

LORNA FITZPATRICK

Vice President for the
Southern Region



My name is Lorna Fitzpatrick and I am running for the position of Vice President for the Southern Region of USI for the coming academic year. I am the current two-term President of IT Carlow Students' Union. I have previously held the position of Deputy President for Education & Welfare and was delighted to represent students of IT Carlow as Mature Student & Equality Officer in 2014/2015 as well as holding the position of Class Representative throughout my time as a student of IT Carlow.

I recognised issues in IT Carlow that affected students, and I worked tirelessly to rectify them and improve the student experience for all. During my time in IT Carlow Students' Union, I have fought for reform to policies that inhibited student representation on Governing Body & Academic Council. I lobbied the Institute for an increase in our budget to create a fourth full-time officer position, Vice President for Education & Lifelong Learning. I have had the honour of working alongside a brilliant group of officers in IT Carlow Students' Union but to ensure a strong Students' Union for years to come; we have introduced systems and structures that will ensure transparency and accountability both financially and structurally.

As an elected student representative, I have been a strong voice for students on both a local and national level. I have always stood up for what was in the best interest of students, and I will continue to do so if you elect me this as your regional officer.

What will I do for you?

Support & Development

Planning is vital for a successful year, so I will meet with each Students' Union at the beginning of your term to understand your goals and help develop a plan with you to achieve them. I will meet with Part-Time officers on each campus to create a timeline of actions that will help you thrive in your position without neglecting your other commitments. In the New Year, I will meet with all MO's again to evaluate the first term and plan for the rest of the year.

I will expand the database of campaigns and events to include documents such as constitutions, policies, procedures, etc. This will allow for MO's to share best practice to ensure a thriving, stable and sustainable student movement going forward.

It is vital to ensure there are people running for Class Representative and Students' Union elections. I will help all Students' Union run awareness campaigns and events to raise the profile of Class Representative and Students' Union elections.

For two years, I organised and delivered Class Representative training on multiple campuses. I will help each MO create the content for their training and will deliver individual training sessions for Class Representative training as required by each MO.

I will come to your campus to support you in planning, promoting and running your campaigns and events. I will also help with promoting all your campaigns and events online.

I will attend Class Rep Trainings to create & build awareness of USI from the beginning of the year. I will continue to build this awareness by attending as many Council meetings as possible throughout the year. I will provide all MO's with short updates that can be shared regularly with Class Representatives through Class Rep Facebook pages or email groups.

I will be glad to attend any meetings you feel you need support during, whether that be with your local county/city council, student services or college staff, including senior management.

Communication

As your regional officer, I will ensure that all MO's are fully supported and that their views are clearly represented and communicated to the rest of Officer Board. I understand that Students' Union Officers are busy, so I will ensure that my communication with you is clear and concise.

As your regional officer, I want you to be able to hold me fully accountable for my work. If elected, I will create a Google Drive that can be shared throughout the South, with officers and students that will include my plan of work which I will update regularly. I will also upload weekly updates in this folder and outline what MO's I will be visiting the following week.

I don't believe that regional officers should wait for MO's to reach out to them, I will contact you because I want to visit your campuses regularly to engage with Students' Union Officers, Class Representatives and students to make sure everyone knows what USI is doing for them.

As I have been involved in both the local and national union since I started college in 2011, I would be delighted to share my knowledge on topics such as funding, mental health, accommodation, SUSI, TU mergers and many more. I have learned that when dealing with college staff, media and external organisations it is important to frame your argument in a certain way to ensure it is not only heard but acted upon. I will also ensure you know what your national union is doing on topics that affect students in your campus and I will ensure that your voices are heard at all times at a national level.

Training

I have attended many different training events organised by USI, and I believe we can improve these training sessions by reviewing feedback provided for previous training events to ensure the training provided by USI in the coming year is effective and the best use of your time. I will also continue to ensure that there are regional training sessions available to all USI members.

National Campaign

I will support students and Students' Union's to lobby TD's & Senators until everyone has access to publicly funded higher education. students deserve to get an education without worrying about how they will pay rent, how they will manage to finish that assignment because they have to work or how they will get time to help volunteer.

Placement supports

Students on placement can sometimes feel less supported while away from campus. I will work with the VP Academic Affairs, VP Campaigns and individual MO's to create online campaigns that will support students on placement that incorporates their employment rights and the supports available to them from their college while on placement.

Accommodation

Digs are a great way to help alleviate some of the pressure placed on the rental market in college towns and cities but due to the lack of suitable legislation, students are being put at risk. I will work with the USI housing executive and the coalition for homelessness and housing to lobby to amend the residential tenancy act legislation to support students living in digs.

Technological University

If elected, I will share my knowledge on the TU merger process with other Students' Union's in the South and support individual Students' Union's in creating suitable plans for merging as I have been involved in developing a plan for merging WITSU & ITCSU. I will also continue to lobby for legislation that supports Students' Unions and will not negatively impact on MO's or students.

General Election & Active Citizenship

Next year, it is possible that a General Election will be called. This will present us the perfect platform and opportunity to share students concerns and demand real changes in areas such as higher education funding, SUSI, accommodation, TU process, funding for services and many more.

If elected, I will arrange and attend meetings with local MO's and General Election candidates. I will be there as a support to the local MO and will focus on issues that affect the students of that MO alongside the issues facing students across the country. I will support MO's in running voter registration drives on their campuses.

I will help MO's to organise a General Election hustings on their campus similar to the one I hosted during the last General Election. These hustings provide students with an opportunity to hear from all the candidates in their Constituency and ask them questions about what they would do for them.

About Lorna

I am a 24-year-old graduate of Business and Human Resource Management in 2014/2015. I also completed a Level 6 Introduction to Psychology course in 15/16. I am an organised, dedicated, self-motivated and passionate person who has been at the forefront of the fight for improving the student experience in IT Carlow and on a national level.

I have lobbied for many changes over the past number of years such as an increased budget, microwaves for students, additional car parking spaces, maintaining awards across sittings, more recycling bins, student & ITCSU staff safety, new smoking shelters and the list goes on. I have a proven track record of delivering on my promises because I approach each new initiative and challenge strategically with a well prepared and thought through argument. I am not asking you to put your faith in me because I think I will make a good Southern Regional Officer, I am asking you to vote for me because I know I will. Let's work together to create a stronger south.

Some previous achievements

- Reviewed and enhanced many policies that directly affect students such as the RPL policy, Learner progression, retention and policy, Assessment Regulations, Student Charter, and Student Representation on both Governing Body and Academic Council;
- Presented to both Carlow and Wexford County Council on the topic of publicly funded higher education;
- Helped fundraise thousands of euros for many charity organisations during many events & campaigns including Raise & Give Week;
- Successfully lobbied to make microwaves available to students;
- Organised two student balls as a Class Representative;
- Registered tens of thousands of students in IT Carlow to vote during the last 4 years;
- Launched a new ITCSU website;
- Lobbied for 300 additional parking spaces;
- Created a social media platform for students that allowed them to find suitable accommodation and advertise rooms available in their properties;
- Helped clear a debt of over €100,000 that was handed down to us from previous Students' Union Officers;
- Created new committees and introduced new policies to ensure ITCSU is transparent and accountable;
- Ensured financial stability for the future ITCSU through creating a reserves account that will be funded annually with a percentage of ITCSU budget.

One final thanks

Thank you for taking time to read my manifesto and I look forward to meeting and discussing why I would love to represent you in the coming year as your Vice President for the Southern Region. Unfortunately, I can't cover all my points in this short document but I would love the opportunity to discuss the points above and more with you and answer any questions you may have in person or over the phone, you can contact me on 087 2763941. I can assure you, a vote for Lorna is a vote for a dedicated, experience and approachable Vice President for the Southern Region.