

Congress
Comhdháil AMLÉ

USI

Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

2018

Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

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Dé Máirt

Dé Céadaoin

Déardaoin

Dé hAoine

0900	Registration	Academic Affairs	National / International Affairs	Accounts
1000				Undiscussed Motions
1100	National Council		Undiscussed Motions	
1200	Students for Choice	Welfare	NSTEP Presentation	
1300		LUNCH		
1400	Safety at Congress Congress Training Opening of Congress	Union Organisation	EU+ME Debate	Close of Congress President-Elect's Address
1500			Constitutional Amendments	
1600			Constitutional Amendments	
1700	Policies Due to Expire	Gaeilge / Irish Language		
1800		Union Organisation		
1900		DINNER. YAY!	Free Time	
2000				
2100	Election 2018: Hustings	Equality / Citizenship	Congress Dinner 2018 President's Address Steering Awards	
2200				
22.30				

Notes

RED ITEMS are immovable.

Election Ballots will open at 12.30 on Wednesday. Count later that afternoon.
Poll Close time will be announced by Elections Subcommittee.

Hotel Check-in throughout Tuesday
Hotel Check-Out 1200 on Friday
Room Inspections will take place every morning by hotel staff.

Any session ending early will go into undiscussed motions from previously opened sessions at Steering's discretion, or with the consent of Congress into an unopened session.

Comfort breaks each day at 1545

Sessions begin sharply on time

ENTERTAINMENT

President's Welcome to the 59th Annual Congress of the Union of Students in Ireland

Michael Kerrigan



A Chairde,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Congress 2018, representing 374,000 students from over 30 colleges across the Island of Ireland.

Over the next 4 days, you will decide the future of USI by debating and voting on motions and policy, and by electing the next leaders of the student movement. Be sure to throw yourself into these debates, don't be afraid to disagree with the opinion of others, and be sure to leave everything on the Congress floor.

Over the coming months and years, we will see students, Students' Unions and USI will face a number of considerable issue. The student accommodation strategy launched by the Government in the Summer outlined that the current crises is going to get worse before it gets better, our HEI's are still struggling financially, with no decision made on the future funding, and we are seeing more and more students being taken advantage of while on unpaid work placement. Over the next 4 days, you will decide how we will tackle these, and many other issues.

When the new Officerboard begins on July 1st, I am confident that we will have repealed the 8th amendment, however, our fight for fundamental human rights must not stop there. Whether that is campaigning for gender recognition, against direct provision in Ireland or against the occupation in Palestine. All of this is all up to you.

Each delegate here is representing 1,000 students, this is a great honour but one that should not be taken lightly. As we approach our 60th Birthday, it is up to you to decide where we go next.

Beir Bua

Michael Kerrigan
President

Congressional Greetings from the Congress Director

Ben Archibald

Dear Congressperson,

Congress is the beating, living heart of the Student Movement in Ireland, and for the past five years I have been privileged to be appointed to organise it. Welcome, then, to the Shearwater Hotel in Ballinasloe – Congress was last held here in 2013, and it's a pleasure to return.

In addition to my assignments for the democratic running of USI Congress, I have responsibility for the general safety of the event, liaison with the catering and housekeeping staff of the hotel and the relationship with our suppliers and partners in the event. I am your liaison with the hotel – if you experience any problems, speak to your delegation leader who may well then refer you on to me.

Every delegate and observer at Congress matters to us, which is why we have a robust (and robustly enforced) set of regulations for both the Congress room and outside in the hotel. It's a daunting prospect for many first-time delegates to be together with a few hundred other student activists, and it's important that we make the important work of actually participating in the debates at Congress as easy as possible for them. The Code of Conduct helps us do that.

Every delegate is responsible for their own safety at this event, but we're all collectively responsible to create a space for people to find their voice on behalf of the students who sent them here. Rest assured that if you take your safety and comfort seriously, we will too. Leave arguments on the Congress floor and use the evenings and dinners to find out more about the students who, just like you, have come to do good things at USI Congress.

And another thing – have fun. We have laid on great music, great entertainment and great food to keep your interest this week. We've listened to delegates from the past to bring great ideas into play this Congress.

I'll have the honour of addressing you on Tuesday afternoon, when we'll agree our code of conduct and undertake training to make sure you can fully participate at the event. Do try to stay awake. There'll be a quiz at the end.

I wish you every success this Congress – be safe, be well and be vocal.

Ben Archibald,
USI Congress Director



Chair of Steering Committee

Colm Murphy

Delegates,

Do not be alarmed! The older, haggard, grizzled people you see on Congress floor are in fact members of Steering Committee. We will be chairing sessions of Congress over the next few days. All of us are former activists/union officers and our job is to make sure that the rules get applied objectively so that whether your motion passes or fails, you'll know that at least the process was fair and impartial.

Congress is great fun, and a great opportunity to try out your public speaking skills and show your passion for your fellow students. However, you are each here to represent your fellow students, your own Union and your college. Have respect for each speaker, even if you fervently disagree with every word and they are a minority of one. One day you could be in that minority of one and you would appreciate the same respect.

Other than chairing sessions one of our most important jobs is Steering Awards! These awards, rivalling the Oscars in their glamour and star-studded celebrity, will be given out towards the end of the week. Categories change every year but best speaker, best maiden speaker, angry young speaker, best delegation (small, medium & large) are some of the awards you can expect. So if put on a good show, make sure a member of Steering Committee knows your name and college!

Finally, on behalf of Steering Committee 2017-2019 I would like to welcome you to USI Annual Congress 2018.

Colm Murphy

Chairman



Chair of Elections Subcommittee

Richard Hammond

Elections Sub-Committee is comprised of Nora Duncan, Scott Ahearn, Cathy Pembroke and me.

Our function is to ensure that you can have confidence that both the polling and the counting of ballots are conducted in an independent, impartial and accurate manner.

To that end, Delegate Leaders have been advised on a number of occasions to ensure that each delegate has their Student Card upon their person during polling. Each delegate's identity is verified upon registration and during polling there will be random spot checks on Student Cards to verify identification and student status.

Following the close of polling, Elections Sub-Committee with the assistance of USI HQ will ensure that the ballot box is securely stored until the counting of the ballots. At the election count a representative from each candidate (or the candidate themselves) may be present but subject strictly to their covenant not to release any results prematurely. Your cooperation in these respects will ensure an efficient election process. We hope that you have a productive and enjoyable Annual Congress.

Richard Hammond,
Chairperson



Introducing Steering Committee

Steering Committee is a group of facilitators who chair and advise USI Congress on the conduct of debate.

Chairperson

Colm Murphy

After serving terms as USI Deputy President and VP Academic, Colm worked in the US for the Washington Ireland Program before moving onto various educational institutes and professional bodies. Colm now works manages the CPD program for the Institute of Certified Public Accountants. Colm is a graduate of WIT where he studied law before serving two terms as Education Officer in WITSU. Colm is a qualified private pilot and is the founding chairman of a flying club. He has recently started training as a Flight Instructor.

Fun Fact: There is nothing about Colm that is remotely interesting

Deputy Chairperson

Aodhán Ó Dea

Bhí Aodhán mar Uachtarán agus Oifigeach Gaeilge don Aontas i gColáiste na hOllscoile Bhaile Átha Cliath. Chuir sé spéis san Aontas ar dtús chun an Gaeilge a chur chun cinn agus dimigh sé ar aghaidh le bheith mar Oifigeach Gaeilge le AMLÉ ar feadh dhá bhliain idir 2009-2011. Tá sé ag obair le Conradh na Gaeilge ó shin mar Stiúrthóir Forbartha- bhuel go dtí de hAoine seo caite nuair a chríochnaigh sé le dul ag taisteal timpeall an domhain ar feadh 6 mhí (théis an comhdháil seo). Is breá leis ag labhairt le daoine éagsúla as Gaeilge nó as Béarla- abair “haigh” leis má tá deis agat

Firic spraoiúil- Bhí Aodhán i roinnt cláracha teilifíse náireach, ar nós The Morbegs, Fair City agus Paisean Faisean.

Aodhán was President and Irish Language Officer of UCD Students' Union. He originally got involved in the Union to help promote the Irish language and he eventually went on to be Irish Language Officer for USI for two years between 2009 -2011.

He has been working with Conradh na Gaeilge since then as Director of Development, well until last Friday when he left to take a career break and travel the world for the next 6 months (after congress). He loves a good chat in Irish or English, say “hi” if you get a chance.

Fun Fact- Aodhán was in a string of cringey TV shows- including The Morbegs, Fair City and Paisean Faisean.

Chairman of Elections Subcommittee

Richard Hammond

Richard Hammond was formerly President of the U.C.C. Societies' Guild, Southern Area Officer of USI, and President of USI. He is currently a solicitor in practice at Mallow, County Cork with Hammond Good Solicitors. Richard is member of the Associate Faculty at the Law School of the Law Society of Ireland and is a Council Member of both the Southern Law Association and the Law Society of Ireland. He is also qualified as an Arbitrator, a Trust & Estate Practitioner, a Mediator, and a European Trademark & Design Attorney. He is married to Joyce with whom he has three children

Paul Lynam

Paul Lynam is the Policy and International Relations manager of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA). He has worked on issues such as equity of access to higher education, Seanad reform, STEM education in Ireland. He currently manages the RIA's submission to the Cassell's expert group on funding of higher education. He previously worked as a parliamentary assistant for Eoghan Murphy TD. As a student representative Paul was Eastern Area Officer for USI, he also acted in a custodial role as Deputy President, Postgraduate Officer and Welfare Officer. He was Education Officer of UCDSU and President of UCDSU. He's a certified mediator by the Mediation Institution of Ireland (MII) and has delivered training modules on negotiation and policy development.

Scott Ahern

Scott is a qualified Family Therapist and Outreach Counsellor for TCD Student Counselling Service. In his SU days, he served two terms as UCDSU Welfare Officer and Deputy President and this was followed by a term as USI Welfare Vice President. Over the years Scott co-founded PleaseTalk.org, established the national Green Ribbon Campaign, is a Guinness World Record Holder and qualified HSE Suicide Prevention Trainer.

Cathy Pembroke

Cathy Pembroke is a graduate of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and served a total of three years in WIT Students' Union as a Deputy President for Education and then two years as President. Following this, Cathy also proudly served one year as USI Southern Area Officer. Cathy now works in WIT Student Life and Learning (SLL) as the Student Engagement Officer where she works as part of the Institute student support team.

Fun Fact: Cathy has a slight obsession with eating as much chocolate as she can and is happy to get into a debate with anyone regarding which chocolate brand is the best! Cathy's current favourite sweet treat is eating a double chocolate Magnum ice cream and her ideal wish is that they bring back the old school Magnum cone (like a Cornetto but so much better!!!!!!)

Nora Duncan

A Ulster University BA Hons Drama Graduate from County Antrim. Student Union Involvement began as a volunteer then class representative as well as part time Equality officer UUM in her final year. Nora served 1 term as Welfare Officer followed by 1 term as President of UUSU, she has also worked for two terms as a SU co-ordinator for Waterford Institute of Technology. Nora currently works for the Public Health Agency as a Youth Health Co-ordinator in Belfast, specialising in the areas of high risk behaviour, anti social behaviour, drugs and alcohol awareness as well as sexual health.

FUN FACT: Nora barely missed out on a place of the final of RTE's TV show Fame due to all judges informing her frankly that she couldn't dance! Friends still don't let her forget it but she's still trying to prove them wrong with every step on the dance she takes!

Conor Doyle

Conor went close to overtaking "Van Wilder" record with attending third level education. Having completed his honours degree in Legal Studies he was elected twice as Welfare Officer at Waterford Institute before taking the role of President at the Union for an additional two terms. A keen Gaelic Footballer, and represented his home County of Wicklow at all grades.

FUN FACT: Received a phone call from TV3 a number of years ago to say he had been accepted onto the "Take Me Out" show. Later revealed he had been stitched up by his friends. Gives a serious rendition of "Rathlin Bog" that will awaken the entire Shearwater if requested to do so at any stage of Congress 2018.

Eoin Hayes

Limerick man Eoin Hayes served as President of UCCSU 2009/10, where he started constitutional reform initiatives in UCCSU and USI. Since, he's worked for Google, the Obama 2012 campaign, a management consultancy in NYC, and a Silicon Valley company, Palantir Technologies. He spends his free time at CrossFit, volunteering with local kids in Ringsend, and on charitable and political causes. He recently moved from New York back to Dublin, where he works as a freelance management consultant. He holds a BEng in Process & Chemical Engineering from UCC and an MSc in Management from London Business School and will try very hard not to get into trouble at this year's Congress.

FUN FACT: Eoin once went skinny dipping on a beach and accidentally ran into the entire Munster Rugby team doing water training.

USI Congress is the supreme decision making body of the Union of Students in Ireland. It has the power to review and amend the Constitution, to decide policy and to elect the members of the Officerboard.

Who attends congress?

Congress is composed of the current Officerboard and delegates from each Member Organisation (MO) whose affiliation fees have been paid. The number of delegates from each MO varies according to the number of students registered in that Students' Union.

Who is in charge at congress?

Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that things run smoothly and that motions are discussed fairly and properly.

They do not vote and they are not members of any delegation. Steering Committee enforce the rules which Congress have adopted : they do not make the rules.

Their responsibility at Congress is to preside over the various sessions of debate and to ensure that speakers are not improperly interrupted. They also enforce time limits or other regulations and ensure that votes are carried out in a proper manner.

How do debates work and who proposes the motions?

The Officer or MO who put the motion forward initially, normally proposes the motions in each session.

If the people who initially wrote the motion don't turn up, or don't want to speak, any delegate can start the debate by proposing the motion. Once a motion is proposed, it is then open to the floor for discussion.

How often can I speak?

Unless you are the person who proposed the motion, you can only speak once on any motion. You can, however, speak on as many motions as you wish during Congress. If you proposed a motion, or if you have an amendment to a motion successfully passed, then you can also sum up before a vote is taken.

How long can I speak for?

First Speaker in Favour: 5 Minutes
Each subsequent speaker: 3 Minutes

Speakers for and against a motion alternate, until a vote is called. Note that you must speak for or against the motion.

Once a vote is called for, the Proposer has the right to sum up, unless an amendment to the motion has been passed, in which case, the proposer of the amendment has the right to summate.

Procedural Motions

What procedural motions can be put?

To help ensure that debates run smoothly and as quickly as possible, procedural motions exist. The following are the procedural motions and their effect, if passed:

(A) THAT THE QUESTION NOW BE PUT

If passed, there will be an opportunity for the Proposer of the motion to summarise and then an immediate vote will be taken.

(B) THAT THE QUESTION NOT BE PUT

If passed, prevents a vote being taken on the matter under discussion.

(C) THAT THE QUESTION BE TAKEN IN PARTS

If passed, divides the motion or amendment into specified sections to be voted on individually. Used if there are sections that you do not agree with. This must be put in writing and handed into Steering Committee.

(D) THAT THE MATTER BE REFERRED BACK

If passed, refers the matter back to a specified time or a specified Officer, or a specified Committee, or to a National Council. It is therefore not voted upon at Congress.

(E) A CHALLENGE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S RULING

If passed, the Chairperson must change his or her ruling on an issue in accordance with the motion.

(F) NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CHAIRPERSON

If passed, the Chairperson will vacate the Chair for the remainder of the session and will be replaced by another member of Steering Committee.

The procedure for raising a Procedural Motion will be detailed at Congress Training.

Who do I go to if I have any questions?

If you have questions about debate or the policy process, go to Steering Committee, who should be able to help answer any query you may have. While some members of Steering Committee chair sessions, there are also others situated at the back of Congress floor to answer any questions.

Questions about the hotel and organisation of the event should be made to the Congress Director.

Congress Code of Conduct

USI wants all participants at events to have an enjoyable, productive and safe time. USI has developed procedures to ensure that everything possible is done to protect our members. More guidance has been given to Delegation Leaders, who also have some responsibility for keeping delegates safe and well informed. At the commencement of Congress, anybody remaining at the event will have been deemed to have accepted this Code of Conduct and to be bound by it for the duration of Congress.

Key people for safety

SU Delegation Leader

Your SU has a delegation leader - this is usually the Students' Union President, but it may be someone else on the delegation. This person is responsible for supporting and leading the delegation of representatives from your SU, and for most circumstances may be your most useful contact.

USI Safety Champion

In your pack and on your ID lanyard you will have the telephone number for the Safety Champion, which you can ring at any time of the day or night to report anything you think could be dangerous. This number is to be used in emergencies only.

Congress Director

The Congress Director is appointed by the National Council to manage Congress.

Principles

Responsibility to others

The ethos of our union means that we each have a responsibility to take care of ourselves and to respect the space, integrity and needs of others. Every delegate, facilitator, trainer, committee member and member of staff of USI and its partners is entitled to a safe and trouble-free event. Everybody at a USI event has a responsibility not to cause difficulties for or endanger someone else at our events. We will not accept or tolerate any action which causes another person at a USI event to either be in danger or to believe that they are in danger.

Respect for others

USI believes in the right to freedom of expression for our delegates. Debate about competing ideas is healthy and the basis of our policy process. We don't shout down others when they're speaking. We don't use personally insulting, threatening or offensive language and we don't stop others from expressing themselves within our rules.

Responsibility to promote safety

Every delegate at a USI event has a responsibility to promote safety. Delegates must report anything they feel could endanger themselves or another delegate. Every delegate has a right to have their concerns listened to and respected.

Protocols

Abusive or violent behaviour

USI will not tolerate abusive or violent behaviour at any USI event. Anybody engaged in abusive or violent behaviour at a USI event can expect to be sent home. Any person engaged in activity which

endangers another person at a USI event can expect to be excluded from the event (or any part of it) and not allowed to participate in future USI events.

Conduct

USI events are focused on the work of the student movement over all. Every event we hold is geared toward supporting students and their representatives to best serve the needs of students - so the behaviour of people at our events is paramount.

Alcohol and drugs can impair a user's judgment and lead to risky behaviour, including sexually risky behaviour. It's not acceptable to have illegal drugs at a USI event. Anti-social behaviour, particularly that caused by the influence of drugs or alcohol is also not acceptable - and not compatible with remaining at a USI event. The USI Alcohol Policy contains more information on this.

Sexual conduct

USI has a zero tolerance approach to sexual misconduct or harassment. Personal space, privacy and the right to control over one's own body are vital to USI.

USI will not accept:

- Unwanted sexual comments, including about someone's body or private life
- Repeated unwanted sexual invitations or requests
- Unwanted touching or sexually motivated activity

Consent

At all USI events, we apply a standard of 'explicit consent'. If you want to engage in sexual activity, you need to be certain the other person wants it too. Get a yes, or GTFO.

Investigation

All allegations of misconduct at USI events will be treated seriously- but USI is not capable of conducting investigations into specific allegations and will not undertake to do so. We will provide support and information about other agencies which may be able to help. Where an allegation relates to something which endangers our members, USI will always support the relevant authorities in whatever way it can. If USI Staff become aware of something which endangers our members, you can expect the staff member to report it to the relevant authorities.

Accommodation and sleep

USI provides accommodation at many events. Often this is to be shared between multiple delegates. Everyone at our events has a right to peace and a good night's sleep in the room and the bed they've been allocated, with no exceptions-we need this right to be respected by everyone all the time.

The people who have been allocated a room have responsibility for the room and are responsible for loss or damages there. By agreeing to stay at Congress you agree to be bound by this.

USI Staff

USI staff have no right to participate in the democratic bodies of USI, and no right to reply to public comments about their work. It follows, therefore, that USI staff should not be mentioned or discussed during debates at a democratic event. Concerns about staff should be brought to the President.

Staff can be approached about anything you like - but if it relates to the policies or the procedures of the organisation, you can expect them to say nothing. Staff have no role nor any 'official' view on policy or politics.

Any violent or abusive conduct towards staff will be treated seriously and if unresolved could lead to the withdrawal of USI staff from the event. You can expect such conduct to be reported to the relevant authorities in every case.

The same applies to staff USI has hired temporarily or employees of organisations with which USI

works and hotel staff.

Authority to eject

The authority to require a person at a USI event to leave the event (temporarily or permanently) lies with the SU delegation leader, President, and the Congress Director. The lead officer or Congress Director can take whatever advice and make whatever consultations they feel are appropriate - their decision is final for the event and no refunds may be made in respect of fees paid for attendance for an ejected person.

Why would we eject?

A decision to eject a person will be taken if we feel that the safety or security of people at the event, or the perception of safety or security would be reduced by the person's continuing presence at the event.

We might also eject a person if otherwise the order of a democratic or training event would be impeded, where they have engaged in misconduct or have threatened to do so.

Candidates Statements

Candidate for President

Síona Cahill

The Union of Students in Ireland must strengthen the fight for equity of access to education and supports - we are the only organisation who will lead this.

I have voiced students concerns at both a local and national level, lobbied for equity of access, fought for equal rights for all students, and defended those who are marginalised by society. Over the last year, I have spearheaded the USI Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment, leading with grassroots mobilisation, curating and supporting local activism, and registering thousands of students across this country to vote. USI are at the forefront of social and educational change in Ireland since our inception, and that influence, lobbying power and organisational strength must be built on further.

In 2018-2019, we will be a force to be reckoned with in the battle ongoing about the future and current funding of Higher Level education in Ireland. Students must be at the centre of decision making, and we must resist absolutely the commodification of education in Ireland, and attempts to undermine Students' Unions autonomy. It is the very basis of our movement that we create the space to criticise and improve the systems we interact with as students. This will be a core battle into next year, and I am committed to it.

The work of our organisation spans an exceptional brief alongside the welfare, academic success, supports and institutional interaction of the students we represent over the course of their study. We are also conscious, and must continue to be, of who is not accessing the system at all - who is locked out, who is not adequately supported. We must continue to demand fairness and improvement.

We need to be creative in harnessing, showcasing and liberating the energy of over 374,000 students across this island on the issues that matter and affect us, and working with you, we can make that happen. They will not be able to ignore us.

Let's face our challenges, together.

Ar Scáth a Chéile a mhaireann na ndaoine.

For vision, for action, and for strong leadership for our movement, vote Síona #1 for USI President.

Le meas,

Síona

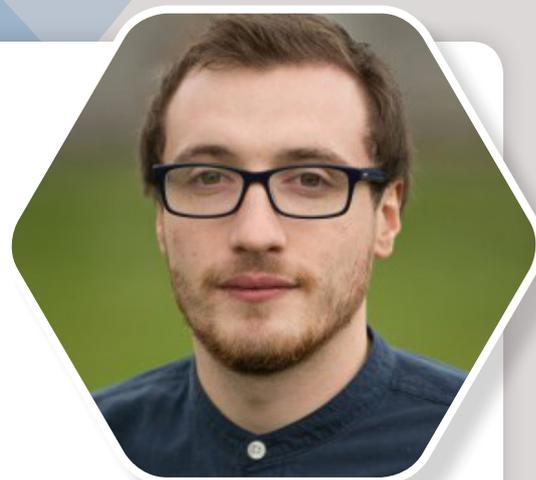
@AnTaobhRua

siona.cahill@gmail.com



Candidate for Vice President for Academic Affairs

Oisín Hassan



Hi everyone! My name's Oisín Hassan, and at last year's USI Congress the student movement elected me to serve as your Vice President for Academic Affairs. Ever since I've been working to secure the rightful voice of students as the core partner in our third-level education system in Ireland.

Before USI, I completed two terms as a Sabbatical Officer at Queen's University Belfast Students' Union, first as Vice President for Equality and Diversity, and then as Vice President for Education. That experience has stood to me this year as I advocated for change nationally on behalf of our membership.

Higher Education is changing in Ireland. Not least with the impending passage in to law of the Technological Universities Bill, and the continued impact of inertia by Government over the funding of our institutions. Meanwhile, our colleges look to increasing international student numbers and pressure grows for rapid expansion in research funding.

In some ways, Higher Education isn't changing in Ireland. We still face a funding crisis, we struggle with issues of student drop-out, our Students' Unions still have to fight every day to get the student voice on to institutional agendas, and staff to student ratios are still incredibly high.

And in the coming academic year our Northern student members will leave the European Union, despite voting overwhelming against Brexit.

But while we face considerable challenges, we are a united movement that has achieved many wins over the past year. We've smashed the established consensus in favour of student loans, we've secured extra funding for those who need it most, we've secured agreement with the Department to move forward on SU autonomy and a national approach to the student voice, and we've done much to ensure our postgraduate members feel included in our movement.

I've worked this year to address the major policy issues that our members face, but USI needs to do more to ensure that we are a movement that can advocate in the streets and on committees.

I am determined to see through the work I have begun, and would be honoured if Congress 2018 would place their trust in me to build on those efforts.

As a movement we are strong and united collective, and that is something I would like to continue to play my part in.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Candidate for Vice President for Campaigns



Michelle Byrne

Students, officers, we have a fight on our hands! The fight for higher education funding, the fight for accommodation & regulation and the fight for our voices to be heard. I'm Michelle Byrne and I have a vision, the experience and the motivation to be your next USI Vice President for Campaigns.

As the current Vice President of the Southern Region in the Union of Students in Ireland, campaigns are at the heart of my work. The regional role is about getting down on the ground, rolling out the ideas of the Vice President for Campaigns and the policy officers. This close working relationship has given me the insight and following that, the inspiration, to run for the position. Campaigns is something I have always had a passion for, whether it was through my skills in design, digital marketing, creative brainstorming, planning or simply being on the ground campaigning to students!

Advocacy, for me, does not stop at the door on the way home from work. It is part of my personal life too. This passion and dedication will help drive campaigns next year from the ground up. I am no stranger to lobbying and taking action on a local SU level - from preventing a library closure by threatening to barricade ourselves into the library with books, to lobbying TDs, holding a demonstration at a governing body and a plan and threat of an all out student strike during my years in WIT Students' Union.

Campaigning is at the heart of our movement; informing and activating our members and moving us towards solutions and I want to be at the helm of it. But we need to get back to the grassroots movement, we need to create grassroots lobby groups to influence the very crux of our campaigns. Congress, we need you. I want to focus on expanding our communications to our members, building those grassroots groups and making sure the government do not forget about us!

So let's make our first move together and vote Michelle Byrne #1 for USI Vice President for Campaigns.

Candidates for Vice President for Welfare

Rachael Sherlock

Hi, my name is Rachael Sherlock. I'm a final year Energy Engineering student at UCC I would like to be your next VP for Welfare Officer on USI. As a native of Belfast, the move to Cork was a large one and not as easy as I thought it would be, but I threw myself in to whatever I could find.

I joined the Canoe Club, I rented bikes and cycled as far around Cork as the pain of a bicycle seat would allow me! I have been an active member of societies throughout my four years here, including committee roles on St.Vincent de Paul, the Engineering Society and Engineers Without Borders as well as volunteering with many charitable events such as Relay for Life, Jailbreak, Darkness into Light and Paddle against Suicide. I've done it all. So why USI? And why VP for Welfare? As the only student candidate in my category, I am the only candidate who's fully knowledgeable of the issues that students are facing today. And I'm not just aware of these issues, I'm living them. It's time for new ideas and fresh innovation on USI and I am here to provide that.

Some of these ideas include constructing a contract that students can provide to property owners to guarantee basic living rights, working with local Welfare Officers to improve their student health centres, starting an initiative to keep our officers healthy so that they can better represent the student movement, educating students on the importance of smear tests and prostate exams at the age of third level education, standardising Welfare Crews, 'Coming out in Ireland' seminars during orientations, interpreters at USI events and so much more.

As a current student I believe I can bring light to the real issues faced by students every day and tackle them with profound efficiency and dedication. Coming from an engineering background, I am trained to think freely and 'outside of the box' to achieve sustainable solutions. However, my aim were I to be elected is not just to provide solutions but to prevent the need for a solution at all. As Mahatma Gandhi once said; "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

Niamh Murtagh

A Chairde,

Hello everyone! I'm Niamh and I am re-running for the position of Welfare in the Union of Students in Ireland. Over the past 9 months so much has been achieved and if re-elected I want to ensure that continues. I give my role 110% and absolutely love my job and want to continue the work I have started and put so much into.

We have redesigned the Sexual Health Campaign, redesigned the Mental Health campaign, launched the largest Mental Health Survey aimed specifically at 3rd level students across the island of Ireland, created an NI specific student support card, secured extra training funding in mental health and free online GP Healthcare to name a few.

I have been involved in the student movement from the moment I stepped into college, and have devoted my life to the cause of students ever since. I have had so many experiences during my time as a student. I was that student that failed an exam and had to fight my way through appeals, the one who had to wait over 6 weeks to see a counsellor and who had no every issue thrown at me while trying to apply for my SUSI grant.

Unfortunately, I am not alone and students are suffering every day with very limited resources to turn to. Students need their welfare officers on the ground to be trained, equipped and supported, and I am fully aware of what that takes ready to ensure that will continue to be the case across the country. Please have a read of my manifesto to see more information or contact me anytime with any queries you may have.

Go raibh mile maith agat,

Niamh



Damien McClean

I'm Damien, and I am the current welfare officer in TCD Students' Union. I studied maths in Dublin for the last few years, but my roots are in the Wee County, Louth

I have needed welfare services all throughout my time in college, and I have been lucky that the support systems have been able to keep me in my degree. When we talk about a right to an education, that includes having the supports available to ensure you can do your best in college.

I have been involved with AHEAD (as a conference speaker at European Association for International Education), YesEquality (as LGBT rights officer in the year of marriage equality) and this year, I have been able to run our most successful consent workshops for first years (with over 90% voluntary attendance).

I have also been involved in my personal time with Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus Ireland as a carer, working with Order of Malta and working with Temple street.

Next year, I want to work on consent, personal safety, mental health, addictive behaviours, welfare abroad, sexual health, accommodation and finances. I want to work with national bodies to represent the difficulties students face whilst in college, and I want to work on national campaigns that will help students. I want to make sure that your sabbatical officers are equipped to deal with the daily issues they face from students, and to bring their voices to

As welfare officer this year, I have seen first hand how vital these services are in supporting students to remain in college. Looking after the welfare of students isn't just about making sure the services are available when we are at our most vulnerable. It is so much more than that.

We need to stop being reactive and start being preventative. We need to be innovative in our approach, constantly seeking improvements, not fighting against the deterioration of our services. We need to continue our fight for access to supports and services that will ensure that we can take full advantage of our education and learning.



Candidates for Vice President for the Southern Region

Philip Desmond

Mo Chairde,

My name is Philip Desmond, I am currently the President of LIT Students' Union and I am an candidate for the 2018 USI Elections for Vice President for the Southern Region.

I completed my Honours Degree in Fine Art, Printmaking & Contemporary Practice in Limerick School of Art & Design, Limerick Institute of Technology in 2016. During my time as a student I was a Class Rep for three academic years and I have always been involved in the Students' Union as a volunteer and also as a Part-time Officer for Events and Entertainment before being elected to two sabbatical terms.

During my time as a student I found myself struggling on more than one occasion with many different aspects of student life and it was during my fourth year that I first started to recognise the work of USI and how Students' Unions can be of great benefit to all students. It was through the then Southern Regional Officer that my love and passion for USI as an organisation and advocacy group began to blossom and since then it has grown even more so.



There are many reasons why I wish to be elected as VP for the Southern Region, but the main reason is to help improve the Higher Level Education Experience for all, as well as continuing to voice the concerns of students and fighting for their rights in education and in society.

With major decisions to be made on the Future Funding of Higher Education in Ireland, mergers of HEI's and the creation of Technological Universities and a Referendum on the Eight Amendment which could alter the Rights' of Women and pregnant people in Ireland there is a great deal of work ahead of USI and Students' Unions across the island of Ireland in the coming months and years. USI, MO's and Students have the opportunity to ensure that our future as students and members of society is fair, equal and suitable for all.

Please vote #1 Philip Desmond for USI Vice President for the Southern Region 2018-2019 as I believe I have the determination, passion and experience to fulfil every aspect of the role with Students and MO's as my number one priorities.

Thank you for your time,

Philip Desmond

Lorna Fitzpatrick

Hello, my name is Lorna Fitzpatrick, and I am running for the position of Vice President for the Southern Region. I am a 24-year-old graduate of Business and Human Resource Management. I am an organised, dedicated, self-motivated and passionate person who has always been at the forefront of the fight for improving the student experience in IT Carlow and on a national level.

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 since 2011.

My first engagement with the Students' Union came during my first year of college when I put myself forward for Class Representative. Every year that followed, my drive and my determination grew to work with students and staff to ensure a better system was in place for students. This year is no different.

If elected; I would love to work with students and officers from around the Southern Region. I will ensure clear and conscience communication while ensuring you are fully supported. I can be that extra pair of hands on campus, support at a meeting or on the other end of the phone.

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. 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.

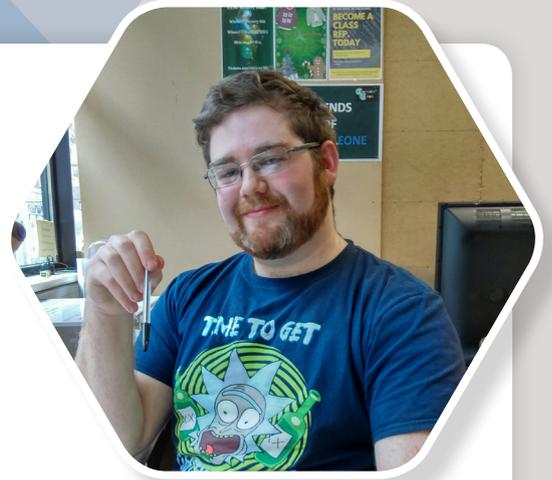
I have lobbied the Institute for many things over the past number of years such as additional car parking spaces, microwaves, maintaining awards across sittings, more recycling bins, additional safety measures, new smoking shelters and the list goes on.

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.



Adam Clarke

Hi there! I'm Adam Clarke, I'm 23 and I'm running for the position of Vice-President for the Southern Region of USI. I started out as a student of Carlow College at 18 and very quickly became engaged with the Clubs and Societies on offer in our little college. I ran for Clubs and Societies Officer at the end of my first year in college and lost resoundingly! But I picked myself up and ran for Vice-President for Education the following year and won that! Then after I finished out my degree I ran for SU President which I won and am now finishing out my second term in office.



Initially when I began college I wasn't particularly engaged with the student movement. I didn't qualify for any sort of grant, so I worked in Xtra-Vision to pay my expenses, you can probably guess for yourself how that worked out in the long-term. It was my year as VP for Education that opened my eyes to just how important the student movement is. Since then I've dedicated myself to improving the lives of the students in my college, as well as bettering our Students' Union as a whole.

As a direct result of working in my SU I have become more political, and a part of why I want to run for the position of VP for the South is that I believe that if I put in the effort, the transformation that overtook me can also overtake students who aren't necessarily SU Officers! Students are a driving force for change across the globe and I want to be able to do my part in driving that change and encouraging others to get behind it. Politics is very much a forum that benefits from critical thinking, and now that I have a degree in English & History it's pretty much the only thing I'm even remotely qualified to do!

Fear not though, as politics is not my be all end all trait, I have a few hobbies outside of my work. I have a real passion for games and love writing essays in my spare time where I examine them critically! That's just a little insight into the world of Adam I suppose, but there's a lot more to me than what I can fit into 400 words, so by all means come over and say hi!

Candidates for Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Anna Heverin

Hi everyone,

Welcome to USI Congress 2018 I am delighted to be running for the position of your USI VP for Equality & Citizenship.

A role like this needs a person who is dedicated, passionate & will never stop fighting for student rights & equality. I have that drive to be a leader in this area & represent all students in Ireland regardless of their sexuality, race or socio-economic background.

In my current position as President of UCC Societies Executive, I have had the opportunity to engage & work alongside so many tremendous students doing exceptional work. I have guided & helped societies from many different backgrounds, cultures & traditions. I have seen UCC Societies grow



from strength to strength & have dedicated myself fully to making our position strong with the UCC community.

Through my work as member of UCCSU Executive I have worked with USI on both a local & a national stage. I have sought to campaign on the issues that are important to students in equality, diversity & educational matters. I have led on my campus in areas such as the campaign to Repeal the 8th amendment & played a central part in voter registration drives in college.

As a national leader I hope to aid the fight for marriage equality in Northern Ireland, greater gender recognition & fight for publically funded third level education.

If you elect me your VP for Equality & Citizenship, I know I will bring the same dedication and persistence that I brought to every role I have undertaken in University College Cork.

Fighting for students to have equal rights in areas of disabilities, gender equality & access to education is something I will always strive to continue both in & out of the student movement.

Le meas.

Anna Heverin

Aisling Cusack

My name is Aisling Cusack and I am asking you to elect me as the next Vice President for Equality and Citizenship with the Union of Students in Ireland. I'm the current Vice President for the Dublin Region, and former two-term Deputy President for Education in IT Tallaght Students' Union.

This year, I led the national voter registration campaign which saw 18,000 students newly registered to vote. I have worked to lobby for voter registration and voting reform in this country, making active citizenship more accessible for students. With this phenomenal student engagement, it is crucial that we keep this momentum going and strengthen the student voice!

I believe that the Union of Students in Ireland has a responsibility to fight for equity of access to education, and ensure students are equally supported through their education. Higher education needs to be a fully inclusive system that enables more people, irrespective of age, socio economic background, disability, ethnicity or other factors.

There is much to be applauded for our work as a student movement on the grounds of equality. We are often the leaders in society to instigate and initiate change. It has been students banging the pavement and making our voices heard on issues such as higher education funding, marriage equality, gender neutral bathrooms, reproductive healthcare, improvements to transgender healthcare, Direct Provision, and increased access to PrEP.

I have been at the forefront of these campaigns and shown a dedication to the student movement and our efforts in creating change.

There are many success stories, but we have more hills to climb and inequalities to overcome and I want to work with you to succeed in these actions.

We must continue to fight for marriage equality in Northern Ireland. We must continue to improve and strengthen our women lead initiatives. We must end Direct Provision. We must lobby for improvements in healthcare for the transgender and non-binary community, and continue to make our campuses more inclusive and accepting of diversity. We must strive to eradicate the forms of marginalisation prevalent in our society, in our campuses and in our communities such as racism, classism, and ableism.

As your next Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, I will work with you in your strive for equality.

Vote Aisling Cusack #1 for USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship



Candidates for Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Robert O'Donnell

I am running to be your VP BMW as I believe I am a candidate with the skills, passion and knowledge to do the best job. It is a position which requires knowledge of campaign, liaising, lobbying and most importantly listening and representing the views of grassroots member of the USI - a point which will be at the heart of my campaign.

Since my involvement in activism at the age of fifteen, I have been involved in a whole range of local, national and European organisations to advance the welfare and rights of young people, students and international citizens. From being a member of my local Comahirle na nÓg to being the Deputy President of the Irish Second-Level Students Union and even now in my role as Societies Senator for Maynooth Students Union. Campaigning and representing is not only something I enjoy, its something I love with a passion and I want to take this passion to the national officer board of USI. With political uncertainty, the up coming referendum on repealing the 8th amendment (of which I will be making a number one campaign priority), and housing crisis - now more than ever we need strong students representatives doing what USI has always done - been the leading voice for a progressive, modern Ireland and fighting for a country that our members want to see take shape.



Barry Clohessy

Hi all,

For those of you I haven't had the chance to meet yet, my name is Barry Clohessy, I am the current President of IT Sligo Students' Union and have previously held the positions of Irish Language officer, Entertainment officer and the Vice President for Welfare, for two terms. I have gained so much experience during my time in the Students' Union from running my own campaigns to sitting on Governing Body, Academic Council and many other committees. I have given the student movement my all over the past 5 and a half years. I've had long days, sleepless nights, sweet victories and unpleasant defeats. But would I change any of it? Most definitely not!

Nationally I have engaged with USI through working groups, national council, various committees and the national campaign and I understand the commitment that has to be given as an officer on USI Officer Board.

This region needs an officer who is passionate, driven and hardworking, I believe I possess these qualities and can continue the fantastic work already carried out by the current Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region while also having my own vision for the role. I have gained a wealth of knowledge during my time in the student movement and feel that I am the ideal candidate for the position of Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region. If you elect me, I can promise I will work tirelessly representing the students and Students' Unions of the region



Make sure to have a read of my full manifesto and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me on 086 773 7456 or clohessy.barry@gmail.com

Have a great congress,

Le meas,

Barry

Candidates for Vice President for the Dublin Region



Kayla Gaffney

My name is Kayla Gaffney. I am a final year Education and Training student in Dublin City University. I am running for the position of Vice President for the Dublin region because I believe that I am the best candidate for the position because I have the skill set, experience and drive needed to ensure that I can implement changes to strengthen the region, make changes within USI to become more student friendly and encourage more engagement from our sabbatical teams.

I am an Access Student and a Disability student which has allowed me to get involved volunteering in both services outreach programmes which works with linked secondary schools, I have given talks, facilitated workshops and supported students entering these services. I believe that this will help me when it comes to engaging and linking in with each MO.

In 2014 I was selected to represent students by being a part of the welfare working group and I am still involved with working group today. Working within the group allowed me to create new campaigns and initiatives to engage students, volunteer with the student's union while meeting new people and improving the atmosphere in my college. I have even received an award for my work within the group. I have also been involved in many clubs and societies within DCU as well as sitting on committees for the Access Society and the Walk and Talk for mental health society.

My passion for student politics began in first year when I was elected as my class's representative and have been active in both class representative council and within local and national campaigns. This has allowed me to use my voice to benefit students within my class as well as my college and to engage with campaigns, protests and issues that mattered to me.

I want to be the next VP for the Dublin Region because I represent a mixed cohort of students and see what challenges they face daily which I want to address at a national level. I have been actively involved within the student movement since starting college and wish to continue that journey. I believe that it is time that USI goes back to basics. I may not have been a sabbatical officer or even a convenor, but I am passionate about student politics and I want to be the voice for students, a student speaking for students.

Colm O'Halloran

Hey, what's up?

I'm Colm and I want to be the VP for the Dublin Region for USI. I've been helping students in Trinity for the past few years and I love helping. It's rewarding to know I've made a difference and I want to make that difference with students in Dublin.

Why do I want the job?

I've been in Trinity for six years and I've helped students throughout this time. I have not finished helping and I can do more through USI. I'm experienced, committed and hard-working and I know I'm the right person for the job.

How do I see the role?

I see the role as having two parts; bringing USI policy to third level institutions in Dublin and listening to the SUs and students in those institutions. I want students to know that USI listens and cares for what they want; USI understands each institution has different needs and the Dublin Region Officer should listen and act on these.

What do I want to do if I get the job?

These are just a few of the things I want to work on.

Engagement; I want to be an active USI representative on Dublin campuses. I want to develop a strategy for on-campus engagement and be talking to students on-the-ground.

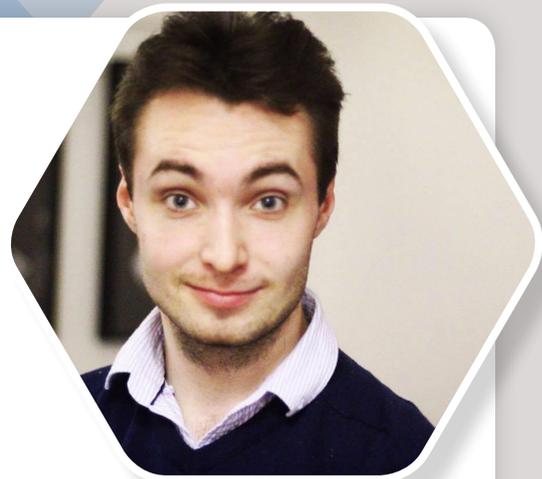
Accommodation in Dublin is at the worst it's ever been, and students are paying too much for substandard accommodation. I want to liaise with the new Student Housing Project Executive and be more realistic with the accommodation advertised on the USI Accommodation website.

The Technological University Bill is an incredibly important development that is ongoing, and it poses challenges for SUs to ensure they are represented. I want to help with this and mediate meetings between the relevant Sus.

There's many Grassroots Campaigns happening on campuses throughout Ireland and I want to be a link between these groups and USI. Issues such as Plastic Free Solutions, Direct Provision, University of Sanctuary are spearheaded by student activists and USI has an obligation to help.

Voter registration is an area where USI is key; every year, new college entrants become eligible voters and USI should make it a priority to assist them in becoming registered and informed voters.

I'd really appreciate your vote and if you have any questions or recommendations then I'm just a phone call away – 087 964 1998.



Candidates for Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge

Aoife Deasy

A Chairde,

Aoife Ní Dhéisigh is ainm dom, ó Coláiste San Aingeal, Contae Shligigh. Tógadh in iarthar contae Chorcaí, tá céim agam sa Ghaeilge agus Eacnamaíocht Bhaile. Oibrím mar Bhean an Tí ar Oileán Chléire i rith an tsamhraidh, ag tabhairt aire do daltaí mhéanscoile sa Ghaeltacht. Bhí mé i m'ionadaí ranga, Oifigeach na Gaeilge, Oifigeach na Leasa, agus Uachtarán i STACS. Táim an-bhródúil go mbeidh Oifigeach na Gaeilge lán-aimsire againn don chéad uair, go mór mór le Bliain na Gaeilge.

My name is Aoife Deasy, from St. Angela's College, Sligo. I'm originally from West Cork and my degree is in Home Economics and Irish teaching. I've been a class rep, Irish Officer, Welfare Officer and SU President. I'm so proud that we will finally have a full time Irish Officer in USI, especially as it's Bliain na Gaeilge (year long Irish Language campaign).

Nuair a bhí mé mar Oifigeach na Gaeilge bhí orm feachtas stocaireachta a eagrú chun cáipéisí oifigiúla a aistriú. Chomh maith leis sin, bhí imeachtaí Gaelacha eagraithe agus brú curtha ar an gColáiste chun rang teagaisc cuimsitheach a fháil. Tá siad ag lorg duine chun cabhair a thabhairt le cúrsaí acadúla faoi láthair.

As Irish Officer, I campaigned for official documents to be available in the college in both Irish and English. I worked with the Irish Society to have events for Irish speakers, such as a tutorial with the Irish department allowing every year of the B.Ed programme to share ideas ahead of placement. The college are currently seeking applications for an Irish language position in the Academic Writing Center

We now have 85 students Safe Talk trained, and ¾ of the college ASIST trained, I introduced the first SHAG week in Angela's and successfully lobbied for the Childcare Fund to be saved. If elected, my main priorities would be the Gaeltacht Requirements for Student Teachers, supporting MO's without an Irish language Officer, utilising An Coiste Cultúrtha, Seachtain na Gaeilge, working towards an Irish Language Act in Northern Ireland and implementation of policy.

Is duine díograiseach, spreagtha mé agus tá grá agam don Ghaeilge.

Le grá,

Aoife



Officer Reports

President

Michael Kerrigan



Higher Education Funding

Work on higher education funding began immediately during our first week in office. The Labour Party called a private members motion in the Seanad opposing student loans and in favour of publicly funded higher education. In the lead up to this I met Education spokespeople for FF and Labour and the leader of SF, I also presented to a large group of FG Senators. The evening before the motion, I presented at a briefing of Seanad members with a number of politicians and Trade Unions. Unfortunately the vote did not go our way, however the discussion raised a lot of concerns about loan schemes from all parties.

In September, we held a small demonstration outside a policy forum on student loan schemes in the Royal Irish Academy. We expressed our disappointment with not being asked to speak, but also provided information to attendees on USI's position on loan schemes, the benefits of publicly funded higher education and why loan schemes would not work in Ireland.

In October, the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) officially joined the Coalition for Publicly Funded Higher Education. We have since rewritten our position paper on Higher Education Funding, lobbied together and are commissioning an opinion poll on the public opinion of student loan schemes.

The Education Is in the Red campaign was launched outside Leinster House on September 25th. The launch announced the date and purpose of the national demonstration and our intentions for this campaign. On September 27th Taoiseach Leo Varadkar stated that he "certainly could not stand over an outcome that left Irish students graduating with the kind of debts that American or English students do." Although this was a positive statement, he did not quite go as far as ruling out an Australian system.

The demonstration for education on October 4th with an estimated 15,000-20,000 people. My main areas of work included assisting the VP Campaigns and with the logistics of the day, speaking at the beginning and end of the demonstration and speaking to the media before, during and days after the event. I also met with the Minister of State for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell O' Connor directly after the demonstration who stated that she "would not see any undue any further burdens on students"

In November, the Minister announced that she would be seeking recommendations from the Oireachtas Committee on the future funding of higher education before Christmas. This has not happened. We will continue to lobby politicians on a national level, but are now concentrating on a local level with County Councils where we have met with 15 councils, with 8 passing motions against loan schemes and in favour of publicly funded higher education.

Students' Union Autonomy

We began this campaign by looking at information taken from the SU comparative research survey completed by the VP Campaigns to see the positions our SU's were currently in.

We also looked for best practice internationally, I brought this item to the Trilateral meeting in October and was given an account of the work that had been done by NUS and where they were successful, mainly at NUS Scotland.

At the 73rd Board Meeting of the European Students' Union, I hosted an open workshop along with the VP South and the Presidents of ITCSU and LITSU on developing Students' Union autonomy. We received a lot of information from our European Colleagues on the autonomy of their SU's, especially information on Students' Union legislation which was evident in Sweden and Germany.

The VP AA and I met with officials in the Department of Education to discuss creating a framework for development of Students' Unions which would include a pillar on autonomy similar to that in

Scotland. The officials stated they would be happy to work with us on it.

In a recent debate in the Seanad on Technological Universities, Minister Mitchell O'Connor stated that

“USI wishes to discuss with the Department the role, responsibilities and rights of students in the future of third level education in an holistic manner. Among the issues it raised were how we might together approach the role and responsibilities of student unions and how we might have an honest dialogue between relevant parties. A number of framework principles were cited, including autonomy, accountability, partnership, representation and sustainability. USI has proposed working together with all relevant parties to develop either a national student charter or a partnership document and the creation of working groups to progress dialogue in Ireland. I am of the view that a broader exploration of the key issues across the higher education sector and perhaps the further education and training sector would be a more progressive and productive approach to take. I have asked my officials to engage further with USI on its interesting and progressive proposals.”

In regards legislation, although we have a TD who is willing to table legislation for us, the Independent SU Committee has decided that it would be better to develop the framework before seeking legislation.

Student Accommodation

The Government's student accommodation strategy was finally launched in the Summer. It showed how bad the current situation is and that is likely to get worse in the short term with excess demand for purpose built student beds to rise from 23,000 to 26,000 between now and 2019.

Unfortunately the strategy did not give a huge amount of long-term solutions other than outlining accommodation being built and new planning applications for student accommodation. In the short-term, USI will continue to be funded to run our #HomesForStudy campaign aimed at getting homeowners to rent out spare beds in their houses.

As part of this arrangement we have completed our #HomesForStudy report and have presented to the Interdepartmental Group on student accommodation on which we sit.

Students for Choice

On September 30th USI hosted our largest ever Students For Choice March with over 1,000 in attendance. I spoke at this event and lead the march to the main event at the Garden Of Remembrance.

Since October, the VP E&C and I have attended High Level Group meetings on developing a civil society campaign to repeal the 8th amendment. This has mainly involved discussion on advocacy, messaging and training.

I have also concentrated on trying to ensure that the referendum takes place in May so that thousands of students who are encouraged to go on J1 Visas this Summer have the opportunity to vote. This has been done by contacting every member of the cabinet and significant promotion online and in the media.

Brexit

In October, the VP AA and I met with the Minister of State for European Affairs, Helen McEntee to outline our main concerns around Brexit, mainly the mobility of Students and Academics and the impact on postgraduates and research. We also discussed the possibility of hosting a “future of Europe” event.

At the February Trilateral Meeting in Belfast, we met with Dr Andrew McCormick, Director General of International Relations and former Permanent Secretary in the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. We discussed protecting the rights set out in the Belfast Agreement and raised possible issues around mobility, tuition fees, Erasmus+ and postgraduate funding. On tuition fees, it was stated that because of the Common Travel Area between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, students travelling across the border to study would not face any change in fees and would not be considered international students. In April, we will travel to Brussels to meet with the European Commission and Diane Dodds MEP (DUP)

Technological Universities Bill

USI has been in negotiations with the Department of Education and Skills for a number of years over the TU Bill. When the TU Bill reached the Dáil, we attempted to bring 3 amendments that were prioritised by the President's Working Group. These involved changing the definition of a Students' Union and increasing the number of student representatives on Governing Body and Academic Council.

I spent a considerable amount of time discussing these with politicians from each party but unfortunately, each of the amendments were defeated narrowly in the Dáil by 3, 1 and 5 votes. Along with a number of SUs and parliamentary assistants, we rewrote these amendments and submitted them through the Seanad where they received a similar result.

Policy Manual

In my work plan, I aimed for Officerboard to complete every mandate possibly and for this Manual to be made available online with updates of work ongoing and completed relevant to each mandate. As of the end of January, 40% of the manual is either implemented or complete with a further 31% on-going.

I have also created an excel sheet of every active USI Policy, its status of completion, lead contact and comments on the work done. This has been made available to all Sabbatical Officers and will be online before Congress.

Budget 2018

A lot of the work around the budget had been completed in June which seen Officerboard rewriting our pre-budget submission based on motion passed at congress and hosting the largest lobby of the Oireachtas in recent history attended by 107 TDs and Senators.

Although there were some positives for students in the budget, it did not go quite far enough. Increased financial supports for part-time and further education students, and an overall increase in funding for higher education were areas in which we called for in our pre-budget submission. This adds to a recommendation for additional funding for 3rd level counselling from the National Youth Mental Health Taskforce on which USI had a seat.

Media

A considerable amount of my time has been spent doing interviews with the media. USI's total media audience from July to the end of January, not including social media was over 130 million. The main areas to receive media attention have been student accommodation, student loans, mental health, sexual health, financial hardship, repeal the 8th, Budget 2018, direct provision, Voter Registration, grants and the lack of student teacher

Deputy President/Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Síona Cahill

It has been a rollercoaster two years in this position, and below is just a snapshot of the last few months. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to do it with you all.

In particular, my work has gone into preparation for the student campaign to repeal the eighth, the development of the first ever LGBTI+ youth strategy, the 21st Annual Pink Training, board work with ICOS, AHEAD and the IFPA, and representation on various Department of Education and HEA level committees examining access and student supports.



Students for Choice

The work for Students for Choice and its development across the country - whether that's through the creation of local taskforces/groups across local SUs, representation and attendance at events,

development of a national profile, increased media engagement or the passing of referenda of campus positions - has truly been a priority of my year. I completely redesigned the branding of the campaign, and I'm happy with the iconic purple and white result, which SUs and local student activist groups have adopted around Ireland.

The Students For Choice taskforce, which had its first meeting in August, has been a particularly important advisory group to my work, particularly in planning large scale actions. We have had an impressive turnout at all public engagements (including 1,000 at the ARC March for Choice in September and the guts of 500 at our International Women's Day), and I'm very proud of hard-working and committed officers around the country for investing in getting this on the agenda across campuses. In particular, credit due to TCDSU for facilitating our historic student gatherings in September and March.

I have represented USI on a national High Level Group with several other leading organisations, and the development of the Together For Yes campaign. I have assisted in significant regional coordination as well as advocacy work since last July. I spearheaded the development of a suite of training with Amnesty International along with our Regional Vice Presidents and the Vice President for Campaigns, and have facilitated numerous trainings, talks, seminars and panel discussions on the issue.

A key focus moving forward for USI will be the upcoming launch of our campaign at Congress 2018, as well as a massive voter registration campaign, to build on the #GetRegd campaign I created with the VP Campaigns at the beginning of the year which saw 18,000 students registered.

A key element of our success on this issue will be ensuring support not only across Students' Union teams but with student societies. In February, I organised the first ever student activist leaders think in, which brought together 60+ society and SU leaders to plan, to network and to skill-up.

One of our key strategic priorities has been to ensure an early May date for the referendum itself, and so far we're on course for this. Another priority for the year has been to ensure the inclusion of marginalised voices in particular from trans, disability and migrant and refugee communities.

A lot more work will go into the coming weeks, but I am confident that the student movement of 2018 will take the baton passed to us by previous generations of USI officers, and get it over the line on May 25th 2018.

The USI WomenLead Project

The re-branded 'WomenLead' project has grown exponentially this year and has genuinely gotten bigger and better. We had an incredible day of training in Accenture Dublin in August for elected female officers, and in January, our residential weekend, which we held in the Social Entrepreneurs Academy, Smithfield had over 50 participants. Early signs from local SU elections would indicate gains regarding the numbers of elected female officers, and certainly success stories from those who attended our training.

In December, myself and several members of Officerboard attend the USI Women's Network gathering of former elected women officers of USI and USI affiliate Students' Unions. It was quite something to sit in a room and speak with the women who had fought through the 1983 referendum, subsequent battles with SPUC through the courts, had championed contraceptive access in colleges, highlighted FGM, the wage gap, and in more recent years, the need for a much more sustainable women in leadership initiative within USI, which I have worked hard to develop.

In November, I was asked to present at NWCI's Femfest regarding inclusive feminist leadership, and I also addressed the NUS-USI Women's Conference as keynote in February 2018.

Early in 2018 I asked to address a special stakeholder meeting of the HEA taskforce examining Gender Equality at third level, where I highlighted issues around gender identity, and maternity leave for postgrad and doctoral students, among other issues.

LGBTI+

Prides: In an effort to attend every Pride in the country, I have travelled the length and breadth of Ireland for the last two summers, linking in with students, Students' Union officers, and LGBTI+ societies, organising registrations, materials, graphics, and other organisational pieces. We have had a massive presence across Ireland, with particular reference to the huge student bloc which

attended Belfast Pride on August 5th, which included officers from across the Republic as well as student society members. There were over 60 students in attendance with us, if not more. In Dublin Pride, we had the largest student bloc ever gathered as one, under the theme 'Pride as Protest', highlighting challenges LGBTI+ people still face, from the absence of civil marriage equality in Northern Ireland, access to PrEP, bi-erasure within the community, HIV-AIDS, and lack of resourcing for LGBTI+ people in rural areas.

Training: In August, I developed a session with TENI to deliver to officers around Trans and LGBT inclusivity and awareness, which I absolutely believe should continue into next year.

LGBTI+ Youth Strategy: Significant hours have gone into the process of developing this strategy, from running regional consultations for hundreds of young people to negotiations with Government Departments. It is due to be launched in June 2018.

GALAS: In October 2017 I was longlisted for two categories in the GALAS, which are the NXF National LGBTI+ awards, held every year in aid of GCN (Gay Community News), I was nominated for Ally of the Year and with USI, Student Leader of the Year. I was later shortlisted for the LGBT+ Student award, which also includes organisations and societies working with students. It was an honour even to be nominated, and obviously incredible to win, but I would like to in particular note that the work of societies across the country.

Trans Healthcare: In early 2018 I co-wrote the USI submission to the Gender Recognition Act review committee with the VP for Welfare & Equality of IADTSU, Andrew Martin. It was indicated by the chair of the committee that ours was one of the most impactful and well-considered submissions received to the group. I have also spoken and supported all calls by student groups regarding immediate improvement to healthcare for trans people in Ireland as a matter of urgency.

World AIDS day: I organised the Pink Training Dublin After Party as a World AIDS day fundraiser, and I was also asked to address an 'Intergenerational Dialogues' event in Maynooth University to give perspectives on the USI campaign for accessible PrEP in Ireland and our work around HIV awareness.

Pink Training

With over 40+ speakers and 300 student participants over a residential weekend, it is by far my biggest undertaking as an officer, but an absolute honour to organise. This year, I further expanded the offering of modules, in particular with regard to trans and non-binary issues, and also expanded the number of Free Rapid HIV testing offered. Massive, massive thanks to NUIGSU and in particular the Vice President for Welfare, Megan Reilly, for their incredible work as partners and organisers.

Mature Students Seminar

An important aspect of the Equality brief is Mature Student engagement and it was a pleasure to work on the Mature Students' Seminar project for the second time. We had approximately 25 students attend a day's training and networking in DIT Grangegorman in October 2017, focusing on issues relating to college exit strategies, study skills and financial supports.

Direct Provision

On the eve of Christmas Eve, I organised a joint action with MASI (Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland) and ENAR (European Network against Racism) Ireland outside Avoca Stores near Dublin's Grafton street to highlight their connection to Direct Provision sites in Ireland through their new owner, Aramark. The 'Avoca Jam' action was one not only of public awareness (we circulated information sheets to the public) but also to create internal pressure on Avoca and Aramark management to improve the quality of food provided on their sites.

International Students

I was appointed early in 2017 by the Minister for Education to the High Level Group on International Education, and have attended meetings and liaised with the group since. A primary focus of my work with the committee has been to highlight issues around visas, healthcare insurance, and accommodation (prices, accessibility) for International students to Ireland. It has been particularly useful to partner with ICOS around this and has meant we've been a louder student voice at the table. The HLG itself is particularly weighted towards student as consumer, and we have fought hard to change the narrative in this space over the year.

Climate Change

In August 2018, I developed and submitted the USI proposals and comments for the Citizens Assembly discussing the impacts of Climate Change in Ireland. I also engaged with student groups around the country working on this issue to ensure USI is part of a wider student activist network around climate change into the coming years. I have since worked with the USI Saves2 co-ordinator in the development of this aspect of the brief.

Access

I sit on the steering committees for the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), the Review committee for the Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD) and the Steering committee for the National Access Plan (NAP). I successfully lobbied for the inclusion of part-time students in accessing SAF, however the roll-out from the HEA was less than ideal, as it wasn't communicated effectively to access officers. This has now been remedied for the next intake. I have regularly contributed to reviews, and submissions regarding access, in particularly for target groups of the NAP.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Oisín Hassan

This Report follows my Workplan which can be found at usi.ie/national-council/ in the documents folder for National Council August 2017 QUBSU.



Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The National Student Engagement Programme has expanded rapidly to 23 institutions and Students' Union. This work has been driven by the Programme Coordinator, Cat O'Driscoll, and I have worked to ensure USI is proactively supporting the Programme, including Chairing the National Student Engagement Network, supporting the 5 Project Teams, and launching an SU specific training.

I've also written a proposal for new governance for NStEP and increased resource, including the recruitment of 2 additional staff. I hope to have the proposal finalised by the end of my term.

I have been advocating for Statutory Guidelines on Student Engagement to complement the Core QA Guidelines published by Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). I am hopeful this project will begin after the QQI has finalised its Strategic Plan.

Another initiative has been working toward a National Student Charter or Partnership Agreement. I wrote a proposal on the need to develop a National Framework for Supporting Students' Unions, and this was submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. The Minister for HE confirmed in both the Dáil and the Seanad that the Department accepted the proposal.

Other projects include exploring accreditation for Class Reps and for participation (e.g. volunteering), writing a piece on behalf of USI for the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) National Report on student review of data, and planning a conference on student engagement.

Education Campaign

Alongside the VP Campaigns, I repackaged the previous 'Exam Success' campaign under the banner of 'Education Is'. In October we launched an Education Is...Access Facebook Live panel which was viewed 3.7k times.

We launched new material, including Study Planners and Procrastination Busters. We held Roadshows in DITSU and GMITSU. Ideally, we had planned to include more around failure issues but this was not feasible. We are exploring sponsorship.

Access and Retention

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFETL) went through a period of instability after a poor decision by the HEA to delay funding. This has delayed a new Workplan, but I am confident that planning on a new enhancement theme on retention will begin soon.

I submitted a consultation response and presented to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills on 'Continuous Assessment in State Examinations'. Drawing on work on transitions and retention by USI and the NFETL, I argued students needed a more participative Leaving Cert if they were to more successfully transition to third-level. I hope now to work with others on this, including the National Parents Council.

Comparative Research and Best Practice

I initially set up Sub Groups of Academic Affairs Working Group, based around the topics that the Student Officers found most relevant to them. The Student Complaints Sub Group planned resource development which I then discussed with the Ombudsman's Office. These resources will be developed for incoming Sabbats.

Another area of work has been examining practices across in academic regulations. I hope to have a document on this compiled by the end of my term. For issues of work-based learning, I have begun with the Association of Higher Education Careers Services (AHECS) to compile data on placements.

NUS-USI

As the first Southern-based OB member from a Northern MO in over a decade, I was determined this year to build greater links to Northern members. USI and NStEP presented at a Department for the Economy-led event on developing student partnership in the North. NStEP has been in discussion in both HE and FE MOs, and I hope that we can roll the Programme across the border soon.

I attended NUS-USI's #Festival alongside the USI President. We facilitated training and informed members about our work. I also used the opportunity to help inform my project on Further Education and Training in the South.

Brexit was an important area for collaboration between NUS-USI and USI. I was added as an Advisor to the NUS UK Brexit Project Team, and have been in regular contact with NUS to inform their work. In April 2018, we will travel to Brussels with NUS-USI and NUS UK to meet with the European Commission and Diane Dodds MEP (DUP). With advice from the NUS-USI President, I presented on issues affecting students at a SIPTU-IMPACT Symposium. Myself and the USI President liaised closely with the Minister for European Affairs on a possible 'Future of Europe' event, although this did not come to fruition.

Postgraduate Affairs

Representing postgraduate students was a top priority this year. I organised training at SUT for Sabbs to be able to support postgrads.

I set up a Postgraduate Representation Network, made up of Reps nominated by MOs. This Group helps to shape and inform the issues that needed more development within USI. I also Chaired a Postgraduate Affairs Working Group held at every second National Council.

The 'Postgraduate Voice: A USI Symposium' event was held in February. The first conference of its kind in recent memory, designed to create national conversation among postgrads, SUs, and academic leadership. The Symposium was held in the Royal Irish Academy, with thanks to the NFETL for partnering with us. An artist animated discussions and delegates were invited to add their thoughts to three core themes. These pieces of artwork then informed the Postgraduate Students Strategy up for approval by Congress.

USI has applied to join Eurodoc (European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers). Membership will increase USI's standing on research issues, especially as I am now taking up a seat on the National Advisory Forum for Doctoral Education.

International Students

The International Education Strategy is very much focused on marketing Ireland as an international destination, rather than on students themselves. I proposed to the HEA an initiative on international

student welcome, but this hasn't progressed. I have also liaised with the QQI on student voice in the International Education Mark.

The USI President and myself raised the lack of fee regulation with Senior Advisors in DES, and we will need to redouble efforts in this area now that it is on their radar. The voice of international students was integral to the work on the Postgraduate Representation Network and the Symposium.

International Representation

The VP Academic Affairs is responsible for International Affairs, and I attend the European Students' Union (ESU) events throughout the year - usually four. USI brings National Council delegates to events, so this year I introduced a strengthened application process with an external panel. The VP Southern was also appointed to assist me, ensuring we were able to engage in more initiatives. USI has held sessions on SU autonomy, international students, and participated in work on the new European Education Area, mental health, and queer feminism.

Myself and the VP Equality also delivered training sessions to the Estonian National Union in July, focusing on LGBT+ students and National Access Plans.

USI also collaborates in the NARC ('Non-Aligned Random Countries') network. We come together at ESU events to examine reform of ESU and policy issues. I am currently working with LSVb (the Netherlands) to create an online platform for NARC.

The European Higher Education Area Ministerial Conference on the Bologna Process will be held in May. ESU publishes a 'Bologna with Student Eyes' document in advance, and USI has contributed. I have been lobbying for USI to be a part of the Irish delegation organised by DES.

Further Education

I have begun to build links across Further Education and Training, including with the ETBI, AONTAS, and SOLAS. I am working on a proposal for a funded programme, but this will continue to take time to negotiate. Meanwhile, I have worked with NUS-USI to develop template Constitutions and resources for building our FE membership. I have worked with the Regional VPs to support them to work with potential MOs in their Regions.

Other Representation

I represent USI on the QQI Board, the NFETL Board, ISSE Plenary Group, ISSE Editorial Group, two Sub Groups of the International Education Strategy, QQI Approvals and Review, the HEA-QQI Memorandum of Understanding Forum, and I also liaise with various external organisations.

Other projects this year have included the Judging and Awards Review for SAAI 2018, Top-Up Training, General Data Protection Regulations advice for MOs, and the joint USI-QQI Quality Assurance Reviewers Pool.

Vice President for Welfare

Niamh Murtagh

It has been an incredible year so far, working on a wide variety of projects with a numerous amount of organisations. We have re-developed many of our initiatives and created new partnerships that hopefully will remain in place for years to come.

These are just a few of the key highlights from the year so far.

Student Union Training

As a member of officerboard 2016/17 I assisted in the organisation of SUT training which took place in July of last year. Some of the tasks undertaken was confirming speakers for the various modules organised for welfare officers, as well as assisting members of officerboard with preparation and



implementation of the week long training event.

Training

Throughout the year I coordinated many training events for officers and students.

Over the last 9 months we have trained approximately 60 in Safetalk 40 in ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Training), and 80 in Mental Health First Aid.

Students and officers trained in these programmes are better able to respond to students who may be going through a difficult time. I also coordinated top up training with the VP for Academic Affairs to train officers on how to deal with casework, bereavement and create policy within their own unions.

Every welfare officer also received a Welfare Campaign Directory with help, guidance and information on how to run campaigns on their own campuses.

Mental Health

Student Support Cards

This year I have been able to work on many projects relating to mental health. In December launched 20,000 student support cards, encouraging students to seek help when needed. The card highlights helpline supports including Aware, Pieta House, Walk in my Shoes, Samaritans and the LGBT Helpline. The card also highlights the Jigsaw, ReachOut.com, Please Talk and yourmentalhealth.ie services for the republic of Ireland.

For the first time I ensured there was a NI specific cards to cater for students no matter where they are which included helpline supports from Cruse Bereavement Care, Inspire Counselling Service, LGBT Switchboard NI, Samaritans and Lifeline.

National Mental Health Survey

In order to respond effectively with evidence-based interventions we must first have a clear understanding of mental health and wellbeing among our students. To meet this need we collated an extensive ethically approved national survey on mental health in 3rd level. The survey looks mental health on third level campuses across Ireland to examine services, help seeking behaviours and student mental health.

This research will allow us to ensure our campaigns are targeted and evidence based, and give much more weight to our lobbying efforts for mental health supports on 3rd level campuses. The Survey was released on January 29th and will remain open until mid April.

National Mental Health Roadshow

Chats for Change is USI's national campaign to get students talking about mental health. It encourages students to have that chat to make change. We ran a national roadshow in partnership with Please Talk and St.Patrick's Mental Health Services which visited UCC, NUI Galway, Athlone IT and IADT.

20,000 branded reusable cups were distributed II across Ireland as well as 20,000 more student support cards with information of national helplines should any student need to talk to someone.

I also attended the national Education Roadshows in December & January where we also disseminated 100's of student support cards and mental health information alongside the educational materials.

Peer Education Mental Health Workshop

At the moment we are piloting a peer education programme in partnership with Jigsaw – The National Centre for Youth Mental Health. It involves implementing a peer education model across third level colleges (starting with DIT and ITB). The Proposed learning outcomes for participants of this mental health workshop are (1) Gain an understanding of mental health (2) Become aware of mental health as a resource for living (3) Learn a range of practical strategies that they can implement to improve and manage their own mental health on a day to day basis (4) Learn how and where to get help (5) Become aware of the supports available in their college and local area (5 A

Day).

Mental Health App

Funding was applied for and granted from ESB Energy for Generations Fund for the creation of an app. The project will create a student mental health crisis support and educational app as part of the Student Mental Health Project. The app will have three main functions: Emergency button allowing students helping students or the user themselves to get advice and quickly access emergency contacts like the Gardaí or local helplines, Education/literacy on mental health and suicide and Services on-campus and off-campus.

Cyberbullying

I have created a Cyberbullying policy that aims to lobby effectively for the implementation of legislation to support those who have suffered from Cyber bullying, and those who may have been victims of revenge porn. This policy will also ensure that we have a campaign in relation to cyberbullying and the devastating effects that it has on so many people.

ESU (European Students' Union)

During the year I was appointed to the European Mental Health Taskforce within the European Students' Union. From this we have been researching best practice in relation to Mental Health across European campuses. From this we hope to identify best practice on a European level and uncover initiatives that we may not have even known existed.

Sexual Health

Campaigns

In early October we ran the first Sexual Health Campaign online which included a different theme every day, from STI's, Contraception, Consent and Crisis pregnancy.

The Sexual Health packs that were to be disseminated were totally redesigned and repackaged with the information on STI's Contraception, how to use a condom/make a dental dam and consent on cards within the packs.

I secured 35,000 condoms and lube sachets in the 1st semester, 20,000 of each for the national Sexual Health campaign and another 40,000 to be distributed before the end of the academic year.

The national roadshow took place in February visiting IT Carlow, Waterford IT, Maynooth University and Queen's University Belfast with 20,000 sexual health packs. We collaborated with the Johnny's got you covered team who distributed 5000 condoms that week and also visiting DIT Bolton Street. I have also secured €15,000 in funding for future sexual health campaigns.

Consent

Myself and the VP for Equality & Citizenship provided training in August for SU officers from the Rape Crisis Centre on Disclosure and how to help in the aftermath of rape and sexual assault.

Consent was a core part of everything we did this year in relation to sexual health. Consent cards were produced to be included in the sexual health packs, as well as making it a core aspect of our roadshow.

I have brought together experts in the field of consent which have formed an expert group. We are currently working on a consent workshop that will be rolled out nationally in the coming months.

A consent campaign is also being planned and will roll out in April of this year. It has been devised by students from LSAD which I have backed and will support to roll out nationally.

Representation

I have been working closely with the HSE within the Sexual Health Communications Working Group and the Sexual Health Crisis Pregnancy Programme Working group. These groups have ensured work

in relation to Prep, PEP, Information at peak times such as Pride Festivals, World Contraception Day, World Aids Day and work in relation to abortion aftercare information is curated and circulated.

SUSI

Training Modules

Myself and the VP for Academic Affairs worked together to roll out a SUSI training module for officers dealing directly with SUSI cases. It consisted of 8 modules that dealt with every area of SUSI so officers could feel prepared and confident when dealing with student issues.

Data Protections

The implementation of new general data protection rules (GDPR) has meant that myself and the VP for Academic Affairs have worked closely with SUSI to resolve any issues arising from this and how to tackle upcoming problems that may appear.

IGPS

Over the past number of months I have been overseeing the plans for the implementation of a new Integrated Grants Processing System for applicants of SUSI grants.

The new processing system will streamline the process, be data protection compliant, and will phase in MyGov certification which will be compulsory from 2019/2020.

Accommodation

Homes for Study Campaign and Report

In July we launched the “Homes for Study” campaign which encouraged homeowners to rent their spare rooms to students during the college term as they can avail of €14,000 tax-free a year from a rent-a-room relief scheme. With the shortage of bed spaces still a huge issue the homes for study hopes to alleviate some of the pressure on students looking for somewhere to stay while in college.

A Homes for Study report was also drafted and completed outlining how many students we housed, how many people advertised on our homes website and information from accommodation offices across the country. The Homes campaign has been successful and advertised around 2,500 rooms. However, this research continues in our lobbying efforts in advocating for student accommodation for students.

Accommodation & finance Guide

In August we released a Finance & Accommodation Guide which included lots of tips and do's and don'ts in relation to renting and tenancy agreements. It also included money management and budgeting information for students. We distributed 45,000 copies of the guides to Students' Unions and Accommodation offices.

Health & Wellbeing

Wellbeing Month

For the first time we did Wellbeing Month just after the winter exam period. I felt it was a crucial part in the year to roll out information to students as most of the information they get is in the first semester and quite often have suffered a stressful time during the winter months.

We had a month long overarching wellbeing campaign which included Mental Health Week, Healthy Living Week, Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance Week and Alcohol and Drugs Awareness Week, which composed of two online information campaigns and two national roadshows.

Video Doc Collaboration

I worked very closely this year with Video Doc which is an online GP service. Since then we have formed a partnership which has given free unlimited access to all USI affiliated students to the online doctor service. This is the first collaboration of its kind and has allowed students across the island of Ireland access to free healthcare, from wherever they are.

Health Promotion Strategy

The Health Promotion Strategy, which will steer the work of the VP Welfare, included various aspects of the role and how to go about building on the work in areas such as mental health, sexual health, physical health, smoking cessation, gambling and alcohol and drugs. The 100 pages document outlines how we can move forward in these areas and progress campaigns, lobbying and supporting students' unions.

Conclusion

This is just a snapshot of the work undertaken this year in my role as the Vice President for Welfare. There is still so much work to be done in the coming months, and I am so grateful that I get to work on behalf of students across Ireland and their Welfare every day.

Thank you so much to the Students' Union Officers who have worked with me, the teams who have worked alongside me and continue to do so everyday. It is an honour and a privilege and I cannot thank you enough for entrusting me to work on your behalf.

Vice President for Campaigns

Amy Kelly



Education Is... In the Red

The USI Campaigns subcommittee created the campaign from messaging to how to promote the campaign and build support. The campaign was launched outside the Dáil with USI, ISSU, TUI, students, children, and parents on September 25th. The launch announced the date and purpose of the national demonstration and our intentions for this campaign. This garnered significant media attention.

I created a resource folder with different resources for SU's to use in the lead up to the march and throughout the campaign. These include: sample letter for management, 30 second pitch, checklist, tactics, graphics and social media, do' & don't sheet, sample ticket, material packs, leaflet on facts of PFE & ICL.

On the 7th of September, USI along with members from MSU, TCDSU, NCADSU held a protest at a policy forum that was happening in the Royal Irish Academy.

I worked with the General Manager in updating the Talk to you TD website, this website was used to get students to send an email to their local TD. The website will also feature an interactive game regarding loans.

All members of USI Officer board supported Students' Unions through giving presentations, promoting the campaign on campus and via e-mail and on the phone when possible. I also presented at each of the regional Part-time officer training events about how part-time officers play a huge roll in the run up to the demo day and how they can assist SU's.

An estimated 15,000 - 20,000 people took the streets on October 4th. We had originally planned for 5,000 and tripled our attendance. The march began at 13:00 and reached Merrion Square South at 13.50. At the stage, we had Annette Quigney (Parent) , Gina O'Brien (Chair of the IMPACT Education Executive Committee), Jane M Hayes Nally (ISSU Rep/ Second Level Student) and Dr Martin Marjoram (Lecturer) as well as USI President speaking at the event.

Coalition for Publicly Funded Education

USI held coalition meetings throughout the year with TUI, SIPTU, IMPACT, IFUT and new members ISSU. We mapped out the direction of the coalition for the coming year. The members were each represented and spoke at the march in October. The main body of work of the coalition this year, has been through lobbying efforts, updating the current position paper with new information, creating a public survey on student loans, connecting with new partners and supporters, and the redesigning the coalition logo.

Voter Registration

I also assisted the VP for the Dublin region on the Voter Reg campaign. I created social media materials to be shared by partnering organisations and all involved on the National voter #GetREG*D day. We successfully registered 18,000 students to vote, this give students a strong voice nationally.

Union Development

Comparative Research Manual

With Union Development under my brief, this year is the first time we are mandated to hold a union development working group at National Council. Myself and the VP for the Southern Region worked together to create survey for all SU officers to complete in relation to their unions.

This in compliance with phase one of the Union Development strategy and it ready to move on to phase two.

I am working with the USI President to conduct an external review on USI in the new year as part of phase one also.

Top-up Training

Myself, the VP for Academic Affairs and the VP for Welfare worked together to plan Top-up training, which took place in Trinity College Dublin in August.

I have planned sessions that would best accommodate and upskill the following officers: Presidents, Entertainment officers, Clubs & Socs officers, campus officers, student engagement officers, Comms officers.

These sessions included, Student engagement and running non-Alcoholic events, Team management, and Utilization of on Campus Revenue

Election Training

I along with the USI regional officers created "Election training" which included modules such as: Introduction to being a SU officer, Campaigning 101, Elections & Social Media, Writing a speech & public speaking, Managing a team, Officer Q & A session. This training was rolled out on a regional basis with great attendance.

Students for Choice

Students for Choice Taskforce

I attended the first students for choice taskforce of the year on the 2nd of August. This was a great space to discuss the future of the campaign to start strategic plan for the year. After the march in September, myself and the VP for Equality and Citizenship focused mainly on the voter registration campaign and ensuring all students are registered to vote.

I have been working with the VP for Equality and Citizenship regarding our plans for 2018 for students for choice. We have held meetings to find out the areas in which we need to focus on in the coming months including SU materials, supporting packs, and training.

I worked with the VP for Equality and Citizenship to deliver several trainings and events throughout the year, including Conversations for Choice, the National Students for Choice Think-in and Amnesty

Collaboration Training.

Myself, the VP for Equality and Citizenship, VP for Dublin, South and BMW regions all met with members from Amnesty international Ireland to discuss a pilot training that was rolled out in 4 colleges in Semester 1, and to discuss how the training will improve for semester two. It was agreed that we will be collaborating to roll out regional canvassing training, this training will be piloted at the national Student Think-in on February 9th. This training was very well received and is currently being rolled out on campuses ahead of the referendum.

Regional Repeal Group

I was selected by the VP for Equality and Citizenship, to attend the National Regional Repeal group which oversees how all organisations around the country are campaigning for repeal can link up together. This created a space for students to link in with local groups and societies and activists to get the wider community involved in events.

Student Teacher Placement Campaign

On the 14th of September, we officially launched the Student Teacher Placement Campaign Survey in a primary classroom, in Terenure. We are delighted partnering with ICTU, TUI, ASTI and the INTO on this campaign.

The survey generated over 3,000 responses with the launch happening on the 29th of March. This report assessed costs and spending for student teachers on placement and assessing how much financial support would be needed while on placement. The report will provide the foundation of our lobbying and campaigning efforts in the coming months.

Welfare and Education Campaigns

I worked with the VP for Welfare on welfare campaigns throughout the year such as Personal Safety, Healthy Living week and online SHAG, Chats for Change, SHAG roadshow

I also worked closely with the VP for AA on a new Education campaign. We Facebook streamed talk targeted to students who are thinking of dropping out and reminding them of the deadline for SUSI. We also created a roadshow that went to GMIT and DIT.

USI Affiliation Referendums

This year there was three USI affiliation referendums, I was tasked with designing all materials (t-shirts, flyers and posters), budgeting and ordering for the NCI and ITTB. The results from each referendum where NCI, 97.2%, UCC, 86%,and ITTB, 97.8% to remain members of USI.

Housing and Homelessness Coalition

USI are members of the coalition for homeless and housing. As part of the coalition I sit on three subcommittees, the social media, the media and executive committee. With these committees, I am tasked with the planning all events that took place this year and the national day of action in April.

We held an Alternative People's Housing Summit on the 12th of December. This was an event for of the supporting organisation coming together to launch to the public the ICTU Housing document. After the morning event, there was also a demonstration outside the Dáil.

In January, there was a full day of planning event, to plan a national mobilisation protest on April 7th.

The planning day in February discussing the national housing crisis and created a regional strategy to mobilise the public for the 7th of April. There was great representation from SU's officers and students on the day.

My work since that day has been focused on mobilising students to attend April 7th and planning the logistics of the day.

Student Achievement Awards Ireland

Myself and the Vice President for Academic Affairs have been tasked with the organizing and

planning of the Student Achievement Awards Ireland. The awards ceremony will take place on April 7th, in the Radisson Blu Hotel, Dublin.

This year the evening will feature a 2-course meal for attendees and entertainment for after the awards are over. Myself and the VP for AA have also revised the awards for this year in which the shortlist will be announced in early April.

Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Laoighseach Ní Choistealbha

Léirmheas ar an Bhliain

Bliain fhoghlama a bhí ann dom, agus níl deireadh leis an mhéid rudaí nua atá feicthe, cloiste, agus foghlamtha agam ó thús na téarma in 2017. Ó mháistreacht a chríochnú i mí Lúghnasa go dtí cothromas ar leith a fháil idir dhá phost (atá go hiomlán éagsúil óna chéile!) ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil leo siúd a chuidigh liom ar an bhealach - go háirithe mo chomhleacaithe ar bhord na n-oifigeach. Ar an drochuair, toisc go raibh dualgaisí eile agam ag tús na bliana, ní raibh mé in ann obair mar oifigeach lán-aimseartha. Mar sin, chaith mé mo théarma ag obair go páirtaimseartha agus bheinn buíoch dá measfaí m'obair faoin choinníoll sin.



Overview of the Year

It was definitely a year for learning things, and there's no end to the amount of new stuff that I've seen, heard, and learned from the beginning of term in 2017. From finishing my MA in August to finding some kind of balance between two very different jobs, I would like to thank those that helped me along the way - especially my colleagues on officer board. Unfortunately, since I had other duties at the beginning of the year, I was unable to do the work of a full-time officer and thus I spent my term working part-time; I would be grateful if my work was evaluated in the context of that reality.

Obair le Conradh na Gaeilge

Ba phléisiúr iontach é obair leanúnach a dhéanamh le Conradh na Gaeilge i mbliana. D'oibrigh mé leo i dTraenáil na gCumann, nuair a chuirtear ceardlanna éagsúla ar fáil do mhic léinn ó cheann ceann na tíre ionas go mbeidh siad in ann an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn ar bhealach éifeachtach. D'fhreastail mé ar Ard-Fheis an Chonartha freisin, agus bhí deis agam páirt a ghlacadh sa díospóireacht mar Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge in AMLÉ. Is minic a d'oibrigh mé, go speisialta, le hAlswyn Ní Aonghusa Ní Dhúill, an Comhordaitheoir Tríú Leibhéal sa Chonradh. Thug sí cabhair leanúnach don maidir leis an Suirbhé Oideachais agus leis an Choiste Cultúrtha, agus is mór an meas atá agam uirthi agus ar an obair a dhéanann sí ar son na gCumann Gaelach ar fad. Is ceart dom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le Julian de Spáinn agus Aodhán Ó Deá freisin, a thug cabhair agus comhairle dom le linn na bliana. Tá mé ag súil go mór le BEO - Gaelach agus Bródúil a bheas ar siúl ar an 14ú Aibreáin, agus atá á eagrú ag an Chonradh. Beidh mé féin i láthair ann agus tá súil agam go mbeidh mé páirteach i dtuilleadh tionscadal leis an Chonradh sa toadhcháif.

Working with Conradh na Gaeilge

It was a great pleasure to work continually with Conradh na Gaeilge this year. I worked with them for Traenáil na gCumann, when various workshops are provided to students from all around the country so that they can more effectively promote the Irish language on their campus. I attended the Conradh na Gaeilge Ard-Fheis also, and I had the opportunity to take part in the debate as the LU don Ghaeilge in USI. I often worked with Alswyn Ní Aonghusa Ní Dhúill especially, the Third-Level Coordinator for an Conradh. She frequently worked with me on projects such as the Education Survey and the Coiste Cultúrtha, and for her continual help I respect her and her work on behalf of the Cumainn Ghaelaigh greatly. I should also thank Julian de Spáinn and Aodhán Ó Deá, who helped me greatly during the year and advised me many times. I am very much looking forward to BEO-Gaelach agus Bródúil which will be happening on the 14th of April, and is being organised by an Conradh. I will be there myself, and I hope to work with an Conradh more in the future.

Grúpa Oibre/An Coiste Cultúrtha

Chinntigh mé i mbliana gur cuireadh Grúpa Oibre na Gaeilge ar siúl ag achan Comhairle Náisiúnta i mbliana. Bhí mé diongbháilte go mbeidh sé eagraithe achan am ionas go mbeidh an LU don Ghaeilge in ann tarraingt ar thuairimí agus smaointí chun feabhas a chur ar a p(h)leananna féin. Shonraigh mé, áfach, go raibh gá le fo-choiste eile taobh amuigh den Chomhairle a bheadh in ann cuidiú liom. Thuig mé go raibh dualgaisí eile ag Uachtaráin, mar shampla, a chinntigh nach mbeidh siad in ann freastal ar an ghrúpa oibre go minic. Mar sin, shocraigh mé ar an Choiste Cultúrtha a athbhunú. Roghadh an Coiste ag an Chomhairle Náisiúnta, agus go dtí seo bhí dhá chruinniú luachmhar againn a chuidigh go mór liom rúin a scríobh agus mo phleananna a chur i bhfeidhm i gceart. Tá mé cinnte go leanfaidh an Coiste ar aghaidh sa chéad bhliain eile agus tá súil agam go mbeidh sé níos mó agus níos fearr sa todhcháí.

Working Group/An Coiste Cultúrtha

This year, I ensured that the Irish Language Working Group took place at every National Council. I was determined that it should be organised every time so that the LU don Ghaeilge would be able to draw on thoughts and opinions in order to improve on their plans. I noted, however, that there was a need for a sub-committee type of grouping outside of National Council that would be able to assist me. I understood that Presidents, etc., had other responsibilities at National Council and would therefore not be able to attend the working group too often. As a result, I decided to re-establish An Coiste Cultúrtha. The Coiste was chosen at National Council, and up until now we have had two valuable meetings that have helped me greatly with writing motions and implementing plans properly. I am sure that the Coiste will continue next year and I hope that it will be bigger and better in the future.

An Foclóir Aiteach

I mbliana, bhí deis agam comhoibriú le TENI agus BelongTo chun an 'Foclóir Aiteach' a chur le chéile. Díríonn an tionscanamh seo ar an phobal LADTA+ agus a n-ionadaíocht i dteanga na Gaeilge. Shocraigh mé go raibh tábhacht ag baint leis an tionscanamh seo toisc go mbaineann an oiread sin tábhacht leis an Ghaeilge i gcúrsaí dlí agus stáit, agus is ceart go mbeidh deis ag achan duine iad féin a aithint agus cur síos a dhéanamh orthu féin i dteanga ar bith. Ag am scríbhneoireachta, níl an foclóir seolta go hoifigiúil, ach beidh an seoladh oifigiúil ar siúl ar an 21ú Márta, ar champas DCU. Tá súil agam go gcuideoidh an tionscanamh seo maidir le tuilleadh nasc a chruthú idir an pobal Gaelach agus an pobal LADTA+. Is le hachan duine an Ghaeilge, agus ba mhór an deis é dom réimse agus úsáid na teanga a fheabhsú dúinn uile agus don phobal LADTA+ ach go háirithe.

The Queer Dictionary

This year, I had the opportunity of working with the Transgender Equality Network of Ireland (TENI) and BelongTo in order to put together 'The Queer Dictionary'. This project focuses on the LGBTI+ community and their representation in the Irish Language. I decided that there was special importance to this project as so much weight is attributed to the Irish Language in legal and state matters, and because everyone should have the opportunity to recognise themselves and describe themselves within any languages. At time of writing, the Dictionary has not been officially launched, but the official launch event will take place on the 21st of March on DCU campus. I hope that this project will help create more links between the Irish Language community and the LGBTI+ community. Irish belongs to everyone, and It was a great opportunity for me to help improve the range and usage of the language for us all, and especially for the LGBTI+ community.

Ár dTeangacha - Comhdháil

Tá neart pleanáil curtha isteach don Chomhdháil seo, a bheas ar siúl ar an 11ú Aibreán 2018 i mBéal Feirste. Beidh an Comhdháil seo dírithe ar na teangacha éagsúla atá againn ar an oileán seo - An Ghaeilge, an Teanga Comharthaíochta - agus teangacha ónár gcomharsan, An Bhreatnais. Beidh deis ag mic léinn agus oifigigh níos mó a fhoghlaim faoi theangacha éagsúla an oileáin, faoi Achtanna Teanga, go háirithe an Acht ó thuaidh, agus conas mar is féidir linn tacú leo siúd atá ag streachailt chun cearta teanga a bhaint amach.

Our Languages - Conference

Much planning has gone into the 'Our Languages' Conference, which will take place on the 11th of April 2018 in Belfast. This conference will be directed on the different languages of this island - Irish,

Irish Sign Language, etc - and upon other languages from our neighbours, like Welsh. Students and officers will have the chance to learn more about different languages of this island, about Language Acts, especially the Act in the North, and how we can better support those who are struggling to win language rights.

Vice President for the Southern Region

Michelle Byrne

Member Organisation (MO) Engagement

I spent a great deal of time with my region this year travelling very regularly for planning, support and advice, assisting in local campaigns, attending class rep trainings, attending class rep councils and even chairing class rep councils. I visited satellite campuses too.

I engaged with Clubs and Societies days. I developed links with local media, participated in many interviews and submitted articles to local news outlets in order to connect with the wider student community in the South. I also populated a South campaigns hub including creating a past campaigns hub for idea generation.

I organised Southern Region bonding in where we went paintballing, went for dinner and stayed in a scout camp house with an amazing fire pit.



#EducationIs National Campaign

Demonstration

On the lead up to the demonstration for the future funding of higher education, I focussed on promoting the event and supporting MOs to mobilize students in the Southern Region. Working with Officerboard, I assisted in on the running of the demonstration on the day. Fantastic numbers of students travelled from the Southern Region and I was incredibly proud to see the hard work by all pay off and have the region and the student movement so well represented.

Lobbying TDs

I attended the USI lobby day in Buswells Hotel in Dublin in July. In one day we lobbied over 100 TDs. I was happy to engage with Waterford TDs and senators, TDs from the Southern area and party leaders. Separately, I was involved with a lobby of Fine Gael TDs and Labour TDs with members of Officerboard.

County Councils

I contacted every County and City Council in the South in order to get to present to them on the topic of Publicly Funded Education. I spent months following up on this, lobbying Councillors, presenting and answering questions. This is reflected as many of the Councils in the South have passed motions of support. The response from these presentations is hopeful for the rest of the campaign to come.

Other National Campaigns

Voter Registration

With a focus at the beginning of the academic semester to capture incoming students, I coordinated some of the #GetRegd voter registration drives in the South and actively supported MOs run their own and continue to do so.

Welfare Campaigns

Rolling out campaigns with the VP for Welfare, I was involved with the SHAG week on campus campaign in WIT and ITC and the Mental Health launch in UCC. As well as this, I supported SUs to run their own Chats For Change on their campus such as LIT Moylish, LIT LSAD and IT Tralee.

Students For Choice

I have been involved with a large body of work around planning for the upcoming referendum on the 8th amendment. I have worked on setting up taskforces on campuses, attended training events, joined the South-East Coalition meeting, worked with Amnesty to build our own training and attended a couple of repeal planning days. I have also attended the March for Choice, International Women's Day march, the Strike for Repeal assembly and other marches regionally.

Student Switch Off

With the launch of our first environmental sustainability campaign this year, I engaged with the South partner, UCC, and the SAVES2 coordinator on this. I am happy with how this has gone so far and look forward to working on developing this campaign more.

Policy work

Entertainments and Marketing (E&M) policy

I had the privilege to work on these policies which included chairing the E&M Working Group at National Councils. I created content and resources for the Working Group and facilitated discussions. I feel that the E&M working group reform paper has positively impacted the working group. I also included pieces of work around commercial activity which was well received.

Organ donation

I submitted to the Human Tissues Bill outlining that USI support the implementation of an "opt out scheme" for organ donation.

Working with the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), I facilitated over 20,000 Organ Donor Cards to go out during Freshers Weeks.

Publications

I assisted in the creation of the Upskill Directory and Comparative Research survey. I created the 2018 Grant Reform document and have been working on the Environmental Strategy for USI.

International Affairs Support

I was selected to be one of 5 members of the European Students' Union taskforce for 'Women's Participation in the Movement'. As part of my workload, I took lead on our first task of reviewing ESU's Gender Mainstreaming policy as well as a review of the gender quota in ESU elections to make it more inclusive whilst also supporting other projects that taskforce are working on.

The VP for Academic Affairs and I represented USI at European Students' Conferences in Wales and Estonia as well as attending a board meeting in Jerusalem. I have engaged in discussions and co-presented two gender sessions and an open organising session on Students' Union Autonomy at these events. I also engaged with NARC meetings at these events.

Student Media Network

Working with the VP for the Dublin region and the VP for the BMW region, we created a database of people working in student media – from journalists to radio presenters and

people running podcasts. I have established an online network and hope to hold a Student Media Networking event before the end of the semester.

Referenda

I supported referenda campaigns in DITSU and IT Tallaght. I was also very pleased to see UCCSU renew their membership with 86% voting Yes to remain in USI.

Non-affiliate engagement

I have reached out to all FE colleges in the southern region and I have assisted four Further Education Colleges in the process of joining USI and developing their constitutions - Ormond FE College, Kilkenny, Thurles College of FE, Carlow Institute of FE and Waterford Further Education College. I also worked with the VP for Academic Affairs to improve the process of becoming a member.

I contacted Mary I SU and University Limerick SU about joining USI and presented to ULSU Council with the USI President on the topic.

Training Delivery and Event Support

I contributed to and supported Pink Training, running an icebreaker group. I supported and shared experiences at #WomenLead17 and #WomenLead18, I facilitated Part-time Officer training, Class Rep trainings locally and supported Top-Up training and SUT/SUT+. I represented at Pride Parades.

Campaign Groups and Committees

I have been involved in contributing to a number of other groups including - National Council working groups, Campaigns Sub-committee, Coiste Cultúrtha, Students for Choice taskforce, Together moving forward.

I was also the student representative on the International Panel for the National Teaching & Learning forum to undergo a review of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement 2016 funded projects in which I reviewed project teams and assessed the progress of the individual projects and guided their future development.

Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Jimmy McGovern



Engagement with the BMW Region

As a Vice President for the Border, Midlands & Western Region, an enormous amount of time is dedicated to travelling to campuses and the USI Headquarters, communicating with and updating SU Officers and Class Reps across the country. I have made myself as available as possible for consultations, assisting with local events, and to give updates to Officers, Councils and Senates, on the local and national campaigns and the progress of USI's work.

Training Student Leaders

Ensuring that student leaders were trained and felt competent in their roles was a priority of mine from the very beginning of my term. I worked closely with the USI Officer Board and Staff to organise, shape and deliver trainings throughout the year. This included: assisting to facilitate sessions at SUT in Athlone and SUT+ in Belfast; organising and directing a 'Part Time Officer Training' in NUI Galway, and delivering Class Rep Trainings in all GMIT, IT Sligo, St. Angela's College, Sligo, Athlone IT and NCI. I also delivered 'Election Training' in Maynooth University, and contributed to both a Leadership Information evening in NUI Galway and election information evening in St. Angela's College, Sligo.

Campaigning for Publicly Funded Education

As our number one priority, much of my time Council was dedicated to being on campuses across

the Region, making students aware of the campaign for publicly funded education and to oppose an income contingent loan scheme. I played an active role on the Campaigns Sub Committee, directed by the Vice President for Campaigns. Officer Board and the Campaigns Subcommittee met multiple times to discuss and decide the national day of action. I travelled the region, following up with MOs to discuss and debrief with them how they can get involved and maximise the amount of their members they can get involved on the attend the national demonstration, held on October 4th. This included full days dedicated to giving over 100 lecture addresses across the region and selling tickets at across campuses. The BMW Region had an excellent engagement overall and showed very strong numbers on the day of march.

I continued the work of the previous Officer Board and contacted every County Council within the Region requesting they pass a motion to support Publicly Funded Education and oppose an Income Contingent Loan Scheme. I presented in their Council Chamber to each of the Cavan, Laois, Clare and Mayo County Councils and secured support. I also secured support from Leitrim County Council.

Media Engagement

I spoke multiple times on local radio stations about the work USI are doing each week, about many of the ongoing campaigns, voter registration, and most commonly about our campaign for publicly funded higher education and to oppose the introduction of a student loan scheme. I urged listeners, students and the wider public, to get involved in the campaign on radio stations such as Galway Bay FM, Connemara Community Radio, Castlebar Community Radio, Athlone Community Radio and Flirt FM.

Registering Students to Vote

Registering Students to vote plays a crucial role in almost everything USI are lobbying for. 6,000 students registered to vote in the BMW Region, due the collaborative efforts of student leaders. I heavily pushed voter registration through local and regional media, Class Rep trainings, lecture addresses, approaching students across campuses and setting up Voter Registration stands with for the #GetRegd campaign.

Campaigning to Repeal the 8th Amendment

I have been a member of the Students for Choice Task Force, which is the group leading the student movement nationally in regard campaigning to Repeal the 8th Amendment of the Constitution of Ireland. I have been active in contributing to the work of the Deputy President / Vice President for Equality & Citizenship and have fed back to the Region and the ongoing work of USI on the this issue. I also attend the national March for Choice and the March on International Women's Day, campaigning to repeal.

I led and directed USI's campaigning in local SU referendums on adopting a 'Pro-Choice' stance in both St. Angela's College, Sligo and Dundalk Institute of Technology, and assisted the Vice President for the Dublin Region in IT Blanchardstown, which all passed with 80%+ margins.

Amnesty International Ireland and USI have partnered in campaigning on this issue, and we worked to develop a canvassing training for students. My role is to provide training to students across Ireland in how to canvass door to door for a yes vote, equipping participants with information and knowledge, and focusing on the do's and don'ts of vocabulary, tone, body language and conflict management.

Student Switch Off Campaign

As both NUI Galway and Maynooth University were partnered with USI's Student Switch Off Campaign, I worked closely with USI Staff to campaign across both campuses encouraging students to save and reduce energy wastage and getting their commitment to taking leadership in our society's responsibility to tackling climate change and sustainable living.

National Conference for Students Living With Disabilities

The USI President delegated to me the opportunity to organise a 'National Conference for Students Living With Disabilities'. This was open to any members of USI who identified living with a disability.

Through a variety of workshops and speakers, the conference highlighted how to remove barriers and increase opportunities in the student and life experience of people living with disabilities.

Mental Health Promotion

I have been active in promoting positive mental health through a number of campaigns and initiatives, and have actively been campaigned to promote USI's first National Student Mental Health Survey. I also assisted the Vice President for Welfare on the Mental Health 'Chats for Change' roadshow in both Athlone IT and in NUI Galway. I also worked closely with both NUI Galway and GMIT Students' Unions in their partnership with the Western Region Drug & Alcohol Task Force to promote the 'Galway Safe App'. This was an app designed to connect people to supports and prevent loss of life by the waterways in Galway City. On request of the Vice President for Welfare in IT Sligo Students' Union, I was a speaker at the IT Sligo Mental Health Seminar. The session I delivered focused on mental health intervention and suicide alertness.

Additional USI Representation and Duties

I represented USI at a large number of public events both regionally and nationally, including; Galway, Belfast and Cork Pride Festivals; Direct Provision Protest; and International Women's Day March. I presented at conferences on 'Young People & Substance Use in a Digital Age', and under the direction of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, I presented at and attended the 'Teaching & Learning Champions' Project Conference of the West / North West Cluster in Letterkenny IT.

I also assisted in the running of most USI large events (e.g. Pink Training, etc.), acted as the Chairperson for GMIT Class Rep Council, and acted as the Returning Officer for a Letterkenny IT Students' Union Referendum. During the Sexual Health Roadshow, I worked with the Vice President for Welfare and Johnny's Got you Covered, in Maynooth University.

Vice President for the Dublin Region Aisling Cusack

It has been an incredible year working as the first Vice President for the Dublin Region. It was this time last year, when we debated at Congress the necessity of this position and that is something I continue to feel strongly about. It was often challenging working in a new position but always enjoyable and that is down to the students and officers in the region that made it such a positive experience. I have said from the beginning that the region will continue to strengthen and I wish my successor and the newly elected students' union officers the very best in the year to come.



Below, I have broken my report into key areas of work.

MO Engagement

Throughout the year, I have acted as a support for sabbatical officers and part-time officers in students' unions across the Dublin Region. At the beginning of the year, I met with each team of officers to introduce myself and work through our goals for the year ahead. As the year progressed, I regularly would check in with officers by email, phone, or social media to see how they were getting on and if I could assist them in any way with any of their campaigns on campuses. As a regional vice-president, I was the main point of contact between member organisations and the Officer Board and the President.

Class Rep Councils

I have made myself available for student councils where possible to give an update to council on what USI are working on and take feedback on board and bring it back to the Officer Board.

National Campaign

As a member of the Officer Board, I attended each Campaigns Sub-committee meeting where the

campaign plan of action would be decided. With October 4th being the decided day of the national demonstration in Dublin, it was important to get out on campuses early, promoting the march to students.

The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region and the Vice President for the Southern Region and I, worked together to formulate a schedule of the Officer Board on campuses each day from the 20th of September in our regions across the country. Each day, I promoted the national demonstration through lecture addresses, handing out flyers, and selling bus tickets with students and officers from the respective campuses in a Dublin Region campus. I was solely responsible for my region and would check in with the Officer Board and students' union officer to monitor progress and see if changes would be needed to the schedule.

Voter Registration

The work of the Officer Board can be quite heavy and sometimes, items of work will be delegated by the President to vice-presidents of a region. I took on the voter registration campaign and liaised with Regional Vice-Presidents to organise how to achieve maximum numbers of new students registered in the first semester. I regularly checked in with the Regional Vice-Presidents to monitor progress in our respective regions and went onto campuses to assist students' unions with their voter registration drives.

I worked with the Vice President for Campaigns to organise materials for the campaign and the online resource folder whilst working with the Public Relations Executive and Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to ensure National Voter Registration Day was a success. USI partnered with SpunOut and the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) for the event which was trending across Ireland on Twitter. The campaign was extremely successful with over 18,000 students newly registered to vote and will prove to be an invaluable asset when approaching TDs with our asks. With the possibility of a general election and several referenda planned for 2018, this is an incredible achievement this year and more than 10,000 higher than in 2017. The success of this campaign bears testament to the combined and concerted effort of all involved.

Voter registration will continue up with the rollout of our campaign "Me and EU" which will see students getting onto the register and learning about the European Parliament.

USI Affiliation

This year, to date, there have been two affiliation referendums on USI membership within the Dublin Region. The first was of the National College of Ireland Students' Union on the week of the 6th November 2017. For this referendum, I was the campaign lead and coordinated members of Officer Board and students in the NCI campus during the week to campaign for a 'YES' vote. The result of this referendum was 97.2%.

IT Tallaght Students' Union held an affiliation to USI referendum on the 7th December. This referendum was alongside another and I coordinated members of Officer Board to campaign separately for each of the referenda. The result of this referendum was 97.8%.

Students For Choice

As Vice President for the Dublin Region, I am based in Dublin and have attended meetings both alongside and in the absence of the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship of the steering group for the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment.

Throughout the year, I have delivered several trainings to students around repealing the 8th Amendment. This began with conversations around repeal for officers in the part-time officer training I ran in September, and has continued to the more recent canvassing training sessions that are happening now.

I met with Amnesty International Ireland on several occasions to discuss how we could co-facilitate training sessions for students and provide them with the necessary tools to engage with their politicians on the subject of repealing the 8th Amendment. From these meetings, we developed a workshop and a training manual for students which was aesthetically designed by the Vice President for Campaigns. I facilitated these trainings on political lobbying around the 8th Amendment for students, before the Joint Oireachtas Committee finalised their recommendations, and worked with the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to design and plan the Student Activist Think-In, which happened on the 9th of February 2018.

I have also made myself available for on campus trainings ran by students' unions and/or societies with my assistance as well as attending individual member organisation's repeal taskforce meetings throughout the year and each of the USI Students For Choice Taskforce meetings.

Repeal Referenda

There have been three referenda in Dublin member organisations on whether the students' union should take a repeal/pro-choice stance in the upcoming referendum on the 8th Amendment. The member organisations were IT Tallaght Students' Union (ITTDSU), IT Blanchardstown Students' Union (ITBSU), and Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union (DITSU). For each of the referenda, I coordinated members of the Officer Board onto campuses during polling days and campaigned myself alongside several committed student "repealers". The results in each of the referenda were as follows:

ITTDSU: 82% Yes

ITBSU: 87% Yes

DITSU: 83% Yes

Elections Training

Myself and the regional vice-presidents delivered training for students who were planning on running for election in our regions. The format of this training was designed by ourselves in conjunction with the Vice President for Campaigns, who designed the material. The training mainly consisted of how to run an election campaign and public speaking. This training was very well-received and many of the attendees are newly elected officers for the year 2018/2019.

NUS-USI President Olivia Potter-Hughes

UCU Strike Rally

NUS-USI believes that fairly rewarded staff are the cornerstone of the university experience and that the proposal by Universities UK to substantially cut the pensions of members of the USS pension scheme will be hugely damaging if implemented. We sent our full support to UCU during this dispute and area calling on universities to return to negotiations. Myself and Kevin McStravock, UUSU President and Stephen McCrystall, QUBSU President gave full support for the UCU strike at Ulster and QUB.

#ScrapTheCap Protest

On 21st September I supported Reclaim the Agenda and Women's Aid Federation NI protest in Belfast City Centre against the latest welfare cuts that target low income families.

#SharetheGLOVE

The #SharetheGLOVE campaign was a non-profit student led initiative from an excellent student's union, supported by NUS-USI to raise awareness and support for members of the LGBT+ community in the GAA, as well as promoting positive mental health. The glove displays part of the rainbow flag, adopted by the LGBT+ community. Research shows that depression affects LGBT people at higher rates than the heterosexual population, and it was hoped that this initiative could help improve wellbeing too.



Mental Health - Keeping you in Mind

NUS-USI published our wellbeing survey in 2017 and 3680 valid responses were received, making it arguably the largest student mental health survey ever carried out here. Keeping You in Mind intends to tackle the issues faced by students and ensure that students have access to the right support and advice. This year we began a layered campaign around mental health involving creating a contact base for students to access mental health support in their local area, available at: <http://nus-usi.org/mental-health-services-in-your-area/>. We have also been lobbying the government for more investment in mental health facilities, reaching out to mental health organisations to create an online database of professional mental health resources for student's unions to use when running their own mental health campaigns, and released a Student Survival Guide with the PSNI: <http://nus-usi.org/keeping-you-in-mind/student-survival-guide/>

Lobbying

Each of these topics have been covered in meetings with the five main political parties in Northern Ireland:

- Opposing potential budget cuts and seeking more investment in students and tertiary education
- More investment and appreciation for Further Education and Apprentices
- Delivering legislation to protect students' unions
- Working to protect student support and prevent tuition fees increases
- Student wellbeing and more investment in mental health services
- Delivering stable devolved government and ensure the voices of students here are heard
- Need for equality and a shared future in Northern Ireland
- Marriage equality and free, safe, legal and local abortion access
- Defending the rights of students in Brexit

Brexit and Students in NI

I have met with all our main political parties, to lobby them on our objectives, and have also met with Dr Andrew McCormick, the newly-appointed Director General of International Relations in the Northern Ireland civil service, and with head of the European Commission in Northern Ireland, Colette FitzGerald. We plan to arrange future meetings via the Trilateral of NUS-USI, NUS UK and USI Ireland, with both the Irish and UK governments.

As well as this, we supported apprentices and the trade union Unite in Bombardier who were placed at risk during Brexit initiated trade disputes during the year.

NUS-USI lobbying objectives regarding the impact of Brexit:

We want guarantees on continued student mobility cross-border on the island of Ireland

- All EU citizens here must have the right to remain here
- Continued access to EU funding on teaching and learning There must be no increases in fees for students studying on a cross-border basis
- All protections and rights within the 1998 Belfast Agreement must be retained

LGBTI+ Advocacy

NUS-USI partnered with USI, Belfast Met SU, QUBSU and UUSU to march in the annual Pride parade in Belfast on Saturday 5th August 2017. We marched for equality, to fight for the basic rights which

everyone should have a right to.

We marched for protest, to stand in solidarity and send a message that we will never give up this fight.

On the first day of our term, 1st July, NUS-USI took part in the March for Marriage Equality alongside an estimated twenty thousand people Marriage in Belfast City Centre.

During the year, we arranged a meeting with the coalition and student leaders from across the membership, to discuss how they could get more directly involved in the campaign.

At USI Pink Training, I delivered a workshop with the NUS-USI LGBT Officer on Love Equality, to tell student's in the south how they could support our struggle for marriage equality in the North.

Strike for choice and Rally for Choice

Women and people who can become pregnant still do not have choice on abortion. The lack of choice and bodily autonomy in Northern Ireland forces them travel to access reproductive healthcare. With seven in ten people in NI supporting reform on abortion access, change needs to happen, it is time to #TrustWomen and make free, safe, legal and local abortion reform in Northern Ireland. NUS-USI were proud to attend both of these events in Belfast.

The 16 Days of Activism

From 25 November until 10 December, activists across the world come together to carry out 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence, symbolically linking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women to International Human Rights Day. This year, NUS-USI ran a blog series throughout the 16 Days around the 2017 theme: Together we can end Gender Based Violence in Education! Read the blogs here: <http://nus-usi.org/blog-archive/>

Solidarity with the South

NUS-USI share many of the same struggles and aims as our Trilateral partner USI. Having only recently seen civil marriage equality legalised, and currently fighting to Repeal the 8th Amendment for abortion rights, these are some of the events which NUS-USI attended this year to show our solidarity and support to students across the Island of Ireland:

- March for Choice with Students for Choice
- Education Is...Demo
- Dublin Pride

Training

I have been heavily involved in organising the following suite of trainings for officers and students - SUT, SUT+, Part-Time Officer Training, Stranmillis Mentor Training, Student Governor training.

Student Partnership

In November 2017, local education providers and NUS-USI came together to discuss the progress that has been made, to consider any key elements that might be appropriate for inclusion on a 'guiding principles' document for Northern Ireland on student partnership, and to take away further inspiration and ideas for development in our local settings. The NUS-USI President spoke at this event.

College Union Development

NUS-USI have produced individual union development reports for all our FE members. These reports create an evidence base for the impact of the learners voice within our colleges. They also provide our college students' unions with recommendations and a plan for union development matched with NUS100. Over the coming months we will be working with our members to support them in any development work. We also hope that this collective evidence base can be used in the lobby for legislation to protect students' unions.

Policies due to expire

Interim Policies adopted by National Council

Interim policies adopted by National Council are automatically brought back to the next session of Congress for approval or removal. If they are not passed they will instantly cease to be the policy of USI. If they are passed, they will remain on the policy file for three years, as with all other motions.

The proposer of the original motion has the right to propose these motions to Congress; in any case, they are the property of Congress.

Proposed by: Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Tugann An Chomhairle Náisiúnta faoi Deara

Go bhfuil polasaí ag AMLÉ a thacaíonn le cur i bhfeidhm agus síneadh Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla maidir le heagraíochtaí san earnáil phríobhaideach.

Sainordaíonn An Chomhairle Náisiúnta

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge chun fiosrúchán a dhéanamh maidir le hAontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn a chcludú faoi scáth Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla, 2003, agus má tá sé indéanta, chun coinníollacha agus riachtanais an Achta a chomhlíonadh.

Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhairle Náisiúnta

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge chun fiosrúchán a dhéanamh ar na féidearthachtaí a bhaineann le Scéim Teanga a chur i bhfeidhm, a thuarann agus a dhaingníonn plean AMLÉ maidir le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge san eagraíocht, agus seirbhísí agus acmhainní trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil.

Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhairle Náisiúnta

An Leas - Uachtarán don Ghaeilge chun fiosrúchán a dhéanamh maidir leis an fhéidearthacht a bhaineann le haistriúchán a chur ar fáil ar pháipéarachas, chomharthaí, fhograí, agus phostaeir, agus anuas air sin, fiosrúchán a dhéanamh maidir le foilsíúcháin dhátheangacha de thairiscí bliantiúla a chur ar fáil, faoi scáth an Achta.

National Council notes

USI's policy supporting the implementation and extension of the Official Languages Act, 2003 to bodies in the private sector.

National Council mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to investigate the potential of bringing USI under the umbrella of the Official Languages Act, 2003, and, if applicable, to fulfil the conditions and requirements of the Official Languages Act, 2003.

National Council further mandates

The Leas- Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to investigate the potential of implementing a Scéim Teanga (Language Scheme) which forecasts and cements USI's plan for promoting, and providing access to, services and resources through Irish.

National Council further mandates

The Leas - Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to investigate the potential of translating stationary, signs, advertisements, and posters, and well as publishing annual reports bilingually, under the remit of the Official Languages Act, 2003.

NC18 IA 1 : To condemn the actions taken by the Government of Myanmar against the Rohingya population.

NOTES

Proposed by: Carlow College Students' Union

USI Notes:

That due to ongoing 'Clearance Operations' in Burma, over 3000 Rohingya civilians have been killed, at least 140 villages have been burned down, and more than 200,000 people have been internally displaced, with a further 600,000 civilians having fled to Bangladesh.

USI Also Notes:

Little action has been taken at EU level to respond to the Rohingya Crisis.

USI Therefore Mandates:

The USI publicly denounce the ongoing 'Clearance Operations' currently being implemented by the Burmese Government.

The VP Equality & Citizenship to work with Amnesty International Ireland in the call to immediately end the military's campaign of violence and human rights abuses and ensure free and unimpeded access to Rakhine state to humanitarian actors, the UN, independent journalists and human rights monitors and ensure their security.

NC18 UO 1: Road Traffic Act

Proposed by the USI Vice President for Welfare

Council Notes

Research shows that alcohol is a factor in 38% of fatal crashes, yet Irish people continue to drink and drive. An average of 180 drivers are being arrested per week in 2017 on suspicion of driving under the influence.

Council also notes

Under the proposed legislation, drink driving offences committed at BAC levels between 50mg and 80mg will incur an automatic disqualification of 3 months instead of the current penalty of a €200 fine and 3 penalty points.

Council Notes with Concern

That the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 proposed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport 13/07/2017 fell with the last government.

Council also Notes with Concern

Some rural TDs have suggested it is unfair - particularly for those in rural Ireland who cannot easily get home from the pub and many vested interest groups and their supporters continue to deny the factual evidence about drink driving

Council Mandates

The VP Welfare to actively lobby TD's to support the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 and to collaborate with and support the work of the Road Safety Authority in striving to have the bill enacted.

NC18 AAQA 1 : Engaging Postgraduate Issues

Proposed by: Vice President for Academic Affairs

National Council recognises

That the USI membership includes a large body of postgraduate students, and that there is currently no dedicated event or campaign focused on their issues.

National Council further recognises

That in order to fully represent postgraduate students, to engage them in our work, and to build the capacity of our Member Organisations (MOs) in this crucial area of union development, it is imperative that there is an annual event focused on those issues.

National Council mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, alongside the Officerboard, to run an event aimed at engaging postgraduate students in the work of USI, developing the postgraduate student voice nationally, and building the capacity of MOs to represent postgraduate issues. This annual event should take place in the second semester of the academic year.

NC18 UO 2: Entertainment Agency

Council Recognises:

The opportunity for USI to develop an Entertainment agency. This agency would aim to provide MO's with access to book acts, collaborate on events, cost share on acts/events and provide cost saving options for merchandise and event marketing options.

COUNCIL MANDATES:

The USI President to develop an Entertainments agency.

NC18 WEL 1 : ASRA

Proposed by the USI VP Welfare

Council Notes

The many issues facing students when looking for student accommodation which is of an

acceptable standard.

Council Notes with Concern

The escalating number of cramped and substandard accommodation that students are living in posing a number of health and safety risks to students across the island.

Council Also Notes

That ASRA, the Association for Student Residential Accommodation, is the leading representative organisation for student accommodation professionals throughout the UK and Ireland. ASRA represents student accommodation providers on a range of statutory boards and in various housing related organisations.

Council Mandates

The VP Welfare to work with ASRA to collectively in order to promote good standards in accommodation provision.

Council Also Mandates

The VP Welfare to seek a place on their committee/boards with the aim of having a continuous student voice within the organisation.

NC18 EQ 1 : Disability Conference

NOTES

Proposed by the USI Vice President for Welfare

Council Notes:

Reports released by the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD), of which USI is a board member, finds that while numbers of students with disabilities participating in higher education continues to rise, significant barriers remain.

Council Notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to removing the stigma from all disabilities, challenging perceptions and encouraging all members of our society to take a positive attitude towards understanding the nature of disability and overcoming prejudices. A key part of this ongoing work can be done through student engagement at a national-level event, to create a space for networking, dialogue, and empowerment to leadership roles.

Council Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to organise a one day training and networking event for students with disabilities before the end of April 2018.

NC18 AAQA 2: Class Rep Accreditation (Was referred from Congress 2017) Proposed by the USI Vice President for Academic Affairs

Congress believes:

Class Representatives form the backbone of SU and institutional activities in terms of providing a representative student voice within an institution.

Congress notes:

The role of class representatives is increasingly being recognised by the HEA and QQI, through national initiatives such as the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP).

Congress further notes:

Class Representatives involvement is crucial to the success of such programmes.

Congress recognises:

Student time is becoming increasingly scarce due to the nature of semesterisation, and that therefore it is not always possible for them to fully and actively engage with programmes such as the NStEP, and the other functions associated with the role of a class representative.

Congress therefore mandates:

The USI VP Academic Affairs to work with the HEA and QQI to look into the feasibility of rolling out accreditation for the position of class representative, similarly to how standard modules are accredited.

NC 18 WEL 3: One for Ireland

Proposed by Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Council Believes:

That youth mental health and homelessness are pressing social issues in Ireland today.

Council Recognises:

The annual fundraising weekend (March 30 - April 2, 2018) organised by charity One for Ireland, which comprises of a nationwide network of volunteers and businesses seeking to raise funds for charities in the youth mental health and homelessness sectors.

Council Notes:

The innovative cash-free fundraising model pioneered by One For Ireland.

Council Further Notes:

That the aims of One For Ireland are very closely aligned, and that USI can be of significant assistance to One For Ireland in their fundraising effort.

Council therefore mandates:

USI's Regional Officers to support the work of One For Ireland in advance of their fundraising effort.

Council Further Mandates:

USI to support One For Ireland with promotion in advance of their fundraising effort.

Policies Due to Expire

USI Policy now lasts for three years, or a shorter period if expressed in the motion passed by the Congress. Policies due to expire are prioritised by Member Organisations for return to USI Congress for re-approval. Policies not prioritised are not resubmitted to Congress and fall.

12 EM 1 VOTING DAYS

Congress notes:

The Fine Gael and Labour parties condemning of the Government of the day for holding voting on weekdays during the term.

Congress further notes:

That student unfriendly voting days severely reduce turnout among students.

Congress condemns:

The decision to hold the upcoming referendum on the EU fiscal treaty on

Thursday, May 31st 2012.

NOTES

Congress notes with concern:

That the turnout among students will be hampered as a result.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Campaigns and President to lobby the Government for student friendly voting days for all elections and referenda so students can exercise their democratic right to vote.

12 EM 5 CAP ON NUMBERS OF STUDENTS

Congress notes:

The recent statements of the Minister for Education in relation to the possibility of placing a cap on the numbers of students in Higher and Further Education in order to control costs.

Congress notes with alarm:

The immense damage that such a cap could cause to access to education especially given the continuing internationalisation of Higher Education.

Congress mandates:

The President and USI Officerboard to do all in their power to campaign against the introduction of any cap on the numbers of students in Higher and Further Education.

15 AAQA 4 Students outside the grant threshold

Congress notes:

The valuable work undertaken by USI and MOs in relation to preserving the student grant and fighting for its retention

Congress further notes:

The importance of the student grant in allowing students from challenging socio-economic backgrounds to attend third level education in Ireland, but also must acknowledge the difficulty for students and families who are not in receipt of the grant or any other financial bursaries from the state.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP AAQA to undertake campaigns and strategies to increase awareness about the financial difficulties facing students not in receipt of the grant, and to campaign for the means testing of the grant to take place after tax has been deducted from the gross household income.

15 AAQA 5 Universal fee payment dates

Congress notes

That there are a number of different ways in which students are expected to pay their Student Contribution Charge, depending on the institution.

Congress further notes

This may create confusion among students. Furthermore some systems are more sympathetic to students than others.

Congress mandates

VP AAQA and VP Welfare to work with Students' Unions and the relevant groups to establish universal payment dates in institutions.

Congress further mandates

VP AAQA and VP Welfare to work with Students' Unions and the relevant groups to set a universal payment method in institutions.

15 AAQA 7 Technological university supports

Congress acknowledges:

The work, which has been done to date with MO's going through the Technological University (TU) process.

Congress also acknowledges:

The integral role of Students' Unions in these MO's to informing students of their rights and safeguarding them in the TU process.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for the South, BMW and Dublin to engage with Students' Unions in MO's currently going through the TU process.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for the South, BMW and Dublin to work actively with Students' Unions in MO's who in the future may be involved in a TU process.

Proposed Amendment

Proposed by the President of USI

Delete Clause: "Congress mandates"

Delete Clause: "Congress also mandates"

Insert Clause:

Congress mandates:

The Regional Vice-Presidents to assist in the merging of Students' Unions involved in the TU process. This should be based on international best practice.

15 AAQA 10 Cross-border student mobility

Congress believes:

- Currently there is very low cross-border student mobility between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- That education should be free and fairly funded- this also goes for the students who chose to travel over the border for their education
- Every student should be able to access support for travel, course costs, maintenance support and studying cross-border should not be a barrier to support.

Congress notes:

- In 1996/97, almost one in 10 students in the NI colleges were from the Republic - 9.3%, but in 2012/13, this fell to just 5.5%.
- The number of RoI domiciled students enrolled in NI Higher Education Institutions in 2012/13 was 2,835 and the number of RoI students studying in FE institutions in 2012/13 was 3,324.
- In 2012/13 only 980 students from NI travelled over the border to study in Irish institutions.

- RoI students in NI often have trouble accessing the right information about the SUSI grant which is available to them, which can then lead to financial hardship.

Congress mandates:

- VPAAQA to work with the NUS-USI President to explore ways we can increase cross-border student mobility
- VPAAQA to work with NUS-USI to lobby the respective governments to provide adequate financial support for students studying over the border

12 AA 6 RE-INSTITUTION OF GAELTACHT GRANT FOR TEACHERS

Congress notes:

The benefit that time in the Gaeltacht affords trainee teachers

Congress notes with concern:

Steps taken by government to remove the grant for teaching students to go to the Gaeltacht as part of their course.

Congress mandates:

The Vice-President for Academic affairs and Quality Assurance and the Vice-President for the Irish Language to lobby the department, and minister for education to reverse the decision to remove the grant, in order to ensure that trainee teachers may continue to attend the Gaeltacht during their course.

11 ED 4 SUPPORT FUNDS FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That a number of support funds including the Fund for Student with Disabilities, the Student Assistance Fund and the Maintenance Grant are only available for students studying on a full-time basis in recognised Higher Education Institutes.

Congress further notes:

That part-time students are not able to avail of the “free-fees” scheme.

Congress mandates the Education Officer, Welfare Officer and Equality Officer:

To campaign and lobby for support funds and the free fees scheme to be extended to include part-time students.

11 ED 6 EXAM REGULATIONS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That the regulations concerning progression, transfer and quality of awards subsequent to students having failed an exam in an award year differ between institutions.

Congress believes:

That this situation creates inequalities given that students who get the same results in different institutions will achieve different outcome which is contrary to national and international guidelines.

Congress mandates the Education Officer:

To investigate each institution, prepare and submit a report to National Council detailing which Colleges are deviating from national and international guidelines.

11 ED 18 MATHEMATICS BONUS POINTS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress condemns:

The decision by many higher education institutions in the past year to agree to a re-introduction of bonus points for higher level mathematics in the leaving certificate regardless of course of entry to higher education.

Congress notes:

The historical legacy of failure of the third-level sector in solving second-level problems by

imposing admissions requirements on second-level students without engaging in wide-ranging consultations on curriculum reform.

Congress mandates the Education Officer:

To prepare a policy document in accordance with this and previous national council motions on the subject and to lobby for the reversal of the decision to offer bonus points by the institutions concerned.

11 ED 19 MAINTENANCE GRANTS 2

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The current situation of higher education maintenance grants criteria is firstly based on what education institution they attend.

Congress believes:

That third level education should be an open playing field for students and grants should be made available to students based on each individual circumstance on meeting the required criteria rather than on what education institution they attend.

Congress further notes:

That there should be equality and accessibility to education to everyone, for further progressing the opportunities available to students and that that the current grants system is inequitable, significantly unfair and is a barrier to those trying to attend third-level education.

Congress also believes:

That USI should be in a position to fight for equitable access to education grants in every circumstance.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President, Deputy President, Education Officer and the rest of Officer Board

To take action in lobbying the Minister for Education and Skills, pursuant to Section 8 of the Student Support Act 2011, to provide that private colleges such as Griffith College are included in the Higher Education Grant Scheme.

11 ED 20 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress recognises:

That we as a student movement must strive for real equality and equal opportunities at all levels in the Irish education system. We also recognise that whether or not a child will make it to third-level education is often determined many years before that child sits the Leaving Certificate.

Congress further recognises:

That many potential college students have not made it to third-level because they come from areas of socio-economic disadvantage, and thus cannot afford private schooling, or because the public schools in their areas are not adequate.

Congress notes:

The growth of grind schools and private secondary schools in Ireland in the past two decades, and that this growth of the private school sector has led to elitism among students at second-level and beyond, and has also resulted in many good public schools struggling to fill places and stay open.

Congress further notes:

That students attending private schools have access to an education that is partly publicly-funded, but which is only accessible to those who can afford it. This gives them a significant advantage over public school students in the CAO race for places in third-level courses.

Congress mandates USI Officer Board:

To campaign for the removing of state funding for private primary and secondary schools, and for any monies saved to be re-invested in the wider, publicly-funded and publicly-accessible education system including primary, secondary and third level education.

10 ED 4 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That every year a substantial number of International Students travel to Ireland to study within our higher education system.

Congress recognizes:

That these International students can pay large sums of money, on average €12,000 per year to study in our 3rd level institutions:

Congress further recognises:

That there have been a number of issues with regards to these students arriving in Ireland with regards to Irish Customs.

Congress mandates:

The President to work on behalf of the International students to put in place an International Student Charter detailing student rights and responsibilities in the third level CO's where they are studying. By the development of the framework each IoT and University would become responsible for the treatment of International Students when travelling to Ireland.

10 ED 11 APPRENTICES

REAPPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That over the past number of years the increase within the trades industry with regards to Ireland.

Congress further notes:

That with the economic downturn many of these apprentices have been left with no job and in some cases incomplete qualifications.

Congress recognises:

The need to provide further education opportunities in the face of the ever-changing employment landscape of Ireland.

Congress mandates:

The President and the Education Officer to lobby the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority to clearly state, in a national framework, the eligibility of qualified apprentices to progress into relevant degree courses.

10 ED 12 BUDGETS**REAPPROVED 2015****Congress notes:**

That the current volatile economic climate, each Budget is likely to have significant impact on students.

Congress further notes:

That the fear and worry caused by budgets may cause avoidable harm to the welfare to Students.

Congress therefore mandates:

The USI Education Officer, as soon as possible subsequent to the delivery each budget, to write an explanatory memorandum of the impacts of the budget on student and communicate it to all CO's.

09 ED 2 STUDENT LOANS/GRADUATE TAX**REAPPROVED 2015****Congress notes:**

That the principle that education should be accessible to all people, has always been a core value of the student movement.

Congress strongly believes:

That education is a public and social good, which benefits not only the individual but the wider society. It should therefore be paid through progressive taxation like all public services. Investing in education is one of the most important investments we can make; not only does having an educated population strengthen our economy, but graduates pay on average 70% more in tax and have thus directly repaid the cost of their degree through taxation within ten years. Providing education to all citizens equally is fundamental principle for any fair society.

Congress notes:

The 2005 study in the UK by Professor Claire Callender and Jonathan Jackson that shows that for those on lower or middle income backgrounds in the UK, the fear of debt is a significant barrier to entry to third level education in the UK. This is a result of the student loans system in the UK.

Congress also notes:

The research by Professor Kathleen Lynch of UCD's equality studies centre on the Australian HECS system that shows the detrimental impact that a deferred loans system can have on equity of access to third level and on increasing student impoverishment.

Congress notes:

That Australia's education minister Julia Gillard has described the HECS student loans system as "at best complex and at worst anomalous, inconsistent and

irrational”.

Congress also notes:

That the fairest and most egalitarian way of paying for higher education is through a progressive taxation system.

Congress condemns:

The suggestions by minister for education Batt O’Keeffe that an Australian-style student loans system might be introduced in Ireland, at the same time as the Australian government itself is recognising that the system doesn’t work.

Congress also opposes:

The suggestions by some politicians for a graduate tax. Graduates already pay 70% more in tax than non-graduates, therefore a graduation tax is not necessary nor is it fair.

Congress mandates:

USI officer board to continue to oppose fees in any guise, including student loans and a graduate taxation system.

Congress calls for:

Investment through progressive taxation in a fair, equitable education system from primary to third level, whereby those on higher incomes pay higher taxes which funds all essential services. This is an investment in strengthening our economy as well as creating fairness in our society.

09 ED 11 BOLOGNA PROCESS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That the bologna process has, since its inception in 1999, become one of the most important and dominant themes in further and higher education in Europe with significant reforms being introduced throughout Europe and here in Ireland as a result of the bologna process.

Congress further notes:

That the reforms introduced as part of the bologna process have seen a dramatic transformation in further and higher education, much of which has been positive.

Congress recognises:

That these reforms have, however, also introduced considerable uncertainty into further and higher education and there is a need to ensure that as part of the bologna process, the quality of education is not undermined.

Congress welcomes:

That the union of students in Ireland has been involved at both a national and European level in the formation and development of policy in the key areas of the bologna process.

Congress regrets:

That on an issue as critical as the bologna process, which is now entering second decade, USI does not have official, formalised policy on the bologna process.

Congress believes:

That it is imperative that the national students’ union develop policy on an issue that is having and will have a profound impact on its membership.

Congress further mandates:

USI to adopt the following principles on the Bologna process to be implemented

by the president and the education officer

Bologna process (general principles)

USI welcomes the creation of the bologna process and the importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies.

The bologna process should be based on creating opportunities for mobility within higher education in Europe and should not be focused on purely developing a higher education system that suits the needs of enterprise and employers

USI strongly believes that the over-arching goal of the bologna process should be to create a student-centred learning environment that is flexible, transparent, accessible to all and encourages the development of lifelong learning.

Future development of the bologna process must be driven through consultation and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, which must include student representatives.

The bologna process should aim for significant and continuous improvement in the standard of education provided to students and that students are full and complete partners within institutions and at sectoral, national and European levels. Education must also be transparent with embedded and appropriate QA mechanisms focused on improving standards and academic provision.

Social dimension.

Participation in further and higher education must be widened and the demographic of these sectors should reflect the diversity of the population of the signatory countries to the bologna process.

Further and higher education is a public good and should primarily be publicly funded.

USI is opposed to any and all attempts to privatise further and higher education.

USI strongly welcomes the commitment enshrined in the bologna process to student services and will work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that student services are adequately resourced and improved in line with the needs of students.

All obstacles to participation further and higher education should be removed and

USI will campaign strongly on this.

The social dimension of the bologna process must continue to be one of the central action lines of the bologna process.

Mobility

Increased opportunities for student and staff mobility as a result of the bologna process is to be welcomed and contributes positively to the academic and personal development of students.

There should be a mobility target of 20% of the student population by 2020. The participative equity within this 20% must be improved and institutions must create measures to ensure that credits gained during mobility are recognised on return.

A central mobility fund should be created and contributed to by EHEA countries and financed according to the principle of public financing.

USI believes that higher education institutions should provide extensive language tuition to students to encourage and promote mobility.

The USI education officer and the USI equality officer shall campaign and lobby for the simplification of visa and work permit rules and procedures to allow for greater mobility and to prevent mobile students being subject to undue stress, difficulties and discrimination.

Qualifications frameworks and recognition

USI supports the adoption and implementation of the ECTS credit system whereby each academic year is comprised of 60 ECTS with each module being in multiples of 5 ECTS (e.g. 5, 10, 15 etc.). An ECTS credit should represent 20 – 25 hrs of student input including, but not limited to, lectures, assignments, self-directed learning, study and practical classes and placements.

USI welcomes and supports the development of modularisation where a module represents a block of teaching and learning with a combination of linked modules constituting a programme.

Semesterisation, whereby the academic year is comprised of two equal length teaching terms, is welcomed by USI. However, there should not be a nationally standardised set of term dates.

USI welcomes the introduction of learning outcomes, defined as “learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning”. All modules, subjects and programmes must be designed around learning outcomes which are regularly quality assessed to ensure they are appropriate and fit for purpose. Learning outcomes must be used to create a student-centred learning environment and may not be used to create a box-ticking environment.

USI continues to support the national framework of qualifications and shall campaign to ensure that learning outcomes align with the knowledge, skills and competencies associated with the relevant level of the NFQ.

All qualifications in further and higher education should be comparable and readable so that a student’s qualifications can be mapped on to both the European qualifications framework and the qualifications framework of all countries in the Bologna process with ease. The comparability should be verified for the student by the relevant authority (such as ENIC-NARIC) free of charge.

The USI education officer shall run a campaign, in conjunction with constituent organisations, to raise awareness of the NFQ and to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by its operation.

USI Bologna Process Campaign

USI reaffirms that the Bologna process is of extreme importance to the education that students will receive.

USI shall undertake all necessary effort, under the direction of the USI education officer, to assist constituent organisations in ensuring the proper implementation of all Bologna process related reforms.

USI will promote awareness of the Bologna process and of related reforms and opportunities to students through constituent organisations.

USI will work with all relevant stakeholders sectorally, nationally and internationally to ensure adequate student representation and that the Bologna process develops in lines with the above principles.

The USI education officer will develop and regularly update a USI strategy on the Bologna process.

09 ED 13 EQUITY OF ACCESS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That the introduction of the ‘free fees’ initiative was designed to widen access to further and higher education for those from traditionally under-represented backgrounds.

Congress recognises:

That while much progress has been made, with an overall participation rate of 55%, there are still a number of socio-economic and non-traditional backgrounds

which do not participate in further and higher education at the level of other groups.

Congress welcomes:

Recent moves to broaden the participation rate, in particular the creation of the national office for the equity of access to higher education and the publication of the national plan for equity of access to higher education 2008 – 2013.

Congress reaffirms:

That one of the fundamental principles of the union is that it strives for an education and training system open to all, irrespective of any consideration, including consideration of national origin, ethnic background, age, ability, sex, sexuality, creed, political beliefs or economic circumstances, so that each individual can realise their full potential.

Congress believes:

That in order to uphold and defend this principle, USI must have a co-ordinated policy on equity of access and encouraging the widening of participation in further and higher education.

Congress mandates:

That USI adopts the following principles as its policy on equity of access to further and higher education to be implemented by officer board:

Equity of Access (General Principles)

- USI shall campaign for an education and training system open and accessible to all.
- All sectors of society should have equal opportunity to participate in further and higher education.
- Further and higher education institutions should take all steps necessary to encourage and broaden participation
- USI shall build links and work with all relevant stakeholders and organisations to widen the participation rate and address all obstacles that may prevent individuals from accessing further and higher education
- The USI education officer shall develop and regularly update a USI strategy for equity of access to further and higher education
- Targeted access funding and programmes must be expanded to ensure that all students who come from traditionally under-represented backgrounds are able to access further and higher education
- All cuts to the student assistance fund, access offices or strategic innovation funded access projects shall be vigorously opposed by USI
- All constituent organisations shall be supported by USI in promoting access within their own institution and in supporting the proper representation of access students through policy development, practice, promotion and partnership
- The USI education officer and the USI deputy president/campaigns officer shall develop a public campaign promoting access to further and higher education, highlighting the current obstacles and building momentum to have these issues addressed.

09 ED 15 QUALITY ASSURANCE

REAPPROVED WITH DELETIONS 2015

Congress notes:

That quality assurance is an increasingly important issue facing higher and further education and one which USI needs a strong, coordinated campaign on.

Congress also notes:

That USI currently has eight existing motions relating to the area of quality assurance, each with different mandates and emphases.

Congress recognises:

That while each motion covers an important topic, it has created a disparate and sometimes sectoral approach to quality assurance that prohibits the development of a coherent campaign that could affect real change.

Congress also recognises:

That as USI represents students across all sectors of further and higher education, it must establish a common set of principles that will underpin and inform the organisation's approach to quality assurance

Congress further mandates:

That USI adopts the following guidelines as its policy on quality assurance to be implemented by the education officer:

Aims and principles:

'Quality assurance' includes processes such as evaluation, accreditation and audit.

Students have a right to a high quality of education and to have that education reviewed and assessed regularly

The interests of students as well as employers and wider society are served through good quality higher education

Institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities

The need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives

Centrality of student involvement and representation at all levels of the quality assurance process

QA mechanisms should result in demonstrative improvements and that these improvements should be communicated back to students

All elements of the QA process shall be transparent and accountable

Quality Assurance of Modules, Programmes and Academic Units (General Principles)

Institutions should have policy, procedures and formal mechanisms for the quality assurance of their programmes and awards

Institutions should have a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work

Each institution should have a central quality assurance office and/or committee that oversees the implementation of QA; this body shall have student representation

All panels formed to conduct a QA review should have student representation

All panels formed to conduct a QA review should have expert external representation

The quality of teaching staff shall be periodically reviewed as part of any programme, academic unit or institutional review and shall be commented on in the final report

The quality of education provided should be the central element in a review and each module and programme shall be assessed as to whether it is meeting its stated learning outcomes

The appropriateness of the stated learning outcomes as they support a high

quality education should also be reviewed

Any and all QA reviews should also examine the quality of resources to support student learning including information systems, library resources and any and all other relevant services

Modules should be assessed annually with programmes and academic units reviewed on a cyclical basis with programmes reviewed at least once every three years and academic units at least once every five years

All quality assurance evaluations (module, programme, academic unit) should be made available online and all module and programme reviews be distributed to the students affected

Following each assessment an action plan and timeline to implement the recommendations should be produced and communicated to students

External Quality Review of Institutions (General Principles)

All institutions should be subject to review at least once every seven years

Panels should be chosen and overseen by the accreditation and/or awarding body

All panels should have student representation from a different institution with the pool of student representatives drawn up in consultation with USI

All panels formed to conduct an institutional review should have expert external representation

All panels should be fully independent and free of any influence or conflict of interest

Guidelines for institutional reviews should be drawn up by the accreditation agency based on standardised best practice, such as ENQA's 'standards and guidelines'

As part of the review process the institution should produce a self-assessment report which should include progress on the recommendations of the previous report

The effectiveness and suitability of the institution's internal QA policies, procedures and mechanisms should be assessed

The review should also examine the overall quality of the student experience, learning resources, information systems, institutional culture (academic and professional) and academic structure

All institutional review reports should be made available online and all module and programme reviews be distributed to the students affected

Following each assessment an action plan and timeline to implement the recommendations should be produced and communicated to students and the institution

Student Participation in Quality Assurance

Student participation in quality assurance is essential in order to ensure that any QA system is credible

The institution seeks to enshrine the value of student participation in quality assurance activities at module, programme, departmental, faculty and institutional level.

Each institution should produce a guide for new students and should aim to produce a quality assurance handbook

Student representation on all QA fora is essential

The student representation system should be designed to afford opportunities for student engagement in decision-making and quality management arrangements

USI Campaign on Quality Assurance

USI will campaign to ensure high quality teaching and QA standards throughout the further and higher education sectors in accordance with the policies above

USI shall produce, or work with any sectoral body producing, a handbook for students on quality assurance detailing the rights of students and the importance of student involvement in QA

The USI education officer shall assist constituent organisations in developing and implementing QA policies in accordance with the above principles

The USI education officer shall assist constituent organisations in designing and producing materials to inform students about QA procedures and their right to a high quality education.

15 WE2 Student assistance fund

USI Congress notes:

The importance of the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), the role it plays in supporting students across the country, and how quickly it runs out in many HEI's around the country.

USI Congress further notes:

The SAF "Best Practice Framework Document 2013" written by USI.

USI Congress notes with concern:

The high volume of SAF motions currently on the policy manual.

USI Congress hereby deletes:

14 / Wel 7, 13 / Wel 8, 13 / Wel 9, 12 / Wel 1, 11 / Wel 13

USI Congress therefore mandates:

That the President and Vice President for Welfare campaign for increased funding for the SAF scheme, and lobby against any cutbacks to the fund.

USI Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to provide briefing to all MO's on all aspects of the SAF, and seek representation on all committees relating to SAF on their campuses, and to also continually lobby the HEA to redraft the guidelines for the SAF and to include recommendations to increase efficiency of systems.

15 WE 12 Motion to provide training and contacts to deal with issues regarding BTEA

Congress notes

The number of mature students who rely on the back to education allowance.

Congress further notes

That SU officers may be ill-equipped to deal with the problems arising in applying for and receiving BTEA.

Congress mandates

The VP Welfare to organise training for SU Officers on dealing with casework relating to BTEA.

Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare to set up a contact within the Department of Social Protection that can be used by SU officers' when resolving issue with BTEA

15 WE 13 Mental Health Awareness

Congress acknowledges

The success of mental health awareness through the 'Chats for Change' and 'See Change' campaigns which have a significant focus on talking to someone about mental health and an individual's well-being.

Congress notes

That although talking is a crucial message to the campaigns, some individuals require the use of Anti-depressants or Anti-Anxiety medication etc.

Congress further notes

That the lack of information around the use of medication can lead to stigmatisation of individuals who use medication for mental health issues and can cause a great deal of distress for individuals who have the use of medication suggested to them upon presenting to a GP on a mental health issue.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice-President for Welfare to include information on the use of medication in relation to mental health issues as part of their on-going mental health campaigns.

15 WE 25 Gambling

Congress notes

The addictive nature of gambling and how easily accessible gambling can be with development of apps such as Paddy Power and close proximity of betting outlets to third level campuses.

Congress notes with concern

Evidence of gambling that is frequently appearing on bank statements through Student Assistance Fund Applications and the number of students who are faced with growing debt problems due to gambling.

Congress further notes

In an article on the Irish Examiner last March, Paul Mullins of Aiseiri, warns that among under-25s, as many as 90% start gambling on a handheld device. The alarming aspect of online gambling is that it reverses the trend of normal gambling given that it is overwhelmingly dominated by those under 25.

The Institute of Public Health said its studies indicated that gambling among young people was thought to be three times more prevalent than those aged over 21 years – a trend entirely attributed to online sites.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to work with the relevant organisations to develop a campaign to inform students of the effects of gambling and recognising an addiction.

11 WEL 12 MONEY MANAGEMENT AWARENESS

Congress notes:

The continuing financial strain that is being placed on families and students at this difficult time.

Congress further notes:

With these hard times, many students are withdrawing from third level college due to financial difficulties.

Congress therefore mandates the Welfare Officer:

To run a Money management awareness week and to also publish a financial guide to aid students with their budgeting problems.

Proposed Amendment

Proposed by the President of USI

Delete clause: "Congress therefore mandates the Welfare Officer:"

Insert clause:

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to publish a financial guide to aid students with their budgeting problems each year.

11 WEL 13 STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

Congress notes:

The importance of the Student Assistance Fund and the role it plays to support students across the Country.

Congress acknowledges:

That the Student Assistance Fund may be targeted in Government cutbacks.

Congress therefore mandates the President and Deputy President:

To lobby against any cuts to the Student Assistance Fund and to campaign for increased funding for the fund.

15 EQ 1 Women in Leadership

Congress notes

that motion 14/EQ9 stated: "That women are still significantly under-represented in Student Union politics, as well as politics nationally. Only 20% of Presidents are women in USI member colleges are women. Only 33% of UK Students Union Presidents are women. In the Dáil Éireann the representation of women is even worse. Only 15% of TDs are women. In local councils across Ireland the representation of women is below 20%. In Northern Ireland, only 19% of MLAs in Stormont are women Ireland ranks 23rd out of 27 EU countries for their percentage of women in parliament.

Congress acknowledges

that significant work has been undertaken by MOs in empowering women to run for leadership positions in the past year.

Congress applauds

the fantastic job USI Pink Training does in empowering members of the student LGBT community to run for SU leadership and also the grassroots engagement that exposes USI to a new generation of Student Leaders.

Congress calls for

the USI to expand the Women In Leadership campaign.

Congress mandates

the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to take the template provided by USI Pink Training and adapt it to create a weekend training event with the aim of empowering Women not only in their SU's but in their college, community and careers. 15 EQ3 MSM Blood Ban in Northern Ireland

Congress notes:

In September 2011 the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales announced that regulations banning the donation of blood by Gay and Bisexual men would be lifted, and allow for implementing a one-year deferral period instead. This decision comes after the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SABTO) carried out a review and found it could no longer support the permanent exclusion of men who have had sex with men from blood donation.

Congress further notes:

That this change in regulation did not extend to Northern Ireland, despite it being part of the UK, and that despite multiple court cases where it was ruled that the Northern Ireland Minister for Health was unjustified in their refusal to alter the MSM Blood Ban and was “infected by apparent bias” the lifetime blood ban still remains for MSM, while a 12 month blood ban is in place for WSMSM

Congress believes that:

The Northern Irish MSM Blood Ban is discriminatory against members of the LGBT+ Community and is founded on nothing more than inherent bias and bigotry.

Congress mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to actively campaign to call for an end to this discriminatory ban in Northern Ireland.

Congress also mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to offer their unconditional support and resource to collaborate with the NUS-USI LGBT Officer regarding the ongoing campaign to remove the ban on MSM Blood Donation in the North.

12 EQ 7 LGBT MENTAL HEALTH**Congress notes:**

That the results of the Supporting LGBT Lives Study of 2009 showed serious issues for LGBT people in Ireland with regards to mental health and bullying.

Congress notes with concern:

That these results showed that “Almost 20 per cent of gay, lesbian, bisexual and Transgender people have attempted suicide and almost all saw this as related to their sexual identity and the experiences of being abused and feeling isolated”

Congress further notes:

The high levels of self harming within the young LGBT community and the levels of homophobia that still exist in many areas of Irish society.

Congress mandates:

That the VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP Welfare engage with various LGBT organisations like BeLonG To, TENI and GLEN and develop policies for LGBT mental health and best practice for promotion of positive mental health for LGBT people.

10 MS 2 Mature Students Officer**Conference notes:**

The high increase in the number of mature students attending third level education

Conference also notes:

That increasing access to lifelong learning and creating diverse student populations is to be welcomed

Conference is aware:

That mature students have additional needs and that these are often not represented at local level in colleges

Conference believes that:

In order to represent the needs of mature students, each student union should have a part time mature student representative

Conference therefore mandates:

The Mature Students Officer to lobby local COs to create part time mature student officer positions and to assist all unions in the development of this position.

Proposed Amendment

Proposed by the President of USI

Delete clause: "Conference notes"

Delete clause: "Conference therefore mandates"

Insert clause:

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to encourage local MOs to create part time mature student officer positions and to assist all unions in the development of this position. 15 NA 3 Relationships with Trades Unions

Congress commends

the alliance building with education trade unions by USI Officerboard the past year.

Congress believes

that these relationships will be invaluable not only in the context of solidarity within the education sector but also in the context of the next General Election.

Congress believes

that the Education system as a whole deserves protection and that it is incumbent on stakeholder unions to fight against the egregious attack that has occurred during the austerity period.

Congress therefore mandates

the USI President to enter into negotiations with stakeholder trade unions in the primary, secondary and third level education system towards building a common platform on Education for the next General Election.

15 NA 7 Alcohol Advertising in Sport

Congress notes

The influence alcohol advertising in sport has on young people.

Congress notes with concern

In January 2015, plans to allow a legislative clause which would eventually allow for the banning of alcohol sponsorship of sports have been dropped.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Welfare to campaign with Alcohol Action Ireland for such a ban to be introduced.

15 UO3 Students' union staff training

Congress notes:

The unique work that is done by Student Union staff on a daily basis in each Students' Union in Ireland.

Congress further notes:

The high standard of training provided by USI for Students' Union elected officers.

Congress mandates:

Officer Board provide a two day training programme for MO staff. The aim being to strive for best practice; enable networking; champion equality and inclusion; and create a platform for the staff to understand thus communicate the benefits and supports provided by USI.

15 UO7 USI Election Process

Congress notes

That information in relation to procedures around running for a position on Officer Board is not readily available to Member Organisations and that ambiguity around the regulations and election procedure could discourage potential candidates from running.

Congress further notes

That currently there is no limitation on spending for Officer Board campaigns. This may create uncertainty around the financial implications of running for an Officer Board position and work to further discourage potential candidates.

Congress therefore mandates

USI Officer Board to make regulations and procedures relating to Officer Board elections readily available to Member Organisations before commencement of the 2015/2016 Academic Year.

Congress further mandates

All of Officer Board to introduce a spending limit of €350 for all campaign materials

15 UO18 Student manifesto ahead of the next general election

Congress notes:

That there will be a General Election no later than April 2016.

Congress affirms:

That USI must seek to make solutions to core student issues part of the next Programme for Government.

Congress notes:

The process by which NUS and NUS-USI's '#GenerationVote' campaign sought to a) highlight the upcoming elections and the importance of students voting and b) gather student feedback on what a student general election manifesto should include.

Congress mandates:

The VP Campaigns to arrange for an Irish student manifesto ahead of the next general elections, as part of the wider national campaign. The rollout of this should be a priority for the Campaigns Working Group and Campaigns Sub-Committee.

15 U019 Casework Recording Best Practice Policy

Congress notes:

The vital need for a “Casework Recording Best Practice Policy” for MO’s. Taking into extreme consideration data protection legislation and HEI data protection policies.

Congress further notes:

The invaluable information provided by casework recording for data analysis in each academic year and the dire need for MO’s to have a guideline to data recording and safe keeping.

Congress also notes:

The benefit of liaising with support services in each HEI so that we may gain a greater insight into the issues students face each academic year.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Welfare to produce a Best Practice Guideline/policy for MO’s regarding the recording of issues faced by students. Taking into extreme consideration data protection legislation and HEI data protection policies.

Congress further mandates:

The VP welfare to investigate the feasibility for MO’s to liaise with support services in each HEI to gather necessary data to analyse key student issues in each academic year.

15 U023 Regional Issues

Congress notes:

That there is too few opportunities to discuss Regional Issues at National Council besides within a Working Group.

Congress believes:

That regions can feel isolated due to USI being centered in Dublin, and regional Issues are not dealt with in time

Congress Further Believes:

That Regional Councils will promote and engage MOs further and be less costly for MOs.

Congress mandates

The Regional Officer to host regional councils within the region with the aim of submitting a report to council.

15 U029 Campaign to encourage participation in full time Students’ Union elections

Congress notes

The difficulty in getting students to engage with full time SU elections

Congress further notes

The work already being done by MOs trying to increase participation

Congress applauds

The work being done with the ‘Women for Election’ campaign

Congress mandates

The VP for Campaigns to work with MOs in running a 'ready-made' campaign to encourage overall participation nationally but also be able to be interpreted locally for individual MOs in full time elections and to equip them with the skills necessary to do so but also, to provide the support, aid and advice to MOs in preparing their own local election campaigns.

15 UO 30 USI Transparency and Engagement:

Congress notes:

The work of Officerboard goes mostly unnoticed by the wider student population.

Congress applauds:

Efforts made by Officerboard to increase transparency in its work over the past two years.

Congress mandates:

Officerboard to implement a weekly round-up of the work carried out during that week, which is to

include policy and Manifesto updates, be distributed to Officers, and their Class Representatives.

Proposed Amendment

Proposed by the President of USI

Delete clause:

"Congress mandates"

Insert clause:

Congress mandates:

Officerboard to produce a monthly newsletter of the work carried out, which is to include policy and Manifesto updates. This is to be emailed to Officers, and their Class Representatives and made available on the USI website.

12 UO 11 ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY

Congress notes:

That this year USI has made a conscious effort to create an inclusive working environment to all Officers.

Congress further notes:

How important it is to be at the forefront of an access and inclusivity for all officers.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to ensure that USI continues to ensure that it achieves appropriate and reasonable accommodations for all.

10 UO 19 MANIFESTO UPDATES

Congress notes:

Important issues highlighted in the manifestos of elected members of officer board can be neglected as the year progresses.

Congress also notes:

The importance USI members place on the strength of the leadership of USI

officer board and much of their confidence in an individual stems from the issues they pledge to attack/defend/promote in their manifestos.

Congress mandates:

Each member of officer board to outline the progress they have made on their manifesto issues at national council twice annually.

10 UO 21 CAMPAIGN HISTORY

Congress notes:

USI has a long and proud tradition when it comes to running effective campaigns which gather media attention and brings our issues to national attention.

Congress also notes:

We rely on anecdotal memory of what photo stunts/campaign strategies have been used in the past. Often the issues are the same for example, fees, equal rights etc.

Congress mandates:

The Deputy President to compile a database of previous campaigns under relevant headings. By doing this, we are building on our knowledge of what USI has achieved to date. Also, we can learn from what media campaigns have worked in the past and why.

15 GA 1 Seimineár Gaeilge/ Irish Language Seminar

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil:

An tábhacht a bhaineann le Cumainn Ghaelacha ar dul chun cinn na Gaeilge, agus in úsáid na

Gaeilge i gColáistí tríú leibhéal ar fud na tíre.

Sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil:

Leas-Uachtarán Ghaeilge seimineár bhliantúil a heagrú, i bpáirt le heagraíochtaí eile, agus Roinn

na dTeangacha in Institiúidí Oideachais, agus béim speisialta a chuir in earnáil na Gaeilge, Meáin na Gaeilge, agus gníomhaíocht i saol na Gaeilge.

Congress notes:

The importance that Cumann Gaelacha have in the usage, and promotion of Irish in 3rd level institutions across the country.

Congress mandates:

The LU Gaeilge to organise an annual seminar, in conjunction with other organisations, and Language Departments in Educational Institutions, 3rd Level Students, with special emphasis on the Irish Language sector, Irish Language Media, and Irish Language Activism.

15 GA 4 Seachtain na Gaeilge

Congress notes

The importance social events have on the ability for student to practice, and use whatever Irish they have.

Congress mandates:

The LU Gaeilge to organise an annual Seachtain na Gaeilge festival, in conjunction with Conradh na Gaeilge, in the last week of February, as a special stand alone event prior to the National Seachtain na Gaeilge. Congress notes

NOTES

15 CZN 7 General Election Campaign

Congress notes

That General Election will happen in the next 18 months with the likelihood of a new Government.

Congress also notes

This is an opportunity for USI to lobby and assure students' interests are provided for in the next program for Government

Congress therefore mandates

The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write 'the Student Manifesto' to highlight USI's key demands from political parties.

Congress also mandates

The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write 'the Student Guide to the General Election' which will inform the general student body on the election relevant to student issues and interests.

12 CZN 2 STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

Congress notes:

That in order to help fund their education, many students take up a part time job.

Congress welcomes:

The decision to reverse the cut to the minimum wage, which targeted students in part time jobs who are already struggling financially.

Congress notes with concern:

That in many of these jobs, trade union membership is absent and in some places discouraged. Furthermore, many students are unaware of what their rights and entitlements are in relation to time off, payment and hours.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President of Equality and Citizenship to better inform students of their rights in the workplace by providing information that is set out by the LRC, NERA and Employment legislation. This mandate should be completed within the first quarter of the Academic Year. 12 CZN 3 USI STUDENT PARTICIPATION AWARDS

Congress recognises:

A lot of unrecognised valuable work is completed by MOs of USI each year across a wide range of areas and that many students work tirelessly for the betterment of Students' Union and Clubs and Societies.

Congress acknowledges:

That the range of work completed is diverse and covers a vast area of extracurricular activities and that there is little recognition for these students in a formal capacity.

Congress notes:

The success of the BICS Awards and NUS Awards in the UK.

Congress believes:

That the students who work hard in these extracurricular activities should be recognised and acknowledged.

Congress therefore mandates Officerboard:

To organise USI Student Participation Awards whereby students will be accredited for their involvement in local Students' Unions, USI Campaigns and involvement in

Clubs and Societies.

The President and Officer Board to bring forward to the first National Council of 2012/2013 a cohesive plan for the Student Participation Awards which should include the categories that will be included in the Award Ceremony, who will be eligible, how they will be run and judged, deadlines and any other preparation needed.

NOTES



National Student Engagement Programme

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn

NStEP: A National Collaboration

The National Student Engagement Programme was launched in April 2016 by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) with the aim of enhancing student engagement in Irish Higher Education. The Programme has 3 key strands of work: National Student Training Programme, Development of Institutional Capacity and 5 Projects.

Over 1,500 Class Reps have completed the Introductory Class Rep training with NStEP since 2016 and training for online students, research students and part time learners is being developed. 11 Colleges have completed an analysis workshop to develop strategies for better student engagement. To support Colleges with developments in specific topics the 5 NStEP projects have started to develop tools, resources and guidance in the following areas:

- Class Rep Recruitment
- Programme Design and Review
- Feedback Mechanisms & Data
- Strategic Plans & Decision-Making
- Staff Roles and Capacity Building



NStEP has also set up a National Student Engagement Network for Student Representatives and College Staff to meet and exchange ideas twice a year. In collaboration with USI and QQI the National Student QA Reviewers Pool is coordinated by NStEP. For more information go to studentengagement.ie, follow @NStEPie on twitter and visit the NStEP stand outside the main Congress Hall.

Call For Student Trainers Open Now!

Are you enthusiastic, upbeat & approachable? Do you understand the Class Rep Role? Would you like to develop the skills of a trainer? NStEP is seeking 5 new Student Trainers for the



upcoming 2018-2019 academic year to deliver our training programme to Class Reps across 23 Irish Higher Education Institutions. The Pool is made up of students from across Ireland who receive training and are paid to deliver the Class Rep Training sessions. All pool members must be full or part time students and are required to complete a residential training course in late August with sparqs in Dundee.

Applications will close on Friday April 27th and interviews will be held in early May. Go to studentengagement.ie or pick up a form at the NStEP stand to apply.

Institutions

- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Carlow College
- Cork Institute of Technology
- Dublin Business School
- Dublin City University
- Dublin Institute of Technology
- Galway – Mayo Institute of Technology
- Griffith College Dublin
- Hibernia College
- Institute of Art, Design and Technology
- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
- Institute of Technology Carlow
- Institute of Technology Sligo
- Institute of Technology Tallaght
- Institute of Technology Tralee
- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Maynooth University
- National College of Ireland
- NUI Galway
- University College Cork
- University of Limerick
- Waterford Institute of Technology

The National Student Engagement Programme is funded and supported by:

HEA AN TÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



Motions before Congress

Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance

AA 1 : Integrated Pharmacy Masters Campaign

Proposed by University College Cork Students' Union

Congress Notes:

A new integrated Pharmacy Masters' degree has been introduced in Ireland, beginning with the Pharmacy class of 2020. As a result of the new masters, Pharmacy students are no longer authorised to receive payment for their mandatory placements in every phase of the degree. Additionally, they are no longer able to take an international placement, thus driving up the competitive nature of the placements in Ireland for many students. Fees have also increased substantially for the final year of the course to €7500; this fee increase places it in direct contrast with medicine students, who pay the same fee for all 5 years of their degree.

Congress Further Notes:

This issue affects all three schools of Pharmacy in Ireland, which includes students in University College Cork, the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, and Trinity College Dublin.

Congress Believes:

That all students should be paid a fair wage for the placement work they undertake as part of their degree courses, and that, following on from successful campaigns for nursing students in recent years, pharmacy students are entitled to the same right to payment, as they have been in the past.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

That USI campaign in favour of the restoration of paid placement for Pharmacy Students nationwide, and lobby relevant parties for the reduction of fees of the final year of Pharmacy Masters.

AA 2 : Back to Education Allowance Strategy

Proposed by Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress:

Repeals 16 AA

Congress Adopts:

The proposed Amended Back to Education Allowance reform paper.

AA 3 : Placement and work based learning Strategy

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Congress notes

The significant number of students who complete placement or work-based learning elements in order to progress in their programme of study.

Congress further notes

The significant value that quality placement opportunities can have for students, but that they can also create pressure on students academically and personally.

Congress Adopts

The USI Placement and work based learning Strategy

Congress Deletes:

13 AA

AA 4 : Accreditation for Volunteering & Participation

NOTES

Proposed by IT Tallaght Students' Union.

Congress recognises:

The importance of student participation in extra-curricular activities such as clubs & societies, Students' Unions, volunteering and civic engagement during their time in college, and the benefits that engaging in such activity brings about in terms of the overall personal development of the student.

Congress further recognises:

The continued promotion by Students' Unions of students getting involved in these activities, and the associated advantages which can be conferred on students who have been active in these areas when seeking future employment.

Congress notes:

The development of modules and recognition within programmes which exist in some Higher Education Institutions to accredit students for their involvement and participation in these activities, in order to facilitate, recognise and encourage their non-academic as well as academic development whilst in college.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the National forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education and other relevant statutory agencies to develop a national approach to accreditation to student volunteering and participation in other extra-curricular activity

Congress Repeals
Policy 13 AA

AA 5 : Turning STEM into STEAM

Proposed by LIT Students' Union – Academic Affairs

Congress recognises:

Students and courses which fall under Art & Humanities in many cases are overlooked due to a preference for STEM Courses by HEI's and the Department of Education when funding and resources are distributed.

Congress further recognises:

Due to academic and institutional/department preferences towards STEM subjects and STEM research, courses, staff and students within Art & Humanities courses are at risk of course closure, job loss, lack of appropriate facilities and materials as well as a lack appropriate learning spaces which causes uncertainty and concern for thousands of students and professionals across the Island of Ireland. The preference of STEM subjects also sees students in creative courses being forced to pay out huge amounts of money for materials for project work even while still attending their college course.

Congress also recognises:

Employment opportunities in the future for Arts and Humanities are less threatened by technological advancements which has seen many jobs cuts due to people-power being replaced by machinery. Therefore employment opportunities for Arts and Humanities has more potential to be increased than many other fields.

Congress notes:

Where there is a possibility of improving employment opportunities for graduates USI should encourage and lobby for increased focus in relevant areas.

Congress also notes:

Closures of such courses in the areas of Art, Design, Art & Humanities would have a dramatically negative impact on culture, socio-economical circumstances for professionals and students as well as creativity in general.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs and the President to ensure to include the above mentioned funding pressures in lobby efforts of the Department of Education in campaigns such as 'Publicly Funded Education' to give Art & Design as well as Arts & Humanities the same recognition as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and the same funding opportunities.

Congress further mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs and the President to lobby the Department of Education to emphasise the importance of STEAM over STEM especially now in times of economic uncertainty and that research policy and funding should be addressed to place ART, DESIGN, ARTS & HUMANITIES at the centre of STEM.

AA 6 : Creative Arts Student Network

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

Within USI MOs, there are many creative courses across the island of Ireland. Students within these courses struggle to network and communicate with one another at any level. Networking within the creative arts is essential for progression and identification of further development.

Congress further notes:

Graduates from Creative Arts courses tend to have less employment opportunities available in their field. There is a lack of information directly available to creative arts students about specific financial supports available to them.

Congress recognises:

The need for support and promotion of such a network for creative arts students in all MOs.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VPs for Dublin Region, BMW Region, and Southern Region to work with relevant MOs to establish a Creative Arts Student Network to facilitate peer support and networking opportunities.

Congress further mandates:

The VPs for Dublin Region, BMW Region, and Southern Region to work on creating a list including a creative representatives from each relevant MO who will bring local creative issues to the national forefront.

AA 7 : Class representative best practice

Proposed by IT Carlow Students' Union

Congress recognises:

Class representatives are the backbone of a Students' Union in terms of providing a student voice on institutional activities.

Congress notes:

Class Representatives in some member organisations do not fully recognise the power they command.

Congress further notes:

The role of Class Representation, their elections and their implementation operates differently in each individual member organisation.

Congress mandates:

The VP Academic Affairs to coordinate a piece of research that establishes best practice across all third level HEIs in terms of electing, training and empowering Class Reps to perform their roles on a local level, bearing in mind the challenges posed by institution type and size.

Congress further mandates:

The VP AA and VP Campaign to develop a campaign, based on feedback from member organisations, to encourage students to run for class representative positions.

Congress therefore repeals 17AA6

AA 8: USI Grant Reform Policy

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress Approves:

The adoption of the USI Grant Reform Policy.

Congress therefore repeals:

17 AA 1, 15 AA, 14 AAQA, 11 ED 19, 10 ED 5, 16 WEL 2, 15 We 20

AA 9: Further Education and Training Strategy

Proposed by Union Development Working Group

Congress Adopts

The Further Education and Training Strategy.

AA 10 : Teaching Qualification for Lecturers

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress Notes:

That currently in DIT there is a policy that all lecturing staff must obtain a teaching qualification in the form of a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching through the Institute Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre within the first two years of appointment.

Congress Further Notes:

That it is a common concern raised among students that lecturers neither have the required training or qualification to effectively teach a class.

Congress Believes:

That it is important that all lecturers are trained in how to conduct a class, correct assignments etc. effectively. This should be supported by the Institute in the form of training and continual support and guidance.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning to implement a similar policy for all Institutes that would see all lecturers having to obtain or undergo a teaching qualification upon appointment.

AA 11 : Academic Supports for International Students

Proposed by the Vice President Equality and Citizenship

Congress notes

The increasing number of international students, from different countries, backgrounds and experiences, studying in Irish institutions.

Congress further notes

A lack of tailored support for international students, who face significant pressures of integration and often feel excluded in our institutions, including academic supports such as language and communication.

Congress recognises

The huge contribution our international students make to the social and academic life of our institutions, and the need to ensure their needs are catered for so that they can unlock their full potential.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President Academic Affairs to research and examine practices in institutions in academic support for international students.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President Academic Affairs to lobby the Department for Education and Skills for international student access to tailored academic supports, including language support within the curriculum, without financial or other barriers.

AA 12 : Anonymous Marking

Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students' Union

Congress notes

Anonymous marking is the correction of examinations by a lecturer without knowing the learners name first hand.

Congress further notes

Leaving Certificate students entering into third level education will have already had their leaving Certificate examinations corrected anonymously.

Congress Believes

Anonymous marking may reduce the perception of bias marking be it accidental or otherwise.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to conduct research into anonymous marking and form USIs position on it, in order to assist MOs in lobbying for anonymous marking within their own HEI.

AA 13 : Postgraduate Students Strategy

Proposed by the Postgraduate Affairs Working Group

Congress adopts

The Postgraduate Students Strategy.

AA 14 : Mature Student Support

NOTES

Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students' Union

Congress Notes:

The work that USI does on behalf of mature students in the form of running an annual Mature Students Seminar. Most recently held in DIT Grangegorman in October 2017.

Congress Regrets:

That this is not sufficient in representing and supporting mature students in college as their needs are very different to the general student population.

Congress Further Regrets:

That Mature Student Ireland is not transparent and effective in their current representation and support of mature students in their respective Institutes.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with MOs to lobby their respective Institutes to provide support for mature students, especially for those who do not have a Mature Student Office.

Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with Mature Student Ireland to improve how they currently support mature students nationally.

AA 15 : The Marketisation of Third-Level Education

Proposed by the Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

Efforts by Governments and Higher Education Institutions, both in Ireland and internationally, to create a competitive environment in third-level education, especially in Higher Education.

Congress further notes

That this effort to marketise education damages the ethos of education as a social and public good.

Congress recognises

The USI's efforts to campaign and lobby for publicly funded education and protect education as a public good.

Congress believes

That in Ireland the student movement is not proactively discussing or raising the dangers of marketisation and commodification of education, and must be better equipped to do so.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to develop clear policy guidance on the negative consequences of marketisation both locally and nationally, and to work with the Vice President Campaigns to create toolkits for Member Organisations to recognise and campaign against marketisation in their institutions.

AA 16 : The Quality of Teaching in Irish Higher Education

Proposed by the Vice President Academic Affairs

Repeals 14 AA 10

Congress notes

The efforts of USI to support the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to date, and the strong partnership that the two organisations have fostered with one another.

Congress further notes

USI's involvement with significant work around teaching quality, including: the National Learning Impact Awards, especially the Teaching Heroes Awards; collaboration on the enhancement of assessment; developing the Student QA Reviewers Pool; and supporting the development of the National Student Training Programme.

Congress applauds

The significant work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to develop The National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education, based on the model of reflective practice.

Congress believes

That the National Professional Development Framework should be recognised by students as the national tool for improving and enhancing teaching quality and academic staff support.

Congress further believes

That the National Professional Development Framework requires cultural change within our institutions, and in order for it to be implemented effectively, it requires significant buy-in from across the sector, including senior managers, statutory agencies, institutional staff, and Students' Unions.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to work to support and lobby for the implementation and resourcing of the National Professional Development Framework.

AA 17 : European Education Area

Proposed by: Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

The proposed European Education Area (EEA) and new "Sorbonne Process".

Congress notes with concern

That this new EEA is being developed by the European Union, and may potentially create conflicts of interest with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the further development of the Bologna Process, of which USI is highly supportive.

Congress believes

That judgement on the EEA should be reserved, and that without concrete proposals from the European Commission, the EEA may create a "two-tier Bologna" that will inevitably further a destructive agenda of competition in Higher Education across Europe.

Congress further notes

The potential creation of a European Student Card under this new process, and the pilot initiative, in relation to the potential roll-out of the card, currently being

undertaken by the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland (CSSI).

Congress notes with concern

That the purpose and parameters of this Student Card has not been clearly defined, and may represent a move to hold student data at a European level, without real consultation from students.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to liaise with the European Students' Union (ESU) and continually update National Council on developments on the development of the EEA.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs and Vice President Welfare to ensure the voice of USI members is heard through the Irish pilot of the European Student Card being rolled out by the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland.

AA 18 : National Student Partnership Agreement

Proposed by: Academic Affairs Working Group

Repeals 17 AA 5

Congress notes

Efforts to date to enhance student engagement in their education through the work of the National Student Engagement Programme, of which USI is a proactive partner.

Congress further notes

The increasing awareness of the concept of students as partners in their education, and developments both locally and nationally to embed the student voice in all aspects of our institutions.

Congress believes that

Developing 'Student Partnership Agreements' between Institutions and Students' Unions is a positive and constructive avenue through which student participation, representation, and engagement can be fostered, while ensuring the ethos of Students' Unions as autonomous decision-making organisations is protected.

Congress further believes that

There is significant appetite to take a national approach to student partnership.

Congress recognises

The commitment by the Minister for Higher Education to work with USI to develop a national approach to the student voice, both through a Framework on Supporting Students' Union, and through the exploration of Student Charters and Partnership Agreements.

Congress mandates

The USI President and the USI Vice President Academic Affairs to work with the Department for Education and Skills, and all other relevant stakeholders, to lobby for and develop a National Student Partnership Agreement.

Congress further mandates

That any development of a National Student Partnership Agreement should proactively engage students from across the USI membership at every stage.

AA 19: Class Rep Recognition

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

Congress believes

Class Representatives form the backbone of SU and institutional activities in terms of providing a representative student voice within an institution.

Congress notes

The role of class representatives is increasingly being recognised by the HEA and QQI, through national initiatives such as the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP).

Congress further notes

Class Representatives involvement is crucial to the success of such programmes and this involvement needs to be commended and recognised.

Congress recognises

Student time is becoming increasingly scarce due to the nature of semesterisation, and that therefore it is not always possible for them to fully and actively engage with programmes such as the NStEP, and the other functions associated with the role of a class representative.

Congress therefore mandates

The USI VP Academic Affairs to work with the HEA and QQI to look into the feasibility of rolling out formal recognition in the form of accreditation for the position of class representative, similarly to how standard modules are accredited. This accreditation would not replace credits required to complete the learning outcomes but would however add on the the students' degree as additional credits.

AA 20 : Postgraduate Student Funding

Proposed by Dublin City University Students' Union

Congress notes

that at present not all postgraduate students can avail of the student assistance fund in their HEI.

Congress believes

that HEI's must be inclusive and supportive of postgraduate students in tough economic situations.

Congress therefore mandates the VP Education

to investigate this matter and where this issue is present to campaign to the relevant authority to ensure all pg students have access to this vital funding support.

Union Organisation

UO 1 : Location of National Council

Proposed by Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress believes:

That all MOs should have an equal chance of hosting meetings of National Council

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to ensure that the location of National Council, should cycle

between regions, ensuring that a full cycle of the four regions must be concluded before an MO from a previous host region may reapply. A lottery system should be used if more than 1 MO from a region is interested in hosting.

Congress therefore deletes:

15 UO21 National Council Decentralisation

UO 2 : Constitutional Development Support for MOs

Proposed by Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

That all Member Organisations are governed by their constitutions.

Congress Recognises:

Constitutional drafting and reform is a specialist undertaking, which requires significant time and expertise.

Congress notes with Concern:

The lack of national infrastructure available to MOs considering Constitutional Reform.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to investigate the feasibility of developing a national infrastructure for Constitutional Reform for Member Organisations.

UO 3 : Union development intern

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Congress notes

As per the union development strategy, it is the duty of USI to take lead on improving development of the local member organisations and the union as a whole.

Congress further notes

The union development strategy further outlines 3 phases over three years of work in this area. Currently this work is undertaken by the VP for Campaigns.

Congress recognises

The amount of work within union development in USI is not feasible to be looked into fully by one officer on their own.

Congress therefore mandates

The President to explore the possibility of hiring a union development intern to assist the VP for campaigns in implementing this strategy and to further develop the work in union development brief.

UO 4 : Sub-committees of National Council

Proposed by IT Carlow Students' Union

NOTE: AMENDMENT PROPOSED BELOW THIS MOTION

Congress recognises

The importance of having members of National Council elected to sub-committees with specific purposes.

Congress notes

That these members are elected as representatives from each region to perform tasks such as but not limited to planning and evaluation. The members of National Council that are elected to sub-committees are accountable to National Council.

Congress further notes

That USI runs many events to improve participation from underrepresented groups at events, in elections and other initiatives.

Congress mandates

For minutes of sub-committees of National Council meetings, including attendance registers to be available to National Council.

Congress further mandates

USI to promote gender balance on sub-committees of National Council.

AMENDMENT:

Proposed by the President of USI

Replace clause "Congress mandates" with the following:

Congress mandates:

The President to ensure that minutes of sub-committees of National Council, including attendance registers, are made available to members of National Council.

UO 5 : USI Commercial Strategy

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress believes

That USI should create a Commercial Strategy for the organisation.

Congress also believes

The implementation of this strategy is fundamentally important to the future development of USI, in terms of meeting strategic financial targets and adding value to USI membership.

Congress Mandates

The President of USI to oversee the creation and implementation of a USI Commercial Strategy.

Congress repeals

14 AF 2, 14 AF 3

UO 6 : Access breaks at Congress

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

Long hours without breaks decreases attention span and productivity on Congress floor.

Congress further notes

That the increase in productivity from short breaks improves delegate performance and engagement.

Congress acknowledges:

That according to the constitution, “no formal business shall be conducted after 10:30pm”.

Congress therefore mandates:

That there must be a break each day during USI Congress between lunch and dinners. These breaks must not exceed 15 minutes.

UO 7 : USI Rep/Ambassador

Proposed by Institute of Technology Tralee Students' Union

Congress Notes

The importance of student input from a grassroots level within USI.

Congress Also Notes

That students are often unaware of the work being undertaken on their behalf on a national level.

Congress Mandates

The relevant regional officers to work with MO's to recruit a USI rep/ambassador to liaise with USI to disseminate the work being done by USI on a national level to their student body.

UO 8 : General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Proposed by Maynooth University Students' Union

Congress Notes

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will come into force on the 25th May 2018, replacing the existing data protection framework under the EU Data Protection Directive.

Congress Notes with Concern

The lack of visible work being done by USI Officerboard on preparing MOs for the introduction of GDPR.

Congress Notes with Alarm

That the introduction of GDPR will hugely impact the running of autonomous MOs in the absence of GDPR data sharing agreements.

Congress Believes

That as the National Union, USI has a role to play in assisting MOs to be GDPR compliant.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to work with MO's in drafting a framework to identify the key pieces of information, gathered by HEI's, that are needed to be shared with MOs for the legitimate running and operations of MOs.

Congress Further Mandates

Following on from the framework, the President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to draft a sample data sharing agreement, relating to these issues, to be made available to MOs for their use.

UO 9 : Student Levies

Proposed by Maynooth University Students' Union

Congress Notes

That many MOs assist in the delivery of student levies for the HEIs.

Congress Notes with Concern

That sometimes promises or commitments made by HEIs in the lead up to student levy referendums are not always honoured or acted upon after the passing of referendums.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to draft a set of guidelines highlighting an indicative list of guarantees or assurances MO's should seek and obtain from HEIs before deciding to engage in the implementation of a student levy for the HEI.

Congress Further Mandates

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to collate and maintain an annual dossier of details on the current and any known proposed levy models, including but not limited to levy rate, levy lifetime, percentage contribution of levy funds to projects etc, within MOs as to keep a record of developments and changes as they occur.

UO 10 : Supporting strikes that do not affect Students negatively

Proposed by Maynooth University Students' Union

Congress notes

The impact that industrial action in the public transport sector has on third level students' welfare and ability to exercise their human right to education.

Congress further notes

The recent 'no fares' strike on the bus network in Brisbane, Australia. A no fares strike is when public transport is still being operated by striking workers but users are not asked to purchase tickets or otherwise provide monetary payment for using the service. This form of strike is equally impacting on employers as an old-fashioned strike while having no negative impact on those using the service.

Congress believes

That this form of striking is best practice for industrial action as it is most student friendly.

Congress further believes

That trade unions in Ireland should embrace this form of striking as to minimise the negative impact their actions have on students. While Congress fully recognises the workers' right to strike, any support to striking workers must be proportionate with USI's duty to advocate for its members.

Congress mandates

USI to only support 'no fares' strikes and other similar student friendly strikes in public transport in the future

UO 11 : Clean up of Policy Book

NOTES

Proposed by the President of USI

Ruling by Steering Committee: If this motion passes it will not itself pass into the policy book, but will have the effect of simply repealing the designated policies as indicated.

Congress Recognises:

That the current USI Policy Book of 444 policies, contains many policies that are vague, duplicated and outdated.

Congress Believes:

For efficient day to day running of the organisation, mandates and policies need to be clear, relevant and achievable.

Congress also believes:

That long term goals of USI should have their own specific policies that can be amended Congress in the Future.

Congress Notes:

That organising hustings and Q&A forums with TDs has been successful as part of overall campaigns in advance of General Elections, as covered under 15 CZN 3.

Congress further notes:

That this has not been viable outside of elections years, but political engagement has been successful through Lobbying days

Congress therefore deletes:

17 U08 Student Engagement with TDs

Congress Notes:

The constitution defines regional working groups as forums to inform and advise relevant members of the Officerboard, to formulate, review and implement policy and to share expertise and experience. Planning can be implemented in these committees

Congress therefore deletes:

17 U021 Regional planning days

Congress Notes:

That this is currently the only committee mandated to take place at a meeting of National Council, although the majority of Entertainment Officers around the country are part-time and do not attend National Council.

Congress therefore deletes:

17 U026 Entertainment Committees at National Council

Congress Notes:

The training strategy adopted at Congress 2016 ensures that training organised is relevant, flexible and is based on feedback after training and from outgoing officers. It also ensures that there is not large number of mandates for training that cannot fit into a short space of time and result in poor attendance and engagement.

Congress therefore deletes:

11 UO 1 MONEY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

16 UO 16 Casework Training at SUT

17 U09 Marketing Skills Training

17 U017 Comms specific training

17 U022 Trans* Training for Officers

Congress Notes:

Congress therefore deletes:

11 UO 5 MEMBERSHIP WORKING GROUP

Congress Notes:

This was investigated, another motion was passed and packs were provided for a number of year. This was not financially sustainable and the motion fell last year. This should no longer be active mandated.

Congress therefore deletes:

11 UO 8 FRESHERS' PACKS

Congress Notes:

This is a role for the President, Finance Committee and is currently in the Constitution. This does not need to have a seperate mandate.

Congress therefore deletes:

11 UO 9 PAYMENT OF AFFILIATION FEES

Congress Notes:

This mandates USI to work on ensuring corporations pay close to, rather than the actual rate of corporation tax

Congress therefore deletes:

14 NA 3 CORPORATION TAX IN IRELAND

Congress Notes:

This mandate is vague with no specific actions

Congress therefore deletes:

**13 NA 6 RESEARCH INTO THE CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS OF THE
CURRENT CRISIS**

Congress Notes:

This mandate is outdated

Congress therefore deletes:

13 NA 5 CROKE PARK AGREEMENT

Congress Notes:

The minimum wage is not higher that pre 2010 levels, we also have a policy on the introduction of a living wage

Congress therefore deletes:

11NA 6 MINIMUM WAGE

Congress Notes: *The cost of congress is investigated each year by the Finance Committee with 4 elected members of National Council*

Congress therefore deletes:

13 AF 3

Congress Notes: *This has been included in the health promotion strategy*

Congress therefore deletes:

14 wel 1 Update alcohol policy

Congress Notes: The inclusion of Smoking Cessation within the Health Promotion Strategy, and a new one submitted by an MO for Congress 2018.

Congress therefore deletes:

14 wel 2 Smoking Cessation

Congress Notes: The passing of an updated version was passed at Congress 2017.

Congress therefore deletes:

16 wel 14 Bereavement

Congress Notes: Overlaps with 17 AA 4 and 17 AA 5

Congress therefore deletes:

13 AA STUDENTS RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

Congress therefore deletes:

13 AA

UO 12 : Review of committee meeting preceding National Council

Proposed by the Presidents' Working Group

Congress Notes:

That there are currently 10 constitution committees that usually take place the day of, or before a meeting of National Council.

Congress Recognises:

The difficulty in holding each of these committee meetings in a short space without a significant number clashing.

Congress notes with concern:

That part-time officers, who do not attend National Council are unable to engage with these committees.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to review the current structure of committees preceding National Council meetings.

Congress Further Mandates:

The President to investigate the possibility of some of these committee meetings taking place separate to National Council with the option of Video Conferencing.

UO 13 : Historical Record of the Mandate Manual and Policies

Proposed by the Presidents' Working Group

Congress notes:

That currently, the USI Mandate Manual is a live document that is constantly changing.

Congress Recognises:

The importance of organisational memory in USI

Congress Mandates:

The President to ensure that a historical record of the Mandate manual for each year is recorded and made available online.

Congress Further Mandates:

That historical records of all policies and strategies are recorded and made available online after Congress each year.

UO 15 : Pre Budget Submission

Proposed by the Presidents' Working Group

Congress notes:

That the Government accept submission on budget proposals each year.

Congress mandates:

The President to ensure that USI submit a pre-budget submission, based on mandates from congress, and that a Lobbying day is organised to discuss this submission with members of the Oireachtas. This is to take place before the Dáil's Summer recess each year.

Congress therefore deletes:**11 UO 3****UO 16 : Gender Equality on Finance Committee**

Proposed by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

Congress notes

That gender balance at USI finance committee is an ongoing issue.

Congress believes

That USI should be a positive force for promoting the participation of our self-identifying female members at all levels.

Congress notes

The president nominates 4 people to finance committee; three qualified people from outside the Union, who are not members of the Union but may be serving Trustees, who can contribute by virtue of their experience, and one former President of the Union.

Congress mandates

The President insofar as practicable, to ensure their nominees are gender balanced.

UO 15 : Officer Report Transparency

Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

That Officer report transparency is important when it comes to trusting the good work done by the Officerboard.

Congress therefore mandates:

Officerboard to provide their expenses claimed and annual leave taken on their officer report at each National Council.

UO 16 : An Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar Fho-Choiste- An Coiste Cultúrtha as another Subcommittee of NC

Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Gur éirigh leis an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge Choiste Cultúrtha a thoghadh i mbliana, tar éis easpa fada.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Gur éirigh leis an Choiste sár-obair a dhéanamh agus naisc luachmhaire a chruthú idir gaeilgeoirí agus lucht suime na Gaeilge.

Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart an Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar ‘ad-hoc Fho-Choiste’ den Chomhairle Náisiúnta agus go mbeadh na baill tofa ag an chéad Chomhairle Náisiúnta achan bliain.

Congress notes

That the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge succeeded in electing the first Coiste Cultúrtha this year, after a long absence of such.

Congress understands

That the Coiste succeeded in doing good work and creating new links between Irish speakers and those interested in Irish.

Therefore, Congress mandates

That An Coiste Cultúrtha would be created as an ad-hoc subcommittee of National Council, and elected at the first National Council of the year, every year.

UO 17 : Cur Chun Cinn Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann/ Promotion of Irish Sign Language

Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Gur aithníodh Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann mar tríú teanga oifigiúil i stát na hÉireann sa bhliain seo ag Dáil Éireann.

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Go bhfuil níos mó ná mionteanga amháin in Éirinn, agus gur cheart fáilte a chur roimh Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann mar an tríú teanga oifigiúil.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge bheith aireach ar mhionteangacha eile sa tír seo, agus gur féidir tacú leis an Teanga Comharthaíochta go héasca mar chuid d’fheachtasaíocht.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil ar

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge an Teanga Comharthaíochta a thacú ina ról, agus chun ar a laghad ócáid amháin a chur ar siúl a thabharfaidh léargas ar an teanga agus deis do lucht na teanga sin a dteanga a chéiliúradh.

Congress notes

That Irish Sign Language has been recognised as a third official language in the Irish state in this year by Dáil Éireann.

Congress further notes

That there is more than one minority language in Ireland and that the ISL should be welcomed as the third official language of the state.

Congress understands

That the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge should be mindful of other minority languages in this country, and it is possible to support the ISL easily as a part of

campaigning.

Therefore, Congress mandates

That the LU don Ghaeilge should support the ISL in their role, and to at least organise one event that will give an overview of the language and give an opportunity to the users of the language to celebrate the language.

UO 18 : The very limited time available for Working Groups at USI National Council events.

Proposed by Dublin City University Students' Union

Congress recognises:

That significant time is used to discuss topics which are only relevant to different subgroups of these Working Groups. Some examples of discussions that deserve to be discussed, but are only of relevance to subgroups are: engaging students on satellite campuses, mergers of Institutes of Technology, lack of student services, University Statues, etc.

Congress believes:

That these are issues of great importance, but would be better suited to being addressed in additional subgroups set up for those specific purpose.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to provide a platform, video conference or otherwise, to address these subsections of Working Groups.

UO 19 : Plastic and Sustainability

Proposed by Dublin City University Students' Union

Congress notes

the growth of plastic free and plastic reduction campaigns within HEI's over the past year.

Congress believes

that it is imperative that we as a society reduce the negative impacts we have on the environment.

Congress therefore adopts as policy

our support of plastic free and plastic reduction campaigns.

Congress mandates the VP Campaigns

to create a campaign package that will incorporate plastic free and plastic reduction strategies and mechanisms which MO's can avail of, where they wish to support this campaign within their own HEI.

UO 20 : Paper Cups and Sustainability

Proposed by Dublin City University Students' Union

Congress notes

that every day in Ireland 2 million disposable coffee cups end up in landfill waste.

Congress believes

that this is an ordinate and avoidable level of waste.

Therefore Congress calls on

the government to introduce a 20c levy on all disposable coffee cups.

Congress further calls

for the revenue from this levy to be ring-fenced to support waste reduction strategies.

Welfare

WEL 1 : Counselling and Mental Health Support for Students' Union Officers.

Proposed by LIT Students' Union - Welfare

Congress recognizes:

The toll a year in Students' Union can take on the mental health of a sabbatical officer and the negative impact this can have on their working ability and their personal lives.

Congress also recognizes:

Sabbatical Officers quite likely experience Vicarious Trauma, due to the nature of their work.

Congress notes:

Currently if a sabbatical officer wants to seek counselling, this service can only be availed through on campus services or seeking it externally. This can prove to be costly when it is externally sourced and in many cases it is not appropriate for an SU Officer to avail of services internally as it may negatively impact on working relations within Institutes and Universities.

Congress also notes:

Most Aid organisation/NGOs/ support organisations have a form of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or Supervision in place; which exists to alleviate Vicarious Trauma or any personal difficulties faced due to the nature of the work, and that officers could greatly benefit from a similar set up.

Congress further notes:

The success of video doc and that a similar service could work for counselling. The possibility of counselling being offered online would also help to facilitate officers who are seeking support but may struggle in terms of finding time to attend sessions.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to explore the possibility of providing free counselling services and mental health support to all USI and SU sabbatical officers throughout their term with an additional number of de-brief sessions to follow on from the end of an officer's term.

WEL 2 : Online Student Assistance Fund

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

The Student Assistance Fund is distributed through different application processes across HEIs.

While some have the resources to accept applications online, many do not. This can cause a drain on resources dealing with applications for both institute staff and SU officers, and ultimately prolongs the amount of time it takes to provide students in financial need with support.

Congress recognises:

An offline application process can exclude some access students and students studying abroad from accessing the SAF.

Congress further notes:

SUSI's upcoming move to an online application process in the interest of a more accessible system for students.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice-President for Welfare to lobby the HEA to move towards providing an online system for SAF applications to institutions should they wish to adopt it.

WEL 3 : Cap on Student Accommodation Prices on USI platforms

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

That there is a national housing crisis and student accommodation shortage.

Congress applauds:

That USI have launched homes.usi.ie and are a part of the national Housing Coalition.

Congress proposes:

Alongside the excellent work that USI does at the moment regarding accommodation, they need to also set a precedent for the housing and economic conditions that they envision.

Congress therefore mandates:

USI impose a cap on the price of the accommodation that they will platform.

Congress further notes:

That the price of accommodation fluctuates depending on the economy, and so this proposed cap will also fluctuate.
The amount can be amended accordingly by the VP Welfare each year in accordance to national rental prices.

WEL 4 : Drug awareness and harm reduction campaign

Proposed by IT Carlow Students' Union

Congress recognises

The importance of running an engaging national campaign on drugs awareness and harm reduction.

Congress notes

Some of the material used to bring awareness to this topic is not very engaging for students in third level education.

Congress mandates

The VP Welfare to work with Sesh Safety, The Loop and other relevant organisations to develop and run a drugs awareness and harm reduction national campaign by the end of the first semester.

Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare to provide training and guidance for member organisations on how to develop suitable policies within their Higher Education Institution on drug awareness and harm reduction models.

Congress therefore repeals:

16 WEL 12

WEL 5 : Crisis Counselling Access

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

The importance of young people to seek help from mental health services, despite the difficulty in accessing them due to unacceptable wait times.

Congress further notes:

Short term free public crisis counselling services are inaccessible to those who are currently in the care of the HSE and awaiting appointments that are potentially months away.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the HSE to provide a list of mental health organisations that mental health professionals and case workers can refer people to when wait times are too long.

Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the HSE to negotiate with short term counselling services to accept patients currently under the care of the HSE for counselling.

WEL 6 : Timetabled Wellness Hours

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

The success of wellness hours in certain MO's of USI in educating students in regards to a holistic lifestyle and also giving space and potential for personal development whilst in an extremely academic driven Institution.

Congress further notes:

The USI Mental Health Survey will give a rounded view of what ways students are struggling in regards to their mental health and thus this information could be used to see in what regard Wellness Hours could be targeted to address these issues.

Congress mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to develop a proposal document based on the USI Mental Health survey outlining the benefits of timetabled Wellness Hours on students from a holistic lifestyle approach with a focus on student retention, mental health and wellbeing. This document would be intended to be used by MO's in a hope to establish scheduled wellness hours in their Institute.

Congress further mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to lobby the relevant educational bodies to incorporate scheduled wellness hours as a national objective for Third Level Institutions.

WEL 7 : National Niteline Service

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

Niteline is a confidential listening and information service. The key principles of Niteline are to provide a service that is confidential, anonymous, non-judgemental and non-directive. Niteline is usually run by trained students for students who

need someone to talk to and there are successful examples of this in MO's of USI.

Congress further notes:

A National Niteline where any student from any college could avail of this service would be extremely beneficial to students as this service would have the potential to reach out to a wider student base. A service like this would help students whom have a difficult circumstance that they are trying to deal with and may be the first point of contact for many of them.

Congress mandates:

The USI VP for Welfare to investigate and develop a best practise model for running a Niteline service.

Congress further mandates:

The USI VP for Welfare to develop a USI National Niteline Service ran by students for students in order to be able to offer every student this confidential listening and information service.

WEL 8 : Regional Food Banks

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes

Food banks acquire donations of edible but unmarketable food from the food industry. Food can be donated due to a wide variety of reasons; they may be mislabelled, overproduced, test -market items and products with short code dates or even sometimes at the end of the day canteens in colleges throw away food that is perfect for consumption.

Congress further notes

Students who are struggling financially could be able to get some food from a food bank at the end of the day.

Congress mandates

Regional Officers to assist local MO's in setting up food banks for students in financial hardship, with their college canteens or other external sources.

WEL 9 : Student Assistance Fund Access

Proposed by Institute of Technology Tralee Students' Union

Congress notes

The essential assistance the SAF (Student Assistance Fund) provides to students.

Congress further notes

According to the SAF Guidelines "students participating on a second qualification at the same or a lower level are not eligible for funding."

Congress notes with concern

The barriers to accessing the SAF for these students could be detrimental to continuing their studies.

Congress therefore mandates

The VP Welfare to work with the HEA to seek inclusion for these students so they may be eligible to apply for the SAF

WEL 10 : Engagement with Irish Student Health Association (ISHA) members

Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students' Union

Congress notes

That the health and wellbeing of the members of each MO is of great importance to USI.

Congress further notes

Student health services are very important part of HEI's throughout country by caring for and engage with many students on a daily basis.

Congress Believes

That engaging with member organisations of the Irish Student Health Association is very beneficial to ensure that health and wellbeing campaigns run by USI are fully exposed to students and one clear consistent message is communicated throughout the country.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to communicate all relevant health & wellbeing campaigns in advance with ISHA and member organisations of ISHA

WEL 11 : Smoking Cessation Campaign

Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students' Union

Congress notes

USI, HSE & DRUGS.IE have run campaigns on the dangers of drug use, but have neglected to highlight the dangers of smoking regular tobacco cigarettes and electronic cigarettes and how addictive they are.

Congress Believes

That educating students about the dangers of smoking regular tobacco cigarettes and electronic cigarettes may lead to a decrease in use.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to carry out comprehensive national campaigns on smoking cessation and the dangers of smoking.

WEL 12 : Abusive Relationships, Sexual Violence & Harassment

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

Congress Notes

The suffering that is caused by the many levels of abusive relationships, sexual violence and harassment.

Congress Recognises

That several national organisations are doing work in the area of domestic violence, sexual harassment, violence, and emotional abuse, and the USI should build partnerships with them in order to ensure students are part of their target audiences moving forward.

Congress Mandates

The VP Welfare to roll out a national information campaign that is inclusive of all genders and none around abusive relationships, dating abuse, sexual violence and harassment in a similar fashion to the the "Too into You" campaign.

Congress Also Mandates

The VP Welfare & VP Campaigns to create a toolkit for MO's on sexual harassment to be disseminated alongside an awareness campaign.

Congress Further Mandates

The VP Welfare and VP Equality & Citizenship to develop a partnership with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCII) in their project work nationally to end sexual violence and harassment at third level.

Congress therefore deletes

17 EQ 4 - Expansion of "2in2u" Campaign.

WEL 13 : Health Promotion Strategy

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

Congress Notes

The Health Promotion Strategy that was adopted by USI Congress 2016.

Congress Commends

The work undertaken by Officerboard at that time in relation to this strategy.

Congress Mandates

The adoption and implementation of the updated Health Promotion Strategy 2018-2021.

WEL 14 : Cura Disassociation

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

Congress Notes

The support that pregnant people may need during a crisis pregnancy is non-judgemental, unbiased and factual.

Congress Notes

Cura does not provide contact details for abortion clinics, or information on abortion services.

Congress Notes with Concern

That Cura only provides two options during pregnancy counselling which can cause unnecessary pressure and lack of knowledge to make an informed choice.

Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to ensure that all information disseminated from USI is from organisations that provide all options to those seeking counsel on information relating to pregnancy.

Congress also Mandates

USI and the Vice President for Welfare to officially dissociate from Cura by ensuring information from them is not disseminated in any USI materials or campaigns relating to Cura.

WEL 15 : Cyberbullying Policy

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

Congress Notes

The adoption of the USI Cyberbullying Policy which was adopted at congress 2017.

Congress also Notes

How quickly issues change in the cyber community and how USI policy must be kept up to date to reflect that.

Congress Mandates

For the adoption of a new updated Cyber Bullying policy which will be reviewed every 12 months.

Congress also mandates

The deletion of the older version of the cyberbullying policy.

WEL 16 : Expert Consent Advisory Group

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

Congress Notes

Existing USI policy on Train the Trainer consent workshops to be rolled out by USI.

Congress Notes with concern

The severity of issues surrounding consent that students across the island of Ireland face on a daily basis.

Congress also Notes

The work undertaken by other organisations on consent and the level of expertise and experience they hold in this area.

Congress Mandates

The VP Welfare to organise an expert advisory group to advise on the roll out of Train the Trainer consent classes.

WEL 17 : Financial Supports for FE Students

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

Congress Notes

That many students in Further Education suffer financial worries

Congress also Notes

The lack of supports available to students in FE institutions which can cause a lot of extra pressures.

Congress notes with concern

Students in FE institutions may be disadvantaged because of lack of financial supports such as ESF and the disability fund.

Students also Notes with concern

That it can create a barrier to students you may want to progress to Higher Education, further studies or training.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP Welfare to lobby the Department of Education and to extend financial supports to FE Students.

National Affairs

NA 1 : Coalition for Homelessness and housing policies

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Ruling by Steering: This motion would require a simple majority (50%+1) to pass.

Congress notes

The Coalition For Homelessness And Housing formed in 2016 with USI becoming members in 2017.

Congress recognises the coalition policies are:

1. The housing and homelessness situation should be declared an emergency.
2. An end to economic evictions: No loss of principal residency due to economic distress.
3. Regulation of the private rented sector. Security of tenure and rent certainty.
Greater enforcement and inspection. Limit rent rises to a link such as the consumer price index. Public led provision of student accommodation. A charter of housing rights for all renters in the private sector (including students).
4. A local authority led emergency response to the housing crisis addressing the issue of vacant units, including the use of compulsory purchase orders and the refurbishment of existing units to meet public housing targets.
5. Public policy should aim to increase the output of public housing to an annual rate of 10,000 units per year by late 2018/early 2019 at an estimated cost of €1.8 billion per annum. At least three quarters of these must be provided by local authorities.
6. Additional capital expenditure of €1,150 million in 2018 on top of 2017's planned €655 million provided from the fiscal space available for 2018 and additional tax measures such as the fast-tracking of the vacant site levy and by borrowing. Greater flexibility as regards the application of EU fiscal rules for investment in public housing.
7. An integrated strategy of well-planned mixed income housing provided by the local authorities on publicly owned land.
8. Redirect the billions spent on subsidising private landlords to the provision of public housing while continuing and improving necessary rent assistance.
9. The development of a cost rental model as a matter of urgency. Adoption and adaption of NERI's March 2017 proposals for a European cost rental model.
10. Land zoned for housing that is owned by local authorities should be used primarily to provide public housing by local authorities, instead of being made available to private developers.
11. Decent pay and working conditions in the construction sector aiming for the use of unionised and direct labour.
12. Full expenditure of improved funding for Traveller accommodation.
13. Socially inclusive and energy efficient standards for public housing
14. Steps taken to inscribe the Right to Housing in the constitution.

15. An end now to emergency provision for families in bed and breakfast accommodation and the provision for them of suitable public housing. Improved and expanded hostel accommodation for homeless people on the street.

Congress therefore adopts

The current policies (as of 23 February 2018) of the coalition, which is inclusive of student specific housing issues.

NA 2 : Sustainability Targets and Carbon Tax

Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Ruling by Steering: This motion would require a 2/3 majority to pass.

Congress notes:

The United Nations states that climate change is one of the major challenges of our time and adds considerable stress to our societies and to the environment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.

Congress further notes:

Since 1991, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has published an average of one such study a year regarding Carbon taxes. All have delivered the same message: raising the tax on carbon is a crucial policy instrument to tackle climate change. In 2010 a carbon tax was introduced in Ireland. The carbon tax applies to kerosene, marked gas oil, liquid petroleum gas, fuel oil, natural gas and solid fuels.

Congress notes with concern:

Ireland is expected to fail to meet their targets, made in agreement with the European Union, and despite both the ESRI evidence and the lack of progress towards achieving these targets, Ireland failed to increase the carbon tax in budget 2018.

Congress also notes with concern:

The decision not to raise carbon tax and diesel tax substantially in recent budgets, causes great concern to where Climate Change falls as a national priority.

Congress believes:

With public pressure, significant progress can be made regarding achieving these national targets.

Congress mandates:

USI to work in partnership with appropriate campaign groups to actively lobbying government on meeting sustainability targets.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to directly lobby government to increase the carbon tax in Ireland.

NA 3 : 24/7 Cardiac Care for the South East

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union

Ruling by Steering: This motion would require a 2/3 majority to pass.

Congress notes:

Waterford and the extended South East including the student population of the

NOTES

regionally have Cardiac Cover in University Hospital Waterford Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

Congress further notes:

The People of the South East are at a serious risk as are students with the lack of this essential facility which is currently being provided in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway as a 24/7 365 days a year service.

Congress Mandates:

The USI President and Welfare Officer to lobby the Minister for Health and any other relevant decision makers in the Government stating the absolute need for 24/7 365 Cardiac Care for the South East in UHW with the aim of this service being provided as soon as possible.

NA 4 : Seanad Reform

Ruling by Steering: This motion would require a simple majority (50%+1) to pass.

Proposed by the President of USI

Congress notes:

Prior to the 7th amendment, it was a constitutional requirement that three members of Seanad Éireann, be elected by the graduates of the National University of Ireland and three by the graduates of the University of Dublin (Trinity College).

Congress further notes:

The 7th amendment to Bunreacht na hÉireann passed by referendum on the 5th of July 1979 with a majority of 92.4%. This amendment allowed for six senators to be elected by the graduates of any institutions of higher education in any manner that might be determined by law by the Oireachtas (parliament).

Congress notes with concern:

That there has been no legislative change in reforming the University Constituencies since the passing of the referendum almost 40 years ago.

Congress believes:

That the current electoral system is elitist and is disengaged from the majority of citizens

Congress applauds:

The Manning report that was launched in 2015, recommending reforms to the Elections, powers and reforms of the Seanad.

Congress mandates:

The President to lobby the government to implement the recommendations from the Manning Report.

Congress further mandates:

The President to lobby for a proposed amendment to the constitution to reform the Seanad including, but not limited to, the removal of 11 seats being nominated by the Taoiseach and the stipulation that all voting be by secret postal ballot.

International Affairs

NOTES

IA 1 : Graduate USA Visa

Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Ruling by Steering: This motion would require a simple majority (50%+1) to pass.

Congress notes:

The popularity of the 1 Year USA Graduate Programme among Irish Graduates, which gives an opportunity to intern in the USA for 1 year without having any pre-arranged internship before travelling.

Congress believes:

The 1 Year USA Graduate Programme provides an excellent opportunity for Irish Graduates to gain invaluable experience in launching their careers.

Congress further notes:

The short timeframe graduates have to demonstrate their worth to employers, from beginning employment to requesting that employers being the sponsorship process.

Congress also believes:

Many participants of the programme are denied sponsorship by employers due to an insufficient amount of time to demonstrate their skills and worth.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to lobby the relevant Irish and US Departments (i.e. the US State Department, Department of Labour and Department of Homeland Security), to extend the one year limit to two years, if requested by a participant of the programme who is currently in employment.

IA 2 : Justice and human rights for Palestine

Proposed by Queen's University, Belfast Students' Union

Ruling by Steering: This motion would require a 2/3 majority to pass.

Congress notes:

That the state of Israel is involved in a brutal military occupation of the Palestinian territories

The occupation is responsible for systematic, widespread and ongoing human rights abuses against the local Palestinian population, including destruction of homes, theft of land and water resources, imprisonment without trial, torture of prisoners, and construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

That the State of Israel is in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. The settlements have also been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice and the UK government with Amnesty International stating that "Israel's settlement policy is inherently discriminatory and has resulted in grave human rights violations including destruction of homes, forced evictions, unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions and collective punishment".

Congress believes:

That Israel should end its occupation of the Palestinian territories and allow the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international law.

That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of

person, self-determination, security and parity of esteem as all other peoples in the world today.

That a boycott of Israel's entire regime of oppression, including all of the Israeli companies and institutions that are involved in its violations of international law, is a reasonable non-violent activity that can be taken to register opposition to such crimes.

That the Palestinian led BDS campaign does not target anyone or anything based on identity, but rather based solely on complicity in denying Palestinian rights and that BDS is a strategy for effective solidarity, not a dogma or ideology and certainly not an attack upon Jewish communities or individuals.

Congress mandates Officer Board:

To inform MOs of the background to the situation in Israel/Palestine and to commemorate Palestine Solidarity Day, working with any relevant groups such as student societies and civil society organisations local to each of our campuses.

To support an Academic Boycott of Israeli Higher Education institutions complicit in normalising, providing intellectual cover for, and supporting settler-colonialism. This includes policies that amount to Apartheid, encouraging recruitment to the Israeli Defence Forces, and providing support to the militarist occupation of Palestine.

To lobby our university to divest itself from and terminate any contracts with companies that are complicit in the occupation of the Palestinian territories and violation of Palestinian human rights more widely

To join the global movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it ends the occupation and complies with international law.

Gaeilge / Irish Language

IL 1 : Updating of Language and Terminology – Uasdhátú Téarmaíochta agus Teanga

Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

Tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Deara:

An sár-obair atá déanta ag an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le linn na bliana maidir le haistriúchán na dtéarmaí LADTA+ go Gaeilge.

Anuas air sin, tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Deara:

Go raibh an obair seo an-thábhachtach, agus in éineacht leis seo, rinneadh obair ag eagraíochtaí eile sa bhliain maidir le haistriúchán téarmaíochta go Gaeilge, mar shampla, téarmaíocht a bhaineann le cine.

Tuigeann An Comhdháil:

Chun reachtaíocht a scríobh in Éirinn, caithfear í a scríobh trí mhéan na Gaeilge, agus go bhfuil an leagan Gaeilge den dlí agus den bhunreacht mar ard-leagan dóibh.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn An Comhdháil:

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge obair leanúnach a dhéanamh maidir le haistriúchán na dtéarmaí atá chun cinn i gcúrsaí cothroime in Éirinn, agus gur cheart dóibh díriú isteach ar an téarmaíocht nach bhfuil mar fhócas i measc eagraíochtaí eile a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge go speisialta.

Congress Notes

The excellent work done by USI VP for Irish Language this year regarding translating LGBTQ+ terms into Irish.

Congress further notes

That this work was very important, and that alongside it there has been work by other bodies this year translating terminology into Irish, such as terminology related to race.

Congress understands

That in order for legislation to be written in Ireland, it needs to be written into the Irish language, and that the supreme form of the law and constitution are the Irish Language versions.

Congress therefore mandates

That the VP for Irish Language work continually on translating terminology that is at the fore front of social justice issues in Ireland and that they focus on terminology that may not be the focus of other Irish Language groups.

IL 2 : Cumas na gComhaltas maidir le toghadh Oifigeach Gaeilge- Union Capability regarding Election of IL Officers

Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go bhfuil sár-obair curtha isteach ag na hoifigigh Ghaeilge in Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn, agus go cuireann siad go mór le hobair a gComhaltas agus le hobair Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn go hiomlán.

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Nach bhfuil oifigeach Gaeilge in achan Aontas/Comhaltas, agus is minic nach bhfuil easpa Oifigeach Gaeilge mar an chloch is mó sa phaidrín ag comhaltais éagsúla.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Nach bhfuil sé ar chumas ag achan Aontas/Comhaltas Oifigeach Gaeilge a bheith acu go fóilleach, agus go bhfuil, i gcásanna, riachtanais níos práinní acu i gcomhthéacs na gcampas ar a bhfuil an Comhaltas ag obair (mar shampla, ní bheadh ranganna/cúrsaí Gaeilge ag achan ball-eagraíocht).

Mar sin, aisghaireann an Comhdháil

13 G 6

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge tacú le grúpaí eile ar champas a bheadh in ann cuidiú leo ina n-obair: Oifigigh Chultúrtha, Oifigigh Idirnáisiúnta, agus araile. Ba cheart ról an oifigigh Gaeilge a chur chun cinn, ach caithfear tuiscint nach bhfuil toghchán an oifigigh sin ar chumas achan Comhaltas go fóill.

Congress notes

That excellent work has been done by the Oifigigh Ghaeilge in the Union of Students in Ireland, and that they contribute greatly to the work of their unions and USI in general.

Congress further notes

That not every Union has an Oifigeach Gaeilge, and frequently the lack of this officer is not the most urgent concern for those Unions.

Congress understands

That not every Union has the capability to elect an Oifigeach Gaeilge yet, and that, in cases, there are more urgent needs to be addressed in the context of the campuses on which these Unions are functioning (for example, there would not be Irish classes/courses in every member organisation).

Thus, Congress repeals

13 G 6

Therefore, Congress mandates

That the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge should also support other groups on campus that would be able to assist them in their work: Cultural Officers, International Officers, and others. The role of an Oifigeach Gaeilge should be promoted, but it must be understood that the election of said officer is not a reality for every union yet.

IL 3 : Scéim Teanga AMLÉ a chur i bhfeidhm – Implementation of USI Irish Language Scheme

Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Nach bhfuil scéim leanúnach nó soiléir ag Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn maidir le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge san eagraíocht faoi láthair.

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Gur cheart go mbeadh scéim lárnach i bhfeidhm a thabharfaidh treoir don LU don Ghaeilge ina ról, agus a thabharfaidh leanúnachas do chur chun cinn na Gaeilge san eagraíocht ar fad.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Gur doiciméad oibre é seo, agus go bhfuil na tnútháin réasúnta go leor ag an pointe seo, toisc nach bhfuil scéim teanga ag an Aontas faoi láthair, agus go gcaithfidh tógáil ar an obair seo as seo amach.

Mar sin, aisghaireann An Comhdháil

14.GA.3

Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Ar an LU don Ghaeilge, i bpáirt leis an Uachtarán, chun cinntiú go mbeadh an scéim seo curtha i bhfeidhm san eagraíocht, agus go ndéantar athbhreithniú ar an doiciméid go bliainiúil.

Congress notes

That the Union of Students in Ireland does not currently have a continuous or clear scheme regarding the promotion of the Irish language within the organisation.

Congress further notes

That it is right that there is a central scheme in operation that would direct the LU don Ghaeilge in their role, and that would give continuity to the promotion of the Irish Language in the entire organisation.

Congress understands

That this is a working document, and that the expectations therein are reasonable at this point, since there is no scheme in operation at the minute, and that this work must be built upon in the future.

Thus, Congress repeals

14.GA.3

Therefore, Congress mandates

The LU don Ghaeilge, along with the President, to certify that this scheme will be implemented in the organisation, and that this document will be reviewed on a yearly basis so that the LU don Ghaeilge can amend if needed in the future.

IL 4 : Tuairisc ar Oideachas na Gaeilge – Report on the Education of Irish

Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

Tugann An Comhdháil faoi deara

Go bhfuil neart polasaithe ar an fhód maidir le foghlaim agus oideachas na Gaeilge i meánscoileanna an Phoblacht na hÉireann, agus gur chuimsigh na rúin seo mórlach na rún don LU don Ghaeilge go stairiúil.

Anuas air sin, tugann An Comhdháil faoi deara

Go mbaineann tábhacht agus conspóid ar leith le teagasc na Gaeilge ag an dara leibhéal, le Gaelscolaíocht, agus le measúnú na teanga go ginearálta.

Tuigeann An Comhdháil

Go bhfuil neart polasaithe a bhaineann leis an oideachas ar an fhód, agus gur cheart tuairisc nó polasaí amháin a chruthú, ag tarraingt ar an dáta is déanaí chun polasaí sruthlíneach amháin a chur ar fáil a théann i ngleic le ceist na Gaeilge sa chóras oideachais.

Mar sin, aisghaireann An Comhdháil

16 IL 2, 16 IL 3, 13 G 7, 11 NA 3, 11 NA 4

Mar sin, sainordaíonn An Comhdháil

Ar an LU don Ghaeilge polasaí Oideachas na Gaeilge a chruthú ag cur ceist na Gaelscolaíochta, na hArdteiste, agus araile, san áireamh.

Congress notes

That many mandates exist regarding the learning and education of the Irish language in the secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland, and that these motions have historically encompassed many of the mandates of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge historically.

Congress further notes

That the question of Irish language education is both controversial and important at the second level, in the context of Gaelscoileanna, and with the question of assessment in general.

Congress understands

That many mandates related to education are currently in existence, and that it is right to produce one report or policy, drawing on the most recent data to create one streamlined policy that will deal with the question of the education of the Irish language.

As a result, Congress repeals

16 IL 2, 16 IL 3, 13 G 7, 11 NA 3, 11 NA 4

Therefore, Congress mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to create a policy/report on the education of the Irish language, taking Gaelscolaíocht, the Leaving Certificate, etc., into account.

IL 5 : Gaeltacht Requirement for Student Teachers

Proposed by St Angela's College Sligo Students' Union

Congress Notes

The high cost of attending courses in the Gaeltacht combined with the difficulties student teachers face when registering with the Teaching Council. When registering with the Teaching Council, obstacles facing students are not limited to cost. Students must prove their Gaeltacht experience in order to gain a teaching council number.

Tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Dheara

Na deacrachtaí móra atá ann le haghaidh an mhic léinn mhúinteoireachta agus iad ag iarraidh clarú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta. Chomh maith leis sin bíonn sé an-chostasach dóibh. Ní hamháin teorainneacha airgeadais atá i gceist. Caithfidh an mhic léinn mhúinteoireachta fianaise a léiriú chun uimhir a fháil.

Congress Understands

The need for clarity on what can be described as a verifiable Gaeltacht experience. Both work and study placements undertaken in the Gaeltacht have the capacity to enhance a students' academic and personal development.

Anuas ar sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi dheara

Cén sórt tréimhse Gaeltachta atá ag teastáil agus conas is féidir fianaise a thabhairt. Is féidir le tréimhse Gaeltachta cumais acadúil agus forbairt phearsanta na dalta a fheabhsú

Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP for the Irish Language and the VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the Teaching Council and the Department of Education for achievable learning outcomes, clarity and increased financial support.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

An LU don Ghaeilge agus an VP AA stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar an Roinn Oideachais agus an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta chun torthaí foghlama, soiléire agus níos mó tacaíocht airgeadais.

This motion repeals:

15 GA 3 and 12 AA 6

IL 6 : Inclusion of Irish in USI roadshows

NOTE: AMENDMENT BELOW

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students' Union

Congress commends:

All the work USI has done thus far on the promotion of the Irish language

Congress also notes:

The need for Irish to be integrated into all campaigns run by USI

Congress mandates:

The Leas Uachtaran don Ghaeilge to work with relevant policy officers, to create elements of USI roadshows that use the Irish language, and to roll these out in MOs where appropriate.

Amendment 1

Proposed by NUI Galway Students' Union

Replace clause "Title" with the following; Inclusion of Irish in USI Campaigns

Amendment 2

Proposed by NUI Galway Students' Union

Replace clause "Congress Mandates" with the following;

That the Leas Uachtaran don Ghaeilge work with relevant policy officers, in so far as is possible, to strive to include the Irish language in all USI campaigns and on promotional materials including but not limited to t-shirts, posters and cups and to also include the Irish Language in themed roadshows.

Equality

NOTES

EQ 1 : Gender Recognition of Students

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students' Union & the USI Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

Congress notes:

Trans and non-binary students have difficulty changing their name and gender on college records such as exam results, roll, student cards etc.

Congress recognises:

The considerable distress that not being able to be recognised as who they are can have on trans and non binary students.

Congress Notes:

The work ongoing of the Gender Recognition Act Review Committee examining the Gender Recognition Act 2015 due to be complete by Summer 2018.

Congress applauds:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship recent submission to the Gender Recognition Act Review and the current work being done in MOs on Gender Identity and Expression Policies.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to campaign for a system-wide agreement from CAO level upwards, regarding the facilitation of name-changes as well as the inclusion of non-binary identities.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the HEA (Higher Education Authority) to set up a working group with the USI, THEA (Technological Higher Education Association), the IUA (Irish Universities Association) and the Department of Education to identify a robust and agreed system-level framework, so that applications for name-changes while the student is attending their third level institution is met with a consistent response regardless of institution, rather than a case-by-case, ad-hoc, and discretionary reaction that often depends on the staff member the student speaks to.

EQ 2 : Mature Student Campaign

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress notes

The large numbers of mature students attending third level education and the difficulties they face.

Congress applauds:

The success of events such as Mature Student Conventions/Seminars provided by USI in the past.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to run a Mature Student Seminar annually in the first semester of each academic year.

Congress Notes

That events for matures students may be inaccessible due to other commitments of potential attendees.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to create an online forum for mature students in order for them to still obtain the benefits of networking at a regional and national level.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to continue their work in supporting the development of mature student officers and societies in MOs.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President for Campaigns to create a support document for local MOs which should include, but is not limited to, information on running their own mature student events, information to help development mature student supports on campuses and other links to mature student organisations.

Congress repeals

14 EQ 1, 12 OU 12, 15 OU 13, 12 OU 12. (SIC)

EQ 3 : Transgender Health Care

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

Transgender and Non Binary people are people who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. These people may seek medical methods of transition to make them more comfortable, and for many people this is necessary for both personal safety and for mental stability.

Congress further notes:

The work done by transgender and non-binary activist groups and USI in their submissions to the Gender Recognition Act to give people the right to self-determine their identity.

Congress notes with regret:

Transgender and non-binary people are currently unable to dictate their own need for hormone therapy, and need to be given a diagnosis under an outdated 'medical-diagnostic model'.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby the HSE to provide training for healthcare professionals in Ireland in transgender issues and their healthcare needs.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby the Minister for Health to replace the current medical-diagnostic model of treating transgender and non-binary people in place of an informed consent model, to allow people to declare and receive the treatments they need.

EQ 4 : Gender Equality Audit

Proposed by the Vice President for the Dublin Region

Congress notes

That self-defining women are still significantly under-represented in Students' Union politics, as well as politics nationally. For the year 2017/2018, less than 20% of Presidents in USI affiliated Students' Unions were women.

Congress recognises

The ongoing work being done within Students' Unions to encourage more self-defining women to run for elected positions within their Students' Unions.

Congress applauds

The Women Lead Projects rolled out this year and in previous years by USI and the continued growth in participation of these projects.

Congress further notes

The importance of data collection to further develop the Women Lead Project.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to conduct a gender equality audit of Students' Unions and their structures to support and inform the ongoing work of USI in this area.

EQ 5 : Universal design for learning

NOTE: AMENDMENT BELOW

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students' Union

Congress notes:

Learning materials used in lectures, tutorials, and for study are frequently inaccessible to students with different requirements

Congress recognises:

The universal design for learning approach campaigns for more user friendly, varied and accessible materials for students who have a physical/ hidden disability, mental health condition, student parents, and students whose first language is not English.

Congress mandates:

The VP E&C to work with relevant organisations to support the implementation of UDL wherever possible.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by NUI Galway Students' Union

Replace clause "Congress mandates" with the following;

Congress mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP for Academic Affairs to work with relevant organisations to support the implementation of Universal Design for Learning wherever possible.

Citizenship

CZN 1 : USI Environmental Sustainability Strategy

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress notes:

The need for USI to have a comprehensive long-term strategy on Environmental Sustainability.

This should include, but would not be limited to, specific campaigns such as Single use straws campaign, the Conscious Cup campaign and the Student Switch Off campaign.

It should also address the issue of food waste on campuses, look at the feasibility of Environmental Officers in Students' Unions, addressing the issue of Freshers' bag waste, single use plastics and the use of campaign materials.

It should also lay out a plan for creating resources for Students' Unions for example, an 'SU Guide to making your SU and Campus more sustainable' – which could include tenders/procurement, materials and contacts, campaigns, audits, discounts for reusable cups, applying to Green campus etc. Or other resources such as fact sheets or app

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship and the Vice President for the Southern Region with the SAVES2 coordinator and other relevant contributors to create the USI Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Congress therefore repeals:

17 CZN 1, 16 CZN 3

CZN 2 : Ending Direct Provision

Proposed by the USI Equality & Citizenship Committee

Congress notes

Asylum-seekers and their children have spent years living in an institutional setting that was designed to be a short-term solution. They are accommodated by the State in residential institutions, under a reception system known as 'Direct Provision'. Direct Provision is intended to provide for the welfare of asylum seekers and their families as they await decisions on their asylum application. The majority of asylum seekers spend over 4 years in Direct Provision waiting for their application to be processed.

Congress further notes

That there are thousands of children and young people currently within the system, many of them aspiring to attend a third level or further education institution in Ireland. There has been a very low uptake of the scholarships available to those in Direct Provision to attend third level.

Congress commends

The work of Students' Unions around the country in raising this issue on their campuses and localities through direct action campaigns, protests, and working with campus student groups in targeting commercial operations associated with Direct Provision to condemn their complicity in the system and to educate the public and students eg. Aramark off our Campus and the USI 'Avoca Jam' in 2017.

Congress Condemns

The system of Direct Provision as it currently stands in Ireland.

Council therefore mandates

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the abolition of the system of Direct Provision, campaign for the end of deportations, and for the introduction of a humane reception system in line with international best practice

Council Further Mandates:

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the universal right to work and accessible education for those in Direct Provision.

Council Further mandates

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the full enactment of the EU Receptions Conditions Directive.

CZN 3 : Support the 2018 Civil Society Repeal Campaign

Proposed by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

Congress commends

The work of Students' Unions around Ireland as 'Students for Choice', and the lobbying effort thus far for an early referendum date in 2018, and to prepare students for the upcoming referendum in the Republic of Ireland.

Congress notes

USI's membership of the coalition to repeal the 8th amendment and the national women's council of Ireland, and the USI mandate to support the goals of the Abortion Rights Campaign, and the strategy for referendum laid out in the USI Students for Choice strategy.

Congress further notes

The need for USI to ensure that the voices of minority communities affected by the 8th amendment, including students, transgender and non-binary people, as well as migrants in Ireland, are to the fore of the public debate ahead of the referendum.

Congress supports

The civil society campaign led by the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment, the National Women's Council of Ireland, and the Abortion Rights campaign.

Congress mandates

USI to support the National Campaign, and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship and Vice President for Campaigns to further the successful development of 'USI Students for Choice' as the leading national voice for students during the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment.

CZN 4 : Voter Registration and Reform

Proposed by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Congress recognises

There are several mandates regarding Voter Registration as part of the policy book.

Congress notes

A strategy covering voter registration and reform would be more efficient for a USI officers work, and would comprehensively deal with the topic, making the process of lobbying on the content easier.

Congress adopts

The Voter Registration and Reform Position Paper.

Congress mandates

The President and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government based on the USI Position Paper.

Congress therefore deletes

12 CZN 4 Voting Rights for Citizens Living Abroad

15 CZN 8 Voter Registration System Reform

15 CZN 1 Lobby for 3rd Level Centre Polling Stations

14 CZN 2 SERD

CZN 5 : University of sanctuary

NOTE: AMENDMENT BELOW

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students' Union

Congress notes:

The 'Places of Sanctuary' campaign encourages community groups and organisations to create a welcoming space for those seeking asylum.

Congress further notes

Higher Education institutions play a key role in welcoming students from different diverse backgrounds, and creating inclusive and understanding communities.

Congress recognises:

Many Universities and ITs have been awarded places of sanctuary/ University of Sanctuary status.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP E&Q to disseminate information on the places of sanctuary initiative to MOs, and encourage MOs to apply for status where possible.

AMENDMENT

Proposed by NUI Galway Students' Union

Replace motion title with:

Places of Sanctuary

Replace clause "Congress notes" with the following;

Congress Notes:

Places of Sanctuary Ireland is a network of groups in towns, cities, local communities and third level institutions which share the objectives of promoting the integration, inclusion and welfare of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, by encouraging every sector of society to make a practical commitment to becoming places of welcome and safety.

CZN 6 : International Student Visa

NOTES

Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students' Union

Congress Notes:

That international students have to get a visa every year regardless of the length of their academic tenure.

Congress Further Notes:

That international students studying in other countries such as the United Kingdom are given student visas for the full term of their academic tenure as opposed to an annual renewed visa.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Academic Affairs lobby the Department of Justice and Equality and the Garda National Immigration Bureau to provide international students in Ireland with visas that last the duration of their period of study under the course they applied to.

Constitutional Amendments

CA 1 : The Entertainments, Marketing and Commercial Committee

Proposed by the Entertainments Committee

Remove:

Article 7.1.5 and replace with: "7.1.5 The Entertainment, Marketing & Commercial Committee shall be a forum for its members to share expertise and ideas in relation to, but not limited to, the organisation, promotion and running of events and activities. The committee shall also be a forum to share expertise and ideas in relation to commercial activity, communications and marketing for Students' Unions as a whole. It may be attended by the staff of USI or MOs, or by any guest by invitation."

Further replace:

Article 7.1.5: "References elsewhere in this constitution to the Entertainments Committee to be changed to 'The Entertainments, Marketing & Commercial Committee.'"

CA 2 : Democratic determination of affiliation fees

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union

Amend Article 2.2.2 to read as:

They have applied and been accepted as a Member Organisation according to the application procedure as defined in Schedule A and who pay affiliation fees as decided by Congress.

Amend Schedule B2.2 to read as:

The Annual Subscription for which a Member Organisation is liable shall be decided by Congress. It shall be calculated on the number of students represented by that organisation in the last completed academic year. Member Organisations shall pay and be liable for all full-time students and for those part-time students from whom they receive a fee. Where a student of a Member Organisation is by virtue of the course of study also considered as a part-time student in another Member Organisation, they shall only be affiliated through the Member Organisation in which they are registered as a full-time student.

CA 3 : Amendment of Extant Policies without Repeal

Proposed by the President of USI

Add to Article 4.1.6.2 after the first clause:

“Union Policy may be amended at each meeting of Congress”

Article therefore to read:

Union Policies

Formal adoption of Union policy occurs by motion at Congress with the policy document itself appended to the Clár. Such policy may be amended at subsequent meetings of Congress. Union Policies shall be contained in a published Union Policy Manual and they shall automatically lapse after three years unless reauthorised by Congress.

CA 4 VP Postgraduate Affairs

Proposed by the Postgraduate Affairs Working Group

ADD to Article 5 in a convenient place and renumber accordingly if needed

5.X.1 The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Postgraduate) shall have responsibility, in a part-time capacity on the Union’s Officerboard, for the Union’s work on policy and engagement with postgraduate students.

5.X.2 The VP/Postgraduate shall assist the VP/Campaigns with campaigns in relation to postgraduate issues.

5.X.3 The VP/Postgraduate shall be Chairperson of the Postgraduate Affairs Committee.

Replace Article 5.4.1 with the following text:

“The Vice President for Academic Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Academic) shall have primary responsibility for the Union’s work on academic policy and quality enhancement on all post-secondary education, including, full-time and part-time students in Further Education and Higher Education, students on Labour Market Activation Programmes and Apprenticeships. They shall act as an advocate for the Union’s education policy on a national and international level and shall assist the VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns on education matters.”

Remove Article 5.4.3 and renumber if necessary as appropriate

At Article 5.13.3 in the first sentence, after the word ‘officerboard’ and after ‘all officers’ insert:

(except for the VP/Postgrad)

Add to Article 7.1.2 where convenient and subsequently renumber provisions as necessary:

“The Postgraduate Affairs Committee”

CA 5 : Vice-President for Postgraduate Affairs

Proposed by Dublin City University Students’ Union

To article 5, ADD at the end where convenient:

5.X The Vice-President for Postgraduate Affairs

5.X.1 The VP/Postgraduate Affairs shall be responsible for policy and research on postgraduate issues and shall assist the VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns on Postgraduate issues.

5.X.3 The VP/Postgraduate Affairs shall have responsibility for the implementation and development of the Union's postgraduate affairs policy and oversees the work of the Postgraduate Affairs Committee of which they are Chairperson .”

Remove all of Article 5.4.3.

Add to Article 7 where convenient:

Postgraduate Affairs Committee

CA 6 : Amendment to Schedule C: Number of motions to Congress

Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students' Union

Amend Schedule C6.1 to read as:

Member Organisations may submit three motions. All members of the Officerboard and each Committee they chair may all submit three motions. From time to time National Council may establish ad hoc Committees/Conferences who shall have the power to submit up to five motions. - next council - national council decides

CA 7 : Correctly formulating the Electoral Commission

Proposed by the President of USI

Delete and then Replace Article 6 with the following:

Article 6: Steering Committee, Elections Subcommittee, and the Electoral Commission

The Steering Committee

6.1.1 Elections for Steering Committee shall be held every two years and shall be organised and supervised by the President. Each candidate must be proposed by a Member Organisation or the President.

Members of Steering Committee shall not be current members of the Union but shall have attended a previous Congress and shall have been a member of the Union.

6.1.3 There shall be ten elected members of Steering Committee together with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of National Council pursuant to Article 4.2.9. Vacancies can be filled by co-option and the term of co-opted members shall expire at the next Steering Committee election. Members are eligible for re-election.

Quorum for Steering Committee shall be half plus one of the total membership of the committee.

From their number, Steering Committee shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Steering Committee.

They may form other subcommittees and divide necessary work as they see fit within their membership. The quorum stipulated at Article 6.1.4 shall apply to any such subcommittee.

Unless dismissed, they shall remain in office until their successors have been elected.

6.1.8 Steering Committee shall order the business of Congress according to the provisions of the relevant Schedules and the direction of National Council.

Steering Committee shall chair the sessions of Congress and have responsibility for ensuring the running of Congress as laid out in the Constitution and Schedules.

The Elections Subcommittee

6.3.1 Steering Committee shall have an Elections Subcommittee to which four members of Steering Committee shall be elected by the whole of Steering Committee.

Quorum for Elections Subcommittee shall be half plus one of the total memberships of that subcommittee.

6.2.3 From their number, Elections Subcommittee shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. The Chairperson of Steering Committee may not also chair Elections Subcommittee. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Elections Subcommittee shall be the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer, respectively, of the Union.

6.2.3 Elections Subcommittee shall be responsible for the running of all Union elections including inter alia setting deadlines for submission of nominations, receiving nominations, determining the validity of nominations and of candidates, organising hustings at Congress or National Council, organising polling, counting votes and declaring results in accordance with the terms of this Constitution.

6.2.4 Elections Subcommittee shall receive, investigate and adjudicate on all complaints relating to the running of Union elections; organise and chair Congress elections, make regular reports to Congress and National Council regarding Union elections, and act as a credentials vetting Committee for delegates to Congress.

6.2.5 For the avoidance of doubt, matters relating to the remit of the Electoral Commission shall fall outside of the scope of the Elections Subcommittee.

The Electoral Commission

6.3.1 Campaigning in the Officerboard elections, and any by-elections, shall be regulated and supervised by the Electoral Commission.

Elections for the Electoral Commission shall be held every year and shall be organised and supervised by the President.

6.3.3 This Electoral Commission shall be composed of two external members who shall not be members of the organisation but who shall each have attended USI Congress, one member of Steering Committee (as nominated by Steering Committee) and two members of National Council. Each candidate must be proposed and seconded by members of the National Council or by the President and elections shall take place no later than the second National Council of the academic year.

6.3.4 The Terms of Reference for the Commission are prescribed at Schedule M of this Constitution. If a member of National Council decides to seek nominations to run for a position on USI Officerboard, they will immediately cease to be a member of the Commission.

6.3.5 The Electoral Commission shall set regulations in relation to campaigning during USI elections and shall sanction any breaches of such regulations.

Add to the Schedules:

Schedule M to the USI Constitution

M.1 The electoral commission shall meet in the first semester

M.2 The electoral commission shall agree regulations to be followed by USI and candidates in elections throughout the year for USI's officerboard.

M.3 The electoral commission shall adopt a suite of rules on:

M.3.1 The expenditure permitted per candidate in elections

M.3.2 The methods of campaigning to be accepted in campaigns



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