

"Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought" - Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

#1

- Hard Working
- Determined
- Experienced



Vote Jason #1

to be YOUR

VP for Postgraduate Affairs

Overview

Hello everyone, My name is Jason Kavanagh and I am running for the part-time position of Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs. I am currently 6 months into my 18 month postgraduate degree by research and the former President of IT Tallaght Students' Union 17/18. I was delighted to represent all 6,014 students during my time as president and would love to represent the interests of all postgraduates in USI.

I worked tirelessly to improve the student experience of our student body in areas of education, welfare, equality, representation and engagement. During my time as President in IT Tallaght I fought for the re-opening of the creche facility in time for the new year, leading a successful 3 month campaign by lobbying the institute, local council and TDs by raising parliamentary questions on barriers to education. I worked with Tusla and the South Dublin County Council childcare committee to finally reach a resolution with all students successfully returning to college.

I lobbied for a new finance agreement securing €16,000 more than the previous 3 years. Throughout the year, I had the honour of working with a brilliant diverse team strengthening accountability via policy and transparency.

Since I started my masters by research I have been exposed to a student experience that simply does not compare to the undergraduate experience. It is through working with other students and learning from postgraduates (taught and research all the way to PhD) that my passion and desire to better the postgraduate experience is now central in my heart. It is for this reason I am seeking your vote to become your new Postgraduate officer 2019/2020.

As an elected student representative I have been a strong voice locally and nationally on USI working-groups and task-forces. I have always put students interests at the forefront of my actions and If elected I will continue to do so as your VP for Postgraduate Affairs

Some of my local Successes

- I introduced an additional 5 campaigns to better the student experience, student rights, personal safety, sexual health in first term, accessibility and awareness of student services.
- €30,000 investment into Digital media equipment.
- Introduced ITTSUs first ever policy book.
- Campus Creche re-opened - ON TIME.
- Record number of ITT students registered to vote.
- Lobbied and secured the first ever ITTSU finance agreement
- Record attendance at the National Demo
- €10,000 invested into the Volunteering+ initiative.
- 3 successful referendums passed on campus
- Introduction of the first constitution review committee
- Ensured all sabbatical officers received mental health training + Suicide aware.
- Lobbied senators and TD's on the TU Bill, National budget, climate change and affordable childcare for student parents.
- Re-structured the students' union to meet our students needs with an introduction of 3 new positions.
- I passed a new gender neutral constitution ensuring all future policies are also gender neutral with parity of union activities on campus sites.
- I submitted three successful national motions at congress 2018 to accredit class reps, USI Transparency and International Visas as part of the TUDSU delegation.
- I won the Student Entrepreneur of the year award at USI's SAAI 2017.
- Received best speech award at congress 2018

Jason Kavanagh



Manifesto

Finances

Stipend rates for postgraduates are often below the cost of living, They can vary depending on individual colleges and faculty. I want to work with relevant authorities to continue the discussion towards the design of a universal stipend, to ensure fair pay and parity between postgraduates regardless of who funds projects or where.

With the introduction of the TU Bill, merging IOT's and the pay scales between individual colleges may be uneven. I would like to work with MO's to campaign to prevent pay cuts and assist in the process of creating a unilateral pay agreement across merged institutes that sees the postgraduates are favoured

I want to conduct a national survey to compare the hourly pay of postgraduates for delivering lessons to produce the average pay scale to push parity among postgraduates who teach.

Engagement and Representation

2019 will be the first year the postgraduate ISSE survey will be carried out, I plan to work with MO's and assist them to break down the results of the ISSE survey into comprehensible, actionable data. It will be essential to work to prepare for the second survey and take action based on the results to improve postgraduate experience.

I plan to conduct a report into postgraduate representation best practises and publish this report to aid students' unions in their decision making to improve postgraduate engagement and representation. The report will explore the types of postgraduate student and resources needed to best represent them.

I aim to provide the report in Union Development working groups to open a platform of discussion so Unions can query how they can best adopt more student representation practises. This will be essential for merging colleges as there is a postgraduate representative on Governing body so structures must be in place. I will be there to help !

Postgraduate Integration in USI Policy

I plan to work with officer-board to make current policies inclusive of postgraduate students. This would ensure postgraduates are included in welfare, education, equality and citizenship, regional, national and international motions.

It would also include training, campaigns and events to maximise representation of and engagement with postgraduates.

Engagement and Representation Contd.

Engagement is not just about putting on an event - it is about making sure it is accessible to the sort of students you are targeting. The right time, the right location. I will put postgraduate perspective at the forefront of USI activities through executive meetings and collaborating with other officers.

The postgraduate market is growing in size, I would like to expand the postgraduate network and encourage more communications between USI and postgraduates around the country.

Postgraduate student forums - the range of issues experienced by postgraduates can be very different to those of an undergraduate. I would like to assist MO's run local postgraduate student forums so we hear the student voice from a wide, diverse range of postgraduates. With a better understanding of local issues we can directly work to improve the student experience.

If elected I would introduce postgraduate representation training at SUT and SUT+ and include sessions at Part-time officer training. I would further circulate a postgraduate representation handbook and create a part-time officer network for those representing postgraduates to communicate and gauge new ideas.

Publicly Funded Education

I plan to put postgraduate students at the forefront of USI's actions and plans, including campaigning for publicly funded education and needed Postgraduate Fee regulations **NOW!** Postgraduate fees are often a multiple of undergraduate fees and higher again for international students. We must ensure that postgraduate fees and grants are included in USI's annual budget proposal like in the 2019 budget. We must now push it as a priority.

By educating ourselves on the exploitation of international students we can create a more focused campaign to prevent the further "cash cow" mentality towards our visiting students. Not to mention the vulnerability of accommodation for postgraduate students as they don't all begin at one time. This is a clear barrier to education that needs breaking. We must also work closely with NUS, NUS-USI as Northern Ireland approach their exit from Europe (Brexit). We must not allow the students from the north to face similar exploitation and potential fee increases for studying in Ireland.

National and Regional Symposiums / USI Academic conferences

I want to introduce regional symposiums throughout the year to further engagement and identify issues locally, regionally and nationally. This offers opportunity for actions to be taken and progress to build before the national symposium where every region can bring ideas forward and work on the national focus.

I would like to introduce a day long graduate colloquium to allow students to present their work professionally, network and develop their skills.

USI Website- Develop the Postgraduate Section

We must be able to engage with our postgraduates on a multi-platform basis.

We can introduce an informative, interactive and functional web-based support for postgraduates in Ireland as well as providing information to those pursuing the postgraduate route.

Benefits to Postgraduates

- Platform for providing a list of the services available to postgraduates as members of USI
- Student Rights as a postgraduate
- Information on working conditions and working rights.
- Postgraduate peer reviews system: This will encourage multi-disciplinary submissions reviewed by postgraduates of all fields throughout Ireland.
- A platform to promote events such as research colloquiums and conferences taking part around the country. By making postgraduates aware of these events, encourage taking part and presenting at research colloquiums it will help provide great experiences and add to the development of a postgraduate student.

Benefits for undergraduate students:

- Postgraduate information page for undergraduate student - insight to postgraduate life.
- How to pursue a postgraduate by research career
- Access routes to postgraduate research – how to apply, how to prepare research proposals, how to seek funding, how to seek the right supervisor etc.

USI Postgraduate Officer Development

I plan to develop the role of Part-time VP for Postgraduate Affairs.

The role currently is lacking in mandates and fixed responsibilities.

This was fine in its first year, but now, I want to ensure the hard work is continued year on year until achieved. Through more mandates we can ensure continuity of the work from one officer to another as well as developing the postgraduate officer to a crucial position in USI.

If elected I plan to do this by sitting with the current VP for Postgraduate Affairs and turn their progress and plans into mandates and or a strategy to ensure completion of those plans.

I will communicate with Northern Mo's to develop collaborative action plans to represent our postgraduates across the whole island of Ireland.

Postgraduate Roadshow

I would like to work with the VP for Academic Affairs to launch the first USI Postgraduate Roadshow - The roadshow would be targeted at final year students around the country to inform them of the possibilities and opportunities to continue education onto level 9 and level 10. By informing students before they become postgraduates we can bridge the knowledge gap of services and representation available to postgraduates

The Roadshow aims to bring more awareness around postgraduate education, to provide information to students about the types of postgraduate study they can opt for i.e. Scholarship, Taught, Research, Full-time or Part-time.

By providing students with the information of how to create research proposals, how to seek funding and search for supervisors for a specific project, students will be empowered and in more control of co-creating their own education.

Deliver Objectives of USI Postgraduate Strategy 2018

- There is an absolute URGENCY to lobby the department for education and skills to introduce FEE REGULATIONS to prevent competitive institutions from increasing fees.
- I plan to further the relationships with trade unions (IFUT and TUI) by ensuring inclusiveness of postgraduates who teach.
- Mo Support: Produce guidelines on engagement with institutions to collectively work towards bettering the postgraduate experience. Deliver an MO support manual to assist officers who may have to face case work and those who are trying to engage the postgraduate community.
- Identify postgraduate issues through the ISSE survey results and create a national campaign to address issues specific to postgraduates.

I'd like to thank you all for taking the time to read my manifesto and I look forward to meeting and discussing why I would love to represent you in the coming year as your Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs. Like all manifesto's I cannot fit everything into this document.

I have plenty of plans and practical things that can be introduced to improve the postgraduate experience. I always welcome input and encourage it so we can develop plans together, maximising effectiveness and engagement.

The approach I would like to take if elected is to work with every union to put our collective plans into motions and policies to develop not only the role of the VP for Postgraduate Affairs but USI's level of engagement with postgraduate issues.

Be reassured, a vote for Jason is a vote for a dedicated, hard-working and experienced VP for Postgraduate Affairs.

Vote Jason Kavanagh
#1 for Postgraduate Affairs

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NOTES and FEEDBACK



THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION..!

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Vote Jason #1 for Postgraduate Affairs