

The National Council of the Union of Students in Ireland

Minutes

National Council USI, NC 59.5

Institute of Technology, Tralee

16th November, 2018

Chairperson: Richard Hammond

Deputy Chairperson: Cathy Pembroke

NAMES APPEARING ON THE ATTENDANCE LIST:

(No liability and/or reproach accepted for difficulties deciphering manuscript notations)

AITSU

Oisín Moloughney

Aine Daly

Catherine Power

CCSU

Amanda Bowes

Ryan Shannon

CITSU

Aaron Buckley

Stephanie Kelly

Jeff Jones

DCUSU

Craig McHugh

Callaghan Commons

DITSU

Rebecca Gorman

Daniel Sogaolu

Rosie White

DKITSU

Maria Maguire

GMITSU

Aaron Burke

Gary Tobin

ITBSU

Kris Sulkowski

Luke Daly

Mark Doyle

ITCSU

Richard Morrell

Ronan Larkin

Erica Cunningham

ITSSU

Vanessa Molloy

Tara Ní Raghallaigh

ITTDSU

Amy Keatinge

Lee Bennett

ITTSU

Jessica Murphy

Aidan Kelly

Joseph Kavanagh

Sandra Moynihan

Petrina Comerford

Michael Edgar

LITSU/LSADSU

Aishling McGrory

Paul Cashin

LYITSU

Paul Lynch

NUIGSU

Megan Reilly

Clare Austick

STACS

Marie Lyons

TCDSU

Shane DeRis

Oisin Vince Coulter

UCCSU

Alan Hayes

Faye Murphy

Kelly Coyle

Aaron Frahill

UUSU

Kevin McStravock

Andrew McAnallen

Owen McCloskey

WITSU

Marie Sheedy

Darren Malone

John Fortune

Bord na nOifigeach, AMLÉ

Síona Cahill, President

Oisín Hassan, Deputy President/ Vice President for Academic Affairs

Damien McClean, Vice President for Welfare

Michelle Byrne, Vice President for Campaigns

Aisling Cusack, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Barry Clohessy, Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Lorna Fitzpatrick, Vice President for the Southern Region

Colm O'Halloran, Vice President for the Dublin Region

Aoife Deasy, Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Andrew Forde, Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

NAMES FOR WHOM APOLOGIES WERE OFFERED TO THE MEETING:

DCUSU; Vito Moloney Burke, DCUSU; Karl McGovern, DCUSU; Aisling Fagan, DITSU; Pierre Yimbog, DITSU; Róisín O' Donovan, DITSU; Jess Morris, GMITSU; Victor O'Loughlin, GMITSU; Emma-Louise Duffy, ITCSU; Roisín Sheridan, LYITSU; William Conroy Daly, LYITSU; Siobhan Howe, MSU; Leon Diop, MSU; Paul Kenny, MSU; Kim Lockyer, MSU; Katie Deegan.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting which occurred at Dublin Institute of Technology, 21st September were proposed by ITBSU and seconded by GMITSU and **passed without objection.**

The minutes of the meeting which occurred at USI HQ Office, 24th October were proposed by NUIGSU and seconded by ITBSU and **passed without objection.**

2. Matters Arising

None.

3. Elections

None.

4. Officer Reports

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs had nothing to add to his report. There were no questions.

The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge had nothing to add to her report. There were no questions.

The Vice President for the Dublin Region had nothing to add to his report. TCDSU requested more information regarding the recent meeting in Norway. The Vice President for the Dublin Region explained that USI was invited by NSO Norway to their Autumn Conference which is their equivalent of a national Students' Union, to outline the Irish student movement involvement in national campaigns, such as Marriage Equality, Repeal of the 8th and the accommodation crisis.

The Vice President for the Southern Region noted that USI has been selected to attend an upcoming Mental Health seminar in Latvia from the 6th to the 9th of December. The Vice President for the Southern Region added that funding to attend this event is being provided by the EU and that only 15 applications out of 160 were selected. The VPSA stated that she will provide an update at the next National Council. There were no questions.

The Vice President for the Border, Midlands & Western Region had nothing to add to his report. There were no questions.

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship confirmed that Procter and Gamble have been selected as a sponsor for this year's Pink Training and they will be delivering a

workshop on the topic of “bringing your whole self to the workplace”. TCDSU sought clarity regarding the plan for this year’s Women in Conference event. The VPE&C explained that this year’s conference will instead be delivered as a single event over two days. The VPE&C noted that details are still to be confirmed and further information will be circulated soon. TCDSU requested if local Students’ Union election dates could be considered when the date is being selected in order to benefit students who are planning on putting their name forward for election. The VPE&C agreed with this point and requested MO’s to please pass on their Students’ Union election dates and noted that she will do her best to accommodate them where possible.

The Vice President for Campaigns had nothing to add to her report. There were no questions.

The Vice President for Welfare had nothing to add to his report. There were no questions.

The Deputy President and Vice President for Academic Affairs highlighted the upcoming Student Centre Approach Conference on Tuesday the 20th of November. The DP+VPAA stressed the importance of having the student voice heard at the conference and kindly requested that sabbatical officers please try attend. There were no questions.

The President took questions on behalf of NUS-USI President and had nothing to add to her report. TCDSU requested the background to the relationship between USI and videoDoc. The President outlined the background of the USI relationship with videoDoc. DITSU asked the President to outline her response during her recent interview on Morning Ireland regarding USI reaction to the Leaving Cert results high court case. The President explained that her response was in relation to the fact that Higher Education institutions shouldn’t amend their dates when the problem is regarding the correction process was due to lack of sufficient resources. The President also noted that she can circulate the briefing document regarding this issue.

The President on the behalf of the NUSI-USI President thanked all National Council members who assisted with the recent University of Ulster NUS-USI referendum and expressed delighted that the referendum was successful passed. The President also expressed thanks to the VPC for all her work regarding the referendum. UUSU also thanked all of Officer Board and Students’ Union Officers who travelled up and assisted with the referendum.

5. Media Report

None.

6. Items for Agreement

6(a) Motion: Pay Equality for Newly Qualified Teachers

The motion: Pay Equality for Newly Qualified Teachers was proposed by the Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge and seconded by DCUSU and **was passed without objection.**

Pay Equality for Newly Qualified Teachers Motion

National Council Notes:

The financial difficulties faced by Newly Qualified Teachers due to the two-tier pay system.

National Council Further Notes:

Those who entered the profession from February 2012 have been placed on a severely-reduced starting salary which sees them generally earn over 21% less than those appointed prior to 2012.

National Council Mandates:

USI Officer Board to support the campaign striving for equal pay for equal work and to ensure that negotiations are inclusive of the student perspective.

6(b) Motion: Boycott Aramark

The motion: Boycott Aramark was proposed by the Vice President for the Dublin Region and seconded by TCDSU and **was passed by a majority.**

Boycott Aramark Motion

National Council Notes:

Aramark is contracted by the Irish Government to run three Direct Provision Centres; Lissywollen, Athlone, Co. Meath, Knockalisheen, Co. Clare, and Kinsale Road, in Co. Cork.

National Council Further Notes:

That Aramark is profiting from the Direct Provision system. In 2016, Aramark received €5.2 million in investment from the Irish government to run the three centres.

National Council Notes with Concern:

In 2015, residents carried out a hunger strike in the Aramark run centre in Knockalisheen, after people were hospitalized with gastroenteritis as a result of the

poorly produced food. A year earlier a hunger strike occurred in the Lissywollen for similar reasons. There have been consistent complaints by those living in the centres as to how they are treated.

National Council Mandates:

USI to support and assist the boycott of any Aramark run restaurants, cafés or services.

National Council Further Mandates:

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the USI President to assist MO's in campaigning for the removal of Aramark run services on their campuses.

6(c) Congress Director

The President proposed USI General Manager, Ben Archibald as this year Congress Director which was seconded by TCDSU and **was passed unanimously.**

6(d) Motion: "Use Your Brain" Campaign

The motion: "Use Your Brain" Campaign was proposed by IT Tralee and seconded by WITSU and **was passed unanimously.**

"Use Your Brain" Campaign Motion

National Council Acknowledges:

The 'Use your Brain, not your fists' Campaign was run by An Garda Síochanna to highlight the devastation of violent attacks by young people on each other.

National Council Acknowledges:

That students could imperil themselves and others through violent attacks; and that they may not be aware of the risks or long-term effects of their actions.

National Council Therefore Mandates:

That the VP Campaigns & VP Welfare should liaise with An Garda Síochanna in future in relation to this campaign, and work towards inclusion of key messaging around violent behaviour in future campaigns relating to personal safety.

6(e) Motion: Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital

The motion: Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital was proposed by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and seconded by TCDSU and **was passed unanimously.**

Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital Motion

National Council Recognises:

The long history of the Union of Students in Ireland in campaigning for accessible abortion services in Ireland, and the recent victory in repealing the 8th Amendment from Bunreacht na hÉireann.

National Council Notes:

The continued opposition to abortion access by many religiously-based groups throughout Ireland.

National Council Notes with Concern:

That abortion access could be extremely limited if plans for the National Maternity Hospital to be governed by a Catholic organisation goes ahead.

National Council Mandates:

USI Officer Board to campaign for the National Maternity Hospital to be taken into public ownership, and that the new maternity hospital is governed by a new, secular charter.

National Council Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Health on this issue.

7. Items for Discussion

There were no Items for Discussion.

8. Items for Information

8(a) Food Banks

The Vice President for the Southern Region highlighted that Regional Officers have been working on developing a working paper on this topic and they are attempting to build a network with FoodCloud. Further updates will be provided by Regional Officers.

8(b) Irish Language Survey

The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge reminded MO's about the Irish Language Survey. The VPIL kindly asked officers to continue to inform students about the survey and to consider including it in their weekly email. The survey will close before the Christmas holidays.

8(c) Gaeltacht Fees rally

The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge confirmed a Christmas themed rally on this issue is being arranged and kindly requested the support from MO's.

8(d) Stim Rooms for ASD students

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship noted that DCU has recently been awarded as the world's first Autism-Friendly University by AsIAM, the autism advocacy charity. The VPE&C explained that a feasibility study is looking to examine if it's possible to roll out this format on other campuses across the Country. The VPE&C also requested if MO's could let her know if they have sensory rooms on their campus.

8(e) Student Status and the Department of Social Protection

The VPE&C explained that there is some anecdotal evidence that Community Welfare Officer (CWO's) when working with social welfare recipients who are looking to return back to education are possibly directing them towards more "job friendly" degrees rather than their desired courses. The VPE&C stated that it is possible that some of the CWO's are unfamiliar with the process associated with going back to education within the higher education system. The VPE&C continued by explaining that she will be looking at this situation in more detail and to examine possible training opportunities for CWO's.

9. Any Other Business

The Vice President for Campaigns highlighted that an Anti-Eviction Bill is currently been drafted by the Solidarity Party and that USI has requested that students be considered under this bill. The VPC stated that Sinn Féin has proposed a Residential Tenancies Bill, and that she will speak on it at next week's meeting of the Joint Committee on Housing Planning and Local Government. The VPC also added that she will be sending out details regarding this bill so that MO's can promote it through their social media channels. The VPC encouraged MO's to continue to get behind the National Housing demonstration which is scheduled for the 1st of December as it was important that the student's voice is heard.

The VPC explained that tomorrow is the National Day of Action and wished to receive feedback from the National Council regarding how USI should acknowledge this event. TCDSU and LYITSU highlighted caution in terms of doing something that might demonstrate that USI is not present at the event or doesn't achieve buy-in from students. It was agreed in principle that during tomorrow's schedule, time will be allocated for a brainstorming session on the housing crisis issue including a discussion about developing a promotional plan for the National Housing demonstration on the 1st of December.

The VPE&C highlighted that an email will be sent out next week regarding timelines for Pink Training. The VPE&C explained that she will try to send out hostel details in advance in order to speed up the check-in process. The VPE&C also added that to ensure the safety of delegates, colleges will need to send in advance the contact details of their designated delegate leader and Students' Union Officer. The VPE&C stressed the importance of colleges arranging post-Pink Training support for delegates and the importance of respecting people's right to anonymity and need to ensure that attendance details are kept anonymous. The VPE&C explained that no delegates who are under the age of eighteen will be able to attend and therefore stressed the importance for Students' Unions to check delegate ID's. The VPE&C finally added that training in the area of alley ship models will be delivered and encouraged people to please attend.

TCDSU highlighted that tomorrow is recognised as "International Students Day" and encouraged both USI and MO's to acknowledge this momentous day.

NUIGSU noted that their Ethnic Minorities Officer will be talking on this evening's Late Late show and encouraged people to watch the show.

DKITSU requested that details regarding the upcoming Mature Student Conference be highlighted. The VPE&C explained that the event is being planned for the 7th of December in NCI and confirmed that details regarding the conference will be circulated soon. The VPE&C also added that she will check the size of the rooms in order to confirm the overall capacity in terms of attendees.

The President thanked everyone for their contribution and involvement during today's events. The President noted that this week the VPW launched a "Recharge Campaign" and kindly reminded everyone that a self-care workshop is being arranged for tomorrow. The President stressed the importance of attending tomorrow's workshop in order for Students' Union Officers to protect themselves from burnout.

The President expressed sincere thanks to ITTSU for facilitating everything and for all their assistance. The President also congratulated the Chairperson on his appointment as President for the Southern Law Association.

The Chairperson thanked IT Tralee Students' Union for hosting today's meeting, thanked all present for their participation and wished everyone a Happy Christmas as he will be missing the next National Council meeting before closing the meeting.