

# The National Council of the Union of Students in Ireland

## Minutes

National Council USI, NC 59.9

Waterford Institute of Technology

14<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**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                      John Devine

### CCSU

Amanda Bowes                      Adam Kane                      Brooklyn O’Keeffe

### DCUSU

Craig McHugh                      Callaghan Commons                      Christine Farrell

### DITSU

Pierre Yimbog                      Rebecca Gorman                      Róisín O’ Donovan  
Jess Morris                      Barry Egan                      Daniel Sogaolu  
Moya Browne

### DKITSU

Maria Maguire                      Taidgh Kavanagh                      Glenn Mc Court  
Christopher O’Neill

### GMITSU

Victor O’Loughlin                      Gary Tobin

### ITBSU

Kris Sulkowski                      Luke Daly                      Rory O’Shea  
Padraic Keane

### ITCSU

Richard Morrell                      Tawnya Foster                      Thomas Drury

### ITTSU

Jessica Murphy                      Petrina Comerford                      Jason O’Byrne

### ITSSU

Vanessa Molloy                      Tara Ní Raghallaigh

### ITTDSU

Amy Keatinge                      Lee Bennett                      Megan O’Neill

**LITSU**

Una Cahill  
Sara Dowling

Jade Foynes

Sinead Nix

**MSU**

Leon Diop  
Katie Deegan  
Michael Butler

Paul Kenny  
Clíodhna Ní Dhufaigh

Kim Lockyer  
Ciarán Watts

**NCADSU**

Ross Kelly

Lilly Cunningham

Caelainn Kerrigan

**NUIGSU**

Megan Reilly

**NUSI-USI**

Robert Murtagh

**STACS**

Marie Lyons

Joe Redahan

**TCDSU**

Shane DeRís  
Aimee Connolly

Páraic McLean  
Niamh McCay

Oisín Vince Coulter  
Aisling Leen

**UUSU**

Kevin McStravock

Conor Keenan

**UCCSU**

Aaron Frahill  
Ciara Kealy

David Condon  
Catherine Dawson

Naoise Crowley  
Sophie O'Sullivan

**WITSU**

Marie Sheedy  
Paula Rochford

Darren Malone  
Ben Gunnip

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:**

AITSU; Meg Doyle, AITSU; Aine Daly, IADTSU; Chloe Power, IADTSU; Grace Latham, IADTSU; Niamh Grennan, ITTSU; Joseph Kavanagh, ITBSU; Mark Doyle, ITBSU; Sean Byrne, NUS-USI; Olivia Potter-Hughes.

**1. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting which occurred at Waterford Institute of Technology, 3<sup>rd</sup> May were proposed by ITTDSU and seconded by ITBSU and **passed without objection.**

**2. Matters Arising**

None.

**3. Elections**

**3(a) Chair and Deputy Chair of National Council**

The President proposed that this item should be deferred to the next National Council meeting in July.

**3(b) Finance Committee**

Two candidates put their name forward for election to USI Finance Committee;

- Amy Keatinge, ITTDSU was proposed by ITBSU and seconded by ITCSU.
- Aaron Burke, GMITSU was proposed by MSU and seconded by DKITSU.

The Chair asked if anyone wanted a physical ballot election and with no offer coming from the floor, both candidates were offered for acclamation and their election was **approved with objection.**

**4. Executive Reports**

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs wished his successor the very best of luck for next year. DCUSU, QUBSU, ITSSU and STACSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for Postgraduate Affairs which he gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge wished her successor the very best of luck for next year. ITTDSU, TCDSU, DITSU and ITTSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge which she gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for the Dublin Region wished his successor the very best of luck for next year. ITTDSU, TCDSU, DITSU and ITTSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for the Dublin Region which he gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for the Southern Region wished her successor the very best of luck for next year. WITSU, UCCSU and ITCSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for the Southern Region which she gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for the Border, Midlands & Western Region wished his successor the very best of luck for next year. ITSSU, GMITSU, AITSU and DKITSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for the Border, Midlands & Western Region which he gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship wished all incoming and continuing officers the very best of luck for next year. DITSU, NUIGSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for Equality & Citizenship which she gratefully accepted. ITTDSU also offered their sincere thanks and noted their intention to present a college rugby jersey to the VP for Equality & Citizenship which she gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for Campaigns encouraged MO's to make contact with their local TD's regarding their support for the upcoming tipping legislation and thanked all the members of the Campaigns Sub Committee for their commitment this year. ITBSU, ITTSU and WITSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for Campaigns which she gratefully accepted.

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The Vice President for Welfare wished his successor the very best of luck for next year. TCDSU questioned if USI will be promoting the new location of Gay Men's Health Clinic. The VPW confirmed that once they receive permission to circulate the updated information around it will be done. ITTSU asked if there was any update on the mental health survey. The VPW explained that nothing can be circulated until it is all finalised but noted that he expects that this work should be completed by the end of the summer. ITBSU, WITSU, DITSU and ITTSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the VP for Welfare which he gratefully accepted.

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The Deputy President and Vice President for Academic Affairs reminded everyone that the pool for quality assurance reviewers closes at the end of the month and reminded people to encourage students to apply before wishing his successor the very best of luck next year. UCCSU, QUBSU, UUSU and ITTDSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the Deputy President and Vice President for Academic Affairs which he gratefully accepted.

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The President took questions on behalf of NUS-USI President and explained that her report was not circulated due to a family bereavement but noted that it will be sent around next week. The President continued by stressing the importance of keeping connected with family and friends while working in the student movement. The President outlined some of the important items that will be included as part of her circulated officer report; HEA crossover meetings to discuss Higher Education funding; an update on student accommodation concerns and ended by congratulating the Deputy President and Vice President for Academic Affairs on his recent appointment as the NStEP Programme Manager.

ITBSU offered their deepest condolence to the President but highlighted a delay in receiving information regarding the expense breakdown and expressed concern regarding the language used in the recent letter to the American President, Donald Trump. The President apologised for the delay in the expense information not being sent out immediately. Regarding the language used in the letter to President Trump the President expressed thanks for the feedback and accepted that some would disagree with the language used but explained it was important for the student movement to make a strong stance against his visit due to his poor human rights record. DITSU questioned why a protest was targeted against President Trump when it was not discussed with MO President or connected to any USI's policy/mandate and noted concern that this may give the impression that American visitors are not welcome. The President noted DITSU concerns and explained that at certain times the President must be trusted to be able to make quick decisions that don't require consultation with MO's. TCDSU added that the post was a paid advertisement to aid its promotion. The President confirmed that this was the case but stressed that it was USI duty to highlight these issues and wanted to increase the level of engagement. DITSU, DKITSU, LITSU and UUSU offered their sincere thanks and best wishes to the President which she gratefully accepted. MSU also offered their sincere thanks and presented a gift to the President which she gratefully accepted. The President concluded by acknowledging her gratitude to having the opportunity to work with her sibling this year.

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**5. Media Report**

The media document will be circulated around.

**6. Items for Agreement**

**6(a) Motion on Insurance Reform**

The motion: Insurance Reform was proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns and was passed without objection.

## Insurance Reform Motion

### **National Council believes:**

Students are massively struggling with the cost of education, from the extortionate fees to the huge costs of accommodation. Transport is another cost we need to reduce for students. Students are commuting by car more because of the high costs of education or lack of availability of public transport but the commutes themselves are almost as expensive as renting in some cases.

### **National Council notes:**

That after Central Bank abolished releasing the PMIS report in 2015, there is very little data available on specific stats in relation to insurance - including around young people/students and motor/travel insurance, making it very difficult to create a case to lobby on.

### **National Council believes:**

According to anecdotal data, students face a number of barriers when it comes to insurance including cost, getting insured on cars aged 10 years and older.

### **National Council believes:**

That transparency is important in terms of real reform of this market and in order to lobby on this issue.

### **National Council acknowledges:**

That there is a broad alliance of groups working on insurance reform called the *Insurance Reform Alliance* who are highlighting the negative impact of persistently high premiums and calling for real action to tackle the issue. Their aim is to leverage reforms that will quickly reduce liability and motor insurance premiums to affordable levels and keep them that way.

### **National Council mandates:**

The USI Executive to join the Insurance Reform Alliance.

### **National Council also mandates:**

The USI Executive to work on reducing the costs of insurance to students, including lobbying relevant bodies and building partnerships with companies to offer discounts.

## **6(b) Motion on Free Public Transport for Students**

The motion: Free Public Transport for Students was proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns and **was passed without objection.**

### Free Public Transport for Students Motion

#### **National Council believes:**

Students are struggling with the cost of education, from the extortionate fees to the huge costs of accommodation. Transport is another cost we need to reduce for students. Students are commuting more because of the high costs but the commutes themselves are almost as expensive as renting in some cases. This is a much more viable option for those who have the option to get a bus as it is better for the environment and does not require parking spaces in the vicinity of the college, which is not offered in some institutions.

#### **National Council acknowledges**

By 2000, there were 27 free public transport systems in the world. That increased to 60 in 2010, 99 in 2017 and 114 today - the majority in Europe, according to Wojciech Keblowski, an expert on free public transport at the Free University Brussels.

#### **National Council notes:**

Ireland already provides free public transport for citizens aged 66 and older, and for certain categories of welfare recipients.

#### **National Council mandates:**

The USI Executive to lobby for further reduction and in turn, the abolition of public transport costs for students.

#### **6(c) Undiscussed Motions from Congress**

1. The motion: 16 WEL 3 was proposed by the VPW and **was passed without objection.**
2. The motion: 16 WEL 8 was proposed by the VPW and **was passed without objection.**
3. The motion: 16 WEL 13 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
4. The motion: 16 EQ 2 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
5. The motion: 16 NA 1 was proposed by the VPE&C and **was passed without objection.**
6. The motion: 16 UO 1 was proposed by the President and **was passed without objection.**
7. The motion: 16 UO 5 was proposed by the VPC and **was passed without objection.**
8. The motion: 16 UO 6 was proposed by the DP+VPAA and **was passed without objection.**
9. The motion: 16 UO 7 was proposed by the President and **was passed without objection.**

10. The motion: 16 UO 8 was proposed by the VPC and **was passed without objection.**
11. The motion: 16 UO 14 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
12. The motion: 16 UO 15 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
13. The motion: 16 UO 17 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
14. The motion: 16 UO 18 was proposed by the President and **was passed without objection.**
15. The motion: 16 UO 19 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
16. The motion: 16 AF 2 was proposed by the VPSR and **was passed without objection.**
17. The motion: 16 IL 2 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
18. The motion: 16 IL 4 wasn't proposed so, therefore, fell.
19. The motion: 16 CZN 2 was proposed by the DITSU and **was passed without objection.**

## **7. Items for Discussion**

### **7(a) USI Pre-Budget Submission (*'The Crisis Never Ended'*)**

The Vice President for the Southern Region and President-elect presented the proposed Pre-Budget Submission document and noted how the format had been changed this year. The VPSR further explained that only a limited number of issues can be included within the document, so the most pressing concerns were included. DITSU noted concern regarding USI pushing for a cut back in the student contribution charge as it could possibly create a situation where colleges transfer this cut back on funding for student services and requested if this risk could be clarified. The VPSR noted the risk and outlined the importance of the student partnership agreement which incorporates student input in terms of where the money is being spent. DITSU highlighted that there was a poor turn out at the earlier consultation session and recommended that MO's read the document before attending next week's Lobby Day. The President concluded by explaining that a briefing session will be conducted at 10.00am on the morning of the Lobby Day and asked that MO's please attend and bring students.

## **8. Items for Information**

### **8(a) Coiste Gno CNAG**

The Vice President for the Irish Language/Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge highlighted that she attended her first meeting of the Coiste Gnó of Conradh na Gaeilge.

**8(b) Campaigns Subcommittee Updates**

A member of the Campaigns Subcommittee outlined the main points highlighted from a recent reflection meeting; how MO's and USI can address apathy amongst students on the ground and increase student involvement; discussed developing a term of reference and establishing role guidelines for committee members. Finally, the VPC confirmed that she will work on the main points highlighted and encouraged next year's Officers to consider running for a role on the subcommittee.

**9. Any Other Business**

The VPSR confirmed that TCDSU and USI will be holding a breakfast morning for Dublin Pride. The VPE&C explained that further information will be circulated out.

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The VPC requested if officers could please stay on to participate on a video for the Lobby Day.

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The President thanked everyone for their contribution and involvement during the last two days event and expressed sincere thanks to MSU and the incoming President for all their assistance. The President reflected on her last five years involvement in the student movement and thanked a number of past USI Presidents for their input and support. The President continued by stressing the important role that the student movement plays in driving social change and noted how it was a great honour to lead the movement this year. The President thanked all of the members of the Executive Board and gave special recognition to the DP+VPAA for his personal and professional support throughout the year. The President concluded by thanking the Chair and Deputy Chair and offered her best wishes to the incoming President for the year ahead.

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The Chairperson thanked MSU for hosting today's meeting and congratulated this year's National Council for all their work and wished everyone a safe trip home before closing the meeting.