



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Mandates Manual May 2019

Errors and Omissions Excepted.

Version 1.0

USI Policy is passed at USI Congress each year. Policy has a life of three years at which time it may be extended for a further three years. All policy and policy extensions now have validity for 3 years.

Whilst we are engaged in a process of standardisation, policies with novel formatting are preserved with that formatting in order to retain the integrity of the policy as considered at Congress.

Nothing in the policy file should be taken to mean any mandate on the President of NUS-USI, who may only be mandated by NUS-USI Conference.

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The USI Policy Manual 2015 details all motions passed at USI Congress.

USI policy has a three-year life span before it lapses.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & QUALITY ASSURANCE

AA 19 - 1 Learning Outside of the Classroom

Proposed by Ulster University Students' Union

Congress Notes:

The NUS and BUCS 'Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free' campaign which has supported Students' Unions across the UK to lobby for dedicated time to be set aside in the academic timetable to allow students to participate in clubs, societies, volunteering and other co-curricular activity.

The plethora of research, demonstrating the link between physical activity and improved quality of life.

Congress Believes:

Participation in co-curricular activity, such as involvement with clubs and societies has a positive impact on student satisfaction and retention, and consequently on student success.

Having space in the academic calendar also improves access for students who work while studying and those with caring responsibilities.

Not having dedicated space within the academic calendar to support such activities puts increasing strain on student experience and discourages students from getting involved with University life outside of the classroom.

Congress Mandates:

USI Officerboard to research 'Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free' and similar schemes with a view to proposing a universal system for supporting co-curricular engagement.

USI Officerboard to undertake research on the links between co-curricular engagement and student retention and success in order to support MOs to lobby their institutions to develop timetabling that supports this activity.

AA 19 - 2 College Awareness Week

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

Congress notes

That College Awareness Week is a national campaign which aims to promote the benefits of going to college, to help students of all ages to become college-ready and to showcase local role models.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to promote College Awareness Week.

Congress further mandates

Where possible, USI Officer Board to arrange a talk in a secondary school in their local area and to give advice about going to college.

AA 19 - 3 The creation of a Charter for Postgraduate Research Students

Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

Congress Recognises

That there is a lack of consistency within the Higher Education sector on what rights postgraduate student have within their institution.

Congress Further Recognises

That there is a need for clarity on a range of issues from access to the HR department in the case of a work place dispute to access to staff printing.

Congress Notes

That the "USI/SIPTU Postgraduate Survey on Working and Economic Conditions" provides sufficient evidence in this regard.

Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to try to work with SIPTU to develop and promote a Charter of Rights for Institutions to sign up to, which will set out best practice for a healthy working environment for postgraduates.

AA 19 - 4 The creation of National Minimum Stipend rate.

Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

Congress Recognises

That the stipend rates received by Postgraduate Research Students varies dramatically.

Congress further recognises

That the cost of living is rising whilst stipends remain relatively stagnant.

Congress mandates

That USI Officer Board lobby for the creation of a National Minimum Stipend Rate.

Congress further mandates

That this objective be pursued with the ambition of paring the National Minimum Stipend Rate to the cost of living.

AA 19 – 5 Postgraduate Funding in Northern Ireland

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group

Congress Notes:

- The Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan in Northern Ireland which only entitles students to £5,500 towards the cost of postgraduate taught course.
- Tuition Fees for standard Masters courses in Northern Ireland are set to rise to £5,900, with many other Masters programmes costing much more but tuition fee loans will not automatically rise in line with this.
- Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK to cap tuition fee loans for Postgraduate students at £5,500, meaning that students are offered no maintenance support.
- That many postgraduate students in Northern Ireland opt for part-time study in order to be able to work alongside their degree.
- The insufficiency of the current funding system for part-time students where the loan must be split equally across years regardless of whether there are differential fees within the course, resulting in some students being left with a shortfall in their second or third year, which has led to some students being forced to withdraw from the programme.
- Due to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive in 2017, there is currently no Minister in place to approve an increase in the tuition fee loan available to Postgraduate students or to commission any change to the current Postgraduate Funding system.

Congress Believes:

- The current funding arrangements for postgraduate students in Northern Ireland are wholly inadequate, providing no maintenance support whatsoever and not covering the entire cost of standard Master's programmes, or any programmes with higher fees.
- A review of postgraduate funding in Northern Ireland must be commissioned, in order to improve the support offered to students there and improve the coherency of funding arrangements for part-time students.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to work with NUS-USI and its' members to lobby for a review of postgraduate funding in Northern Ireland with a view to increasing available support whilst continuing to strive towards lobbying for publicly funded education, accessible to all.

AA 19 – 6 The legal status of a PhD student.

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group.

Congress notes

That currently PhD students are classified as students.

Congress further notes

That there are many benefits to this status, such as exemption from tax.

Congress further notes

That there are also a range of problems with this student definition. Inclusive of but not limited to; no application of a minimum wage and access to HR in the case of a dispute.

Congress acknowledges

That Ireland and the United Kingdom are an outlier when compared to other European States and our fellow members of Eurodoc.

Congress mandates

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to continue to investigate options to secure more rights for Postgraduate students by lobbying for a change to the definition of a postgraduate, whether moving to define them as an employee or a hybrid status between employee and student.

AA 19 – 7 Academic Calendars and Repeat Results implications

Proposed By Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress Notes

Academic Calendars within Higher Education Institutions can cause a lot of difficulties for students on the ground. Some Institutes may use the Academic Calendar as an instrument to move Exams to wherever they like.

Congress Acknowledges

The lack of a "perfect model" when it comes to Academic Calendars. But also, the lack of Best Practice when it comes to creating an Academic Calendar.

Congress Believes

Working with MO's and Trade Unions to form a joint approach on Academic Calendar Best Practice would help all Institutions and SU's make sure that the needs of students are met academically.

Congress Recognises

The release of Repeat Examinations 2-4 weeks into a semester has a serious impact on Student Mental Health and that to release Repeat Examination Results earlier may help tackle retention in HEI's.

Congress therefore Mandates

The VP for Academic Affairs, alongside the Regional Officers, to consult with MO's and Trade Unions to develop a best practice when it comes to Academic Calendars. The VP for Academic Affairs should also investigate the possibility of an Academic Calendar sub-committee of National Council who will report their findings to National Council.

Congress Further Mandates

The VP for Academic Affairs to investigate the effects on students having repeat examinations results released so late in term and use that to lobby the relevant bodies to get Repeat Examination results released earlier and if possible, before the semester begins.

AA 19 - 8 The Future of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement

Proposed by Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress notes

That the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is now well recognised across Irish Higher Education, having launched in 2013 after a number of years of lobbying from USI to ensure colleges across the country saw the value and need to gather empirical data from students.

Congress further notes

That USI, Students' Unions, and students have worked hard to ensure that the survey is recognised and engaged with by students, and have advocated to ensure the data is readily available for students to interpret through institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes. This further manifested itself in the development of the postgraduate research ISSE which launched in 2018.

Congress notes with concern

That despite the huge efforts of students and rising response rates that institutions are still largely failing to distil the data in to user-friendly formats, that they have not created thorough processes for involving students in interpreting the data they created and understand, and have in some cases blocked students from seeing any results.

There are also very low response rates for the survey in a number of HEI's.

Congress believes that

ISSE data should be readily available to students in appropriate formats to allow them to interrogate the data and seeks ways to enhance and improve education in Ireland. Furthermore, Students' Unions are often the main driving force behind promoting the survey, using their own human and financial resources, and should have a partnered role in using the data.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to lobby the ISSE Steering Group to develop and publish an updated report (furthering on from 2015's report) on the promotion of the survey, a review on how involved individual SUs are on each campus, and on how the data is being used by students in each HEI. Alongside this, a review on why response rates are low needs to be covered in this work also, which may in turn lead to a restructuring of the overall survey.

The report should contain key recommendations on the role of Students' Unions and students in promotion and in the use of data by students for quality enhancement.

Congress further mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs explores ways to develop best practice on the use of ISSE data by students, including ways in which the data can be viewed, distributed, and engaged with by students and staff in partnership.

AA 19 – 9 Best practice for MO Council Meetings

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress notes:

The differing structures for Council or equivalent class representative meetings.

Congress believes:

The introduction of Best Practice in Council (or equiv.) training would be beneficial for not only MOs but also class representatives

Congress further notes:

The implementation of these structures would also benefit class representatives unfamiliar with USI Congress procedures.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs, in conjunction with Regional Officers, to facilitate training for structures and procedures within these bodies.

AA 19 – 10 Student Representation in Accreditation and PSRBs

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) oversee accreditation and standards across many programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions in Ireland, ensuring that the students who enter these programmes receive qualifications that qualify them to practice in their chosen profession.

Congress further notes

That PARN (Professional Associations Research Network) carried out a project with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in 2016/17 on the impact of accreditation bodies in Irish HEIs, but that the subsequent report did not contain any information on the role of student representation and voice.

Congress believes

That issues arising in degree programmes in disciplines such as teaching, pharmacy, and social work, to name a few, have demonstrated that the student voice is often sidelined in the setting of standards and guidelines by PSRBs.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to liaise with the QQI to ensure that student representation is recognised and strengthened in quality assurance and enhancement processes that involve PSRBs. This work should draw on international best practice and involve students from across a range of degree programmes, in order to ensure that the diversity of experiences of students is captured and acted upon.

Congress further mandates

That part of this work should be to utilise the QQI's engagement with regulators to open dialogue on the importance of student representation in their processes and procedures.

AA 19 – 11 HEI Student Success Strategies

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That every public HEI must have a Student Success Strategy in place by 2020 under a requirement of the HEA System Performance Framework.

Congress further notes

That USI was involved in the HEA Student Success Working Group that considered how to ensure student progression, retention, and completion became integral to the existing work on access stemming from the National Access Plan. The work of USI and others such as the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning ensured that the definition of student success was not limited in scope, and should encompass all aspects of the life of students in and outside of college.

Congress notes with concern

That HEIs seem either unaware of the need to produce such strategies, or that they do not see these strategies as a priority, despite the short amount of time required to develop them. HEIs also seem unaware that student success has a wider remit than access initiatives, encompassing (but not limited to) everything from the background and personal lives of individual students to the student services they need, to teaching and learning, extra-curricular activity, academic supports, health and wellbeing, student representation, and finances.

Congress believes

That the inclusion of student success by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning as one of four major strategic priorities and their upcoming development of national guidelines as key to overcoming these challenge.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to consult with MOs to include the student perspective on what success means, taking due regard of student diversity, and to develop tools and resources alongside the National Forum for member Students' Unions to use to ensure that they are central to developing HEI Student Success Strategies as partners in the process.

Congress further mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs should consider all such relevant USI mandates that contribute to the success of students before, during, and after their time in college, in order that the work of the National Forum is fully informed by USI.

AA 19 – 12 Grade Inflation

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That there is a rising conversation in Ireland and globally in Higher Education about the issue of ‘grade inflation’, which refers to improving grades across the student body.

Congress notes with concern

That the debate on grade inflation and its causes has excluded the rising standards in teaching and learning, the changing nature of assessment, the rise of student engagement and partnership, and more active attempts to improve student-centred learning and feedback.

Congress realises

That there are valid concerns on many of the potential causes for grade inflation, including a lack of clarity around grading practices and external examination, however this should not give rise to anti-student rhetoric and attempts to deny students their hard earned academic success.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to ensure that any work on grade inflation in Ireland, undertaken by any national body, includes student representation and takes full account of the changing nature of the teaching and learning environment.

Congress further mandates

That USI Officer Board challenges and counters anti-student rhetoric in the grade inflation debate.

AA 19 – 13 Best Practice Framework for Student Rights

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

Congress Notes:

The framework for assessment and examination guidelines vary between each Institution in Ireland. Many member organisations run a version of my rights campaign which encompasses student rights within their institution.

Congress further Notes:

Due to this, it is difficult for USI to run a national my rights campaign with generic and national student rights information. This can lead to students being unaware of their basic rights within their respective courses.

Congress Believes:

That a standardisation of assessment and examination guidelines would benefit not only the everyday student, but also the frameworks would better facilitate these students when transferring between Institutes.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to seek a framework for best practice of student rights across all institutions with the view to standardisation of these campaigns. This should be completed end of the 2019/20 academic year.

AA 19 – 14 Student Feedback and TUI

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

Student feedback on assessments and modules is vital to the upkeep of standards of quality assurance in all third-level institutions.

Congress further Notes:

Student feedback is vital for implementing change in the relevant module and course, in order to keep up with the development of courses.

Congress therefore Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the TUI on student feedback and encourage relevant officers in member institutions to implement similar feedback structures locally.

AA 19 – 15 Creative Arts Networking

Proposed By National College Of Art And Design Students' Union And Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

Within many of the USI MOs there are Creative Arts courses that are underrepresented locally, as well as nationally, and offer unique issues to their students. 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 fewer 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 repeals:

2018 AA 6

Congress mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs, and VP Campaigns to create a Creative Arts subcommittee that tackles issues that are exclusively faced by Creative Arts students. This subcommittee will consist of the VP for Academic Affairs, VP for Campaigns, at least one representative from each MO that specialises in Creative Arts, and any other representatives.

Congress further mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs and VP Campaigns, to organise a one-day networking event for Creative Arts students to discuss and educate artists on issues such as, but not limited to, funding, internships, and taxes as a freelance artist.

AA 19 – 16 Erasmus Rights

Proposed By ITBSU

Congress Notes:

The large number of Students who study abroad during the course of their studies.

Congress Regrets:

Many students can feel lost or unsupported before and during their time abroad.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the European Students' Union (ESU) to provide general resources for participating Erasmus+ institutions (e.g. info on accommodation, finance, transport links) and to investigate flaws in the current Erasmus+ system.

AA 19 – 17 Amendment to the FE Development Strategy

Proposed by the Southern Regional Working Group

Congress recognises

The importance of ensuring all students in both further and higher education are fully represented within the Union of Students in Ireland.

Congress applauds

The work was undertaken to develop the USI FE Strategy that was passed by Congress in 2018.

Congress mandates

The following section to be included in the FE Strategy under the "Our Further Education Members in NUS-USI" Actions Section

"Vice Presidents for the Regions to conduct study visits to FE colleges who are members of NUS-USI to learn about the structures and procedures. Vice Presidents for the Regions can use this learning in helping to develop FE colleges to become full members of USI."

AA 19 – 18 Clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of Technological Universities and Borrowing Models for IOTs

Proposed by Limerick IT Students' Union

Congress notes

Given the fast pace development of Higher Education in Ireland our regional IOTs must be protected. For years IOTs across the country have continued to suffer a deflating financial state. As it stands IOTs cannot borrow money in the such ways Universities can; there is a lack of clarity around the borrowing capacity of the newly developed Technological Universities.

Congress further notes

This raises significant concerns and issues for IOTs, regarding their progress and status advancement in the same way of Universities and that expressed by Technological Universities.

Due to the inability to borrow and minimal funding from the HEA, IOT's will continue to struggle in delivering adequate modern higher education: digitalisation, investment in modern STEM equipment and campus development.

Furthermore, the inability to access additional funding inhibits IOTS to help combat the accommodation crisis, as they cannot build, forcing them to rely on external development.

Congress therefore mandates

The USI President as a member of the HEA board to seek clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of TUs in comparison to IOTs.

To highlight same with the HEA and to lobby the Government for IOTs to access additional funding, in line with Universities and Technological Universities.

Congress therefore deletes

17 AA3

AA 19 – 19 Student Teacher Campaign

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

Congress Notes

The teacher supply shortage in Ireland and the high cost of teaching courses

Congress Further Notes

The benefit of data produced from the USI Student Teacher Report in 2017/2018

Congress Mandates

Officer board to review the data from the Student Teacher Report and expand the existing online forum for student teachers

AA (NC) 19 – 1 Open Access Policy

Proposed by: VP Postgraduate Affairs

National Council notes:

The freedom of researchers to publish wherever they feel most appropriate. The need to increase and improve access to the output of research. The increased digitisation of literature. The increased price of subscriptions and barriers to access.

National Council believes:

Research must be freely available on the public internet, permitting any user 'free to read' and 'free to re-use' access. The only constraints on open access should be that it is achieved whilst

satisfying the principle that authors be acknowledged through citation for their work, and maintain control over the dignity of their work.

National Council mandates:

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to develop a position paper on open access. The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to collaborate with EuroDoc and other relevant parties to lobby for open access.

AA (NC) 19 - 2 Career Guidance Review

Proposed by: Vice President for Academic Affairs

National Council notes: The Career Guidance Review announced by the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, in early 2018. That this review aims to examine all aspects of Career Guidance, including at secondary and third-level.

That an external Consultancy firm, Indecon, is carrying out this review, and that USI aided Indecon in circulating a number of surveys for Further and Higher Education students, and that USI submitted it's own written submission in June 2018.

National Council believes:

That this Review is an important opportunity to consider the role of good career guidance for transition, progression, retention, success, and wellbeing.

That the specific focus of the Review on enterprise engagement should not detract from the views of students in shaping the outcome of the Review.

National Council welcomes:

The Career Guidance Review and the number of opportunities provided to gain the views of students, however, it would have been preferable for the Review to be held during term-time.

National Council believes that:

The Review should conclude that career guidance must be considered as a continuous process, and that a National Strategy should clearly link each level of education and each pathway to promote lifelong learning, supports, and informed decision-making.

The Review must include the need to invest in significant resource, including employing more specific Career Guidance Teachers/Counsellors in Schools after cuts during austerity years, as well as resourcing for Careers Offices at third-level.

National Council mandates that:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs should lobby that any National Strategy or approach requires a new agency for oversight and implementation, that can also create best practice and support continuous professional development in career guidance. This agency should also develop, maintain, and support an online resource that can replace or revamp Qualifax and other tools.

EM 1 (AAQA): Merging Students' Unions

Proposed by WIT Students' Union

Congress Notes:

The recent enactment of the Technological University Act has put forward the imminent establishment of Technological Universities in Ireland.

Congress Further Notes:

The merging and restructuring of Students' Unions will be expected during the process of two or more IOT's merging.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs of USI to research and write a best practice for merging Students' Unions document based on examples of third level institutes who have already merged in the past to be completed by SUT+ 2018.

Motion Passed

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.

2018 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.

2018 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.

2018 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

2018 AA 4 : Accreditation for Volunteering & Participation

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

2018 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

2018 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

2018 AA 9: Further Education and Training Strategy

Proposed by Union Development Working Group

Congress Adopts

The Further Education and Training Strategy.

2018 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.

2018 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 assist MOs in lobbying for anonymous marking within their own HEI.

2018 AA 13 : Postgraduate Students Strategy

Proposed by the Postgraduate Affairs Working Group

Congress adopts

The Postgraduate Students Strategy.

2018 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.

2018 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.

2018 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 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.

2018 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 at every stage.

2018 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.

2018 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 vital funding support.

17 NC/AA 05 Early Education and Carers Campaign

NATIONAL COUNCIL NOTES:

Early years workers and providers are dedicated and passionate about delivering a quality service that focuses on the needs of children and realising their full potential. Workers are paid too little and are struggling to make ends meet. The cost of Early Years services in Ireland are among the highest in Europe, an average of over €750 per child per month. However most early years educators are earning less than the living wage.

NATIONAL COUNCIL APPLAUDS:

The 'Big Start' campaign led by SIPTU and the efforts to build a coalition of organisations and groups on the issue.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ACKNOWLEDGES:

A lack of State investment where Ireland spends only 25% of the European average investment in early years services. Lack of empirical evidence to show that early education and carers students and graduates are looking for recognition of the sector and a living wage and if other issues exist.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to work with the relevant trade unions, and other organisations, to assess the issues that may exist and to further mobilise students on a campaign on the issues of: pay, work, and recognition of the sector.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ALSO MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective.

17 AA2 Fees Sanctions

CONGRESS NOTES:

That many students are unable to pay their fees by the deadline put in place by each Third Level Institute.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That there is no best practice guidelines in place to deal with the issue of late fee payment of students.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That in an attempt to encourage to students to pay their fees, they can be locked out of online resources including moodle and emails.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That this is resulting in students becoming very distressed, as the sanctions put in place are having a direct negative impact on each of the students academics, as students are unable to access upload continues assessments or sit online exams.

CONGRESS MANDATES

The President to lobby the HEA to set up a Sub group to examine best practice guidelines in relation to sanctions for late fee payment.

17 AA3 Borrowing model of IOTs

CONGRESS NOTES

There is a huge crisis in relation to the current financial state of many IOTs across the country. IOTs are not allowed to borrow money in the such ways Universities can. According to recent reports in the media, currently there are six Institutes of Technology in a vulnerable state.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

This causes huge issues for IOTs regarding progress and helping to advance their status the same way Universities can. This can also come into effect as IOTs cannot borrow money to help with the accommodation crisis, and they cannot borrow money to build.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The USI President as a member of the HEA board to highlight with the HEA and lobby the government for IOTs to access additional funding the same way Universities can access it.

17 AA4 Student Participation in Governance

CONGRESS:

Repeals 15 AAQA 8 and 14 AAQA 6

CONGRESS NOTES:

That student participation in the academic governance of their institution is integral to ensuring that the perspective of the learner is embedded and reflected in decision-making.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

Tertiary-level education is becoming increasingly marketised and competition-driven, with HEI Management engaged in strategic work around recruitment, marketing, and internationalisation. Students are increasingly denied a role in academic governance, creating a democratic deficit in our institutions.

CONGRESS BELIEVES THAT:

Students and student representatives are partners in their education, and should have a key role to play in governance throughout structures in their institutions.

Congress recognises:

- The experiences of MOs in student participation and institutional democracy is varied.
- The work to date with NStEP on institutional analysis and academic representation.
- The work to date with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning on partnership.

CONGRESS MANDATES THE PRESIDENT AND THE VP ACADEMIC AFFAIRS:

- To carry out diagnostic work with MOs to get a broader picture of institutional democracy and student representation in governance structures.
- To create resources around best practice examples of democratisation and decentralisation of institutional governance structures.
- To work with individual MOs, as appropriate, to support efforts to improve student participation in academic governance.

17 AA6 Class Rep Best Practice

CONGRESS NOTES:

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

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

The role of Class Rep, 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.

17 AA7 Class Rep Accreditation

REFERRED BACK TO NEXT AA WORKING GROUP – IS NOT ADOPTED AS POLICY BY CONGRESS

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.

17 AA8 Multi-campus support

CONGRESS NOTES

There are many colleges with multi-campus. Multiple campuses are important in delivering education to regional communities.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That in setting up multi-campus there was additional funding provided. That funding has since stopped, giving no help to colleges to support the running of the many satellite campuses. This has resulted many colleges facing satellite campus closures, and high financial difficulty.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

USI President and VP AA to put pressure on TDs and the HEA to support the fact that multi-campus' need more support to sustain a comfortable financial state and security for the survival of these vital campuses.

17 AA10 Shared Feedback Standards

CONGRESS NOTES:

Current assessment and feedback structures vary across all institutions. This results in highly varied teaching standards. Students are suffering as a result.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning have chosen "Assessment Of/For/As Learning " as their most recent enhancement theme. It places a special focus on assessment in Irish higher education.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

ISSE data collected since its initiation, which indicates that first year students experience a low level of interaction with lecturing staff.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

VP AA to engage with the Department of Education, QQI and HEA to introduce shared standards for feedback on assessed work across all third level institutions that improves the students' experience and develops quality of assessment across the country.

17 AA11 Motion on residency criteria for returning emigrants

CONGRESS NOTES

That students who have not lived in Ireland or another EU member state for 3 of the last 5 years do not qualify for EU tuition fee levels or the student maintenance grant, regardless of their nationality and/or citizenship.

CONGRESS REGRETS

That this policy has particularly affected the many young people who emigrated from Ireland during the economic crisis. Those who wish to return to Ireland to pursue higher education at both undergraduate and postgraduate level face significantly higher non-EU fee levels as a result of their residency in a non-EU state. In practice, this serves as an incentive to defer or reconsider repatriation.

CONGRESS ALSO REGRETS

That for a huge number of emigrants, emigration has not been a "lifestyle choice". Hundreds of thousands of people have emigrated from Ireland over the past 10 years and many of whom did so under the obligation of a scarcity of opportunity.

CONGRESS ACCORDINGLY ASSERTS

That it is unjust to penalise those Irish citizens who were forced by external circumstances to seek opportunities abroad. Moreover, the current policy is inconsistent with government strategy to incentivise the repatriation of those same emigrants.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

That returning emigrants should be subject to less strict conditions of residency in order to qualify for EU fee levels and student supports

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

Officer board to liaise with the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority to pursue the implementation of less strict conditions of residency for these people.

16 AAQA 3 Motion to call for a state agency to support student partnership – Re-adopted 2019.

Congress Affirms

That student partnership is an effective, student-centric model for student engagement.

Congress Notes

The success of student partnership as a model for student engagement in international contexts, including but not limited to Scotland, Wales, and England. For each, some form of publicly funded agency for the third level sector has been established to support student engagement in the quality of the learning experience.

Congress Also Notes

Significant recent developments in Ireland in relation to student partnership, including but not limited to the outcomes of the HEA working group on student engagement, USI's development with the HEA and QQI of a training scheme for class and school representatives, and institutional engagement with Student Participation in Quality Scotland (Sparqs).

Congress calls for

The establishment of a publicly funded agency, congruent with the Sparqs (Scottish) model, to support the third level sector in enhancing student partnership in the quality of their learning experience.

Congress repeals

Policy 12 AAQA 2

Congress adopts

The proposed USI Student Partnership Statement.

16 AAQA 4 Non-EU fee regulation - Re-adopted 2019.

Congress Acknowledges

That a large number of third level institutions have responded to a contraction in state funding by endeavouring to attract students of "nonEU" fee status. These students do not qualify for the HEA "free fees" scheme and, as such, pay a much higher fee to attend higher education in Ireland.

Congress Regrets

That these students are, in effect, regarded as "cash cows" by institutions, which in many cases fail to distribute the appropriate resources to support services and student organisations to cater their activities towards a more diverse student population.

Congress Also Regrets

That these students do not enjoy a significant degree of fee level certainty, such is the wont of institutions to increase fee levels on an almost annual basis. As well as representing an issue of esteem, many non EU students from countries prioritised for recruitment take large commercial loans to fund their education in Ireland. These students are particularly affected by changes in fee level as they will have been required before starting college to budget up to six years in advance (in the case of longer courses).

Congress Asserts

That non EU students deserve, at an absolute minimum, full certainty as to their fee obligations for the entire course of their degree.

Congress mandates

That USI, as an organisation, is opposed to the current national policy of unregulated non-EU fees.

Congress also mandates

The VP Equality & Citizenship and the VP AAQA to research the effects of unregulated non-EU fees on the non-EU student population and to present a report on the issue to National Council before the end of 2016.

Congress further mandates

The President to present the findings of the research to the Higher Education Authority.

15 AAQA 5 Universal fee payment dates

RENEWED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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

RENEWED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 Regional Vice Presidents to assist in the merging of Students' Unions involved in the TU Process

15 AAQA 10 Cross-border student mobility

RENEWED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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

14 AAQA 1 USI/NERI THIRD-LEVEL FUNDING POLICY

Congress notes:

Congress policy 11/ ED 11 mandating Officer Board to compile a single comprehensive and researched document on the public-funding model proposed through various USI policies.

Congress applauds:

The securing of research support from the Nevin Economic Research Institute on areas of shared concern, including initially the development of a public-funding policy for third-level on behalf of USI, as part of the SIPTU-USI Agreement.

Congress believes:

This provides USI with credible, well-researched and solutions-based policy for which to advance the argument in favour of our ideological position on third-level funding.

Congress approves:

The third-level funding policy paper developed by NERI as USI policy.

Congress mandates:

USI Officer Board to campaign and lobby extensively for the adoption of this policy as the roadmap for the future funding of the Irish Higher Education system, through every possible political, media and policy platform.

14 AAQA 2 ALTERNATIVE ADMISSIONS

Congress regrets:

The almost exclusive focus of the current third-level admissions route on prior academic attainment.

Congress believes:

That taking into consideration contextual data can ensure that an individual's true potential for performance in higher education is considered.

Congress also believes:

That such consideration would broaden the socio-economic demographic of the third-level student body; the current admissions system disproportionately advantages applicants from fee-paying secondary schools.

Congress notes with approval:

That an Irish Universities Association (IUA) alternative admissions route is being piloted in Trinity College Dublin. The alternative route shall offer 7530 students in total a place in a competitive Level 8 degree programme in September 2014 on the basis of Leaving Certificate results, performance relative to classmates, and a personal statement.

Congress mandates:

That the USI shall support initiatives to create an alternative common admissions route for all publicly-funded third-level institutions where contextual data, including but not limited to socio-economic background, is considered in addition to prior academic attainment.

Congress also mandates:

The President to lobby for state investment in retention activities to prevent disproportionate drop out levels of those from non-traditional backgrounds.

Congress further mandates:

The President and the VP Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to lobby for improved information, advice and guidance and careers information at all levels of education.

14 AAQA 3 CONSULTATION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENT CONTRIBUTION CHARGE

Congress notes:

That in November 2011 USI agreed with the Higher Education Authority that HEIs were obliged towards 'meaningful consultation' with students on the expenditure of the student contribution charge.

Congress regrets:

That meaningful consultation does not occur in many institutions; most HEIs consult ineffectively and insincerely in forums where students have legally-mandated representation but are not the only representatives present.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to work with the HEA to define best practice for 'meaningful consultation' in the context of the distribution of the student contribution charge, and to lobby the HEA to ensure the application of this established best practice.

14 AAQA 9 USI PARTICIPATION IN ESU

Congress recognises:

That many policies and initiatives developed and agreed at European Union and European Higher Education Area level effect the Irish Higher Education system and our students.

Congress believes:

As a member of the European Students' Union USI has an important role in the shaping of international policies and has the opportunity to inform national and local policies with international best practice.

Congress mandates:

The Officer Board members who attend each bi-annual ESU Board meeting to present a report to the following meeting of National Council including explanations of the policies proposed and voted on by USI.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to co-ordinate a delegation, selected from National Council participants, to attend each bi-annual European Student Convention. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance is also tasked to investigate funding opportunities to cover the associated costs.

Congress notes:

That legislation creating the Technological Universities has been enacted and that the development of the Dublin TU is now moving ahead quickly.

Congress further notes:

The agreement in principle from the three ITSUs in question to work together by way of a steering group, chaired by the USI President.

Congress affirms:

That student consultation in this development must be thorough and meaningful, with a view to students being seen as the key stakeholders at the table.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to continue to assist in ensuring that this steering group is recognised at HEA and DoE's level as the collective representative voice of the three ITSUs.

14 AAQA 12 FEES FOR STUDENT APPRENTICES

Congress notes:

The publication of the Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland, and the consistent focus on the importance of work-based learning and apprenticeships as part of the dialogue around the Youth Guarantee.

Congress condemns:

The decision taken in Budget 2014 to impose a new pro-rata Student Contribution fee burden on student apprentices.

Congress welcomes:

The collaboration between the USI and the TEEU in launching the 'Axe The Tax on Training' campaign this year.

Congress mandates:

The President, Vice-President for Campaigns and Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to lobby to overturn this decision in Budget 2015 and reinstate the State contribution to this fee, in conjunction with the TEEU.

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 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 18 MATHEMATICS BONUS POINTS

REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 20 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 recognizes:

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

REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 (with amendments) – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 the 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 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 2015 (With Amendments) and 2018 (With no further amendments) – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

WELFARE

WEL 19 – 1Abortion Information in SHAG Packs

Proposed By ITBSU

Congress Notes:

That the USI Sexual Health, Awareness and Guidance (SHAG) packs are a greatly appreciated by MO's.

Congress Welcomes:

The legalisation of Abortion in Ireland in January 2019.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship along with the VP for Welfare to provide abortion information in every SHAG Pack.

WEL 19 – 2Decriminalisation of Drugs

Proposed by VP Welfare

Congress Notes

On July 17th 2015, USI National Council formally adopted a stance that called for USI to support a call for decriminalisation of drugs, with a view to taking a similar approach to the one in place in Portugal. Following the adoption of this stance, the VP Equality and Citizenship made a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality as part of their Drugs Policy Review

process. In 2016, USI Congress mandated Officer Board to lobby for decriminalisation, and in 2018, Officer Board had developed connections with external expert groups to promote harm reduction campaigns and promote decriminalisation models.

Congress Notes

College is a time when many students are exposed to drugs. For many students, this exposure can happen at an even younger age. There is currently very little information being given to students at second or third level about drug consumption or risks. There is a culture of fear amongst wider society around talking about drugs in an informed and responsible manner.

Congress Also Notes

That if a student gets a conviction for personal use, this can have lifelong implications. It can prevent a student from accessing a visa to certain countries, a job which requires Garda vetting, certain types of insurance, and can impede them from availing of further education or training. A criminal conviction also limits an individual's chances of social mobility, which results in them becoming dependent on the state.

Congress Further Notes

On July 1st 2001, Portugal decriminalised drug use, acquisition and possession of illicit drugs when conducted for personal use as part of a comprehensive new policy. This quantity of personal use amounted to up to 10 days' supply for personal use. The policy also included a significant expansion in drug treatment, including methadone maintenance, to help dependent users get away from injecting heroin.

Congress Believes

There is a need for health professionals, parents and educators to acknowledge the fact that young people often engage in drug use, and at the very least will be exposed to drug use at some point in their lives. Drug use cannot be tackled by policy measures which are only aimed at controlling the supply of drugs. It is futile to only have supply reduction strategies in place of more cost-effective and evidence based investments in harm-reduction and education.

Congress Mandates

Officer Board to lobby for the decriminalisation of drugs in line with the Portuguese Model. USI Officer Board should also lobby for investment into treatment and health facilities along with education about drug use and risk for young adults and those of school age.

Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare, and VP Campaigns (with the aid of Officer Board), to run an information campaign for students to educate them of the need for this reform.

Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare to provide appropriate information and supports to MOs to best understand these issues, and to promote such campaigns in their own unions, and to appropriate bodies in their own institutions.

WEL 19 - 3 Investment in Mental Health Care in Rural and West of Ireland

Proposed By GMIT SU

Congress Notes:

Mental Health supports and preventative ongoing care provisions are lacking in Ireland, leaving many without adequate, if any supports especially in rural and the west of Ireland. As well as this, gaps in the system and miss-information has seen students wrongly 'transferred' to services which aren't capable/exist for that purpose.

Congress Further Notes:

Ongoing Preventative Mental Health services are necessary for general wellbeing and not just for emergency cases where focus currently lies, increased investment in preventative services can help us stop the loss of student lives in disadvantaged and under resourced areas, these people are the future of Ireland.

Congress Recognises:

The need for more investment and resources in early and ongoing care and awareness, with this also assisting in reducing the pressure on emergency services

Congress Mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to lobby for ongoing Mental Health services in the west and rural Ireland inclusive of non-emergency services as well as bringing awareness to the current situation in order to highlight the need, and aid the lobbying for this investment.

WEL 19 - 4 Undetectable = Untransmittable

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

That there has been a significant increase in HIV diagnoses within Ireland in recent years. The level of new HIV diagnoses is the highest on record to date with at least one diagnosis being issued every 18 hours on average. The stigma surrounding HIV in Ireland prevents us from tackling the epidemic and lowering HIV diagnoses.

Congress further notes:

The "PARTNER 1" and "PARTNER 2" studies showed that if someone living with HIV, who are virally suppressed from antiretroviral therapy (ART) medication, cannot transmit HIV to a sexual partner. This is known as "Undetectable = Untransmittable," or "U=U".

Congress mandates:

The VP for Welfare to organise a national campaign, which would be brought to every MO, to highlight and educate students on the term "U=U," or "Undetectable = Untransmittable." This campaign should emphasise the increasing diagnoses of HIV in Ireland and highlight the benefits of knowing your HIV status.

Congress further mandates:

The VP for Welfare to produce a document containing information about STI checks, including, but not limited to, information regarding STI's, how, where and when to get STI checks, and how much they cost.

WEL 19 - 5 Local Specialised Sexual Health Services.

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes:

The importance of students having local access to specialised sexual health services.

Congress further notes:

The student cohort is a demographic most at risk of obtaining sexual health infections/diseases.

Congress mandates:

THE VP for Welfare and the officer board to lobby the HSE and government to provide local access to Specialised Sexual Health Services in every town/city with a third level institution.

WEL 19 – 7 Excessive alcohol consumption campaign for secondary and third level

Proposed by Letterkenny Institute Of Technology Students' Union, St. Angela's College, Sligo Students' Union, Institute Of Technology, Sligo Students' Union.

Congress notes

That excessive alcohol consumption has increased substantially in the past number of years as a result of binge drinking.

Congress further notes

That underage alcohol consumption has increased and has a detrimental effect on the developing student, impacting their progress to third level.

Congress is saddened

That alcohol is responsible for 88 deaths every month in Ireland, over 1,000 deaths per year. There were 6,479 alcohol related deaths between 2008 and 2013, which accounts for 3.8% of all deaths in Ireland. Furthermore, One in four deaths of young men aged 15-39 in Ireland is due to alcohol. Liver disease rates are increasing rapidly in Ireland and the greatest level of increase is among 15-to-34-year-olds, who historically had the lowest rates of liver disease.

Congress believes:

That the issue of excessive alcohol consumption awareness can be targeted, research a possible partnership between USI, ISSU and the HSE.

CONGRESS MANDATES THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR WELFARE, VICE PRESIDENT FOR CAMPAIGNS AND THE REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS:

To initiate contact with the HSE and ISSU to research the feasibility of a joint yearlong campaign on Excessive alcohol consumption awareness. This campaign would highlight the statistics and work with MO's to establish alcohol-free events. This campaign will have a particular focus on Fresher's, Raise and

Give weeks and Christmas events. This campaign should be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of the students.

WEL 19 – 8 Support for Students Addicted to Drugs and/or Alcohol

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

[Congress notes](#)

The lack of specialised supports and services for students undergoing drug and alcohol addiction.

[Congress mandates](#)

The VP for Welfare to seek partnership with a specialised drug and alcohol addiction service to facilitate a Drug & Alcohol Addiction awareness Roadshow.

WEL 19 – 9 Second-hand Smoke

Proposed By Dublin City University SU

[Congress notes:](#)

The danger and damaging effects second-hand smoke can have on students

[Congress believes:](#)

That college campuses should have smoke free zones.

[Congress mandates:](#)

The Welfare Officer to put together a campaign which will be rolled out to all college's to introduce smoke free zones.

WEL 19 – 11 USI Cost of Living Index

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

[Congress notes](#)

That the DIT Cost of Living Guide (now the TU Dublin Cost of Living Guide) for 2018/19 indicates that the annual cost of college while living away from home is €11,829 and is €6,780 while living at home.

[Congress further notes](#)

That other colleges are attempting to put together similar guides or have lists of particular costs, include possible learning resources, in their marketing materials and websites.

[Congress believes](#)

That these guides do not necessarily portray the actual costs of living in Ireland while studying in third-level.

[Congress mandates](#)

That the USI President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Welfare seek meaningful ways to explore the true costs of student life today in Ireland, including through the

possible commission of research, taking into account regional pressures, soaring rents, and hidden course costs.

[Congress further mandates](#)

That any new Index should act as a national guide for student budgeting and be underpinned by evidence that can be utilised in USI's ongoing lobby efforts, including to inform the further development of the Grant Reform Paper and campaign for increased SUSI grants and other student supports.

WEL 19 – 13 Men's Mental Health

PROPOSED BY Vice President for the Border, Midlands & West

[Congress notes:](#)

The importance of empowering men to speak about their Mental Wellbeing and to seek help if they face a crisis.

[Congress notes with regret:](#)

The lack of work in the area of Men's Mental Health within USI.

[Congress notes with concern:](#)

In 2017 Ireland registered almost 400 suicides with eight out of those ten fatalities accounting for males.

[Congress recognises:](#)

How the male population of students are vulnerable to mental health crisis and the stigma attached to seeking help.

[Congress mandates:](#)

The Vice President for Welfare to form a campaign specific to empowering men to speak about their Mental Health.

[Congress further mandates:](#)

The Vice President for Welfare & Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to coordinate an action to mark International Men's Day specific to Men's Health.

WEL 19 – 14 Adoption of the Consent Strategy

Proposed by VP Welfare

[Congress Recognises](#)

The unacceptable rates of sexual harassment and sexual assault in HEIs, as well as in wider society.

[Congress Agrees](#)

That sexual consent is paramount to positive communications and relationships.

[Congress Welcomes](#)

The lobby that USI has done to introduce an infrastructure for consent in HEIs, and the subsequent, Consent in HEIs report, "Safe, Respectful, Supportive & Positive: Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions", of which USI were members of the inner working group writing the report.

[Congress notes](#)

That given the shifting culture, and external attitudes to consent, USI need to introduce a comprehensive strategy on how we can best support our students with these new structures.

[Congress therefore mandates](#)

The adoption of the 'Consent Strategy' Document

[Congress further repeals](#)

2018WEL16 Expert Consent Advisory Group

17WEL8 Consent classes

WEL 19 – 15 Casework Debriefing Provision

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

[Congress notes](#)

The difficult casework which officers deal with on a regular basis; and often must rely on self-coping mechanisms between periods of little support.

[Congress further notes](#)

That although working groups or spaces at NC can be useful to debrief, an OB member may not be adequately equipped to lead a facilitation session to help officers explore issues they have faced in their roles.

[Congress therefore mandates](#)

The VP Welfare to organise debriefing sessions, on the request of Welfare working group, in order to best help officers. Debriefing sessions should be lead by an appropriately skilled facilitator, and also encompass coping skills that officers can use in self-care exercises.

WEL 19 – 16 Regional Finance & Accommodation Information Provision

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

[Congress notes](#)

That the USI Finance & Accommodation guide is a useful tool for educating students on their accommodation rights, and how to manage their finances.

[Congress also notes](#)

That given the accommodation crises, it has become more difficult to categorise accommodation information as one piece, given that different areas are hard to compare.

[Congress therefore mandates](#)

That the VP Welfare would endeavour to provide the online version of the Finance & Accommodation guide which are more region specific.

18 EM 2 (WEL) : Fee Certainty

Proposed by TCD Students' Union

Congress notes:

Non-EU and Postgraduate students pay significant fees annually for their education. There is no government regulation of fees for these students. Many of these students are multi-year students and precarious fee increases year to year has a negative impact on students.

Congress further notes:

Trinity College introduced a policy of 'fee certainty' for non-EU and Postgraduate students meaning new students will be aware of the entire cost of their degree programme, prior to commencing their studies. This will provide fee paying multi-year students with vital information often required when applying for loans and scholarships, as well as placing students in an improved position to budget for the duration of their studies.

Congress mandates:

That until such a time as higher education is free to all students, congress mandates the VP for Academic Affairs and the VP for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for the introduction of fee certainty policies for multiyear fee paying students in HEIs meaning the costs associated with the entire duration of a degree programme is determined prior to the student beginning their studies.

18 EM 3 (WEL) : Survivor Support Campaigns

Proposed by NUI Galway Students' Union

Congress notes:

Legislation, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, does not favour the victim and that there are very little provisions put in place to support survivors of sexual assault and rape.

Congress further notes:

Issues regarding consent, sexual assault and rape has been to the forefront of media attention as of late. This may have an impact on future victims coming forward to report an assault. The only way this can change is for legislation to be re-written and/or added to and an improvement of provisions to be put in place for victim support. This will in turn change Irish cultures and protect the victim from personal attack.

Congress believes:

That the student movement has always been one to inspire great change within society and incite progressive legislation. We should unite once again to demand a change and to demand better victim support for future crimes reported.

Congress mandates:

The Vice-President for Welfare and the Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to head up survivor support campaigns. This would unite MO's across Ireland to come together and lead a movement towards a better legal and support system.

Congress further mandates:

That these campaigns, lead by USI, would promote local support groups in regional areas for victims of sexual assault. Congress also mandates that these campaigns be run within the first semester of the academic term to provide the best most efficient support to students.

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.

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.

2018 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 officers throughout their term with an additional number of de-brief sessions to follow on from the end of an officer's term.

2018 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.

2018 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 rental prices.

2018 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

2018 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.

2018 WEL 6 : Timetabled Wellness Hours

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union

REFERRED AND PASSED IN PARTS AT NATIONAL COUNCIL. INTERIM POLICY, TO COME TO CONGRESS 2019.

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.

2018 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.

2018 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

2018 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

2018 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.

2018 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 (NWC) in their project work nationally to end sexual violence and harassment at third level.

Congress therefore deletes

17 EQ 4 - Expansion of "2in2u" Campaign.

2018 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.

2018 WEL 14 : Cura Disassociation

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

REFERRED AND PASSED AT NATIONAL COUNCIL. INTERIM POLICY, TO COME TO CONGRESS 2019.

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.

2018 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.

2018 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.

2018 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.

17 WEL EM 3 Proposed Qmark for good employment practices in the hospitality sector

CONGRESS REGRETS

That there is a significant number of students who are working in the hospitality sector who have been subjected to mistreatment and abuse of their basic employment rights. This has left students feeling devalued and demoralised. Research evidence shows that this experience is not confined to student workers alone. Research evidence also shows that people are afraid to speak up.

CONGRESS NOTES

That a large proportion of students who work part-time are employed in the Hospitality Sector. A survey Conducted by NUI Galway SU shows that 40% of respondents work in this sector.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That a wider campaign has been launched after a public meeting on March 6 th by two ex-workers from the sector. They are hoping to promote a national Quality Mark for employers within the sector that treat employees fairly and uphold their basic rights. This could help combat the negative culture that has developed in the sector . They are planning to pilot the initiative in Galway City and move forward to other Tourist/ Student orientated towns and cities.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That good employers should be recognised and promoted, especially if it is an SME that promotes good work place relations between employers and employees

CONGRESS WELCOMES

The Involvement of its affiliates such as 3rd level academics, SIPTU, and NGO's such as the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland, who are working closely with campaigners behind this important project.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

That the V.P for Campaigns, V.P for Welfare and V.P for Equality and Citizenship should work together to come up with a plan to help support this Initiative.

CONGRESS MANDATES

That the USI should lend its support for this QMark initiative to put in place mechanisms to help students who have faced difficulties in the workplace as a result of mistreatment from employers in the Hospitality Sector.

17 WEL 1 Age Threshold for Cervical Cancer Checks

CONGRESS NOTES

The Cervical Check Ireland provides free Smear tests to women over 25 years of age.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

The lack of services available to students under the age of 25 with concerns and the time it takes to get appropriate treatment.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The VP Welfare to lobby the appropriate bodies to campaign on lowering the initial age of smear screenings.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES:

The VP Welfare to provide un-biased information on the HPV Vaccine and its availability.

CONGRESS THEREFORE REPEALS:

10 17 WEL 6 CERVICAL CANCER

17 WEL 3 Dealing with students in distress

CONGRESS NOTES:

Student's mental health issues are prevalent from the beginning of a Sabbatical officer's term

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

Although basic Mental Health Training is offered at SUT, Sabbatical Officers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to assist students during times of distress from the start of the welfare officers elected term.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Welfare to organise comprehensive and practical training at SUT to ensure Sabbatical Officers are capable of dealing with students in distress from the early stages of the officer's term.

CONGRESS REPEALS:

16 WEL 19

17 WEL 7 Rental Restrictions for HEI Owned Campus Accommodations'

CONGRESS NOTES

the impact the housing and rental crises is having on students participating in higher education.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

that a number of HEI's own and operate on-campus accommodation services for their respective students, through companies established and owned by the HEI's.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

that student renters using these accommodation services have not benefited from rental restriction measures introduced between 2014-2016 under varying amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 2016, mainly due to the type of rental agreements these services utilise.

CONGRESS BELIEVES THAT

it is important that such accommodation is accessible for all types of students participating in higher education and that HEI's should not be allowed use the rental crises to plunder the pockets of student renters.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The USI President to seek the HEA to issue guidelines to see that similar rental restriction measures are introduced for HEI owned student accommodation.

17 WEL 8 Consent classes

Congress notes:

The importance of educating our members around sexual health particularly around consent.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That USI has worked closely with organisations like DRCC, Smart Consent and ICOS in raising awareness around consent, domestic violence and sexual assault through campaigns, training and lobbying efforts.

CONGRESS APPLAUDS:

The work that USI has done in relation to the above in pioneering and spearheading national campaigns and the dialogue around consent and sexual health.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That USI should assist local Officers in creating policies locally in their Institutions to implement consent workshops in order to educate their members and continue the dialogue surrounding consent.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and VP for Welfare to conduct research and design, with the assistance of external expert bodies, a national student-focused consent workshop based on recommendations from the 2016 Trinity consent workshops.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and VP for Welfare carry out 'train the trainer' consent courses for Officers in order to educate them on implementing inclusive consent courses for their students.

17 WEL 9 Gambling Control Bill 2013

CONGRESS NOTES:

That USI has a stance to campaign to educate its members on the prevalence of problem gambling for students.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

That Ireland has one of the loosest regulations on gambling in Europe while the Gambling Control Bill 2013 hasn't been acted on since it was first drafted.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That with increase awareness of gambling and improvements in technology, that this bill must be passed to ensure that students and future generations are protected from gambling addiction.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

That the VP Welfare work with organisations such as Problem Gambling Ireland & the Rutland Centre to lobby the Minister for Justice, relevant Junior Ministers and Oireachtas members on introducing the Gambling Control Bill.

17 WEL 10 Training for Officers dealing with students with mental illness or disability

CONGRESS NOTES:

That MOS should be trained in basic awareness in how to deal with difficult situation if they arose and how to refer them on and how to refer the students to the proper services

CONGRESS BELIEVE:

That MOS are not equipped with the basic skill on how to deal and refer people who might have a mental illness, a Disability or a medical condition.

CONGRESS FURTHER BELIEVES:

That if MOS are equipped with the basic skill it will help the student receive help from the right services as quick as possible.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The Vice President for Welfare to organise training for MOs in the basic skills for dealing with a student with a mental illness, a Disability or a Medical Condition if a difficult situation arose and which are the proper services to which to refer students.

17 WEL 11 Accommodation Strategy

CONGRESS NOTES:

That the accommodation strategy was passed in Congress 2016.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

That the accommodation strategy must be edited due to legislative changes.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The adoption of the USI accommodation strategy with the included edits.

17 WEL 12 Public Health (Alcohol) Bill

CONGRESS NOTES:

That USI officially dis-associated from Drinkaware.ie in November 2013

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

That the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill is currently being discussed in the Dáil and is currently being lobbied against by the drinks industry which is successfully stalling the introduction of the Bill in full.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill must be introduced in its current full form to protect future generations and save lives.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI President with assistance of the VP Welfare to lobby the government to support and introduce the bill.

17 WEL 13 USI Health Promoting Strategy:

CONGRESS NOTES:

11/17 WEL 4 mandating the creation of a strategy document in the main areas of work for the VP Welfare.

CONGRESS APPLAUDS:

The creation of the USI Health Promoting Strategy which encompasses the following strategies:

- Mental Health Strategy
- Sexual Health Strategy
- Physical Health Strategy
- Healthy Eating Strategy
- Body Confidence Strategy
- Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy
- Drugs Harm Reduction Strategy
- Smoking Cessation Strategy
- Gambling Awareness Strategy

CONGRESS RECOGNISES:

The importance of having a streamlined strategy

CONGRESS THEREFORE INCORPORATES THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS INTO THE STRATEGY, WHICH HAS BEEN PUBLISHED ACCORDINGLY:

Health:

16/wel 14

16/wel 13

16/wel 12

16 wel11

16 wel 1

- 15/Wel 13
- 14/wel 4
- 14/wel 5
- 14/wel 6
- 14/wel 8
- 14/wel 16
- 13/wel 1
- 13/wel 2
- 12/wel 7
- 13/wel 11
- 13/wel 13
- 12/wel 7
- 11/wel 5

Sexual Health:

- 15/wel 9
- 14/wel 11
- 13/wel 3
- 12/wel 3
- 11/wel6

- 11/wel 7
- 10/wel 7
- 9/wel 1
- 9/wel 9

CONGRESS MANDATES

The VP Welfare to follow the above-created USI Health Promoting Strategy with a review every 3 years.

17 WEL14 Cervical Cancer Awareness

CONGRESS NOTES:

Cervical Cancer is sadly statistically increasing amongst the younger population of women in Ireland.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

Cervical Check – Irelands National Cervical Screening Programme currently provides free smear tests to women aged between 25-60 years of age.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

Although free smear tests are provided for all women over the age of 25, women under this age may also develop Cervical Cancer.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

That women who are under 25 years of age, and who are sexually active (which gives them an increased risk of contracting cervical cancer), and who may have symptoms or desire a smear test, currently must pay for it.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI VP Welfare, to work with the HSE to develop an awareness campaign on cervical cancer including the symptoms, risks and how and where to get tests.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES:

The VP Welfare to lobby the government to lower the age of the first FREE Smear test in order to detect the early stages of cervical cancer.

17 WEL 15 Student Survey on Perceptions of Consent

CONGRESS NOTES

that a 'Say Something' Survey was carried out in 2013, to research the instances of unwanted sexual contact and levels of reporting, but not the perception and culture of consent and sexual misconduct.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES

that in the last 3+ years since the survey was carried out, the topic of consent and sexual misconduct within Educational institutions has become a larger topic of conversation for more institutions than ever.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

that to truly tackle the issue of sexual misconduct, culture and social norms must be changed.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

that this survey, if repeated at a later date, will allow USI, MO's and the wider community to evaluate campaigns, policies and strategies that they may have implemented and evaluate whether these have worked in changing social perceptions and norms.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

that this research will better shape campaigns on the topic of consent and allow for MO's to lobby institutions (if required) on the Implementation of consent classes, policies and strategies.

CONGRESS MANDATES

the VP Welfare and the VP Equality and Citizenship to investigate the feasibility of such a survey.

17 WEL 16 Student Assistant Fund & SUSI Recipients

CONGRESS NOTES:

The purpose of the Student Assistance Fund is to provide support to fulltime students who may be experiencing extreme financial difficulties, have experienced a major change of circumstances or are experiencing extreme personal hardship

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

In some third level institutions in Ireland the Student Assistance Fund application process is closed to those who are in receipt of SUSI.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

VP Equality & Citizenship to work towards the Student Assistance Fund being accessible to all students regardless of whether they are in receipt of SUSI or not across Institutes in Ireland.

17 WEL 17 Key Welfare Campaigns Directory

CONGRESS NOTES

The previous campaign directories designed and distributed by previous officers to aid MO's in planning key Welfare Campaigns throughout the year.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES

The time and coordination it takes to organise campaigns which can sometimes be daunting if they are new to their role.

CONGRESS APPLAUDS

The work done previously by welfare officers in this area.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The VP Welfare and VP Campaigns to collate a campaign directory to be distributed to welfare officers with poster and event ideas in the style of previous years.

THIS IS TO BE COMPLETED FOR THE 2ND NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE SU YEAR

17 WEL 18 PrEP Availability in Ireland

CONGRESS NOTES:

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an important tool in reducing the rate of HIV infections and that PrEP is not currently available in Ireland. PrEP, is a safe and highly effective way for HIV-negative people to prevent HIV.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

PrEP is recommended as a prevention option for people at substantial risk of HIV by the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and UNAIDS.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

HIV diagnoses are increasing in Ireland, but PrEP offers a way to prevent new transmissions. Condoms have been our main HIV prevention method for 30 years. While they have been very successful, they have not been enough to stop HIV alone. In 2016 the number of new HIV diagnoses in Ireland was the highest ever recorded. New options like PrEP won't replace condoms and other

risk-reduction approaches, but will be additional tools to help meet the wide range of needs in the real world.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The VP Equality and Citizenship campaign for the accessible introduction of PrEP in Ireland, and work with advocacy organisations already working in the area, eg. *ACT UP* Dublin.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES:

The VP Welfare to lobby the HSE and to seek availability of PrEP in Ireland as part of the National Sexual Health Strategy moving forward.

17 WEL 20 Road Safety

CONGRESS NOTES

Previous collaborations with the Road Safety Authority to create awareness of safe driving on our roads.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN

the rate of fatal accidents among young drivers, and the dangers of driving witnessed in the Southern Region.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES

The importance of raising awareness of road safety to students of which many rely on to get to and from college.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The VP Welfare to look into collaborating with organisations such as the Road Safety Authority in promoting Road Safety to students.

17 WEL 21 Student Bereavement Support

CONGRESS NOTES

As a result of the autonomous nature of policy making each HEI will have a different approach with how to deal with bereavement.

CONGRESS THEREFORE OBSERVES

The creation of bereavement policies within each HEI.

CONGRESS WELCOMES

The structure that they provide on how each institute handles the death of a student or the death of a student's guardian/friend.

CONGRESS NOTES

That the Students' Union is often a source of comfort, familiarity and support to students who have suffered a bereavement.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

It would be beneficial for all MOs to have a bereavement policy to assist the Students' Union with a bereavement of a student or a student's next-of-kin.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The VP for Welfare to find out the best practice of MOs regarding their individual bereavement policies and come up with a uniformed policy for MOs to use in the case of a bereavement.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES

The VP for Welfare to also provide self care information for officers who have to deal with bereavement within their line of work.

CONGRESS THEREFORE REPEALS

14 Wel 8 to be replaced by Student Bereavement Supports.

17 WEL 22 Social Inclusion Campaign

CONGRESS NOTES:

Isolation and loneliness are two issues that affect many students across all institutions in Ireland.

CONGRESS ACKNOWLEDGES:

AITSU 'Mind Your Mates' campaign and WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' UNION 'Be Their Buddy' campaign as being a successful social inclusion initiative in their campuses respectively.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

VP Welfare to run a social inclusion campaign where students are encouraged to support each other at the most basic level of interaction.

Within this campaign, information on appropriate referral services is to be included so students are aware of pathways if an issue is disclosed.

17 WEL 24 Additional Opportunities Available to Post Second Level

CONGRESS NOTES

The pressure placed on Second Level students to gain entry into University and Institutes of Technology.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

The level of drop-out rates amongst first year students at Third Level.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

A lack of career guidance and pressure to have to achieve Third Level contribute to these drop-out rates.

CONGRESS MANDATES

The Vice President for Campaigns to liaise with the Second Level Students' Unions and relevant bodies to run a campaign to emphasize the valuable opportunities available from postponing Third Level education, by means of sampling the world these institutes try to prepare people for.

17 WEL 25 Personal Safety Campaign during Freshers' Week

CONGRESS NOTES:

Every September vast amount of students enter college for the first time, and find it difficult to transition from secondary to third level educational life.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That many students travel or move to bigger counties/cities and are not familiar with the surroundings of their new college.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

Students are most vulnerable during freshers week, as they are exposed to new independence and environments, such as nightlife etc.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH GREAT CONCERN:

That there is a lack of active promotion around personal safety for students.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

USI Welfare Officer, to research and develop a personal safety campaign, during freshers' weeks', that can be implemented into all universities and IOT's across the country.

17 WEL 26 Drug Testing Kits: Awareness and Promotion

CONGRESS NOTES:

Many third level students partake in recreational drug use.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That students are not exposed to the necessary information or tools/apparatus needed to make informed choices about drug usage.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

That lack of information/ apparatus around drug safety and fear mongering with students is resulting in misinformation and putting students at risk. This is why the promotion and education of drug testing kits is beneficial to all students across the country

CONGRESS MANDATES:

VP Welfare, to circulate information around drug testing kits and look into the feasibility of selling them or making them available via the students union.

17 WEL 27 Stim Room for ASD students

CONGRESS NOTES:

That some students find it hard to concentrate and integrate into the student body during lectures and exams due to environmental sensitivity, such as florescent lighting, overcrowding, heat temperature and distracting sounds.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That students internationally with conditions such as ASD (autism spectrum disorder) have benefited from stim rooms, which is a low cost resource that can be easily implemented into universities and institutes across the country.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

VP Equality & Citizenship to investigate the feasibility of implementing this across all colleges in the country.

15 WE2 Student assistance fund

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 13 Mental Health Awareness

REAPPROVED 2018 WITH MINOR AMENDMENT – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 medication in relation to mental health issues as part of their on-going mental health campaigns.

15 WE 25 Gambling

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

14 WEL 3 CASEWORK TRAINING

Congress notes:

The high levels of casework Students' Union officers deal with on a yearly basis.

Congress further notes:

The need for training and support throughout the year when handling large number of individual cases.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare, in consultation with other members of Officer Board, to organise intensive casework training for Students' Union officers each year. This training must include; referral, role plays, data protection and managing casework records. This training must be completed before September each year.

14 WEL 4 APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST) FOR STUDENTS' UNION OFFICERS

Congress notes:

According to the CSO figures, there were 507 suicides registered in 2012 or 11 per 100,000 of the population.

Congress believes:

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention and that Students' Unions need to be equipped with the skills to intervene in a possible suicide if it arises. The more people who feel confident and willing to explore possible signs of suicide risk and provide support and help, the more lives could be saved.

Congress acknowledges:

ASIST, the two-day interactive workshop in suicide first-aid that is highly beneficial. It encourages honest, open and direct talk about suicide as part of preparing people to provide suicide first aid.

Congress acknowledges:

That specific ASIST for Students' Union officers was delivered for the first time in December 2013.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to organise Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) each year for Students' Union Officers. This must be completed by September each year.

14 WEL 6 AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELLORS IN THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION

Congress notes:

A study commissioned by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors that found cutbacks have significantly reduced the time available for one-to-one student counselling in schools.

Congress notes with concern:

Reports from Welfare Officers, that waiting lists for an appointment with Counselling services are at least two weeks with some students waiting up to 6 weeks in extreme cases and also the increasing numbers of students reporting mental health issues.

Congress further notes:

That there is an embargo on hiring of more public sector staff and that many Institutes may not be able to afford to hire more counselling staff either.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the relevant bodies including the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People to lift the embargo on the hiring of counselling staff in Higher Education Institutes and for increased funding to be given specifically for the provision of adequate Counselling services to all Third Level Students either through the direct employment of more Counsellors or in purchasing external counselling session hours.

14 WEL 7 STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

Congress notes:

The importance of the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) and the role it plays to support students in hardship across the country. 83

Congress notes with concern:

How quickly the SAF has run out in many Higher Education Institutions around the country showing the increased strain on students' financial situation.

Congress affirms:

That with the current plight of student finances across the country, the current allocation of funds to student hardship is not fit for purpose.

Congress mandates:

That the President and the Vice President Welfare to campaign for increased funding for the SAF scheme, and to update National Council in August 2014.

14 WEL 9 STUDENTS IN REMOTE AREAS

Congress observes:

That many colleges have courses in which students can be based in remote areas for much of the duration of their course.

Congress believes:

That students in rural areas can feel a sense of isolation and issues such as mental health, alcohol abuse and road safety can be prevalent among students in these areas.

Congress further believes:

That it can be difficult for MO's to reach these campuses to be of support to these students and many of the campuses where these students may be based are far from central student support services and local support services.

Congress applauds:

That some organisations have made efforts to tackle the above issues in rural communities i.e. Headstrong have set up Jigsaw Centres in communities in many parts of Ireland.

Congress believes:

That there should be more focus put on supporting our students in remote areas and communities

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare and Regional Vice Presidents to support MO's who are faced with this issue and to work with MO's on developing a support system or campaign in order to reach out to these students.

14 WEL 10 WATER SAFETY

Congress observes:

That many students and young people are not aware of water safety and the harms of swimming or activity, in and around unsupervised open waters.

Congress notes with regret:

The total number of drowning's in 2012 were 147(Accidental 65, Suicide 4, Undetermined 33). There were many more in 2013 due to the hot weather during the summer months.

Congress applauds:

The work of Irish Water Safety in promoting water safety and local Civil Defense groups in the emergency response service they provide.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to run a water safety mini- campaign on water safety in promoting water safety and awareness.

14 WEL 11 MORNING AFTER PILL

Congress notes:

The cost of the Morning After Pill is currently unregulated here in Ireland, and prices vary hugely throughout counties, cities, towns and pharmacy chains in Ireland.

Congress further notes:

Getting the morning After Pill can set you back anywhere from €10 to €45 or even higher.

Congress believes:

That a standard, maximum price should be set for the Morning After Pill, so that women are aware of how much the drug will cost them irrespective of where they live.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Welfare to engage with other groups who are campaigning for maximum pricing for emergency contraception, including the Real Productive Health campaign, with the aim of setting a national maximum price for emergency contraception.

14 WEL 14 CONTINUITY OF THE HEAR ACCESS PROGRAMME

Congress notes:

The continued excellent work of the Access Service within third level higher education. Through the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR), the Access Service at colleges' discretion, supplies an

“access grant” to students, and also allows students to apply for an access Students Assistance Fund (SAF). While the Access Scheme is allocated funding from the SAF, Access students can chose to apply for the Access Scheme SAF finance support or for the general SAF finance support (this finance support is usually larger).

Congress further notes:

The lack of structure, continuity and shared information amongst colleges and institutes nationally in relation to their access schemes, and particularly their distributions and allocating of access SAF funds.

Congress further notes:

The lack of dialogue within USI in relation to the Higher Education Access Route and information available to elected Students' Union representatives in relation to the Higher Education Access Route and access schemes.

Congress mandates:

That the USI Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, along with the USI Vice President for Welfare, to investigate the Access Scheme on a national level and to prepare a report for National Council in December 2014.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to ensure that a workshop in relation to the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) takes place annually at Students' Union Training.

14 WEL 16 STUDENT SUICIDE

Congress notes with regret:

The continual loss of student's lives to suicide.

Congress notes:

The importance of local officers in the support structure for students who have experienced bereavement and who are contemplating taking their own life by suicide.

Congress further notes:

The importance of comprehensive training in bereavement support for local officers.

Congress mandates:

The VP for welfare to ensure that Safetalk training are offered to all Welfare Officers and any other officer who wish to avail of such training by September before students return to college.

12 WEL 3 SEXUAL HEALTH WEBSITE

Congress notes:

There is large amount of paper material distributed in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.

Congress recognizes:

The lack of a one-stop shop for sexual health information and support services on line.

Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:

To develop an all-inclusive web site which will contain relevant information about sexual health that can be used in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.

12 WEL 4 ALCOHOL ABUSE

Congress notes:

That alcohol consumption in Ireland doubled between 1970 and 2003, one the largest increases in the world during that period (Byrne, 2010).

Congress recognises:

Though consumption has fallen slightly since 2003, Irish consumption at 13.4 litres of pure alcohol per person is the second highest in the OECD (Mongan, 2007).

Congress notes with concern:

That the increase in alcohol consumption has caused a corresponding increase in alcohol related harms in Irish society, including alcohol related accidents and illnesses, alcohol related crime, alcohol related domestic abuse and alcohol related absences from work (Hope, 2008).

Congress understands:

That the Department of Health (RoI) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI) have held a North South conference on alcohol misuse in January to explore some of the common issues in relation to the alcohol culture on both sides of the border. Both Departments recognizing the scope for sharing information and evidence based material, on an all-island basis, in a number of areas including the tackling of alcohol abuse.

Congress believes:

That the issue of alcohol abuse significantly impacts on the welfare of our members. Furthermore, that we as representatives; entrusted with protecting the interests our members, should be proactive in addressing the issue of alcohol abuse.

Congress mandates the President, the Vice President for Welfare:

To engage with the Department of Health (RoI), the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI), before July 2013 in addressing the issue of alcohol abuse.

12 WEL 5 EXAM STRESS PACKS

Congress notes:

That many students experience, incidences of elevated stress and anxiety around the examination period.

Congress notes with concern:

The affects of increased stress and anxiety on students' physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and the subsequent impact on their examination performance.

Congress congratulates:

The Welfare Officer and members of Officerboard for their hard work in tackling issues surrounding students' physical, mental, and emotional welfare.

Congress believes:

That students should be provided with adequate support and guidance around the issue of stress and anxiety, including how to diagnose the condition, what affects it has on students, what self help techniques are recommended, and general management advice.

Congress mandates the Vice President for Welfare:

To develop and source a stress pack and booklet to be distributed to MO's before the winter and summer exams. These should be available for December 2012.

12 WEL 6 DRINK RESPONSIBLY CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

That alcohol consumption has increased substantially in the past number of years and Ireland now consumes more alcohol per adult than most of its European counterparts.

Congress is saddened:

By the linkages drawn between alcohol and related harm, with reference to a report by the HSE in 2008, including; injuries, hospital admissions, mortality, driving, street violence, domestic violence, and road injuries.

Congress applauds:

The Welfare Officer for engaging with Drink Aware, and other related groups in creating awareness about excessive alcohol consumption, and promoting the responsible consumption of alcohol.

Congress believes:

That the issue of alcohol abuse significantly impacts on the welfare of our members.

Congress further believes:

That as student representatives we should be proactive in creating awareness around the issue of excessive alcohol consumption, and campaign for responsibility in this area.

Congress mandates the Vice President for Welfare:

To develop and implement a USI National Drink Responsibly Campaign before July 2013, and to carry out same on an annual basis thereafter in order to create awareness around alcohol consumption rates, and encourage its responsible consumption.

12 WEL 7 SUICIDE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

The level of work the previous Welfare Officer has put into the Mental Health Campaign for the student population.

Congress also notes:

The difficulty in designing a campaign or highlighting the issue of suicide prevention/awareness which is not threatening to students.

Congress recognises:

That suicide remains a key issue for students.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Welfare Officer to organise, design and run a National Suicide Prevention Campaign that would be rolled out right across the Country on a Specific Day.

12 WEL 9 PHYSICAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR USI

Congress notes:

11/WEL 02 mandating the creation of a USI Physical Health Strategy.

Congress therefore adopts the proposed:

USI Physical Health Strategy 2012-2015

Congress mandates:

The Welfare Vice President to both follow the USI Physical Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.

This motion should apply for three years.

12 WEL 10 ALCOHOL POLICY FOR USI

Congress notes:

11/ Wel 4 mandates the creation of strategy documents in the main areas of work for the welfare officer, including sexual health, finance, physical health, accommodation, alcohol awareness, substance abuse and any others that are appropriate.

Congress therefore adopts the proposed:

USI Alcohol Policy 2012-2015

Congress therefore deletes:

11/ Wel 11 Anti Social Behavior Campaign

10/ Wel 3 Student and Alcohol

10/ Wel 8 Anti-Social Behavior

09/ Wel 8 Drug Awareness

09/ 13 Alcohol Awareness Campaign

Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:

To both follow the USI Alcohol Policy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations and action points by disseminating the policy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.

This motion should apply for three years.

12 WEL 13 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Congress notes:

That substance abuse is a growing problem in Irish society.

Congress further notes:

09/Wel 5 – Counselling Service and 09/Wel 8 – Drug awareness mandates as these demonstrate the need for a formulated strategy document to be created in the area of substance abuse.

Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:

To create a Substance abuse strategy document that would contain information in relation to drug awareness, campaigns, how to combat addictions and other items deemed essential to be included by welfare working group. Appropriate training should be provided for Welfare Officers over the summer period so they can handle cases in this area.

This motion shall apply till December 2012.

12 WEL 14 EXAM STRESS CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

The work that MOs put into Exam Stress Campaigns across the Country in the run up to Exams.

Congress further notes:

The lack of support on a National Level to the roll out of these Campaigns and the lack of an overall Exam Stress Campaign.

Congress mandates the VP/South, VP/BMW and the Welfare Officer:

To investigate the possibility of sourcing the materials, supplying and distributing 'Exam Stress Packs' to the MOs along with a resource pack that contains information on support services for the students.

11 WEL 12 MONEY MANAGEMENT AWARENESS

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

AMENDMENTS SHOWN IN STRIKETHROUGH (REMOVAL) AND RED (ADDITION)

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 Vice President for Welfare:

To publish a financial guide to aid students with their budgeting problems each year

10 WEL 2 STUDENT PREGNANCY

Congress notes:

The lack of policy and support in the area of student parenting, both for student mothers and students Fathers.

Congress further notes:

That while staff who fall pregnant are recognised under equality law, students exist within a grey area of legislation in this sector and subject to discrimination as the college chooses in terms of concessions and special accommodations.

Congress applauds:

The efforts of institutions such as Mary Immaculate College in the formation of a student parent liaison officer.

Congress mandates:

The Welfare and Equality Officers to research best practice policies on student parents both within Ireland, the UK and beyond with a view to formulate a template for local COs to negotiate with their institutions.

The Welfare and Equality Officers to meet and work with relevant organisations with a view to formulating a policy document for Welfare officers and other relevant CO officers as to how best to support student parents and what supports are needed. Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 14 - - 14 -

The Welfare and Equality Officers to HEI authorities for better provisions and rights for student parents.

10 WEL 7 SEXUAL HEALTH

Congress notes with concern:

The worrying lack of information and knowledge among Student Health Services and other college supports about issues pertaining to lesbian sexual health.

Congress further notes:

That oftentimes, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or queer are unaware of lesbian sexual health issues.

Congress mandates:

The Welfare Officer to work with the LGBT RO to ensure that the sexual health module at UOS also covers lesbian sexual health issues; so that the welfare officers can be equipped with the knowledge to deal with these issues.

10 WEL 11 NON- ACADEMIC SERVICES

Congress notes:

The current lack of quality assurance systems with regards to an Irish National Policy Framework for non-academic students services provided by the third level institution, such as health centres, counselling services etc.

Congress further notes:

The importance of quality assurance with regard to non-academic aspects of student services.

Congress recognizes:

The value of the overall student experience within the higher education system in Ireland.

Congress mandates:

The President and the Welfare Officer to lobby the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education for the formation of a non-academic student services policy relating to quality assurance.

09 WEL 1 EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

Congress notes:

Dependant on location, time of week, travel plans, unforeseen circumstances (i.e. sex without consent or awareness) etc. that availing of a doctors appointment for aforesaid prescription may not be possible, and that the efficacy of EC decreases significantly over a 72-hour period.

Congress believes:

That people are entitled to complete control over their sexual reproduction and fertility, and that freer availability of ECs in Ireland is essential to this intrinsic right.

Congress welcomes:

Research carried out on the effects of the ECP introduction in Britain by the *British Journal of Medicine* that reported: a 10% decrease in the amount of teenage pregnancies with only a 2% increase in those using the ECP following its over-the-counter introduction no reduction in the usage of other contraceptive methods

And the research document prepared for this debate on the myths, realities and physiological & health impacts of the different ECPs by UCC's Welfare Officer, Keith O' Brien.

Congress mandate:

The USI Welfare Officer to co-ordinate with relevant groups to provide more comprehensive information on the different forms of EC.

09 WEL 2 ABORTION RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

That USI is mandated to lobby the government and other relevant bodies to develop greater access to abortion services for all women within the state (06/WEL 6 Abortion).

Congress further notes:

That USI's involvement in this debate in the past (SPUC vs. Grogan) led to the changing of legislation so that information about abortion could be distributed freely in the state.

Congress recognises:

That in many student unions abroad and indeed in many organisations worldwide the issue of abortion is viewed as an issue of equality and women's rights .

Congress further recognises:

That the issue is one of concern for Welfare Officers around the country.

Congress acknowledges:

The establishment of the Safe and Legal (in Ireland) Abortion Rights Campaign which aims to end the hypocrisy of exiling women in crisis pregnancy that choose to have an abortion. The campaign includes various strands, including a litigation strand, a public awareness strand and a national and international advocacy strand.

Congress mandates:

The Welfare and Equality Officer to work with the Safe and Legal (in Ireland) Abortion Rights Campaign to once again make this issue a priority for Irish Women.

Congress further mandates:

The Welfare and Equality Officer to raise awareness of the Safe and Legal (in Ireland) Abortion Rights Campaign to USI members and to support the campaign in any of its actions.

EQUALITY

EM 19 (EQ) – 1: Decolonising Education

Proposed by QUB Students' Union

Congress notes:

That a student-led occupation started on 12 March 2019 surrounding anti-racism & decolonization in Goldsmiths University. This ongoing occupation's demands from the university is grounded in the ethos of decolonizing education as the core of anti-racist work in tertiary/third-level institutions.

The #GoldOccupy movement has encouraged actions of solidarity from across the UK & Northern Ireland.

That USI and NUS UK work in partnership through the Trilateral Agreement and that the student movement across the world has a proud history of coming together in solidarity actions.

Student-led 'Decolonise education' campaigns have emerged across the UK since 2015's *'Why is My Curriculum White?'* And *'Rhodes Must Fall'* campaigns, and connect to a rich history of student radicalism.

Deep inequalities persist in education for students of colour, including-but-not-limited-to the attainment gap – these are exacerbated by the scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance and Maintenance Grants.

The BAME Attainment Gap is a national crisis, with BAME students 20% less likely to achieve a first or upper second-class degree compared to their white counterparts, despite having been admitted into university with the same A-level grades.

According to NUS liberate the curriculum research 34% of BAME students feel unable to bring their perspectives as students of colour, to their lectures/seminars.

There is a lack of sufficient research, across the island of Ireland, into the issues resulting in the BAME Attainment Gap and how it affects BAME students of intersectional identities and liberation groups (i.e. Women, LGBTQ, Disabled).

University staff employed are not representative of the students that they teach or the national population regarding race and this is also a prevalent issue amongst university senior management.

BAME students are being severely disadvantaged because they are more likely to leave university unable to secure jobs and twice as unlikely to make use of their degree.

A truly liberated and antiracist education system must include racial justice for students, staff and workers within an institution.

University administration are vested in the racist and xenophobic climate of wider society, and embrace the marketisation of higher education to reduce their responsibilities towards workers.

Decolonising education means democratise – transformative change will not happen through seat-at-the-table politics, but by leveraging student-worker-community power against institutions, to wrest control over them from the hands of overpaid management and corporate interests.

A 'movement-based' approach, organising both in and outside the confines of SUs, and rooted in local communities, should be taken to build a democratic, dynamic movement of truly decolonising our curriculum and institution.

Congress Further Believes:

Decolonise campaigns must, at core, confront the processes of marketisation, corporatisation and securitisation of education that have shut down universities as spaces to organise for radical change – not narrowly consider matters of curriculum and/or faculty diversity.

'Decolonising education' must necessarily be connected to-

- The demand for free education;
- The imposition of visa monitoring on institutions;

- The exclusion and gentrification of working class communities adjacent to many universities;
- The managerialism in the university, and shutting down of internal democracy
- Links between institutions and the arms trade/militarisation abroad;
- Ending Direct Provision.

We should seek where possible to connect with education movements for radical change in the global south.

Many local campaigns across the UK, led primarily by sabbatical officers and guided by NUS UK, have been co-opted by universities and re-routed into diversity initiatives, or incrementalist reformism. The aim of these campaigns should be transformative, not merely replacing one set of bourgeois intellectuals with another of a different hue.

Issues of 'race' inequality cannot be divorced from the other pressures affecting institutions and education on a national scale.

Addressing 'race' inequality goes hand-in-hand with campaigns for free education and the democratising our education - not band-wagoning on regressive government reforms because we're promised crumbs.

Congress mandates:

The President, Vice-President Equality & Citizenship, Vice-President Academic Affairs to work on investigating issues surrounding the attainment gap in Ireland.

Congress also mandates

USI Officer Board to work on the ethos of this policy.

Congress reaffirms

USI's stance on calling for free education, and that the democratising education is central to ensuring education is accessible for all.

Congress also reaffirms

USI's solidarity with the Goldsmiths Anti-Racism Occupation.

EQ 19 – 1 International Students Access to Multi Re-Entry Visa

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

The large number of international students that come to Ireland every year to study, but are only in receipt of a single-entry visa.

Congress further Notes:

the challenges in being granted a multi-entry visa in Ireland, which restricts students entering and leaving the country.

Congress Regrets:

That this has a negative impact on students seeing family and friends whilst studying abroad.

Congress Believes:

The importance of welcoming international students to Ireland to add to our already diverse and inclusive student environment.

Congress Mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice and Equality and the Garda National Immigration Bureau for easier access to the multi-entry visa for international students.

EQ 19 – 2 Students in Direct Provision:

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Working Group

Congress commends:

The work done to date by the Union of Students in Ireland and students' unions across the country towards ending the inhumane system of Direct Provision and working to protect and support students living in Direct Provision in their institutions.

Congress notes:

More and more asylum seekers are entering third level education, whether through access routes or Institution of Sanctuary scholarships. It is of great concern that College of Sanctuary scholarship students can be faced with deportation orders when they are in the middle of their studies.

Congress applauds:

The work done by DCUSU in particular around the Save our Shepherd campaign, and the incredible success of that campaign.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice to take a person's student status into special consideration when in the asylum process.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to devise a national strategy on what to do in the case of a student being faced with a deportation order, and to develop materials and resources around this for Students' Union officers.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Education to extend domestic fee status to students who are asylum seekers across all third level institutions.

EQ 19 - 3 Supporting Student Parents and Carers

Proposed By Ulster University Students' Union [UUSU]

Congress Notes:

The significant number of students in third level education in Ireland who have dependant children or other caring responsibilities.

The additional barriers facing student parents & carers which often interfere with their academic career and limit their scope to engage outside of the classroom.

The childcare costs incurred by student parents which normally cannot be fully met by grants which they are eligible for.

In spite of this, many institutions do not have sufficient services and facilities in place to support those with caring responsibilities such as creche facilities and funding support, and do not fully consider the needs of student parents in the coordination of timetables.

Congress Believes:

It is imperative upon students' unions and USI to support the interests of student parents and carers and help to support them throughout their academic career. Individual MOs can make more progress on this issue locally, when they work collectively on this issue.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to produce guidance notes for MOs on how to further improve the experience of student parents & carers in their institutions, focusing on areas such as class timetabling, childcare support and inclusivity of events.

EQ 19 - 4 The abolishment of MSM blood donation deferral period

Proposed by Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress notes:

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) needs 3,000 donations a week to supply 71 hospitals nationwide. Regular blood donations by a sufficient number of healthy people are needed to ensure that safe blood will be available whenever and wherever it is needed. Blood transfusions are needed for women with complications of pregnancy, many complex medical and surgical procedures and for those undergoing radiation or chemotherapy to name a few.

Congress also notes:

The IBTS have set strict guidelines for those who eligible to donate to ensure that all donations are safe to use and to protect donors and recipients.

Congress further notes:

The lifetime ban on gay men donating blood to the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) was lifted in January 2017 and replaced with a 12 month abstinence deferral period which means that a man who last had sex with another man (MSM) more than 12 months ago is now be able to donate blood if he meets the other blood donor selection criteria.

Congress notes with concern:

Eligibility decided on sexuality is extremely discriminatory and no one should be denied the right to donate blood based on their sexuality.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship campaign for the abolishment of the deferral period to ensure that MSM who meet all other eligibility criteria will be eligible to donate blood in Ireland.

EQ 19 - 5 Accessibility audits

Proposed By NUI Galway SU

Congress notes:

Many campuses are inaccessible in many ways to students with disabilities. Examples of this include physical infrastructure such as ramps and working lifts etc. as well as not having clear markings across campus for students with visual impairments.

Congress further notes:

A lack of proper facilities can act as an ongoing barrier to students with disabilities towards completing their education.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to work with AHEAD to develop an accessibility audit template for campuses, which can be given to MOs to carry out across their own campuses.

EQ 19 – 6 Hate Crime legislation

Proposed By NUIG Students' Union

Congress notes:

Post the introduction of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, very little legislative changes have taken place in Ireland to further protect and defend minority groups from acts of hate crime.

Congress further notes:

The Irish Council of Civil Liberties report The Lifecycle of a Hate Crime: Country Report for Ireland, launched in July 2018, found that Ireland has significant gaps in Irish law, policy and criminal justice practice regarding acts of discrimination against minorities, which go largely underreported. Ireland currently is one of a small number of EU countries that does not have specific laws around dealing with hate crimes.

Congress acknowledges:

As we grow as campus communities, diversity is reflected in our student population more and more. Students from non traditional backgrounds may find their access to education restricted by such acts.

Many students from minority groups face discrimination; in particular, members of the Trans Community, students with disabilities, and those from Ethnic minority backgrounds can find themselves the targets of hate crime. This affects students across a range of issues of accommodation, transport, online interactions and many other areas of life.

CONGRESS MANDATES: The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to ensure there is adequate student representation involved at a national level for any legislation being drafted.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for hate crime legislation to be enacted in Ireland

EQ 19 – 7 Gender Equality

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

Congress Notes:

The lack of policy in relation to transgender, non-binary and intersex students, and gender identity/expression inclusivity within higher education. Research from LGBTI Ireland Report (2016) found that transgender, non-binary and intersex people face additional challenges in their day-to-day lives such as being referred to/as by the wrong pronoun or gender and this can have an immensely negative impact on a person's mental health.

Congress Believes:

We need to lead the way in supporting transgender, non-binary and intersex students within higher and further education.

Congress Mandates:

VP Equality and Citizenship to develop a campaign in conjunction with relevant organisations such as ShoutOut, BeLonG To and TENI to support Students' Union Officers in running a transgender, non-binary and intersex inclusivity campaign on campus for both staff and students which should include information packs, posters, workshop materials and leads to further resources.

Congress Further Mandates:

USI VP for Equality & Citizenship to gather and circulate all relevant HEI and SU policy relating to transgender, non-binary and intersex gender identity and expression policies.

EQ 19 – 8 Supporting Students with Religious Beliefs and Rituals

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

All MO's have a very diverse community of student members who have specific religious beliefs and rituals.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship to provide elected officers with information on how best to support students who have religious beliefs and rituals. This may include lobbying for improved facilities, catering services and supports.

EQ 19 – 9 Disability Awareness and Annual Conference

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Congress 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.

Congress 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 and campaigns throughout the year, including a national-level event, to create a space for networking, dialogue, and empowerment to leadership roles.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to roll out a campaign informing students of many different disabilities and creating awareness of supports for students with disabilities.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to organise a conference and networking event for students with disabilities before the end of April in each academic year.

EQ 19 – 10 Equality Strategy 2019

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee

Congress notes:

The area of Equality and Citizenship is extremely broad and expands into many different aspects of the work of the Officer Board. For this reason, it is important that there is a roadmap to assist the work of the Union of Students in Ireland in how to best ensure the brief is effectively carried out, to the best ability.

Congress mandates:

The adoption of the proposed Equality Strategy 2019.

EQ 19 – 11 EMpower students

Proposed by The VP for Equality & Citizenship and Maynooth Students' Union

Congress notes:

Ireland has become more diverse in recent years. There has been an increase in people from Ethnic Minority background enrolling in institutions across the country and this will continue to rise.

Congress notes with alarm:

That students from ethnic minority background can be underrepresented in positions of leadership and representation. This can include, students' union positions, class representatives, clubs and society committee positions etc.

Congress applauds:

The success of Pink Training, Women Lead, the conference for students living with disabilities, and similar events in the promoting of minority students running for leadership positions.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to run an event called 'Empower'. This event will focus on increasing Ethnic Minority representation in positions of leadership in institutions across Ireland.

EQ (NC) 19 - 2 Solidarity with NUS-USI 'Trust Us' Campaign and Abortion Access in Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council recognises:

The collaborative efforts in campaigning for abortion access in Ireland by students all over Ireland.

National Council notes the following:

The 1967 Abortion Act of the UK Parliament was never extended to Northern Ireland.

Abortion is available in Northern Ireland only where there is a risk to the life, or to the long-term mental or physical health of the pregnant person. This excludes cases where there is fatal foetal abnormality, or a pregnancy as a result of rape or incest. In most circumstances, abortion is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act.

The Northern Ireland Public Prosecution Service has initiated criminal proceedings under sections 58 and 59 of the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act for unlawful procurement of abortion and abortion pills in a minimum of three separate cases since 2016. An April 2016 case resulted in a suspended sentence of 3 months' imprisonment, and in January 2017 a couple received formal cautions for attempting to procure an abortion with pills.

In October 2017, the UK Department for Women and Equalities announced that it would cover the cost of treatment for pregnant people who travel from Northern Ireland to England for abortion care. As a result, pregnant people lawfully resident in Northern Ireland and registered with a local GP will now be offered free abortions at the point of access if they travel to England to exert that right.

Although abortion on request is now legal up to 12 weeks in the Republic of Ireland, this change does not mean that people in Northern Ireland will stop travelling to Great Britain for abortion. The current provisions for Northern Ireland residents accessing abortion services in the Republic of Ireland require Northern Irish residents to pay to access care privately and comply with the mandatory three day waiting period. Travelling to Great Britain remains the cheapest and least complicated method of accessing legal abortion for Northern Ireland residents.

It is expected that by the end of 2019, it will be possible for residents of England, Scotland and Wales to take abortion pills at home once they have been prescribed. Northern Ireland residents who have to travel to Great Britain to access early medical abortion will not benefit from the shift to home use: they will have to take both abortion pills in Great Britain before travelling home. Meanwhile an individual who induces an abortion with the same medications (Mifepristone and Misoprostol) at home in Northern Ireland is at risk of prosecution.

National Council further notes with great concern that:

Although people who travel from Northern Ireland to England to access a termination are eligible to receive free abortion care on the NHS as of November 2017, the cost and logistics of arranging transport, accommodation, time off work and childcare continue to present practical barriers to accessing abortion outside Northern Ireland.

Obtaining an early medical abortion by purchasing abortion pills online is a method of abortion which is frequently relied upon by people who face additional barriers when travelling to access abortion, or find it impossible to travel altogether. Victims and survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities and people with caring responsibilities can find themselves in this position.

The criminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland deters people from accessing aftercare, for fear of being reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland if they disclose that they induced an abortion with medication.

Students who move to Northern Ireland for study effectively sign away their abortion rights when they register with a local GP because access to abortion is so restricted on the Northern Ireland NHS.

National Council believes that:

Individuals who make the decision to terminate a pregnancy should be supported and cared for in their local healthcare system, rather than disempowered and isolated by having to travel elsewhere to do so.

Access to reproductive healthcare is a student welfare issue. The lack of access to abortion services in Northern Ireland can significantly impact the personal and academic lives of students with crisis pregnancies. The inaccessibility of safe and legal abortion in Northern Ireland places an undue burden on students in an already stressful situation.

Abortion should be governed by the same robust regulatory and ethical frameworks as all other medical procedures.

Abortion reform should be designed in a manner which is inclusive of women, trans men, non-binary and gender fluid people.

National Council mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, in solidarity with NUS-USI, to campaign for accessible reproductive healthcare and the removal of barriers to abortion access in Northern Ireland.

National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the NUS-USI 'Trust Us' campaign for the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland and actively engage with NUS-USI to ensure our solidarity is as effective as possible.

NC18 EQ 1 : Disability Conference

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.

2018 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.

2018 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)

2018 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.

Congress further notes:

The work done by transgender and non-binary activist groups and USI in their submissions to the Gender Recognition Act.

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 receive the treatments they need.

2018 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.

2018 EQ 5 : Universal design for learning

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students' Union with an amendment also proposed by them

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 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.

17 EQ EM 2 Motion of Solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa

CONGRESS NOTES

with deep concern the severe deterioration of the health conditions in recent weeks of Ibrahim Halawa, the Irish citizen interned in Egypt, who is currently on hunger strike.

CONGRESS IS HORRIFIED BY

the consistently barbaric and inhumane detention of Ibrahim by the Egyptian regime during his now three year internment.

CONGRESS IS DISGUSTED BY

the lack of priority given by the Irish government to the detention of a young Irish citizen whose life is now in peril.

CONGRESS IN ITS LONG STANDING SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS STATES

its solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa in his righteous fight for freedom.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

USI to call on the Irish government to intensify their efforts for the release of Ibrahim Halawa.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES

the USI Vice-President for Equality & Citizenship to engage with the relevant human rights organisations to support the campaign for the release of Ibrahim Halawa.

17 EQ1 Access to Orkambi, the Cystic Fibrosis medication

CONGRESS NOTES:

Cystic Fibrosis (CF) is an inherited chronic illness that is acting as a barrier to education for students who suffer from it. Students with CF need regular IV drips where they must be admitted to hospital for long periods of time. These lengthy visits to hospital affect students' college attendance.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

Orkambi has the potential to improve the living conditions and the educational experience for these students.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

VP Welfare and VP Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Government to make Orkambi available in Ireland for those who require it.

17 EQ2 Equality Grounds

CONGRESS NOTES:

That the VP Equality & Citizenship works on behalf of students in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to review the equality legislation in both legal jurisdictions in their work on behalf of students across the island.

17EQ3 Integration of displaced persons into education

CONGRESS RECOGNISES

The ongoing refugee crisis, in which over 20 million people have been displaced due to war, terrorism, and other conflicts.

CONGRESS ASSERTS

That education is an emancipator and affords people the tools with which to become independent and self-determinant.

CONGRESS CALLS ON

The Irish government to partake in the resettlement and relocation of displaced persons (such as refugees and asylum seekers) in numbers appropriate to the scale of the crisis.

CONGRESS CALLS ON

The education sector in Ireland to proactively support the integration of such displaced persons.

CONGRESS CALLS ON

The Minister for Education to extend “domestic” fee status to such displaced persons resettled in Ireland who wish to pursue their studies. This status should also extend to eligibility for the student maintenance grant and other student supports.

CONGRESS CALLS ON

Institutions of third-level education to follow the lead of Dublin City University and pursue “University of Sanctuary” designation.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The officer board to campaign for the integration of such displaced persons into education in Ireland with particular focus on access, student supports, retention, recognition of prior learning and cultural integration, the latter including the provision of English language lessons.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to provide for student leaders, particularly elected officers, to become “No Hate Speech” ambassadors.

17 EQ4

Expansion of '2in2u' Campaign

Jointly proposed by the VP Equality & Citizenship & WIT Students' Union

CONGRESS RECOGNISES:

The organisation Women's Aid runs a successful '2in2u' dating abuse campaign which is supported by the Union of Students in Ireland. This campaign helps young women to spot the 'danger signs' of dating abuse and provides information to combat online stalking and digital abuse, as well as signposting support services.

CONGRESS NOTES:

The campaign, whilst being very beneficial, has limitations in regards to the types of relationships and genders it focuses on.

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:

That VP Equality & Citizenship and VP Welfare to work with Women's Aid to expand their 2in2u campaign to become more inclusive of all genders and relationships. If this is not feasible, then a similar campaign and materials should be developed to compliment the 2in2u campaign which is more inclusive of gender and sexuality.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to develop a partnership with the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWC) in their project work nationally to end sexual violence and harassment at third level.

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.

14 EQ 2 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Congress believes:

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 also believes:

Despite forming a majority of students in higher and further education, women are under-represented in powerful positions in colleges and students' union.

Women's representation in colleges and students' unions is vital to women's equality and to overcoming the inequality and discrimination that women face.

Congress mandates:

The USI President and the VP Equality and Citizenship, to run a national campaign supporting and empower women in leadership and create a support network in order to encourage more women candidates to run for election.

The USI President and the VP Equality and Citizenship to campaign on increasing the number of women who run for all sabbatical positions, all student councillors and voluntary roles within students unions.

The VP Equality and Citizenship to make links with the NUS-USI and the NUS Women's Campaign and work together to encourage women in leadership.

14 EQ 3 MARRIAGE EQUALITY

Congress notes:

USI policy 12/EQ4 mandates USI Officers to campaign for equal access to civil marriage in Ireland.

Congress also notes:

That the Government have committed to holding a referendum on marriage equality in Ireland in 2015.

Congress believes:

That equal access to civil marriage in Ireland is one of the most important civil rights issues of our generation and that the students of this country have a valuable role to play in making this a reality.

Congress adopts:

The 'Students for Marriage Equality 2015' campaign strategy document as USI policy.

Congress mandates:

All of USI Officer Board to implement the actions in 'Students for Marriage Equality 2015' strategy.

Congress also mandates:

The USI President, the USI Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI Vice-President for Campaigns to oversee the implementation of the 'Students for Marriage Equality 2015' strategy and to report to every National Council in lead up to the referendum on the progress of the campaign.

14 EQ 4 LGBT* FRIENDLY CAMPUS**Congress notes:**

That many institutions do not have an official stance on being a LGBTQ Friendly campus.

Congress applauds:

The promotion of equality and anti-discrimination nationally.

Congress believes:

USI could work with LGBTQ organisations in the development of criteria that would deem colleges to be "LGBTQ Friendly campuses".

Congress further believes:

That this could be rewarded with national recognition and that this would be of benefit to colleges marketing for second level students.

Congress mandates:

VP for Equality and Citizenship, Campaigns officer and regional officers to work with LGBTQ organisations in developing a framework that could be applied to colleges in order to give them a "LGBTQ Friendly Campus" status.

14 EQ 5 REGIONAL LGBT TRAINING EVENT**Congress commends:**

The good work completed by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship along with USI and Students' Unions nationally on the organisation of Pink Training.

Congress notes:

The importance of Pink Training and the potential value of another event of this nature on a regional basis.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the regional vice presidents to work with various LGBT societies to organise regional LGBT training events each year.

12 EQ 7 LGBT MENTAL HEALTH

REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 develop policies for LGBT mental health and best practice for promotion of positive mental health for LGBT people.

11 EQ 1 LGBT AMBASSADORS

Congress notes:

That many second level educational institutions do not have a formal LGBT bullying policy.

Congress appreciates:

That access to third level education by students identifying themselves as from the LGBT committee is influenced by the experiences of those students at second level.

Congress understands:

That third level students acting as LGBT ambassadors to their own previous secondary schools will help promote understanding and acceptance of LGBT students in the second level education system.

Congress thus mandates the LGBTRO, Deputy President and the Education Officer of USI:

To co-ordinate the campaign to promote third level students as LGBT ambassadors in second level schools across the country.

11 EQ 2 LGBT STUDENT SURVEY

Congress notes:

There is very little statistical information about the experiences of LGBT people in third level education.

Congress further notes:

The serious lack of statistical information makes helping to improve the college experiences of LGBT students difficult.

Congress therefore mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:

To conduct a nationwide survey on the student experiences of LGBT students.

11 EQ 3 LGBT SOCIETY MANUAL

Congress notes:

There is a considerable lack of helpful resources for those trying to start up and run an LGBT society.

Congress believes:

It would greatly aid those wishing to run or establish an LGBT society if there was a comprehensive manual with information and resources for setting up and running society.

Congress therefore mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:

To produce a manual outlining ways to set up, run and maintain a successful LGBT society which can be used by Student Unions as well as students.

Congress further mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:

To update the manual annually with any new information and to ensure it is ready for distribution in September when the new college year begins.

11 EQ 4 LGBT PACKS

Congress notes:

There is a serious lack of LGBT mental health, physical health and sexual health resources aimed directly at students in third level education.

Congress believes:

That an all round LGBT pack encompassing mental health and sexual health similar to the mental health packs and SHAG packs provided by USI to the general student body could drastically improve integration of LGBT students into the student body and improve awareness of the specific mental, physical and sexual health needs of LGBT students amongst non LGBT students.

Congress mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:

To develop and produce LGBT packs including information on mental health and sexual health for distribution in all COs.

11 EQ 5 DIRECT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Congress notes:

The effectiveness of the USI LGBT campaign in directly interacting with the USI membership through its links with student societies and USI Pink Training.

Congress believes:

The USI Equality campaign should follow a similar structure.

Congress mandates:

The Equality Officer to organise an annual intervarsity event for each of the equality sub sections.

Congress further mandates the Equality Officer:

To enhance links with existing equality based student societies and to foster the development of further equality related societies in each CO.

11 EQ 7 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

Congress notes:

The new immigration rules which came into effect on the 1st of January 2011 which change immigration regulations for non-EEA students.

Congress further notes:

That there are some regressive part of these new regulations including:

- The inability of international students who avail of the graduate employment scheme in Ireland to immediately return to post-graduate education in Ireland after completing the scheme.
- The fact that non-EEA students who have dependents in Ireland are unable to use public first and second level schools for their dependents, which causes major problems for students, particularly if their children are in primary school due to the small number of private first-level schools in Ireland.

Congress mandates the Equality Officer:

To work with the Irish Council for International Students to campaign and lobby for changes to be made to the immigration regulations in relation to the graduate employment scheme and the use of public schools for the dependents of international students.

10 EQ 1 CIVIL PARTNERSHIP BILL

Congress notes:

That the proposed Civil Partnership Bill falls short of offering members of the LGBT community many of the same rights and responsibilities offered by Civil Marriage to the heterosexual community.

Congress further notes:

That as it currently stands the Bill is unacceptable to the LGBT community.

Congress recognizes:

That the LGBT campaign is an integral part of USI and many LGBT students would like to see a national campaign on this issue.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Deputy President, the Equality Officer and the LGBT Rights Officer to work together to roll out a national campaign highlighting the issue and to lobby the government on this issue.

Congress further mandates:

That the Deputy President, Equality Officer and LGBT RO work with other LGBT interest groups on the Civil Marriage campaign, for example LGBT NOISE and Marriage Equality.

10 EQ 2 MIGRANT STUDENTS

Congress notes:

That Erasmus, EU and non EEA (European Economic Area) students have access to dedicated support services in third level colleges.

Congress further notes:

That there are clear policy guidelines on issues affecting Erasmus, EU and non EEA students with regard student fees, leave to remain in Ireland and the right to work while studying.

Congress recognizes:

That the same level of service and policy does not exist for migrants, children of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and/or children of same, some of whom are now completing primary and secondary education in Ireland.

Congress believes:

That these groups are entitled to receive a third level education in Ireland.

Congress mandates:

The Equality Officer to investigate what government and HEI policies exist in this area and to collate the responses in a position paper accompanied by suggestions for future actions. Such a position paper should be presented to National Council prior to Congress 2011.

10 EQ 3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That in order to communicate with students with disabilities, the USI Equality Campaign is reliant on Disability Support Services and Access Offices in each third level campus. Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 51 - - 51 -

Congress further notes:

That this year there have been significant difficulties in reaching out to students with disabilities in third level colleges.

Congress also notes:

That these difficulties are not specific to USI and are also experienced by other organisations working in this area.

Congress mandates:

The Equality Officer to make it a priority of 2010/2011 to design a system whereby USI Equality can connect directly with students with disabilities in third level and to seek assistance from members of Officer Board, USI staff and external organisations on how best to achieve this.

10 EQ 4 Communicating with Part Time Officers

Conference notes:

That part time officers exist in each CO who work in the area of equality

Conference also notes:

That these officers are elected at different times in different colleges and so it is difficult to organise a networking event at the beginning of the year

Conference believes:

Part time officers stand to gain a lot from being involved with the USI Equality Campaign

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer to meet individually with relevant part time officers once they are elected and outline the positive benefits getting involved in USI Equality can have.

Conference also mandates:

The Equality Officer to maintain contact with part time officers by circulating a campaign update email once per fortnight

Conference further mandates:

The Equality Officer to compile a contact list for part time officers and to circulate this to Equality Working Group as early as possible in the year.

10 EQ 5 Negative Stereotypes in Irish Media

Conference notes:

That often minority groups are represented poorly in both national and local print media in Ireland.

Conference regrets:

That over the past 12 months there has been an increase in the number of such articles, in particular on the issue of access of third level education

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer and all members of Equality Working to respond and counteract negative images and stereotypes of minority students in the media through letters to the editor of the publication involved.

10 EQ 6 Students Attitude to Equality

Conference notes:

The recent research by the Equality & Rights Alliance into Irish attitudes on equality.

Conference also notes:

The research is not specific to student attitudes

Conference believes:

That the Equality Campaign cannot be effective in campaigning on equality until it establishes what students think about the issues involved.

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer to commission a nationwide student survey on attitudes to equality in third level education and to use the results of this survey to inform the equality campaign going forward.

10 EQ 7 Online Campaigning

Conference notes:

The necessity for USI Equality to campaign through various online media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Blogging.

Conference also notes:

The increasing success of the current online activities of the USI Equality Campaign.

Conference mandates:

Equality Working Group to continue utilising online media to further the aims of the campaign.

Conference further mandates:

All members of Equality Working Group to write a blog on an issue relevant to the campaign at least once a month.

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer to run competitions through online media in order to encourage students to be more interactive with the campaign.

10 EQ 8 Branding USI Equality

Conference notes

The success of the rebranding of the USI Equality Campaign in rejuvenating the image of the campaign among students, COs and NGOs

Conference mandates

The Equality Officer and Equality Working Group to continue to use the new logos and colour coding in all aspects of the Equality Campaign.

10 EQ 9 NUS-USI Collaboration

Conference notes:

That NUSUSI coordinates an equality campaign for the Northern Area

Conference notes:

That the structure of the NUSUSI campaign is similar to the structure of the USI Equality Campaign

Conference believes:

That it would be beneficial to both NUSUSI and USI if officers involved in both campaigns communicated regularly and shared ideas and experiences

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer to organise one meeting per semester between the two campaigns to discuss possible collaborations and to provide support, if requested, to the NUSUSI Equality Campaign

Conference further mandates:

All members of Equality Working Group to keep in regular contact with counterparts working in the NUSUSI Equality Campaign

09 EQ 2 AHEAD

Congress notes:

Previous policy (08/EQ6) which mandates the President and Welfare Officer to open discussions with AHEAD with a view to working together on common areas of interests.

Congress further notes:

That the Equality Officer, who has the responsibility to support the autonomous disability campaign, and the Disability Rights Officer are best placed to build links with AHEAD.

Congress acknowledges:

The work of the Equality Officer and Disability Rights Officer this year in achieving the above aim.

Congress further acknowledges:

The current work being done by USI and AHEAD in relation to compiling a guide for student union officers on how best to develop policy and services for students with disabilities.

Congress recognises:

That in the past number of months, support services for students with disabilities as well as the 'Fund for Students with Disabilities' have experienced cuts due to the current economic climate.

Congress mandates:

The Equality and Disability Rights Officers to:

Continue to build links with AHEAD;

Work with AHEAD to develop initiatives which can counteract the current cuts to support funds for students with disabilities;

Oppose any further cuts to support services for students with disabilities;

Promote and assist the development of student societies for students with disabilities;

Work with AHEAD to organise an annual one day event for students with disabilities;

09 EQ 4 USI RAINBOW WEEK

Conference notes:

That "Rainbow Week" is not thoroughly recognised within all affiliated colleges.

Conference also mandates:

The LGBT RO to communicate with the Students Unions and the LGBT societies and assist in the organisation of the Rainbow Weeks to those colleges that need assistance.

Gender Equality

10 GE 1 Reclaim the Night

Conference notes:

The success of the 'Reclaim the Night Marches' organised in the UK between the London Feminist Network and the National Union of Students in the UK (NUSUK) to highlight the issue of sexual violence against women.

Conference is disappointed:

By recent research from the Rape Crisis Network Ireland (December 2009) which outlined a poor conviction rate for crimes of rape and sexual violence in Ireland, inaccurate stereotypes of rape as well as poor treatment of victims by members of An Garda Síochána.

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Officer to organise an annual 'reclaim the night march' for students to raise awareness of sexual violence against women in Ireland.

Conference further mandates:

The Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Officer to contact the Rape Crisis Network Ireland to explore possible collaborations on the issue of sexual violence against women.

10 GE 3 Childcare Facilities

Conference notes:

That access to affordable childcare is difficult in Ireland

Conference also notes:

That access to flexible and affordable childcare is difficult for students

Conference is aware:

That some third level institutions have crèches on or close to campus and that a number of places in said crèches are reserved for students

Conference is also aware:

That childcare/crèche subsidy schemes exist in different colleges

Conference believes:

That all third level institutions should provide a childcare facility for students

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer, Gender Equality Office and Mature Student Officer to lobby all relevant authorities to establish childcare facilities on all third level campuses. Such childcare facilities should include both crèche and after school care facilities and should be affordable for students. Furthermore a majority of places in these facilities should be reserved for registered students of the institution.

10 GE 6 Campaigning for Women

Conference notes:

That USI had a successful Women's Rights Campaign in the past

Conference also notes:

That in recent years there has been very little policy on Women's issues

Conference believes:

That there is a problem with female participation in USI

Conferences further believes:

That current officers could learn a lot from the experience of past female officers, particularly those who were involved in the women's rights campaign

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer to convene a roundtable with interested ex officers to discuss how to progress women's involvement in the union.

International Students

10 IS 4 Finance for International Students

Conference notes:

That International Students face hefty fees for studying in Ireland

Conference also notes:

That there is a lack of transparency surrounding these fees and how they are costed

Conference believes:

That financial stress, caused by such large fees and the expense of living in Ireland, has a negative impact on the student experience for international students

Conference mandates:

The Equality Officer & International Students Officer to always lobby for transparent costings of all fees charged to international students and that these fees are advertised well in advance of a student arriving in Ireland. Where possible, officers should lobby for a decrease in the amount charged to international students.

LGBT

10 LGBT 2 Homophobic Bullying

Conference notes:

That the results of the “LGBT Lives” survey (2009) show that 12 years old is the most common time for an LGBT person to come out to themselves, with 17 being the age most of them start to come out. This means most LGBT people are in secondary school while beginning their coming out process, or just starting college.

Conference further notes:

That over 58% of LGBT people reported homophobic bullying in their schools, and that 80% of LGBT people currently experience verbal abuse due to their LGBT identity in their day to day lives

Conference believes:

That LGBT students can be victims of homophobic abuse in college

Conference mandates:

The LGBTRO to work alongside the ISSU on a joint anti homophobic bullying campaign, covering both secondary school and college students to raise awareness of this issue

Conference further mandates:

The LGBTRO to work with BeLonG To on this campaign, as they have established points of contact for the area of homophobic bullying.

10 LGBT 4 Anti-homophobia Campaign

Conference believes:

It should be obvious to all students in USI colleges that homophobia will not be tolerated in any form on campus.

Conference mandates:

The LGBT RO to prepare information leaflets or pack for a campus-wide anti-homophobia campaign in all USI campuses on a certain day and to encourage all SUs to get involved.

Mature Students

10 MS 2 Mature Students Officer

REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

National Affairs

EM 19 (NA) – 1: Support for Workers in Ballina Breweries - Coca-Cola Proposed by USI VP for Campaigns

This requires two-thirds majority to pass

Congress Notes:

SIPTU represents the majority of core production workers in the Coca Cola Company plant in Ballina Beverages, County Mayo. Since October 2014, they have been seeking union recognition for the purposes of collective bargaining. They have two Labour Court recommendations that state that the company should recognise SIPTU for those employees in membership of the Union. The company has shut down discussion on the Labour Court recommendations.

Congress notes with concern:

The company's human rights policy states *'where employees are represented by a legally recognised union, we are committed to establishing a constructive dialogue with their freely chosen representatives. The company is committed to bargaining in good faith with such representatives.'* The company are clearly in breach of their own human rights policy by failing to engage in collective bargaining with SIPTU and its members.

Congress also notes:

Young people are the main target market for Coca Cola products and have great weight in this campaign.

Congress further notes:

The National Union of Students UK (NUS UK) wrote to Mr James Quincey, President and CEO of The Coca Cola Company, on the 12th March 2019, raising their concerns about the company's violation of their own human rights policy in relation to workers rights. Mr Brent Wilson, The Coca Cola Company Global Head of Workplace Rights, wrote back to the NUS on the 15th March 2019 offering to meet with the NUS on their concerns.

Congress Mandates:

USI officerboard to write a letter of correspondence to Mr Quincey in support of the SIPTU members in Ballina and raise their concerns over this breach of the human rights of Coca Cola workers in Ballina Beverages.

Congress also mandates:

USI officerboard to support SIPTU in their #TasteZeroRights campaign.

EM 19 (NA) – 2: USI Strategy Paper on the British Exit from the European Union

Motion proposed by the VP for Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union on 23 June 2016, but that voters in the North rejected Brexit in the referendum.

Congress further notes

Previous USI mandates opposing Brexit, to support the efforts of NUS-USI in fighting the negative consequences of Brexit, and the previously stated support of USI to the NUS-USI call for a 'People's Vote'.

Congress notes with deep concern

The political deadlock in the UK Parliament on the negotiated Withdrawal Agreement, which would prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland through the inclusion of the backstop, and the now looming prospect of a no deal Brexit.

Congress recognises

That USI must now seriously increase its lobby and campaigning activity on the implications of Brexit for students across the island, and work more proactively with NUS-USI to protect peace and stability on the island, the rights enshrined under the Good Friday Agreement, and the right of access of all to education.

Congress therefore adopts

The *USI Strategy Paper on the British Exit from the European Union*.

Congress also mandates

That this Strategy is reviewed and considered at each National Council, as required.

NA 19 – 1 Garda National Immigration Bureau Process for non-EU students.

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group

[Congress Recognises](#)

The current process for GNIB registration for students coming from outside of the European Union is costly and repetitive.

Congress further recognises

That the high cost of renewing your application annually combined with the bureaucracy of the process is not fit for purpose.

Congress further recognises

That the travel restrictions which activate through the GNIB process are counter intuitive to a postgraduate working and academic life.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the Department of Justice and Equality, and any party they deem appropriate, to reform the process and make it more accessible and equitable for students.

NA 19 - 2 Post March 29th: Brexit Support

Proposed By Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU)

Congress Notes:

At time of writing, the United Kingdom is set to exit the European Union on March 29th.

If a deal is not struck, the EU would begin to trade with the UK under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

Policy previously passed by Congress in 2016 which mandated USI to 'actively campaign to ensure that the rights and values of the student movement are not diminished or ignore'.

EU students studying in the UK and UK students studying in the Republic of Ireland have been guaranteed home fee status for 19/20, but no such guarantee has been made beyond.

Congress Believes:

No-Deal Brexit could have disastrous consequences for the lived experience of students across the island, and will lead to uncertainty around fees, research funding and cross-border mobility amongst many issues.

Any future detrimental change to fee status for ROI or EU students studying in the North or vice-versa would be entirely unacceptable.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to support MOs to work with their institution in supporting students in their colleges who have been affected by the outcomes of Brexit.

The USI President to consult with the NUS-USI and NUS-UK Presidents to lobby institutions and government against reclassification of fee status for UK and ROI/EU citizens studying in ROI/EU and the UK respectively.

NA 19 - 3 Integrated Education in Northern Ireland

Proposed by Ulster University Students' Union

Congress Notes:

Education in Northern Ireland is divided and typically segregated along religious lines.

There are around 70'000 empty desks in the school's system across the North.

Divided education systems create a lack of consistency in the quality and content in the education received, particularly in areas such as religious education and sex education.

Congress Recognises:

That divided education isolates communities and does not contribute to progress towards a shared future in Northern Ireland.

That educating all children together at a primary and secondary level is an essential part of the reconciliation process and of building a society that celebrates respect, understanding and friendships across traditional divides.

Divisions cannot be expected to be healed if children are taught separately and don't meet someone of a different belief or background to themselves until they reach university.

Congress Mandates:

That USI President should consult with NUS-USI for fully integrated education at primary and secondary level within Northern Ireland whilst respecting people's right to choose where they send their children.

The USI Officer Board should work alongside stakeholders with similar interests and outlooks such as the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) to achieve this.

NA 19 - 4 Expansion of student Leap Card

Jointly Proposed by GMITSU And NUI Galway SU

Congress Notes:

Most colleges have a large percentage of commuting students, especially since the price of renting accommodation has increased largely over the last couple of years. Public transport in most areas is acceptable but still needs more investment especially in rural areas.

Congress further notes:

The National Transport Authority (NTA) leap card has made the price of public transport cheaper within city boundaries but not from commuter towns and cities, meaning many students who commute everyday are forced to buy tourist tickets.

Congress recognises:

Cheaper and improved public transport would incentivise more students to use it and reduce congestion and the need for housing in most HEI towns/cities. More affordable public transport options also widens the radius of housing to students further out than just city boundaries.

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to negotiate with the NTA to improve and extend the limits of use for the Student Leap Card, making access to institutions cheaper and more accessible.

NA 19 - 5 Protection of Employee Tips Bill Campaign

Proposed by GMITSU

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress Notes:

Currently in Ireland there is no legislation for ownership of tips for employees in the hospitality sector in which they work.

Congress Further Notes:

There is no legal obligation for employers to re-issue tips or to have a structure in place to ensure employees received their tips. This has allowed employers to place restrictions on the allocation of tips.

Congress Recognises:

That employers often capitalise on this fact to take tips that rightfully belong to the employee.

Congress Further Recognises:

The legislation will give transparency to where tips go, for the staff and customers who reward the tip!

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to lobby TD's to ensure that, "the Protection of Employee Tips Bill" that's passed through the Seanad gets through the Dáil to become Law and our students that work in that sector get what they're owed.

NA 19 - 6 BusConnects - Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

Congress notes

The recent BusConnects Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign Consultation Process.

Congress further notes

The impact that the redesign could have on students.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for the Dublin Region to inform MOs of the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign when it is reviewed.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for the Dublin Region to collect feedback from MOs on the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign and collate it in to a report.

NA 19 - 7 Privatisation of Public Transport

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress notes with concern

The recent privatisation of several Dublin Bus routes;

17a (from Blanchardstown to Kilbarrack)

33a (from Balbriggan/Skerries to Swords/Dublin Airport or Dublin City Centre)

33b (from Portrane to Swords)

45a, 45b (from Dún Laoghaire to Kilmacanogue)

59 (from Killiney to Dún Laoghaire Station)

63, 63a (from Dún Laoghaire Station to Kiltarnan Village)
75, 75a (from Tallaght to Dún Laoghaire)
102 (from Dublin Airport to Sutton Station)
111 (from Dalkey to Brides Glen)
175 (from Citywest to UCD)
184 (from Bray to Newtownmountkennedy)
185 (from Bray to Enniskerry)

Congress further notes

That in October, the National Transport Authority (NTA) announced its intention to tender out 10% of Bus Éireann routes.

Congress worries

That the continued privatisation of public transport will increase costs and have a negative affect on students.

Congress mandates

The USI President to make representations and lobby against the privatisation of public transport.

NA 19 – 8 Minimum Graduate Wage for Students Graduates

Proposed By GMITSU

Congress Notes:

Students are exposed to precarious work, zero-hour contracts and low wages whilst supporting themselves in college and early years of their careers

Congress Regrets:

That the increase in the cost of living and a relatively stagnant minimum wage has grown the divide between what students earn, and what students need to earn to meet the cost of living.

Congress Recognises

That a living wage provides for someone to earn the minimum required to live.

Congress Mandates

The President of USI to initiate campaigns and lobbying efforts to increase the minimum wage of graduates.

NA 19 – 8 Right to Higher Education

Proposed by The USI President

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress recognises

That there is no constitutionally recognised right to Higher Education in Ireland.

Congress welcomes

The ruling of the Irish High Court, who recognised that in order to be economically and socially prosperous, it was imperative that citizens have access to higher education.

Congress Believes that

Ireland, as a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, should pursue improved access to Higher Education.

Congress mandates

The USI President to actively work to ensure that reference to that convention is throughout the work of the department and other agencies, and to explore ways and means to ensure

Congress Further mandates

The USI President to lobby for the Higher Education Authority Act to reflect in its wording that third level education is a public good that must be accessible.

NA 19 – 9 Minimum Living Wage for Students Graduates

Proposed by GMITSU

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress Notes:

Students are exposed to precarious work, zero-hour contracts and low wages whilst supporting themselves in college and early years of their careers

Congress Regrets:

That the increase in the cost of living and a relatively stagnant minimum wage has grown the divide between what students earn, and what students need to earn to meet the cost of living.

Congress Recognises

That a living wage provides for someone to earn the minimum required to live.

Congress Mandates

The USI President to campaign for a living wage and to initiate campaigns and lobbying efforts which would be appropriate to achieve said aim.

NA 19 – 10 Higher Education Funding Campaign

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Congress notes

The formation of a Coalition for Public Funded Education in recent years, which was driven by USI and includes SIPTU, IFUT, IMPACT, TUI and ISSU. This collaboration with like-minded organisations, who support our funding position and see Higher Education as a public good, strengthens the campaign.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to ensure the continuation of and engagement with the Coalition for Public Funded Education.

Congress notes

The previous research done by the NERI institute in 2013 on Higher Education Funding, led by the USI-SIPTU partnership called 'We Need to Talk about Higher Education', which was adopted by Congress in 2013.

Congress notes

The need for an updated single comprehensive and researched document on the public-funding model proposed through various USI policies. This will provide USI with credible, well-researched and solutions-based policy for which to advance the argument in favour of our ideological position on third-level funding.

Congress mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to seek to update the previous research conducted by the NERI institute in line with the current situation in higher education and commission other areas of research that will also benefit the campaign where needed.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to create a sustained national campaign on Higher Education Funding, backed by research and supported by the Coalition, to include investment in Higher Education, supports and towards a model of fully publicly funded education.

USI Officer Board to campaign and lobby extensively for the future funding of the Irish Higher Education system.

Repeal:

14 AAQA 1 USI/NERI THIRD-LEVEL FUNDING POLICY

14 EM 4 THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN- EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

NA (NC) 19 - 1 Air BnB Regulation

Proposed by: Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

National Council regrets:

As of the beginning of August 2018 there was a mere 1,400 houses available to rent in Dublin. At the same time there was in excess of 3,000 homes to let on AirBnB.

National Council notes:

The regulation of short-term letting through agents such as AirBnB in cities such as Amsterdam and Berlin tackled directly the congestion in the availability of housing.

National Council therefore calls upon:

The Government to introduce further regulation of this sector in line with that employed in Berlin in order to increase the availability of housing.

NA (NC) 19 - 2 Separate Church and State

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council notes:

That people in Ireland have different religious and spiritual beliefs or none and we live in a pluralistic society.

National Council notes with concern:

The religious nature of Bunreacht na hÉireann and how it can further impact the advancement of positive change in Ireland.

National Council believes:

That Bunreacht na hÉireann and our laws should be secular and that religious or spiritual faith and practices should have no influence on our legislative processes or laws and that no one religion should have supremacy over others.

National Council mandates:

USI Officer Board to support campaigns and lobby groups working towards a separation of church and state. This includes but is not limited to supporting the provision of objective relationships and sexuality education in schools and removing the offence of blasphemy from Bunreacht na hÉireann.

NA (NC) 19 - 3 Pay Equality for Newly Qualified Teachers

Proposed by: Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Council Notes:

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

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.

Council Mandates:

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

NA (NC) 19 - 4 Boycott Aramark

Proposed by: Vice President for the Dublin Region

National Council notes:

Aramark are 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 are 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 has 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 MOs in campaigning for the removal of Aramark run services on their campuses.

NA (NC) 19 - 5 Supporting the 'Use your brain, not your fists' Campaign

Proposed by: IT Tralee Students' Union

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 to work towards inclusion of key messaging around violent behaviour in future campaigns relating to personal safety.

NA (NC) 19 - 6 Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

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 go 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 be 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.

NA (NC) 19 - 7 ICCL Electoral Law Reform

Proposed by: USI President

National Council notes

A law which was originally intended to prohibit large or anonymous donations to political parties is now being applied to the campaigning work of civil society organisations, preventing them from carrying out their legitimate human rights and social justice work.

National Council notes that

Transparency regarding donations to charities and CSOs in general, and particularly during referendums or elections periods is imperative.

National Council notes with concern

That the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPOC) is now applying the law to civil society's legitimate attempts to bring about change. This places Ireland in the same legal position as countries such as Hungary and Russia which prevent foreign funding of civil society, although in our case these restrictions are the result of poor regulation rather than deliberate policy decisions.

National Council mandates

The USI President to actively support the joint campaign calling for electoral act reform, along with the ICCL, Amnesty, Frontline defenders, Uplift, Transparency International and The Wheel.

NA (NC) 19 - 8 Support the fight for marriage equality in Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council notes:

Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK where same-sex marriage is still not legally recognised, despite huge support among the public in Northern Ireland. According to a 2016 Ipsos MORI poll, 70% of the public in Northern Ireland are in support of marriage equality.

National Council notes with concern:

That according to the Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts research, reduced LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland has led to a mental health crisis in the community, with 5% of LGBT+ individuals self-harming compared to 13% in rest of UK, 57% drinking to hazardous levels compared to 24% in England, and 25% attempting suicide

National Council believes:

That everyone should have equal access to civil marriage, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

National Council mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the Love Equality Coalition campaign for equal marriage in Northern Ireland.

National Council also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI President to publish a statement of support for the Love Equality campaign in pursuit of marriage equality in Northern Ireland from the Union of Students in Ireland and encourage other LGBTQ+ organisations to do the same.

National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to endeavour to include opportunities for students to learn about the political climate with regard to marriage equality in Northern Ireland at LGBTQ+ training events.

2018 NA 1 : Coalition for Homelessness and housing policies

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

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 adaptation 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.

2018 NA 2 : Sustainability Targets and Carbon Tax

Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

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.

2018 NA 3 : 24/7 Cardiac Care for the South East

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union

Congress notes:

Waterford and the extended South East including the student population 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.

2018 NA 4 : Seanad Reform

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.

17 NA 1 Amendment to Article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann

CONGRESS NOTES

the effect of article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann in the case of The Housing (Private Rented Dwellings) Bill referred under Article 26 to the Supreme Court that forbade the state from introducing rent controls.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

that this article has had a negative and erroneous effect on public policy with regard to the right to safe and affordable housing in Ireland.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES AS POLICY THE POSITION THAT

Article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann should be amended in order to allow for a fairer and more equitable regulation of the rental market by the Oireachtas.

17 NA 2 The Impact of Brexit both North and South

Proposed by Queen's University Belfast Students' Union

CONGRESS RECOGNISES:

- That on 23rd June 2016, the United Kingdom voted in a referendum to leave the membership of the European Union.
- That 56% of the electorate in Northern Ireland voted to Remain in that referendum.
- That young people and students in particular voted overwhelmingly to Remain within the EU on 23rd June 2016, in Northern Ireland, and across the UK.
- That, as a result, there exists a democratic deficit between the north of Ireland and other regions.
- That due to this democratic deficit, there exists a possibility that the rights of students, and the values of the students' movement in Northern Ireland, may be diminished, neglected or ignored during Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU.
- That there will also be a number of worrying ramifications for the Republic of Ireland.
- That there has already been a fall in the number of international students, particularly EU students, applying to study in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

CONGRESS IS CONCERNED THAT:

- That withdrawal from the EU will have profound political, economic and social effects on our society, and on opportunities for students.
- That hugely successful initiatives for student mobility such as the Erasmus+ scheme may be severely curtailed.
- That the number of students who are from Northern Ireland and want to study in the Republic

of Ireland, or vice versa, will reduce as a result of withdrawing from the EU.

- That access to healthcare via the European Health Insurance Card will be under threat.
- That the number of people from the Island of Ireland who want to access reproductive healthcare in Great Britain will now face additional barriers due to withdrawing from the EU.
- That EU nationals, including students and academics, living in the UK may be used as 'negotiating capital' in Brexit negotiations and their 'right to remain' will be threatened.
- That civic society in Northern Ireland, and the needs and interests of our society and citizens will be neglected during Brexit negotiations.
- That issues of border control and immigration in Britain will have a profound impact on the Irish border, with freedom of movement curtailed, and trade on the island hampered.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

- The USI Officer Board to actively campaign to ensure that the rights and values of the student movement are not diminished or ignored, and are reflected and promoted, during Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU, and during any negotiation between Governments in London and Dublin.
- These rights, opportunities and values include, but are not limited to:
 - Access to EU funding and participation in EU teaching, learning, travel and research programs.
 - Freedom of movement through Europe, especially for students and academics
 - Protection of Equality Legislation and the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland.
 - The 'right to remain' for EU nationals living in Northern Ireland and throughout the UK.
 - Retaining the Erasmus+ Scheme
 - Access to European Healthcare
 - Retention of the Common Travel Area, and the right to unhindered free movement, across the island of Ireland
 - The USI Officer Board to engage with NUS-USI, NUSUK, ESU, and with civic society, in order to develop clear and informed policy stances on the implications of Brexit.

17 NA4 Car Insurance Campaign

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

The cost of car insurance claims has increased by 44% from 2012 to 2015 while insurance costs have soared by more than 70% since June 2013.

CONGRESS ACKNOWLEDGES:

The increase of fees, rent, cost of college materials, transport and other costs on students have made attending third-level a financial difficulty.

CONGRESS FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGES:

The Cost of Insurance Committee, Chairpersoned by Minister of State Eoghan Murphy TD, has published its report containing 33 recommendations comprising 71 actions with recommendations that implementation needs to be swift in order for these recommendations to be felt for consumers.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns to join the external campaign led by taxi drivers, road hauliers, older people groups and sympathetic political parties to take action on car insurance increases.

17 NA 6 Sugar Tax

This will require a simple majority to pass

CONGRESS NOTES:

That Finance Minister Michael Noonan announced plans to introduce a sugar tax in Budget 2017

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

- That the United Kingdom is working towards an implementation of a similar tax in 2018 Congress
- A public consultation process is currently underway regarding its implementation in the Republic of Ireland

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

That the Vice President for Welfare to engage with this public consultation process

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.

14 NA 1 LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

That the Living Wage is the minimum hourly rate at which one can live on without fear of poverty. Eurostat statistics show that 20.7% of the workforce receive low pay.

Congress also notes that:

- There is a strong campaign in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for a living wage and that the current living wage rate in London is £8.55 (€10.25); outside of London the rate stands at £7.45 (€8.95). Over 100 high street businesses in the UK support the living wage
- In Denmark it costs an employer €39.61 for each employee per hour, while in Ireland it costs €24.57. Research also shows that business profits in Ireland have increased by 21% since 2007, at a much faster pace than anywhere else in Europe. The argument that employers can't afford to pay a living wage should be dismissed in the context of lower-than-European-average labour costs, high increases in business profits, and the increased benefits to business of paying a living wage.

Congress believes:

- Students and workers have the right to be able to afford to live and not just survive.
- The introduction of a living wage would be a strong commitment to decent living in our society and enable workers to afford the basic requirements of everyday living.

- The living wage not only ensures that the employees are lifted out of poverty, it is also beneficial for the employer. We believe that a living wage improves retention rates, reduces absenteeism and produces a higher level of staff morale.

Congress further believes:

- That the education sector should be amongst the most progressive employers in the country.
- Education institutions and students' unions have a civic and societal obligation to pay their staff a fair wage for a fair day's work.
- Education institutions should commit to paying a living wage.

Congress mandates:

- The USI President to call for a living wage in Ireland for all of society.
- The USI Officer Board to support students' unions who commit to paying the living wage and lobby their institutions to do the same.
- The USI President to continue to collaborate with trade unions to work in partnership for students and workers.

14 NA 2 ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS

Congress notes with concern:

The problems of Zero Hour Contracts, seeing them as exploitative, precarious and disproportionately altering the relationship between employers and employees, many of whom are students.

Congress regrets:

That this has additional problems in relation to families/ single parents, given the difficulties of combining Zero Hour Contracts and childcare.

Congress mandates:

USI to confirm its opposition to Zero Hour Contracts, and work with the trade union movements and sympathetic political parties to bring about the abolition of ZHC.

14 NA 4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Congress notes:

The year on year cut backs to Public Transport funding in Ireland.

Congress further notes:

The constant hikes in the cost of using Public Transport with no apparent improvement of service.

Congress notes with concern:

The decreased availability and increased cost of accommodation for students forcing more students to commute to college.

Congress recognises:

The cost of public transport for students in Ireland is significantly higher than in other European countries.

Congress mandates:

The President and the Vice President for Welfare to lobby the relevant bodies including the Minister for Transport to provide improved student discounts on all forms of public transport, and to lobby for increased Nitelink bus services mid-week and to report to Council on both issues by September 2014.

14 NA 5 OPT-OUT ORGAN DONATION**Congress notes:**

The importance of organ donation within this country in saving lives.

Congress applauds:

The usage of organ donation cards and the promotion of organ donation within the “Irish Donor Network”.

Congress further applauds:

The implementation of an “opt out scheme” for organ donation in neighboring European countries.

Congress believes:

That further actions should be taken to lobby for an opt out scheme to be introduced in Ireland.

Congress therefore mandates:

USI President and VP for Welfare to lobby relevant parties for the promotion of an opt-out scheme in relation to organ donation.

12 NA 1 CHILDRENS’ RIGHTS**Congress notes:**

The absence of legislation in Ireland in relation to the protection of children.

Congress further notes:

The contents of the Cloyne, Ryan and Murphy Reports.

Congress recognises:

That we, as a society, fail to protect vulnerable children.

Congress therefore mandates:

USI Officerboard to actively support the proposed referendum on children’s rights, to work with Campaign for Children and other organisations in favour of the referendum, and to actively encourage and facilitate MOs to get involved in the campaign. This motion shall continue to be in force for the next three years or until such time as the referendum has passed.

12 NA 2 CROKE PARK AGREEMENT**Congress notes:**

The Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement) imposes a moratorium on public sector recruitment and guarantees no compulsory pay cuts to public sector staff until at least 2014.

Congress notes with concern:

The lack of employment for graduates resulting from the recruitment freeze stipulated by the Croke Park agreement and that the public sector pay freezes have resulted in less money being available in the budgets of Educational Institutions for non-pay expenditure such as student services.

Congress believes:

That the Croke Park agreement has had a negative effect on students' education and employment prospects.

Congress mandates:

That USI calls for the renegotiation of the Croke Park Agreement.

Congress further mandates:

The President to pursue a renegotiation of the Croke Park agreement at the Lobby of the Oireachtas & to propose a more student-friendly alternative which will still endeavour to respect the rights of public sector employees.

12 NA 3 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Congress recognises:

That we as a student movement we must strive for true equality of opportunity 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 very often determined by the quality of their secondary education.

Congress further recognises:

That many potential 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 a divided student body 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 to a large extent publicly-funded, but which is only accessible to those who can pay the private fees which run into the thousands each year. This means that all taxpayers are being asked to subsidise an education system that is only accessible to those children lucky enough to be born into relatively well-off families, and that this private education puts them at a great advantage in attaining higher CAO points and thus places on third-level courses.

Congress mandates Officer Board:

To campaign for the removing of state funding for private primary and secondary schools, and for any monies saved in this process to be ring fenced and re-invested in the wider, publicly-funded and publicly-accessible education system including primary, secondary and third level education. This should be completed within the next year.

12 NA 5 REFORM OF THE IRISH CONSTITUTION

Congress notes:

The inherently Catholic ethos of the Irish Constitution/Bunreacht na hÉireann.

Congress further notes:

USI policy in the areas of marriage equality and abortion.

Congress notes with concern:

That the Catholic nature of the Constitution prohibits any legislation which may seek positive, fair and just advancement in these areas, areas in which USI has campaigned tirelessly for decades.

Congress believes:

That the Constitution of Ireland should be wholly secular in nature, and that no one religion deserves constitutional supremacy over all others, nor should any one religion influence the laws of the State.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for a seat for USI on the soon-to-be established National Constitutional Review Committee and to make known USI's desire for a secular Constitution, lobbying to ensure that areas such as the definition of marriage etc. are in line with USI policies. This mandate must be fulfilled prior to the national Constitutional review taking place.

12 NA 7 ANTI-COUNTERFEIT TRADE AGREEMENT (ACTA)

Congress notes:

The importance of copyright law and the protection of intellectual property rights and the need of the Irish government to act on this.

Congress notes with concern:

The lack of public discussion on the ACTA Treaty and how it would be implemented in Ireland.

Congress further notes with concern:

The potential impact of any legislation around ACTA on students' work, freedom of speech and civil liberties.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP/Campaigns to campaign and lobby on behalf of the students of Ireland to prevent the ratification of the Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement and the introduction of legislation to enforce it in Ireland.

Congress further mandates:

The VP/Campaigns to lobby and campaign for the next three years for a wider discussion on the issue of copyright infringement and counterfeit trade prior to the Irish government putting in place any legislation in this area.

12 NA 8 PUBLIC & CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT EMBARGO

Congress notes:

The difficulties caused by the current Public & Civil Service Recruitment Embargo and the employment control framework in operation in the Higher Education Sector.

Congress further notes:

That Ireland has a huge problem with Graduate Unemployment and that many of our best and brightest are being forced to emigrate.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President and VP/Campaigns to lobby for a root and branch review of all areas of the public and civil service. This review would enable the Government to create a public and civil service that is appropriate for a modern Ireland. By creating a modern civil and public service the Government would be in a position to lift the embargo and recruit graduates into frontline services and other areas appropriate for a modern Ireland.

12 / NA 9 GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT & EMIGRATION

Congress welcomes:

The progress made to the date on the implementation of the USI Reigniting the Smart Economy Policy adopted at Congress 2011.

Congress also welcomes:

The announcement of the Job Bridge, National Internship Scheme in June 2011.

Congress notes with grave concern:

Recent figures that over 100 Irish people are emigrating every day. Large scale emigration has hugely negative social and economic consequences for communities across the country.

Congress mandates:

The President and VP Campaigns to launch a large scale campaign to force Government to tackle the problems of Graduate Unemployment & Emigration and to create the appropriate environment for job creation.

Congress further mandates:

- The President and VP Campaigns to lobby for the following amendments to the Job Bridge Scheme.
- A reduction in the Job Bridge criteria from 12 weeks to 4 weeks.
- The modification of the Social Welfare Code to enable employers to give a modest stipend to interns.
- That Job Bridge interns under the age of 25 qualify for the maximum rate of Job
- Seekers Benefit.
- Vetting of Internships on Job Bridge site.

This mandate shall expire after a period of 3 years if it is not re-approved by Congress.

12 NA 10 NATIONAL PROPERTY SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Congress notes:

The findings of the Auctioneering/Estate Agency Review Group established by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform, that the existing statutory framework for the property sector in the Republic of Ireland is outdated, inappropriate and inadequate for the present day market and does not provide any ongoing official supervisory, disciplinary or consumer redress system.

Congress further notes:

That to address these shortcomings, the Review Group recommended the establishment of a Regulatory Authority to achieve uniformity and transparency in licensing, regulation and provision of information to the public in relation to the property sector.

Congress understands:

That the Minister for Justice and Law Reform has established the National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA) as the agency to carry out this function.

Congress believes:

That this is a hugely positive step by Government to regulate the property sector. At a time where many businesses are facing liquidation, receivership, and other financial difficulties, adequate governance is required more than ever. Furthermore, the enactment of this legislation to empower this regulatory authority would provide a significant support to our members along with all tenants nationwide.

Congress mandates the President and Vice President for Welfare:

To voice the support of the USI; before the end of the calendar year 2012, for the establishment of the National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA).

Congress further mandates the President and Vice President for Welfare:

To lobby the Minister for Justice and Law Reform; before the end of the calendar year 2012, to ensure the swift and secure enactment of this legislation.

12 NA 10 MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS

Congress notes with concern:

Recent figures that 1 in 7 householders are struggling to repay mortgages due to the economic crisis.

Congress further notes:

That many students and families across the country have to make stark choices as to whether to pay the mortgages, pay colleges fees or simply put food on the table to provide for their families.

Congress also notes:

That many families are not in a position to meet mortgage repayments because they have been made redundant or have had to close their business due to the economic crisis.

At present, families are bearing the full responsibility, that is losing their homes, for what can now be described as excessive lending by financial institutions. It is estimated that 36,000 mortgages are in arrears of three months or more and that 17,000 households are receiving mortgage interest supplement.

Congress is concerned:

That the financial crisis being experienced by students and families across the country is resulting increased levels of stress, anxiety and mental health issues.

Congress mandates:

The President, VP Equality and VP Campaigns to work with external organisations to campaign and lobby the Government to introduce measures that support families in situations where they are unable to repay their mortgage and to ensure that families do not lose their homes.

12 NA 12 EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

The focus being put on producing work-ready, world-ready graduates by the 3rd Level sector.

Congress further notes:

The lack of clarity for many students around what graduate recruiters and employers are actively seeking in graduates

Congress mandates:

The Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Officer and the Campaigns Officer to roll out a nationwide campaign before June 1st 2013 with the aim to inform students on what skills make them more employable and opportunities they have to develop them.

Congress further mandates:

The Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Officer to investigate the feasibility of a national career guidance database/website for 3rd and 4th level students.

11 NA 1 ABORTION LEGISLATION

Congress notes:

The ruling in December 2010 by the European Court of Human Rights which said that the Irish State had violated the rights of one of the plaintiffs in the "*A, B & C v. Ireland*" case.

Congress further notes:

That the "Attorney General v. X" case in 1992 highlighted a lack of clarity in the constitution as it gives equality in the right to life of both the mother and the unborn child, and recommended that legislation be introduced in this regard.

Congress mandates the Equality Officer:

To campaign for, and lobby the Government to legislate for abortion in line with the "Attorney General v. X" case judgement.

11 NA 2 VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

The unusual political situation in the year 2010/2011 put USI under a lot of pressure as regards a Voter Registration Campaign in the run-up to a General Election.

Congress believes:

That a Voter Registration Campaign would be more feasible operationally if it was carried out at the start of the year instead of in the run up to the election.

Congress further notes:

That to encourage people to vote an organisation must be registered. If CO's run a Voter Registration Campaign, it must be done through USI, who are registered.

Congress mandates USI Officer Board:

To run a Voter Registration Campaign every September/October, to provide help to CO's running Voter Registration Campaigns, to make officers available on the ground to COs, and to approve all CO information etc for any Voter Registration Campaign.

11 NA 3 An Ghaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht

Aithníonn an chomhdháil:

Go bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar ábhar éigeantach don Ardteistiméireacht faoi láthair

Aithníonn an chomhdháil ar lean:

Go bhfuil roinnt fadhbanna ann leis an curaclam mar atá sé agus roinnt moltaí ar conas gur féidir linn é a deisiú.

Creideann an chomhdháil go láidir:

Gur cheart don Ghaeilge fanacht mar croí ábhar éigeantach don Ardteistiméireacht

Aithníonn an chomhdháil le himní:

Go mbeidh tionchar uafásach ag aon athrú ar staideas na Gaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht ar cúrsaí tríú leibhéal trí Ghaeilge agus todhchaí an teanga.

Sainordaíonn an Comhdháil Oifigeach na Gaeilge agus Oifigeach na bhFeachtas:

Le feachtas a chur ar bun chun Athchóiriú iomlán a bhaint amach ar curaclam na Gaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht trí í a roinnt i dhá ábhar

1. Teanga na Gaeilge- ábhar éigeantach le béim ar scríobh agus labhairt na Gaeilge
2. Saíocht agus Litríocht na Gaeilge- ábhar roghnach le béim ar filíocht, litríocht agus stair na Gaeilge.

Irish Language for the Leaving Certificate

Congress note:

That the Irish Language is currently a compulsory subject for the Leaving Certificate.

Congress further notes:

That there have been many problems with the Irish curriculum in schools and many suggestions on how to fix the current curriculum

Congress strongly believes:

That Irish should remain a central & compulsory subject for the Leaving Certificate.

Congress notes with concern:

That making the Irish language optional at Leaving Certificate level will have a disastrous impact on third level Irish language courses and the future of the language

Congress mandates the Irish Language Officer and Campaigns Officer:

To campaign for a revamp of the Irish language for the leaving certificate by splitting the subject into two subjects.

1. Irish Language- a compulsory subject with emphasis on speaking and writing the language
2. Culture and Literature of Irish Language- an optional subject with emphasis on poetry, literature and history of the language

11 NA 4 GAELSCOILEANNA

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil:

An tábhacht atá ag Gaelscoileanna de todhchaí an teanga agus an fás ollmhór sa méid Gaelscoileanna le 20 bhliain anuas.

Aithníonn an chomhdháil le himní:

Go bhfuil géarghá le scoileanna nua in áiteanna áirithe agus go bhfuil éileamh ann i gcomhair Gaelscoileanna

Aithníonn an chomhdháil ar lean le himní:

Go bhfuil tuismitheoirí ina dhiaidh scoileanna a bhunú iad féin gan aitheantas nó airgead on rialtas.

Dá bhrí sinn sainordaíonn an chomhdháil seo an Oifigeach Oideachais agus Oifigeach na Gaeilge:

Chun stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar an Aire Oideachais le fáil réidh leis lánchosc atá ann faoi láthair agus le cinnte a dhéanamh go bhfuil an Ghaeilge curtha chun cinn tríd an córas oideachais ar fad

Congress recognises:

The importance of Gaelscoileanna to the development of the Irish language and the dramatic increase in the numbers of Gaelcoileanna in the past 20 years.

Congress believes:

That every Irish citizen should be given the choice to Irish-medium education.

Congress notes with concern:

That in certain areas there is a need for new schools urgently and a great demand for Gaelscoileanna.

Congress further notes with concern:

That parents have had to take matters into their own hands and set up unrecognised privately funded schools

Congress therefore mandates the Education Officer and the Irish Language Officer:

To lobby the government and the Minister for Education to abolish the current embargo and to ensure the promotion of the Irish language throughout the education system.

11 NA 5 ROLLING REGISTER

Congress notes:

That the 'door to door' method of maintaining the electoral register currently used in Ireland means there is little public confidence in the current method of voter registration.

Congress further notes:

That responsibility for compiling the electoral register lies with individual local authorities rather than a central body. While this may seem like a sensible delegation of responsibilities, in reality the opposite is true. It has been shown that the current method of voter registration allows for:

- Varying degrees of priority afforded to maintaining data;
- Wide variety of practices among registration authorities;
- Insufficient field-workers and door-to-door visits to obtain the necessary information.

Congress believes:

That transferring responsibility for managing the register away from the local authorities to a newly created Electoral Commission operating an individual, rolling register would greatly increase the accuracy of the electoral register. Furthermore, it would make the process of registering students in third level colleges much easier as only one authority would be involved in the registration process.

Congress mandates the Deputy President, Education Officer and Area Officers:

To lobby for the creation of an Electoral Commission that would facilitate an individual, rolling register to ensure that the electoral register is up to date and accurate going forward.

11 NA 7 **JOBSEEKERS' ALLOWANCE & WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMMES**

Congress notes:

That from January 2011, the Jobseeker's Allowance maximum payments are as follows:

Age 18 – 19: €100

Age 20 – 21: €100

Age 22 – 24: €144

Age 25 +: €188

Congress notes:

That the exceptions to reduced payments to under 25s are:

- Claimants with dependent children.
- People transferring to Jobseeker's Allowance immediately after finishing their entitlement to Jobseeker's Benefit.
- People transferring from Disability Allowance to Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Where an existing Jobseeker's Allowance claimant is assessed at the higher rate of allowance gets work but loses that job and is back on Jobseeker's Allowance within 12 months.
- People under 25 participating in a course of education, training or Community Employment. However, when the course ends you will return to an age related JA payment, if you were getting one before you started the course.
- You were at least 20 years of age on 30 December 2009 and became unemployed on or before 30 December 2009.
- You were 18 or 19 on 30 December 2009 and you became unemployed on or before 29 April 2009.
- You are 22 to 24 and taking part in the Work Placement Programme run by FÁS.

Congress further notes:

The recommendations in the USI policy document “Re-Igniting the Smart Economy” include the provision of 20,000 graduate work placement places, and that the 2011 Budget included provisions for the creation of 15,000 places.

Congress believes:

That reducing social welfare payments purely on the basis of age is discriminatory.

That the limiting of increased payments for those taking part in the FÁS Work Placement Programme to the ages of 22-24 is discriminatory and should be extended to all under 25s as long as reduced payments for under 25s persists.

Congress mandates:

The President, Deputy President and Equality Officer to campaign for the abolishment of reduced payments for those on the Jobseeker’s Allowance based entirely on the recipients’ age.

And until such time as reduced payments for those on the Jobseeker’s Allowance based entirely on the recipients’ age are abolished, to campaign for the extension of increased payments to those on the FÁS Work Placement Programme to be extended to all those below 25, and to include those who have applied for the FÁS Work Placement Programme. They should also lobby and campaign for those participating in any national work placement programmes outside of FÁS to similarly be eligible for increased payments.

09 NA 4 Elections Campaign

Congress applauds:

The current USI policy on increasing the student vote.

Congress mandates:

The President to immediately begin lobbying all political parties with regard to student issues, specifically funding of third level education.

Congress further mandates:

Officer Board to prepare information regarding each party’s policies which relate to students so as to inform USI’s members.

Congress also mandates:

The President and Officer Board to immediately begin a campaign to improve student access to voting – through lobbying for weekend voting, on campus polling stations and re-instating the right to be registered at home and at college.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

EM 19 (IA) – 1: Brunei Sharia Law Urgent Days of Action

Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU / TU Dublin SU

This requires two-thirds majority to pass

Congress Notes

That students have been a fundamental instrument and key contributor of driving the queer rights movement historically and that human right issues are tackled head on by students with power, vigor and enthusiasm.

Congress Notes With Alarm

That Brunei is a country in Asia, that is governed by Sharia Law. As of from this week a law took effect whereby anyone engaging in queer intercourse or adultery, would serve a sentence of death by stoning. This is not acceptable and a disgusting attack on human rights.

Congress Mandates

That USI officer-board leads a day of action, that will see students mobilized to show solidarity with those affected in Brunei.

Congress Further Mandates

That USI hosts a further day of action with letter drives calling the government to condemn and act as a lobbying power towards this to take a no tolerance stance on horrific, bigoted language.

IA 19 – 1 Non EU International Students

Proposed By NUI Galway Students' Union

Congress notes:

Within the confines of a severely underfunded Higher Education system, many institutions are looking to internationalise as a means to increase fee income.

Congress condemns:

International students being used as a source of revenue, and the fact that there are not adequate supports in place for international students who study here.

Congress notes with concern:

Non EU international students are often excluded from funding pots, for example, funds for Students with Disabilities and Field trip funds.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Education and skills for funding streams to include non EU international students.

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

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.

2018 IA 1 : Graduate USA Visa

Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

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.

2018 IA 2 : Justice and human rights for Palestine

Proposed by Queen's University, Belfast Students' Union

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 lobby to divest 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.

17 IA1 Protection of J1 Visa Program

CONGRESS NOTES WITH DEEP CONCERN

the policy effects of the selection of Donald Trump by the Electoral College of the United States to be their 45th President.

CONGRESS IN PARTICULAR NOTES

that Mr. Trump had indicated that he would seek to repeal the J-1 Visa programme and the impact this would have on Irish students who seek to participate in the program.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

that this program has been beneficial for positive relations between the United States and Ireland and a deeper sharing of the historical relationship between Ireland and the United States.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

the President to lobby the Irish Government to make the preservation and continuation of this program a diplomatic priority in their engagement with the United States.

15 IA1 Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Congress notes with concern:

the on-going negotiations between the European Union and the United States in relation to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and the potential impact that it could have on Irish higher education, democracy and wider society.

Congress does not support:

the lowering of any EU standards in regards to the environment, food safety, animal welfare and workers' rights.

In addition, Congress is especially concerned that under TTIP, the US would be allowed to export shale gas to Europe thus increasing fracking in the US and allowing US companies to challenge fracking bans in Europe under the Investor-State Dispute Settlement clause.

While Congress supports the EU's efforts in job creation we believe that TTIP jeopardises the health and wellbeing of those living in the EU and therefore call on the EU to use these negotiations to encourage the US to raise its standards rather than lowering its own.

Congress affirms

that while it does not oppose free trade in principle, TTIP does not amount to a traditional free trade agreement but rather threatens to constitute an historic infringement upon democratic governance.

Conference mandates:

Officer Board to campaign against TTIP and to engage with like-minded organisations in Ireland and across Europe on the matter.

14 IA 1 SUPPORTING LGBT RUSSIA

Congress is aware:

Of USI's proud history of campaigning for LGBT rights, including the 1993 decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland.

Congress believes:

That as a Union we have a responsibility to ensure that human rights are protected, not only for our members but also for our European and international counterparts.

Congress is appalled:

By the effect the of the "homosexual propaganda" law that has been introduced and implemented by the lawmakers of the Russian Federation.

Congress notes with concern:

That the Russian LGBT community is living in conditions of extreme oppression while coping with acts of violence on a daily basis.

Congress is disgusted:

That the group calling themselves "Occupy Paedophilia" is allowed to attack perceived members of the LGBT community with almost complete immunity from the law.

Congress is opposed:

To the regime that has been imposed upon the LGBT people in the Russian Federation and conveys solidarity with those who are risking their own lives to fight against this oppressive regime.

Congress mandates:

The USI Equality and Citizenship Vice President to organise a repeat of the recent demonstration in front of the Russian Embassy in co-operation with other LGBT groups, calling for the repeal of this law and the protection of the Russian LGBT community from continued attacks.

Congress further mandates:

The USI Equality and Citizenship Vice President and the USI President to contact the Department of Foreign Affairs with a view to meeting the Minister to ask if the issue has been discussed with his Russian counterparts and if the Government of Ireland is willing to call for a repeal of the "homosexual propaganda" law. This meeting should take place by the third National Council of the year and the findings reported back to that National Council.

Congress also mandates:

The Equality and Citizenship Vice President to continue to work with IGLYO on this matter.

UNION ORGANISATION

UO 19 – 1 USI Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin SU

Congress notes:

The cyclical nature of student representative terms leads to a regular change in priorities and shifts in focus of the national movement. This often weakens the ability for the movement to gather momentum on the issues which lie at the core of the student movement.

Congress further notes:

Changes made to Union structures are often made without strategic forethought.

Congress understands:

Strategic planning is an organisational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organisation's direction in response to a changing environment.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Campaigns and the President, in consultation with National Council, devise a strategic plan for the Union of Students' in Ireland to run from 2020-2025, and for this plan to be ratified by Congress 2020.

Congress further mandates:

A working group of National Council be established to oversee and inform the development of the strategic plan.

Congress further mandates:

The President to publish an annual progress report on this Strategic Plan and present it to annual congress.

UO 19 – 2 Governance training modules

Proposed By Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress notes:

As sabbatical officers, we are expected to sit on a number of academic and governing boards within our HEI's and much of the discussion at these meetings can contain language that is new or uncommon for officers to have consistent knowledge of.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to introduce new governance training modules for SUT and SUT+ which cover business and legal terminology, negotiation skills and top things for SU Officers to look out for and query during meetings. More detail on the contents of this training can be covered in the SU Officers Handbook.

UO 19 – 3 Regional Officer Support with Mergers:

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress notes:

There are a number of mergers that are either prior or post designation in many MOs across the country.

Congress further notes:

The merging of different MOs can be a difficult and an overwhelming process. The transition from being a single entity to becoming a part of a larger establishment can be daunting not just for the overall union but the officers involved.

Congress mandates:

The regional officers to liaise with the MOs involved in mergers to ensure that each of these MOs (and officers) feels represented, well-equipped and supported going through this transition.

Congress further mandates:

The regional officers to establish a working group for MOs involved in a merger process. This would provide a space for the MOs to give advice on how they dealt with going through a merger.

UO 19 – 4 Sponsorship Agreements and Commercial Partnerships

Proposed by Presidents Working Group

Congress Notes

USI may wish to work alongside companies throughout the year based on shared interests or common goals. This can sometimes take the form of a partnership agreement between the employer and the USI which identifies their common interests and objectives. USI voted through UO5 USI Commercial Strategy last year, and this motion would add to that strategy.

Congress Further Notes

USI has engaged increasingly with commercial organisations for sponsorship of USI events and support for venue hire, catering and materials.

Congress supports and encourages

USI in seeking sponsorship in order to reduce costs and add value to events for members.

Congress Understands

That the ability to seek out and secure sponsorship offers varies depending on the project involved and the financial benefit offered and is regularly time sensitive.

Congress mandates

The USI President and VP Campaigns to create a policy regarding commercial partnerships, following consultation with MO sabbatical officers and USI Officerboard. This policy would cover how partnerships are sought out, agreed upon, and the length of time they are active for.

UO 19 – 5 Strategic Review of USI

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

USI has not undertaken a strategic review of the organisation since 1999. In 2015, USI adopted a Union Development Strategy 2015 - 2020, which outlines a vision and strategy for developing not only Students' Unions but also USI as an organisation. This has yet to be fully implemented.

Congress Notes with Concern:

That USI is not performing to its fullest potential and is becoming an organisation in desperate need of reform. Member Organisations continue to be frustrated at the lack of support from USI and question the value of being a member.

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to carry out a robust strategic review of USI including, but not limited to, areas of governance, finance, democracy, political lobbying and campaigns. The review should be undertaken by an external consultant and must take into account the opinions and concerns of all current Member Organisations, as well as potential candidate Member Organisations where possible.

Congress further Mandates:

That the USI President ensures that the strategic review considers the 2018 motion on USI Commercial Strategy. (2018 UO5) The review should provide a report to the December National Council in 2019 with a list of recommendations in which USI must adopt no later than July 2020.

Congress therefore repeals 17 NC UO 7

UO 19 - 6 USI in the North

Proposed By Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU)

Congress Notes:

The long-established trilateral agreement which entitles students, studying in Northern Ireland to be represented by NUS UK and USI, through its' principal representative body NUS-USI, with the former acting as managing partner for NUS-USI.

An estimated 200,000 of USI's 374,000 members are NUS-USI members of which approximately 160,000 come from FE colleges. The Further Education & Training Strategy, passed by Congress in 2018 sets out a direction of how USI ought to interact with FE members in the North.

Despite this, there is a lack of consistency in how USI engages NUS-USI members in its' work with FE members rarely being included in USI campaigns.

Congress Further Notes:

Recent changes to NUS UK's operations have resulted in a reduction in staff support for NUS-USI, with representation now being provided by one full-time officer, supported by two full-time staff members.

Congress Believes:

The reduced staff support puts significant strain on the NUS-USI President's capacity to represent and campaign on behalf of their 200,000 members in the North.

In light of this, it is imperative for USI to recognize its' role in supporting the interests of its' NI members.

Congress Mandates:

USI Officer Board to consult with NUS-USI to further extend its' engagement with members in the North, with each portfolio officer aiming to incorporate NUS-USI and its' members in at least one relevant campaign per year.

USI Portfolio officers to work collaboratively with the NUS-USI President and their counterpart members of the NUS-USI REC (Regional Executive Committee), where applicable, to support campaigns and events being run by NUS-USI.

USI Officer Board to consult with NUS-USI in extending its prominence within NI student affairs more generally.

UO 19 – 7 Regional Officers

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes

The benefit of having Regional Officers on campus.

Congress further notes

The experience and direction regional officers can give to local MOs is of great benefit.

Congress mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to work with MOs before the beginning of the academic year to schedule at least four visits per semester.

UO 19 – 8 Media Training

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes

Students' Union officers are regularly sought for interviews with local and national media outlets.

Congress further notes

That training for all sabbatical officers is expensive and that Students' Unions may have to subsidise such training.

Congress mandates

The VP for Campaigns to provide opportunities for Media Training to officers who wish to avail of such.

UO 19 – 9 Progress Report on mandates

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress notes:

USI officer board has been mandated to take on a large number of motions. It is not realistic to complete all of these mandates in one year.

Congress recognizes:

The hard work being put in by officer board to complete a large amount of motions.

Congress regrets:

There is no transparent indicator of how far along these mandates have gotten.

Congress mandates:

All officer board to produce a progression report in their officer report of the development of these mandates at each National Council.

UO 19 – 10 Accommodating for Ents, Marketing and Commercial during SUT+

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

Congress Notes:

SUT+ is additional training during the summer period of which this year amalgamated what was previously known as 'Top Up' training into the week too.

Congress Further Notes:

Due to this amalgamation, there was little training for officers in areas revolving Entertainments, Marketing and Commercial Activities as this was not previously catered for in the 'Top Up' training schedules. When all officers are present for other elements of the SUT+ schedule, it is vital to use this opportunity to increase capacity of those officers.

Congress Believes:

August is a vital time for bookings for events such as Freshers' Week and there should be a working group and/or top up training for these officers to make proper use of the time present at the event.

Congress Mandates:

USI Officer Board to ensure that there is an Ents, Marketing & Commercial working group available at SUT+ and that there are training events available to Ents, Marketing and Commercial officers that is relevant to the time of their work with big events approaching such as Freshers Week.

UO 19 – 11 Check-ins with Ents, Commercial and Marketing Working Group

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

Congress Notes:

Throughout the year, there are many events that can cause a lot of stress to the officers organising them.

Congress Further Notes:

When organising these events such as Freshers Week or Raise and Give Week, it can impact on the mental health of these officers. The officers may feel like they are the only officers in that position. Also since it is such a busy time of the year, there may be a lack of communication with officers in Ents, Marketing and Commercial Working Group, so officers may not be able to communicate with other officers in the same position.

Congress recognises

As many officers who are involved in organising events for their SU are part-time officers, working groups at National Council during term time may not be suitable.

Congress Believes:

Following the success this year, video-call check ins have proven to be greatly beneficial to officers organising events, especially those officers that may not be able to travel to every National Council. A video-call may only take an hour out of each officers time, however it gives officers the platform to explain what they are going through and share experiences and advice.

Congress Mandates:

USI Vice President over Ents, Marketing and Commercial Working Group to ensure that these video-calls happen at as regularly as needed with a special focus the busy times such as before September and February.

Congress Further Mandates:

USI Vice President over Ents, Marketing and Commercial Working Group to have check-ins regularly to individual MO's that have busy time periods of organising events.

UO 19 – 12 Re-think Campaign

Proposed By President, IT Carlow Students' Union

Congress notes:

That the USI have and will continue to do incredible work on behalf of the students across Ireland. That valuable work that is performed by officer board in conjunction with MO's can easily go un-noticed by the students that the USI represent.

Congress Further notes:

That a campaign to reconnect the USI with the students that it represents is greatly needed to bolster the great work that both officer board and local Unions do.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Campaigns to develop a campaign to reconnect the national union to the students that they represent.

UO 19 – 16 Part Time Officer Training

Proposed by the Southern Regional Working Group

Congress recognises

The importance and value of having part-time officers and executive members trained in skills that will help them to achieve their goals within their local Students' Union and on a National Level.

Congress values

The training possibilities within USI and external organisations that are offered to Students' Union part-time officers and executive members.

Congress understands

That each Students' Union team may have different part-time officers and executive positions and that these may require different training to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills to carry out their role.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to carry out a needs-based assessment of training required for each Students' Union part-time officer/executive member and provide training in the manner which best meets those needs.

UO 19 – 17 Students' Union Officer Handbook

Proposed by the Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress recognises

The role of a Officer within a Students' Union is a unique role. It is also very important to have a well-rounded understanding of how to approach your role as an Officer within a Students' Union and that a well-developed crossover is extremely valuable for newly elected Officers.

Congress understands

It can be helpful to have a source of information provided to Students' Union Officers that cover areas they may find useful throughout their term in Office such as effective communication, event organisation, useful contacts and a jargon buster.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to publish a Students' Union Officer Handbook before SUT each year to support newly elected officers.

UO 19 – 18 Inclusion of UN Sustainable Development Goals

Proposed by VP Welfare

Congress notes

That in 2015, the UN introduced the resolution, "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and with those, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, global warming, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice.

Congress also notes

That much of the work currently undertaken by USI are linked to sustainable development, and hence these goals. Our work on quality education (SDG4), Mental, Sexual and Physical Health (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5) and reducing inequality (SDG10) are core to USIs values, and mission, and are directly linked to the aims of the SDGs.

Congress further notes

The added benefits of promoting our work in this framework, and the progress that is to be made by linking with other organisations with similar aims.

Congress therefore mandates

USI Officer Board to SDG-Proof its future campaigns, policies, and other relevant areas of their work. This should involve, but is not limited to, linking our campaigns to the SDG goals, including SDG information in our social media channels (especially during campaign weeks), and working with external bodies to align our work more in line with these goals.

Congress further mandates

That USI Officer Board work with external organisations to help them better align their work with these goals.

UO 19 – 19 Give Us the Night Campaign

Proposed by Ents, Marketing & Commercial Working Group

Congress notes

The Give Us The Night is an independent volunteer group of professionals operating within the night-time industry, campaigning for positive changes to nightlife in Ireland, with particular regard to music venues. They endeavour to highlight the contribution of the night-time industry to culture, community and the economy in Ireland, and to raise the quality of nightlife to international standards. Their ongoing aim is to create debate and discussion about the licensing laws in Ireland, with a view to influencing legislative changes.

Congress notes

The importance of such a campaign to students and Students' Unions who often play a part in an active nightlife on and off campuses.

Our members can see these effects in many areas including but not limited to;

Organising events: SUs liaise with promoters/venues for events who are directly affected by these laws.

Venue closures: Many students' unions have expressed concerns with their local nightclubs/late night venues closing in the recent year, this may be due recent to recent increase in costs in licences.

Staggered closing times: after large events, safety issues can arise due to venues all closing at the same time - we would benefit from a staggered closing time and later opening hours.

Employment: According to the USI survey conducted relation to the hospitality sector, 70% work in Food & Beverage and a further 7% in Events.

Graduate employment: Many students who study courses such as music, sound engineering course would benefit from the employment opportunities that would result in the core aims of the campaign being realized.

Congress mandates

The USI Officer with responsibility for Ents, Marketing & Commercial activity to support the Give Us the Night Campaign who's core aims are the following;

To support, nurture and reframe the conversation around nightlife and the night-time economy in Ireland.

To highlight the economic value and societal benefits of a diverse and vibrant Irish night-time industry.

To contribute to the creation of jobs and sustainable indigenous businesses within the night-time industry, and to broaden employment opportunities for those operating in the creative arts.

To ensure that Ireland adopts a more progressive European approach to nightlife, that reflects the wide range of lifestyles and working hours here.

Congress further mandates

The USI Officer with responsibility for Ents, Marketing & Commercial to lobby relevant people to ensure the student perspective is heard in the campaign.

UO 19 - 20 Student Activist Groups

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Congress notes

The importance of students at the core of the success of USI campaigns.

Congress commends

The hard work of student activists throughout the year.

Congress further notes

That students engaged in activism reap educational benefits such as developing a greater sense of social responsibility and identity. It is also important for teaching students about the importance of democratic participation, leadership and the ability to build coalitions amongst a wide variety of individuals on campus. (Barnhardt, Reyes, 2016)

Congress mandates

For USI Officer Board to engage with student activists and grassroots campaigns, where possible, in the running of their campaigns and to actively seek out opportunities to engage with established student activist groups.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to set up Facebook Groups for students who share common interests from all over Ireland to facilitate opportunities for networking, sharing information and easily mobilising students.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to where possible, attend events and support the work of (what is currently known as) the All Ireland Student Activist Network and similar groups like it.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to run non-violent direct action training, which is open to students, each year.

UO 19 – 21 Trade Unions Partnerships and Workers’ Rights Campaign

Proposed by the Union Development Working Group

Congress Regrets:

That there are incidents where abuses of workers’ rights are leaving students concerned about whether they will have enough work or finances to afford attending third-level or afford to live once they graduate.

Congress Notes:

That there is a need for students to become aware of their rights as workers. Students should have the opportunity to work enough hours to be able to afford a decent standard of living.

Congress Welcomes:

The SIPTU-USI Agreement, previously approved by the Executives of both Unions in 2013.

Congress Further Notes:

That the knowledge and resources available from SIPTU, such as the Worker’s Rights Centre, and the Irish Congress Trade Union (ICTU) are valuable resources and partners to draw upon.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to work towards an update of the SIPTU-USI partnership as needed and promote it to members.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to work towards building alliances with trade unions, similar to the SIPTU-USI agreement, in as many sectoral trade unions as possible with the aim to gain benefits for students. These partnerships should have a particular focus on free/reduced cost membership to access to the services of those trade unions that match their area of study or part-time work while studying.

Congress also mandates

The VP for Campaigns to advocate for elected Students’ Union officers and their staff to become members of a union.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to endeavour to work with the relevant trade unions, and other organisations, to assess the issues that may exist and to further mobilise students on a campaign on the issues of: pay, work, and recognition of the sector.

Congress Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns to roll-out an evidence-based Workers’ Rights Awareness Campaign for students in conjunction with SIPTU and other trade unions.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective.

Repeal

16 UO 12 WORKER'S RIGHTS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

UO 19 – 22 the use of technological development to allow MOs to join national council

Proposed by Limerick IT Students' Union

Congress notes

There is an appreciation for USI's ethos of inclusive and rotary locations for their events. The various locations allow MOs to build informed comparisons to their own Institute or University.

Congress further notes

In some cases, it can be difficult for MOs to travel to every location- particularly for the non-centralised MOs.

Congress mandates

The USI President to thoroughly investigate an allowance for MO Representatives to join USI National Council events through technology, on giving notice.

This technological development should offer a capped number of times per year, for MO representatives to join same- in keeping with the benefits of face-to-face interactions at National Council events.

This capped number of times per year would be based on the Presidents' agreed schedule of National Councils.

UO (NC) 19 - 1 Membership of 'Stop Climate Chaos' Coalition

Proposed by: USI President

National Council notes that

'Stop Climate Chaos' is a coalition of civil society organizations campaigning to ensure Ireland does its fair share to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change.

National Council also notes

Current members include development, environmental, youth and faith based organisations.

National Council further notes

USI's commitment to engaging with public representatives and students in education and awareness regarding climate change and sustainability.

National Council recognises

USI's recent commitment to the Stop Climate Chaos lobby of the Oireachtas.

National Council mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and USI President to work with the coalition on it's objectives and the aims to influence policy, engage the public and to assist in growing Ireland's climate change movement on campuses.

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.

2018 UO1 : 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

2018 UO2 : 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.

2018 UO3 : 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.

2018 UO4 : Sub-committees of National Council

Proposed by IT Carlow Students' Union

Passed with Amendment submitted by the President of USI

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

The President to ensure that minutes of sub-committees of National Council, including attendance registers, are made available to members of National Council.

Congress further mandates

USI to promote gender balance on sub-committees of National Council.

2018 UO5 : 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

2018 UO6 : 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.

2018 UO9 : 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, as to keep a record of developments and changes as they occur.

2018 UO12 : 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.

2018 UO13 : 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.

2018 UO15 : 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

2018 UO16 : 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.

2018 UO17 : 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 ISL should be welcomed as the third official language of the state.

Congress understands

That Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge should be mindful of other minority languages in this country, and it is possible to support ISL easily as a part of campaigning.

Therefore, Congress mandates

That LU don Ghaeilge should support 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.

2018 UO19 : 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.

2018 UO20 : 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.

Therefor 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.

2018 UO21 : 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.

2018 UO22 : An Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar Fho-Choiste- An Coiste Cultúrtha as another Subcommitee 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 thefirst 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.

17 NC/UO 01 Strategic Review of USI

NATIONAL COUNCIL NOTES:

As the representative organisation for Students' Unions across the country, the USI has a responsibility to operate in a way that effectively strengthens the student movement.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MANDATES:

That the President appoint a suitably qualified consultant to complete a full review of all aspects of the USI organisation and structure with a view to bringing forward proposals to strengthen the role and performance of the USI as the central voice of student organisations across the country.

The President should also instruct the consultant to obtain the views of all Students' Unions, whether currently affiliated or not, and make such recommendations as they see fit and present their report to a specially convened general meeting to be held, at the latest, by 31st March 2018.

17 UO1 Independent Students' Unions

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN

The creeping intrusion on students' union democracy and independence occurring around the country.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

The backbone of the student movement is for students' unions to be allowed to democratically self-govern, and to be free from interference by outside bodies.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES WITH CONCERN

The attempts to censor some students' unions, and encroach on their freedom of association.

CONGRESS MANDATES

The President to have the Independent Students' Union campaign as a priority campaign for the year, and to form a Committee, made up of the President and members of national council, and any external bodies that National Council see fit. This Committee is to report back to each National Council.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES

The President to undertake an annual dossier of the current situation within individual students' unions, so as to keep a national record of developments and changes as they occur. This dossier is to occur no later than September 30th to allow for adequate time to analyse and respond to issues as they arise. The information provided within the dossier is to be kept confidential, and is only to be used as part of the Independent Students' Union campaign.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES

The President to seek legal counsel in relation to proposing changes to Irish legislation to protect students' union independence, and to report findings and recommendations back to both National Council and the Independent Students' Union Committee.

17 UO3 USI on campus

CONGRESS NOTES

that students should have the opportunity to see more of what USI is doing for them.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

that this helps MO engagement when they can see that their officers are working on national issues with USI.

CONGRESS MANDATES

that USI distributes information (via poster campaigns, social media and shoutouts) to every campus once a term with MOs to give them a national update and tell them which projects they have been doing with that MO during the year.

17 UO5 Employability & Personal Skills Development

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That upskilling is important alongside students' degrees to improve employability upon graduation, in securing part-time work to fund their education and to develop their own personal skills.

CONGRESS NOTES:

The Upskill Week run by WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' UNION which was then followed by similar campaigns & workshops in ITTSU and NUIGSU.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

The on-going upskilling opportunities that institutions and SUs offer throughout the year. This includes first aid training, bar training, barista training, Safe talk training, CV workshops, Volunteering opportunities, Interview skills, restorative practices, self defence etc.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

Regional officers to create a list of resources and contacts for MOs undertaking the campaign or running workshops.

17 UO6 USI Policy book transparency

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

The USI Policy Book is essential in directing the work of USI and Officerboard.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

That it is not always clear what motions have been completed.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The USI President to ensure an up to date Policy Book is made available online with a clear indication of mandates complete, mandates ongoing and mandates not complete.

CONGRESS ALSO MANDATES:

Members of Officerboard to give updates on mandates complete in their officer reports to National Council.

17 UO7 Utilising National Council

CONGRESS NOTES:

The importance of National Council in steering the work of USI and deciding interim policy.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That National Council is best utilised with contributions from every Member Organisation.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI president to organise training at SUT for Sabbatical Officers on how to interact with National Council.

17 UO10 USI and Member Organisations Entertainments Collaboration

CONGRESS NOTES:

That the Entertainments Committee is under-utilised as a forum for USI and MO's to collaborate on events such as Freshers Week, RAG Week etc.

CONGRESS FURTHER RECOGNISES:

The difficulty MO's can have when organising events and negotiating with entertainment companies to book acts, negotiate fees and riders and organise theme night events. Entertainment companies can take advantage

of MO's in early negotiations

CONGRESS RECOGNISES:

The potential for greater collaboration between USI and MO's to book acts collectively which can reduce total event costs.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The Chairperson of Entertainments Committee to present a draft a list of MO events and campaigns before SUT+.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The Chairperson of Entertainments Committee to develop and share costings for acts, event hire agencies and merchandise etc for their events on/off campus for the Committee

17 UO11 Ents Committee Reform

CONGRESS NOTES:

That the Ents Committee has experienced low turnout.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

That the Chairperson of the Ents Group conducts a survey of former and current marketing and ents officers, including officers who may have a brief including Ents , to see what they would like the Ents Committee to be.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The Chairperson of the Ents Group to compile the results of this survey into a terms of reference document, to be passed by National Council in June.

17 UO12 Regional Training Events

CONGRESS NOTES:

Training events for Students' Union Officers are frequently held within the Dublin Region.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That therefore it is not always feasible for officers from other areas to attend these vital training events.

CONGRESS FURTHER BELIEVES:

During the academic term it can be difficult for SU officers to find the time to travel for required training.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

All training is important to SU officer's roles. Therefore by making it more accessible through regional training more SU officers will likely be able to attend the training.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

USI Officer Board to ensure that when they are organising training events aside from SUT, SUT+ and other events as determined by the officer board, that they do so in each region where logistically and financially possible.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The USI Officer Board to clarify and justify to USI National Council and/or relevant officer working groups why it is not possible to facilitate regional training events aside from SUT, SUT+ and other events as determined by the officer board in detail prior to the events being organised.

17 UO14 USI Calendar

CONGRESS NOTES:

USI organise a number events over the course of the year.

CONGRESS RECOGNISES:

The dates and volume of events organised by the organisation may need to be adapted from time to time.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

Students benefit from attendance at USI events.

CONGRESS FURTHER BELIEVES:

If students had sufficient notice in regards to the timing and location of events, attendance at these events would be increased.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI President in conjunction with the Officer Board to develop a set calendar of USI events and activities, including the location when known/available, for their term of office

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The USI President to make this calendar available to Member Organisations and students via the USI Website and other mediums they feel appropriate.

17 UO15 Comparative Research Manual

CONGRESS RECOGNISES:

Students' Union Officers sit on a number of boards and committees within their respective institutions.

CONGRESS NOTES:

Students' Union Officers roles on these boards and committees is to represent students and to defend their rights predominantly.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

Students' Union Officers need at their disposal statistics and figures from other member organisations to strengthen their arguments on a number of issues, for example but not limited to library opening hours, on campus catering prices etc.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The Regional officers of USI to compile together a comparative research manual following a consultation process with students and the USI National Council in terms of which areas should be covered within this manual.

17 UO18 Secretary for standing committees and action points

CONGRESS NOTES

that fluent discussion can come from standing committees of National Council.

CONGRESS MANDATES

USI Officerboard to ensure that as part of standing orders for Committees, a secretary should be elected to take minutes and action points are created from these minutes, which track the work of these committees in an effective manner.

17 UO19 Election Training

CONGRESS ACKNOWLEDGES

That each Students' Union would hold elections to elect their officers.

CONGRESS FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGES

That it can be difficult to get the correct information and know exactly how to run a successful campaign. It is important that students who put themselves in an election that they feel they know how to run an election.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

USI Officerboard to run training which offers advice on how to run a successful election campaign.

17 UO23 The Governance Code

CONGRESS NOTES:

The Governance Code is a resource to assist community, voluntary and charity (CVC) organisations develop their overall capacity in terms of how they run their organisation and places a greater emphasis on values, accountability, transparency, probity, maintaining control, leadership and the diversity of opinions and skills.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

The increasing need for better governance within organisations for the purpose of board function and for funding opportunities and development of the Union.

CONGRESS APPLAUDS:

USI committing to compliance with the Governance Code and registering as being 'On The Journey' in efforts to become accountable, transparent and better governed.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The USI President, as CEO of the Union, to commit to complying with the Governance Code and to report to the membership of National Council on the progress of this journey at every National Council.

17 UO25 Policies and Submissions Made Widely Available

CONGRESS NOTES:

The work done by USI Officerboard in creating policy, reports, strategies and submissions on behalf of students

CONGRESS ACKNOWLEDGES:

That these policies, reports, strategies and submissions could be used by the media, researchers, students' unions and other stakeholders in their own policies and submissions.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

That the USI President should ensure that policies, reports, strategies and submissions which are not subject to confidentiality are made available on the USI website in an easily accessible manner.

17 UO27 Presidents' Training Day

CONGRESS REPEALS

17 UO 25

CONGRESS NOTES

Many students' union presidents do not have in-depth managerial, financial or HR training prior to entering into their role.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That SUT and SUT+ are already jam-packed with modules, and that there isn't enough time to provide adequate training in a number of areas relevant to the role of the president of an SU. These areas include, but are not limited to, HR, management, budgeting and finances.

CONGRESS RECOGNISES

The USI Training Policy, and the methodology within it of assessing the needs of a group before providing training, and seeks to uphold this policy when ascertaining the additional training to be provided under the remit of this mandate.

CONGRESS MANDATES

In line with the USI Training Policy, the USI President to facilitate a daylong training day- "Pres Day"- where training will be provided in essential managerial areas as needed through assessing the needs of the SU presidents. This Day is to occur no later than August 30th in any given year.

17 UO28 TU Bill Merging of Student Unions

CONGRESS NOTES:

The introduction of the TU Bill in Ireland may cause the need for individual SUs to merge into one larger students' union.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That this is an opportunity for the USI to play a pivotal role in the creation of a new type of Students' Union.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The President of USI to work with merging Students' unions, to assist them with the formation of a Technological University Students' Union.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The President of USI to give monthly updates to USI National Council on the progress regarding the merging of Technological University Student' Unions.

15 UO3 Students' union staff training

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 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 UO18 Student manifesto

SPECIAL CASE: REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021. AMENDMENTS NOTED IN STRIKETHROUGHS AS THE POLICY ADOPTED IN 2018

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 as part of the wider national campaign.

15 UO19 Casework Recording Best Practice Policy

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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 UO 30 USI Transparency and Engagement:

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

14 UO 8 SIPTU-USI AGREEMENT

Congress welcomes:

The development of the SIPTU-USI Agreement, approved by the Executives of both Unions.

Congress recognises:

The significant benefits to students, particularly those in part-time employment, arising from the terms of the Agreement, and the tangible added value to USI membership it brings about.

Congress believes:

USI and SIPTU have a considerable amount of shared concerns and issues, and should work and campaign together on these areas where possible.

Congress approves:

The SIPTU-USI Agreement.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to oversee the terms of the Agreement, and work to ensure their implementation.

12 UO 11 ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY

REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

11 UO 2 CONSTITUENT ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

Congress notes:

The federal composition of USI.

Congress further notes:

That each constituent organisation is independent and autonomous.

Congress therefore mandates Officer Board:

To liaise and seek permission of individual Cos when asked publicly about local institutional issues.

11 UO 6 TRAINING FOR PROTEST STEWARDS

Congress notes:

That USI have organised two large student protests over the past three years.

Congress further notes:

That 42,000 students marched on the Education not Emigration March, which exceeded expected numbers by almost 20,000.

Congress notes with concern:

That the students chosen as stewards by some colleges lacked the training and cohesion to deal with those kind of numbers.

Congress therefore Mandates Officer Board:

USI to consult with an events management company to draft a stewarding policy suitable for all major protests and events, to be presented to National Council before August 2011.

Congress Further mandates Officer Board:

To ensure that this policy includes recommendations with regard to the dissemination of this training to all stewards.

11 UO 7 STEERING MEMBERS

Congress notes:

That Steering committee are very dedicated to the organisation and to its successful running. In order to ensure that there are active steering members there needs to be a proactive approach from Officer Board to encourage and foster networks with past expertise from the organisation so that institutional memory is still accessible to the organisation.

Congress mandates the deputy president:

To actively pursue new steering members in times of steering election and that they actively promote a network with ex USI officers.

10 UO 10 AREA OFFICER ROLE

Congress recognizes:

The difficulty for both COs and Area Officers in defining the role of the Area Officer and utilizing it to its full potential.

Congress believes:

That in order for the role to be successful, the onus should be on both the Officer themselves and on COs. However, this is difficult as there are no definite guidelines as to what an Area Officer's role is.

The following should be the minimum expected from an Area Officer:

- A minimum of one visit to each CO in between National Councils.
- A minimum of one week's notice to COs about this visit (unless CO requests Area Officer in a shorter period of time).
- Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliantuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 30 - - 30 -
- To organise a number of bonding events throughout the year. This should be approved by all COs and ensure that all are available to attend. And if all COs cannot attend, that those not available are happy the event takes place without them.
- To assist COs whenever requested in the run up to or during campaigns.
- To organise a number of regional councils during the year - the calendar of these should be agreed on at the first Regional Council of the year.
- That when requested, the Area Officer will attend Class Councils to update class reps on what USI has been doing and what the future plans of the USI are. COs are asked to invite the Area Officers to at least two Class Councils in the year.
- To speak to the media on behalf of the region and act as the main spokesperson on issues effecting students of their relevant area.
- To provide a detailed weekly report on their activities, both to COs and the President and Deputy President.
- To assist the Deputy President in organizing any protests or rallies, which COs have requested.
- To keep Officers based in HQ informed of the issues and activities happening in their area.

- To give an adequate cross over consisting of any further advice gained from holding office to their successor outlining issues which may be ongoing in certain COs, the main issues they face as an officer that year and how best to interact with their COs.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Area Officer to outline their role to their COs at the first regional council of the year.

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.

10 UO 26 UNION ORGANISATION

Congress notes:

That it is essential that each constituent organisation of USI can hold USI Officer Board to account.

Congress further notes:

That the current system of accountability is not adequate in ensuring that each member of Officer Board is meeting their mandates.

Congress believes:

That in the same way that Higher Education Institutes should offer a quality assurance scheme to its students; USI should provide its own quality assurance scheme as part of this effort for greater accountability.

Congress mandates:

Officer Board to establish a system of accountability, as detailed below, as part of an effort to improve accountability and quality assurance across the organisation.

Once elected, each member of Officer Board should present the first sitting of National Council with a plan of work for the year ahead, complete with key milestones and targets and displayed on a Gantt Chart, as is the industry standard for project management. This plan of work should reflect the policies laid down in the USI Policy Manual together with the tasks implied in the officer's job description and these should be prioritised accordingly.

The National Council have the option to accept the proposed plan of work, or reject it in which case the officer must return to the next National Council with a new proposal.

Progress on each item against the original plan of work must then be made known to all Constituent Organisations by means of a newsletter from each member of Officer Board on a fortnightly basis.

Failure to meet these targets, within 20 percent of the overall time allocation of each item, should then result in the Officer being held to account at the next sitting of National Council, The Officer will be fully entitled to due process in line with Article 5.8 of the USI Constitution and the law of the land.

Article 5.8 USI Constitution

The right of the students, through their Constituent Organisation, to call to account and instruct those charge with office, within the Union, to discipline and ultimately dismiss those who fail to carry out their responsibilities.

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

AF 19 – 1 Affiliation Fees Review

Proposed by USI President

[Congress Notes](#)

In 2018 Congress inherited the authority to decide affiliation fees from National Council after the successful passage of a constitutional amendment.

[Congress further notes](#)

The concern raised by member organisations regarding the cost of affiliation fees, in particular where affiliation fees are not collected as part of a levy separate to the Students' Union's own budget allocation.

[Congress believes](#)

That the current affiliation model requires review and reform. The current USI affiliation fee model has not changed, or increased, in 15 years.

[Congress further believes](#)

That Congress has a responsibility to act upon its inherited authority over affiliation fees in the interest of maintaining and growing a strong National Union and encouraging those who are currently non-members to join.

[Congress therefore mandates](#)

The USI President, in consultation with Member Organisation Presidents and Finance Committee, to conduct a comprehensive review of the current affiliation model and present its findings to Congress 2020, to include an impact and value assessment of any cap or change to the current model of affiliation fees.

[Congress further mandates](#)

That in the case that the aforementioned review procedure delivers a multitude of options of reform, that these options be put before Congress 2020 floor for debate.

17 NC/AF Financial Statements at Every National Council

NATIONAL COUNCIL NOTES:

Every year; the USI operates from a budget derived from the membership fees of the individual Member Organisations.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FURTHER NOTES:

As it is student money being used, financial transparency and accountability is always a core ideal.

NATIONAL COUNCIL MANDATES:

That at every National Council financial statements showing cumulative income and expenditure from 1st July each year are presented up to the time of each meeting.

A member of Finance Committee or Officer Board will present the accounts to the MO representatives present and allow them to question and seek clarification on the accounts as presented.

17 AF1 USI Financial Transparency

CONGRESS BELIEVES

That having clear and accessible transparency for the Union of Students in Ireland will strengthen the organisation and also allow students engage more functionally and effectively.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That members have a right to have easy access to such documents.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The USI President to ensure that financial accounts are uploaded to the USI Website no more than 5 working days after being approved by Congress each year.

CONGRESS DELETES:

15 AF1

16 AF 1 Solidarity Fund

Proposed by the President, USI

Congress notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland has actively sought to expand its membership in recent years with a particular focus on postsecondary inclusion.

Congress further notes:

Participation from new unions is significantly curtailed by a lack of funding. This essentially means that certain student groups are still unrepresented despite being members of USI.

Congress recognises:

Solidarity is the cornerstone of unions and that every effort should be made to ensure our Union is as inclusive and engaging as possible.

Congress mandates:

The introduction of a solidarity fund to allow for broader participation of underfunded unions in the national movement. This fund would operate on a voluntary basis and be used to allow for engagement in key national activity such as national council, congress and other decision making or training exercises organised by the union.

Congress further mandates:

That the fund would only be available to unions that fulfil the following criteria:

- Have a total annual budget of less than €18,000 per year.
- Have less than two paid sabbatical officers.
- It is the view of the National Council that they are not in a position to participate in the work of the national union due to financial constraints.

Congress further mandates:

The introduction of a levy on Students Unions of not more than 14c per student per year to finance the fund. The contribution of individual Students' Unions would be voluntary.

Congress further mandates:

Fees applied by USI for training, conferences etc be reduced, as appropriate, to allow participation in such events

Congress further mandates:

The President, and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to seek alternative funding for FE colleges as soon as practicable.

16 AF 2 Living Wage

Proposed by the President, USI

Congress recognises:

The definition of the living wage as "a wage which is high enough to maintain a normal standard of living."

Congress recognises:

The value of leading by example and the existing motion 14 NA 1 which outlines our comprehensive policy on the issue.

Congress notes:

The work undertaken by various representative groups, including USI, and some employers to ensure that workers be paid the living wage in order to maintain a decent standard of living.

Congress further notes:

That USI has a number of staff and officers working full time for the organisation.

Congress mandates:

That USI becomes a living wage employer and that Officer Board encourages other Students' Unions to do the same.

14 AF 1 FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR LARGE-SCALE EVENTS

Congress believes:

Transparency in the financial dealings of the Union of Students in Ireland is of paramount importance.

Congress also believes:

That this transparency is particularly important in relation to large-scale high-cost events organised by USI.

Congress notes with approval:

The presentation on the finances of the USI offered by the General Manager at National Council each year and the further presentation by finance committee at congress.

Congress asserts:

That every effort should be made to ensure financial transparency and that Member Organisations should be entitled to input before decisions regarding the budgets of large scale events are made.

Congress therefore mandates:

That the President present a projected budget for large scale events, including but not limited to Pink Training, SUT, and Congress to a National Council prior to the event for discussion.

Congress further mandates:

That the President present an actual budget for large scale events, including but not limited to Pink Training, SUT and Congress to the first National council after the event as an item for discussion.

14 AF 5 COMPENSATION OF IRISH OFFICER

Congress notes the importance of the Irish language:

Congress further notes the effort and commitment of the VP for the Irish Language in USI.

Congress is concerned:

That the work of the VP for the Irish Language is uncompensated with the exception of expenses and that this is the only unpaid position on USI officer board.

Congress recognises:

That expenses are not paid until the end of the month and can leave the officer out of pocket or unable to do the job. In addition there is a significantly reduced level of accountability on the officer based on the fact that they are not paid.

Congress further recognises:

The fact that the VP for the Irish Language is likely to be based out of the main office and this is likely to be a deterrent to applicants who could not afford to take up the position.

Congress acknowledges:

That changing this state of affairs would require a USI constitutional amendment.

Congress therefore mandates:

That the USI President investigates the possibility of providing part-time pay to the VP for Irish Language.

EMERGENCY MOTIONS

IRISH LANGUAGE

IL 19 – 1 Semester 1 Seachtain na Gaeilge

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress Notes:

The hard work and emphasis put into Seachtain na Gaeilge during Semester 2 of the Academic year.

Congress further Notes:

Due to the timing of Seachtain na Gaeilge and annual SU elections, these two sometimes clash for many MO's which can mean Seachtain na Gaeilge gets put to one side.

Congress Believes:

Seachtain na Gaeilge is an important national campaign that should also be delivered throughout the year.

Congress Mandates:

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to run a Semester 1 Seachtain na Gaeilge campaign, including a roadshow to highlight and celebrate our national language.

IL 19 – 2 Irish language: Use your Cúpla Focail

Proposed By NUI Galway Students' Union

CONGRESS COMMENDS: The great work done by the LÚ Don Ghaeilge this year with the focail an lae on social media, and how this has encouraged a more mainstream approach to the Irish language.

CONGRESS REGRETS:

Many people have Irish, but don't make use of the language.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The LU don Ghaeilge to roll out a 'Use your cupla focail' campaign

IL 19 – 3 Cearta Teanga / Language Rights

Rúin Ón Coiste Cultúrtha

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go bhfuil neart plé sna meáin faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Go mbíonn daoine ar gearán faoi easpa cearta teanga go minic, agus go raibh feachtas an-éifeachtach (#nílsécg, #faighdofada) eagraithe ar líne.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge tacú le feachais faoi na Cearta Teanga agus go gcaithfidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge dul i dteangmháil le hOifig an Coimisinéir Teanga chun nasc a chruthú leo.

Congress Notes

The constant media attention surrounding the Irish Language Act, and the upcoming Official Language Bill.

Congress Understands

There is regular cause for complaint due to the lack of language rights, with a very successful online campaign (#faighdofada, #nílsécg)

Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to support campaigns about language rights, and to contact the office of an Coimisinéir Teanga in order to build a connection.

IL 19 – 4 Na Táillí Gaeltachta / Gaeltacht Fees

Rúin Ón Coiste Cultúrtha

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go gcaithfidh na hábhair oidí tréimhse a chaitheamh sa Ghaeltacht chun clárú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Go raibh feachtas éifeachtach eagraithe in 2018 (#GaelFees)

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Go bhfuil an costas a bhaineann le na cúrsaí seo ró-ard agus go mbíonn na hábhair oidí faoi bhrú maidir leis an gcostas. Chomh maith leis sin bhí maoiniú ann roimh 2012 chun cabhrú leis an gcostas.

Mar sin, aisghaireann an Comhdháil

12 AA 6

15 GA 3

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge forbairt a dhéanamh ar an bhfeachtas #GaelFees in éinteacht le Conradh na Gaeilge agus go gcaithfidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge stocaireacht a dhéanamh faoin gcostas.

Congress notes

Student teachers must spend time in the Gaeltacht in order to register with the Teaching Council

Congress further notes

There was an effective campaign organised in 2018 (#GaelFees)

Congress understands

The cost of these courses is very high, putting student teachers under financial pressure. There was funding available for these fees before 2012.

Thus, Congress repeals

12 AA 6

15 GA 3

Therefore, Congress mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to continue lobbying on the Gaeltacht Fees and to develop the #GaelFees campaign further

IL 19 – 5 NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

Congress Notes

The formation of the NUS-USI Irish Language Task Force in 2018/2019

Congress Further Notes

The training opportunities provided to Irish language Activists in 2019

This motion thus repeals

14 G 4

Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to provide continued support for the NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce, member organisations and facilitate training when needed

IL 19 – 7 NUS-Cymru

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

An obair atá ar siúl sa Bhreatain Bheag chun na Cearta Teanga a chur chun cinn

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Go bhfuil NUS-Wales agus na Coláistí sa Bhreatain Bheag ag déanamh an-iarracht chun na Cearta Teanga a chur chun cinn

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge dul i dteangmháil le NUS-Wales, na coláistí sa Bhreatain Bheag, an Coimisinéir Teanga agus tuairisc a scríobh chun forbairt a dhéanamh ar scéim teanga AMLÉ

Congress Notes

The work taking place in Wales in order to promote Language Rights

Congress Further Notes

The hard work done by NUS-Wales and affiliated colleges in order to promote Language Rights

Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to contact NUS-Wales, affiliated colleges and the Language Commissioner, create a report on findings in order to develop the USI Language Scheme

2018 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.

2018 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 comhaltas 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.

2018 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 phointe 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 bliaintiúil.

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.

2018 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, 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.

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.

2018 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

2018 IL 6 : Inclusion of Irish in USI campaigns

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students' Union with amendments also moved by them

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:

That the Leas Uachtarán 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.

17 IL2 Irish Language Act

AITHNÍONN AN COMHDHÁIL

Na failí atá déanta ag an bhFeidhmeannas ó Thuaidh i leith an tAcht Teanga a gealladh sa bhliain 2006 mar chuid de Chomhaontú Chill Rìmhinn i gceangailt B.

CÁINEANN AN CHOMHDÁIL

Na failí atá déanta ag an bhFeidhmeannas ó Thuaidh agus na céimeanna atá glactha ag roinnt dá mbaill seasamh a thógaint in aghaidh an teanga in ainneoin go bhfuil siad ag dul i gcoinne an méad atá ó mhóramh an phobail.

SAINORDAÍONN AN CHOMHDÁIL

Don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge mar aon leis an gcuid eile den Bhord Oifigigh feachtasaíocht a dhéanamh ó Thuaidh le haghaidh Acht Teanga agus le dul i ngleic leis na failí atá déanta ag an bhFeidhmeannas i leith an tAcht Teanga a gealladh sa bhliain 2006 mar chuid de Chomhaontú Chill Rìmhinn i gceangailt B. Mar aon le comhoibriú le grúpaí eile ar nós Conradh na Gaeilge agus an Dream Dearg leis an sprioc seo a bhaint amach.

CONGRESS NOTES:

That the Executive did not fulfil the commitments made in Annex B of the St Andrews Agreements in 2006.

CONGRESS CONDEMNNS

That the commitments for a Language Act were not fulfilled and the steps taken by certain members of the executive to actively work against any furthering of the language, against the wishes of the majority of the population.

CONGRESS MANDATES

The LU don Ghaeilge and Officer Board campaign for a language act in Northern Ireland working with groups like Conradh na Gaeilge and an Dream Dearg to ensure that the populations Language rights do not continue to be violated. Also to ensure that all of the commitments made regarding the Irish Language in the St Andrews Agreement in 2006 are filled.

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

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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,

14 G 1 JUNIOR CERTIFICATE REVIEW

Congress notes:

The Education Minister, Ruairí Quinn, is currently reviewing the Junior Certificate as a means of examining pre-Leaving Certificate students. All subjects are currently being assessed, and new curricula being developed.

Congress also notes:

The inefficiency of the Irish Language curriculum in teaching students Irish, and in particular to students in Gaeltacht areas, who are forced to learn the language in the same way as those not fluent.

Congress mandates:

Officer Board, in particular the LU Gaeilge and the VP AAQA, to lobby the Minister, and his Department, to introduce a two stream system of Irish subjects:

A mandatory communicational stream, and an optional literary subject to cater for more advanced students.

14 G 2 IRISH LANGUAGE CAMPAIGNS

Congress notes:

The newly ratified memorandum of association between USI and Conradh na Gaeilge, which will not only strengthen the Irish Language campaigns run by the USI, but it will also ensure that USI will be a prominent stakeholder in Conradh na Gaeilge campaigns.

Congress mandates:

That the LU Gaeilge continue the Irish Language Rights campaign currently being rolled out at the moment.

14 G 4 MANDATE LU GAEILGE TO CONTACT NUS & NUS/USI TO BUILD A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP

Congress notes:

The beneficial aspects of a long-lasting relationship to be built between language officers of NUS Wales and NUS Scotland.

Congress mandates:

The LU Gaeilge to develop a relationship with the NUS Language Officers, with a view to developing a role for an NUS-USI Oifigeach na Gaeilge.

12 IL 1 SUPPORT OF TEACHING THROUGH IRISH

Congress recognises:

The special status of the Irish Language in the National University of Ireland, Galway and also the special recognition of the language in the USI.

Feictear don Chomhdháil seo:

Go bhfuil meath leanúnach ag tarlú bliain i ndiaidh bliana ar líon na n-ábhar a mhúintear trí Ghaeilge ar phríomh champas Ollscoil na hÉireann Gaillimh. Anuas air sin, tá imeallú fisiciúil agus tíreolaíochta ag tarlú don Ghaeilge, tá sí á brú amach go dtí campais an Acadaimh sa Ghaeltacht agus de réir a chéile tá sí le cluinstitín níos lú agus níos lú i hallaí léachta an phríomh champais. Cé go bhfuil líon mór scoláirí ag déanamh staidéir trí Ghaeilge sna campais Gaeltachta, is cúrsaí de chineál eile ar fad atá iontu siúd agus tá an teanga á ruaigeadh amach as na daonnachtaí agus na heolaíochtaí i gcampas chathair na Gaillimhe.

Congress opposes:

The move away from teaching through Irish on the main campus in NUIG over recent years, and furthermore the USI commits to supporting all campaign efforts to retain and restore the teaching of academic subjects through the Irish language.

Congress notes:

That under the 1929 University College, Galway Act NUIG has a special responsibility towards teaching in the native language. While it is no longer a requirement of the University to give priority to Irish speakers when recruiting academic staff, it is none the less required to support, promote and expand on the teaching of academic subjects through Irish.

Congress therefore mandates:

The USI Oifigeach na Gaeilge to campaign on this issue and to support the NUIG Irish language community and SU Oifigeach na Gaeilge in this campaign, within the next year.

Congress furthermore mandates:

The President to raise this concern on the board of the HEA within the next year.

CITIZENSHIP

EM 19 (CZN)– 5: Solidarity with School students - take action on climate change

Proposed by Maynooth Students' Union

Congress notes with concern:

A recent report issued by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), says the planet will reach the crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels by as early as 2030, precipitating the risk of extreme drought, wildfires, floods and food shortages for hundreds of millions of people.

A report published last year by Climate Action Network showed that Ireland rank second worst in Europe for tackling climate change. According to this report, Ireland is set to miss it's 2020 climate & renewable energy targets. Furthermore, Ireland is already off track to meet it's 2030 emissions target.

This trend extends to many other countries, which means we are set for a 3°C increase, put this is leaning more towards 4°C, which means the struggle to exist will become impossible for millions of people. Meanwhile, just 90 companies are responsible for 63% of all global emissions - it is these companies drive for profits which enables such environmental destruction.

Congress further notes:

Millions of school students all over the world took the lead on an international climate strike on March 15th in response to the lack of action taken by governments on this existential issue.

Congress recognises: Strike action is a necessary step to take in order to put sufficient pressure on our government and, more importantly, play an important role in building a global movement for the radical change needed to avert climate death.

Congress Mandates: USI to join in practical solidarity and take action on all global strike days called by secondary students in the future.

CZN 19 – 2 Irish Nationality and Citizenship

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Council notes:

In 2004, 79% of the public voted in favour of a constitutional amendment which would remove the automatic right to citizenship for children born in Ireland. The following was inserted into Bunreacht na hÉireann,

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, a person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, who does not have, at the time of the birth of that person, at least one parent who is an Irish citizen or entitled to be an Irish citizen is not entitled to Irish citizenship or nationality, unless provided for by law.

Council further notes:

That this constitutional amendment leaves many who were born here and who have been resident in Ireland throughout their lives, facing an uncertain legal future and in some cases, the threat of deportation.

Council notes with concern:

Nationality and citizenship has a huge impact on accessing education, considering the financial barriers facing those when classified as international students, although they were born in Ireland and have lived in the state since.

Council therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for provisions to be made by the Oireachtas for jus soli citizenship and to support bills brought through the Oireachtas which would improve access to education for those living in Ireland.

CZN 19 – 4 Deposit and return schemes

Proposed By NUI Galway SU

Congress notes with concern:

Ireland is failing to meet its 2020 carbon emission targets to combat climate change, and leaves itself open to large fines as a result.

Congress recognises:

Sustainability has been proven to be a massive student issue, this year the Student Movement was a leading force in Climate case Ireland, and SUs across the country are continuing work inside and outside their institutions on sustainability .

Congress commends:

Deposit and return schemes in many European countries. These schemes encourage people to recycle plastic in exchange for money.

Congress welcomes:

The Repack Machine in UCC allows recycling of plastic, while also raising money for UCCSU designated charities, and the positive impact this has had on their campus.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and USI President to lobby the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment to introduce a national deposit and return scheme, and to lobby for economic supports for the introduction of such schemes.

CZN 19 – 7 Referendum on the Extension of Presidential Voting Rights

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Congress notes

The upcoming referendum on the extending Presidential voting rights to Irish citizens living outside of the Republic of Ireland.

Congress recognises

That Irish citizens, regardless of their location, should have the right to vote for their nation's head of state.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to campaign in favour of extending Presidential voting rights to those living outside of the Republic of Ireland.

2018 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

2018 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.

2018 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.

2018 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

2018 CZN 5 : Places of Sanctuary

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students' Union with an amendment also moved by them.

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.

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.

2018 CZN 6 : International Student Visa

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.

16 CZN 2 Students' Unions Multicultural Festival

Proposed by DITSU

Congress Notes:

That Ireland has become far more diverse and multicultural in the last 20 years.

Congress Further Notes:

That this promotes recognition, understanding and acceptance of people who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Congress Further Notes:

The importance of celebrating the many different cultures which have had a positive impact on Irish Society.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

That the VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP for Campaigns, working with all the Equality Officers and/or Welfare Officers and the many different multicultural groups, institutions and organisations in Ireland

to run an annual Students' Unions Multicultural Festival which celebrates these many different cultures, and promotes the excellent opportunities available within all Students' Unions.

15 CZN 7 General Election Campaign

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

14 CZN 3 POLITICAL REFORM

Congress adopts:

As USI policy the 2014 'Free Our Voice' political reform document.

Congress mandates:

The USI President, USI Vice-President for Campaigns and the USI Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to use the 'Free Our Voice' policies to lobby the Government for political reform.

12 CZN 2 STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

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.

