

Comhairle Náisiúnta AMLÉ

National Council of the Union of Students in Ireland

December 2022

Miontuairiscí/Minutes

Comhairle Náisiúnta AMLÉ/National Council USI, NC 62.10

9th December 2022 – ATU and online

Chairperson: Jack Leahy

Deputy Chairperson: Sean Gordon Dalton

NAMES APPEARING ON THE ATTENDANCE LIST:

Please note: As this was a hybrid meeting, some of those joining online who were not on the call at the time that attendance was noted may not be on the list. If your name is not on the list and you were in attendance, please email seangordondalton@gmail.com to have the record corrected.

ATUSSU

X

CCSU

x

DCUSU

Christine O'Mahony, Nathan Murphy, Eoin Crossen

DKITSU

x

IADTSU

Crow Mullen, Micaela Dunne

MTUCSU

Isobel Kavanagh, Kelda Mac, Oisín Gavan

MTUKSU

x

MSU

X

NCADSU

X

NCISU

X

CMLOÉG/NUIGSU

Sai Gujulla, Joe Mee

QUBSU

X

SETUSU.CW

Mark Dunne, Oscar Murphy

SETUSU.WD

Patrick Curtain, Oscar Murphy, Bryan O'Mahony

STACSSU

X

TCDSU

Gabi Fullam, László Molnárfi

TUDSU

Saoirse Daly

TUSSU

Niall Naughton, Niamh Kennedy, Saoirse Mulvihill, Kyran Keogh, Alexander Ciszewicz, James Hadrett, Darcy Lawless

UCCSU

Asha Woodhouse

UUSU

x

Coiste Gnó

Clodagh McGivern, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Sarah Behan [online], Vice President for Welfare

Maeve Richardson, Vice President for Equality & Citizenship (Tánaiste)

Ross Boyd, Vice President for Campaigns

Waqar Ahmed, Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Hannah Brennan, Vice President for the Border, Midlands, and Western Region

Sierra Müller-Owens, Vice President for the Dublin Region

Orlagh ní Choistealbha, Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge

Caoimhe Walsh, Vice President for the Southern Region

Apologies

Beth O'Reilly, USI President

1. Minutes / Miontuairiscí

The minutes of the previous meeting which occurred at NCI were approved.

2. Matters Arising / Nithe ag Éirí Astu

None.

3. Elections

a. Committee to review the constitution

The Chair suggests accepting nominations by acclamation as there are 14 nominations for 14 positions. This is agreed to.

4. Executive Team Reports / Tuairiscí an Choiste Ghnó

Vice President for Equality & Citizenship delivered the report on behalf of the USI President. There were no questions for the Vice President to put to the President.

There are no questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs takes their report as read.

There were no questions for the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs.

The Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge takes their report as read.

There were no questions for the Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge.

The Vice President for the Southern Region takes their report as read. There were no questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region takes the majority of their report as read, further noting a recent meeting with the Minister for Housing. The Minister seemed to be receptive, and emphasised the balance between renters' and homeowners' rights.

Questions:

UCCSU ask about the recent survey on student digs.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for the Dublin Region takes their report as read.

Questions:

UCCSU enquire about in-person training.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Campaigns takes their report as read.

Questions:

DCUSU ask:

What steps are being taken to build on the recent Walk Out?

It is noted that many campus visits are recorded in the Vice President's report, however no expenses were claimed. The Vice President is encouraged to claim their expenses.

Is the Vice President speaking to students as well as SU officers on these campus visits? (Yes)

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Welfare will send out posters for the STI testing campaign asap. They are please to see the SUs being proactive in sharing the information. The Vice President also notes that they were on medical leave for two weeks.

There were no questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is moving the placement campaign to semester 2. Questions have been prepared for the survey, so everyone is encouraged to review them and give feedback. The Vice President also notes that Ossian from InStep is gone for a year. They take the rest of their report as read.

Questions:

DCUSU thank the Vice-President for running the Academic Integrity campaign, and ask if there is more campaigns coming?

The Vice President is happy to run more campaigns if that is desired.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship notes that Pink Training has returned to in-person for the first time since before the pandemic. They note that the recent survey results on student-digs were presented to the Minister for Housing. The Vice President thanks MOs for their participation.

A motion to approve the attendance of the USI General Manager is approved unanimously.

The Chair notes that before beginning item 4 on the CN agenda that they have ruled two motions as being out of order, as they would repeal policies passed at Congress and CN does not have the power to do so. (The motions in question being the 'Financial needs of non-EU students' and the 'Postgraduate Researchers' Rights charter'.)

TCDSU note that such motions can be passed by a supermajority in an emergency. The Chair does not believe that the present circumstances represent an emergency.

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs is happy to amend the reference to repealing the motion passed at congress, and believes that waiting until March wastes time as the review will finish in February. The Chair notes that a motion can only be amended during discussion on the motion, and a motion cannot be discussed if it is ruled to be out of order.

TCDSU characterise this as a bureaucratic hinderance.

UCCSU argue that, based on the points made by the VP for Postgraduate Affairs, the present circumstances do represent an emergency.

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs raises a procedural motion to challenge the Chair's ruling. The Chair vacates their role overseeing the proceeding vote and is replaced by the Deputy Chair.

The motion to challenge the chairs ruling is carried, 11 votes to 5.

The Chair resumes their role for the remainder of the CN.

4. Items for Approval / Le Socrú

a. Appointment of Comhdháil Director [USI Coiste Gnó]

- USI CG nominate the USI General Manager as Comhdháil Director.
- IADTSU note their appreciation that previous concerns raised were queried.

b. Motion on BDS [TCDSU]

- TCDSU explain motion and encourage all to vote in favour.
- The VP for Dublin notes a BDS motion was raised at Congress but did not pass. However, this motion is stronger and more actionable.
- TUD raise a motion 9A, seconded by DCU. The 9A is approved and the motion passes.

c. Financial needs of non-EU students motion

- The motion is moved to the next CN.

d. Operation Transformation motion

- T USSU discuss the motion and encourage all to vote in favour. The VP for Equality and Citizenship also encourages MOs to support the motion.
- The motion is approved.

e. Government Financial Aid for students who do not qualify for the Free Fees initiative

- TUDSU propose the motion. IADTSU encourage MOs to support it.
- The motion is approved.

f. Motion on EU employment law

- The VP for Dublin proposes the motion.
- MTUKSU ask about the impacts on Welfare Officers and work hours.
- IADTSU ask about the applicability to Congress
- The VP for Academic Affairs notes that overtime must still be signed off on.
- The motion is approved.

g. Motion on USI Postgraduate Researcher's Rights Charter

- The VP for Postgraduate Affairs reads the motion.
- TUDSU propose a motion 9C to amend the motion to remove a reference to repeal, seconded by IADTSU. The 9A is approved.
- The VP for Postgraduate Affairs summates.
- The motion is approved.

5. Items for Discussion / Le Plé

a. Financial Update [USI GM]

The GM notes that 42% of the budget was used by November, however only 31% of affiliation fees are in at the moment. All fees must be paid 7 days before Congress. The GM offers to help MOs to secure the funding that they are due from their Universities.

The GM notes that one of the notable expenses is the rising cost of paper, which has doubled every two months for the last two years. The cost of living crisis is impacting supplies and as a result, overall expenditure is up. The prospective cost of congress is quite high.

b. Comhdháil Update [USI GM]

The GM outlines the USI requirements for Comhdháil. The spec was sent to a hotel marketing group who tender it to hotels. Some hotels had caveats, many of the cheaper hotels are unavailable due to the refugee crisis. No hotel could provide accommodation for the 3rd to 6th of April. Timeline issues are being discussed.

c. Digs Survey [CG AMLÉ Hannah Brennan]

The VP for BMW notes that no legislation or tenant protections currently exist for students living in digs. This was discussed in the recent meeting with the Housing Minister.

The VP for Welfare notes that PBP have announced they will table a motion of no confidence in the Housing Minister.

d. Strategy for USI direct voting in elections [TCDSU & UCCSU]

UCCSU note that someone can be elected to the Coiste Gnó without winning the popular votes of students as many MOs vote by block, similar to Trump winning the 2016 Electoral College despite losing the popular vote. A new system could involve links to allow students to vote, with block voting made

proportional. Other options would include USI having its own database of students to organise votes.

TCDSU say that proportional voting blocks more closely resemble '1 person, 1 vote'.

NUGSU believe that MOs should have the autonomy to choose their own voting system. UCCSU notes that this is an administrative matter, not a dictated one.

DCUSU note that this could be perceived as the USI dictating how MOs operate. It is desirable to have the most representative voting system, but they hold reservations about telling MOs what to do.

UCCSU argue that hustings would not be required on every campus, and that a single, online hustings should suffice. They note that while concerns have been flagged, MOs seem broadly supportive of making USI elections more representative. UCCSU and TCDSU note the importance of starting this conversation and will speak to other MOs about it.

e. ESU Board Meeting – Prague [USI VP AA & VP Dublin]

The VP for academic affairs provides an update on the recent ESU Board Meeting.

6. Items for Information / Pointí Eolais

IADTSU note their frustration with the 1-2 minutes of confusion today during VOTING. While bearing no ill-will towards the chair, they note that the Chair recusing themselves from the process came as a surprise and led to a lot of confusion. A crash course on procedures for people would be useful as they believe the lack of clarity isn't fair to first time officers.

7. A.O.B. / A.G.E.

IADTSU flag that the snapchat group is a quick way to communicate, but MOs seem to be too reliant on phones for communication. This raises problems when CG officers are on leave and uncontactable. However, it is important not to tag CG about work related matters in personal chats as they deserve a break.