

**Comhairle Náisiúnta AMLÉ**  
*National Council of the Union of Students in Ireland*  
August 2022

**Miontuairiscí/Minutes**

**Comhairle Náisiúnta AMLÉ/National Council USI, NC 62.10**  
**19<sup>th</sup> August 2022 – CMLOÉG/NUIGSU and online**

**Acting Chairperson: Marie Lyons**

**Acting Deputy Chairperson: Kevin McStravock**

**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 [president@usi.ie](mailto:president@usi.ie) to have the record corrected.*

**ATUSSU**

Faye Woods, Dáire Martin, Keelan Kenroy

**CCSU**

Jacky Casserly, William Rainsford

**DCUSU**

Eoin Crossen, Christine O'Mahony, Thomas O'Dowd, Nathan Murphy, Colette Murphy

**DKITSU**

Niamh Fallon

**IADTSU**

Eoin Hicks Smyth, Micaela Dunne

**MTUCSU**

Isobel Kavanagh, Oisín Gahan

**MTUKSU**

Stephen Fogarty, Chris Clifford

**MSU**

Niall Daly [online], Alex Balfe [online]

**NCADSU**

Luje Pendlebury, Saorla Doyle

**NCISU**

Eimear Annesley

**CMLOÉG/NUIGSU**

Imogen O'Flaherty Falconer [online]

**QUBSU**

Beth Elder, Emma Murphy

**SETUSU.CW**

Mark Dunne, Wiktoria Szeremeta, Liam Crowley

**SETUSU.WD**

Bryan O'Mahony

**STACSSU**

Kim Austin

**TCDSU**

Zöe Cummins, László Molnárfi [online]

**TUDSU**

Louise Kavanagh, Adam Clarke, Ian Kelly, James Curry, Saoirse Daly

**TUSSU**

Niamh Kennedy, Saoirse Mulvihill, Kevin Pakenham, Niall Naughton, James Hadnett

**UCCSU**

Sinéad Roche, Sam Galvin, Stephen O'Riordan

**UUSU**

Grace Boyle, Dónall Ó hÉigeartaigh, Ethan Davies, Finola Quigg, Robert Millar, Chaudhary Hamza Riaz

**Coiste Gnó**

Beth O'Reilly, President

Clodagh McGivern, Vice President for Academic Affairs

Sarah Behan, Vice President for Welfare

Maeve Richardson, Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

Ross Boyd, Vice President for Campaigns

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

Caoimhe Walsh, Vice President for the Southern Region

Sierra Müller-Owens, Vice President for the Dublin Region

Waqar Ahmed [online], Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Róisín Nic Lochlainn [online], Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge

**Apologies**

NUS-USI, President, Chloe Ferguson

**Preliminary minutes:**

The meeting agreed to the attendance of the USI General Manager to the meeting, and to the appointment of an Acting Chairperson and Acting Deputy Chairperson for the meeting.

## **1. Elections/Toghcháin**

### **a. Election of the Chair of Comhairle Náisiúnta**

One candidate put themselves forward for the role of Chair:  
Jack Leahy

After exceeding the quota on the first count, Jack Leahy was duly elected Chair.

### **b. Election of the Deputy Chair of Comhairle Náisiúnta**

One candidate put themselves forward for the role of Deputy Chair:  
Sean Gordon Dalton

After exceeding the quota on the first count, Sean Gordon Dalton was duly elected Deputy Chair.

### **c. Election of the USI Steering Committee**

6 candidates put themselves forward for 10 positions on the USI Steering Committee:

Ryan Carey  
Barry Clohessy  
Caoimhe Cronin  
Aaron Frahill  
Caeilann Kerrigan  
Ciara Murphy

After exceeding the quota, all of the candidates were duly elected to the Steering Committee.

### **d. Election of the Coiste Cultúrtha**

The following candidates put themselves forward for an Coiste Cultúrtha:

Alex Balfe (MSU)  
Sam Ó Gealbhain (UCCSU)  
Katie Halpin Hill (UCCSU)  
Jacky Casserly (CCSU)  
Barry Ó Siochrú (CMLOÉG)  
Séan Ó Gaibhín (CMLOÉG)  
Rhiannon Nic Gabhainn (CMLOÉG)  
Máirtín Mac Gabhainn (CMLOÉG)  
Kelda McManus (MTU Cork)  
Stephen Fogarty (MTU Kerry)  
Bryan O'Mahony (SETUSU Waterford)  
Caoimhe Molloy (TCDSU)  
Aodhán Mac Íosóg (TCDSU)  
Christine O'Mahony (DCUSU)  
Abbie Nulty (TUDSU)

Sahra Heibe (IADTSU)  
Storm Eaton (QUBSU)  
Emer Counihan (STACSSU)

All of the candidates were declared elected.

## **2. Lunch Break [13:00]**

## **3. Minutes / Miontuairiscí**

The minutes of the meeting which occurred at CMLOÉG/NUIG were proposed by IADTSU and seconded by UCCSU.

TCDSU expressed concern about the environment which was created within the previous meeting, adding that they objected to the behaviour of members of the Coiste Gnó and the previous Chairperson of the Comhairle Náisiunta. They asked that these concerns be reflected in the minutes.

The President apologised for the atmosphere created at the previous meeting and has discussed with Presidents' Working Group how changes can be made to ensure that people are able to engage comfortably within the meeting environment going forward.

The President proposed deferring the approval of minutes to the next meeting to enable the necessary changes to be made which was approved without objection.

## **4. Matters Arising / Nithe ag Éirí Astu**

None.

## **5. Executive Team Reports / Tuairiscí an Choiste Ghnó**

The NUS-USI President could not attend the meeting. Questions for the NUS-USI President were directed to the USI President.

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

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The Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge had nothing to add to their report. There were no questions for the Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge.

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The Vice President for the Dublin Region thanked all members in the Dublin region who have invited them to their campus and reminded members to send an invite if they wished for the the Vice President to visit their campus.

TUDSU asked for an update on the Personal Development Student Training. The Vice President for the Dublin Region has met with the Vice President for Welfare and USI Mental Health Manager who will be taking this policy forward, supported by the Regional Vice Presidents.

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The Vice President for the Southern Region had nothing to add to their report. There were no questions for the Vice President.

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

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The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship thanked members for their engagement thus far on the various elements of her role and invited other members to reach out if there any elements of the Equality & Citizenship brief they would like to discuss.

There were no questions for the Vice President.

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The Vice President for Campaigns thanked the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship for their support with the Pre-Budget Submission document.

TUSSU asked around the Vice President's plans to collaborate with the Welfare officer on campaigns around spiking. The Vice President for Campaigns will be meeting with Give Us The Night in the coming weeks and will work with the Vice President for Welfare to incorporate spiking into nightlife related campaigns.

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The Vice President for Welfare had nothing to add to their report.

TUDSU asked if there were any updates on PReP accessibility. The Vice President for Welfare is working on campaign plans for World Sexual Health Day and will follow up on this point.

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The Vice President for Academic Affairs had nothing to add to their report.

SETUSU CW thanked the Vice President for Academic Affairs for agreeing to chair their Class Rep Council.

TCDSU asked the Vice President for Academic Affairs for more information about her meeting with IFUT regarding hybrid learning, and for information on key issues identified by IFUT with hybrid learning. The Vice President said they were receptive to working on a policy together, and to identify best practices for institutions to follow, and they hope to progress this in the coming months.

TUDSU asked the Vice President for Academic Affairs about the expenses relating to their mobile phone. The Vice President for Academic Affairs explained that these purchases were necessary upon beginning the role and that the accessories would remain with their phone.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs informed members about an upcoming panel discussion on academic integrity that is being co-organised with the National Academic Integrity Network and encouraged all members to engage with this event.

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The President had nothing to add to their report.

TCDSU asked for more information about the meeting of the trilateral group, and whether universal suffrage had been discussed. The President explained that the trilateral meeting was a short crossover meeting to make introductions to the new NUS President and NUS-USI President. The next meeting of the trilateral will take place in September, and the President intends to raise this at the meeting.

TCDSU asked for further information on the HEA Board Meeting. The President attended with the former President as an observer and did not have speaking or voting rights. The meeting discussed a number of issues such as accommodation and approved committee membership.

TCDSU also asked about the outcome of the meeting with the European Students' Unions regarding the HEA Bill. The President provided an overview of the situation in Ireland, and asked for further information regarding the situation in other European countries. ESU have agreed to follow up with further information. The President is also happy to incorporate the HEA Bill into the forthcoming lobbying day. The President will also raise this issue with Minister Simon Harris when the Coiste Gnó meet with him in the coming weeks.

TUDSU asked for an update on the IRFU Statement. The President contacted the IRFU and Student Sport Ireland to check whether the IRFU decision would have an impact on student sport. The President has not yet received a reply. The President understands that the decision will have an impact on the rules for third-level sport but is awaiting clarification from Student Sport Ireland.

TUDSU asked around plans to upload the minutes from Comhairle Náisiúnta. The President confirmed that they plan to make minutes and agendas available via the website and are currently working on this.

## **6. Items for Agreement / Le Socrú**

- a. Motion to Mandate a National Student Walk-out over the Accommodation Crisis [UCCSU]

The motion: Motion to Mandate a National Student Walk-out over the Accommodation Crisis was proposed by UCCSU and seconded by TCDSU and was passed without objection.

### *Motion to Mandate a National Student Walk-out over the Accommodation Crisis*

#### **Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:**

The ongoing accommodation/cost of living crisis and its effect on students. This crisis creates further barriers to education.

#### **Comhairle Náisiúnta mandates:**

The VP for Campaigns to coordinate a national student walk-out for the 13th of October, in conjunction with a press statement to be released at the same time.

## **b. Motion in Support of UCU and IFUT Industrial Action [UCCSU]**

The motion: Motion in Support of UCU and IFUT Industrial Action was proposed by UCCSU and seconded by the USI President.

A procedural motion 9C was proposed by UCCSU and seconded by TUDSU. The procedural motion 9C was passed without objection.

The motion as amended was passed without objection.

### *Motion in Support of UCU and IFUT Industrial Action*

#### **Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:**

The effect the cost of living crisis is having on workers in the Higher Education sector in Ireland.

#### **Comhairle Náisiúnta further notes:**

Working conditions in HE are the learning conditions for our members.

#### **Comhairle Náisiúnta further notes:**

The steps teaching unions for third level have taken towards industrial action. This includes the launch of the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) "UCU Rising" campaign, calling for UCU members to support a ballot for industrial action to secure concessions on casualisation, pension entitlements, and pay, amongst other considerations. The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) have also recently announced their intention to ballot members in September if an agreement on pay increases is not secured.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta further resolves:**

To publicly support industrial action taken by members of the UCU and IFUT in the Higher Education sector to improve their pay and conditions. To this affect Comhairle mandates that the Coiste Gnó release a public statement in support of the UCU Rising campaign and any industrial action of theirs or IFUT's members.

c. [Motion to Support DADA Campaign](#) [NCADSU]

The motion: Motion to Support DADA Campaign was proposed by NCADSU and seconded by UCCSU and was passed without objection.

*Motion to Support DADA Campaign*

**Comhairle Náisiúnta notes:**

Disabled artists and disabled academics face unnecessary and restricting barriers while trying to establish an independent practice that, compounded with their disabilities, punish them for their efforts and prevent them from working autonomously.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta also notes:**

The Disabled Artist & Disabled Academics (DADA) Campaign has made good strides in making the voices of disabled artists and academics heard, and is fighting for the right to be self-employed for all people with disabilities.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta believes:**

Through support for DADA, employment rights for disabled people can be improved and, by extension, the wellbeing of disabled student artists and future self-employed disabled workers will be improved.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta therefore mandates:**

USI to support the DADA Campaign's Pre-Budget 2023 Submission by adding it to their own Budget 2023 Submission, and for the VP for Equality & Citizenship to support DADA Campaign in their future endeavours to further the rights of disabled people by promoting their work on social media, and engaging with them as necessary to further common goals.

d. [Trans Equality Together Coalition](#) [USI Coiste Gnó]

The motion: Trans Equality Together Coalition was proposed by the USI Coiste Gnó and seconded by UCCSU and was passed without objection.

*Trans Equality Together Coalition*

**Comhairle Náisiúnta Notes:**

Trans and non-binary people face many barriers in Ireland in the areas of discrimination, harassment and healthcare. Students' Unions have been advocates for the community leading on implementation of gender neutral toilets and many SUs joining the Irish Trans Writers Union boycott of the Irish Times newspaper.



**Comhairle Náisiúnta Notes with regret:**

The Trans and Nonbinary community have been under intense unwarranted media attention as well being targeted by recent developments in sporting organisation.

**Comhairle Náisiúnta Therefore Mandates:**

The Union of Students in Ireland to join the Trans Equality Together coalition led by BelongTo, LGBT Ireland and TENI (Trans Equality Network Ireland)

**Comhairle Náisiúnta Further Mandates:**

The VP for Equality & Citizenship and VP for Welfare to attend media training run by Trans Equality Together and/or TENI in order to be able to represent trans issues in the most update to date and correct way possible.

**7. Items for Discussion / Le Plé**

a. Financial Update [General Manager]

The USI General Manager presented an interim financial report up to the end of July 2022 which included updates on headings such as affiliation fee incomes, general operation costs and expenditure synopsis.

The USI General Manager noted that the budget is subject to approval by the governance committee, adding that the budget as presented is currently provisional.

The General Manager noted the additional costs being incurred by USI due to the rising cost of living which has affected catering and accommodation costs associated with SUT and SUT+, and is likely to affect future events.

There were no questions.

**8. Items for Information / Pointí Eolais**

a. Media Report Update [Uachtarán / President]

The President noted that the Media Report will be distributed quarterly to allow for greater comparability of media mentions.

b. Pre-Budget Submission [Uachtarán / President]

The President thanked the Vice President for Campaigns and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship for their work on the pre-budget submission and added that this has now been made available to USI members.

A full designed version will be made available for the lobby day.

c. Campaigns Directory [Leas Uachtarán um Feachtais / Vice President for Campaigns]

The Vice President for Campaigns noted that the Campaigns Directory is now available to USI members.

**9. A.O.B. / A.G.E.**

The Vice President for Welfare noted that drug testing will be taking place at Electric Picnic this year and expects information to be available for future drug harm reduction campaigns stemming from them.

IADTSU asked the Coiste Gnó around plans for improving the accessibility of USI events. The USI President thanked IADTSU for their feedback and confirmed that the Coiste Gnó will do their best to ensure that all relevant accommodations are met for future events, and intends to introduce an accessibility audit for events going forward. The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship added that they are mandated to have accessibility audits for specific events, and hopes to use this policy to support member organisations in hosting their own events.

An Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge informed CN that they have handed in their resignation and hope to leave at the beginning of October. They hope to be available for all previously agreed Freshers events.

DCUSU thanked the Acting Chair and Deputy Chair for stepping in for the meeting.

IADTSU asked the Coiste Gnó around the processes in place to ensure that all dietary requirements are met at USI events.

DCUSU commended the USI Coiste Gnó for facilitating a non-alcoholic event. The USI President thanked UUSU for facilitating this event and for all of their support in hosting SUT+.

UUSU apologised for the dietary experience of certain delegates and will address this with the catering provider for any future events they host. UUSU further thanked the Coiste Gnó for giving them the opportunity to host this event.

The USI President closed the meeting and thanked all members for their engagement. They will meet with the new Chair and Deputy Chair to discuss dates for future CN meetings and with Presidents on potential locations for future meetings, and will revert back to members with dates.