

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

4th November 2022 – NCI 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

Jacky Casserly

DCUSU

Eoin Crossen, Thomas O'Dowd, Colette Murphy

DKITSU

X

IADTSU

Crow Mullen, Eoin Hicks Smyth

MTUCSU

Kelda MacManus

MTUKSU

Stephen Fogarty, Pa McElligot, Chris Clifford

MSU

X

NCADSU

Luje

NCISU

Eimear Annesley, Cristian Balint, Jennifer Treadwell

CMLOÉG/NUIGSU

Sai Gujulla, Imogen O'Flaherty Falconer, Joe Mee

QUBSU

X

SETUSU.CW

Mark Dunne, Oscar Murphy

SETUSU.WD

Alicia Lewandowska, Patrick Curtain

STACSSU

X

TCDSU

Zoe Cummins, László Molnárfi

TUDSU

James Currey, Saoirse Paly, Ian Kelly

TUSSU

Kevin Pakenham, Darcy Lawless

UCCSU

Sam Galvin, Asha Woodhouse

UUSU

Finola Quigg, Ellen Davey, Robert Miller, Rebecca Allen, Grace Boyle, Chaudhary Hamza Riaz

Coiste Gnó

Beth O'Reilly, President

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

Chloe Ferguson, President NUS USI

Apologies

Caoimhe Walsh, Vice President for the Southern Region

1. Minutes / Miontuairiscí

The minutes of the meeting which occurred at SETU/WD were proposed by CG and seconded by TUDSU.

The minutes were approved.

2. Matters Arising / Nithe ag Éirí Astu

None.

3. Executive Team Reports / Tuairiscí an Choiste Ghnó

NU USI President, taking report as read and notes the ongoing work surrounding cost of living, rent freeze – recent wins include 40% decrease in fees, increase in availability of postgrad loans, dedication from Economy Dept to put more funding into education - potentially making higher ed free.

The President briefly discusses an external review being conducted to improve quality control of higher education in Northern Ireland, the recent Trilateral meeting, and upcoming events in December to mark the 50th anniversary of NU USI.

Questions:

TUDSU asks about cross border student mobility. NU USI President has been making some representations on this issue, but recent focus has been on cost of living.

UUSU thanks NU USI for their work, noting the difficulty of lobbying without a government in Stormont.

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs notes the post grad group has been formed to examine role of post grad students in research and educational quality control. In 2 months, SUs will be getting a report on how postgrad representations currently operate. Post grad committee charter is a live document. The funding review is a national review, and the VP notes regional variations in funding and trying to meet the gaps. There were no questions for the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs.

The Leas-Uachtarán don Gaeilge is focusing on Cumann Gaelachs on campuses and Irish language signage. Working on partnership with Conradh na Gaeilge.

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

The USI President delivered the report on behalf of the Vice President for the Southern Region, who had nothing to add to their report. There were no questions for the President to put to the Vice President.

The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region had nothing to add to their report. They noted that they have included their campuses visits, and that their expenses would go up next month as they have not been claiming fuel expenses to date.

Questions:

Thanks were offered by T USSU

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for the Dublin Region was on leave recently and hasn't done many campus visits in the past month. They note that in the last few days, they are getting FOI requests back, which is not in their report. An update will be provided at the next CN. The USI trip to Brussels was also not in the report and will be included in the next one.

Questions:

IADTSU asks about a recent meeting with Minister Simon Harris. The VP has an update on this that they will deliver later in the meeting.

TCDSU asks if the FOIs mentioned were related to war investment, and if the VP could upload them to the FOI drive. The VP notes they were looking at a range of FOIs including, war, Israel, and fossil fuels.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship thanked members for their engagement on campus visits. Recent work has surrounded international students, recently sent a letter to request a meeting with Minister Darragh O'Brien to meet with SU presidents.

Questions:

TCDSU offers thanks to the Vice President for the class rep training presentation.

TUDSU asks about migrant education access policy. The VP does not have an update at this time. It will be a priority over the coming month.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Campaigns thanked all who helped with the student walkout. They thanked the Campaigns Committee for recent feedback and noted that they are currently looking to improve relationship with trade unions.

There were no questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Welfare notes the STI testing kits are available online to order in the south. No posters are not available yet. Will be free once released. The VP flagged that women's aid are engaging with USI on campaign partnerships. The working group will work on a document on the impacts of the #gainweight campaign.

Questions:

DCUSU offer their thanks to the Vice President.

IADTSU offer their thanks to the Vice President for checking in on their sabbats.

TUDSU asks if there are updates on financial supports for international students. The VP does not have an update at this time.

TCDSU asks about a meeting on October 7th re SUSI.

UCCSU asks about anti-spiking campaign. The VP explains that the campaign will be stalled until more funding is received.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is taking report as read.

Questions:

TUDSU asks about updates on hidden course costs. The VP is working on the survey at the moment, to come in semester 2. It will be hashed out in Academic affairs working group

TCDSU offer their thanks for attending class rep training.

TUDSU offer their thanks for class rep training.

NCISU offer their thanks for walk out and class rep training.

TCDSU asks about FOI request referred to in VP report. The requests relate to creation of new course placements and resources.

TCDSU ask about template for cooperation with trade unions. VP will write a policy on recording lectures for MOs.

DCUSU asks about temperature of response to student surveys. VP explains there is little movement on sharing data.

TCDSU asks about the recent meeting with Minister Simon Harris.

There were no other questions for the Vice President.

The President explains they were on medical leave and the Tánaiste wrote their report. The President notes the positive feedback on the budget, and the recent meeting with Simon Harris. No expenses to claim for this month.

Questions:

IADTSU asks about the report the president is doing on the salaries of sabbatical officers. The President did not include a question on where SU sabbats were from, so the survey is being restarted and sent to presidents tonight, so data is not skewed.

TCDSU apologies for the late invitation to the walkout and offers thanks to the President for attending the walkout at Trinity.

Regarding a question on the potentiality of a 'Student Union Bill', the President notes that it seems unlikely to happen based off a previous meeting with Minister Simon Harris.

TCDSU note TCDSU passed a motion at last Council mandating the union to campaign for universal suffrage for USI elections, and ask if this was raised at the Trilateral meeting. The President confirms that it was, and that changes to voting structures will be examined by the constitutional review committee

MTKSU ask about moving CN to a Thursday. The president notes the majority voted for Thursday/Friday sessions.

4. Items for Approval / Le Socrú

a. Motion to Abolish Non-Disclosure Agreements in Third-Level Institutions in the Cases of Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination [TUDSU]

TUDSU present their motion and note that NDIs aren't shared with third parties which puts students in danger as abusers can move to different colleges.

The VP for Welfare supports this and notes that Simon Harris said NDAs shouldn't be used.

The NUS USI President will help with this campaign.

The motion is passed unanimously.

b. Money Mule Awareness Campaign [TUDSU]

TUDSU present their motion and explain what money mules are, and the importance of raising awareness.

NUGSU notes their support and mentions pyramid schemes and the potential to link the campaigns.

The Tánaiste urges everyone to vote in favour and notes recent engagement with the Garda Inspectorate on the matter.

The motion was passed unanimously

5. Items for Discussion / Le Plé

a. Financial Update [USI President]

- Presented. Notes the confidential nature of the info, questions to the President or the GM emails. Expenses are higher due to inflation. Some events are poised to go over budget. Affiliation fees are on track. Once a proposal is written the 100k for the drugs campaign can be used and noted as other income. Expenses are low, but more international travel is expected. Travel may have to be cut to reserve funds, or possibly tap the unspent money from last year.

TCDSU ask will MOs have to spend more on fees to attend congress. The president notes this is possible and has been discussed

ATU Sligo asks about precautions USI is taking to prevent a budget deficit. President notes specific expenses this year which won't apply next year.

b. Constitutional Referendum Updates [USI VP Dublin]

- Presented. The VP notes that this is their area of interest. They are hoping to have a two-level assessment, focus groups with students, PTOs, and class reps. Also to create a group that is more focused on sabbatical officers. This would take the thoughts of, and give foundational knowledge to the groups to carry out the work.

TCDSU asks for clarification.

6. Items for Information / Pointí Eolais

a. Meeting with Minister Simon Harris [USI VP Dublin]

Explains Minister's answer to the question of gov funded accommodation on campus and how it will stay affordable. He acknowledges there is a housing crisis, but affordability cannot be defined and there are people who can afford this accommodation already. This answer suggests to the VP that we likely won't see a decrease in campus accommodation costs. The meeting was not formally minuted, but informal notes were taken.

b. Media Report Q1 22/23 [USI President]

Monthly media reports have been switched to quarterly. The report was compiled by the PR and Comms manager and is attached to the Clár for CN's review.

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

MSU thanks the VP for BMW for supporting MSU in the walk out.

IADTSU asks if Congress is confirmed for late march. The President notes a date has not yet been confirmed but will be once the USI find a hotel. Dates are based around NU USI and USI UK dates, so they don't clash.

NUGSU suggests setting the dates after sabbatical elections so new officers can attend congress. The President will raise this with the GM.

MTUKSU notes that campaign emails often don't give SUs much time to organise travel. The VP for Equality and Citizenship apologises and notes that MO emails often go to spam which can lead to delays. The VP suggest following up with text messages. The VP for BMW concurs.

IADTSU re contact the Coiste Gnó notes sometimes attempts to contact go unanswered and asks for the best way to contact if in an emergency. CG say to call them.

NUGSU note they are currently building more campus accommodation, and affordability was key to the plans, but affordability was not defined. Discussion needs to be held at the start to define it.

NCADSU ask if the USI could look into defining affordability, for example as spending 33% of minimum wage a month on rent. The president will work on this with the salary survey.

NUGSU have discussed benchmarking it against SUSI payments.

UUSU notes low-cost rents are much higher for international students and would like USI to review the fee structure for international students specifically. The VP for Post Graduate Affairs notes the lack of standards and procedure for international post grads.

The President thanks NCI SU for hosting this CN.