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# Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

### 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 MandatesThe 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-campuses. Multiple campuses are important in delivering education to regional communities.

##### Congress further notes

That in setting up multi-campuses there was additional funding provided. That funding has since stopped, giving no help to colleges to support the running of the many satailte 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 quality 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.

### 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 routeon 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.

# WELFARE

### 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-assiocated 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.

### 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.

### 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

# EQUALITY

### 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 &amp; 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 harrassment, 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 (NWCI) in their project work nationally to end sexual violence and harassment at third level.

### 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 in 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.

### 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.

# National Affairs

### 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 forbad 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

### 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.

### 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 leibhéil 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.

### 11 NA 3 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 to 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.

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

### 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.

### 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

### 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 consolation 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.

### 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.

### 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.

# ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

### 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

### 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 Languag

# IRISH LANGUAGE

## 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 bhFeidhmeanas 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 bhFeidhmeanas i leith an tAcht Teanga a gealladh sa bhliain 2006 mar chuid de Chomhaontú Chill Rìmhinn i gceangailt B. Mar aon le comhoibriú le grupaí 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 condemns

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.

### 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 buy 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.

# CITIZENSHIP

### 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.