



USI VP Academic Affairs/ Leas-Uachtarán do Chúrsaí Acadúla

This document provides a brief overview of the key aspects of the Vice President for Academic Affairs role. The day-to-day functions of any elected role will change in line with the key priorities at the time, and the policies which the role is mandated to carry out which change from year to year in line with the Annual Congress:

Key Elements of the Role

- **Policy Development and Analysis**

A core element of the VPAA's role is conducting policy analysis on a range of relevant issues. This includes creating policy briefings that outline key policy areas e.g. COVID-19 Mitigations and developing USI's policies in certain areas e.g. Digital & Distance Learning Paper.

- **Training and Support**

During the summer months, alongside the rest of the Executive Team you will provide training to SU officers on key aspects of the education role such as SUSI, Academic Integrity and NStEP. Throughout the year, you will meet with SU officers on a regular basis throughout the Academic Affairs Working Group and provide support with a range of local issues that they are tackling.

- **Committee Representation**

As outlined in the 'Boards and Committees' section below, the VPAA represents USI on a range of Boards and Committees within the sector. They play an important role in providing a student perspective on the work of sector agencies and organisations and contributing to the development of new projects and initiatives.

- **Campaigns and Events**

Alongside the above, the VPAA is responsible for carrying out campaigns in line with USI mandates. These are outlined below under 'Campaigns and Events'. Some of these may change from year to year as mandates expire, and new mandates are passed by USI Congress. You might also take on new campaigns that you are not specifically mandated to lead on. As you're rolling out campaigns, you'll work closely with the VP Campaigns, the PR & Comms Manager and other members of the USI Executive Team.

- **International Affairs**

As VPAA, you are the USI Lead on International Affairs, and will represent the organisation within the European Students' Union. This will entail attendance at European Student Conventions and Board Meetings which normally take place twice per year (so four events in total). As USI lead, you will be responsible for coordinating a delegation for each event and reporting back to National Council on the outcomes of each meeting. You will be supported by a member of the USI Executive Team (normally a Regional Officer) who is agreed with the USI President at the beginning of the term.

Committees and Boards

Boards

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

The VP AA is an automatic member of the QQI Board, responsible for the overall governance of QQI, the national agency for Qualifications and Quality Assurance within third level education in Ireland.

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning

The VP AA is also a member of the Board for the National Forum, the national body responsible for leading and advising on teaching & learning in Irish Higher Education.

Committees

Academic Affairs Working Group

Made up of education officers, and officers with responsibility for education across USI's membership. The VP AA chairs this Working Group, which takes place in line with USI National Council (so roughly once every six weeks). This group offers a space for members to discuss local and national issues, and feed into the work of the VP Academic Affairs.

National Academic Integrity Network (QQI)

As VP AA, you sit on the National Academic Integrity Network which is made up of all of the Irish HEIs, and convened by QQI. The focus of the network is to improve practice in detecting and preventing contract cheating, and improving institutional culture of Academic Integrity. The VP AA also chairs the Communications Working Group on the Network.

NStEP Steering Committee

Alongside the USI President and representatives from QQI and the HEA, you will sit on the Steering Committee for the National Student Engagement Programme [NStEP]. Meeting on a roughly quarterly basis, you will receive updates on the workplan from the NStEP Programme Manager and approve any budgetary or strategic requests.

Student Survey.ie Steering Committee

USI, alongside IUA, THEA and the HEA is one of the partners for Student Survey.ie. The Steering Committee meets on a quarterly basis alongside representation from the University

and Technological sectors and QQI. The other Student Survey.ie Committees report to the Steering Committee and it approves any major financial or strategic decisions being made.

IUA EDTL Steering Committee

Steering Committee for the 'Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning' project within the Irish Universities Association. Meets every few months to review the project's development within IUA's seven member Universities.

NStEP Advisory Group

Meets on a quarterly basis and is co-chaired by the VP AA and the QQI/HEA representatives on an alternative basis. The Advisory Group is comprised of stakeholders across the Higher Education sector including staff and student representatives from the University, Technological and Private Colleges sectors.

NStEP Network

The VP AA chairs the National Student Engagement Network which usually meets twice per year. This brings together staff and student representatives from all NStEP participating institutions. Networks will normally include presentations or facilitated discussions from NStEP and other invited speakers. The agenda is usually produced by the VPAA and NStEP Programme Manager and agreed with the Steering Committee.

Student Survey.ie Analysis & Impact Committee

Meets every few months – the focus of this committee is on supporting institutions to undertake further analysis of StudentSurvey.ie data and ultimately to act upon this feedback in order to create impact. Other student representatives from local Students' Unions sit on this committee alongside the VP AA.

Campaigns and Events

Academic Rep Campaign (Mandated under motion 18AA7)

Campaign to encourage students to put themselves forward for an Academic Rep position. Graphics made available on social media, and sent out to officers. Academic Rep Insights also circulated to officers. Usually runs early-mid September in line with Academic Rep recruitment.

Destress for Success (Mandated under motions 12WEL 5 and 12WEL14)

Co-created with the VP for Welfare. Development of resources (graphics, study planners) to support SUs in rolling out destress campaigns during assessment and exam periods. Where on-campus activity possible, the campaign has previously included branded materials such as highlighters and water bottles. Usually runs December/January and April/May.

Academic Integrity (Mandated under motions 20AA6)

As part of the previously mentioned National Academic Integrity Network, the VP AA chairs the Communications Working Group which develops campaign assets such as videos, graphics and other resources that can be used to aid institutions and SUs in improving student awareness of Academic Integrity and Contract Cheating. This usually runs throughout the year, with a lead campaign week in October.

Student Achievement Awards Ireland

Usually held in April, with nominations opening in mid-February. The VP AA is ordinarily the lead on planning these awards. They recognize the commitment of students across a range of fields including student representation, clubs & societies, activism and campaigning. Nominations are usually judged by a range of experts including former student representatives, NGOs and charities. The VP AA is supported by other members of the USI Executive Team.

Student Teachers, Pharmacists, Graduate Entry Medicine, Psychology Doctoral Students, Nurses & Midwives

USI have specific mandates to campaign on issues relevant to each of the above distinct cohorts, which the VP AA usually leads or at least works on. The issues are diverse across cohorts, but most relate in some way to fees and placement. USI will engage with students on the ground, and representative organisations such as IPSA (Pharmacy Students), the INMO (Nursing & Midwifery) and PSI (Psychology) to bring forward the issues of relevance to these groups.

National Campaign

As a member of the Executive Team, the VP AA contributes to the development of the National Campaign which is overseen by the Campaigns Strategy Committee. This campaign ordinarily focuses on the barriers to accessing third-level education with a particular focus on fees and the need for sustainable funding.

If you have any questions about this role, please contact Kevin on education@usi.ie