



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.

day to day activities will vary and many Working Groups or Committees that the President sits on are specific to projects or new initiatives. Many of the current groups relate to COVID-19 and may be redesigned ahead of the new term.

As per the USI Constitution, the role of the President involves:

5.3.1 The President shall have overall responsibility to lead the Union's work, to allocate and direct the work amongst the officers of the Executive Team and to report to Congress and National Council on the Union's work.

Basically, this means that the President is responsible for working with other members of the USI Executive Team to ensure the Union is working effectively individually and as a team to achieve the goals as set by Congress. The President also reports on the work of the Union to Congress and National Council and takes questions on those reports.

5.3.2 The President is the chief spokesperson and representative of students in Ireland.

The President is the main spokesperson for students in Ireland – this includes at events, committees, boards and with the media. The President works with the PR & Communications Manager to prepare for media and to allocate media requests to other members of the team, where appropriate.

5.3.3 The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the Union and can take such decisions that do not require a meeting of National Council or Congress. All such decisions must be reported to the next meeting of National Council.

Due to the size and work of the organisation, the President can take decisions to support the Organisation to effectively achieve its goals as set by its' members without calling a meeting of National Council. The President must report these decisions to next meeting of National Council.

5.3.4 The President, as leader of the organisation, may take such decisions as do not require a meeting of the National Council or Congress, or of the Governance Committee, in line with the Governance Handbook.

Similar to the above point, the President can take decisions to ensure the Organisation can effectively achieve its goals as set by its' members once these decisions are not reserved for another body e.g. Congress. These are all decisions that fall outside of the remit of other bodies which can be found in section 5.2 of the Governance Handbook.

5.3.5 The President shall propose for ratification, to the first National Council each year, another member of the Executive Team to act as their Deputy in their absence, or, in the event of their death, resignation or incapacity. This nomination should be circulated to all Member Organisations at least one calendar week prior to the first meeting of National Council.

This nomination is proposed by the President following engagement with members of the team who they feel would meet the criteria required to Deputise for them if they are unavailable. The nomination must be ratified at the first National Council of the year.

5.3.6 The President oversees the work of the Presidents Committee of which they are Chairperson.

Every Member Organisation President is a member of the Presidents Committee. This committee is normally attached to a meeting of National Council and is chaired by the USI President. The agenda is created by the members. This is a closed meeting and action points are recorded for the purpose of progressing the work required.

5.3.7 The President shall nominate an appropriate member of Executive Team to assist Member Organisations not covered by Schedule G.

5.3.8 Where USI is requested to nominate a member or members to the board of an external body or committee the President shall inform National Council of all nominations made under this provision.

On occasion, USI will nominate members of the Executive Team to sit on a board or committee of an external body. When this occurs, the President must notify National Council of this.

The Constitution also requires the following of the President:

- Nominate member of Executive Team to chair the Entertainments, Marketing and Commercial Committee, which must be approved by National Council;
- Develop a Presidents Advisory Committee to present to National Council no later than the second meeting of the year;
- Nominate a Congress Director;
- Has a vote at National Council on behalf of the Executive Team unless a weighted vote is called;
- Is a member of the USI Governance Committee.

Boards & Committees

HEA Board

The USI President has traditionally held a seat on the HEA Board during their term of office. The role of the HEA board is to satisfy themselves that financial controls and risk management practices are in place and are robust, set the strategic direction for the HEA and review corporate governance developments. The Board meetings There are a number of committees of the HEA Board that the USI President is a member of which are outlined below

- **Pensions Appeals Committee**
- **Audit and Risk Committee**
- **Finance and Governance Committee**

NStEP Steering Group

Alongside the USI VP Academic Affairs 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.

Political engagement

The USI President tends to have regular political engagement with both Government and opposition parties. The President is responsible for identifying opportunities to ensure the policy direction of Government is in line with that of the Union. The President will spend quite some time in meetings with politicians and political staff to further the work of the Union.

Pre-budget submission

The President along with other members of the Executive Team are responsible for producing the USI Pre-Budget Submission which is used by the Executive Team and local Students' Unions when lobbying Government. This is a large-scale project that takes approx. 6 months to complete. The President is responsible for overseeing this work ensuring each deadline is met and the submission is presented to National Council for approval ahead of the pre-budget lobby effort. This document is normally ready for May/June of each year.

Campaigns and Events

The President is responsible for supporting the USI Executive Team and staff in the development of any USI Campaigns and Events. The level of engagement in the planning process varies depending on the campaign and/or event however, the President will be expected to review and approve all content prior to the campaign and/or event launching.

National Council

The USI President is responsible for organising all meetings of National Council and would normally work with the Deputy President to ensure deadlines are set and met for documentation required for each meeting of National Council.

Team Support

The USI President is responsible for providing support to the Executive Team to ensure they are supported to achieve the goals set for the Union by its' members. Much of the work of the President is ensuring the team have all the resources, guidance and contacts needed to achieve their work. I believe this is one of the most important elements of the role because the President should not and can not be responsible for delivering on the work of the Union alone, they need to be surrounded by a team who are eager and supported to complete the mandates set by Congress. This requires time, compassion, dedication, active listening and also organisation skills.

For more information on this role, please contact Lorna on president@usi.ie