



## **USI Regional Officer/ Oifigeach Réigiúnach**

This document provides a brief overview of the key aspects of the Regional Officer 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.

The Regional Officer roles are as follows:

- Vice President for the Dublin Region
- Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region (encompassing colleges in Letterkenny, Sligo, Galway, Mayo, Athlone, Dundalk and Maynooth)
- Vice President for the Southern Region (encompassing colleges in Carlow, Waterford, Cork and Kerry)

### **Communication**

The regional officer is a direct line of communication between the USI Executive Team and Students' Union Officers within the region. It is important for regional officer to keep USI Officers informed of issues directly affecting students in order to best represent and support students across the Island. The Regional Role is also responsible for communicating relevant issues and the work of USI through various means including, but not exclusively, Class Rep Councils, Radio Interviews, Trainings/Events, Social Media, Traditional Media, Conferences, Events, etc.

### **Updates at Student Councils**

As a regional officer, one is responsible for attending Student Councils to provide USI updates to member organizations within your region. These Updates are important and inform both sabbatical officer and students of the work that USI is undertaking. This is also an opportunity for students to ask questions in relation to the work of USI and raise any issues they may be facing to relay back to the USI executive team.

In some cases, one may be asked from time to time to fill in as chair for MO class rep council and in some case, the regional officer may be appointed as chair for the year within a CRC. But this may not always be the case.

### **Radio Interviews**

While the President handles national media outlets, it is the prerogative of regional officers to speak on behalf of the USI to local media outlets which fall within their region. These can come in the form of Newspaper interviews, radio broadcasts, college media societies and podcasts.

These interview requests can occur anywhere between a couple of days to a couple of hours in advance and are often in relation to emerging events and issues regarding students. Luckily you will be supported by Martina our PR manager who will ensure that you are adequately prepared.

### **Supporting Policy Officers**

The Regional Officer can assist the policy officers, where relevant, on the implementation of USI Policy passed by Congress. Regional officers may also team up with policy officers as part of a small crew to support on remits too large for the policy officer to manage on their own. Examples include but are not limited to the ESU (European Students Unions), facilitation and organising events, sustainability, different USI conferences, to name a few areas.

### **Regional Working Groups**

Each Regional Officer has the responsibility of organising and chairing their Regional Working Groups; a space where Students' Union Officers from different Member Organisations (MOs), in that particular region, can meet to discuss issues, to ask for advice, to share ideas, to brainstorm ideas for campaigns, etc. The Working Groups also ensure Officers are kept up to date on upcoming events

### **MO Interaction and Support**

- Speaking to MO sabbatical officer teams.
- Facilitating 1:1 meeting with SU officers to plan, reflect, and communicate
- Gathering information from region to support individual MOs to tackle issues internally that may arise within institutes.
- Supporting the roll-out of campaigns both at National and Regional Level.

### **Sustainability Remit**

USI regional officers can support the Vice President of Equality and Citizenship in USIs sustainability remit. As part of this one may attend external meetings with organizations to partner and roll out campaigns and events in relation to climate action and sustainability.

### **International Remit**

One USI Regional Officer is usually appointed to support the Vice President of Academic Affairs in the work carried out with the European Students' Union (ESU). Each year there are two European Students' Union Conventions, and two ESU Board Meetings. At each of these events various topics, policies, statements and documents are debated, discussed and analysed by National Students' Unions from across Europe. The officer appointed as ESU Support Officer will be agreed with the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the start of the term.

### **Regional Bonding**

In addition to being a direct line of communication and support to MO's and their students in the region, it is imperative that the regional officer works to establish a strong and consistent network between MOs in their remit. This should be done early and from the outset in order to effectively establish a keen sense of community among MOs, which will encourage positive networking and collective action in the region.

A main feature when kickstarting this process is the regional officer's prerogative in organizing regional bonding. In a normal year, bonding will typically consist of activities organized by the officer over the course of two days and one night. You will have a set budget for this which may cover food and overnight stay so shop around and see what deals you can get! Where this cannot be facilitated due to COVID-19 restrictions, online activities and events can be organised. In addition to bonding there will be other opportunities to build upon the regional communities' relationship at National Council through other activities such as 12 pubs, Secret Santa and general evening entertainments and trainings.

### **PTO Training**

Part time officers (PTO's) are the backbone in every Union and are a valuable source of support in assisting and supporting MOs in various events and initiatives rolled out over the year. PTOs have a wide variety of roles across the movement depending on the SU. Positions usually consist of roles not commonly found on full time exec teams e.g Equality and Diversity Officers, Clubs and Societies Officers, Communications Officers, Green Campus Officers, Mature Student Officers, Postgrad Officers, Irish Language Officers etc...

As a Regional Officer one is responsible for establishing a line of communication with PTOs and broadening this into the PTO network. PTO Training is a big part of this process. In previous years Regional Officers have gone from institute to institute to deliver training tailored to PTOs. Other years Regional officers have attempted bringing together the PTOs from their remit to central locations for cross regional training. More recently we have achieved national PTO training across USI's region for PTOs across the Island. This has been done through the convenience of online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meets and has seen its biggest turn out with positive feedback. Do what works best for you, you might even find an even better way to enhance this experience!

### **COVID-19**

- Due to Covid-19 the role of the regional has changed and been adapted in line with government guidance. Officers have been working remotely since the beginning of term and have been engaging with Students' Union Officers virtually rather than travelling across their regions to meet in person.
- The regional officers hold regional working groups virtually every six weeks to allow student officers to be informed of the work of USI and be a platform to share ideas and issues within individual MOs within the region.
- In line with Government guidelines regional officers have not been able to visit campuses and support officers remotely for the time being.

### **South-Specific Section**

- The Vice President for the Southern Region has a seat on the ONECork Movement where stakeholders from different Unions meet to discuss different events, issues or plans in everyone's respective areas of work and how we can work together to support one another.

### **Dublin-Specific Section**

- The vice president for the Dublin region is mandated to work on the Bus connects- Dublin area transport redesign policy NA 19 – 6. This policy mandates the Vice President of the Dublin region to feed into the redesign and ensure students best interests are considered in the new phases of the transport design.
- The Dublin region currently has 28 Full time officers across 6 member organisations.
- The Vice President for the Dublin region represents over 70,000 students.

### **BMW-Specific Section**

- Fun but scary Fact: BMW Region Area = 35,595km<sup>2</sup> which makes it arguably the largest region in USI. Like the VP South, the VP BMW will mostly work while being mobile in a typical year of the role, unlike the other positions which are Dublin based.
- Excluding PTO's, there are 24 Officers across 8 Member Organizations in the BMW region.
- One Galway: The Vice President for the BMW has a seat on this committee along with the President of GMITSU and NUIG SU. Meetings usually occur in Galway in the Forsa office (or virtually) on a bi-monthly basis.
- iNOTE steering committee: The VP BMW acts as the USI representative on this committee and the external advisor for the work package 3 to matters relating to methods relating to student experience and access to important services. The project itself aims to build digital capacity for learners in Connacht-Ulster Alliance (LYIT, IT Sligo and GMIT). LYIT is the lead on this project where it is officially based. There are numerous work packages between the TU institutes mentioned which are aimed at achieving TU status. As the USI rep you will act as an external advisor to the project and provide a student perspective. iNOTE typically meets once every quarter (twice a term).

If you have any questions about any of the Regional officer roles, please contact Gary on [bmw@usi.ie](mailto:bmw@usi.ie), Megan on [dublin@usi.ie](mailto:dublin@usi.ie) or Ciara on [south@usi.ie](mailto:south@usi.ie).