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# Policy Due to Expire 2021 (CD3)

USI Policies remain in force for three years. This document contains older policy adopted by USI Congress prior to 2019, which will cease being policy at the close of USI Congress 2021 unless Congress votes to extend the policy for three more years.

This motions have been prioritised in line with the regulations.

Errors and Omissions Excepted. As ever, any errors will be corrected upon their notification.

# Policy due to expire having received four priority votes

## (Expiring) 15 AAQA 7 Technological university supports

**Congress acknowledges:**

The work, which has been done to date with MO’s going through the Technological University (TU) process.

**Congress also acknowledges:**

The integral role of Students’ Unions in these MO’s to informing students of their rights and safeguarding them in the TU process.

**Congress mandates:**

The Regional Vice Presidents to assist in the merging of Students’ Unions involved in the TU Process

## (Expiring) 2018 EQ 1 : Gender Recognition of Students

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union & the USI Vice

President for Equality & Citizenship

**Congress notes:**

Trans and non-binary students have difficulty changing their name and gender on college records such as exam results, roll, student cards etc.

**Congress recognises:**

The considerable distress that not being able to be recognised as who they are can have on trans and non binary students.

**Congress Notes:**

The work ongoing of the Gender Recognition Act Review Committee examining the Gender Recognition Act 2015 due to be complete by Summer (Expiring) 2018 .

**Congress applaud**s:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship recent submission to the Gender Recognition Act Review and the current work being done in MOs on Gender Identity and Expression

Policies.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to campaign for a system-wide agreement from CAO level upwards, regarding the facilitation of name-changes as well as the inclusion of non-binary identities.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the HEA (Higher Education

Authority) to set up a working group with the USI, THEA (Technological Higher Education Association), the IUA (Irish Universities Association) and the Department of Education to identify a robust and agreed system-level framework, so that applications for namechanges while the student is attending their third level institution is met with a consistent response regardless of institution, rather than a case-by-case, ad-hoc, and discretionary reaction that often depends on the staff member the student speaks to.

## (Expiring) 2018 IL 1 : Updating of Language and Terminology – Uasdhátú Téarmaíochta agus Teanga

Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

**Tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Deara:**

An sár-obair atá déanta ag an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le linn na bliana maidir le haistriúchán na dtéarmaí LADTA+ go Gaeilge.

**Anuas air sin, tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Deara:**

Go raibh an obair seo an-thábhachtach, agus in éineacht leis seo, rinneadh obair ag eagraíochtaí eile sa bhliain maidir le haistriúchán téarmaíochta go Gaeilge, mar shampla, téarmaíocht a bhaineann le cine.

**Tuigeann An Comhdháil:**

Chun reachtaíocht a scríobh in Éirinn, caithfear í a scríobh trí mhéan na Gaeilge, agus go bhfuil an leagan Gaeilge den dlí agus den bhunreacht mar ard-leagan dóibh.

**Mar sin, sainordaíonn An Comhdháil:**

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge obair leanúnach a dhéanamh maidir le haistriúchán na dtéarmaí atá chun cinn i gcúrsaí cothroime in Éirinn, agus gur cheart dóibh díriú isteach ar an téarmaíocht nach bhfuil mar fhócas i measc eagraíochtaí eile a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge go speisialta.

**Congress Notes**

The excellent work done by USI VP for Irish Language this year regarding translating LGBTQ+ terms into Irish.

**Congress further notes**

That this work was very important, and that alongside it there has been work by other bodies this year translating terminology into Irish, such as terminology related to race.

**Congress understands**

That in order for legislation to be written in Ireland, it needs to written into the Irish language, and that the supreme form of the law and constitution are the Irish Language versions.

**Congress therefore mandates**

That the VP for Irish Language work continually on translating terminology that is at the fore front of social justice issues in Ireland and that they focus on terminology that may not be the focus of other Irish Language groups.

# Policy due to expire having received three priority votes

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 4 : Accreditation for Volunteering & Participation

Proposed by IT Tallaght Students’ Union.

**Congress recognises:**

The importance of student participation in extra-curricular activities such as clubs & societies, Students’ Unions, volunteering and civic engagement during their time in college, and the benefits that engaging in such activity brings about in terms of the overall personal development of the student.

**Congress further recognises:**

The continued promotion by Students’ Unions of students getting involved in these activities, and the associated advantages which can be conferred on students who have been active in these areas when seeking future employment.

**Congress notes**:

The development of modules and recognition within programmes which exist in some Higher Education Institutions to accredit students for their involvement and participation in these activities, in order to facilitate, recognise and encourage their non-academic as well as academic development whilst in college.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the National forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education and other relevant statutory agencies to develop a national approach to accreditation to student volunteering and participation in other extra-curricular activity

**Congress Repeals** Policy 13 AA

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 15 : Cyberbullying Policy

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

**Congress Notes**

The adoption of the USI Cyberbullying Policy which was adopted at congress 2017.

**Congress also Notes**

How quickly issues change in the cyber community and how USI policy must be kept up to date to reflect that.

**Congress Mandates**

For the adoption of a new updated Cyber Bullying policy which will be reviewed every 12 months.

**Congress also mandates**

The deletion of the older version of the cyberbullying policy.

## (Expiring) 2018 EQ 2 : Mature Student Campaign

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

**Congress notes**

The large numbers of mature students attending third level education and the difficulties they face.

**Congress applauds:**

The success of events such as Mature Student Conventions/Seminars provided by USI in the past.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to run a Mature Student Seminar annually in the first semester of each academic year.

**Congress Notes**

That events for matures students may be inaccessible due to other commitments of potential attendees.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to create an online forum for mature students in order for them to still obtain the benefits of networking at a regional and national level.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to continue their work in supporting the development of mature student officers and societies in MOs.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President for Campaigns to create a support document for local MOs which should include, but is not limited to, information on running their own mature student events, information to help development mature student supports on campuses and other links to mature student organisations.

**Congress repeals**

14 EQ 1, 12 OU 12, 15 OU 13, 12 OU 12. (SIC)

## (Expiring) 2018 UO22 : An Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar Fho-Choiste- An Coiste Cultúrtha as another Subcommitee of NC

Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

**Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara**

Gur éirigh leis an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge Choiste Cultúrtha a thoghadh i mbliana, tar éis easpa fada.

**Tuigeann an Comhdháil**

Gur éirigh leis an Choiste sár-obair a dhéanamh agus naisc luachmhaire a chruthú idir gaeilgeoirí agus lucht suime na Gaeilge.

**Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil**

Gur cheart an Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar ‘ad-hoc Fho-Choiste’ den Chomhairle Náisiúnta agus go mbeadh na baill tofa ag an chéad Chomhairle Náisiúnta achan bliain.

**Congress notes**

That the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge succeeded in electing thefirst Coiste Cultúrtha this year, after a long absence of such.

**Congress understands**

That the Coiste succeeded in doing good work and creating new links between Irish speakers and those interested in Irish.

**Therefore, Congress mandates**

That An Coiste Cultúrtha would be created as an ad-hoc subcommittee of National Council, and elected at the first National Council of the year, every year.

# Policy due to expire having received two priority votes

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 15 : The Marketisation of Third-Level Education

Proposed by the Vice President Academic Affairs

**Congress notes**

Efforts by Governments and Higher Education Institutions, both in Ireland and internationally, to create a competitive environment in third-level education, especially in Higher Education.

**Congress further notes**

That this effort to marketise education damages the ethos of education as a social and public good.

**Congress recognises**

The USI’s efforts to campaign and lobby for publicly funded education and protect education as a public good.

**Congress believes**

That in Ireland the student movement is not proactively discussing or raising the dangers of marketisation and commodification of education, and must be better equipped to do so.

**Congress mandates**

The Vice President Academic Affairs to develop clear policy guidance on the negative consequences of marketisation both locally and nationally, and to work with the Vice President Campaigns to create toolkits for Member Organisations to recognise and campaign against marketisation in their institutions.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 18 : National Student Partnership Agreement

Proposed by: Academic Affairs Working Group

Repeals 17 AA 5

Congress notes

Efforts to date to enhance student engagement in their education through the work of the National Student Engagement Programme, of which USI is a proactive partner.

Congress further notes

The increasing awareness of the concept of students as partners in their education, and developments both locally and nationally to embed the student voice in all aspects of our institutions.

Congress believes that

Developing ‘Student Partnership Agreements’ between Institutions and Students’ Unions is a positive and constructive avenue through which student participation, representation, and engagement can be fostered, while ensuring the ethos of Students’ Unions as autonomous decision-making organisations is protected.

Congress further believes that

There is significant appetite to take a national approach to student partnership.

Congress recognises

The commitment by the Minister for Higher Education to work with USI to develop a national approach to the student voice, both through a Framework on Supporting Students’ Union, and through the exploration of Student Charters and Partnership Agreements.

Congress mandates

The USI President and the USI Vice President Academic Affairs to work with the

Department for Education and Skills, and all other relevant stakeholders, to lobby for and develop a National Student Partnership Agreement.

Congress further mandates

That any development of a National Student Partnership Agreement should proactively engage students at every stage.

## (Expiring) 15 AAQA 10 Cross-border student mobility

**Congress believes:**

Currently there is very low cross-border student mobility between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland

That education should be free and fairly funded- this also goes for the students who chose to travel over the border for their education

Every student should be able to access support for travel, course costs, maintenance support and studying cross-border should not be a barrier to support.

**Congress notes:**

In 1996/97, almost one in 10 students in the NI colleges were from the Republic - 9.3%, but in 2012/13, this fell to just 5.5%.

The number of RoI domiciled students enrolled in NI Higher Education Institutions in 2012/13 was 2,835 and the number of RoI students studying in FE institutions in 2012/13 was 3,324.

In 2012/13 only 980 students from NI travelled over the border to study in Irish institutions.

RoI students in NI often have trouble accessing the right information about the SUSI grant which is available to them, which can then lead to financial hardship.

**Congress mandates:**

VPAAQA to work with the NUS-USI President to explore ways we can increase crossborder student mobility

VPAAQA to work with NUS-USI to lobby the respective governments to provide adequate financial support for students studying over the border

## (Expiring) 09 ED 13 EQUITY OF ACCESS

REAPPROVED 2015 and (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the introduction of the ‘free fees’ initiative was designed to widen access to further and higher education for those from traditionally under-represented backgrounds.

**Congress recognises:**

That while much progress has been made, with an overall participation rate of 55%, there are still a number of socio-economic and non-traditional backgrounds which do not participate in further and higher education at the level of other groups.

**Congress welcomes:**

Recent moves to broaden the participation rate, in particular the creation of the national office for the equity of access to higher education and the publication of the national plan for equity of access to higher education 2008 – 2013.

**Congress reaffirms:**

That one of the fundamental principles of the union is that it strives for an education and training system open to all, irrespective of any consideration, including consideration of national origin, ethnic background, age, ability, sex, sexuality, creed, political beliefs or economic circumstances, so that each individual can realise their full potential.

**Congress believes:**

That in order to uphold and defend this principle, USI must have a co-ordinated policy on equity of access and encouraging the widening of participation in further and higher education.

**Congress mandates:**

That USI adopts the following principles as its policy on equity of access to further and higher education to be implemented by officer board:

**Equity of Access (General Principles)**

USI shall campaign for an education and training system open and accessible to all.

All sectors of society should have equal opportunity to participate in further and higher education.

Further and higher education institutions should take all steps necessary to encourage and broaden participation

USI shall build links and work with all relevant stakeholders and organisations to widen the participation rate and address all obstacles that may prevent individuals from accessing further and higher education

The USI education officer shall develop and regularly update a USI strategy for equity of access to further and higher education

Targeted access funding and programmes must be expanded to ensure that all students who come from traditionally under-represented backgrounds are able to access further and higher education

All cuts to the student assistance fund, access offices or strategic innovation funded access projects shall be vigorously opposed by USI

All constituent organisations shall be supported by USI in promoting access within their own institution and in supporting the proper representation of access students through policy development, practice, promotion and partnership

The USI education officer and the USI deputy president/campaigns officer shall develop a public campaign promoting access to further and higher education, highlighting the current obstacles and building momentum to have these issues addressed.

## (Expiring) 18 EM 2 (WEL) : Fee Certainty

Proposed by TCD Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

Non-EU and Postgraduate students pay significant fees annually for their education. There is no government regulation of fees for these students. Many of these students are multiyear students and precarious fee increases year to year has a negative impact on students. **Congress further notes:**

Trinity College introduced a policy of ‘fee certainty’ for non-EU and Postgraduate students meaning new students will be be aware of the entire cost of their degree programme, prior to commencing their studies. This will provide fee paying multi-year students with vital information often required when applying for loans and scholarships, as well as placing students in an improved position to budget for the duration of their studies.

**Congress mandates:**

That until such a time as higher education is free to all students, congress mandates the VP for Academic Affairs and the VP for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for the introduction of fee certainty policies for multiyear fee paying students in HEIs meaning the costs associated with the entire duration of a degree programme is determined prior to the student beginning their studies.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 5 : Crisis Counselling Access

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

The importance of young people to seek help from mental health services, despite the difficulty in accessing them due to unacceptable wait times.

**Congress further notes:**

Short term free public crisis counselling services are inaccessible to those who are currently in the care of the HSE and awaiting appointments that are potentially months away.

**Congress Mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the HSE to provide a list of mental health organisations that mental health professionals and case workers can refer people to when wait times are too long.

**Congress Further Mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the HSE to negotiate with short term counselling services to accept patients currently under the care of the HSE for counselling.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 12 : Abusive Relationships, Sexual Violence & Harassment

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

**Congress Notes**

The suffering that is caused by the many levels of abusive relationships, sexual violence and harassment.

**Congress Recognises**

That several national organisations are doing work in the area of domestic violence, sexual harassment, 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**

The VP Welfare to roll out a national information campaign that is inclusive of all genders and none around abusive relationships, dating abuse, sexual violence and harassment in a similar fashion to the the “Too into You” campaign.

**Congress Also Mandates**

The VP Welfare & VP Campaigns to create a toolkit for MO’s on sexual harassment to be disseminated alongside an awareness campaign.

**Congress Further Mandates**

The VP Welfare and 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.

**Congress therefore deletes**

17 EQ 4 - Expansion of “2in2u” Campaign.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 13 : Health Promotion Strategy

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

**Congress Notes**

The Health Promotion Strategy that was adopted by USI Congress 2016.

**Congress Commends**

The work undertaken by Officerboard at that time in relation to this strategy.

**Congress Mandates**

The adoption and implementation of the updated Health Promotion Strategy (Expiring) 2018 -2021.

## (Expiring) 2018 EQ 3 : Transgender Health Care

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

Transgender and Non-Binary people are people who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. These people may seek medical methods of transition.

**Congress further notes:**

The work done by transgender and non-binary activist groups and USI in their submissions to the Gender Recognition Act.

**Congress notes with regret:**

Transgender and non-binary people are currently unable to dictate their own need for hormone therapy, and need to be given a diagnosis under an outdated ‘medical-diagnostic model’.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby the HSE to provide training for healthcare professionals in Ireland in transgender issues and their healthcare needs.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby the Minister for Health to replace the current medical-diagnostic model of treating transgender and non-binary people in place of an informed consent model, to allow people to receive the treatments they need.

## (Expiring) 2018 EQ 4 : Gender Equality Audit

Proposed by the Vice President for the Dublin Region

**Congress notes**

That self-defining women are still significantly under-represented in Students’ Union politics, as well as politics nationally. For the year 2017/(Expiring) 2018 , less than 20% of Presidents in USI affiliated Students’ Unions were women.

**Congress recognises**

The ongoing work being done within Students’ Unions to encourage more self-defining women to run for elected positions within their Students’ Unions.

**Congress applauds**

The Women Lead Projects rolled out this year and in previous years by USI and the continued growth in participation of these projects.

**Congress further notes**

The importance of data collection to further develop the Women Lead Project.

**Congress therefore mandates**

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to conduct a gender equality audit of Students’ Unions and their structures to support and inform the ongoing work of USI in this area.

## (Expiring) 2018 EQ 5 : Universal design for learning

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students’ Union with an amendment also proposed by them

**Congress notes:**

Learning materials used in lectures, tutorials, and for study are frequently inaccessible to students with different requirements

**Congress recognises:**

The universal design for learning approach campaigns for more user friendly, varied and accessible materials for students who have a physical/ hidden disability, mental health condition, student parents, and students whose first language is not English.

**Congress mandates:**

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP for Academic Affairs to work with relevant organisations to support the implementation of Universal Design for Learning wherever possible.

## (Expiring) 15 EQ 1 Women in Leadership

**Congress notes**

that motion 14/EQ9 stated: “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 acknowledges**

that significant work has been undertaken by MOs in empowering women to run for leadership positions in the past year. **Congress applauds**

the fantastic job USI Pink Training does in empowering members of the student LGBT community to run for SU leadership and also the grassroots engagement that exposes USI to a new generation of Student Leaders. **Congress calls for** the USI to expand the Women In Leadership campaign. **Congress mandates**

the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to take the template provided by USI Pink Training and adapt it to create a weekend training event with the aim of empowering Women not only in their SU’s but in their college, community and careers.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 9 NUS-USI Collaboration

**Conference notes:**

That NUS-USI coordinates an equality campaign for the Northern Area

**Conference notes:**

That the structure of the NUSUSI campaign is similar to the structure of the USI Equality Campaign

**Conference believes:**

That it would be beneficial to both NUSUSI and USI if officers involved in both campaigns communicated regularly and shared ideas and experiences

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to organise one meeting per semester between the two campaigns to discuss possible collaborations and to provide support, if requested, to the NUSUSI Equality Campaign

**Conference further mandates:**

All members of Equality Working Group to keep in regular contact with counterparts working in the NUSUSI Equality Campaign

## (Expiring) 09 EQ 2 AHEAD

**Congress notes:**

Previous policy (08/EQ6) which mandates the President and Welfare Officer to open discussions with AHEAD with a view to working together on common areas of interests.

**Congress further notes:**

That the Equality Officer, who has the responsibility to support the autonomous disability campaign, and the Disability Rights Officer are best placed to build links with AHEAD. **Congress acknowledges:**

The work of the Equality Officer and Disability Rights Officer this year in achieving the above aim.

**Congress further acknowledges:**

The current work being done by USI and AHEAD in relation to compiling a guide for student union officers on how best to develop policy and services for students with disabilities.

**Congress recognises:**

That in the past number of months, support services for students with disabilities as well as the ‘Fund for Students with Disabilities’ have experienced cuts due to the current economic climate.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality and Disability Rights Officers to:

Continue to build links with AHEAD;

Work with AHEAD to develop initiatives which can counteract the current cuts to support funds for students with disabilities;

Oppose any further cuts to support services for students with disabilities;

Promote and assist the development of student societies for students with disabilities;

Work with AHEAD to organise an annual one day event for students with disabilities;

## (Expiring) 2018 NA 1 : Coalition for Homelessness and housing policies

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

**Congress notes**

The Coalition For Homelessness And Housing formed in 2016 with USI becoming members in 2017.

**Congress recognises the coalition policies are:**

* The housing and homelessness situation should be declared an emergency.
* An end to economic evictions: No loss of principal residency due to economic distress.
* Regulation of the private rented sector. Security of tenure and rent certainty. Greater enforcement and inspection. Limit rent rises to a link such as the consumer price index. Public led provision of student accommodation. A charter of housing rights for all renters in the private sector (including students).
* A local authority led emergency response to the housing crisis addressing the issue of vacant units, including the use of compulsory purchase orders and the refurbishment of existing units to meet public housing targets.
* Public policy should aim to increase the output of public housing to an annual rate of 10,000 units per year by late (Expiring) 2018 /early 2019 at an estimated cost of €1.8 billion per annum. At least three quarters of these must be provided by local authorities.
* Additional capital expenditure of €1,150 million in (Expiring) 2018 on top of 2017’s planned €655 million provided from the fiscal space available for (Expiring) 2018 and additional tax measures such as the fast-tracking of the vacant site levy and by borrowing. Greater flexibility as regards the application of EU fiscal rules for investment in public housing.
* An integrated strategy of well-planned mixed income housing provided by the local authorities on publicly owned land.
* Redirect the billions spent on subsidising private landlords to the provision of public housing while continuing and improving necessary rent assistance.
* The development of a cost rental model as a matter of urgency. Adoption and adaption of NERI’s March 2017 proposals for a European cost rental model.
* Land zoned for housing that is owned by local authorities should be used primarily to provide public housing by local authorities, instead of being made available to private developers.
* Decent pay and working conditions in the construction sector aiming for the use of unionised and direct labour.
* Full expenditure of improved funding for Traveller accommodation. • Socially inclusive and energy efficient standards for public housing
* Steps taken to inscribe the Right to Housing in the constitution.
* An end now to emergency provision for families in bed and breakfast accommodation and the provision for them of suitable public housing. Improved and expanded hostel accommodation for homeless people on the street.

**Congress therefore adopts**

The current policies (as of 23 February (Expiring) 2018 ) of the coalition, which is inclusive of student specific housing issues.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 3 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**Congress recognises:**

That we as a student movement we must strive for true equality of opportunity 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 very often determined by the quality of their secondary education.

**Congress further recognises:**

That many potential 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 a divided student body 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 to a large extent publicly-funded, but which is only accessible to those who can pay the private fees which run into the thousands each year. This means that all taxpayers are being asked to subsidise an education system that is only accessible to those children lucky enough to be born into relatively well-off families, and that this private education puts them at a great advantage in attaining higher CAO points and thus places on third-level courses.

**Congress mandates Officer Board:**

To campaign for the removing of state funding for private primary and secondary schools, and for any monies saved in this process to be ring fenced and re-invested in the wider, publicly-funded and publicly-accessible education system including primary, secondary and third level education. This should be completed within the next year.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 7 ANTI-COUNTERFEIT TRADE AGREEMENT (ACTA)

**Congress notes:**

The importance of copyright law and the protection of intellectual property rights and the need of the Irish government to act on this.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The lack of public discussion on the ACTA Treaty and how it would be implemented in Ireland.

**Congress further notes with concern:**

The potential impact of any legislation around ACTA on students’ work, freedom of speech and civil liberties.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The VP/Campaigns to campaign and lobby on behalf of the students of Ireland to prevent the ratification of the Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement and the introduction of legislation to enforce it in Ireland.

**Congress further mandates:**

The VP/Campaigns to lobby and campaign for the next three years for a wider discussion on the issue of copyright infringement and counterfeit trade prior to the Irish government putting in place any legislation in this area.

## (Expiring) 15 IA1 Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

**Congress notes with concern:**

The on-going negotiations between the European Union and the United States in relation to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and the potential impact that it could have on Irish higher education, democracy and wider society. **Congress does not support:**

The lowering of any EU standards in regards to the environment, food safety, animal welfare and workers’ rights.

In addition, Congress is especially concerned that under TTIP, the US would be allowed to export shale gas to Europe thus increasing fracking in the US and allowing US companies to challenge fracking bans in Europe under the Investor-State Dispute Settlement clause.

While Congress supports the EU’s efforts in job creation we believe that TTIP jeopardises the health and wellbeing of those living in the EU and therefore call on the EU to use these negotiations to encourage the US to raise its standards rather than lowering its own.

**Congress affirms**

that while it does not oppose free trade in principle, TTIP does not amount to a traditional free trade agreement but rather threatens to constitute an historic infringement upon democratic governance. **Conference mandates:**

Officer Board to campaign against TTIP and to engage with like-minded organisations in Ireland and across Europe on the matter.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO3 : Union development intern

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

**Congress notes**

As per the union development strategy, it is the duty of USI to take lead on improving development of the local member organisations and the union as a whole.

**Congress further notes**

The union development strategy further outlines 3 phases over three years of work in this area. Currently this work is undertaken by the VP for Campaigns.

**Congress recognises**

The amount of work within union development in USI is not feasible to be looked into fully by one officer on their own.

**Congress therefore mandates**

The President to explore the possibility of hiring a union development intern to assist the VP for campaigns in implementing this strategy and to further develop the work in union development brief.

## (Expiring) 15 UO3 Students’ union staff training

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

The unique work that is done by Student Union staff on a daily basis in each Students’ Union in Ireland.

**Congress further notes:**

The high standard of training provided by USI for Students’ Union elected officers.

**Congress mandates:**

Officer Board provide a training programme for MO staff. The aim being to strive for best practice; enable networking; champion equality and inclusion; and create a platform for the staff to understand thus communicate the benefits and supports provided by USI.

## (Expiring) 15 UO18 Student manifesto

SPECIAL CASE: REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021. AMENDMENTS NOTED IN

STRIKETHROUGHS AS THE POLICY ADOPTED IN (Expiring) 2018

**Congress affirms:**

That USI must seek to make solutions to core student issues part of the next Programme for Government.

**Congress notes:**

The process by which NUS and NUS-USI’s ‘#GenerationVote’ campaign sought to a) highlight the upcoming elections and the importance of students voting and b) gather student feedback on what a student general election manifesto should include.

**Congress mandates:**

The VP Campaigns to arrange for an Irish student manifesto as part of the wider national campaign.

## (Expiring) 15 UO19 Casework Recording Best Practice Policy

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress Notes:**

The vital need for a “Casework Recording Best Practice Policy” for MO’s. Taking into extreme consideration data protection legislation and HEI data protection policies.

**Congress Further Notes:**

The invaluable information provided by casework recording for data analysis in each academic year and the dire need for MO’s to have a guideline to data recording and safe keeping.

**Congress also notes:**

The benefit of liaising with support services in each HEI so that we may gain a greater insight into the issues students face each academic year.

**Congress mandates:**

The VP for Welfare to produce a Best Practice Guideline/policy for MO’s regarding the recording of issues faced by students. Taking into extreme consideration data protection legislation and HEI data protection policies.

**Congress further mandates:**

The VP welfare to investigate the feasibility for MO’s to liaise with support services in each HEI to gather necessary data to analyse key student issues in each academic year.

15 UO 30 USI Transparency and Engagement:

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021 **Congress notes:**

The work of Officerboard goes mostly unnoticed by the wider student population.

**Congress applauds:**

Efforts made by Officerboard to increase transparency in its work over the past two years.

**Congress mandates:**

Officerboard to implement a weekly round-up of the work carried out during that week, which is to include policy and Manifesto updates, be distributed to Officers, and their Class Representatives.

## (Expiring) 2018 CZN 2 : Ending Direct Provision

Proposed by the USI Equality & Citizenship Committee

**Congress notes**

Asylum-seekers and their children have spent years living in an institutional setting that was designed to be a short-term solution. They are accommodated by the State in residential institutions, under a reception system known as ‘Direct Provision’. Direct Provision is intended to provide for the welfare of asylum seekers and their families as they await decisions on their asylum application. The majority of asylum seekers spend over 4 years in Direct Provision waiting for their application to be processed.

**Congress further notes**

That there are thousands of children and young people currently within the system, many of them aspiring to attend a third level or further education institution in Ireland. There has been a very low uptake of the scholarships available to those in Direct Provision to attend third level.

**Congress commends**

The work of Students’ Unions around the country in raising this issue on their campuses and localities through direct action campaigns, protests, and working with campus student groups in targeting commercial operations associated with Direct Provision to condemn their complicity in the system and to educate the public and students eg. Aramark off our Campus and the USI ‘Avoca Jam’ in 2017.

**Congress Condemns**

The system of Direct Provision as it currently stands in Ireland.

**Council therefore mandates**

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the abolition of the system of Direct Provision, campaign for the end of deportations, and for the introduction of a humane reception system in line with international best practice

**Council Further Mandates:**

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the universal right to work and accessible education for those in Direct Provision.

**Council Further mandates**

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the full enactment of the EU Receptions Conditions Directive.

## (Expiring) 2018 CZN 4 : Voter Registration and Reform

Proposed by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

**Congress recognises**

There are several mandates regarding Voter Registration as part of the policy book.

**Congress notes**

A strategy covering voter registration and reform would be more efficient for a USI officers work, and would comprehensively deal with the topic, making the process of lobbying on the content easier.

**Congress adopts**

The Voter Registration and Reform Position Paper.

**Congress mandates**

The President and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government based on the USI Position Paper.

**Congress therefore deletes**

12 CZN 4 Voting Rights for Citizens Living Abroad

15 CZN 8 Voter Registration System Reform

15 CZN 1 Lobby for 3rd Level Centre Polling Stations

14 CZN 2 SERD

## (Expiring) 2018 CZN 5 : Places of Sanctuary

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students’ Union with an amendment also moved by them.

**Congress notes:**

Places of Sanctuary Ireland is a network of groups in towns, cities, local communities and third level institutions which share the objectives of promoting the integration, inclusion and welfare of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, by encouraging every sector of society to make a practical commitment to becoming places of welcome and safety.

**Congress further notes**

Higher Education institutions play a key role in welcoming students from different diverse backgrounds, and creating inclusive and understanding communities.

**Congress recognises:**

Many Universities and ITs have been awarded places of sanctuary/ University of Sanctuary status.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The VP E&C to disseminate information on the places of sanctuary initiative to MOs and encourage MOs to apply for status where possible.

## (Expiring) 2018 CZN 6 : International Student Visa

Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students’ Union

**Congress Notes:**

That international students have to get a visa every year regardless of the length of their academic tenure.

**Congress Further Notes:**

That international students studying in other countries such as the United Kingdom are given student visas for the full term of their academic tenure as opposed to an annual renewed visa.

**Congress Mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Academic Affairs lobby the Department of Justice and Equality and the Garda National Immigration Bureau to provide international students in Ireland with visas that last the duration of their period of study under the course they applied to.

# Policy due to expire having received one priority vote

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 3 : Placement and work based learning Strategy

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

**Congress notes**

The significant number of students who complete placement or work-based learning elements in order to progress in their programme of study.

**Congress further notes**

The significant value that quality placement opportunities can have for students, but that they can also create pressure on students academically and personally.

**Congress Adopts**

The USI Placement and work based learning Strategy

**Congress Deletes:**

13 AA

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 7 : Class representative best practice

Proposed by IT Carlow Students’ Union

**Congress recognises:**

Class representatives are the backbone of a Students’ Union in terms of providing a student voice on institutional activities.

**Congress notes:**

Class Representatives in some member organisations do not fully recognise the power they command.

**Congress further notes:**

The role of Class Representation, 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.

**Congress further mandates:**

The VP AA and VP Campaign to develop a campaign, based on feedback from member organisations, to encourage students to run for class representative positions. **Congress therefore repeals** 17AA6

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 8: USI Grant Reform Policy

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

**Congress Approves:**

The adoption of the USI Grant Reform Policy.

**Congress therefore repeals:**

17 AA 1, 15 AA, 14 AAQA, 11 ED 19, 10 ED 5, 16 WEL 2, 15 We 20

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 9: Further Education and Training Strategy

Proposed by Union Development Working Group

**Congress Adopts**

The Further Education and Training Strategy.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 11 : Academic Supports for International Students

Proposed by the Vice President Equality and Citizenship

**Congress notes**

The increasing number of international students, from different countries, backgrounds and experiences, studying in Irish institutions.

**Congress further notes**

A lack of tailored support for international students, who face significant pressures of integration and often feel excluded in our institutions, including academic supports such as language and communication.

**Congress recognises**

The huge contribution our international students make to the social and academic life of our institutions, and the need to ensure their needs are catered for so that they can unlock their full potential.

**Congress mandates**

The Vice President Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President Academic Affairs to research and examine practices in institutions in academic support for international students.

**Congress further mandates**

The Vice President Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President Academic Affairs to lobby the Department for Education and Skills for international student access to tailored academic supports, including language support within the curriculum, without financial or other barriers.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 12 : Anonymous Marking

Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students’ Union

**Congress notes**

Anonymous marking is the correction of examinations by a lecturer without knowing the learners name first hand.

**Congress further notes**

Leaving Certificate students entering into third level education will have already had their leaving Certificate examinations corrected anonymously.

**Congress Believes**

Anonymous marking may reduce the perception of bias marking be it accidental or otherwise.

**Congress Therefore Mandates**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to assist MOs in lobbying for anonymous marking within their own HEI.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 16 : The Quality of Teaching in Irish Higher Education

Proposed by the Vice President Academic Affairs

Repeals 14 AA 10

**Congress notes**

The efforts of USI to support the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to date, and the strong partnership that the two organisations have fostered with one another.

**Congress further notes**

USI’s involvement with significant work around teaching quality, including: the National Learning Impact Awards, especially the Teaching Heroes Awards; collaboration on the enhancement of assessment; developing the Student QA Reviewers Pool; and supporting the development of the National Student Training Programme.

**Congress applauds**

The significant work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to develop The National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education, based on the model of reflective practice.

**Congress believes**

That the National Professional Development Framework should be recognised by students as the national tool for improving and enhancing teaching quality and academic staff support.

**Congress further believes**

That the National Professional Development Framework requires cultural change within our institutions, and in order for it to be implemented effectively, it requires significant buy-in from across the sector, including senior managers, statutory agencies, institutional staff, and Students’ Unions.

**Congress mandates**

The Vice President Academic Affairs to work to support and lobby for the implementation and resourcing of the National Professional Development Framework.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 19: Class Rep Recognition

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

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 and this involvement needs to be commended and recognised.

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 formal recognition in the form of accreditation for the position of class representative, similarly to how standard modules are accredited. This accreditation would not replace credits required to complete the learning outcomes but would however add on the the students’ degree as additional credits.

## (Expiring) 15 AAQA 5 Universal fee payment dates

**Congress notes**

That there are a number of different ways in which students are expected to pay their Student Contribution Charge, depending on the institution.

**Congress Further Notes**

This may create confusion among students. Furthermore some systems are more sympathetic to students than others.

**Congress Mandates**

VP AAQA and VP Welfare to work with Students’ Unions and the relevant groups to establish universal payment dates in institutions.

**Congress Further Mandates**

VP AAQA and VP Welfare to work with Students’ Unions and the relevant groups to set a universal payment method in institutions.

## (Expiring) 10 ED 4 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**Congress notes:**

That every year a substantial number of International Students travel to Ireland to study within our higher education system.

**Congress recognizes:**

That these International students can pay large sums of money, on average €12,000 per year to study in our 3rd level institutions.

**Congress further recognizes:**

That there have been a number of issues with regards to these students arriving in Ireland with regards to Irish Customs.

**Congress mandates:**

The President to work on behalf of the International students to put in place an International Student Charter detailing student rights and responsibilities in the third level CO’s where they are studying. By the development of the framework each IoT and University would become responsible for the treatment of International Students when travelling to Ireland.

## (Expiring) 10 ED 11 APPRENTICES

**Congress recognises:**

The need to provide further education opportunities in the face of the ever-changing employment landscape of Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and the Education Officer to lobby the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority to clearly state, in a national framework, the eligibility of qualified apprentices to progress into relevant degree courses.

## (Expiring) 09 ED 11 BOLOGNA PROCESS

REAPPROVED 2015 and (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the bologna process has, since its inception in 1999, become one of the most important and dominant themes in further and higher education in Europe with significant reforms being introduced throughout Europe and here in Ireland as a result of the bologna process.

**Congress further notes:**

That the reforms introduced as part of the bologna process have seen a dramatic transformation in further and higher education, much of which has been positive.

**Congress recognises:**

That these reforms have, however, also introduced considerable uncertainty into further and higher education and there is a need to ensure that as part of the bologna process, the quality of education is not undermined.

**Congress welcomes:**

That the union of students in Ireland has been involved at both a national and European level in the formation and development of policy in the key areas of the bologna process. **Congress regrets:**

That on an issue as critical as the bologna process, which is now entering second decade, USI does not have official, formalised policy on the bologna process.

**Congress believes:**

That it is imperative that the national students’ union develop policy on an issue that is having and will have a profound impact on its membership.

**Congress further mandates:**

USI to adopt the following principles on the Bologna process to be implemented by the president and the education officer

**Bologna process (general principles)**

USI welcomes the creation of the bologna process and the importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies.

The bologna process should be based on creating opportunities for mobility within higher education in Europe and should not be focused on purely developing a higher education system that suits the needs of enterprise and employers

USI strongly believes that the over-arching goal of the bologna process should be to create a student-centred learning environment that is flexible, transparent, accessible to all and encourages the development of lifelong learning.

Future development of the bologna process must be driven through consultation and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, which must include student representatives.

The bologna process should aim for significant and continuous improvement in the standard of education provided to students and that students are full and complete partners within institutions and at sectoral, national and European levels. Education must also be transparent with embedded and appropriate QA mechanisms focused on improving standards and academic provision.

**Social dimension.**

Participation in further and higher education must be widened and the demographic of these sectors should reflect the diversity of the population of the signatory countries to the bologna process.

Further and higher education is a public good and should primarily be publicly funded.

USI is opposed to any and all attempts to privatise further and higher education.

USI strongly welcomes the commitment enshrined in the bologna process to student services and will work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that student services are adequately resourced and improved in line with the needs of students.

All obstacles to participation further and higher education should be removed and

USI will campaign strongly on this.

The social dimension of the bologna process must continue to be one of the central action lines of the bologna process.

**Mobility**

Increased opportunities for student and staff mobility as a result of the bologna process is to be welcomed and contributes positively to the academic and personal development of students.

There should be a mobility target of 20% of the student population by 2020. The participative equity within this 20% must be improved and institutions must create measures to ensure that credits gained during mobility are recognised on return.

A central mobility fund should be created and contributed to by EHEA countries and financed according to the principle of public financing.

USI believes that higher education institutions should provide extensive language tuition to students to encourage and promote mobility.

The USI education officer and the USI equality officer shall campaign and lobby for the simplification of visa and work permit rules and procedures to allow for greater mobility and to prevent mobile students being subject to undue stress, difficulties and discrimination.

**Qualifications frameworks and recognition**

USI supports the adoption and implementation of the ECTS credit system whereby each academic year is comprised of 60 ECTS with each module being in multiples of 5 ECTS (e.g. 5, 10, 15 etc.). An ECTS credit should represent 20 – 25 hrs of student input including, but not limited to, lectures, assignments, self-directed learning, study and practical classes and placements.

USI welcomes and supports the development of modularisation where a module represents a block of teaching and learning with a combination of linked modules constituting a programme.

Semesterisation, whereby the academic year is comprised of two equal length teaching terms, is welcomed by USI. However, there should not be a nationally standardised set of term dates.

USI welcomes the introduction of learning outcomes, defined as “learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning”. All modules, subjects and programmes must be designed around learning outcomes which are regularly quality assessed to ensure they are appropriate and fir for purpose. Learning outcomes must be used to create a student-centred learning environment and may not be used to create a b0ox-ticking environment.

USI continues to support the national framework of qualifications and shall campaign to ensure that learning outcomes align with the knowledge, skills and competencies associated with the relevant level of the NFQ.

All qualifications in further and higher education should be comparable and readable so that a student’s qualifications can be mapped on to both the European qualifications framework and the qualifications framework of all countries in the bologna process with ease. The comparability should be verified for the student by the relevant authority (such as ENIC-NARIC) free of charge.

The USI education officer shall run a campaign, in conjunction with constituent organisations, to raise awareness of the NFQ and to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by its operation.

**USI Bologna Process Campaign**

USI reaffirms that the bologna process is of extreme importance to the education that students will receive.

USI shall undertake all necessary effort, under the direction of the USI education officer, to assist constituent organisations in ensuring the proper implementation of all bologna process related reforms.

USI will promote awareness of the bologna process and of related reforms and opportunities to students through constituent organisations.

USI will work with all relevant stakeholders sectorally, nationally and internationally to ensure adequate student representation and that the bologna process develops in lines with the above principles.

The USI education officer will develop and regularly update a USI strategy on the Bologna process.

## (Expiring) 10 ED 12 BUDGETS

REAPPPROVED 2015 and (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the current volatile economic climate, each Budget is likely to have significant impact on students.

**Congress further notes:**

That the fear and worry caused by budgets may cause avoidable harm to the welfare to Students.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The USI Education Officer, as soon as possible subsequent to the delivery each budget, to the write an explanatory memorandum of the impacts of the budget on student and communicate it to all CO’s.

## (Expiring) 09 ED 15 QUALITY ASSURANCE

REAPPROVED 2015 (With Amendments) and (Expiring) 2018 (With no further amendments) – UP

FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That quality assurance is an increasingly important issue facing higher and further education and one which USI needs a strong, coordinated campaign on.

**Congress also notes:**

That USI currently has eight existing motions relating to the area of quality assurance, each with different mandates and emphases.

**Congress recognises:**

That while each motion covers an important topic, it has created a disparate and sometimes sectoral approach to quality assurance that prohibits the development of a coherent campaign that could affect real change.

**Congress also recognises:**

That as USI represents students across all sectors of further and higher education, it must establish a common set of principles that will underpin and inform the organisation’s approach to quality assurance

**Congress further mandates:**

That USI adopts the following guidelines as its policy on quality assurance to be implemented by the education officer:

Aims and principles:

‘Quality assurance’ includes processes such as evaluation, accreditation and audit.

Students have a right to a high quality of education and to have that education reviewed and assessed regularly

The interests of students as well as employers and wider society are served through good quality higher education

Institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities

The need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives

Centrality of student involvement and representation at all levels of the quality assurance process

QA mechanisms should result in demonstrative improvements and that these improvements should be communicated back to students

All elements of the QA process shall be transparent and accountable

**Quality Assurance of Modules, Programmes and Academic Units (General Principles)**

Institutions should have policy, procedures and formal mechanisms for the quality assurance of their programmes and awards

Institutions should have a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work

Each institution should have a central quality assurance office and/or committee that oversees the implementation of QA; this body shall have student representation

All panels formed to conduct a QA review should have student representation

All panels formed to conduct a QA review should have expert external representation

The quality of teaching staff shall be periodically reviewed as part of any programme, academic unit or institutional review and shall be commented on in the final report

The quality of education provided should be the central element in a review and each module and programme shall be assessed as to whether it is meeting its stated learning outcomes

The appropriateness of the stated learning outcomes as they support a high quality education should also be reviewed

Any and all QA reviews should also examine the quality of resources to support student learning including information systems, library resources and any and all other relevant services

Modules should be assessed annually with programmes and academic units reviewed on a cyclical basis with programmes reviewed at least once every three years and academic units at least once every five years

All quality assurance evaluations (module, programme, academic unit) should be made available online and all module and programme reviews be distributed to the students affected

Following each assessment an action plan and timeline to implement the recommendations should be produced and communicated to students

**External Quality Review of Institutions (General Principles)**

All institutions should be subject to review at least once every seven years

Panels should be chosen and overseen by the accreditation and/or awarding body

All panels should have student representation from a different institution with the pool of student representatives drawn up in consultation with USI

All panels formed to conduct an institutional review should have expert external representation

All panels should be fully independent and free of any influence or conflict of interest

Guidelines for institutional reviews should be drawn up by the accreditation agency based on standardised best practice, such as ENQA’s ‘standards and guidelines’

As part of the review process the institution should produce a self-assessment report which should include progress on the recommendations of the previous report

The effectiveness and suitability of the institution’s internal QA policies, procedures and mechanisms should be assessed

The review should also examine the overall quality of the student experience, learning resources, information systems, institutional culture (academic and professional) and academic structure

All institutional review reports should be made available online and all module and programme reviews be distributed to the students affected

Following each assessment an action plan and timeline to implement the

recommendations should be produced and communicated to students and the institution

Student Participation in Quality Assurance

Student participation in quality assurance is essential in order to ensure that any QA system is credible

The institution seeks to enshrine the value of student participation in quality assurance activities at module, programme, departmental, faculty and institutional level.

Each institution should produce a guide for new students and should aim to produce a quality assurance handbook

Student representation on all QA fora is essential

The student representation system should be designed to afford opportunities for student engagement in decision-making and quality management arrangements

**USI Campaign on Quality Assurance**

USI will campaign to ensure high quality teaching and QA standards throughout the further and higher education sectors in accordance with the policies above

USI shall produce, or work with any sectoral body producing, a handbook for students on quality assurance detailing the rights of students and the importance of student involvement in QA

The USI education officer shall assist constituent organisations in developing and implementing QA policies in accordance with the above principles

The USI education officer shall assist constituent organisations in designing and producing materials to inform students about QA procedures and their right to a high quality education.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 2 : Online Student Assistance Fund

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

The Student Assistance Fund is distributed through different application processes across HEIs.

While some have the resources to accept applications online, many do not. This can cause a drain on resources dealing with applications for both institute staff and SU officers, and ultimately prolongs the amount of time it takes to provide students in financial need with support.

**Congress recognises:**

An offline application process can exclude some access students and students studying abroad from accessing the SAF. Congress further notes:

SUSI's upcoming move to an online application process in the interest of a more accessible system for students.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice-President for Welfare to lobby the HEA to move towards providing an online system for SAF applications to institutions should they wish to adopt it.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 3 : Cap on Student Accommodation Prices on USI platforms

Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

That there is a national housing crisis and student accommodation shortage.

**Congress applauds:**

That USI have launched homes.usi.ie and are a part of the national Housing Coalition.

**Congress proposes:**

Alongside the excellent work that USI does at the moment regarding accommodation, they need to also set a precedent for the housing and economic conditions that they envision.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

USI impose a cap on the price of the accommodation that they will platform.

**Congress further notes:**

That the price of accommodation fluctuates depending on the economy, and so this proposed cap will also fluctuate.

The amount can be amended accordingly by the VP Welfare each year in accordance to rental prices.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 9 : Student Assistance Fund Access

Proposed by Institute of Technology Tralee Students’ Union

**Congress notes**

The essential assistance the SAF (Student Assistance Fund) provides to students.

**Congress further notes**

According to the SAF Guidelines “students participating on a second qualification at the same or a lower level are not eligible for funding.”

**Congress notes with concern**

The barriers to accessing the SAF for these students could be detrimental to continuing their studies.

**Congress therefore mandates**

The VP Welfare to work with the HEA to seek inclusion for these students so they may be eligible to apply for the SAF

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 17 : Financial Supports for FE Students

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

**Congress Notes**

That many students in Further Education suffer financial worries

**Congress also Notes**

The lack of supports available to students in FE institutions which can cause a lot of extra pressures.

**Congress notes with concern**

Students in FE institutions may be disadvantaged because of lack of financial supports such as ESF and the disability fund.

**Students also Notes with concern**

That it can create a barrier to students you may want to progress to Higher Education, further studies or training.

**Congress Therefore Mandates**

The VP Welfare to lobby the Department of Education and to extend financial supports to FE Students.

## (Expiring) 15 WE 13 Mental Health Awareness

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 WITH MINOR AMENDMENT – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress acknowledges**

The success of mental health awareness through the ‘Chats for Change’ and ‘See Change’ campaigns which have a significant focus on talking to someone about mental health and an individual’s well-being.

**Congress notes**

That although talking is a crucial message to the campaigns, some individuals require the use of Anti-depressants or Anti-Anxiety medication etc.

**Congress Further notes**

That the lack of information around the use of medication can lead to stigmatisation of individuals who use medication for mental health issues and can cause a great deal of distress for individuals who have the use of medication suggested to them upon presenting to a GP on a mental health issue.

**Congress therefore mandates**

The Vice-President for Welfare to include information on medication in relation to mental health issues as part of their on-going mental health campaigns.

## (Expiring) 15 WE 25 Gambling

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes**

The addictive nature of gambling and how easily accessible gambling can be with development of apps such as Paddy Power and close proximity of betting outlets to third level campuses.

**Congress notes with concern**

Evidence of gambling that is frequently appearing on bank statements through Student Assistance Fund Applications and the number of students who are faced with growing debt problems due to gambling.

**Congress further notes**

In an article on the Irish Examiner last March, Paul Mullins of Aiseiri, warns that among under-25s, as many as 90% start gambling on a handheld device. The alarming aspect of online gambling is that it reverses the trend of normal gambling given that it is overwhelmingly dominated by those under 25.

The Institute of Public Health said its studies indicated that gambling among young people was thought to be three times more prevalent than those aged over 21 years – a trend entirely attributed to online sites.

**Congress Mandates**

The Vice President for Welfare to work with the relevant organisations to develop a campaign to inform students of the effects of gambling and recognising an addiction.

## (Expiring) 10 WEL 2 STUDENT PREGNANCY

**Congress notes:**

The lack of policy and support in the area of student parenting, both for student mothers and students Fathers.

**Congress further notes:**

That while staff who fall pregnant are recognised under equality law, students exist within a grey area of legislation in this sector and subject to discrimination as the college chooses in terms of concessions and special accommodations.

**Congress applauds:**

The efforts of institutions such as Mary Immaculate College in the formation of a student parent liaison officer.

**Congress mandates:**

The Welfare and Equality Officers to research best practice policies on student parents both within Ireland, the UK and beyond with a view to formulate a template for local COs to negotiate with their institutions.

The Welfare and Equality Officers to meet and work with relevant organisations with a view to formulating a policy document for Welfare officers and other relevant CO officers as to how best to support student parents and what supports are needed. Union of

Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 14 - - 14 –

The Welfare and Equality Officers to HEI authorities for better provisions and rights for student parents.

## (Expiring) 10 WEL 11 NON- ACADEMIC SERVICES

**Congress notes:**

The current lack of quality assurance systems with regards to an Irish National Policy Framework for non-academic students services provided by the third level institution, such as health centres, counselling services etc.

**Congress further notes:**

The importance of quality assurance with regard to non-academic aspects of student services.

**Congress recognizes:**

The value of the overall student experience within the higher education system in Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and the Welfare Officer to lobby the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education for the formation of a non-academic student services policy relating to quality assurance.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

REAPPROVED 2015

**Congress notes:**

That in order to communicate with students with disabilities, the USI Equality Campaign is reliant on Disability Support Services and Access Offices in each third level campus. Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 51 - - 51 –

**Congress further notes:**

That this year there have been significant difficulties in reaching out to students with disabilities in third level colleges.

**Congress also notes:**

That these difficulties are not specific to USI and are also experienced by other organisations working in this area.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality Officer to make it a priority of 2010/2011 to design a system whereby USI Equality can connect directly with students with disabilities in third level and to seek assistance from members of Officer Board, USI staff and external organisations on how best to achieve this.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 4 Communicating with Part Time Officers

**Conference notes:**

That part time officers exist in each CO who work in the area of equality

**Conference also notes:**

That these officers are elected at different times in different colleges and so it is difficult to organise a networking event at the beginning of the year

**Conference believes:**

Part time officers stand to gain a lot from being involved w ith the USI Equality Campaign

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to meet individually with relevant part time officers once they are elected and outline the positive benefits getting involved in USI Equality can have.

**Conference also mandates:**

The Equality Officer to maintain contact with part time officers by circulating a campaign update email once per fortnight

**Conference further mandates:**

The Equality Officer to compile a contact list for part time officers and to circulate this to Equality Working Group as early as possible in the year.

## (Expiring) 2018 NA 3 : 24/7 Cardiac Care for the South East

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

Waterford and the extended South East including the student population have Cardiac Cover in University Hospital Waterford Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

**Congress further notes:**

The People of the South East are at a serious risk as are students with the lack of this essential facility which is currently being provided in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway as a 24/7 365 days a year service.

**Congress Mandates:**

The USI President and Welfare Officer to lobby the Minister for Health and any other relevant decision makers in the Government stating the absolute need for 24/7 365 Cardiac Care for the South East in UHW with the aim of this service being provided as soon as possible.

## (Expiring) 2018 NA 4 : Seanad Reform

Proposed by the President of USI

**Congress notes:**

Prior to the 7th amendment, it was a constitutional requirement that three members of Seanad Éireann, be elected by the graduates of the National University of Ireland and three by the graduates of the University of Dublin (Trinity College).

**Congress further notes:**

The 7th amendment to Bunreacht na hÉireann passed by referendum on the 5th of July 1979 with a majority of 92.4%. This amendment allowed for six senators to be elected by the graduates of any institutions of higher education in any manner that might be determined by law by the Oireachtas (parliament).

**Congress notes with concern:**

That there has been no legislative change in reforming the University Constituencies since the passing of the referendum almost 40 years ago.

**Congress believes:**

That the current electoral system is elitist and is disengaged from the majority of citizens **Congress applauds:**

The Manning report that was launched in 2015, recommending reforms to the Elections, powers and reforms of the Seanad.

**Congress mandates:**

The President to lobby the government to implement the recommendations from the Manning Report.

**Congress further mandates:**

The President to lobby for a proposed amendment to the constitution to reform the Seanad including, but not limited to, the removal of 11 seats being nominated by the Taoiseach and the stipulation that all voting be by secret postal ballot.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 10 NATIONAL PROPERTY SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

**Congress notes:**

The findings of the Auctioneering/Estate Agency Review Group established by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform, that the existing statutory framework for the property sector in the Republic of Ireland is outdated, inappropriate and inadequate for the present day market and does not provide any ongoing official supervisory, disciplinary or consumer redress system.

**Congress further notes:**

That to address these shortcomings, the Review Group recommended the establishment of a Regulatory Authority to achieve uniformity and transparency in licensing, regulation and provision of information to the public in relation to the property sector.

**Congress understands:**

That the Minister for Justice and Law Reform has established the National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA) as the agency to carry out this function.

**Congress believes:**

That this is a hugely positive step by Government to regulate the property sector. At a time where many businesses are facing liquidation, receivership, and other financial difficulties, adequate governance is required more than ever. Furthermore, the enactment of this legislation to empower this regulatory authority would provide a significant support to our members along with all tenants nationwide.

**Congress mandates the President and Vice President for Welfare:**

To voice the support of the USI; before the end of the calendar year 2012, for the establishment of the National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA).

**Congress further mandates the President and Vice President for Welfare:**

To lobby the Minister for Justice and Law Reform; before the end of the calendar year 2012, to ensure the swift and secure enactment of this legislation.

## (Expiring) 2018 IA 1 : Graduate USA Visa

Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

**Congress notes:**

The popularity of the 1 Year USA Graduate Programme among Irish Graduates, which gives an opportunity to intern in the USA for 1 year without having any pre-arranged internship before travelling.

**Congress believes:**

The 1 Year USA Graduate Programme provides an excellent opportunity for Irish Graduates to gain invaluable experience in launching their careers.

**Congress further notes:**

The short timeframe graduates have to demonstrate their worth to employers, from beginning employment to requesting that employers being the sponsorship process. **Congress also believes:**

Many participants of the programme are denied sponsorship by employers due to an insufficient amount of time to demonstrate their skills and worth.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President to lobby the relevant Irish and US Departments (i.e. the US State Department, Department of Labour and Department of Homeland Security), to extend the one year limit to two years, if requested by a participant of the programme who is currently in employment.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO1 : Location of National Council

Proposed by Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress believes:**

That all MOs should have an equal chance of hosting meetings of National Council

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President to ensure that the location of National Council, should cycle between regions, ensuring that a full cycle of the four regions must be concluded before an MO from a previous host region may reapply. A lottery system should be used if more than 1 MO from a region is interested in hosting.

**Congress therefore deletes:**

15 UO21 National Council Decentralisation

## (Expiring) 2018 UO9 : Student Levies

Proposed by Maynooth University Students’ Union

**Congress Notes**

That many MOs assist in the delivery of student levies for the HEIs.

**Congress Notes with Concern**

That sometimes promises or commitments made by HEIs in the lead up to student levy referendums are not always honoured or acted upon after the passing of referendums.

**Congress Therefore Mandates**

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to draft a set of guidelines highlighting an indicative list of guarantees or assurances MO’s should seek and obtain from HEIs before deciding to engage in the implementation of a student levy for the HEI.

**Congress Further Mandates**

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to collate and maintain an annual dossier of details on the current and any known proposed levy models, including but not limited to levy rate, levy lifetime, percentage contribution of levy funds to projects etc, as to keep a record of developments and changes as they occur.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO15 : Pre Budget Submission

Proposed by the Presidents’ Working Group

**Congress notes:**

That the Government accept submission on budget proposals each year.

**Congress mandates:**

The President to ensure that USI submit a pre-budget submission, based on mandates from congress, and that a Lobbying day is organised to discuss this submission with members of the Oireachtas. This is to take place before the Dáil’s Summer recess each year.

**Congress therefore deletes:**

11 UO 3

## (Expiring) 2018 UO21 : Officer Report Transparency

Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

That Officer report transparency is important when it comes to trusting the good work done by the Officerboard.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

Officerboard to provide their expenses claimed and taken on their officer report at each National Council.

## (Expiring) 10 UO 10 AREA OFFICER ROLE

**Congress recognizes:**

The difficulty for both COs and Area Officers in defining the role of the Area Officer and utilizing it to its full potential.

**Congress believes:**

That in order for the role to be successful, the onus should be on both the Officer themselves and on COs. However, this is difficult as there are no definite guidelines as to what an Area Officer‟s role is.

The following should be the minimum expected from an Area Officer:

* A minimum of one visit to each CO in between National Councils.
* A minimum of one week‟s notice to COs about this visit (unless CO requests Area Officer in a shorter period of time).
* Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 30 - - 30 -
* To organise a number of bonding events throughout the year. This should be approved by all COs and ensure that all are available to attend. And if all COs cannot attend, that those not available are happy the event takes place without them.
* To assist COs whenever requested in the run up to or during campaigns.
* To organise a number of regional councils during the year - the calendar of these should be agreed on at the first Regional Council of the year.
* That when requested, the Area Officer will attend Class Councils to update class reps on what USI has been doing and what the future plans of the USI are. COs are asked to invite the Area Officers to at least two Class Councils in the year.
* To speak to the media on behalf of the region and act as the main spokesperson on issues effecting students of their relevant area.
* To provide a detailed weekly report on their activities, both to COs and the President and Deputy President.
* To assist the Deputy President in organizing any protests or rallies, which COs have requested.
* To keep Officers based in HQ informed of the issues and activities happening in their area.
* To give an adequate cross over consisting of any further advice gained from holding office to their successor outlining issues which may be ongoing in certain COs, the main issues they face as an officer that year and how best to interact with their COs.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Area Officer to outline their role to their COs at the first regional council of the year.

## (Expiring) 2018 IL 5 : Gaeltacht Requirement for Student Teachers

Proposed by St Angela’s College Sligo Students’ Union

**Congress Notes**

The high cost of attending courses in the Gaeltacht combined with the difficulties student teachers face when registering with the Teaching Council. When registering with the Teaching Council, obstacles facing students are not limited to cost. Students must prove their Gaeltacht experience in order to gain a teaching council number.

**Tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Dheara**

Na deacrachtaí móra atá ann le haghaidh an mhic léinn mhúinteoireachta agus iad ag iarraidh clarú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta. Chomh maith leis sin bíonn sé anchostasach dóibh. Ní hamháin teoraineacha airgeadais atá i gceist. Caithfidh an mhic léinn mhúinteoireachta fianaise a léiriú chun uimhir a fháil.

**Congress Understands**

The need for clarity on what can be described as a verifiable Gaeltacht experience. Both work and study placements undertaken in the Gaeltacht have the capacity to enhance a students’ academic and personal development.

**Anuas ar sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi dheara**

Cén sórt tréimhse Gaeltachta atá ag teastáil agus conas is féidir fianaise a thabhairt. Is féidir le tréimhse Gaeltachta cumais acadúil agus forbairt phearsanta na dalta a fheabhsú

**Congress Therefore Mandates**

The VP for the Irish Language and the VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the Teaching Council and the Department of Education for achievable learning outcomes, clarity and increased financial support.

**Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil**

An LU don Ghaeilge agus an VP AA stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar an Roinn Oideachais agus an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta chun torthaí foghlama, soiléire agus níos mó tacaíocht airgeadais.

**This motion repeals:**

15 GA 3 and 12 AA 6

## (Expiring) 2018 IL 6 : Inclusion of Irish in USI campaigns

Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students’ Union with amendments also moved by them

**Congress commends:**

All the work USI has done thus far on the promotion of the Irish language

**Congress also notes:**

The need for Irish to be integrated into all campaigns run by USI

**Congress mandates:**

That the Leas Uachtaran don Ghaeilge work with relevant policy officers, in so far as is possible, to strive to include the Irish language in all USI campaigns and on promotional materials including but not limited to t-shirts, posters and cups and to also include the Irish Language in themed roadshows.

15 GA 1 Seimineár Gaeilge/ Irish Language Seminar **Aithníonn an Chomhdháil**:

An tábhacht a bhaineann le Cumainn Ghaelacha ar dul chun cinn na Gaeilge, agus in úsáid na Gaeilge i gColáistí tríú leibhéal ar fud na tíre.

**Sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil:**

Leas-Uachtarán Ghaeilge seimineár bhliantúil a heagrú, i bpáirt le heagraíochtaí eile, agus Roinn na dTeangacha in Institiúidí Oideachais, agus béim speisialta a chuir in earnáil na Gaeilge, Meáin na Gaeilge, agus gníomhaíocht i saol na Gaeilge.

**Congress Notes:**

The importance that Cumann Gaelacha have in the usage, and promotion of Irish in 3rd level institutions across the country.

**Congress Mandates:**

The LU Gaeilge to organise an annual seminar, in conjunction with other organisations, and Language Departments in Educational Institutions, 3rd Level Students, with special emphasis on the Irish Language sector, Irish Language Media, and Irish Language Activism.

## (Expiring) 15 CZN 7 General Election Campaign

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes**

That General Election will happen in the next 18 months with the likelihood of a new Government.

**Congress also notes**

This is an opportunity for USI to lobby and assure students’ interests are provided for in the next program for Government

**Congress therefore mandates**

The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write ‘the Student Manifesto’ to highlight USI’s key demands from political parties.

**Congress also mandates**

The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write ‘the Student Guide to the General Election’ which will inform the general student body on the election relevant to student issues and interests.

# UNPRIORITISED: Policy due to expire having received no priority votes

The following motions have received no priority votes from any Member Organisation and will therefore cease to be the policy of USI upon the close of USI Congress 2021.

# ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & QUALITY ASSURANCE

## (Expiring) NC18 AAQA 1 : Engaging Postgraduate Issues

Proposed by: Vice President for Academic Affairs

**National Council recognises**

That the USI membership includes a large body of postgraduate students, and that there is currently no dedicated event or campaign focused on their issues.

**National Council further recognises**

That in order to fully represent postgraduate students, to engage them in our work, and to build the capacity of our Member Organisations (MOs) in this crucial area of union development, it is imperative that there is an annual event focused on those issues.

**National Council mandates**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, alongside the Officerboard, to run an event aimed at engaging postgraduate students in the work of USI, developing the postgraduate student voice nationally, and building the capacity of MOs to represent postgraduate issues. This annual event should take place in the second semester of the academic year.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 1 : Integrated Pharmacy Masters Campaign

Proposed by University College Cork Students’ Union

**Congress Notes:**

A new integrated Pharmacy Masters’ degree has been introduced in Ireland, beginning with the Pharmacy class of 2020. As a result of the new masters, Pharmacy students are no longer authorised to receive payment for their mandatory placements in every phase of the degree. Additionally, they are no longer able to take an international placement, thus driving up the competitive nature of the placements in Ireland for many students. Fees have also increased substantially for the final year of the course to €7500; this fee increase places it in direct contrast with medicine students, who pay the same fee for all 5 years of their degree.

**Congress Further Notes:**

This issue affects all three schools of Pharmacy in Ireland, which includes students in University College Cork, the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, and Trinity College Dublin. **Congress Believes:**

That all students should be paid a fair wage for the placement work they undertake as part of their degree courses, and that, following on from successful campaigns for nursing students in recent years, pharmacy students are entitled to the same right to payment, as they have been in the past.

**Congress Therfore Mandates:**

That USI campaign in favour of the restoration of paid placement for Pharmacy Students nationwide, and lobby relevant parties for the reduction of fees of the final year of Pharmacy Masters.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 2 : Back to Education Allowance Strategy

Proposed by Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress:**

Repeals 16 AA

**Congress Adopts:**

The proposed Amended Back to Education Allowance reform paper.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 13 : Postgraduate Students Strategy

Proposed by the Postgraduate Affairs Working Group

**Congress adopts**

The Postgraduate Students Strategy.

## (Expiring) 2018 AA 17 : European Education Area

Proposed by: Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

The proposed European Education Area (EEA) and new “Sorbonne Process”.

Congress notes with concern

That this new EEA is being developed by the European Union, and may potentially create conflicts of interest with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the further development of the Bologna Process, of which USI is highly supportive.

Congress believes

That judgement on the EEA should be reserved, and that without concrete proposals from the European Commission, the EEA may create a “two-tier Bologna” that will inevitably further a destructive agenda of competition in Higher Education across Europe.

Congress further notes

The potential creation of a European Student Card under this new process, and the pilot initiative, in relation to the potential roll-out of the card, currently being undertaken by the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland (CSSI).

Congress notes with concern

That the purpose and parameters of this Student Card has not been clearly defined, and may represent a move to hold student data at a European level, without real consultation from students.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to liaise with the European Students’ Union (ESU) and continually update National Council on developments of the EEA.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs and Vice President Welfare to ensure the voice of USI members is heard through the Irish pilot of the European Student Card being rolled out by the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland.

## (Expiring) 15 AAQA 11

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.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

REAPPROVED 2015

**Congress notes:**

That in order to communicate with students with disabilities, the USI Equality Campaign is reliant on Disability Support Services and Access Offices in each third level campus. Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 51 - - 51 –

**Congress further notes:**

That this year there have been significant difficulties in reaching out to students with disabilities in third level colleges.

**Congress also notes:**

That these difficulties are not specific to USI and are also experienced by other organisations working in this area.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality Officer to make it a priority of 2010/2011 to design a system whereby USI Equality can connect directly with students with disabilities in third level and to seek assistance from members of Officer Board, USI staff and external organisations on how best to achieve this.

## (Expiring) 09 ED 2 STUDENT LOANS/GRADUATE TAX

REAPPROVED 2015 and (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the principle that education should be accessible to all people, has always been a core value of the student movement.

**Congress strongly believes:**

That education is a public and social good, which benefits not only the individual but the wider society. It should therefore be paid through progressive taxation like all public services. Investing in education is one of the most important investments we can make; not only does having an educated population strengthen our economy, but graduates pay on average 70% more in tax and have thus directly repaid the cost of their degree through taxation within ten years. Providing education to all citizens equally is fundamental principle for any fair society.

**Congress notes:**

The 2005 study in the UK by Professor Claire Callender and Jonathan Jackson that shows that for those on lower or middle income backgrounds in the UK, the fear of debt is a significant barrier to entry to third level education in the UK. This is a result of the student loans system in the UK.

**Congress also notes:**

The research by Professor Kathleen Lynch of UCD’s equality studies centre on the Australian HECS system that shows the detrimental impact that a deferred loans system can have on equity of access to third level and on increasing student impoverishment. **Congress notes:**

That Australia’s education minister Julia Gillard has described the HECS student loans system as “at best complex and at worst anomalous, inconsistent and irrational”.

**Congress also notes:**

That the fairest and most egalitarian way of paying for higher education is through a progressive taxation system.

**Congress condemns:**

The suggestions by minister for education Batt O’Keeffe that an Australian-style student loans system might be introduced in Ireland, at the same time as the Australian government itself is recognising that the system doesn’t work.

**Congress also opposes:**

The suggestions by some politicians for a graduate tax. Graduates already pay 70% more in tax than non-graduates, therefore a graduation tax is not necessary nor is it fair.

**Congress mandates:**

USI officer board to continue to oppose fees in any guise, including student loans and a graduate taxation system.

**Congress calls for:**

Investment through progressive taxation in a fair, equitable education system from primary to third level, whereby those on higher incomes pay higher taxes which funds all essential services. This is an investment in strengthening our economy as well as creating fairness in our society.

# WELFARE

## (Expiring) 18 EM 3 (WEL) : Survivor Support Campaigns

Proposed by NUI Galway Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

Legislation, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, does not favour the victim and that there are very little provisions put in place to support survivors of sexual assault and rape.

**Congress further notes:**

Issues regarding consent, sexual assault and rape has been to the forefront of media attention as of late. This may have an impact on future victims coming forward to report an assault. The only way this can change is for legislation to be re-written and/or added to and an improvement of provisions to be put in place for victim support. This will in turn change Irish cultures and protect the victim from personal attack.

**Congress believes:**

That the student movement has always been one to inspire great change within society and incite progressive legislation. We should unite once again to demand a change and to demand better victim support for future crimes reported.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice-President for Welfare and the Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to head up survivor support campaigns. This would unite MO’s across Ireland to come together and lead a movement towards a better legal and support system.

**Congress further mandates:**

That these campaigns, lead by USI, would promote local support groups in regional areas for victims of sexual assault. Congress also mandates that these campaigns be run within the first semester of the academic term to provide the best most efficient support to students.

## (Expiring) NC 18 WEL 1 : ASRA

Proposed by the USI VP Welfare

**Council Notes**

The many issues facing students when looking for student accommodation which is of an acceptable standard.

**Council Notes with Concern**

The escalating number of cramped and substandard accommodation that students are living in posing a number of health and safety risks to students across the island.

**Council Also Notes**

That ASRA, the Association for Student Residential Accommodation, is the leading representative organisation for student accommodation professionals throughout the UK and Ireland. ASRA represents student accommodation providers on a range of statutory boards and in various housing related organisations.

**Council Mandates**

The VP Welfare to work with ASRA to collectively in order to promote good standards in accommodation provision.

**Council Also Mandates**

The VP Welfare to seek a place on their committee/boards with the aim of having a continuous student voice within the organisation.

## (Expiring) NC 18 WEL 3: One for Ireland

Proposed by Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

**Council Believes:**

That youth mental health and homelessness are pressing social issues in Ireland today.

**Council Recognises:**

The annual fundraising weekend (March 30 - April 2, (Expiring) 2018 ) organised by charity One for Ireland, which comprises of a nationwide network of volunteers and businesses seeking to raise funds for charities in the youth mental health and homelessness sectors.

**Council Notes:**

The innovative cash-free fundraising model pioneered by One For Ireland.

**Council Further Notes:**

That the aims of One For Ireland are very closely aligned, and that USI can be of significant assistance to One For Ireland in their fundraising effort.

**Council therefore mandates:**

USI’s Regional Officers to support the work of One For Ireland in advance of their fundraising effort.

**Council Further Mandates:**

USI to support One For Ireland with promotion in advance of their fundraising effort.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 8 : Regional Food Banks

Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes**

Food banks acquire donations of edible but unmarketable food from the food industry. Food can be donated due to a wide variety of reasons; they may be mislabelled, overproduced, test -market items and products with short code dates or even sometimes at the end of the day canteens in colleges throw away food that is perfect for consumption.

**Congress further notes**

Students who are struggling financially could be able to get some food from a food bank at the end of the day.

**Congress mandates**

Regional Officers to assist local MO’s in setting up food banks for students in financial hardship, with their college canteens or other external sources.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 10 : Engagement with Irish Student Health Association (ISHA) members

Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students’ Union

**Congress notes**

That the health and wellbeing of the members of each MO is of great importance to USI.

**Congress further notes**

Student health services are very important part of HEI’s throughout country by caring for and engage with many students on a daily basis.

**Congress Believes**

That engaging with member organisations of the Irish Student Health Association is very beneficial to ensure that health and wellbeing campaigns run by USI are fully exposed to students and one clear consistent message is communicated throughout the country.

**Congress Therefore Mandates**

The Vice President for Welfare to communicate all relevant health & wellbeing campaigns in advance with ISHA and member organisations of ISHA

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 11 : Smoking Cessation Campaign

Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students’ Union

**Congress notes**

USI,HSE & DRUGS.IE have run campaigns on the dangers of drug use, but have neglected to highlight the dangers of smoking regular tobacco cigarettes and electronic cigarettes and how addictive they are.

**Congress Believes**

That educating students about the dangers of smoking regular tobacco cigarettes and electronic cigarettes may lead to a decrease in use.

**Congress Therefore Mandates**

The Vice President for Welfare to carry out comprehensive national campaigns on smoking cessation and the dangers of smoking.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 14 : Cura Disassociation

Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

REFERRED AND PASSED AT NATIONAL COUNCIL. INTERIM POLICY, TO COME TO CONGRESS 2019.

**Congress Notes**

The support that pregnant people may need during a crisis pregnancy is non-judgemental, unbiased and factual.

**Congress Notes**

Cura does not provide contact details for abortion clinics, or information on abortion services.

**Congress Notes with Concern**

That Cura only provides two options during pregnancy counselling which can cause unnecessary pressure and lack of knowledge to make an informed choice.

**Congress Mandates**

The Vice President for Welfare to ensure that all information disseminated from USI is from organisations that provide all options to those seeking counsel on information relating to pregnancy.

**Congress also Mandates**

USI and the Vice President for Welfare to officially dissociate from Cura by ensuring information from them is not disseminated in any USI materials or campaigns relating to Cura.

## (Expiring) 2018 WEL 16: Expert Consent Advisory Group

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

**Congress Notes**

Existing USI policy on Train the Trainer consent workshops to be rolled out by USI.

**Congress Notes with concern**

The severity of issues surrounding consent that students across the island of Ireland face on a daily basis.

**Congress also Notes**

The work undertaken by other organisations on consent and the level of expertise and experience they hold in this area.

**Congress Mandates**

The VP Welfare to organise an expert advisory group to advise on the roll out of Train the Trainer consent classes.

## (Expiring) 12 WEL 3 SEXUAL HEALTH WEBSITE

**Congress notes:**

There is large amount of paper material distributed in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.

**Congress recognizes:**

The lack of a one-stop shop for sexual health information and support services on line.

**Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:**

To develop an all-inclusive web site which will contain relevant information about sexual health that can be used in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.

## (Expiring) 12 WEL 5 EXAM STRESS PACKS

**Congress notes:**

That many students experience, incidences of elevated stress and anxiety around the examination period.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The affects of increased stress and anxiety on students’ physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and the subsequent impact on their examination performance.

**Congress congratulates:**

The Welfare Officer and members of Officerboard for their hard work in tacking issues surrounding students’ physical, mental, and emotional welfare.

**Congress believes:**

That students should be provided with adequate support and guidance around the issue of stress and anxiety, including how to diagnose the condition, what affects it has on students, what self help techniques are recommended, and general management advice.

**Congress mandates the Vice President for Welfare:**

To develop and source a stress pack and booklet to be distributed to MO’s before the winter and summer exams. These should be available for December 2012.

## (Expiring) 12 WEL 14 EXAM STRESS CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The work that MOs put into Exam Stress Campaigns across the Country in the run up to Exams.

**Congress further notes:**

The lack of support on a National Level to the roll out of these Campaigns and the lack of an overall Exam Stress Campaign.

**Congress mandates the VP/South, VP/BMW and the Welfare Officer:**

To investigate the possibility of sourcing the materials, supplying and distributing ‘Exam Stress Packs’ to the MOs along with a resource pack that contains information on support services for the students.

## (Expiring) 10 WEL 7 SEXUAL HEALTH

**Congress notes with concern:**

The worrying lack of information and knowledge among Student Health Services and other college supports about issues pertaining to lesbian sexual health.

**Congress further notes:**

That oftentimes, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or queer are unaware of lesbian sexual health issues.

**Congress mandates:**

The Welfare Officer to work with the LGBT RO to ensure that the sexual health module at UOS also covers lesbian sexual health issues; so that the welfare officers can be equipped with the knowledge to deal with these issues.

## EQUALITY

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 1 CIVIL PARTNERSHIP BILL

**Congress notes:**

That the proposed Civil Partnership Bill falls short of offering members of the LGBT community many of the same rights and responsibilities offered by Civil Marriage to the heterosexual community.

**Congress further notes:**

That as it currently stands the Bill is unacceptable to the LGBT community.

**Congress recognizes:**

That the LGBT campaign is an integral part of USI and many LGBT students would like to see a national campaign on this issue.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Deputy President, the Equality Officer and the LGBT Rights Officer to work together to roll out a national campaign highlighting the issue and to lobby the government on this issue.

**Congress further mandates:**

That the Deputy President, Equality Officer and LGBT RO work with other LGBT interest groups on the Civil Marriage campaign, for example LGBT NOISE and Marriage Equality.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 2 MIGRANT STUDENTS

**Congress notes:**

That Erasmus, EU and non EEA (European Economic Area) students have access to dedicated support services in third level colleges.

**Congress further notes:**

That there are clear policy guidelines on issues affecting Erasmus, EU and non EEA students with regard student fees, leave to remain in Ireland and the right to work while studying.

**Congress recognizes:**

That the same level of service and policy does not exist for migrants, children of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and/or children of same, some of whom are now completing primary and secondary education in Ireland.

**Congress believes:**

That these groups are entitled to receive a third level education in Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality Officer to investigate what government and HEI policies exist in this area and to collate the responses in a position paper accompanied by suggestions for future actions. Such a position paper should be presented to National Council prior to Congress 2011.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 5 Negative Stereotypes in Irish Media

**Conference notes:**

That often minority groups are represented poorly in both national and local print media in Ireland.

**Conference regrets:**

That over the past 12 months there has been an increase in the number of such articles, in particular on the issue of access of third level education

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer and all members of Equality Working to respond and counteract negative images and stereotypes of minority students in the media through letters to the editor of the publication involved.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 6 Students Attitude to Equality

**Conference notes:**

The recent research by the Equality & Rights Alliance into Irish attitudes on equality.

**Conference also notes:**

The research is not specific to student attitudes

**Conference believes:**

That the Equality Campaign cannot be effective in campaigning on equality until it establishes what students think about the issues involved.

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to commission a nationwide student survey on attitudes to equality in third level education and to use the results of this survey to inform the equality campaign going forward.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 7 Online Campaigning

**Conference notes:**

The necessity for USI Equality to campaign through various online media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Blogging.

**Conference also notes:**

The increasing success of the current online activities of the USI Equality Campaign. **Conference mandates:**

Equality Working Group to continue utilising online media to further the aims of the campaign.

**Conference further mandates:**

All members of Equality Working Group to write a blog on an issue relevant to the campaign at least once a month.

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to run competitions through online media in order to encourage students to be more interactive with the campaign.

## (Expiring) 10 EQ 8 Branding USI Equality

**Conference notes**

The success of the rebranding of the USI Equality Campaign in rejuvenating the image of the campaign among students, COs and NGOs

**Conference mandates**

The Equality Officer and Equality Working Group to continue to use the new logos and colour coding in all aspects of the Equality Campaign.

## (Expiring) 09 EQ 4 USI RAINBOW WEEK

**Conference notes:**

That “Rainbow Week” is not thoroughly recognised within all affiliated colleges.

**Conference also mandates:**

The LGBT RO to communicate with the Students Unions and the LGBT societies and assist in the organisation of the Rainbow Weeks to those colleges that need assistance.

# Mature Students

## (Expiring) 10 MS 2 Mature Students Officer

REAPPROVED 2015 and (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Conference notes:**

The high increase in the number of mature students attending third level education

**Conference also notes:**

That increasing access to lifelong learning and creating diverse student populations is to be welcomed

**Conference is aware:**

That mature students have additional needs and that these are often not represented at local level in colleges

**Conference believes that:**

In order to represent the needs of mature students, each student union should have a part time mature student representative **Conference therefore mandates:**

The Mature Students Officer to lobby local COs to create part time mature student officer positions and to assist all unions in the development of this position.

# National Affairs

## (Expiring) 15 NA 7 Alcohol Advertising in Sport

**Congress notes**

The influence alcohol advertising in sport has on young people.

**Congress notes with concern**

In January 2015, plans to allow a legislative clause which would eventually allow for the banning of alcohol sponsorship of sports have been dropped.

**Congress mandates**

The Vice President Welfare to campaign with Alcohol Action Ireland for such a ban to be introduced.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 1 CHILDRENS’ RIGHTS

**Congress notes:**

The absence of legislation in Ireland in relation to the protection of children.

**Congress further notes:**

The contents of the Cloyne, Ryan and Murphy Reports.

**Congress recognises:**

That we, as a society, fail to protect vulnerable children.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

USI Officerboard to actively support the proposed referendum on children’s’ rights, to work with Campaign for Children and other organisations in favour of the referendum, and to actively encourage and facilitate MOs to get involved in the campaign. This motion shall continue to be in force for the next three years or until such time as the referendum has passed.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 2 CROKE PARK AGREEMENT

**Congress notes:**

The Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement) imposes a moratorium on public sector recruitment and guarantees no compulsory pay cuts to public sector staff until at least 2014.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The lack of employment for graduates resulting from the recruitment freeze stipulated by the Croke Park agreement and that the public sector pay freezes have resulted in less money being available in the budgets of Educational Institutions for non-pay expenditure such as student services.

**Congress believes:**

That the Croke Park agreement has had a negative effect on students’ education and employment prospects.

**Congress mandates:**

That USI calls for the renegotiation of the Croke Park Agreement.

**Congress further mandates:**

The President to pursue a renegotiation of the Croke Park agreement at the Lobby of the Oireachtas & to propose a more student-friendly alternative which will still endeavour to respect the rights of public sector employees.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 5 REFORM OF THE IRISH CONSTITUTION

**Congress notes:**

The inherently Catholic ethos of the Irish Constitution/Bunreacht na hÉireann.

**Congress further notes:**

USI policy in the areas of marriage equality and abortion.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That the Catholic nature of the Constitution prohibits any legislation which may seek positive, fair and just advancement in these areas, areas in which USI has campaigned tirelessly for decades.

**Congress believes:**

That the Constitution of Ireland should be wholly secular in nature, and that no one religion deserves constitutional supremacy over all others, nor should any one religion influence the laws of the State.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Campaigns and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for a seat for USI on the soon-to-be established National Constitutional Review Committee and to make known USI’s desire for a secular Constitution, lobbying to ensure that areas such as the definition of marriage etc. are in line with USI policies. This mandate must be fulfilled prior to the national Constitutional review taking place.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 8 PUBLIC & CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT EMBARGO

**Congress notes:**

The difficulties caused by the current Public & Civil Service Recruitment Embargo and the employment control framework in operation in the Higher Education Sector.

**Congress further notes:**

That Ireland has a huge problem with Graduate Unemployment and that many of our best and brightest are being forced to emigrate.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President and VP/Campaigns to lobby for a root and branch review of all areas of the public and civil service. This review would enable the Government to create a public and civil service that is appropriate for a modern Ireland. By creating a modern civil and public service the Government would be in a position to lift the embargo and recruit graduates into frontline services and other areas appropriate for a modern Ireland.

## (Expiring) 12 / NA 9 GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT & EMIGRATION

**Congress welcomes:**

The progress made to the date on the implementation of the USI Reigniting the Smart Economy Policy adopted at Congress 2011.

**Congress also welcomes:**

The announcement of the Job Bridge, National Internship Scheme in June 2011.

**Congress notes with grave concern:**

Recent figures that over 100 Irish people are emigrating every day. Large scale emigration has hugely negative social and economic consequences for communities across the country.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and VP Campaigns to launch a large scale campaign to force Government to tackle the problems of Graduate Unemployment & Emigration and to create the appropriate environment for job creation.

**Congress further mandates:**

The President and VP Campaigns to lobby for the following amendments to the Job Bridge Scheme.

A reduction in the Job Bridge criteria from 12 weeks to 4 weeks.

The modification of the Social Welfare Code to enable employers to give a modest stipend to interns.

That Job Bridge interns under the age of 25 qualify for the maximum rate of Job

Seekers Benefit.

Vetting of Internships on Job Bridge site.

This mandate shall expire after a period of 3 years if it is not re-approved by Congress.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 10 MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS

**Congress notes with concern:**

Recent figures that 1 in 7 householders are struggling to repay mortgages due to the economic crisis.

**Congress further notes:**

That many students and families across the country have to make stark choices as to whether to

pay the mortgages, pay colleges fees or simply put food on the table to provide for their families.

**Congress also notes:**

That many families are not in a position to meet mortgage repayments because they have been made redundant or have had to close their business due to the economic crisis.

At present, families are bearing the full responsibility, that is losing their homes, for what can now be described as excessive lending by financial institutions. It is estimated that 36,000 mortgages are in arrears of three months or more and that 17,000 households are receiving mortgage interest supplement.

**Congress is concerned:**

That the financial crisis being experienced by students and families across the country is resulting increased levels of stress, anxiety and mental health issues.

**Congress mandates:**

The President, VP Equality and VP Campaigns to work with external organisations to campaign and lobby the Government to introduce measures that support families in situations where they are unable to repay their mortgage and to ensure that families do not lose their homes.

## (Expiring) 12 NA 12 EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The focus being put on producing work-ready, world-ready graduates by the 3rd Level sector.

**Congress further notes:**

The lack of clarity for many students around what graduate recruiters and employers are actively seeking in graduates

**Congress mandates:**

The Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Officer and the Campaigns Officer to roll out a nationwide campaign before June 1st 2013 with the aim to inform students on what skills make them more employable and opportunities they have to develop them.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Officer to investigate the feasibility of a national career guidance database/website for 3rd and 4th level students.

## (Expiring) 09 NA 4 Elections Campaign

**Congress applauds:**

The current USI policy on increasing the student vote.

**Congress mandates:**

The President to immediately begin lobbying all political parties with regard to student issues, specifically funding of third level education.

**Congress further mandates:**

Officer Board to prepare information regarding each party’s policies which relate to students so as to inform USI’s members.

**Congress also mandates:**

The President and Officer Board to immediately begin a campaign to improve student access to voting – through lobbying for weekend voting, on campus polling stations and reinstating the right to be registered at home and at college.

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Brunei is a country in Asia, that is governed by Sharia Law. As of from this week a law took effect whereby anyone engaging in queer intercourse or adulatory, would serve a sentence of death by stoning. This is not acceptable and a disgusting attack on human rights.

**Congress Mandates**

That USI officer-board leads a day of action, that will see students mobilized to show solidarity with those affected in Brunei.

**Congress Further Mandates**

That USI hosts a further day of action with letter drives calling the government to condemn and act as a lobbying power towards this to take a no tolerance stance on horrific, bigoted language.

NC18 IA 1 : To condemn the actions taken by the Government of Myanmar against the Rohingyan population.

Proposed by: Carlow College Students’ Union

**USI Notes:**

That due to ongoing ‘Clearance Operations’ in Burma, over 3000 Rohingya civilians have been killed, at least 140 villages have been burned down, and more than 200,000 people have been internally displaced, with a further 600,000 civilians having fled to Bangladesh.

**USI Also Notes:**

Little action has been taken at EU level to respond to the Rohingya Crisis.

**USI Therefore Mandates:**

The USI publicly denounce the ongoing ‘Clearance Operations’ currently being implemented by the Burmese Government.

The VP Equality & Citzienship to work with Amnesty International Ireland in the call to immediately end the military’s campaign of violence and human rights abuses and ensure free and unimpeded access to Rakhine state to humanitarian actors, the UN, independent journalists and human rights monitors and ensure their security.

## (Expiring) 2018 IA 2 : Justice and human rights for Palestine

Proposed by Queen’s University, Belfast Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

That the state of Israel is involved in a brutal military occupation of the Palestinian territories

The occupation is responsible for systematic, widespread and ongoing human rights abuses against the local Palestinian population, including destruction of homes, theft of land and water resources, imprisonment without trial, torture of prisoners, and construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

That the State of Israel is in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva

Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United

Nations. The settlements have also been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice and the UK government with Amnesty International stating that “Israel’s settlement policy is inherently discriminatory and has resulted in grave human rights violations including destruction of homes, forced evictions, unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions and collective punishment”.

**Congress believes:**

That Israel should end its occupation of the Palestinian territories and allow the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international law.

That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of person, selfdetermination, security and parity of esteem as all other peoples in the world today.

That a boycott of Israel’s entire regime of oppression, including all of the Israeli companies and institutions that are involved in its violations of international law, is a reasonable nonviolent activity that can be taken to register opposition to such crimes.

That the Palestinian led BDS campaign does not target anyone or anything based on identity, but rather based solely on complicity in denying Palestinian rights and that BDS is a strategy for effective solidarity, not a dogma or ideology and certainly not an attack upon Jewish communities or individuals.

**Congress mandates Officer Board:**

To inform MOs of the background to the situation in Israel/Palestine and to commemorate Palestine Solidarity Day, working with any relevant groups such as student societies and civil society organisations local to each of our campuses.

To lobby to divest from and terminate any contracts with companies that are complicit in the occupation of the Palestinian territories and violation of Palestinian human rights more widely

To join the global movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it ends the occupation and complies with international law.

# UNION ORGANISATION

## (Expiring) NC18 UO 1: Road Traffic Act

Proposed by the USI Vice President for Welfare

**Council Notes**

Research shows that alcohol is a factor in 38% of fatal crashes, yet Irish people continue to drink and drive. An average of 180 drivers are being arrested per week in 2017 on suspicion of driving under the influence.

**Council also notes**

Under the proposed legislation, drink driving offences committed at BAC levels between 50mg and 80mg will incur an automatic disqualification of 3 months instead of the current penalty of a €200 fine and 3 penalty points.

**Council Notes with Concern**

That the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 proposed by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport 13/07/2017 fell with the last government.

**Council also Notes with Concern**

Some rural TDs have suggested it is unfair - particularly for those in rural Ireland who cannot easily get home from the pub and many vested interest groups and their supporters continue to deny the factual evidence about drink driving

**Council Mandates**

The VP Welfare to actively lobby TD’s to support the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill 2017 and to collaborate with and support the work of the Road Safety Authority in striving to have the bill enacted.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO2 : Constitutional Development Support for MOs

Proposed by Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

That all Member Organisations are governed by their constitutions.

**Congress Recognises**:

Constitutional drafting and reform is a specialist undertaking, which requires significant time and expertise.

**Congress notes with Concern:**

The lack of national infrastructure available to MOs considering Constitutional Reform.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President to investigate the feasibility of developing a national infrastructure for Constitutional Reform for Member Organisations.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO4 : Sub-committees of National Council

Proposed by IT Carlow Students’ Union

Passed with Amendment submitted by the President of USI

**Congress recognises**

The importance of having members of National Council elected to sub-committees with specific purposes.

**Congress notes**

That these members are elected as representatives from each region to perform tasks such as but not limited to planning and evaluation. The members of National Council that are elected to sub-committees are accountable to National Council.

**Congress further notes**

That USI runs many events to improve participation from underrepresented groups at events, in elections and other initiatives.

**Congress mandates**

The President to ensure that minutes of sub-committees of National Council, including attendance registers, are made available to members of National Council.

**Congress further mandates**

USI to promote gender balance on sub-committees of National Council.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO5 : USI Commercial Strategy

Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

**Congress believes**

That USI should create a Commercial Strategy for the organisation.

**Congress also believes**

The implementation of this strategy is fundamentally important to the future development of USI, in terms of meeting strategic financial targets and adding value to USI membership.

**Congress Mandates**

The President of USI to oversee the creation and implementation of a USI Commercial Strategy.

**Congress repeals**

14 AF 2, 14 AF 3

## (Expiring) 2018 UO6 : Access breaks at Congress

Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union

**Congress notes:**

Long hours without breaks decreases attention span and productivity on Congress floor.

**Congress further notes**

That the increase in productivity from short breaks improves delegate performance and engagement.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That according to the constitution, “no formal business shall be conducted after 10:30pm”.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

That there must be a break each day during USI Congress between lunch and dinners. These breaks must not exceed 15 minutes.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO12 : Review of committee meeting preceding National Council

Proposed by the Presidents’ Working Group

**Congress Notes:**

That there are currently 10 constitution committees that usually take place the day of, or before a meeting of National Council.

**Congress Recognises:**

The difficulty in holding each of these committee meetings in a short space without a significant number clashing.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That part-time officers, who do not attend National Council are unable to engage with these committees.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President to review the current structure of committees preceding National Council meetings.

**Congress Further Mandates:**

The President to investigate the possibility of some of these committee meetings taking place seperate to National Council with the option of Video Conferencing.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO13 : Historical Record of the Mandate Manual and Policies

Proposed by the Presidents’ Working Group

**Congress notes:**

That currently, the USI Mandate Manual is a live document that is constantly changing.

**Congress Recognises:**

The importance of organisational memory in USI

**Congress Mandates:**

The President to ensure that a historical record of the Mandate manual for each year is recorded and made available online.

**Congress Further Mandates:**

That historical records of all policies and strategies are recorded and made available online after Congress each year.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO16 : Gender Equality on Finance Committee

Proposed by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

**Congress notes**

That gender balance at USI finance committee is an ongoing issue.

**Congress believes**

That USI should be a positive force for promoting the participation of our self-identifying female members at all levels.

**Congress notes**

The president nominates 4 people to finance committee; three qualified people from outside the Union, who are not members of the Union but may be serving Trustees, who can contribute by virtue of their experience, and one former President of the Union.

**Congress mandates**

The President insofar as practicable, to ensure their nominees are gender balanced.

## (Expiring) 2018 UO17 : Cur Chun Cinn Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann/Promotion of Irish Sign Language

Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

**Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara**

Gur aithníodh Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann mar tríú teanga oifigiúil i stát na hÉireann sa bhliain seo ag Dáil Éireann.

**Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara**

Go bhfuil níos mó ná mionteanga amháin in Éirinn, agus gur cheart fáilte a chur roimh Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann mar an tríú teanga oifigiúil.

**Tuigeann an Comhdháil**

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge bheith aireach ar mhionteangacha eile sa tír seo, agus gur féidir tacú leis an Teanga Comharthaíochta go héasca mar chuid d’fheachtasaíocht.

**Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil ar**

An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge an Teanga Comharthaíochta a thacú ina ról, agus chun ar a laghad ócáid amháin a chur ar siúl a thabharfaidh léargas ar an teanga agus deis do lucht na teanga sin a dteanga a chéiliúradh.

**Congress notes**

That Irish Sign Language has been recognised as a third official language in the Irish state in this year by Dáil Éireann.

**Congress further notes**

That there is more than one minority language in Ireland and that ISL should be welcomed as the third official language of the state.

**Congress understands**

That Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge should be mindful of other minority languages in this country, and it is possible to support ISL easily as a part of campaigning.

**Therefore, Congress mandates**

That LU don Ghaeilge should support ISL in their role, and to at least organise one event that will give an overview of the language and give an opportunity to the users of the language to celebrate the language.

## (Expiring) 12 UO 11 ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY

REAPPROVED 2015 and (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That this year USI has made a conscious effort to create an inclusive working environment to all Officers.

**Congress further notes:**

How important it is to be at the forefront of an access and inclusivity for all officers.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President to ensure that USI continues to ensure that it achieves appropriate and reasonable accommodations for all.

## (Expiring) 10 UO 21 CAMPAIGN HISTORY

**Congress notes:**

USI has a long and proud tradition when it comes to running effective campaigns which gather media attention and brings our issues to national attention.

**Congress also notes:**

We rely on anecdotal memory of what photo stunts/campaign strategies have been used in the past. Often the issues are the same for example, fees, equal rights etc.

**Congress mandates:**

The Deputy President to compile a database of previous campaigns under relevant headings. By doing this, we are building on our knowledge of what USI has achieved to date. Also, we can learn from what media campaigns have worked in the past and why.

## (Expiring) 10 UO 26 UNION ORGANISATION

**Congress notes:**

That it is essential that each constituent organisation of USI can hold USI Officer Board to account.

**Congress further notes:**

That the current system of accountability is not adequate in ensuring that each member of

Officer Board is meeting their mandates.

**Congress believes:**

That in the same way that Higher Education Institutes should offer a quality assurance scheme to its students; USI should provide its own quality assurance scheme as part of this effort for greater accountability.

**Congress mandates:**

Officer Board to establish a system of accountability, as detailed below, as part of an effort to improve accountability and quality assurance across the organisation.

Once elected, each member of Officer Board should present the first sitting of National Council with a plan of work for the year ahead, complete with key milestones and targets and displayed on a Gantt Chart, as is the industry standard for project management. This plan of work should reflect the policies laid down in the USI Policy Manual together with the tasks implied in the officer‟s job description and these should be prioritised accordingly.

The National Council have the option to accept the proposed plan of work , or reject it in which case the officer must return to the next National Council with a new proposal.

Progress on each item against the original plan of work must then be made known to all Constituent Organisations by means of a newsletter from each member of Officer Board on a fortnightly basis.

Failure to meet these targets, within 20 percent of the overall time allocation of each item, should then result in the Officer being held to account at the next sitting of National Council, The Officer will be fully entitled to due process in line with Article 5.8 of the USI Constitution and the law of the land.

Article 5.8 USI Constitution

The right of the students, through their Constituent Organisation, to call to account and instruct those charge with office, within the Union, to discipline and ultimately dismiss those who fail to carry out their responsibilities.

# IRISH LANGUAGE

## (Expiring) 2018 IL 4 : Tuairisc ar Oideachas na Gaeilge – Report on the Education of Irish

Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

**Tugann An Comhdháil faoi deara**

Go bhfuil neart polasaithe ar an fhód maidir le foghlaim agus oideachas na Gaeilge i meánscoileanna an Phoblacht na hÉireann, agus gur chuimsigh na rúin seo mórlach na rún don LU don Ghaeilge go stairiúil.

**Anuas air sin, tugann An Comhdháil faoi deara**

Go mbaineann tábhacht agus conspóid ar leith le teagasc na Gaeilge ag an dara leibhéal, le Gaelscolaíocht, agus le measúnú na teanga go ginearálta.

**Tuigeann An Comhdháil**

Go bhfuil neart polasaithe a bhaineann leis an oideachas ar an fhód, agus gur cheart tuairisc nó polasaí amháin a chruthú, ag tarraingt ar an dáta is déanaí chun polasaí sruthlíneach amháin a chur ar fáil a théann i ngleic le ceist na Gaeilge sa chóras oideachais.

**Mar sin, sainordaíonn An Comhdháil**

Ar an LU don Ghaeilge polasaí Oideachas na Gaeilge a chruthú ag cur ceist na Gaelscolaíochta, na hArdteiste, agus araile, san áireamh.

**Congress notes**

That many mandates exist regarding the learning and education of the Irish language in the secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland, and that these motions have historically encompassed many of the mandates of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge historically.

**Congress further notes**

That the question of Irish language education is both controversial and important at the second level, in the context of Gaelscoileanna, and with the question of assessment in general.

**Congress understands**

That many mandates related to education are currently in existence, and that it is right to produce one report or policy, drawing on the most recent data to create one streamlined policy that will deal with the question of the education of the Irish language.

**Therefore, Congress mandates**

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to create a policy/report on the education of the Irish language, taking Gaelscolaíocht, the Leaving Certificate, etc., into account.

## (Expiring) 15 GA 4 Seachtain na Gaeilge

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021 **Congress notes**

The importance social events have on the ability for student to practice, and use whatever Irish they have.

**Congress Mandates:**

The LU Gaeilge to organise an annual Seachtain na Gaeilge festival, in conjunction with Conradh na Gaeilge,

# CITIZENSHIP

20 CZN 1The Cost and Criteria of Irish Citizenship.

Proposed by the Equality and Citizenship Working Group.

**Congress notes**

The total fee to become an Irish citizen for an adult is ‚¬1145, consisting of an application fee of ‚¬175 and a fee to gain citizenship of ‚¬950. Furthermore the criteria to apply for citizenship includes having a period of 365 days\* (1 year) continuous reckonable residence in the State immediately before the date of application for naturalisation.

**Congress notes with concern**

This high cost acts as a barrier to many young people and students who wish to apply for citizenship, excluding them from being able to vote in certain Irish elections. Also, the restrictive criteria of having to stay in the country for 365 consecutive days limits opportunities for people who are hoping to apply to become Irish citizens.

**Congress mandates**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for a reduction in the cost of citizenship and to lobby for the continuous 365 residency in the state to be changed. "

## (Expiring) 2018 CZN 3 : Support the (Expiring) 2018 Civil Society Repeal Campaign

Proposed by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

**Congress commends**

The work of Students’ Unions around Ireland as ‘Students for Choice’, and the lobbying effort thus far for an early referendum date in (Expiring) 2018 , and to prepare students for the upcoming referendum in the Republic of Ireland.

**Congress notes**

USI’s membership of the coalition to repeal the 8th amendment and the national women’s council of Ireland, and the USI mandate to support the goals of the Abortion Rights

Campaign, and the strategy for referendum laid out in the USI Students for Choice strategy.

**Congress further notes**

The need for USI to ensure that the voices of minority communities affected by the 8th amendment, including students, transgender and non-binary people, as well as migrants in Ireland, are to the fore of the public debate ahead of the referendum.

**Congress supports**

The civil society campaign led by the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment, the National Women’s Council of Ireland, and the Abortion Rights campaign.

**Congress mandates**

USI to support the National Campaign, and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship and Vice President for Campaigns to further the successful development of ‘USI Students for Choice’ as the leading national voice for students during the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment.

## (Expiring) 12 CZN 2 STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

REAPPROVED (Expiring) 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That in order to help fund their education, many students take up a part time job.

**Congress welcomes:**

The decision to reverse the cut to the minimum wage, which targeted students in part time jobs who are already struggling financially.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That in many of these jobs, trade union membership is absent and in some places discouraged. Furthermore, many students are unaware of what their rights and entitlements are in relation to time off, payment and hours.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President of Equality and Citizenship to better inform students of their rights in the workplace by providing information that is set out by the LRC, NERA and Employment legislation. This mandate should be completed within the first quarter of the Academic Year.