# **Gary Tobin**

## Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

## Leas-Uachtarán don Iarthar, Lár-tíre agus Teorainn

Below is a general overview of the work which I carried out this year as the Vice President for the Border Midlands and Western Region USI. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to express my immense appreciation Firstly; To the Sabbatical officers of the BMW Region and my fellow exec officers and staff at the USI who it has been a pleasure to work with this year.

### Training, Supports and Engaging with MO’s

This year, it was important more than ever that officers were ready for the year ahead. I assisted with roll out of SUT, SUT+ and sat in as a support for other trainings such as Pink Training and REFLECT.

In addition, I worked alongside my fellow regionals together leading out on USI’s first ever national PTO training on Zoom as well as establishing a national PTO network comms via social media page.

I assisted MO’s on the ground with class rep training, providing overviews of USI and the meaning of being a rep establishing an early connection and relatability. I continued to attend class rep councils to provide updates from USI’s work and sat as a permanent chair on 4 class rep councils for MO’s. I thank MO’s for this opportunity.

Working with MO’s I provided weekly updates to the region and checked in with MO’s and sabbats on a weekly basis through phone or messages to keep up to date with local issues and to aid where possible. I also scheduled meetings with each MO team at the start of each term to discuss our work and goals together. For the BMW network I organised virtual regional bonding with officers and chaired the BMW working group and I incorporated opportunities for officers to network into the sessions.

### Campaigns/Events

I checked in with officers regularly to discuss local campaigns with them and offered supports where required. In some instances, I attended events as a moderator/tech support. I also gathered dates from the region so that national campaigns could coincide with local events where possible.

I terms of national campaigns, I sat in as secretary this year for the Campaigns strategy committee as well as the Campaigns working group which was very enjoyable. I communicated with BMW MO’s to ensure that they were informed and supported in the roll out of national campaigns and included these in CRC updates also.

Gathering important info from MO’s locally on National Issues such as Nursing and Social Care Placement and flagging WG’s regarding these became a main feature in this area of work also.

Campaigns of note included:

* EducationForAll,
* The USI Accommodation Bill
* Nurses & Midwives & Social Care Student Placement

I of course did not lead out on these and wish to commend the VP for Campaigns & Academic Affairs who did so with the utmost professionalism.

### Environmental Activism & Sustainability

In terms of policy work this year, I was primarily involved in sustainability, climate action and the environment. I also lead out on a number of initiatives such as the USI Plastic reduction campaign and European Youth Biodiversity position paper. Items of note included engaging with groups such as Stop Climate Chaos in their mass lobby of TD’s on the climate emergence as well as feeding into the National Climate Plan 2021 consultation process. Another organisation which we were heavily involved in was with Students Organising Sustainability (SOS) where we collaborated with international members in the sharing of ideas and resources as well as helping to expand the network of member organisations with similar goals.

I of course was not alone in these endeavours and wish to give a big shout out to the sustainability crew who I will fondly remember working with on these and their initiatives.

### TU Mergers

I made sure to check in regularly with MO’s undergoing the TU Merger process to discuss and evaluate with them their progress as each stage was met and I offered assistance, thoughts and advice where required.

A main role which I had in the CUA process was my sitting on the I-Note steering committee as an external advisor to work package 3 which focussed on the role out of student supports across the TU.

### Lobbying

Concerning matters of lobbying, I checked in with MO’s on the ground regularly to offer assistance where lobbying was to take place, often in the form of circulating templates and ensuring MO’s were informed on important issues and lobbying requests.

A main area of lobbying which I was directly involved in this year was in relation to the student Accommodation issue in the Galway/Roscommon constituency. I alongside VP’s for Welfare in both NUIGSU & GMITSU met with a majority of TD’s in this constituency to discuss accommodation and how students in the Galway area were affected by this.

I would like to thank the officers involved in this joint Union lobby for reaching out to include me in this process and for their efforts in raising this which in turn resulted in local TD’s joining to place additional pressure on accommodation providers in Galway to do right by the students.

### Media

Throughout the year I was involved in covering a number of local media requests within the BMW region. These were often in relation to National Campaigns and initiatives as well as to discussing and defending against arising issues concerning the national student body.

In my check ins with MO’s I checked in with individual officers following any media coverage which they engaged with and made sure that local MO’s relevant to the Radio stations in question were notified of my coverage.

### Other important areas of work that I wish to highlight include:

* Facilitating Pink training Eurovision with Clíodhna
* Organising Post NC Christmas Extravaganza with Megan
* Assisting with Motions ahead of Congress
* Work on PQ’s to government and PBS’s
* Crossover Docs for next team

Thank You.