Policy Due to Expire at USI Congress 2022

Policies discussed and decided three years or more ago may be less relevant to the current policy landscape. Each policy has a natural lifespan of three years and may be renewed for an additional three years if Congress so desires.

In some cases, newer policy will have superseded the old policies and the old policy may be allowed to lapse.

* A list of all three year old policies will be made available to Presidents of each Member Organisation.
* Each Member Organisation may select 10 policies to seek to retain at USI Congress 2022.
* Policies selected for debate at Congress will be debated in order according to the support for their retention
* Policies receiving no support for retention will be deemed to have lapsed at the close of USI Congress.
1. There are 63 pages in this document. Please don’t print it out unless it’s absolutely necessary.
2. This document has been created in Microsoft Word and works best with the Navigation Pane.
3. Text in the document complies to the new H2=Title standard.

# Academic Affairs

## 16 AAQA 4 Non-EU fee regulation –

### Re-adopted 2019.

##### Congress Acknowledges

That a large number of third level institutions have responded to a contraction in state funding by endeavouring to attract students of “nonEU” fee status. These students do not qualify for the HEA “free fees” scheme and, as such, pay a much higher fee to attend higher education in Ireland.

##### Congress Regrets

That these students are, in effect, regarded as “cash cows” by institutions, which in many cases fail to distribute the appropriate resources to support services and student organisations to cater their activities towards a more diverse student population.

##### Congress Also Regrets

That these students do not enjoy a significant degree of fee level certainty, such is the wont of institutions to increase fee levels on an almost annual basis. As well as representing an issue of esteem, many non EU students from countries prioritised for recruitment take large commercial loans to fund their education in Ireland. These students are particularly affected by changes in fee level as they will have been required before starting college to budget up to six years in advance (in the case of longer courses).

##### Congress Asserts

That non EU students deserve, at an absolute minimum, full certainty as to their fee obligations for the entire course of their degree.

##### Congress mandates

That USI, as an organisation, is opposed to the current national policy of unregulated non- EU fees.

##### Congress also mandates

The VP Equality & Citizenship and the VP AAQA to research the effects of unregulated non- EU fees on the non-EU student population and to present a report on the issue to National Council before the end of 2016.

##### Congress further mandates

The President to present the findings of the research to the Higher Education Authority.

## AA 19 – 2 College Awareness Week

##### Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

##### Congress notes

That College Awareness Week is a national campaign which aims to promote the benefits of going to college, to help students of all ages to become college-ready and to showcase local role models.

##### Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to promote College Awareness Week.

##### Congress further mandates

Where possible, USI Officer Board to arrange a talk in a secondary school in their local area and to give advice about going to college.

## AA 19 – 3 The creation of a Charter for Postgraduate Research Students

##### Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

##### Congress Recognises

That there is a lack of consistency within the Higher Education sector on what rights postgraduate student have within their institution.

##### Congress Further Recognises

That there is a need for clarity on a range of issues from access to the HR department in the case of a work place dispute to access to staff printing.

##### Congress Notes

That the “USI/SIPTU Postgraduate Survey on Working and Economic Conditions” provides

sufficient evidence in this regard.

##### Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to try to work with SIPTU to develop and promote a Charter of Rights for Institutions to sign up to, which will set out best practice for a healthy working environment for postgraduates.

## AA 19 – 4 The creation of National Minimum Stipend rate.

##### Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

##### Congress Recognises

That the stipend rates received by Postgraduate Research Students varies dramatically.

##### Congress further recognises

That the cost of living is rising whilst stipends remain relatively stagnant.

##### Congress mandates

That USI Officer Board lobby for the creation of a National Minimum Stipend Rate.

##### Congress further mandates

That this objective be pursued with the ambition of paring the National Minimum Stipend Rate to the cost of living.

## AA 19 – 5 Postgraduate Funding in Northern Ireland

##### Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group

##### Congress Notes:

* The Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan in Northern Ireland which only entitles students to £5,500 towards the cost of postgraduate taught course.
* Tuition Fees for standard Masters courses in Northern Ireland are set to rise to £5,900, with many other Masters programmes costing much more but tuition fee loans will not automatically rise in line with this.
* Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK to cap tuition fee loans for Postgraduate students at £5,500, meaning that students are offered no maintenance support.
* That many postgraduate students in Northern Ireland opt for part-time study in order to be able to work alongside their degree.
* The insufficiency of the current funding system for part-time students where the loan must be split equally across years regardless of whether there are differential fees within the course, resulting in some students being left with a shortfall in their second or third year, which has led to some students being forced to withdraw from the programme.
* Due to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive in 2017, there is currently no Minister in place to approve an increase in the tuition fee loan available to Postgraduate students or to commission any change to the current Postgraduate Funding system.

##### Congress Believes:

* The current funding arrangements for postgraduate students in Northern Ireland are wholly inadequate, providing no maintenance support whatsoever and not covering the entire cost of standard Master’s programmes, or any programmes with higher fees.
* A review of postgraduate funding in Northern Ireland must be commissioned, in order to improve the support offered to students there and improve the coherency of funding arrangements for part-time students.

##### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to work with NUS-USI and its’ members to lobby for a review of postgraduate funding in Northern Ireland with a view to increasing available support whilst continuing to strive towards lobbying for publicly funded education, accessible to all.

## AA 19 – 6 The legal status of a PhD student.

##### Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group.

##### Congress notes

That currently PhD students are classified as students.

##### Congress further notes

That there are many benefits to this status, such as exemption from tax.

##### Congress further notes

That there are also a range of problems with this student definition. Inclusive of but not limited to; no application of a minimum wage and access to HR in the case of a dispute.

##### Congress acknowledges

That Ireland and the United Kingdom are an outlier when compared to other European States and our fellow members of Eurodoc.

##### Congress mandates

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to continue to investigate options to secure more rights for Postgraduate students by lobbying for a change to the definition of a postgraduate, whether moving to define them as an employee or a hybrid status between employee and student.

## AA 19 – 7 Academic Calendars and Repeat Results implications

Proposed By Waterford IT Students’ Union

##### Congress Notes

Academic Calendars within Higher Education Institutions can cause a lot of difficulties for students on the ground. Some Institutes may use the Academic Calendar as an instrument to move Exams to wherever they like.

##### Congress Acknowledges

The lack of a “perfect model” when it comes to Academic Calendars. But also, the lack of

Best Practice when it comes to creating an Academic Calendar.

##### Congress Believes

Working with MO’s and Trade Unions to form a joint approach on Academic Calendar Best Practice would help all Institutions and SU’s make sure that the needs of students are met academically.

##### Congress Recognises

The release of Repeat Examinations 2-4 weeks into a semester has a serious impact on Student Mental Health and that to release Repeat Examination Results earlier may help tackle retention in HEI’s.

##### Congress therefore Mandates

The VP for Academic Affairs, alongside the Regional Officers, to consult with MO’s and Trade Unions to develop a best practice when it comes to Academic Calendars. The VP for Academic Affairs should also investigate the possibility of an Academic Calendar sub- committee of National Council who will report their findings to National Council.

##### Congress Further Mandates

The VP for Academic Affairs to investigate the effects on students having repeat examinations results released so late in term and use that to lobby the relevant bodies to get Repeat Examination results released earlier and if possible, before the semester begins.

## AA 19 – 8 The Future of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement

Proposed by Waterford IT Students’ Union

##### Congress notes

That the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is now well recognised across Irish Higher Education, having launched in 2013 after a number of years of lobbying from USI to ensure colleges across the country saw the value and need to gather empirical data from students.

##### Congress further notes

That USI, Students’ Unions, and students have worked hard to ensure that the survey is recognised and engaged with by students, and have advocated to ensure the data is readily available for students to interpret through institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes. This further manifested itself in the development of the postgraduate research ISSE which launched in 2018.

##### Congress notes with concern

That despite the huge efforts of students and rising response rates that institutions are still largely failing to distil the data in to user-friendly formats, that they have not created

thorough processes for involving students in interpreting the data they created and understand, and have in some cases blocked students from seeing any results.

There are also very low response rates for the survey in a number of HEI’s.

##### Congress believes that

ISSE data should be readily available to students in appropriate formats to allow them to interrogate the data and seeks ways to enhance and improve education in Ireland.

Furthermore, Students’ Unions are often the main driving force behind promoting the survey, using their own human and financial resources, and should have a partnered role in using the data.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to lobby the ISSE Steering Group to develop and publish an updated report (furthering on from 2015’s report) on the promotion of the survey, a review on how involved individual SUs are on each campus, and on how the data is being used by students in each HEI. Alongside this, a review on why response rates are low needs to be covered in this work also, which may in turn lead to a restructuring of the overall survey.

The report should contain key recommendations on the role of Students’ Unions and

students in promotion and in the use of data by students for quality enhancement.

##### Congress further mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs explores ways to develop best practice on the use of ISSE data by students, including ways in which the data can be viewed, distributed, and engaged with by students and staff in partnership.

## AA 19 – 10 Student Representation in Accreditation and PSRBs

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

##### Congress notes

That professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) oversee accreditation and standards across many programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions in Ireland, ensuring that the students who enter these programmes receive qualifications that qualify them to practice in their chosen profession.

##### Congress further notes

That PARN (Professional Associations Research Network) carried out a project with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in 2016/17 on the impact of accreditation bodies in Irish HEIs, but that the subsequent report did not contain any information on the role of student representation and voice.

##### Congress believes

That issues arising in degree programmes in disciplines such as teaching, pharmacy, and social work, to name a few, have demonstrated that the student voice is often sidelined in the setting of standards and guidelines by PSRBs.

##### Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to liaise with the QQI to ensure that student representation is recognised and strengthened in quality assurance and enhancement processes that involve PSRBs. This work should draw on international best practice and involve students from across a range of degree programmes, in order to ensure that the diversity of experiences of students is captured and acted upon.

##### Congress further mandates

That part of this work should be to utilise the QQI’s engagement with regulators to open

dialogue on the importance of student representation in their processes and procedures.

## AA 19 – 11 HEI Student Success Strategies

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

##### Congress notes

That every public HEI must have a Student Success Strategy in place by 2020 under a requirement of the HEA System Performance Framework.

##### Congress further notes

That USI was involved in the HEA Student Success Working Group that considered how to ensure student progression, retention, and completion became integral to the existing work on access stemming from the National Access Plan. The work of USI and others such as the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning ensured that the definition of student success was not limited in scope, and should encompass all aspects of the life of students in and outside of college.

##### Congress notes with concern

That HEIs seem either unaware of the need to produce such strategies, or that they do not see these strategies as a priority, despite the short amount of time required to develop them. HEIs also seem unaware that student success has a wider remit than access initiatives, encompassing (but not limited to) everything from the background and personal lives of individual students to the student services they need, to teaching and learning, extra-curricular activity, academic supports, health and wellbeing, student representation, and finances.

##### Congress believes

That the inclusion of student success by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning as one of four major strategic priorities and their upcoming development of national guidelines as key to overcoming these challenge.

##### Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to consult with MOs to include the student perspective on what success means, taking due regard of student diversity, and to develop tools and resources alongside the National Forum for member Students’ Unions to use to ensure that they are central to developing HEI Student Success Strategies as partners in the process.

##### Congress further mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs should consider all such relevant USI mandates that contribute to the success of students before, during, and after their time in college, in order that the work of the National Forum is fully informed by USI.

## AA 19 – 12 Grade Inflation

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

##### Congress notes

That there is a rising conversation in Ireland and globally in Higher Education about the

issue of ‘grade inflation’, which refers to improving grades across the student body.

##### Congress notes with concern

That the debate on grade inflation and its causes has excluded the rising standards in teaching and learning, the changing nature of assessment, the rise of student engagement and partnership, and more active attempts to improve student-centred learning and feedback.

##### Congress realises

That there are valid concerns on many of the potential causes for grade inflation, including a lack of clarity around grading practices and external examination, however this should not give rise to anti-student rhetoric and attempts to deny students their hard earned academic success.

##### Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to ensure that any work on grade inflation in Ireland, undertaken by any national body, includes student representation and takes full account of the changing nature of the teaching and learning environment.

##### Congress further mandates

That USI Officer Board challenges and counters anti-student rhetoric in the grade inflation debate.

## AA 19 – 13 Best Practice Framework for Student Rights

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

##### Congress Notes:

The framework for assessment and examination guidelines vary between each Institution in Ireland. Many member organisations run a version of my rights campaign which encompasses student rights within their institution.

##### Congress further Notes:

Due to this, it is difficult for USI to run a national my rights campaign with generic and national student rights information. This can lead to students being unaware of their basic rights within their respective courses.

##### Congress Believes:

That a standardisation of assessment and examination guidelines would benefit not only the everyday student, but also the frameworks would better facilitate these students when transferring between Institutes.

##### Congress Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to seek a framework for best practice of student rights across all institutions with the view to standardisation of these campaigns. This should be completed end of the 2019/20 academic year.

## AA 19 – 14 Student Feedback and TUI

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

##### Congress Notes:

Student feedback on assessments and modules is vital to the upkeep of standards of quality assurance in all third-level institutions.

##### Congress further Notes:

Student feedback is vital for implementing change in the relevant module and course, in order to keep up with the development of courses.

##### Congress therefore Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the TUI on student feedback and encourage relevant officers in member institutions to implement similar feedback structures locally.

## AA 19 – 15 Creative Arts Networking

Proposed By National College Of Art And Design Students’ Union And Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

Within many of the USI MOs there are Creative Arts courses that are underrepresented locally, as well as nationally, and offer unique issues to their students. Networking within the Creative Arts is essential for progression and identification of further development.

##### Congress further notes:

Graduates from Creative Arts courses tend to have fewer employment opportunities available in their field. There is a lack of information directly available to creative arts students about specific financial supports available to them.

##### Congress recognises:

The need for support and promotion of such a network for creative arts students in all MOs.

##### Congress repeals:

2018 AA 6

##### Congress mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs, and VP Campaigns to create a Creative Arts subcommittee that tackles issues that are exclusively faced by Creative Arts students. This subcommittee will consist of the VP for Academic Affairs, VP for Campaigns, at least one representative from each MO that specialises in Creative Arts, and any other representatives.

##### Congress further mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs and VP Campaigns, to organise a one-day networking event for Creative Arts students to discuss and educate artists on issues such as, but not limited to, funding, internships, and taxes as a freelance artist.

## AA 19 – 16 Erasmus Rights

Proposed By ITBSU

##### Congress Notes:

The large number of Students who study abroad during the course of their studies.

##### Congress Regrets:

Many students can feel lost or unsupported before and during their time abroad.

##### Congress Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the European Students’ Union (ESU) to provide general resources for participating Erasmus+ institutions (e.g. info on accommodation, finance, transport links) and to investigate flaws in the current Erasmus+ system.

## AA 19 – 17 Amendment to the FE Development Strategy

Proposed by the Southern Regional Working Group

##### Congress recognises

The importance of ensuring all students in both further and higher education are fully represented within the Union of Students in Ireland.

##### Congress applauds

The work was undertaken to develop the USI FE Strategy that was passed by Congress in 2018.

##### Congress mandates

The following section to be included in the FE Strategy under the “Our Further Education

Members in NUS-USI” Actions Section

“Vice Presidents for the Regions to conduct study visits to FE colleges who are members of NUS-USI to learn about the structures and procedures. Vice Presidents for the Regions can use this learning in helping to develop FE colleges to become full members of USI.”

## AA 19 – 18 Clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of Technological Universities and Borrowing Models for IOTs

Proposed by Limerick IT Students’ Union

##### Congress notes

Given the fast pace development of Higher Education in Ireland our regional IOTs must be protected. For years IOTs across the country have continued to suffer a deflating financial state. As it stands IOTs cannot borrow money in the such ways Universities can; there is a lack of clarity around the borrowing capacity of the newly developed Technological Universities.

##### Congress further notes

This raises significant concerns and issues for IOTs, regarding their progress and status advancement in the same way of Universities and that expressed by Technological Universities.

Due to the inability to borrow and minimal funding from the HEA, IOT’s will continue to struggle in delivering adequate modern higher education: digitalisation, investment in modern STEM equipment and campus development.

Furthermore, the inability to access additional funding inhibits IOTS to help combat the accommodation crisis, as they cannot build, forcing them to rely on external development.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The USI President as a member of the HEA board to seek clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of TUs in comparison to IOTs.

To highlight same with the HEA and to lobby the Government for IOTs to access additional funding, in line with Universities and Technological Universities.

##### Congress therefore deletes

17 AA3

## AA 19 – 19 Student Teacher Campaign

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

##### Congress Notes

The teacher supply shortage in Ireland and the high cost of teaching courses

##### Congress Further Notes

The benefit of data produced from the USI Student Teacher Report in 2017/2018

##### Congress Mandates

Officer board to review the data from the Student Teacher Report and expand the existing online forum for student teachers.

## AA (NC) 19 – 1 Open Access Policy

Proposed by: VP Postgraduate Affairs

##### National Council notes:

The freedom of researchers to publish wherever they feel most appropriate. The need to increase and improve access to the output of research. The increased digitisation of literature. The increased price of subscriptions and barriers to access.

##### National Council believes:

Research must be freely available on the public internet, permitting any user ‘free to read’ and ‘free to re-use’ access. The only constraints on open access should be that it is achieved whilst satisfying the principle that authors be acknowledged through citation for their work, and maintain control over the dignity of their work.

##### National Council mandates:

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to develop a position paper on open access. The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to collaborate with EuroDoc and other relevant parties to lobby for open access.

## AA (NC) 19 - 2 Career Guidance Review

Proposed by: Vice President for Academic Affairs

##### National Council notes:

The Career Guidance Review announced by the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, in early 2018. That this review aims to examine all aspects of Career Guidance, including at secondary and third-level.

That an external Consultancy firm, Indecon, is carrying out this review, and that USI aided Indecon in circulating a number of surveys for Further and Higher Education students, and that USI submitted it’s own written submission in June 2018.

##### National Council believes:

That this Review is an important opportunity to consider the role of good career guidance for transition, progression, retention, success, and wellbeing.

That the specific focus of the Review on enterprise engagement should not detract from the views of students in shaping the outcome of the Review.

##### National Council welcomes:

The Career Guidance Review and the number of opportunities provided to gain the views of students, however, it would have been preferable for the Review to be held during term- time.

##### National Council believes that:

The Review should conclude that career guidance must be considered as a continuous process, and that a National Strategy should clearly link each level of education and each pathway to promote lifelong learning, supports, and informed decision-making.

The Review must include the need to invest in significant resource, including employing more specific Career Guidance Teachers/Counsellors in Schools after cuts during austerity years, as well as resourcing for Careers Offices at third-level.

##### National Council mandates that:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs should lobby that any National Strategy or approach requires a new agency for oversight and implementation, that can also create best practice and support continuous professional development in career guidance. This agency should also develop, maintain, and support an online resource that can replace or revamp Qualifax and other tools.

# Welfare

## WEL 19 – 2 Decriminalisation of Drugs

Proposed by VP Welfare

##### Congress Notes

On July 17th 2015, USI National Council formally adopted a stance that called for USI to support a call for decriminalisation of drugs, with a view to taking a similar approach to the one in place in Portugal. Following the adoption of this stance, the VP Equality and Citizenship made a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality as part of their Drugs Policy Review process. In 2016, USI Congress mandated Officer Board to lobby for decriminalisation, and in 2018, Officer Board had developed connections with external expert groups to promote harm reduction campaigns and promote decriminalisation models.

##### Congress Notes

College is a time when many students are exposed to drugs. For many students, this exposure can happen at an even younger age. There is currently very little information being given to students at second or third level about drug consumption or risks. There is a culture of fear amongst wider society around talking about drugs in an informed and responsible manner.

##### Congress Also Notes

That if a student gets a conviction for personal use, this can have lifelong implications. It can

prevent a student from accessing a visa to certain countries, a job which requires Garda vetting, certain types of insurance, and can impede them from availing of further education or training. A criminal conviction also limits an individual’s chances of social mobility, which results in them becoming dependent on the state.

##### Congress Further Notes

On July 1st 2001, Portugal decriminalised drug use, acquisition and possession of illicit drugs when conducted for personal use as part of a comprehensive new policy. This quantity of personal useamounted to up to 10 days’ supply for personal use. The policy also included a significant expansion in drug treatment, including methadone maintenance, to help dependent users get away from injecting heroin.

##### Congress Believes

There is a need for health professionals, parents and educators to acknowledge the fact that young people often engage in drug use, and at the very least will be exposed to drug use at some point in their lives. Drug use cannot be tackled by policy measures which are only aimed at controlling the supply of drugs. It is futile to only have supply reduction strategies in place of more cost-effective and evidence based investments in harm- reduction and education.

##### Congress Mandates

Officer Board to lobby for the decriminalisation of drugs in line with the Portuguese Model. USI Officer Board should also lobby for investment into treatment and health facilities along with education about drug use and risk for young adults and those of school age.

##### Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare, and VP Campaigns (with the aid of Officer Board), to run an information campaign for students to educate them of the need for this reform.

##### Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare to provide appropriate information and supports to MOs to best understand these issues, and to promote such campaigns in their own unions, and to appropriate bodies in their own institutions.

## WEL 19 - 3 Investment in Mental Health Care in Rural and West of Ireland

Proposed By GMIT SU

##### Congress Notes:

Mental Health supports and preventative ongoing care provisions are lacking in Ireland, leaving many without adequate, if any supports especially in rural and the west of Ireland.

As well as this, gaps in the system and miss-information has seen students wrongly

‘transferred’ to services which aren’t capable/exist for that purpose.

##### Congress Further Notes:

Ongoing Preventative Mental Health services are necessary for general wellbeing and not just for emergency cases where focus currently lies, increased investment in preventative services can help us stop of the loss of student lives in disadvantaged and under resourced areas, these people are the future of Ireland.

##### Congress Recognises:

The need for more investment and resources in early and ongoing care and awareness, with this also assisting in reducing the pressure on emergency services

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to lobby for ongoing Mental Health services in the west and rural Ireland inclusive of non-emergency services as well as bringing awareness to the current situation in order to highlight the need, and aid the lobbying for this investment.

## WEL 19 - 4 Undetectable = Untransmittable

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

That there has been a significant increase in HIV diagnoses within Ireland in recent years. The level of new HIV diagnoses is the highest on record to date with at least one diagnosis being issued every 18 hours on average. The stigma surrounding HIV in Ireland prevents us from tackling the epidemic and lowering HIV diagnoses.

##### Congress further notes:

The “PARTNER 1” and “PARTNER 2” studies showed that if someone living with HIV, who are virally suppressed from antiretroviral therapy (ART) medication, cannot transmit HIV to a sexual partner. This is known as “Undetectable = Untransmittable,” or “U=U”.

##### Congress mandates:

The VP for Welfare to organise a national campaign, which would be brought to every MO, to highlight and educate students on the term “U=U,” or “Undetectable = Untransmittable.” This campaign should emphasise the increasing diagnoses of HIV in Ireland and highlight the benefits of knowing your HIV status.

##### Congress further mandates:

The VP for Welfare to produce a document containing information about STI checks, including, but not limited to, information regarding STI’s, how, where and when to get STI checks, and how much they cost.

## WEL 19 - 5 Local Specialised Sexual Health Services.

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

##### Congress notes:

The importance of students having local access to specialised sexual health services.

##### Congress further notes:

The student cohort is a demographic most at risk of obtaining sexual health infections/diseases.

##### Congress mandates:

THE VP for Welfare and the officer board to lobby the HSE and government to provide local access to Specialised Sexual Health Services in every town/city with a third level institution.

## WEL 19 – 9 Second-hand Smoke

Proposed By Dublin City University SU

##### Congress notes:

The danger and damaging effects second-hand smoke can have on students

##### Congress believes:

That college campuses should have smoke free zones.

##### Congress mandates:

The Welfare Officer to put together a campaign which will be rolled out to all college’s to

introduce smoke free zones.

## WEL 19 – 11 USI Cost of Living Index

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

##### Congress notes

That the DIT Cost of Living Guide (now the TU Dublin Cost of Living Guide) for 2018/19

indicates that the annual cost of college while living away from home is €11,829 and is

€6,780 while living at home.

##### Congress further notes

That other colleges are attempting to put together similar guides or have lists of particular costs, include possible learning resources, in their marketing materials and websites.

##### Congress believes

That these guides do not necessarily portray the actual costs of living in Ireland while studying in third-level.

##### Congress mandates

That the USI President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Welfare seek meaningful ways to explore the true costs of student life today in Ireland, including through the possible commission of research, takingg into account regional pressures, soaring rents, and hidden course costs.

##### Congress further mandates

That any new Index should act as a national guide for student budgeting and be

underpinned by evidence that can be utilised in USI’s ongoing lobby efforts, including to inform the further development of the Grant Reform Paper and campaign for increased SUSI grants and other student supports.

## WEL 19 – 13 Men’s Mental Health

Proposed by Vice President for the Border, Midlands & West

##### Congress notes:

The importance of empowering men to speak about their Mental Wellbeing and to seek help if they face a crisis.

##### Congress notes with regret:

The lack of work in the area of Men’s Mental Health within USI.

##### Congress notes with concern:

In 2017 Ireland registered almost 400 suicides with eight out of those ten fatalities accounting for males.

##### Congress recognises:

How the male population of students are vulnerable to mental health crisis and the stigma attached to seeking help.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to form a campaign specific to empowering men to speak about their Mental Health.

##### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare & Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to coordinate an action to mark International Men’s Day specific to Men’s Health.

## WEL 19 – 15 Casework Debriefing Provision

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

##### Congress notes

The difficult casework which officers deal with on a regular basis; and often must rely on self-coping mechanisms between periods of little support.

##### Congress further notes

That although working groups or spaces at NC can be useful to debrief, an OB member may not be adequately equipped to lead a facilitation session to help officers explore issues they have faced in their roles.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The VP Welfare to organise debriefing sessions, on the request of Welfare working group, in order to best help officers. Debriefing sessions should be lead by an appropriately skilled facilitator, and also encompass coping skills that officers can use in self-care exercises.

## WEL 19 – 16 Regional Finance & Accommodation Information Provision

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

##### Congress notes

That the USI Finance & Accommodation guide is a useful tool for educating students on their accommodation rights, and how to manage their finances.

##### Congress also notes

That given the accommodation crises, it has become more difficult to categorise accommodation information as one piece, given that different areas are hard to compare.

##### Congress therefore mandates

That the VP Welfare would endeavour to provide the online version of the Finance & Accommodation guide which are more region specific.

# Equality

## EM 19 (EQ) – 1: Decolonising Education

Proposed by QUB Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

That a student-led occupation started on 12 March 2019 surrounding anti-racism & decolonization in Goldsmiths University. This ongoing occupation’s demands from the university is grounded in the ethos of decolonizing education as the core of anti-racist work in tertiary/third-level institutions.

The #GoldOccupy movement has encouraged actions of solidarity from across the UK & Northern Ireland.

That USI and NUS UK work in partnership through the Trilateral Agreement and that the student movement across the world has a proud history of coming together in solidarity actions.

Student-led ‘Decolonise education’ campaigns have emerged across the UK since 2015’s ‘Why is My Curriculum White?’ And ‘Rhodes Must Fall’ campaigns, and connect to a rich history of student radicalism.

Deep inequalities persist in education for students of colour, including-but-not-limited-to the attainment gap – these are exacerbated by the scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance and Maintenance Grants.

The BAME Attainment Gap is a national crisis, with BAME students 20% less likely to achieve a first or upper second-class degree compared to their white counterparts, despite having been admitted into university with the same A-level grades.

According to NUS liberate the curriculum research 34% of BAME students feel unable to bring their perspectives as students of colour, to their lectures/seminars.

There is a lack of sufficient research, across the island of Ireland, into the issues resulting in the BAME Attainment Gap and how it affects BAME students of intersectional identities and liberation groups (i.e. Women, LGBTQ, Disabled).

University staff employed are not representative of the students that they teach or the national population regarding race and this is also a prevalent issue amongst university senior management.

BAME students are being severely disadvantaged because they are more likely to leave university unable to secure jobs and twice as unlikely to make use of their degree.

A truly liberated and antiracist education system must include racial justice for students, staff and workers within an institution.

University administration are vested in the racist and xenophobic climate of wider society, and embrace the marketisation of higher education to reduce their responsibilities towards workers.

Decolonising education means democratise – transformative change will not happen through seat-at-the-table politics, but by leveraging student-worker-community power against institutions, to wrest control over them from the hands of overpaid management and corporate interests.

A ‘movement-based’ approach, organising both in and outside the confines of SUs, and rooted in local communities, should be taken to build a democratic, dynamic movement of truly decolonising our curriculum and institution.

##### Congress Further Believes:

Decolonise campaigns must, at core, confront the processes of marketisation, corporatisation and securitisation of education that have shut down universities as spaces to organise for radical change – not narrowly consider matters of curriculum and/or faculty diversity.

* ‘Decolonising education’ must necessarily be connected to-
* The demand for free education;
* The imposition of visa monitoring on institutions;
* The exclusion and gentrification of working class communities adjacent to many universities;
* The managerialism in the university, and shutting down of internal democracy
* Links between institutions and the arms trade/militarisation abroad;
* Ending Direct Provision.

We should seek where possible to connect with education movements for radical change in the global south.

Many local campaigns across the UK, led primarily by sabbatical officers and guided by NUS UK, have been co-opted by universities and re-routed into diversity initiatives, or incrementalist reformism. The aim of these campaigns should be transformative, not merely replacing one set of bourgeois intellectuals with another of a different hue.

Issues of ‘race’ inequality cannot be divorced from the other pressures affecting

institutions and education on a national scale.

Addressing ‘race’ inequality goes hand-in-hand with campaigns for free education and the democratising our education - not band-wagoning on regressive government reforms because we’re promised crumbs.

##### Congress mandates:

The President, Vice-President Equality & Citizenship, Vice-President Academic Affairs to work on investigating issues surrounding the attainment gap in Ireland.

##### Congress also mandates

USI Officer Board to work on the ethos of this policy.

##### Congress reaffirms

USI’s stance on calling for free education, and that the democratising education is central to ensuring education is accessible for all.

##### Congress also reaffirms

USI’s solidarity with the Goldsmiths Anti-Racism Occupation.

## EQ 19 – 1 International Students Access to Multi Re-Entry Visa

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

##### Congress Notes:

The large number of international students that come to Ireland every year to study, but are only in receipt of a single-entry visa.

##### Congress further Notes:

the challenges in being granted a multi-entry visa in Ireland, which restricts students entering and leaving the country.

##### Congress Regrets:

That this has a negative impact on students seeing family and friends whilst studying abroad.

##### Congress Believes:

The importance of welcoming international students to Ireland to add to our already diverse and inclusive student environment.

##### Congress Mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice and Equality and the Garda National Immigration Bureau for easier access to the multi-entry visa for international students.

## EQ 19 – 2 Students in Direct Provision:

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Working Group

##### Congress commends:

The work done to date by the Union of Students in Ireland and students’ unions across the country towards ending the inhumane system of Direct Provision and working to protect and support students living in Direct Provision in their institutions.

##### Congress notes:

More and more asylum seekers are entering third level education, whether through access routes or Institution of Sanctuary scholarships. It is of great concern that College of Sanctuary scholarship students can be faced with deportation orders when they are in the middle of their studies.

##### Congress applauds:

The work done by DCUSU in particular around the Save our Shepherd campaign, and the incredible success of that campaign.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice to take

a person’s student status into special consideration when in the asylum process.

##### Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to devise a national strategy on what to do in the case of a student being faced with a deportation order, and to develop materials and resources around this for Students’ Union officers.

##### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Education to extend domestic fee status to students who are asylum seekers across all third level institutions.

## EQ 19 - 3 Supporting Student Parents and Carers

Proposed By Ulster University Students’ Union [UUSU]

##### Congress Notes:

The significant number of students in third level education in Ireland who have dependant children or other caring responsibilities.

The additional barriers facing student parents &amp; carers which often interfere with their academic career and limit their scope to engage outside of the classroom.

The childcare costs incurred by student parents which normally cannot be fully met by grants which they are eligible for.

In spite of this, many institutions do not have sufficient services and facilities in place to support those with caring responsibilities such as creche facilities and funding support, and do not fully consider the needs of student parents in the coordination of timetables.

##### Congress Believes:

It is imperative upon students’ unions and USI to support the interests of student parents and carers and help to support them throughout their academic career. Individual MOs can make more progress on this issue locally, when they work collectively on this issue.

##### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to produce guidance notes for MOs on how to further improve the experience of student parents &amp; carers in their institutions, focusing on areas such as class timetabling, childcare support and inclusivity of events.

## EQ 19 - 4 The abolishment of MSM blood donation deferral period

Proposed by Waterford IT Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) needs 3,000 donations a week to supply 71 hospitals nationwide. Regular blood donations by a sufficient number of healthy people are needed to ensure that safe blood will be available whenever and wherever it is needed. Blood transfusions are needed for women with complications of pregnancy, many complex medical and surgical procedures and for those undergoing radiation or chemotherapy to name a few.

##### Congress also notes:

The IBTS have set strict guidelines for those who eligible to donate to ensure that all donations are safe to use and to protect donors and recipients.

##### Congress further notes:

The lifetime ban on gay men donating blood to the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) was lifted in January 2017 and replaced with a 12 month abstinence deferral period which means that a man who last had sex with another man (MSM) more than 12 months ago is now be able to donate blood if he meets the other blood donor selection criteria.

##### Congress notes with concern:

Eligibility decided on sexuality is extremely discriminatory and no one should be denied the right to donate blood based on their sexuality.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship campaign for the abolishment of the deferral period to ensure that MSM who meet all other eligibility criteria will be eligible to donate blood in Ireland.

## EQ 19 - 5 Accessibility audits

Proposed By NUI Galway SU

##### Congress notes:

Many campuses are inaccessible in many ways to students with disabilities. Examples of this include physical infrastructure such as ramps and working lifts etc. as well as not having clear markings across campus for students with visual impairments.

##### Congress further notes:

A lack of proper facilities can act as an ongoing barrier to students with disabilities towards completing their education.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to work with AHEAD to develop an accessibility audit template for campuses, which can be given to MOs to carry out across their own campuses.

## EQ 19 – 6 Hate Crime legislation

Proposed By NUIG Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

Post the introduction of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act, very little legislative changes have taken place in Ireland to further protect and defend minority groups from acts of hate crime.

##### Congress further notes:

The Irish Council of Civil Liberties report The Lifecycle of a Hate Crime: Country Report for Ireland, launched in July 2018, found that Ireland has significant gaps in Irish law, policy and criminal justice practice regarding acts of discrimination against minorities, which go largely underreported. Ireland currently is one of a small number of EU countries that does not have specific laws around dealing with hate crimes.

##### Congress acknowledges:

As we grow as campus communities, diversity is reflected in our student population more and more. Students from non traditional backgrounds may find their access to education restricted by such acts.

Many students from minority groups face discrimination; in particular, members of the Trans Community, students with disabilities, and those from Ethnic minority backgrounds can find themselves the targets of hate crime. This affects students across a range of issues of accommodation, transport, online interactions and many other areas of life.

Congress mandates: The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to ensure there is adequate student representation involved at a national level for any legislation being drafted.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for hate crime legislation to be enacted in Ireland

## EQ 19 – 7 Gender Equality

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

##### Congress Notes:

The lack of policy in relation to transgender, non-binary and intersex students, and gender identity/expression inclusivity within higher education. Research from LGBTI Ireland Report (2016) found that transgender, non-binary and intersex people face additional challenges in their day-to-day lives such as being referred to/as by the wrong pronoun or gender and this can have an immensely negative impact on a person’s mental health.

##### Congress Believes:

We need to lead the way in supporting transgender, non-binary and intersex students within higher and further education.

##### Congress Mandates:

VP Equality and Citizenship to develop a campaign in conjunction with relevant organisations such as ShoutOut, BeLonG To and TENI to support Students’ Union Officers in running a transgender, non-binary and intersex inclusivity campaign on campus for both staff and students which should include information packs, posters, workshop materials and leads to further resources.

##### Congress Further Mandates:

USI VP for Equality & Citizenship to gather and circulate all relevant HEI and SU policy relating to transgender, non-binary and intersex gender identity and expression policies.

## EQ 19 – 8 Supporting Students with Religious Beliefs and Rituals

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

##### Congress Notes:

All MO’s have a very diverse community of student members who have specific religious

beliefs and rituals.

##### Congress Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship to provide elected officers with information on how best to support students who have religious beliefs and rituals. This may include lobbying for improved facilities, catering services and supports.

## EQ 19 – 9 Disability Awareness and Annual Conference

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### Congress notes:

Reports released by the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD), of which USI is a board member, finds that while numbers of students with disabilities participating in higher education continues to rise, significant barriers remain.

##### Congress notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to removing the stigma from all disabilities, challenging perceptions and encouraging all members of our society to take a positive attitude towards understanding the nature of disability and overcoming prejudices.

A key part of this ongoing work can be done through student engagement and campaigns throughout the year, including a national-level event, to create a space for networking, dialogue, and empowerment to leadership roles.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to roll out a campaign informing students of many different disabilities and creating awareness of supports for students with disabilities.

##### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to organise a conference and networking event for students with disabilities before the end of April in each academic year.

## EQ 19 – 10 Equality Strategy 2019

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee

##### Congress notes:

The area of Equality and Citizenship is extremely broad and expands into many different aspects of the work of the Officer Board. For this reason, it is important that there is a roadmap to assist the work of the Union of Students in Ireland in how to best ensure the brief is effectively carried out, to the best ability.

##### Congress mandates:

The adoption of the proposed Equality Strategy 2019.

## EQ 19 – 11 EMpower students

Proposed by The VP for Equality & Citizenship and Maynooth Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

Ireland has become more diverse in recent years. There has been an increase in people from Ethnic Minority background enrolling in institutions across the country and this will continue to rise.

##### Congress notes with alarm:

That students from ethnic minority background can be underrepresented in positions of leadership and representation. This can include, students’ union positions, class representatives, clubs and society committee positions etc.

##### Congress applauds:

The success of Pink Training, Women Lead, the conference for students living with disabilities, and similar events in the promoting of minority students running for leadership positions.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to run an event called ‘Empower’. This event will focus on increasing Ethnic Minority representation in positions of leadership in institutions across Ireland.

## EQ (NC) 19 - 2 Solidarity with NUS-USI ‘Trust Us’ Campaign and Abortion Access in Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### National Council recognises:

The collaborative efforts in campaigning for abortion access in Ireland by students all over Ireland.

##### National Council notes the following:

The 1967 Abortion Act of the UK Parliament was never extended to Northern Ireland.

Abortion is available in Northern Ireland only where there is a risk to the life, or to the long-term mental or physical health of the pregnant person. This excludes cases where there is fatal foetal abnormality, or a pregnancy as a result of rape or incest. In most

circumstances, abortion is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act.

The Northern Ireland Public Prosecution Service has initiated criminal proceedings under sections 58 and 59 of the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act for unlawful procurement of abortion and abortion pills in a minimum of three separate cases since 2016. An April 2016 case resulted in a suspended sentence of 3 months’ imprisonment, and in January 2017 a couple received formal cautions for attempting to procure an abortion with pills.

In October 2017, the UK Department for Women and Equalities announced that it would cover the cost of treatment for pregnant people who travel from Northern Ireland to England for abortion care. As a result, pregnant people lawfully resident in Northern Ireland and registered with a local GP will now be offered free abortions at the point of access if they travel to England to exert that right.

Although abortion on request is now legal up to 12 weeks in the Republic of Ireland, this change does not mean that people in Northern Ireland will stop travelling to Great Britain for abortion. The current provisions for Northern Ireland residents accessing abortion services in the Republic of Ireland require Northern Irish residents to pay to access care privately and comply with the mandatory three day waiting period. Travelling to Great Britain remains the cheapest and least complicated method of accessing legal abortion for Northern Ireland residents.

It is expected that by the end of 2019, it will be possible for residents of England, Scotland and Wales to take abortion pills at home once they have been prescribed. Northern Ireland residents who have to travel to Great Britain to access early medical abortion will not benefit from the shift to home use: they will have to take both abortion pills in Great Britain before travelling home. Meanwhile an individual who induces an abortion with the same medications (Mifepristone and Misoprostol) at home in Northern Ireland is at risk of prosecution.

##### National Council further notes with great concern that:

Although people who travel from Northern Ireland to England to access a termination are eligible to receive free abortion care on the NHS as of November 2017, the cost and logistics of arranging transport, accommodation, time off work and childcare continue to present practical barriers to accessing abortion outside Northern Ireland.

Obtaining an early medical abortion by purchasing abortion pills online is a method of abortion which is frequently relied upon by people who face additional barriers when travelling to access abortion, or find it impossible to travel altogether. Victims and survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities and people with caring responsibilities can find themselves in this position.

The criminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland deters people from accessing aftercare, for fear of being reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland if they disclose that they induced an abortion with medication.

Students who move to Northern Ireland for study effectively sign away their abortion rights when they register with a local GP because access to abortion is so restricted on the Northern Ireland NHS.

##### National Council believes that:

Individuals who make the decision to terminate a pregnancy should be supported and cared for in their local healthcare system, rather than disempowered and isolated by having to travel elsewhere to do so.

Access to reproductive healthcare is a student welfare issue. The lack of access to abortion services in Northern Ireland can significantly impact the personal and academic lives of students with crisis pregnancies. The inaccessibility of safe and legal abortion in Northern Ireland places an undue burden on students in an already stressful situation.

Abortion should be governed by the same robust regulatory and ethical frameworks as all other medical procedures.

Abortion reform should be designed in a manner which is inclusive of women, trans men, non-binary and gender fluid people.

##### National Council mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, in solidarity with NUS-USI, to campaign for accessible reproductive healthcare and the removal of barriers to abortion access in Northern Ireland.

##### National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the NUS-USI ‘Trust Us’ campaign for the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland and actively engage with NUS-USI to ensure our solidarity is as effective as possible

# National Affairs

## EM 19 (NA) – 1: Support for Workers in Ballina Breweries - Coca- Cola

Proposed by USI VP for Campaigns

This requires two-thirds majority to pass

##### Congress Notes:

SIPTU represents the majority of core production workers in the Coca Cola Company plant in Ballina Beverages, County Mayo. Since October 2014, they have been seeking union recognition for the purposes of collective bargaining. They have two Labour Court recommendations that state that the company should recognise SIPTU for those employees in membership of the Union. The company has shut down discussion on the Labour Court recommendations.

##### Congress notes with concern:

The company’s human rights policy states ‘where employees are represented by a legally recognised union, we are committed to establishing a constructive dialogue with their freely chosen representatives. The company is committed to bargaining in good faith with such representatives.’ The company are clearly in breach of their own human rights policy by failing to engage in collective bargaining with SIPTU and its members.

##### Congress also notes:

Young people are the main target market for Coca Cola products and have great weight in this campaign.

##### Congress further notes:

The National Union of Students UK (NUS UK) wrote to Mr James Quincey, President and CEO of The Coca Cola Company, on the 12th March 2019, raising their concerns about the company’s violation of their own human rights policy in relation to workers rights. Mr Brent Wilson, The Coca Cola Company Global Head of Workplace Rights, wrote back to the NUS on the 15th March 2019 offering to meet with the NUS on their concerns.

##### Congress Mandates:

USI officerboard to write a letter of correspondence to Mr Quincey in support of the SIPTU members in Ballina and raise their concerns over this breach of the human rights of Coca Cola workers in Ballina Beverages.

##### Congress also mandates:

USI officerboard to support SIPTU in their #TasteZeroRights campaign.

## EM 19 (NA) – 2: USI Strategy Paper on the British Exit from the European Union

Motion proposed by the VP for Academic Affairs

##### Congress notes

That the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union on 23 June 2016, but that voters in the North rejected Brexit in the referendum.

##### Congress further notes

Previous USI mandates opposing Brexit, to support the efforts of NUS-USI in fighting the negative consequences of Brexit, and the previously stated support of USI to the NUS-USI call for a 'People's Vote'.

##### Congress notes with deep concern

The political deadlock in the UK Parliament on the negotiated Withdrawal Agreement, which would prevent a hard border on the island of Ireland through the inclusion of the backstop, and the now looming prospect of a no deal Brexit.

##### Congress recognises

That USI must now seriously increase its lobby and campaigning activity on the implications of Brexit for students across the island, and work more proactively with NUS- USI to protect peace and stability on the island, the rights enshrined under the Good Friday Agreement, and the right of access of all to education.

##### Congress therefore adopts

The USI Strategy Paper on the British Exit from the European Union.

##### Congress also mandates

That this Strategy is reviewed and considered at each National Council, as required.

## NA 19 – 1 Garda National Immigration Bureau Process for non-EU students.

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group

##### Congress Recognises

The current process for GNIB registration for students coming from outside of the European Union is costly and repetitive.

##### Congress further recognises

That the high cost of renewing your application annually combined with the bureaucracy of the process is not fit for purpose.

##### Congress further recognises

That the travel restrictions which activate through the GNIB process are counter intuitive to a postgraduate working and academic life.

##### Congress mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the Department of Justice and Equality, and any party they deem appropriate, to reform the process and make it more accessible and equitable for students.

## NA 19 - 2 Post March 29th: Brexit Support

Proposed By Ulster University Students’ Union (UUSU)

##### Congress Notes:

At time of writing, the United Kingdom is set to exit the European Union on March 29th.

If a deal is not struck, the EU would begin to trade with the UK under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

Policy previously passed by Congress in 2016 which mandated USI to ‘actively campaign to ensure that the rights and values of the student movement are not diminished or ignore’.

EU students studying in the UK and UK students studying in the Republic of Ireland have been guaranteed home fee status for 19/20, but no such guarantee has been made beyond.

##### Congress Believes:

No-Deal Brexit could have disastrous consequences for the lived experience of students across the island, and will lead to uncertainty around fees, research funding and cross- border mobility amongst many issues.

Any future detrimental change to fee status for ROI or EU students studying in the North or vice-versa would be entirely unacceptable.

##### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to support MOs to work with their institution in supporting students in their colleges who have been affected by the outcomes of Brexit.

The USI President to consult with the NUS-USI and NUS-UK Presidents to lobby institutions and government against reclassification of fee status for UK and ROI/EU citizens studying in ROI/EU and the UK respectively.

## NA 19 - 3 Integrated Education in Northern Ireland

Proposed by Ulster University Students’ Union

##### Congress Notes:

Education in Northern Ireland is divided and typically segregated along religious lines.

There are around 70’000 empty desks in the school’s system across the North.

Divided education systems create a lack of consistency in the quality and content in the education received, particularly in areas such as religious education and sex education.

##### Congress Recognises:

That divided education isolates communities and does not contribute to progress towards a shared future in Northern Ireland.

That educating all children together at a primary and secondary level is an essential part of the reconciliation process and of building a society that celebrates respect, understanding and friendships across traditional divides.

Divisions cannot be expected to be healed if children are taught separately and don’t meet

someone of a different belief or background to themselves until they reach university.

##### Congress Mandates:

That USI President should consult with NUS-USI for fully integrated education at primary and secondary level within Northern Ireland whilst respecting people’s right to choose where they send their children.

The USI Officer Board should work alongside stakeholders with similar interests and outlooks such as the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) to achieve this.

## NA 19 - 4 Expansion of student Leap Card

Jointly Proposed by GMITSU And NUI Galway SU

##### Congress Notes:

Most colleges have a large percentage of commuting students, especially since the price of renting accommodation has increased largely over the last couple of years. Public transport in most areas is acceptable but still needs more investment especially in rural areas.

##### Congress further notes:

The National Transport Authority (NTA) leap card has made the price of public transport cheaper within city boundaries but not from commuter towns and cities, meaning many students who commute everyday are forced to buy tourist tickets.

##### Congress recognises:

Cheaper and improved public transport would incentivise more students to use it and reduce congestion and the need for housing in most HEI towns/cities. More affordable public transport options also widens the radius of housing to students further out than just city boundaries.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI President to negotiate with the NTA to improve and extend the limits of use for the Student Leap Card, making access to institutions cheaper and more accessible.

## NA 19 - 5 Protection of Employee Tips Bill Campaign

Proposed by GMITSU

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

##### Congress Notes:

Currently in Ireland there is no legislation for ownership of tips for employees in the hospitality sector in which they work.

##### Congress Further Notes:

There is no legal obligation for employers to re-issue tips or to have a structure in place to ensure employees received their tips. This has allowed employers to place restrictions on the allocation of tips.

##### Congress Recognises:

That employers often capitalise on this fact to take tips that rightfully belong to the employee.

##### Congress Further Recognises:

The legislation will give transparency to where tips go, for the staff and customers who reward the tip!

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI President to lobby TD’s to ensure that, “the Protection of Employee Tips Bill” that’s passed through the Seanad gets through the Dáil to become Law and our students that work in that sector get what they’re owed.

## NA 19 - 6 BusConnects - Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

##### Congress notes

The recent BusConnects Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign Consultation Process.

##### Congress further notes

The impact that the redesign could have on students.

##### Congress mandates

The Vice President for the Dublin Region to inform MOs of the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign when it is reviewed.

##### Congress further mandates

The Vice President for the Dublin Region to collect feedback from MOs on the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign and collate it in to a report.

## NA 19 - 7 Privatisation of Public Transport

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

##### Congress notes with concern

The recent privatisation of several Dublin Bus routes; 17a (from Blanchardstown to Kilbarrack)

33a (from Balbriggan/Skerries to Swords/Dublin Airport or Dublin City Centre) 33b (from Portrane to Swords)

45a, 45b (from Dún Laoghaire to Kilmacanogue) 59 (from Killiney to Dún Laoghaire Station)

63, 63a (from Dún Laoghaire Station to Kilternan Village) 75, 75a (from Tallaght to Dún Laoghaire)

102 (from Dublin Airport to Sutton Station) 111 (from Dalkey to Brides Glen)

175 (from Citywest to UCD)

184 (from Bray to Newtownmountkennedy) 185 (from Bray to Enniskerry)

##### Congress further notes

That in October, the National Transport Authority (NTA) announced its intention to tender out 10% of Bus Éireann routes.

Congress worries

That the continued privatisation of public transport will increase costs and have a negative affect on students.

##### Congress mandates

The USI President to make representations and lobby against the privatisation of public transport.

## NA 19 – 8 Minimum Graduate Wage for Students Graduates

Proposed By GMITSU

##### Congress Notes:

Students are exposed to precarious work, zero-hour contracts and low wages whilst supporting themselves in college and early years of their careers

##### Congress Regrets:

That the increase in the cost of living and a relatively stagnant minimum wage has grown the divide between what students earn, and what students need to earn to meet the cost of living.

##### Congress Recognises

That a living wage provides for someone to earn the minimum required to live.

##### Congress Mandates

The President of USI to initiate campaigns and lobbying efforts to increase the minimum wage of graduates.

## NA 19 – 8 Right to Higher Education

Proposed by The USI President

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

##### Congress recognises

That there is no constitutionally recognised right to Higher Education in Ireland.

##### Congress welcomes

The ruling of the Irish High Court, who recognised that in order to be economically and socially prosperous, it was imperative that citizens have access to higher education.

##### Congress Believes that

Ireland, as a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, should pursue improved access to Higher Education.

##### Congress mandates

The USI President to actively work to ensure that reference to that convention is throughout the work of the department and other agencies, and to explore ways and means to ensure

##### Congress Further mandates

The USI President to lobby for the Higher Education Authority Act to reflect in its wording that third level education is a public good that must be accessible.

## NA 19 – 10 Higher Education Funding Campaign

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

##### Congress notes

The formation of a Coalition for Public Funded Education in recent years, which was driven by USI and includes SIPTU, IFUT, IMPACT, TUI and ISSU. This collaboration with like-minded organisations, who support our funding position and see Higher Education as a public good, strengthens the campaign.

##### Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to ensure the continuation of and engagement with the Coalition for Public Funded Education.

##### Congress notes

The previous research done by the NERI institute in 2013 on Higher Education Funding, led by the USI-SIPTU partnership called ‘We Need to Talk about Higher Education’, which was adopted by Congress in 2013.

##### Congress notes

The need for an updated single comprehensive and researched document on the public- funding model proposed through various USI policies. This will provide USI with credible, well-researched and solutions-based policy for which to advance the argument in favour of our ideological position on third-level funding.

##### Congress mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to seek to update the previous research conducted by the NERI institute in line with the current situation in higher education and commission other areas of research that will also benefit the campaign where needed.

##### Congress mandates:

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to create a sustained national campaign on Higher Education Funding, backed by research and supported by the

Coalition, to include investment in Higher Education, supports and towards a model of fully publicly funded education.

USI Officer Board to campaign and lobby extensively for the future funding of the Irish Higher Education system.

##### Repeal:

14 AAQA 1 USI/NERI THIRD-LEVEL FUNDING POLICY

1. EM 4 THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN- EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

## NA (NC) 19 - 1 Air BnB Regulation

Proposed by: Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

##### National Council regrets:

As of the beginning of August 2018 there was a mere 1,400 houses available to rent in Dublin. At the same time there was in excess of 3,000 homes to let on AirBnB.

##### National Council notes:

The regulation of short-term letting through agents such as AirBnB in cities such as Amsterdam and Berlin tackled directly the congestion in the availability of housing.

##### National Council therefore calls upon:

The Government to introduce further regulation of this sector in line with that employed in Berlin in order to increase the availability of housing.

## NA (NC) 19 - 2 Separate Church and State

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### National Council notes:

That people in Ireland have different religious and spiritual beliefs or none and we live in a pluralistic society.

##### National Council notes with concern:

The religious nature of Bunreacht na hÉireann and how it can further impact the advancement of positive change in Ireland.

##### National Council believes:

That Bunreacht na hÉireann and our laws should be secular and that religious or spiritual faith and practices should have no influence on our legislative processes or laws and that no one religion should have supremacy over others.

##### National Council mandates:

USI Officer Board to support campaigns and lobby groups working towards a separation of church and state. This includes but is not limited to supporting the provision of objective relationships and sexuality education in schools and removing the offence of blasphemy from Bunreacht na hÉireann.

## NA (NC) 19 - 3 Pay Equality for Newly Qualified Teachers

Proposed by: Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

##### Council Notes:

The financial difficulties faced by Newly Qualified Teachers due to the two tier pay system.

##### Council Further Notes:

Those who entered the profession from February 2012 have been placed on a severely- reduced starting salary which sees them generally earn over 21% less than those appointed prior to 2012.

##### Council Mandates:

USI Officer Board to support the campaign striving towards equal pay for equal work and to ensure that negotiations are inclusive of the student perspective.

## NA (NC) 19 - 5 Supporting the ‘Use your brain, not your fists’

Campaign

Proposed by: IT Tralee Students’ Union

##### National Council acknowledges

The ‘Use your Brain, not your fists’ Campaign was run by An Garda Síochanna to highlight

the devastation of violent attacks by young people on each other.

##### National Council acknowledges

That students could imperil themselves and others through violent attacks; and that they may not be aware of the risks or long term effects of their actions.

##### National Council therefore mandates

That the VP Campaigns & VP Welfare should liaise with An Garda Síochanna in future in relation to this campaign, and to work towards inclusion of key messaging around violent behaviour in future campaigns relating to personal safety.

## NA (NC) 19 - 6 Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### National Council recognises:

The long history of the Union of Students in Ireland in campaigning for accessible abortion services in Ireland, and the recent victory in repealing the 8th Amendment from Bunreacht na hÉireann.

##### National Council notes:

The continued opposition to abortion access by many religiously-based groups throughout Ireland.

##### National Council notes with concern:

That abortion access could be extremely limited if plans for the National Maternity Hospital to be governed by a Catholic organisation go ahead.

##### National Council mandates:

USI Officer Board to campaign for the National Maternity Hospital to be taken into public ownership, and that the new maternity hospital be governed by a new, secular charter.

##### National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Health on this issue.

## NA (NC) 19 - 7 ICCL Electoral Law Reform

Proposed by: USI President

##### National Council notes

A law which was originally intended to prohibit large or anonymous donations to political parties is now being applied to the campaigning work of civil society organisations, preventing them from carrying out their legitimate human rights and social justice work.

##### National Council notes that

Transparency regarding donations to charities and CSOs in general, and particularly during referendums or elections periods is imperative.

##### National Council notes with concern

That the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPOC) is now applying the law to civil society’s legitimate attempts to bring about change. This places Ireland in the same legal position as countries such as Hungary and Russia which prevent foreign funding of civil

society, although in our case these restrictions are the result of poor regulation rather than deliberate policy decisions.

##### National Council mandates

The USI President to actively support the joint campaign calling for electoral act reform, along with the ICCL, Amnesty, Frontline defenders, Uplift, Transparency International and The Wheel.

## NA (NC) 19 - 8 Support the fight for marriage equality in Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### National Council notes:

Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK where same-sex marriage is still not legally recognised, despite huge support among the public in Northern Ireland. According to a 2016 Ipsos MORI poll, 70% of the public in Northern Ireland are in support of marriage equality.

##### National Council notes with concern:

That according to the Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts research, reduced LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland has led to a mental health crisis in the community, with 5% of LGBT+ individuals self-harming compared to 13% in rest of UK, 57% drinking to hazardous levels compared to 24% in England, and 25% attempting suicide

##### National Council believes:

That everyone should have equal access to civil marriage, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

##### National Council mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the Love Equality Coalition campaign for equal marriage in Northern Ireland.

##### National Council also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI President to publish a statement of support for the Love Equality campaign in pursuit of marriage equality in Northern Ireland from the Union of Students in Ireland and encourage other LGBTQ+ organisations to do the same.

##### National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and CItizenship to endeavour to include opportunities for students to learn about the political climate with regard to marriage equality in Northern Ireland at LGBTQ+ training events.

# International Affairs

## EM 19 (IA) – 1: Brunei Sharia Law Urgent Days of Action

Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU / TU Dublin SU This requires two-thirds majority to pass **Congress Notes**

That students have been a fundamental instrument and key contributor of driving the queer rights movement historically and that human right issues are tackled head on by students with power, vigor and enthusiasm.

**Congress Notes With Alarm**

That 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.

## IA 19 – 1 Non EU International Students

Proposed By NUI Galway Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

Within the confines of a severely underfunded Higher Education system, many institutions are looking to internationalise as a means to increase fee income.

##### Congress condemns:

International students being used as a source of revenue, and the fact that there are not adequate supports in pace for international students who study here.

##### Congress notes with concern:

Non EU international students are often excluded from funding pots, for example, funds for Students with Disabilities and Field trip funds.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Education and skills for funding streams to include non EU international students.

# Union Organisation

## UO 19 – 1 USI Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin SU

##### Congress notes:

The cyclical nature of student representative terms leads to a regular change in priorities and shifts in focus of the national movement. This often weakens the ability for the movement to gather momentum on the issues which lie at the core of the student movement.

##### Congress further notes:

Changes made to Union structures are often made without strategic forethought.

##### Congress understands:

Strategic planning is an organisational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organisation’s direction in response to a changing environment.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Campaigns and the President, in consultation with National Council, devise a strategic plan for the Union of Students’ in Ireland to run from 2020-2025, and for this plan to be ratified by Congress 2020.

##### Congress further mandates:

A working group of National Council be established to oversee and inform the development of the strategic plan.

##### Congress further mandates:

The President to publish an annual progress report on this Strategic Plan and present it to annual congress.

## UO 19 – 2 Governance training modules

Proposed By Waterford IT Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

As sabbatical officers, we are expected to sit on a number of academic and governing boards within our HEI’s and much of the discussion at these meetings can contain language that is new or uncommon for officers to have consistent knowledge of.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The President to introduce new governance training modules for SUT and SUT+ which cover business and legal terminology, negotiation skills and top things for SU Officers to look out for and query during meetings. More detail on the contents of this training can be covered in the SU Officers Handbook.

## UO 19 – 3 Regional Officer Support with Mergers:

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

##### Congress notes:

There are a number of mergers that are either prior or post designation in many MOs across the country.

##### Congress further notes:

The merging of different MOs can be a difficult and an overwhelming process. The transition from being a single entity to becoming a part of a larger establishment can be daunting not just for the overall union but the officers involved.

##### Congress mandates:

The regional officers to liaise with the MOs involved in mergers to ensure that each of these MOs (and officers) feels represented, well-equipped and supported going through this transition.

##### Congress further mandates:

The regional officers to establish a working group for MOs involved in a merger process. This would provide a space for the MOs to give advice on how they dealt with going through a merger.

## UO 19 – 4 Sponsorship Agreements and Commercial Partnerships

Proposed by Presidents Working Group

##### Congress Notes

USI may wish to work alongside companies throughout the year based on shared interests or common goals. This can sometimes take the form of a partnership agreement between the employer and the USI which identifies their common interests and objectives. USI voted through UO5 USI Commercial Strategy last year, and this motion would add to that strategy.

##### Congress Further Notes

USI has engaged increasingly with commercial organisations for sponsorship of USI events and support for venue hire, catering and materials.

##### Congress supports and encourages

USI in seeking sponsorship in order to reduce costs and add value to events for members.

##### Congress Understands

That the ability to seek out and secure sponsorship offers varies depending on the project involved and the financial benefit offered and is regularly time sensitive.

##### Congress mandates

The USI President and VP Campaigns to create a policy regarding commercial partnerships, following consultation with MO sabbatical officers and USI Officerboard. This policy would cover how partnerships are sought out, agreed upon, and the length of time they are active for.

## UO 19 – 5 Strategic Review of USI

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

##### Congress Notes:

USI has not undertaken a strategic review of the organisation since 1999. In 2015, USI adopted a Union Development Strategy 2015 - 2020, which outlines a vision and strategy for developing not only Students’ Unions but also USI as an organisation. This has yet to be fully implemented.

##### Congress Notes with Concern:

That USI is not performing to its fullest potential and is becoming an organisation in desperate need of reform. Member Organisations continue to be frustrated at the lack of support from USI and question the value of being a member.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI President to carry out a robust strategic review of USI including, but not limited to, areas of governance, finance, democracy, political lobbying and campaigns. The review should be undertaken by an external consultant and must take into account the opinions and concerns of all current Member Organisations, as well as potential candidate Member Organisations where possible.

##### Congress further Mandates:

That the USI President ensures that the strategic review considers the 2018 motion on USI Commercial Strategy. (2018 UO5) The review should provide a report to the December National Council in 2019 with a list of recommendations in which USI must adopt no later than July 2020.

Congress therefore repeals 17 NC UO 7

## UO 19 - 6 USI in the North

Proposed By Ulster University Students’ Union (UUSU)

##### Congress Notes:

The long-established trilateral agreement which entitles students, studying in Northern Ireland to be represented by NUS UK and USI, through its’ principal representative body NUS-USI, with the former acting as managing partner for NUS-USI.

An estimated 200,000 of USI’s 374,000 members are NUS-USI members of which approximately 160,000 come from FE colleges. The Further Education & Training Strategy, passed by Congress in 2018 sets out a direction of how USI ought to interact with FE members in the North.

Despite this, there is a lack of consistency in how USI engages NUS-USI members in its’

work with FE members rarely being included in USI campaigns.

##### Congress Further Notes:

Recent changes to NUS UK’s operations have resulted in a reduction in staff support for NUS-USI, with representation now being provided by one full-time officer, supported by two full-time staff members.

##### Congress Believes:

The reduced staff support puts significant strain on the NUS-USI President’s capacity to

represent and campaign on behalf of their 200,000 members in the North.

In light of this, it is imperative for USI to recognize its’ role in supporting the interests of its’ NI members.

##### Congress Mandates:

USI Officer Board to consult with NUS-USI to further extend its’ engagement with members in the North, with each portfolio officer aiming to incorporate NUS-USI and its’ members in at least one relevant campaign per year.

USI Portfolio officers to work collaboratively with the NUS-USI President and their counterpart members of the NUS-USI REC (Regional Executive Committee), where applicable, to support campaigns and events being run by NUS-USI.

USI Officer Board to consult with NUS-USI in extending its prominence within NI student affairs more generally.

## UO 19 – 7 Regional Officers

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

##### Congress notes

The benefit of having Regional Officers on campus.

##### Congress further notes

The experience and direction regional officers can give to local MOs is of great benefit.

##### Congress mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to work with MOs before the beginning of the academic year to schedule at least four visits per semester.

## UO 19 – 8 Media Training

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

##### Congress notes

Students’ Union officers are regularly sought for interviews with local and national media outlets.

##### Congress further notes

That training for all sabbatical officers is expensive and that Students’ Unions may have to

subsidies such training.

##### Congress mandates

The VP for Campaigns to provide opportunities for Media Training to officers who wish to avail of such.

## UO 19 – 9 Progress Report on mandates

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

##### Congress notes:

USI officer board has been mandated to take on a large number of motions. It is not realistic to complete all of these mandates in one year.

##### Congress recognizes:

The hard work being put in by officer board to complete a large amount of motions.

##### Congress regrets:

There is no transparent indicator of how far along these mandates have gotten.

##### Congress mandates:

All officer board to produce a progression report in their officer report of the development of these mandates at each National Council.

## UO 19 – 12 Re-think Campaign

Proposed By President, IT Carlow Students’ Union

##### Congress notes:

That the USI have and will continue to do incredible work on behalf of the students across Ireland. That valuable work that is performed by officer board in conjunction with MO’s can easily go un-noticed by the students that the USI represent.

##### Congress Further notes:

That a campaign to reconnect the USI with the students that it represents is greatly needed to bolster the great work that both officer board and local Unions do.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Campaigns to develop a campaign to reconnect the national union to the students that they represent.

## UO 19 – 16 Part Time Officer Training

Proposed by the Southern Regional Working Group

##### Congress recognises

The importance and value of having part-time officers and executive members trained in skills that will help them to achieve their goals within their local Students’ Union and on a National Level.

##### Congress values

The training possibilities within USI and external organisations that are offered to

Students’ Union part-time officers and executive members.

##### Congress understands

That each Students’ Union team may have different part-time officers and executive positions and that these may require different training to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills to carry out their role.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to carry out a needs-based assessment of training required for each Students’ Union part-time officer/executive member and provide training in the manner which best meets those needs.

## UO 19 – 17 Students’ Union Officer Handbook

Proposed by the Vice President for the Southern Region

##### Congress recognises

The role of a Officer within a Students’ Union is a unique role. It is also very important to have a well-rounded understanding of how to approach your role as an Officer within a Students’ Union and that a well-developed crossover is extremely valuable for newly elected Officers.

##### Congress understands

It can be helpful to have a source of information provided to Students’ Union Officers that cover areas they may find useful throughout their term in Office such as effective communication, event organisation, useful contacts and a jargon buster.

##### Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to publish a Students’ Union Officer Handbook before SUT each year to

support newly elected officers.

## UO 19 – 19 Give Us the Night Campaign

Proposed by Ents, Marketing & Commercial Working Group

##### Congress notes

The Give Us The Night is an independent volunteer group of professionals operating within the night-time industry, campaigning for positive changes to nightlife in Ireland, with particular regard to music venues. They endeavour to highlight the contribution of the night-time industry to culture, community and the economy in Ireland, and to raise the quality of nightlife to international standards. Their ongoing aim is to create debate and discussion about the licensing laws in Ireland, with a view to influencing legislative changes.

##### Congress notes

The importance of such a campaign to students and Students’ Unions who often play a part

in an active nightlife on and off campuses.

Our members can see these effects in many areas including but not limited to;

* Organising events: SUs liaise with promoters/venues for events who are directly affected by these laws.
* Venue closures: Many students’ unions have expressed concerns with their local nightclubs/late night venues closing in the recent year, this may be due recent to recent increase in costs in licences.
* Staggered closing times: after large events, safety issues can arise due to venues all closing at the same time - we would benefit from a staggered closing time and later opening hours.
* Employment: According to the USI survey conducted relation to the hospitality sector, 70% work in Food & Beverage and a further 7% in Events.
* Graduate employment: Many students who study courses such as music, sound engineering course would benefit from the employment opportunities that would result in the core aims of the campaign being realized.

##### Congress mandates

The USI Officer with responsibility for Ents, Marketing & Commercial activity to support

the Give Us the Night Campaign who’s core aims are the following;

* To support, nurture and reframe the conversation around nightlife and the night-time economy in Ireland.
* To highlight the economic value and societal benefits of a diverse and vibrant Irish night-time industry.
* To contribute to the creation of jobs and sustainable indigenous businesses within the night-time industry, and to broaden employment opportunities for those operating in the creative arts.
* To ensure that Ireland adopts a more progressive European approach to nightlife, that reflects the wide range of lifestyles and working hours here.

##### Congress further mandates

The USI Officer with responsibility for Ents, Marketing & Commercial to lobby relevant people to ensure the student perspective is heard in the campaign.

## UO 19 - 20 Student Activist Groups

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

##### Congress notes

The importance of students at the core of the success of USI campaigns.

##### Congress commends

The hard work of student activists throughout the year.

##### Congress further notes

That students engaged in activism reap educational benefits such as developing a greater sense of social responsibility and identity. It is also important for teaching students about the importance of democratic participation, leadership and the ability to build coalitions amongst a wide variety of individuals on campus. (Barnhardt, Reyes, 2016)

##### Congress mandates

For USI Officer Board to engage with student activists and grassroot campaigns, where possible, in the running of their campaigns and to actively seek out opportunities to engage with established student activist groups.

##### Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to set up Facebook Groups for students who share common interests from all over Ireland to facilitate opportunities for networking, sharing information and easily mobilising students.

##### Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to where possible, attend events and support the work of (what is currently known as) the All Ireland Student Activist Network and similar groups like it.

##### Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to run non-violent direct action training, which is open to students, each year.

## UO 19 – 21 Trade Unions Partnerships and Workers’ Rights

Campaign

Proposed by the Union Development Working Group

##### Congress Regrets:

That there are incidents where abuses of workers’ rights are leaving students concerned about whether they will have enough work or finances to afford attending third-level or afford to live once they graduate.

##### Congress Notes:

That there is a need for students to become aware of their rights as workers. Students should have the opportunity to work enough hours to be able to afford a decent standard of living.

##### Congress Welcomes:

The SIPTU-USI Agreement, previously approved by the Executives of both Unions in 2013.

##### Congress Further Notes:

That the knowledge and resources available from SIPTU, such as the Worker’s Rights Centre, and the Irish Congress Trade Union (ICTU) are valuable resources and partners to draw upon.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to work towards an update of the SIPTU-USI partnership as needed and promote it to members.

##### Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to work towards building alliances with trade unions, similar to the SIPTU-USI agreement, in as many sectoral trade unions as possible with the aim to gain benefits for students. These partnerships should have a particular focus on free/reduced cost membership to access to the services of those trade unions that match their area of study or part-time work while studying.

##### Congress also mandates

The VP for Campaigns to advocate for elected Students’ Union officers and their staff to

become members of a union.

##### Congress also Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to endeavour to work with the relevant trade unions, and other organisations, to assess the issues that may exist and to further mobilise students on a campaign on the issues of: pay, work, and recognition of the sector.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns to roll-out an evidence-based Workers’ Rights

Awareness Campaign for students in conjunction with SIPTU and other trade unions.

##### Congress Also Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective.

##### Repeal

16 UO 12 Worker’s Rights Awareness Campaign

## UO 19 – 22 the use of technological development to allow MOs to join national council

Proposed by Limerick IT Students’ Union

##### Congress notes

There is an appreciation for USI’s ethos of inclusive and rotary locations for their events. The various locations allow MOs to build informed comparisons to their own Institute or University.

##### Congress further notes

In some cases, it can be difficult for MOs to travel to every location- particularly for the non-centralised MOs.

##### Congress mandates

The USI President to thoroughly investigate an allowance for MO Representatives to join USI National Council events through technology, on giving notice.

This technological development should offer a capped number of times per year, for MO representatives to join same- in keeping with the benefits of face-to-face interactions at National Council events.

This capped number of times per year would be based on the Presidents’ agreed schedule

of National Councils

# Administration and Finance

## 16 AF 1 Solidarity Fund

Proposed by the President, USI

Renewed 2019

##### Congress notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland has actively sought to expand its membership in recent years with a particular focus on postsecondary inclusion.

##### Congress further notes:

Participation from new unions is significantly curtailed by a lack of funding. This essentially means that certain student groups are still unrepresented despite being members of USI.

##### Congress recognises:

Solidarity is the cornerstone of unions and that every effort should be made to ensure our Union is as inclusive and engaging as possible.

##### Congress mandates:

The introduction of a solidarity fund to allow for broader participation of underfunded unions in the national movement. This fund would operate on a voluntary basis and be used to allow for engagement in key national activity such as national council, congress and other decision making or training exercises organised by the union.

##### Congress further mandates:

That the fund would only be available to unions that fulfil the following criteria:

Have a total annual budget of less than €18,000 per year.

Have less than two paid sabbatical officers.

It is the view of the National Council that they are not in a position to participate in the work of the national union due to financial constraints.

##### Congress further mandates:

The introduction of a levy on Students Unions of not more than 14c per student per year to finance the fund. The contribution of individual Students’ Unions would be voluntary.

##### Congress further mandates:

Fees applied by USI for training, conferences etc be reduced, as appropriate, to allow participation in such events

##### Congress further mandates:

The President, and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to seek alternative funding for FE colleges as soon as practicable.

## 16 AF 2 Living Wage

Proposed by the President, USI

Renewed 2019

##### Congress recognises:

The definition of the living wage as “a wage which is high enough to maintain a normal

standard of living.”

##### Congress recognises:

The value of leading by example and the existing motion 14 NA 1 which outlines our comprehensive policy on the issue.

##### Congress notes:

The work undertaken by various representative groups, including USI, and some employers to ensure that workers be paid the living wage in order to maintain a decent standard of living.

##### Congress further notes:

That USI has a number of staff and officers working full time for the organisation.

##### Congress mandates:

That USI becomes a living wage employer and that Officer Board encourages other

Students’ Unions to do the same.

# Gaeilge

## IL 19 – 2 Irish language: Use your Cúpla Focal

Proposed By NUI Galway Students’ Union

Congress commends: The great work done by the LÚ Don Ghaeilge this year with the focail an lae on social media, and how this has encouraged a more mainstream approach to the Irish language.

##### Congress regrets:

Many people have Irish, but don’t make use of the language.

# Citizenship

## CZN 19 – 2 Irish Nationality and Citizenship

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### Council notes:

In 2004, 79% of the public voted in favour of a constitutional amendment which would remove the automatic right to citizenship for children born in Ireland. The following was inserted into Bunreacht na hÉireann,

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, a person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, who does not have, at the time of the birth of that person, at least one parent who is an Irish citizen or entitled to be an Irish citizen is not entitled to Irish citizenship or nationality, unless provided for by law.

##### Council further notes:

That this constitutional amendment leaves many who were born here and who have been resident in Ireland throughout their lives, facing an uncertain legal future and in some cases, the threat of deportation.

##### Council notes with concern:

Nationality and citizenship has a huge impact on accessing education, considering the financial barriers facing those when classified as international students, although they were born in Ireland and have lived in the state since.

##### Council therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for provisions to be made by the Oireachtas for jus soli citizenship and to support bills brought through the Oireachtas which would improve access to education for those living in Ireland.

## CZN 19 – 4 Deposit and return schemes

Proposed By NUI Galway SU

##### Congress notes with concern:

Ireland is failing to meet its 2020 carbon emission targets to combat climate change, and leaves itself open to large fines as a result.

##### Congress recognises:

Sustainability has been proven to be a massive student issue, this year the Student Movement was a leading force in Climate case Ireland, and SUs across the country are continuing work inside and outside their institutions on sustainability .

##### Congress commends:

Deposit and return schemes in many European countries. These schemes encourage people to recycle plastic in exchange for money.

##### Congress welcomes:

The Repack Machine in UCC allows recycling of plastic, while also raising money for UCCSU designated charities, and the positive impact this has had on their campus.

##### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and USI President to lobby the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment to introduce a national deposit and return scheme, and to lobby for economic supports for the introduction of such schemes.

## CZN 19 – 7 Referendum on the Extension of Presidential Voting Rights

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

##### Congress notes

The upcoming referendum on the extending Presidential voting rights to Irish citizens living outside of the Republic of Ireland.

##### Congress recognises

That Irish citizens, regardless of their location, should have the right to vote for their

nation’s head of state.

##### Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to campaign in favour of extending Presidential voting rights to those living outside of the Republic of Ireland.

##### Congress mandates:

The LU don Ghaeilge to roll out a ‘Use your cupla focail’ campaign

## IL 19 – 3 Cearta Teanga / Language Rights

Rúin Ón Coiste Cultúrtha

##### Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go bhfuil neart plé sna meáin faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

##### Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Go mbíonn daoine ar gearán faoi easpa cearta teanga go minic, agus go raibh feachtas an- éifeachtach (#nílsécgl, #faighdofada) eagraithe ar líne.

##### Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge tacú le feachais faoi na Cearta Teanga agus go gcaithfidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge dul i dteangmháil le hOifig an Coimisinéir Teanga chun nasc a chruthú leo.

##### Congress Notes

The constant media attention surrounding the Irish Language Act, and the upcoming Official Language Bill.

##### Congress Understands

There is regular cause for complaint due to the lack of language rights, with a very successful online campaign (#faighdofada, #nílsécg)

##### Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to support campaigns about language rights, and to contact the office of an Coimisinéir Teanga in order to build a connection.

## IL 19 – 4 Na Táillí Gaeltachta / Gaeltacht Fees

Rúin Ón Coiste Cultúrtha

##### Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go gcaithfidh na hábhair oidí tréimhse a chaitheamh sa Ghaeltacht chun clárú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta

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

Go raibh feachtas éifeachtach eagraithe in 2018 (#GaelFees)

##### Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Go bhfuil an costas a bhaineann le na cúrsaí seo ró-ard agus go mbíonn na hábhair oidí faoi bhrú maidir leis an gcostas. Chomh maith leis sin bhí maoiniú ann roimh 2012 chun cabhrú leis an gcostas.

##### Mar sin, aisghaireann an Comhdháil

12 AA 6

15 GA 3

##### Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge forbairt a dhéanamh ar an bhfeachtas #GaelFees in éinteacht le Conradh na Gaeilge agus go gcaithfidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge stocaireacht a dhéanamh faoin gcostas.

##### Congress notes

Student teachers must spend time in the Gaeltacht in order to register with the Teaching Council

##### Congress further notes

There was an effective campaign organised in 2018 (#GaelFees)

##### Congress understands

The cost of these courses is very high, putting student teachers under financial pressure. There was funding available for these fees before 2012.

##### Thus, Congress repeals

12 AA 6

15 GA 3

##### Therefore, Congress mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to continue lobbying on the Gaeltacht Fees and to develop the #GaelFees campaign further

## IL 19 – 5 NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

##### Congress Notes

The formation of the NUS-USI Irish Language Task Force in 2018/2019

##### Congress Further Notes

The training opportunities provided to Irish language Activists in 2019

##### This motion thus repeals

1. G 4

##### Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to provide continued support for the NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce, member organisations and facilitate training when needed