



**ROSS BOYD FOR
CAMPAIGNS**



Manifesto/ Foróga

ABOUT ME



A Chara,

I'm Ross (He/Him), I'm 22 and I am running for election for VP for Campaigns of the USI.

I am a seasoned activist in a wide range of passions and interests, such as mental health, youth engagement, gender equality and in local, national and international issues, ensuring young people aren't just heard in spaces, but truly listened to and that change happens.

I did my degree in Social Sciences & Cultural Innovation, and am the VP for Community & Citizenship at DCU Students' Union, dealing with the student accommodation crisis, sustainability projects including my well-known passion for cycling, engagement and volunteering, and engaging students on political actions.

I also have experience in grassroots activism, from lobbying MEPs in Brussel, representing Irish youth virtually, or sleeping in a tent outside Dáil Éireann.

It's this direct action that is needed to create change, and this action we will lead on. Seeing students having to rely on food banks, relying on SUSI and the support that Students' Union have to provide, because of a failure of the state that refuses to fund higher education.

When we still have to pay the highest fees in the EU, when students miss lectures because of a lack of online resources and when there is still so much injustice, we need to see a new way of engaging with students that creates a mass movement of students to protest on the streets, directly get the change from politicians and not just envision, but create a truly radical and free higher education model for all students, remember the USI's motto "Ní Neart go cur le Chéile" in all our work.

Please do follow my campaign to learn more about what I stand for here and read below.

I hope you do consider your number 1 preference vote for VP for Campaigns.

Is mise le meas,

Ross



EXPERIENCE



- The first officer to hold the role of VP for Community & Citizenship of DCUSU
- Was elected to Campaigns Strategy Committee representing the Dublin region
- Ensured DCU students at protests such as F*ck The Fees, Student Nurses, Black Lives Matter and Early Intervention Funding
- Developed campaigns with Plan International Ireland's Youth Advisory Panel on KnowWhere to Go and Period Justice
- Part of the SpunOut National Panel, developing and contributing to campaigns such as Invisible Disabilities and Body Positivity
- Continued successful campaigns informing students of union rights, as well as a Volunteer Week and Green Week
- Awarded DCU President's Award for Student Engagement with the DCU Neurodivergent Society
- Launched a volunteer newsletter to engage students on extra-curricular opportunities
- Sit on the National Youth Council of Ireland's Young People's Committee since 2020 on the topic of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Awarded the Uaneen Gold Engagement Award for extra-curricular activity
- Engaged political activist, formerly with a political party as well as non-political organisations encouraging voter registration and participation of young people



MY MAIN POINTS



- Building grassroots campaign to re-engage students in a post-COVID situation
- Ensuring campaigns are accessible, physically or virtually, across the entire Island
- Having action-led campaigns that reflect the crises we face for students and MOs



BUILDING GRASSROOTS- LED CAMPAIGNS

Coiste Gnó led campaigns and calendar for all

The biggest part of the role of the campaigns officer is facilitating other Coiste Gnó officers to run successful campaigns, which MOs can share and adapt to their own needs. However, given their high workload and policies to follow, establishing a followed campaigns calendar that can be shared with MOs can ensure officers can create relevant graphics, including gaps when sudden issues may crop up to ensure the union has timely and ready-made promotional material which can complement any actions taken, and ensuring a successfully led union for the year.



Ensuring MOs can be prepped to run successful campaigns

In many cases, the best campaigns and most relevant ones can be ones that are thought about by MOs, irrespective of their size. However, many ideas may have gone under the radar until another MO does it, and this leads to rueing opportunities to further engage students. I want to facilitate improved conversations about campaigns between MOs, that MOs can support each other, share ideas and work together and collaborate, so we can have the best campaigns when we share similar passions, or face similar issues, building along workshops such as SUT and SUT+ to establish how to best ensure collaboration in WGs.

BUILDING GRASSROOTS- LED CAMPAIGNS

Graphics templates to ensure consistent communications

While it's positive to see steps that USI have taken to improve social media communications including launching TikTok and simple graphics, keeping campaigns to have a local aspect is crucial to engagement.

I want to continue this good work to engage students on a digital side, ensuring consistent and relevant graphics and ensuring short, snappy explainers of the key issues facing students, and graphics to ensure students can be empowered to know their rights, and take action when necessary to protect and enhance them.

Engaging with student activists through monthly activist forums

As an activist myself, I know that students who may not be directly involved in SUs can be as crucial in empowering student movements, and creating partnerships wherever possible to ensure the student movement is united on the core common issues we face.

I want to establish a monthly network meeting of groups who may not be part of MOs but have significant activism experience relating to third-level education and the issues facing students, to ensure action and collaboration can happen on a wider level and achieve true change.



BUILDING INCLUSIVE CAMPAIGNS

A National protest while taking positives of regional

While the regional protests had the great intention of engaging more students through protests in Cork, Galway and Dublin, a national protest is something that is well overdue, especially with the easing of restrictions and a more positive public health outlook.

However, this needs to be visible to ensure students' frustrations and I want to take the energy of sleepouts and increase radical actions in tandem with the Campaigns WG and Campaigns Strategy Committee to truly make sure the government is listening, and improving both pre-actions as well as post-actions from the main protest.

That said, I want to ensure accessibility is a cornerstone of any in-person campaigns, and improve online campaigns to allow hybrid options when speaking to students in-person, as well as ensuring those online can take meaningful actions, through lobbying politicians simultaneously to those shouting on the ground, to truly ensure change is the loudest it can be on the day.



BUILDING INCLUSIVE CAMPAIGNS

Ensuring intersectionality on student issues

One of the biggest things I want to focus on is how different students can be disproportionately affected when it comes to the messaging of campaigns.

I especially want to create that **focus on international students**, paying significantly more fees and at risk of being scammed more for accommodation and costs, as well as students from different socio-economic backgrounds and those from **ethnic minorities**, such as BAME and the Travelling community. It's until we break those system barriers that no matter what actions are done, little can be done and I especially want to work with the VP for Equality & Citizenship to be able to ensure campaigns are run with the specific lens.

An all-Ireland campaign approach

No matter what the jurisdiction is, the issues that students face are identical, in the failure of higher education funding from the highest level with students left to face the costs.

I want to **improve leading actions between NUS-USI and USI**, to ensure MOs in the Republic can provide support to those in the North, more needed than ever with budget cuts being faced by the Stormont Executive and create overall consistency in messaging while **recognising the differences in political structures and autonomy of NUS-USI**.
(2021 UO 4)



BUILDING ACTION-LED CAMPAIGNS

Student Accommodation Crisis

The student accommodation crisis is one of the biggest crises that students have faced, particularly this year with many students having to commute hours across the country, live in hotels, hostels or couch-surf, or having to sleep in their car as the only place they can afford. Others have to pay €700-900 a month in unfit for living rooms, with little rights and little awareness of their rights rampant in both an availability and affordability crisis, and change is needed more than ever on this.

What I want to do is see **protests across the country**, as while fees are decided by the government, the accommodation crisis is created by landlords charging rents, loopholes in legislation and a lack of availability in affordable purpose-built student accommodation by developers, despite so many places also being left derelict.

We also need to see **loopholes closed** to allow students to be aware they can pay monthly and information campaigns to empower students of their tenancy rights, continue to object to PBSA which isn't affordable or fit for ordinary students and highlight the commercialisation of PBSA in both on-campus and off-campus accommodation (20 NA {NC} 8B)

It's not a case of a lack of demand, it's only a case of a lack of profit-driven building and extortion of students already cash-strapped.



BUILDING ACTION-LED CAMPAIGNS

Climate and Biodiversity Crisis

While many issues can be seen as too far away from being a student issue, the climate emergency has a great impact on students, particularly those from rural backgrounds.

The lack of public transport, often expensive for students creates a reliance on cars for transport, a lack of sustainable job opportunities available from fossil jobs in farming and universities that have yet to divest from funding fossil fuel companies and the arms industry.

Firstly, ensuring all work that USI does accounts for its carbon cost is crucial to understand the impact the organisation has, and to minimise it where possible and continue to plan to reduce waste where possible in campaign information, promoting reusable materials where possible.

Continuing to protest on climate issues, such as CETA (2021 EM {CZN} 5) and work on networking with other groups and MOs through the USI Climate Action Network (2021 CZN 4)

Most of all, ensuring universities fully understand the climate crisis, act on it and ensuring a just transition for all students is crucial in any actions.



BUILDING ACTION-LED CAMPAIGNS

Student Workers - Including Healthcare workers and Teachers

Those who are working should be paid for their work. However, we've seen student nurses still not being fully paid for their work, despite having to do more than what they are assigned, working in often risky conditions, especially with COVID, and having to rely on only stipends.

Similarly for student teachers, having to substitute in places sometimes nowhere near where they live and without pay, still with few rights and flexibility and often facing poor communication, with little notice for lesson plans and actual work.

I would continue to advocate to ensure that student nurses are paid at the HCA rate, and also that both student teachers and nurses can work in safe and easily accessible places and work with the INMO, INTO, ASTI and VP for Academic Affairs on this.

Many students are also working in low paying jobs, most of them having to work to make ends meet, and having to work long hours and yet balance study. Ensuring more students know their workers' rights and to improve awareness of union membership, including the SIPTU partnership with the USI to ensure students can be empowered.



BUILDING ACTION-LED CAMPAIGNS

SU autonomy and funding crisis

Student Unions, especially this year, have significant issues with their universities and trust, with some facing cuts to their funding or being ignored despite what issues students face.

While the new legislation to reform university management does ensure funding is accountable for what it should be spent for, in particular student services, it also loses spots on governing authorities for student representation in other universities.

It's crucial that an injury to one is an injury to all, and ensuring that any future legislative changes reflect the issues that MOs face, in highlighting cases where universities that do not listen to MOs. ensuring to support MOs when threatened with funding cuts and ensuring flexibility in how SUs operate throughout to avoid overregulation.

We also need to especially tackle the separation of SU teams with the growth of TUs, ensuring MOs in TUs can ensure to keep their relationship with local students while expanding and keeping partnerships in a new expanded team. This will ensure a stronger voice on common issues and avoid the issues of splintering with teams who may be in different counties or rarely be able to communicate consistently.



Department of Further and Higher Education
retweeted

Ross Boyd #FuckTheFees @rosspjb... · 7h ·

BUILDING ACTION-LED CAMPAIGNS

Higher Education Funding

With all of the above issues, however, it is all a question of funding and a lack of it. When students have to fork out the highest fees in the EU, have to pay for extra hidden fees, books and not even receive adequate support on mental health, having to pay costs on accommodation and commuting, as well as how many students have to work a part-time job on top of college just to meet ends meet.

There is only one simple thing that is needed, and that is the **significant increase in investment in higher education, and the removal of ALL fees**, both through the Student Contribution Charge and other hidden fees.

This will be needed through all the actions set out above, and while it may be something that may take time, it's important to keep the messaging of the Cost of College consistent and yes, very much say F*ck the Fees and simply No Keys, No Degrees, in the highlighting of student issues and working with the CSC and Campaigns WG to achieve a truly publicly funded higher education system.

In all of this, I further want to represent non-EU, postgrads, creatives & PhD students on any sort of Cost of College campaigns.



GET IN TOUCH



I'd love to be able to meet with you as the campaign progresses.

Please do send me an email or a DM if you have any questions, what to learn more about what I standing for or just a simple chat about campaigns.

My contact details are below

Email - rosspboyd@gmail.com

Twitter - [@rosspjboyd](https://twitter.com/rosspjboyd)

Instagram - [@ross4campaigns](https://www.instagram.com/ross4campaigns)

Tiktok - [@ross4campaigns](https://www.tiktok.com/@ross4campaigns)

I look forward to seeing you soon at hustings or Comhdháil!

