

CD 1

Welcomes
Regulations
Motions before Congress

Name

MO

Comhdháil Social

Monday



**REGIONAL
THEME
MONDAY**
22.30 Music from Puzzy Wranglers

Tuesday



**CONGRESS
GOT TALENT**
Tuesday 12 April 2022
See your regional VP to enter
MC: DJ Rory Lynam
USI
Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Wednesday



**The
Dinner
COMHDHAIL 2022**
President's Address
Steering Revue
Steering Awards
& Late DJ Set
Late Set: DJ Rory Lynam
USI
Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Table of Contents

4	Welcomes
6	Steering Committee
9	Code of Conduct
11	Comhdháil Primer
12	Jargon Buster
13	Policies Due to Expire
36	Constitutional Amendments
37	Equality & Citizenship
43	National & International Aff.
48	Gaeilge / Irish Language
52	Welfare
59	Academic Affairs
65	Union Organisation
81	Clár-Ama

Fáilte Ón Uachtarán Clare Austick

A chairde,

I am excited to welcome you all to Comhdháil 2022, the first in person Congress since 2019! It has been a long time since we've all been together, learning from each other and debating motions. COVID might have been the cause of our physical separation but our joint motivation and hunger for an accessible, inclusive and publicly funded third level

“our joint motivation and hunger for an accessible, inclusive and publicly funded third level education system has always and will always unite us”

education system has always and will always unite us, no matter where we are.



Comhdháil is the ultimate decision-making body of the Union of Students in Ireland where we set priorities and the direction of the national union for years to come. You should be extremely proud of yourself for being chosen as a delegate to represent a thousand students each.

Make sure to get the most out of your Comhdháil experience by participating in debates, engaging in informal discussions, learning from one another and building your support network. Congress is a fantastic opportunity for you to meet students from all

across the country.

You all are the building blocks that make, shape and drive the student movement forward. Every single one of you can make a difference and lead the change you want to see. Trust yourself, use your voice and champion what you believe in.

Here's to a wonderful Congress experience together!

Ní heart go cur le chéile.

In Unity,

Clare Austick

Clare Austick
USI President
2021-2022

Hello from The Congress Director Ben Archibald

Dear Delegate,

On behalf of the staff of USI, It is my delight and pleasure to be the seventh (or maybe eighth, who knows) person to welcome you to USI Comhdháil 2022 at the Knightsbrook Hotel.

An in-person Congress is something we took for granted for sixty years in USI. We'll never take it for granted again. We have worked hard to ensure this event is a smooth and comfortable reintroduction to major in-person events in USI, and we hope you have a pleasant and safe time.

“An in-person Congress is something we took for granted for sixty years in USI. We'll never take it for granted again.”



Comhdháil is a special event. You represent more than 1,000 students from your institution, and it's your job to contribute your voice, intellect and passion on behalf of those who can't be here to represent themselves. As a result, you have a special place in the Union, and a special responsibility to your classmates. We have no doubt that, just as in past years, you'll do them proud.

We have rules at Comhdháil to keep the event safe and smooth. With 240+ attendees, it's necessary to ensure that everyone's aware of them and committed to upholding them. We and your fellow delegates will thank you for your adherence to the

Code of Conduct.

My role at Comhdháil includes the operations which make the event work. Anything not happening on Congress Floor is my responsibility - if you have any problems or queries about the hotel, catering, delegation management, sleeping arrangements or registration, come to me.

I'm also proud to lead a team of staff who will work to ensure your needs as a delegate are met. When you meet USI staff, you'll see the dedication they have to the democratic heart of USI you're taking part in.

I've been to 17 Congresses. My advice, for what it's worth? Be kind, take care of yourself, eat the mints, drink the water, turn up on time. Have fun.

A handwritten signature of Ben Archibald in black ink.

Ben Archibald

5 April 2022

Steering & Elections Committee

Colm Murphy, Chair of S&EC



On behalf of the Steering Committee I would like to welcome you to Comhdháil AMLÉ 2022!

After 2 years of having Comhdháil online, it's great to be back to in-person events.

Comhdáil is a core part of USI. It is the beating heart of our democratic, inclusive student movement. As such, debates and voting on motions is a huge part of what Comhdháil is about. Steering Committee's role is to be an impartial moderator for debates and to ensure that everything on the debate floor runs smoothly. If you have any questions about procedural motions, points of order or information, how votes are taken or elections are conducted, just ask any member of Steering!

Respect is a fundamental principle of USI. You have every right to fundamentally disagree with a speaker, however all speakers deserve respect at all times on the debate floor. Similarly, speakers should take care to give other delegates their due respect.

Comhdháil is a wonderful event and is filled with opportunities to network, debate and challenge your own ideas as well as everyone else's. Carpe diem!

Enjoy the week.

Is mise le meas.

Colm Murphy

Richard Hammond Chair of Elections Subcommittee



Elections Sub-Committee is comprised of Nora Duncan, Cathy Pembroke and me.

Our function is to ensure that you can have confidence that both the polling and the counting of ballots are conducted in an independent, impartial and accurate manner.

To that end, Delegate Leaders have been advised on a number of occasions to ensure that each delegate has their Student Card upon their person during polling. Each delegate's identity is verified upon registration and during polling there will be random spot checks on Student Cards to verify identification and student status.

Following the close of polling, Elections Sub-Committee with the assistance of USI HQ will ensure that the ballot box is securely stored until the counting of the ballots. At the election count a representative from each candidate (or the candidate themselves) may be present but subject strictly to their covenant not to release any results prematurely. Your cooperation in these respects will ensure an efficient election process. We hope that you have a productive and enjoyable Annual Congress.

Richard Hammond SC, Chairperson

Steering & Elections Committee Who's Who?



Colm Murphy
(Chairperson)

Colm served as Education Officer in WITSU before being elected for two terms as a USI Officer (Education Officer and then Deputy President & Campaigns Officer). Colm spent nearly a decade in professional development working for educational bodies like the Washington Ireland Programme and the Institute of Certified Public Accountants. He also worked as a recruiter specialising in high-potential graduate roles for companies like Dropbox and Kerry Group. Colm then changed career and recently retrained as an airline pilot and will be starting flying the Boeing 737 for a major European low-cost carrier this summer.

Aodhán Ó Dea
(Deputy Chairperson)

Bhí Aodhán mar Uachtarán agus Oifigeach Gaeilge don Aontas i gColáiste na hOllscoile Bhaile Átha Cliath. Chuir sé spéis san Aontas ar dtús chun an Gaeilge a chur chun cinn agus dimigh sé ar aghaidh le bheith mar Oifigeach Gaeilge le AMLÉ ar feadh dhá bhliain idir 2009-2011. Tá sé ag obair le Conradh na Gaeilge ó shin mar Stiúrthóir Forbartha. Is breá leis ag labhairt le daoine éagsúla as Gaeilge nó as Béarla- abair “haigh” leis má tá deis agat.

Aodhán was President and Irish Language Officer of UCD Students' Union. He originally got involved in the Union to help promote the Irish language and he eventually went on to be Irish Language Officer for USI for two years between 2009 -2011. He has been working with Conradh na Gaeilge since then as Director of Development. He loves a good chat in Irish or English, say “hi” if you get a chance.



Richard Hammond
(Chair of Comhairle Náisiúnta & Elections Sub-Committee)

A former President of USI, Richard Hammond S.C. is a solicitor and senior counsel practising in Mallow, County Cork with his partner and spouse Joyce. In addition to representing students' unions he is a specialist in succession law and professional regulation. He supports Cork G.A.A. teams and Liverpool FC.

Cathy Pembroke
(Deputy Chair of Comhairle Náisiúnta)

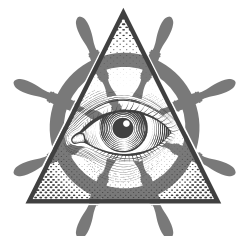
Cathy Pembroke is a graduate of Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT) and served a total of three years in WITStudents' Union as a Deputy President for Education and then two years as President. Following this, Cathy also proudly served one year as USI Southern Area Officer. Cathy now works in WIT Graduate Studies Office as the Graduate Studies Office where she supports the research postgraduate community.



Emma Conway



Emma Conway hails from Galway. After studying for a degree in history she thought she'd get more involved with the Student Movement. She served two terms as Vice President/Welfare Officer in NUI Galway between 2009-2011. For the past few years, she's worked for the Tropical Medical Bureau. When not at work she can be found in her local, sitting by a fire and reading the paper.



In Steering We Trust

Steering & Elections Committee Contd

Eoin Hayes

Limerick man Eoin Hayes served as President of UCCSU 2009/10, where he started major constitutional reform initiatives in UCCSU and USI. Since, he's mostly worked in business but occasionally works in politics (most notably as a HQ data manager on Obama's 2012 campaign). Since 2018, Eoin is the Managing Director of Cantillon Labs in Dublin, a consultancy advising tech startup founders and CEOs on how to scale their companies globally. He holds a BEng in Process & Chemical Engineering from UCC and an MSc in Management from London Business School. In the evenings, you may find him drunkenly ranting about left-wing economic policy to blank walls.



Amy Kelly

Amy Kelly is from Kildare but living in Galway, she currently works with mental health charity Let's Get Talking as their Communications and Fundraising Manager. During her time in GMIT, Amy was elected to a number of SU roles including GMITSU Welfare Officer, GMITSU President and VP for Campaigns with USI.



Nora Duncan

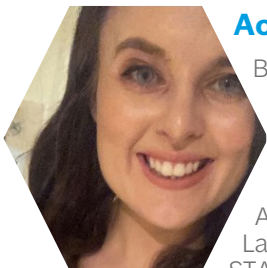
Nóra served 3 terms as an officer within UUSU including the position of President, succeeded by working in WITSU for two years as a staff member. Nóra's career developed within the Public Health Agency as a Youth Health Co-ordinator specialising in the areas of substance misuse, sexual health education, inclusion & diversity, UK Parliament outreach & engagement. As well as this being Nóra's 6th year as a member of USI Steering she has also worked for the NUS:UK for over three years in the role of Campaigns, Development and Communications consultant, working across the UK to provide union development support for both FE and HE unions as well as focusing on NI specific campaigns through NUS-USI.



Aoife Deasy

Ba í Aoife an chéad duine a bhí tofa sa ról mar Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge (íochta!) Roimhe sin bhí sí mar Uachtarán, Oifigeach na Gaeilge agus Leas-Uachtarán do Leas don Aontas i gColáiste San Aingéal, Sligeach. Ina dhiaidh sin chaith sí bliain ag obair le Seanad na Mac Léinn go páirtaimseartha in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad. Is múinteoir meánscoile í anois i nGaelcholáiste i mBaile Átha Cliath, agus bíonn sí le chloistéal ar Raidió na Gaeltachta agus Raidió na Life anois is arís.

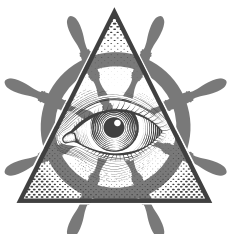
Aoife was the first person to be elected into the full-time, paid role of Vice-President for the Irish Language with USI. Before that she was the President, VP for Welfare and Irish Language Officer in STACS SU. Aoife was the chair of MSU Senate for one year and is now teaching through the medium of Irish in Dublin (but she is from Cork and is happy to talk all things Cork!) Aoife can be heard on both Raidió na Gaeltachta agus Raidió na Life from time to time.



Adrian Kelly

Adrian was Vice-President for the Coleraine campus of the University of Ulster Students' Union prior to serving as the Overall President for two years. During this time Adrian was actively involved with USI, serving as a member of the Finance Committee and a number of working groups.

After leaving the Student Union movement and a period of travelling Adrian returned to studying and undertook a masters in Management and Corporate Governance before pursuing a career as a Company Secretary within the Investment Funds and banking sector in Ireland and the UK. Adrian is currently the Company Secretary for AIB Group (UK) plc, providing corporate governance advice to Senior Management and Board of Directors.



In Steering We Trust

USI Events Code of Conduct

USI wants all participants at events to have an enjoyable, productive and safe time. We've developed procedures to promote our values and make participants comfortable.

At the commencement of Comhdháil, attendees will have been deemed to have accepted this Code of Conduct and to be bound by it for the duration of the event.

People with responsibility

SU Delegation Leader

Your SU has a delegation leader (DL) - this is usually the Students' Union President, but it may be someone else on the delegation. The DL is responsible for supporting and leading the delegation of representatives from your SU, and *for most circumstances will be your most useful contact.*

USI Congress Director

In your pack and on your ID lanyard you will have the telephone number for the Congress Director, which you can call at any time of the day or night to report anything you think could be dangerous. This number is to be used in emergencies only.

Code

Responsibility to others

At USI we believe that we each have a responsibility to take care of ourselves and to respect the space, integrity and needs of others.

Every delegate, facilitator, trainer, committee member and member of staff of USI and its partners is entitled to a safe, enjoyable and productive event.

We won't accept or tolerate any action which causes another person at a USI event to either be unsafe or to believe that they are unsafe.

Respect for others

USI believes in the right to respectful freedom of expression for our delegates. Debate about competing ideas is healthy and the basis of our policy process. We don't shout down others when they're speaking. We don't use personally insulting, threatening or offensive language and we don't stop others from expressing themselves within our rules.

Responsibility to promote safety

You are the primary agent for your own safety, and you have a responsibility to promote safety for everyone. You must report anything you feel could endanger yourself or another delegate, and can expect your concerns to be taken seriously.

Protocols

Abusive, exclusionary, bullying or violent behaviour

USI will not tolerate abusive, exclusionary, bullying or

violent behaviour at any USI event.

Anyone breaching this protocol at a USI event can expect to be required to leave.

Any person engaged in activity which endangers another person at a USI event can expect to be excluded from the event (or any part of it) and not allowed to participate in future USI events.

Anti-social behaviour

Alcohol and drugs can impair a user's judgment and lead to risky behaviour, including sexually risky behaviour. It's not acceptable to have illegal drugs at a USI event. Anti-social behaviour, particularly that caused by the influence of drugs or alcohol is also not acceptable - and not compatible with remaining at a USI event.

Sexual conduct

USI expects all attendees at events to apply the standard of 'active consent'.

USI has a zero tolerance approach to sexual misconduct and harassment. Personal space, privacy and the right to control over one's own body are key principles within USI.

USI will not accept:

- Unwanted sexual comments, including about someone's body or private life
- Repeated unwanted sexual invitations or requests
- Unwanted touching or sexually motivated activity

Accommodation and sleep

USI provides accommodation at Congress. Rooms will be shared between multiple delegates. Everyone at our events has a right to a good night's sleep in the room and the bed they've been allocated, with no exceptions.

Delegates allocated to a room have responsibility for the room and are responsible for loss or damages there.

USI Staff

USI staff work hard to deliver USI objectives and events, but they have no right to participate in the democratic bodies of USI, and no right to reply to public comments about their work.

USI staff should not be mentioned or discussed during debates at a democratic event.

Concerns or complaints about staff should be brought to the President.

Any violent or abusive conduct towards staff will be treated

Code of Conduct Continued

with the utmost seriousness and if unresolved will lead to the withdrawal of USI staff from the event and the whole event's termination. You can expect such conduct to be reported to the relevant authorities in every case.

The same applies to staff USI has hired temporarily or employees of organisations with which USI works and hotel staff.

Steering Committee

Steering Committee members are independent of the organisation and entitled to the same respect as staff and delegates. Steering Committee are not responsible for the content of the Congress and have no responsibility to answer for the organisation or decisions they have taken, outside a session.

Investigation

USI is not capable of conducting investigations into allegations of any sort and will not undertake to do so.

We will provide support and information about other agencies which may be able to help. Where an allegation relates to something unlawful or which endangers or has endangered our members, USI will always support the right of an individual to seek support from relevant authorities in whatever way it can.

If USI staff become aware of something unlawful or which endangers our members, you can expect the staff member to report it to the relevant authorities.

Why would we eject a person?

A decision to eject a person may be taken if we feel that the safety or security of people at the event, or the perception of safety or security of participants would be reduced or imperilled by the person's continuing presence at the event.

We might also eject a person if otherwise the order of a democratic or training event would be impeded, where they have engaged in misconduct contrary to this code, or the standing orders of the event, or have threatened to do so.

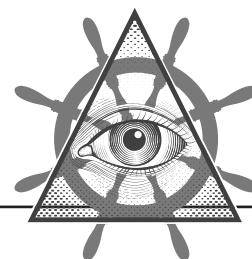
Authority to eject

The authority to require a person at a USI event to leave the event (temporarily or permanently) lies with the SU delegation leader, President, and the Congress Director. The authority to direct that a person be required to leave Congress Floor rests with the chair of the meeting.

The President or Congress Director may take whatever

advice and make whatever consultations they feel are appropriate - their decision is final for the event and no refunds may be made in respect of fees paid for attendance for an ejected person.

In respect of a person who has seriously breached the Code of Conduct, a decision may be taken to bar the person from registration for future events.



In Steering We Trust

Steering Awards 2022

What now?

Each year, during the Congress Dinner (Wednesday night) the USI Steering Committee nominates and presents ten (or more, or fewer, we don't tell them what to do because we're a little afraid of them) awards to delegates and delegations at Congress. To stand a chance of winning a pitifully small prize (HINT: it's an Easter Egg) and the bragging rights, remember to state your name and college any time you speak.



Comhdháil Primer

Who is in charge in Congress debates?

On Congress Floor, **Steering & Elections Committee** is responsible for ensuring that things run smoothly and that motions are discussed fairly and properly.

They do not vote and they are not members of any delegation. **Steering** enforces the rules which Congress has adopted: they do not make the rules.

Their responsibility at Congress is to preside over the various sessions of debate and to ensure that speakers are not improperly interrupted. They also enforce time limits or other regulations and ensure that votes are carried out in a proper manner.

How do debates work and who proposes the motions?

The Officer or MO who put the motion forward initially, normally proposes the motions in each session. If the people who initially wrote the motion don't turn up, or don't want to speak, any delegate can start the debate by proposing the motion. If nobody speaks in favour of a motion, the motion will fall.

Once a motion is proposed, it is then open to the floor for discussion.

How often can I speak?

Unless you are the person who proposed the motion, you can only speak once on any motion. There is no set limit on the number of motions you can speak on. If you proposed a motion, or if you have an amendment to a motion successfully passed, then you can also sum up before a vote is taken. You may alternatively assign your summation to another delegate.

How long can I speak for?

The first proposer of a motion has **5 minutes** to introduce a motion, and all other speeches have a limit of **3 minutes**.

Once a vote is called for, the Proposer has the right to sum up, unless an amendment to the motion has been passed, in which case, the proposer of the amendment has the right to 'summate'.

If, during your speech you realise you need more time, in the last minute of your speech you may once request **UP TO 2** minutes additional. This will be subject to a quick indicative vote by Congress. If Congress rejects your request, you must keep to your default time.

In the case of a procedural motion, you may speak for **up to 1 minute**.

If you offer a 'point of information' to a speaker and they accept it, you may speak for up to **15 seconds**. They are under no obligation to accept it.

How can we control the debate?

Debate at Congress flows according to standing orders approved by the National Council and adopted at the start of the event. To move things on or alter the flow during the debate, you can use Procedural Motions.

What are procedural motions? How can they be put?

To help ensure that debates run smoothly and as quickly as possible, procedural motions exist. A proposer must approach the Steering Committee and explain the motion they would like to propose. If such a proposal is in order, a speaker will, when called by the chairperson, have one minute to propose the motion. The following are the procedural motions and their effect, if passed:

(A) THAT THE QUESTION NOW BE PUT

If passed, the Proposer will summate and then an immediate vote will be taken.

(B) THAT THE QUESTION NOT BE PUT

If passed, no vote will be taken on the matter under discussion. The motion will fall and is considered dead.

(C) THAT THE QUESTION BE TAKEN IN PARTS

If passed, divides the motion or amendment into **specified sections** to be voted on individually. Used if there are sections that you do not agree with. **This must be put in writing and handed into Steering Committee.**

(D) THAT THE MATTER BE REFERRED BACK

If passed, refers the matter back to a specified time or a specified Officer, or a specified Committee, or to a National Council. **It is therefore not voted upon at Congress.**

(E) A CHALLENGE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S RULING

You may challenge the Chairperson's ruling if they have made one. If passed, the Chairperson must change his or her ruling on an issue in accordance with the motion. **A challenge to the Chairperson's definition of an objectively verifiable fact (like the definition of a minute) is not a valid challenge and will be rejected.**

(F) NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CHAIRPERSON

If passed, the Chairperson will vacate the Chair for the remainder of the session and will be replaced by another member of Steering Committee. **The Chairperson may chair further sessions.**

Who do I go to if I have any questions?

If you have questions about debate or the policy process, go to Steering Committee, who should be able to help answer any query you may have.

What if I want to completely change everything?

USI's Congress rules have been developed over decades of practice and constant review. The Standing Orders cannot be amended during Congress.

What if I want to debate something not on the timetable?

Emergency motions may be submitted for debate on a matter having occurred after the deadline for the submission of motions which is not already dealt with in the Clár. The deadline was on 7 March 2022.

The timetable is adopted by Congress, and can be amended by Congress by a **two-thirds-plus-one majority**. Steering Committee will oppose this motion on behalf of the Congress.

Questions about the hotel and organisation of the event should be made to the Congress Director.

Jargon Buster

Jargon

Words and phrases which are meaningful to an in-group, but could confuse uninitiated people.

Proposer

The person who submitted the motion to Congress and usually the first speaker on the motion.

Summation

The speech given to recap on the arguments and respond to other points made in the debate.

Procedural Motion

A technical proposal designed to alter the flow of the debate.

“Name and College!”

What Steering will wearily say to you if you forget to tell them who you are.

Swear Bucket

If you speak in an unparliamentary manner during a debate, you will be fined €2 by the chair of the session. The money will be given to charity at the conclusion of the session. If you are fined more than once in a session you may be denied further speaking rights, at the sole discretion of the chair.

We fully expect to make a few quid out of the “F*ck The Fees” campaign this year. Class.

“Order”

Good order is when the debate is flowing according to the rules. If the debate departs from standards of good order, the chair will give directions to end the disorder. If you are the cause of the disorder, **stop being the cause of the disorder. Just STOP.**

Chuntering from a Sedentary Position

You should not speak at Comhdháil while you are sitting down at your table. If you do, you will be asked to stop and return to good order.

Silent During the Vote

Counting close votes is difficult. If a vote is called and counted, you must sit silently as Steering Committee undertake a count.

Staff Protocol

You cannot mention the name or deeds of USI staff during debates, because staff cannot defend themselves during debate. If you wish to thank or criticise a staff member, do it directly to the President while not on Congress Floor and not publicly during debate.

Congress Floor

The room where debates happen at Comhdháil.

Guillotine

The end of a session. In the past, the Guillotine could fall on a motion under debate, thereby killing it without a vote. But this was sneaky, and people used to draw out debates to use the Guillotine deliberately. Now, when the Guillotine falls, the chair will direct the debate to a summation and a vote.

Hard Guillotine

A guillotine which cannot under any circumstances be moved.

A Previous Speaker

We don't mention the name of anyone who spoke before

us. We pretend they have no name and say ‘a previous speaker’. This is very useful for people with poor memories.

“Seal the Doors!”

When a vote is called, only the people in the room can vote. You can still go out, but nobody can come in until the vote is over.

Point of Information

15 seconds (max) of information intended to aid a speaker in making their point. Rise (if you can) to your feet and call out (once) ‘Point of Information’. If the speaker says ‘Yes Please’ then give them the POI. If they do not respond or say ‘No thank you’ then sit down and relax. It's up to them.

‘First Congress in the BMW Region’

This is said at practically every Congress, despite 80% of all Congresses having been held in the BMW Region. If you are the first to say it at this Congress during a debate, the Congress Director will give you a Creme Egg.

Drink the Water, Eat the Mints

The basic mantra of all regular Congress attendees.

Emergency Motion

A motion relating to something having occurred after the deadline for Congress Motions.

Emergency “Emergency” Motion

This is an Emergency Motion which isn't really eligible for consideration as an emergency motion, but where a proposer realises after the deadline that they forgot something important, so they wait until Comhdháil and submit one on the pretext that someone mentioning the thing on the radio qualifies it. Give it a go. Might work.

Heckling

This is where a person attempts to upset or derail the current speaker having been recognised by the chair. **Anyone heckling a speaker only ever manages it once.**

Our Friends at Revive Active

Every Delegate will get a sachet of Revive Active Zest on the morning of Day 3. You'll need it. It's lovely. Thanks to **our friends at Revive Active** for supplying these for free.

Congress TikTok / Insta / Myspace / Yahoo Images Thing

Steering will give a prize (it's still an Easter Egg) for the best images taken with the consent of all depicted and sent to them. We'll use them at the Congress Dinner when VIPs and future employers are around, so keep it funny and lawful. Look out for how to send images when we work out how to do it.

Typographical Error

A prize for whomever finds the funniest one. It's a Creme Egg.

Could the occupants of Room XYZ come to meet the Congress Director

We may not know what you did last summer, but we have a fair idea you will be working over next summer to pay for whatever you did to your poor bedroom last night. You're not going to enjoy this conversation.

Quorum

The total number of people required in the Constitution to be on Congress Floor for discussion to continue. A person is required to be seated in their position to request a Quorum Count.

Policies due to expire

having received a priority

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 use amounted 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 - 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.

EM 19 (EQ) – I: 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;

Notes

- ▶ 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-wagging 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 – 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.

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.

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 - 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

Notes

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.

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.

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 – 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 subsidise such training.

Congress mandates

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

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 – 21 Trade Unions Partnerships and Workers' Rights

Notes

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

I6 UO I2 Worker's Rights Awareness Campaign

I6 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 I4 NA I 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.

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.

Congress mandates:

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

I6 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 – 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 – 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.

Notes

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.

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 - 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 – 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, taking 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

Notes

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.

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 – 9 Disability Awareness and Annual Conference (tier4)

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 (Tier4)

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.

NA 19 - 2 Post March 29th: Brexit Support (Tier4)

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 – 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

Notes

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 (tier 5)

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 (tier 5)

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.

NA (NC) 19 - 6 Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital (tier 5)

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.

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 (tier 5)

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.

Notes

UO 19 – 4 Sponsorship Agreements and Commercial Partnerships (Tier 5)

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 – 16 Part Time Officer Training (tier 5)

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 – 19 Give Us the Night Campaign (Tier 5)

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.

16 AF I 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.

Notes

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.

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

14 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

Notáí

Notes

New proposed policies

having been duly proposed and prioritised.

Constitutional Amendments:

Notes

2022 CA 1 Rewriting Basic Principles of USI

UCC Students' Union

Remove Article 3.4 and replace with:

USI regards the defense and promotion of all democratic and human rights as a core goal of the organisation, and therefore USI is an anti-imperialist organisation.

2022 CA 2 Constitutional Amendments to the role of Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

the Irish Language Committee

5.11.3 reads

The LU/Gaeilge shall be Chairperson of the Irish Language Committee and shall oversee its work. The function of this Committee is to support the LU/Gaeilge in developing, implementing and planning the Union's Irish language campaign and policies.,

Remove this above section and replace with

The LU/Gaeilge shall be Chairperson of the Gaeilge Working Group whose main function is to communicate needs from a local level, hold the LU/Gaeilge accountable, and implementing and developing Irish language policies and positions in the Union.

All other references to the Irish Language committee shall change to the Gaeilge Working Group

2022 CA 3 LU don Ghaeilge

USI Vice President for the Dublin Region

Remove: Article 5.1.9 and replace with:

5.1.9 The Vice President for the Irish Language, who shall present themselves as An Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge (LU/Gaeilge) in the daily conduct of their office.

Equality & Citizenship

Notáí

2022 EQ 1 Free access to period products and contraception in Ireland

WITSU

Congress Notes

In a recent study it was found that women in Ireland spend on average €120 annually on period products including the cost of painkillers and an additional €120 annually on contraception.

Congress also notes

In the Budget 2022, the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, announced that women in Ireland, ranging from the age of 17-25, can avail of free contraceptives from August 2022.

Congress further notes

However women on average spend 40 years of their lives menstruating and in a lifetime spend over €4,840 on period products and contraceptives. This announcement by the minister hinders women and adds extra cost to the already extortionate cost of living in Ireland today.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The USI Welfare officer to continue to lobby the Government and the Minister for Health to introduce free and accessible period products for all women in Ireland.

Congress Further Mandates

The USI Coiste to lobby the Government and the Minister of Health to broaden the range of age to avail of free contraception in Ireland.

Congress repeals 20 EQ NC 3

2022 EQ 2 SUSI Proof of Estrangement

Southern Region WG

Comhdháil Notes:

Student Universal Support Ireland is a grant system that aims to help bridge the barriers to education for students from a lower socio-economic background. The SUSI maintenance grant has helped thousands of students access education, however there are still some barriers.

Comhdháil Recognises:

Currently to prove estrangement students are required to have/provide documentation that can include a court order, a letter from a social worker or from TUSLA. This documentation has proven to be difficult to secure from students across the country, leaving them ineligible to apply for SUSI without submitting records from their parents/guardians.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship and VP Welfare in conjunction with the VP Academic Affairs to work with SUSI and TUSLA to investigate other avenues to prove estrangement for students.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The Coiste Gnó members working on this should aim to begin lobbying prior to the commencement of semester one

2022 EQ 3 Trans Healthcare

Maynooth Students' Union

Congress Notes:

Trans and Nonbinary people outreach to the National Gender Service to access gender-affirming medical services.

Congress Notes with regret:

The psychiatric-diagnostic model adopted by the National Gender Service is outdated, denies informed and consenting trans and nonbinary people access to its medical services, and does not provide them with sufficient care preceding their medical and/or social transition.

Congress further notes with regret:

Transgender and Nonbinary people do not receive sufficient support when accessing mental health services, a medical transition, and primary care services that are sensitive to their experiences. By extension, Nonbinary people are not legally recognized under the 2015 Gender Recognition Act.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Health to ensure the National Gender Service implements Version 8 of the WPATH Standard of Care and that such services can be provided at a local level.

Notes

Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Justice to revise the Gender Recognition Act to include the legal recognition of nonbinary as a gender.”

2022 EQ 4 T Fund**TU Dublin SU****Congress Notes With Concern:**

That according to TENI, 78% of trans people in the UK and Ireland have thought about ending their lives and 40% have attempted suicide. For many people, beginning and continuing social transition brings significant relief, however college is filled with financial stresses and for many transgender students, name changes and other transition expenses are not an option, even though they are life-saving.

Congress Commends:

NUI Galway and other MOs for the introduction of the ‘T fund’ for social transition, aiding students financially with elements of social transition which may include gender affirming items, such as makeup, and dysphoria relieving items like chest binders.

Congress Also Notes:

That the USI has a proud history of fundraising for various causes, but more recently does not fundraise annually for charity.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to develop a guidance strategy, based on best practice models, on how to establish a local fund, which USI will then circulate to all member organisations.

Congress Further Mandates

The VP Equality & Citizenship to run a yearly campaign and work with relevant departments and ministers to introduce funding for all HEI’s to be able to provide a T Fund for their trans students.

Congress Therefore Repeals:

2020 EQ (NC) 2TFUND

2022 EQ 5 Pink Training**Equality & Citizenship Working Group****Comhdháil Notes**

Pink Training is an annual event ran by the USI annually that brings together members of the LGBTQI+ Community and allies to empower, explore and educate. Pink Training has played a critical role in establishing a safe space for student activism and change. Furthermore, Pink Training has paved the way for hundreds of delegates each year, to experience a place like no other in Ireland; a space where they can truly be themselves.

Comhdháil applauds

The response of USI’s Pink Training event to critical issues of time that required strong student voices to shift narratives of the LGBTQI+ community. This encompassed the promotion of safe sex, tackling the rise in HIV cases, promoting anti-bullying measures in schools, elevating Trans rights and campaigning for legislative change. This work and impact of Pink Training has been imperative for the queer movement in Ireland in campaigning for social justice and equality for all members of the LGBTQI+ community.

Comhdháil Recognises

Pink Training is organised by the VP Equality and Citizenship each year and is a huge undertaking for the officer. Currently there is no document in existence that explains how the VP Equality and Citizenship should run Pink Training. This may cause potential issues regarding a range of factors such as, but not limited to, the continuity of planning, facilitator vetting, facilitator payments, delegate feedback and contribution.

Comhdháil Mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship and the Coiste Gnó to continue to organise the annual USI Pink Training.

This event should endeavour to include sessions that tackle nuanced LGBTQI+ perspectives such as race, body positivity, disability, drug harm reduction and other extended topics deemed relevant.

The location of this training should be agreed upon each year no later than August and should not be held in the same region for more than three consecutive years.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship and any other Coiste Gnó member involved in the organising of Pink Training to produce an Event Planning Document after the training each year.

This document should include how to organise the Training, factoring in costs associated with the training, information on facilitators of the training, feedback from the training and any other information, the organisers feel necessary.

This document should be produced within three months of the Training and should be passed over to the incoming VP Equality and Citizenship each year.

2022 EQ 6 Reproductive Justice & Abortion Rights

Equality & Citizenship Working Group

Comhdháil Acknowledges with pride

That on 25th May 2018, the Irish Electorate voted by a landslide in favour of removing the 8th Amendment (Ireland's constitutional ban on abortion). Following this, on 22nd October 2019, abortion was decriminalized in Northern Ireland. These are both historical moments in Irish history that many students and young people across Ireland played a role in.

Comhdháil Notes

That even after the recent victories of the repeal of the 8th Amendment in the Republic and decriminalization in the North, there is continued opposition to abortion access by many anti-choice groups throughout Ireland.

Comhdháil Further Notes with Concern

That despite these monumental changes in legislation, abortion access is still heavily limited across Ireland. 371 people travelled from the North and 194 travelled from the Republic of Ireland to England for abortion care during the height of the pandemic.

Due to a lack of commissioned abortion services in the North, abortion access is only currently provided for up to 10 weeks', through early medical abortion (EMA). Therefore, many pregnant people are still being forced to travel to Great Britain for Healthcare.

If Northern Irish residents wish to access abortion services in the Republic of Ireland, they are required to pay to access care privately and must comply with the mandatory three-day waiting period.

In the Republic of Ireland, only 1/10 GPs and 10/19 Maternity Hospitals currently provide abortion care. Combined with the medically unnecessary 3 day waiting period and strict 12-week limit, the small number of providers across the country also results in people from the Republic of Ireland travelling for abortion care.

Comhdháil Believes

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 across the island of 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.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

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

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship should support relevant campaigns and organisations in the fight to 'Free, Safe, Legal and Local' abortion care.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

That the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship endeavours to support the decriminalisation of abortion across the island of Ireland and actively engage with NUS-USI to ensure our solidarity in the North is as effective as possible.

2022 EQ 7 Equality Events Advisory Groups

Notes

the VP Southern Region**Comhdháil Recognises:**

The VP Equality and Citizenship organises many events every year including but not limited to EMpower, Pink Training, Women Lead, Power of Disability, Mature Student Seminar etc. These events are organised to support, mobilise, empower and engage with students within these events.

Comhdháil acknowledges

The VP Equality and Citizenship may not be a member of the community that the event is aimed towards. This can make organising the events difficult for the VP when ensuring that the events are effective.

Comhdháil Mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship to set up advisory groups for every Equality Event. These groups should be populated with members of the community that the event is for

2022 EQ 8 EMpower**The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship****Comhdháil Notes**

The importance of recognising and celebrating voices from ethnically diverse communities in Ireland. Over several decades, Irish institutions have witnessed an increase in people of colour and those from Ethnic Minority background enrolling in institutions across the country. This will continue to rise.

Comhdháil Notes with concern

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

Comhdháil Recognises

The importance of safe spaces for students of colour and ethnic minority students within their journey through third level education in predominantly white and settled institutions. These spaces allow for them to organise, create, and come together as a community in what can sometimes be an isolating environment.

Comhdháil applauds

The success of Pink Training, Women Lead, the conference for students with disabilities, and similar events in the promoting of minority students running for leadership positions. These events have shaped future leaders of Ireland.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to organise an event called EMpower. The aim of this event will be to encourage students of colour and ethnic minorities to take up leadership positions in their institutions, community, and professional lives.

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship should endeavour, that the event:

Provides a safe space closed to ethnic minority students, where possible.

Incorporates aspects of culture and social life for ethnic minority students to engage in.

Is organised in partnership with people of colour and ethnic minorities to ensure the event is tailored to its respective target audience.

2022 EQ 9 Use of Name on Third Level Certificates**UCC Students' Union****Comhdháil Notes:**

As per current policy of Higher Education Institutions in Ireland, certificates are awarded to students upon graduation with the students' legal name.

Comhdháil Also Notes:

This system of using the legal name may be particularly harmful for non-binary, trans, and students with a gender beyond the binary of male and female. Particularly if a student is in/will be in the process of changing their name legally, and then after the change is made, the name on their certificate does not match their legal name.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

This also extends to students who may have divorced parents, a name in Irish spelling, or a non-western name, and the name that they wish to have may be on their Higher Education Institution's

records as being misspelled or incorrect. This can be morally and emotionally harmful if the student does not identify with their given name, or at least how it is spelled on the Higher Education Institution's databases.

Comhdháil Believes:

That while attending/upon graduating from a Higher Education Institutions, students should be given the choice on the name that is used on their graduating certificate. This includes (but not limited to); the spelling of the name (both forename and surname), the use of certain characters (eg. fadas on vowels), the use of non-english characters, etc.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Vice President for Welfare work with all relevant parties in the Higher Education Sector with an aim towards this option being implemented across all Higher Education Institutions.”

2022 CZN I Student Cyclist Initiative

USI Vice President for the Dublin Region

CONGRESS NOTES

The merits of cycling as an alternative to other carbon intensive modes of transport. Cycling also promotes improved physical and mental well-being.

CONGRESS CELEBRATES

Improved cycling infrastructure nationwide making it safer and more attractive for citizens to commute via cycling.

CONGRESS ALSO RECOGNISES

Government's commitment to incentivising cycling through significant investment in the sector, e.g. National Cycle Policy Framework, Budget 2022, Climate Action Plan 2021.

CONGRESS REGRETS

That no scheme exists for students to offset the expense of buying a bike and necessary accessories as it can deter students from cycling to college.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The USI Coiste Gnó to lobby the government to target student cyclists in future initiatives via the establishment of “Cycle to College” scheme, subsidised City Bikes or otherwise.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES

The USI Coiste Gnó to continue lobbying for improved cycle networks, particularly in rural areas.

2022 CZN 2 HEI Divestment from Fossil Fuel Industry

the Vice President for the Dublin Region

Comhdháil Notes

Fossil fuel companies were responsible for 71% of global carbon emissions between 1988 and 2017. Since 2010 climate-related disasters across the world have displaced 21.5 million people annually.

Comhdháil Believes

The fossil fuel industry, by extracting, processing, promoting, and facilitating the use of, selling, and profiting from fossil fuels, as well as by having a major influence on government policy, is driving climate change and its catastrophic impacts.

That university commitments to tackling climate change - such as carbon neutral / net zero strategies - should extend to their investment portfolios and policies.

THEREFORE, Comhdháil Mandates

The USI President and USI Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to undertake research into Higher Education Institute's (HEI) existing investment portfolios and investments in the fossil fuel industry.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns, in conjunction with Regional Vice Presidents, to develop a strategy for a campaign highlighting the extent of the links between existing HEI investment portfolios and the fossil fuel industry, as well the potential benefit of divestment.

Comhdháil Also Mandates

The USI Coiste Gnó to liaise closely with special interest groups in the development of this campaign

2022 CZN 3 Sustainability in Third Level Education

CMLOÉG

Comhdháil Notes:

Sustainability is described as the process and activities that society takes to avoid the exhaustion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Society's actions drive climate change. This last decade is believed to be the hottest in human history, with specific weather events being linked to climate change. The effects of such are diseases, droughts, severe weather events and the threats it has on plants, animals and humans. However, we cannot afford to be hopeless and there are many actions we can take while we still have time to implement them.

Comhdháil Believes:

That third level institutions and Students' Unions should:

- ▶ Include sustainability modules and courses in the curriculum, where possible.
- ▶ Fund research into sustainability.
- ▶ Use recycled materials on campus i.e. recycled paper for printing.
- ▶ Offer more sustainable food choices on campus and offer other initiatives such as student pantrys to minimise food waste.
- ▶ Move toward banning single use plastic on campus but improving waste segregation and recycling when initiating this.
- ▶ Increase the amount of online resources in libraries, instead of purchasing hard copies of books.
- ▶ Lobby against construction plans that are more harmful for the environment than beneficial for the third level institution, its students and the wider community.
- ▶ Save green spaces on campus and expand on them to promote biodiversity in the institution.
- ▶ Set up a green procurement policy that needs to be implemented when the University is carrying out projects and third-party contractures are hired to carry out work i.e. services on campus.
- ▶ Promote sustainable modes of transport throughout the year for staff and students i.e. promote public transport to and from the third level institution, exams if they are off campus and field trips. Set up bike-rental schemes or partner with companies that do and set up more electric charging ports on campus.
- ▶ USI and MO's should try to make all events as carbon neutral as possible.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to raise this with the Minister for Higher Education and the Minister for the Environment, Climate & Communications and to lobby for sustainability to be a key area third level institutions focus on with the Higher Level Authorities. The Regional Officers should also work with their MO's to develop this on a local level.

2022 CZN 4 Third Level Eco-Action Forum

the Equality & Citizenship Working Group

Comhdháil Recognises

the important role young people and students have played in the fight against global warming. Climate change is here. As the impact of climate change intensifies over the coming few years, it is the children and young people of today who will face the worst effects. Young people across the globe have taken to the streets to protest the lack of action on the climate crisis by Governments across the globe. This sparked a global movement of school-age students demanding greater action from governments to fight climate change. Now millions are marching to demonstrate their support.

Comhdháil Notes

Governments across the globe are not taking action to fulfil the Paris agreement. Across the island of Ireland, the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly continue to ignore their obligations and role in combating climate change. The Climate Action (Amendment) Bill 2020 aims to pursue

climate neutrality by 2050 but does not have to achieve it, and the carbon budgets do not have to be consistent with the 2050 objective.

In February 2020, the Northern Ireland Assembly declared a climate emergency. Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK that does not have its own climate legislation, although it does contribute to wider UK targets on emissions reductions and has a Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme 2019-2024.

Comhdháil Further Notes with disappointment

The environmental/sustainability movement is largely made up of white, middle to upper class people. Much of the mainstream messaging around fighting climate change focuses entirely on personal responsibility. While this is an important element of societal change it often leads to elitism. The most necessary and effective changes (e.g., insulating a house for energy efficiency), are out of the reach of many, particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Working class voices are under-represented, their needs unaddressed, and often feel unwelcome in the movement.

BIPOC activists have repeatedly expressed discomfort within the sustainability movement. Racism and colonialism's contribution to climate change has long been ignored. The "third world" nations already feeling the effects have contributed very little to climate change, and their plight is ignored by international media. Additionally, the sustainability movement often doesn't understand the needs of BIPOC activists and fails to make a welcoming space for these voices.

People with disabilities have a particularly high stake in fighting climate change. Rising temperatures and biodiversity loss mean increased natural disasters, in which disabled persons are more vulnerable. Furthermore, these changes are linked to pandemics. The UK Office of National Statistics revealed 60% of their Covid deaths were people with disabilities. The concerns of disabled activists need to enter the mainstream.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Campaigns to develop a forum to centralise third level sustainability activism. The forum's purpose is to unite Students Union, Green Campus, environmental societies and third level institutions in pursuing systemic change. It will be an opportunity to coordinate efforts, strengthen a national movement, share knowledge and network.

The forum should launch in the first semester of the 2022/23 academic year. Prior to the launch of the forum, careful planning must be done to consult possible partner organisations (e.g. Eco-UNESCO) and to ensure that BIPOC, disabled and socio-economically disadvantaged activists are central.

Comhdháil therefore repeals

2021 CZN 4

National & International Affairs

2022 NA (NC) I Conversion Therapy Ban

Congress recognises:

That the practice of conversion therapy is the harmful practice of attempting to erase, suppress or change someone's sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Conversion therapy includes medical, psychiatric, psychological, religious, cultural or any other interventions that seek to erase, repress or change the sexual orientation and/or gender identity of a person.

Congress notes:

That conversion therapy is currently legal and is widely practiced in both jurisdictions on this island. In 1990, the WHO (World Health Organisation) removed homosexuality from the international classification of diseases. Yet, 31 years later attempts to 'cure' people who identify as LGBTQ+ continue across the island and globally.

Congress further notes:

The immense suffering experienced by, and lives lost within, the LGBT+ community due to this harmful practice. Conversion therapy has lifelong impacts on those who survive and for some who do not survive. The need for victim and survivor support is vital to support and protect the LGBTQ+ community across the island and globally.

Congress acknowledges:

Notes

There is a commitment in the Programme for Government to legislate to ban conversion therapy, alongside officials at the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth confirming that they have prepared a scoping paper on banning conversion therapy and are currently engaging with the Department of Health to forward proposals on banning conversion therapy. On April 20th, Stormont passed a motion by 59-24, calling on the Minister for Communities to commit to bringing forward legislation to ban conversion therapy in all its forms before the end of the current Assembly mandate. MLAs also voted to reject an amendment from the DUP to remove a section reading "it is fundamentally wrong to view our LGBTQ community as requiring a fix or cure".

Congress believes:

That all forms of conversion therapy must be made illegal on an all-island basis and the Governments across the island must take action to ban this harmful practice. In order to support LGBTQ+ people across the island we need to introduce a full legislative ban, along with providing supports for victims and survivors and introduce public awareness, education and training.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President and the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the NUS USI President in lobbying for the introduction of a full legislative ban to take place within the current Assembly mandate.

Congress further mandates:

The President and Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby and raise awareness of this issue nationally and lobby the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth ban conversation therapy in Ireland within the lifetime of this Government.

2022 NA 1 Public Transport Infrastructure

VP for the BMW Region

Congress Notes:

The declining quality of public transport and lack of accessibility to public transport in certain regions of Ireland, particularly in the more rural parts of Ireland.

Congress Further notes:

The importance of public transport in accessing third level education.

The benefits public transport has on the environment with less people using individual vehicles

Congress Mandates:

The Regional officers to set up a consultation Group with local MOs to identify areas of improvement in the public transport infrastructure, this would include cycle lanes, rail, coach and greenways, and assist them in lobbying on a local level for better and improved transport services.

2022 NA 2 Parental Leave Implementation Review

USI Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Comhdháil Notes

Many external PhD funding bodies allocate paid parental leave for their postgraduate researchers. However, issues may exist where the tax-exempt status of PhD researchers means allocated funding cannot be provided through Higher Education Institutions. This is due to the fact that Universities are not legally allowed to pay a de-registered student under the current framework.

Comhdháil Further Notes

Local arrangements can be implemented, but crucially these remedies sidestep the existing issue. An effective payment release mechanism for postgraduate students on parental leave is urgently needed.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

VPPGA and the Coiste Gnó to lobby through governmental channels for a review of the payment allocation scheme for parental leave for postgraduate researchers per institution to ensure that provided funding can be released effectively.

2022 NA 3 Electoral Reform

Campaigns Working Group

Comhdháil Notes that:

Automatic voter registration does not exist in Ireland.

Comhdháil Further Notes that:

The current system of Seanad voting leaves the majority of students and graduates without a vote, despite many attempts to reform this system.

Comhdháil Believes that:

Automatic voter registration, and a democratically elected Seanad would increase voter participation among young people and facilitate better political engagement.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship and the VP Campaigns to develop a long running electoral reform campaign to which includes but is not limited to;

- ▶ votes at I6
- ▶ automatic voter registration
- ▶ the establishment of an electoral commission
- ▶ A democratically elected Seanad where all citizens have the right to vote
- ▶ The removal of the 11 Seanad seats nominated by An Taoiseach
- ▶ The introduction of the secret ballot for all Seanad voting

Comhdháil repeals:

2021 NA 2

2020 NA 3

NA (NC) 19 - 7

2022 NA 4 Anti-War Motion

Equality & Citizenship Working Group

Congress Notes

That Ireland is considered to be a neutral country, yet the US military presence in Shannon, EU militarisation developments and the threat to world peace has accelerated in the last few years.

Congress Notes with Concern

That Institutions are spending student money on facilitating the war industry through unethical investments.

Congress acknowledges

The work being done by the Anti-War Movement, the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) and other organisations. However, some organisations may have biases in their approach that may perpetuate the current military industrial complex, hindering neutrality.

Congress Mandates

The USI Coiste Gnó to take a stance that Ireland should remain a neutral country and support organisations working towards peace and neutrality. In addition to this, the VP Equality & Citizenship should reflect on biases that may exist within these organisations.

Congress Further Mandates

The VP for Equality and Citizenship, where applicable, to support MOs in lobbying their institutions to divest from the arms-industry.

2022 NA 5 Motion to Oppose the Cultural Death of Dublin

Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

This motion requires a two-thirds plus one majority to pass

Comhdháil Notes with regret

The recent announcement of the closure of Trinity's Science Gallery, Chapters Bookstore and other many other cultural resources in Dublin.

Comhdháil Further Notes

Resources for students as well as the public are being torn down in favour of building more hotels, despite the fact that we are in a housing crisis as well as a cultural crisis. These resources include libraries, museums, bars, nightclubs, and more.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to adopt an official stance supporting the #StopKillingDublin campaign.

Notes

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The VP Campaigns to work with the VP Dublin and external stakeholders to develop a campaign strategy that includes direct action, to be presented to Comhairle Náisiúnta, aimed at ensuring the preservation of cultural resources in Dublin.

2022 IA (NC) I Anti War**Congress notes:**

That Ireland is considered to be a neutral country, yet the US military presence in Shannon, EU militarisation developments and the threat to world peace has accelerated in the last few years.

Congress notes with concern:

That Institutions are spending student money on facilitating the war industry through unethical investments.

Congress acknowledges:

The work being done by the Anti-War Movement, the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) and other organisations. However, some organisations may have biases in their approach that may perpetuate the current military industrial complex, hindering neutrality.

Congress mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó to take a stance that Ireland should remain a neutral country and support organisations working towards peace and neutrality. In addition to this, the VP Equality & Citizenship should reflect on biases that may exist within these organisations.

Congress further mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship, where applicable, to support MOs in lobbying their institutions to divest from the arms-industry.

2022 IA I Ukraine Aid**the VP for the BMW region****Congress Condemns:**

The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian federation.

The attempt to colonise by Russia to overthrow a democratic government of a sovereign state.

Congress Recognises:

The Ukrainians right to independence and self-governance.

The huge generosity of the Irish community in donating to causes to help the Ukrainian population.

That many people in Ukraine currently require and will require assistance from foreign governments and charitable organisations.

Congress Notes:

The calls from many different charitable organisations for support in fundraising for humanitarian supplies to assist people in Ukraine.

Congress Mandates:

USI Coiste Gnó to organise and coordinate a campaign with local unions to help raise funds for humanitarian supplies for the Ukrainian people.

2022 IA 2 Anti-War & Expansionism**Maynooth Students' Union**

This motion requires a two-thirds plus one majority to pass

Congress Notes with Concern:

The recent invasion of the sovereign, independent and democratic nation of Ukraine by Russia, a separate and distinct territory, political entity, and nation and the humanitarian crisis that has arisen as a result.

Congress Affirms:

The statement made recently by the European Students' Union (ESU) where they stated a clear position of "no to war and expansionism, yes to peace and the protection of the human and social right to study in a peaceful context"

Congress Believes:

That while the world's focus is currently on Ukraine, there are other humanitarian crises occurring

including, but not limited to, events in both Palestine and Yemen and we have seen motions on such crises in the past.

Congress Further Believes:

That if the Union of Students in Ireland formally adopted an Anti-War and Expansionism position, the Irish Student Movement (Local and National) will be able to effectively mobilise and stand in solidarity against current and future crises such as these, unified as one under the USI.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The Union of Students in Ireland to adopt an “Anti-War and Expansionism,” position.

2022 IA 3 Motion on vaccine equity

DCUSU

Congress celebrates

The easing of public health restrictions that have allowed students to return to in-person lectures and a full social life

Congress Notes with concern

How this is not a reality shared in most countries, particularly in the Global South and the continent of Africa where fewer vaccines have been administered due to unavailability and cost factors

Congress Recognises

How there are over 100 factories in the African continent that would be able to produce COVID-19 and other life-saving vaccines and ensure students in those countries could access vaccines

Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Minister for International Development and government to call for a TRIPS waiver on COVID-19 vaccines and funding of the ACT-A accelerator,

The VP should also lobby the minister to ensure Ireland meets its target of 0.7% of Gross National Income is spent on Official Development Aid to meet the Sustainable Development Goals

Congress also mandates

The VP for Equality & Citizenship to work with student health groups such as Students4VaccineEquity on vaccine and medicine equity

2022 IA 4 International Student VISA Waiver Scheme

Queen’s Students’ Union

Congress Notes:

The number of international students studying on the island of Ireland continues to increase

International students contribute enormously to student life and should not experience any undue or unfair restrictions on their lives while studying

The Common Travel Area (CTA) does not apply to international students who do not hold UK or Irish citizenship

Many international students studying in Northern Ireland / North of Ireland face visa-based restrictions on travel within the Irish state.

The current immigration system requires many international students to apply for short-term visas to attend events / activities within the Irish state, which is onerous, overly bureaucratic, time consuming, and limits participation in student life.

Congress Believes:

International students should not face additional barriers to travel or to participation in opportunities on the island of Ireland.

International students studying in Northern Ireland / north of Ireland should be able to travel without restriction on the island to participate in educational, social and student experience activities.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The USI Executive Team to secure the implementation of a travel visa waiver - or visa exemption - system within the Irish state for all international students registered as studying in a further or higher education institution in Northern Ireland / north of Ireland.

Gaeilge / Irish Language

Notes

2022 GAE (NC) I Comhpháirtíocht le Misneach/Partnership with Misneach

AITHNÍONN AN CHOMHAIRLE SEO:

Is grúpa é Misneach a bhfuil luachanna an cosúil linne, mar ghluaiseacht, acu; mar shampla, ag obair i dtreo na dícholínithe, ag cur deireadh le géarchéim na Gaeltachta agus tsochaí a bhfuil cothrom do chách.

Comhairle Recognises:

Misneach is a group whose values are very similar to our own as a movement; for example, working towards decolonisation, ending the crisis in An Ghaeltacht and creating a fairer and more equal society.

Creideann an Chomhairle seo:

Go bhfuil buntaistí le comhpháirtíocht a chrúthú le Misneach, chun dul i mbun feachtasaíocht, ag eagrú imeachtaí oideachais, pléphaineál agus traenáil d'ár oifigigh agus gníomhaithe.

Comhairle Believes:

That there are advantages with creating a partnership with Misneach, to get involved in campaigns, organising education events, panel discussions and training for our officers and activists.

Agus creideann an Chomhairle seo:

Gur chóir dúinne mar eagraíocht le 374,000 ball ardán a thabhairt don ghrúpa gníomhaíochta seo ag ár imeachtaí agus spásanna Gaeilge.

Comhairle also Believes:

As an organisation with 374,000 members, we should provide a platform for this activist group within our Irish language events and spaces.

Mar sin, glacann an Chomhairle seo:

le comhpháirtíocht oifigiúil a chrúthú idir Aontas na Mic Léinn in Éirinn agus Misneach.

THEREFORE, THIS COMHAIRLE APPROVES:

the creation of an official partnership between the Union of Students in Ireland and Misneach Agus sainordaíonn an

Chomhairle seo:

Go n-oibríonn an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le Misneach chun tacú agus dul i mbun feachtas, agus imeachtaí a eagrú le chéile.

And Comhairle Mandates:

The Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge work with Misneach to support and organise campaigns and hold events together.

2022 GAE I Use of Irish Language in County Names

CMLOÉG

Comhdháil Recognises

the original place names of our towns, villages and counties north and south, place names which have a greater meaning in their original form.

Comhdháil regrets

that most of our original place names were turned into nonsensical gibberish words as part of colonial anglicisation.

Comhdháil believes

that we lost part of the heritage and culture of our towns and villages as new colonial names were forced upon them.

Comhdháil applauds

other decolonised nations who are reclaiming and changing back to their indigenous place names, such as Mumbai instead of Bombay in India or the former country of Burma changing their name back to Myanmar.

Comhdháil also applauds

other organisations such as the GAA who encourage the use of our county names in Irish.

Comhdháil believes

that proactive measures should be taken over time to reclaim the prominence of our Irish language place names.

Comhdháil Mandates

USI Coiste Gnó to proactively use the Irish language versions of county names as much as possible when referring directly to counties in order to help normalise their use. This mandate would apply to press releases, letters, submissions and social media, while excluding specific names of third level colleges and MOs.

2022 GAE 2 Ranganna Gaeilge d'Oifigí lán aimseartha

CMLOÉG

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil / Congress Notes

Go bhfuil spéis ag méadú i leibhéal na Gaeilge a fhorbairt i measc mic léinn.

That there is a growing interest for developing the level of Irish among students.

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil comh maith / Congress further notes

Go mbeadh Gaeilge líofa ag oifigí lán aimseartha áirithe a thagann isteach amach anseo.

That certain elected full time officers may already have fluent Irish.

Creideann an Chomhdháil/ Congress believes

Go bhfuil géarghách le seirbhísí dhátheangach ag an gcomhaltas

That it is important that bilingual services are provided by the union

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil/ Therefore, Congress mandates

Na naoi n-oifigí lán-aimseartha ar an choiste gnó chun freastal ar ranganna Gaeilge le linn a dtraenáil. D'fhéadfaidh freastal ar réimse ranganna ó ranganna bhunúsacha go ranganna athnuachana.

The full time sabbatical officers to attend Irish classes during their training. The training may range from basic Irish language classes to refresher classes.

2022 GAE 3 Gaeilge Groups in USI

the Irish Language Committee

Comhdháil Recognises:

That the Irish Language Committee / Gaeilge Working Group takes place at each Comhairle Náisiúnta but the LUdG also chairs An Coiste Cultúrtha and the NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce.

Comhdháil acknowledges:

That the Committee/ Working Group is a constitutional requirement and is attended by predominantly full-time officers. An Coiste Cultúrtha was created when the LUdG role was part-time, and the NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce was created to better co-ordinate campaigns on various campuses and to better support those organising those campaigns.

Comhdháil further acknowledges:

That the work of these organisations has changed, and the vacuum in which they were created has been filled by long standing campaigns, fully developed working relationships and additional support from external organisations such as Conradh na Gaeilge, An Dream Dearg, trade unions and USI. These spaces are used primarily for updates, as the work happens somewhere else.

Therefore, Comhdháil Mandates:

That the Irish Language Committee / Gaeilge Working Group continue to operate as it is intended, while the NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce and An Coiste Cultúrtha will cease to operate.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

That the LUdG work with each MO to identify the main challenges they are facing and help them establish local Coistí Cultúrtha/Meitheal Mac Léinn/Irish Language Taskforces/Grúpa Gníomhaí Gaeilge.

Comhdháil strongly encourages:

Each MO register for the Gníomhaí Gaeilge scheme where they will be set up with a mentor who will work one-on-one with them to set and achieve a number of goals in relation to the Irish language in their Union, their Cumann Gaelach or on an individual level, and have the chance to have this work recognised at the end of the year.

Comhdháil repeals:

IL 19 – 5

Notes

NOTE: IF IL 19-5 is extended by Congress, this Motion will not be debated and will automatically fall.

2022 GAE 4 Scéim Teanga 2022

Irish Language Committee

AITHNÍONN AN CHOMHDHÁIL

An tábhacht a bhaineann le scéim teanga a bheith ag Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn leis an nGaeilge a chur chun cinn agus í a bheith chomhtháthú in obair laethúil an Aontais.

CREIDEANN AN CHOMHDHÁIL: Gur cheart uasdátú rialta a dhéanamh ar Scéim Teanga an Aontais chun teacht leis na hathruithe rialta a tharlaíonn san Aontas. Ba cheart go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar chuid nádúrtha d'aon obair a dhéanann AMLÉ go háirithe in aon fheachtas nó imeacht de chuid an Aontais.

SAINORDAÍONN AN CHOMHDHÁIL: Gur cheart an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge agus Uachtarán AMLÉ Scéim Teanga AMLÉ 2022 a chur i bhfeidhm agus bheith cinnte go bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar chuid d'obair laethúil an Aontais.

CHOMH MAITH LEIS SIN, SAINORDAÍONN AN CHOMHDHÁIL: Go ndéanfaidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge athbhreithniú ar an Scéim ar a laghad gach dara bliain chun mbeadh sé ag teacht le haon san Aontas nó ó thaobh reachtaíocht an Stáit de.

CEADAÍONN AN CHOMHDHÁIL: [An Scéim Teanga 2022.](#)

AISGHAIREANN AN CHOMHDHÁIL:

20 GAE 2

Comhdháil Notes:

The importance of USI having an Irish Language Scheme in order to promote the language through its integration in the everyday work of the Union.

Comhdháil Believes:

That any USI Irish language scheme should be regularly updated in line with any major changes which occur in the Union. Irish should be a natural part of any work USI does, especially events or campaigns run by the Union.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge and the USI President to implement USI's Irish Language Scheme 2022 to ensure Irish is seen as a central part of the Union's day to day work.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to review and update the scheme at least every two years to comply with any changes to the Union or to State legislation regarding the language.

Comhdháil APPROVES:

The Scéim Teanga 2022.

Comhdháil REPEALS:

20 GAE 2

SCÉIM TEANGA 2022

Scéim Teanga Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn 2022

Union of Students in Ireland Irish Language Scheme 2022

Meáin Chumarsáide agus Poiblíocht

- ▶ Tá sé mar dhualgas ag Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge (LU don Ghaeilge) aon iarratas ó na meáin Ghaeilge a ghlacadh ar son Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ)
- ▶ San áit nach féidir leis an Leas-Uachtarán labhairt leis na meáin, roghnófar ionadaí ó Choiste Gnó AMLÉ nó cheann de na hAontais áitiúla le labhairt leis na meáin Ghaeilge.
- ▶ Déanfaidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge agus an Oifigeach Polasaí leasmhar cruinniú faisnéise leis an ionadaí sula labhraíonn siad leis na meáin.
- ▶ Cuirfear preasráitis trí Ghaeilge chuig na meáin Ghaeilge maidir le himeachtaí nó feachtais Ghaeilge an aontais más féidir.

Media and Publications

- ▶ It is the responsibility of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge (LU don Ghaeilge) to deal with any request from Irish language media on behalf of the Union of Students in Ireland

(USI).

- ▶ Where the LU don Ghaeilge is not able to fulfil media requests, a representative will be chosen either from the USI Executive Team or from a Member Organisation (MO) to speak to Irish language media.
- ▶ The LU don Ghaeilge or a relevant member of the Executive Team will conduct a briefing with the chosen representative before they speak to the media.
- ▶ Where possible, Irish language press releases will be sent to Irish language media in regards to campaigns or events run by USI.

Feachtais an Aontais

- ▶ Ba cheart d'Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn ar a laghad, an príomh-theideal de gach feachtas a aistriú go Gaeilge, agus ba cheart an dá theanga (Béarla agus Gaeilge) a chur ar phostaeir an fheachtais, ar ábhar an fheachtais, agus ar éadaí nó earraí eile an fheachtais ar aon mhéid lena chéile.
- ▶ Ba cheart an Ghaeilge agus an Béarla a bheith ar aon mhéid lena chéile in aon lógó nua a chruthaítear le haghaidh feachtas de chuid AMLÉ.
- ▶ Ba cheart go mbeadh 35% d'earraí a chruthaítear le haghaidh fheachtais AMLÉ a bheith ar fail i nGaeilge amháin do gach balleagraíocht.
- ▶ Ba cheart don Choiste Gnó iarracht a dhéanamh ócáid Gaeilge nó aon chainteoir le Gaeilge a tharraingt isteach in aon imeacht nó feachtas de chuid AMLÉ.
- ▶ Ba cheart d'Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn, trí obair an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge, ar a laghad feachtas Gaeilge amháin a chur ar siúl Ó Thuaidh (i bpáirt le NUS-USI), agus i gCeantar Gaeltachta, ionas gur féidir leis an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge freastal ar phobail theanga éagsúla.

USI Campaigns

- ▶ USI should, at least, translate the main title of every campaign to Irish, and both languages (English and Irish) should appear on campaign posters, campaign materials, and on campaign clothes and other items in equal size.
- ▶ Irish and English should appear in equal size on any logo created for a USI campaign.
- ▶ 35% of all materials made for USI campaigns should be available solely in Irish to each MO.
- ▶ The Executive Team should endeavour to include one Irish language event or one Irish language guest speaker as part of any USI campaign or event.
- ▶ USI should, through the work of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge, run at least one Irish Language campaign in the North of Ireland (working with NUS-USI) and in a Gaeltacht area, so that the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge can attend to differing language communities.

Aistriúcháin

- ▶ Tá comhaontú idir AMLÉ agus Dréimire (seirbhís aistriúcháin Conradh na Gaeilge) maidir le haistriúcháin na heagraíochta. Mar sin, ullmhaítear an téacs atá le bheith aistrithe in aon cáipéis amháin agus seoladh é chuig an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge, nó duine eile ainmnithe, chun seoladh go Dréimire ar a laghad trí lá sula bhfuil sé de dhíth.

Translation

- ▶ There is an agreement between USI and Dréimire (Conradh na Gaeilge) regarding translation for the Union. Therefore, the text needing translated is collated into one document and sent to the Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge, or another nominated person, to send to Dréimire at least three days before it is needed.

Úsáid na Gaeilge san Aontas

- ▶ Beidh leagan ceart de theideal na nOifigeach ar fáil trí Ghaeilge agus curtha leis na teidil Bhéarla ar aon mhéid lena chéile aon áit a mbíonn siad le feiceáil ar nós i ríomphoist, ar líne, ar phostaeir, ar litreacha srl.
- ▶ Ba cheart go ndéanfaidh Coiste Gnó AMLÉ iarracht úsáid a bhaint as an nGaeilge ag beannú nó ag críochnú ríomhphoist, nó tríd oráide. Cabhróidh an LU don Ghaeilge leo an méid seo a dhéanamh.
- ▶ Beidh duais bhliantúil ar fáil ag Comhdháil AMLÉ chun úsáid na Gaeilge agus iarrachtaí

Notes

chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn a aithint i measc na mballeagraíochtaí. Bronnfar an duais seo ar an toscaire nó toscaireacht a bhaineann úsáid as an Ghaeilge go rialta le linn na Comhdhála. Socróidh an LU don Ghaeilge ar an toiscaire nó toiscearacht.

► Beidh duais bhliantúil ar fáil ag an Chomhairle Náisiúnta deireanach chun iarrachtaí duine amháin as balleagraíocht amháin (atá mar chuid den Chomhairle Náisiúnta) a aithint maidir le cur chun cinn pearsanta in úsáid nó cur chun cinn na Gaeilge. Socróidh an LU don Ghaeilge ar an fhaighteoir.

Use of Irish Language in USI

► The correct Irish Language version of Officers' titles will be provided, and shall appear in the same size with the English language versions that are to be seen online, on posters, letters, and emails.

► Members of the Executive Team should try and use Irish when greeting and signing off in emails, or throughout speeches. The LU don Ghaeilge will help them to achieve this.

► An annual prize will be awarded at Congress to recognise the use of Irish and attempts to promote the Irish Language within member organisations. This will be presented to the delegate or delegation that uses Irish regularly during the Congress. The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge will decide on the delegate or delegation.

► An annual prize will be presented at the last National Council of the year to recognise the efforts of one person in a member organisation (who is a member of National Council) as regards the use or promotion of the Irish Language. The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge will decide the recipient.

Tacaíocht do Bhalleagraíochtaí

► Cuideoidh an LU don Ghaeilge le balleagraíochtaí a scéimeanna teanga féin a chruthú nó uasdátú a dhéanamh ar an scéim reatha atá acu. Cuidieodh an LU don Ghaeilge lleo an scéim a chur i bhfeidhm.

► San áit nach bhfuil Cumann Gaelach nó Oifigeach na Gaeilge ag balleagraíocht, cuirfidh an LU don Ghaeilge acmhainní ar fáil don bhalleagraíocht le feachtais nó imeachtaí trí Ghaeilge a reáchtáil ar champas.

► San áit a bhfuil obair aistriúcháin ar bun ag balleagraíocht, tabharfaidh an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge eolas ar acmhainní, cosúil le sonraí teagmhála do seirbhísí aistriúcháin, eolas ar costais, spriocdhátaí etc.

► Más cuí agus más féidir, cuideoidh an LU don Ghaeilge le balleagraíochtaí Cumann Gaelach a chruthú nó Oifigeach na Gaeilge a thoghadh dóibh.

Support for Member Organisations

► The LU don Ghaeilge will support MOs in creating their own language schemes, or updating any existing schemes they may have. The LU don Ghaeilge will assist them in implementing the scheme.

► Where there is no Irish Society or Irish Language Officer in an MO, the LU don Ghaeilge will provide resources to the MO in order to run Irish Language events or campaigns on campus.

► Where an MO is carrying out translation work, the Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge will provide information on resources, such as contact details for translation services and information on costs, notice required etc.

► Where appropriate and where possible, the LU don Ghaeilge will help to elect Irish Language Officers and/or set up an Irish Language society for them.

Welfare

2022 WEL (NC) I Partnership with Safe Gigs Ireland**Congress notes:**

The occurrence of sexual misconduct at concerts and festivals is often excluded from conversations surrounding the misconduct in nightlife industry.

Congress further notes:

Safe Gigs is a new initiative to make gigs and nightlife safer for everyone by creating a zero-tolerance environment for sexual violence.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Welfare to work with the 'Safe Gigs' team to develop and support the campaign and represent the student perspective.

2022 WEL (NC) 2 Expansion of Provision of Free HIV Supports**Congress notes:**

The HIV epidemic is an intersectional issue affecting people of all walks of life, including the students we represent, and its continued presence in Irish Society for over 30 years alongside the many preventative measures we have available to us.

Congress further notes:

The inequalities of the HIV epidemic have been exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic, and the closure of the Gay Mens Health service, deeming it not a priority of our government.

Congress recognises:

The work done by many organisations such as HIV Ireland and MPOWER Ireland to make available free PrEP and free Rapid HIV testing kits.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns, the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, and the Vice President for Welfare to work with HIV Ireland and MPOWER Ireland and work with and lobby the HSE to expand the provision of free rapid HIV testing kits and PrEP within Colleges for every student who needs it.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES:

The relevant Executive Team members lobby for extensive informational and educational resources to be more expansive, readily available and easily accessible.

2022 WEL I Sexual Harassment Policies in HEIs**CMLOÉG****Congress Notes**

That there are major downfalls in university sexual harassment policy documents, as well as a high number of students reporting sexual harassment or violence (34% - over 1,100 students, according to a national survey). The USI must take a zero-tolerance approach to gender based violence, rape, sexual assault and intimate partner abuse.

Congress further understands

Students who are failed by their university policy have no course for appeal and often deal with the severe consequences of this failure in isolation. The disciplinary process for cases of sexual harassment should not be developed on an ad-hoc basis by individual universities, nor should cases of sexual harassment be assimilated into university's standard disciplinary process that deals with cases of plagiarism, drinking etc. Furthermore, there must be oversight and transparency regarding the implementation of sexual harassment policy.

Congress Therefore Mandates

That it shall be the position of USI to recommend the implementation of national standards regarding university sexual harassment policy, developed with the input of those working in the fields of trauma informed care, sexual violence, women's rights and minority rights. USI shall recommend that these standards should consider the following, amongst more in consultation with these groups:

- ▶ Minimum standards of training for all parties involved in conducting disciplinary procedures including first contacts, investigators and disciplinary committee members.
- ▶ Special accommodations must be outlined for students taking cases of sexual harassment which consider, how many times a complaining student must recount their experience of abuse, whether a complaining student can have someone speak on their behalf, whether the complaining student must face their accused, giving fair warning to the complaining student of exactly when the accused will be notified of the case against them and so on.
- ▶ A support worker should be assigned to assist students who are taking a complaint through the disciplinary process. This role of the worker should include helping students to write and edit complaints and appeals; assisting students to compile supporting

Notes

documentation; accompanying students to disciplinary hearings; assisting students in communicating with the disciplinary committee and appeals board; and keeping in touch with students to inform them of each step in the process. All support workers must receive adequate training.

- ▶ Students making complaints of sexual and gender-based violence should be entitled to submit all relevant evidence for consideration. A lack of corroborating evidence is a major reason for cases to fail, students who have witnesses of their assaults are not allowed to have this evidence considered at any point in the disciplinary proceeding.
- ▶ There should be no time limit on taking cases of sexual harassment/ violence beyond the requirement that all parties remain students/ staff of the university
- ▶ Policy on sexual harassment should not contain sections on false complaints nor should they include a threat of retribution for complaints that lack evidence.
- ▶ Complaining students must be kept informed of any and all updates to their case. The disciplinary committee should be in regular contact with the complainant, take on board any concerns regarding the handling of the case, make a genuine effort to provide any extra accommodation that is requested and reply to any communications from complainants in a timely manner.
- ▶ The reasonable length of time that a case of sexual harassment should be dealt within must be outlined. Where there are delays, this should be justified by an objective reason and this reason should be clearly communicated to the complainant.
- ▶ These standards should be made available to all complaining students as soon as they register a complaint
- ▶ A permanent member of staff, separate from the disciplinary committee, should be tasked with overseeing the implementation of policy and ensuring that standards are met. Reports should be issued to a body external to the university.
- ▶ Where the handling of a sexual harassment complaint falls below best practice, the complaining student should have an option to register a complaint regarding this to the university and/or a body external to the university.
- ▶ Aggregate data regarding the number of cases taken in a university, the portion of successful/ unsuccessful cases, the time taken to conclude cases, the number of complaints made regarding the process, the number of cases taken by students against staff, the number of rejected appeals and so on should be made available to students.

2022 WEL 2 Accommodation Crisis

USI President

Comhdháil Regrets:

That the worsening student accommodation crisis is preventing access to third level education.

Comhdháil Notes:

That the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the already existing financial hardships students experience and has intensified the fall-out from the national accommodation crisis.

Comhdháil Believes:

That Government must take urgent and immediate action to address the student accommodation crisis and believes the crisis should be deemed an emergency.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The President and Vice President for Campaigns to lobby the Ministers for FHERIS and Housing to develop an up to date student accommodation strategy that is reflective of the actions needed to alleviate the stress and pressure placed on students.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The President and Vice President for Campaigns to lobby the Ministers for FHERIS and Housing to develop tangible and effective short-term and medium-term goals around student accommodation to ensure every student can access third level education. In addition, the President should demand that both Ministers prioritise the continuity of the Interdepartmental Working Group on student accommodation.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to review and amend the USI Student Accommodation Strategy 2019 to ensure it is up to date and fully reflective of the current student accommodation crisis.

Amendments provided should be no later than crossover Comhairle Náisiúnta 2023

2022 WEL 3 Prescription Costs

CMLOÉG

Comhdháil Notes:

The cost of living in Ireland continues to rise. Inflation is an estimated 5%+ this year.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Students primarily work in low-paid, minimum wage labour. Students are adversely affected by illness costs, emergency costs, and high-cost medicines and healthcare.

Comhdháil Believes:

Universities should allocate funding to lower prescription costs to students via the on-campus pharmacy, if applicable, in line with medical card holder prescription charges (€1.50 per item). Furthermore, the government should provide all students with medical cards.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó raise this with the Minister for Higher Education. The USI President and the Vice President for Welfare should push for medical cards and prescription funding from Higher Level Authorities and make affordable healthcare a more prominent aspect of their mantra and objectives overall.”

2022 WEL 4 Establishment of an Anti-Spiking Task Force

IT Sligo Students' Union

Congress Notes

That a very serious and worrying development is infringing on students safety across Ireland- students being 'spiked' whilst out socially.

Spiking is a crime and carries up to a 10 year prison sentence.

Congress Further Notes

That 'spiking' has found its way into the fabric of student social life across Ireland.

Congress Believes

That all actions at our disposal should be taken to help combat this worrying threat to student safety.

Congress Further Believes

That the Union of Students' Ireland, in collaboration with MO's should take a proactive approach to this issue, rather than just a reactive one.

Congress Mandates

That the Vice President for Welfare establishes an Anti Spiking Task Force, which allows MO Sabbatical officers to become members of. This task force will take a proactive approach in trying to combat spiking in Ireland, but also act as an emergency response team during unforeseen or additional developments in this area of concern. This task force will collaborate with local and national, relevant organisations.

2022 WEL 5 National Stalking Awareness Campaign

IT Sligo Students' Union

Congress Notes

The suffering that is caused by many victims of stalking in Ireland.

Congress Further Notes

Many studies suggest that most cases of stalking occur between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, directly coinciding with the typical age demographic of students of third level education.

Congress Recognises

The continuous work that many organisations, including Stalking Ireland and others are doing to create awareness and combat this area of concern within Ireland

Congress Further Recognises

Currently (March 2022), Stalking is not recognised in current legislation- the work of Senator Lisa Chambers, Eve McDowell, Una Ring and others to create the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Bill (Stalking Bill), will hopefully result in Stalking being recognised by law in the near future.

Notes

Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare rolls out, in collaboration with the Campaigns Working Group, a national informational and awareness campaign for all students regarding Stalking. This campaign will collaborate with local and national campaigns where appropriate. This campaign will potentially coincide with the 2018 WEL I2: Abusive Relationships, Sexual Violence & Harassment campaign if applicable.

2022 WEL 6 Night-Time Safety**the USI Vice President for Welfare****Congress Notes**

The night-time industry is an integral part of the student experience. Unfortunately, the night-time industry in Ireland is in need of urgent reform at a governmental level to ensure that those engaging and participating in the industry are safe and are able to enjoy themselves.

Congress also notes

In late 2021, there was a clear rise in the number of cases relating to spiking, including the worrying trend of 'needle spiking' within the Irish night-time industry.

Congress also notes:

The slow return of the nitelink services in Dublin following the easing of restrictions (and a lack of services all together elsewhere), a service which many students rely on to get home after standard public transport options have ceased. This has resulted in an increased demand on the taxi industry, and an increased number of people attempting to get home at the same time, a clear barrier to keeping our population safe.

Congress Acknowledges

The incredible work done by MOs and external organisations to ensure that students engaging with the night-time industry in any capacity are safe.

Congress Mandates

The VP for Welfare to engage with relevant stakeholders in the night-time industry nationally (inc. N.Ire) working to ensure the safety of patrons, and to continuously explore potential partnerships with new organisations.

Congress also Mandates

The USI Coiste Gnó to lobby the Government to introduce further supports to protect students engaging with the night-time industry, including but not limited to: further public transport supports outside of traditional hours, a review of legislation surrounding opening hours, further protection for students working in the night time industry

2022 WEL 7 Drug Harm Reduction and the Decriminalization of Drugs**the USI Vice President for Welfare****Congress Notes**

In July 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 the Coiste Gnó to lobby for decriminalisation, and in 2018, Coiste Gnó had developed connections with external expert groups to promote and produce information surrounding the use of drugs with a harm reduction focus and to promote decriminalisation models. Since 2018, the VP for Welfare has continued to engage with relevant stakeholders and endeavoured to ensure that any work being carried out by the coiste Gnó referencing drugs has a harm reduction centred approach.

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 use amounted 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

The coiste Gnó to lobby for the decriminalisation of drugs in line with the Portuguese Model. USI coiste Gnó 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 the coiste gn,àö,â·), to run information campaigns for students to educate them of the need for this reform and on safe drug use.

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.

This repeals:

WEL I9-2 DECRIMINALISATION OF DRUGS

NOTE: IF WEL I9-2 is extended by Congress, this Motion will not be debated and will automatically fall

2022 WEL 8 Creation of a workshop to identify domestic abuse and red flags

UCC Students' Union

Comhdháil Notes with concern:

That domestic violence cases are rising at an alarming rate since the beginning of the pandemic with Ireland reporting a 24% increase since 2020 alone.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

That the creation of a workshop based off the model of the SafeTalk model could be beneficial in helping people recognize the signs of abuse in their own relationship while also providing tools on how to start a conversation with someone you are concerned about, how to start a conversation with someone to ask for help as well as providing information on how to seek help and get out of the relationship safely.

Comhdháil recognizes:

The work USI, Students' Unions, Rape Crisis Centers and Networks have been doing over the decades to drive forward cultural change through sexual health awareness campaigns, consent education via consent workshops, offering disclosure training, coordinating rallies and protests to stand in solidarity with survivors and lobbying for policy development, both on a local and national level.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare and the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to coordinate a workshop like the SafeTalk workshops in conjunction with any relevant organisations to roll out nationwide."

2022 WEL 9 Lower the age of HPV Checks in Ireland

WITSU

Congress Notes

In Ireland today the recommended age that a woman can avail of the HPV Screening in Ireland is 25

Notes

years of age. Furthermore, women are only required to get tested every 3 years between the ages of 25-29.

Congress also notes

HSE has found that HPV infection rate is more common in late teenagers and early 20's, younger than the recommended time women can avail of the screening services. There is clear evidence that cervical cancer can be prevented through early intervention by availing of regular screenings, PAP tests and HPV Tests.

Congress further notes

The age that young people are engaging in sexual intercourse is much younger than the age of 25, Therefore the mandatory age of 25 for screenings should be lowered to the age of consent.

Congress Therefore Believes

The age of screening for HPV and Cervix screenings should be lowered to the age of consent and that women who are sexual active have access to screening in a non- judgemental way. That these screening should be accessible to all and there should be no discriminatory with these screenings between public and private sector.

Congress Mandates

That the USI Coiste Gnó lobby the health services and the Minister for Health to ensure that the standards of women's health in Ireland is being spotlighted and actions are made.

2022 WEL IO Investments in STI Clinics in the South East**WITSU****Congress Notes**

In recent years there has been a notable decline in the accessibility of STI Clinics available in the South East in Ireland and in particular Waterford.

Congress also notes

The cost of private STI tests in Ireland now range from €160- €300. This is an astronomical cost on the average person but for student's this means these tests are totally unaffordable and inaccessible.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The USI Southern Regional Officer and The USI Welfare Officer to assist local MO's to lobby the Government and local Health Services to increase the accessibility of STI Clinics in the South East of Ireland.

2022 WEL II Community Action Tenants Union**UCC Students' Union****Comhdháil Notes:**

Community Action Tenants Union (CATU) Ireland is a union for communities and tenants, that is renters, council tenants, mortgage holders and people in emergency or precarious living situations. Over the past two years CATU has grown hugely as a union, successfully resisting evictions, defending the rights of its members, highlighting dereliction and the exploitation of landlords, and raising class consciousness amongst its membership and the wider population.

Comhdháil Also Notes:

Students make up a significant proportion of the population of renters across Ireland, and the housing crisis and access to safe, affordable and adequate accommodation is one of the most pressing issues for students today. Public services and community infrastructure are also critical to supporting students and the areas they are living in.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

The USI Executive, and in particular the VP Campaigns and VP Welfare, are already mandated to work with and support the establishment and growth of tenants unions. However, there is a need for more direct engagement with tenants unions through information sharing, supporting direct action and encouraging students to join tenants unions.

Comhdháil Believes:

The knowledge, experience and resources from CATU, as well as their strength as an active tenants union, could have huge benefits to student tenants and the student union movement as a whole, and vice versa.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to investigate the feasibility of developing a partnership

agreement between USI and CATU, similar to that of the SIPTU-USI agreement, with the aim of supporting and strengthening both unions, facilitating joining campaigns and actions, and providing students with support as tenants. If the Vice President for Campaigns concludes that such a partnership is feasible then they should go about developing such an agreement with the support of the USI Executive.

2022 WEL I2 Public Diagnostic Services

USI VP Welfare

Congress Notes:

There is a distinct lack of publicly funded diagnostic services accessible to students who may need support for potential neurodivergencies. Currently students who are seeking diagnostic services for ADHD are forced to enroll in the private medical industry, which is often financially inaccessible for students, or be faced with long waiting lists.

Congress Mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó to lobby for increased publicly funded accessible diagnostic services that are accessible to students, and to keep this in mind when developing submissions (e.g. the prebudget submission).

Congress also Mandates:

The VP Welfare and VP E&C to develop a resource pack for MOs of publicly funded diagnostic and disability services accessible to students that is to be reviewed and updated at the beginning of each semester.

2022 WEL I3 REFLECT - SUPPORTING STUDENTS' UNION OFFICERS

Welfare Working Group

CONGRESS NOTES:

That Students' Union Training (SUT) and Students' Union Top-Up Training (SUT+) are extremely beneficial and useful to Students' Union Officers before the academic term begins. Sessions delivered during these training days allow Students' Union Officers to receive detailed knowledge on topics relating to their briefs, gain insight around potential challenges that may arise and focus on what they would like to achieve in the year.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN:

That Students' Union Officers work in extremely stressful, highly pressurized and intense working conditions to adapt and react to the emerging issues around them.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES WITH CONCERN

That due to the nature of the workload many Students' Union Officers are at risk of experiencing burnout or a loss of motivation.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

USI should facilitate and enable Students' Union Officers to work at their best capacity and feel supported by offering tailored training wherever deemed necessary.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The Vice President for Welfare with the support of the Regional Officers, to organise an event, in person or online, at the start of semester two including the following topics, but not limited to; motivation, leadership, goal setting and re-prioritizing manifesto policies, self-care and wellbeing. The structure of the event should be planned in agreement with Welfare Working Group.

This repeals: 2021 UO 3 REFLECT - SUPPORTING STUDENTS' UNION OFFICERS

Academic Affairs

2022 AA (NC) I Re-Introduction of In-Person Examinations

Congress notes:

The moving of many exams to an online format across Higher Education Institutes, and the replacement of many exams with continuous assessment or assignments for the duration of third level education being conducted in an online capacity.

Notes

Congress further notes with:

The lack of experience in sitting in-person exams with short time constraints that students who have come into Higher Education this year may have, due to the lack of in-person exams conducted this year coupled with the cancellation of the Leaving Certificate Examinations.

Congress believes:

That many students are put under immense pressure during exam times, as large portions of exams within a short time period is a difficult undertaking for many students.

Congress further believes:

That should all examinations immediately return to an in-person format once Higher Education returns to in-person teaching, students who have come into third level in the last year, and possibly those coming into Higher Education next year will be put into a high pressure situation which they have not had any experience in, which could lead to difficulty in performance in examinations.

Congress further believes:

That the ability to undertake assessments and examinations remotely is a benefit to many students, such as student parents and carers, and it would be beneficial for these students that the ability to take assessments and examinations online remained available to students in the future.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President Academic Affairs lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and work with MO's to lobby individual MO's institutions for the provision of online assessment and examination options in the future.

Congress further mandates:

The VPAA lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, and work with MO's to lobby individual MO's institutions to ensure that should examinations and assessments return to an in-person setting, that the re-implementation of these assessments and examinations would be in a gradual manner.

Congress also mandates:

The VPAA to lobby the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to ensure that higher education Institutions provide additional supports to assist students with the transference from online assessments and exams to in-person examinations

2022 AA 1 Travel Allowance for Placement Students**TU Dublin SU****Congress Notes:**

That many students must complete a mandatory placement as part of their studies. These placements can be upwards of 800 hours which can equate to 12-14 weeks. For most students their placements are not paid positions, and, where there are payments, the payment is pittance.

Congress Further Notes:

That for some students accommodation for placement is also not included and students need to pay out of their own pocket for suitable accommodation for them to live in during their placement. In some situations, placements might be across the country or even abroad. Leaving some students in great financial difficulty.

Congress Recognises:

The recommendations made by the McHugh Report in 2021.

Congress Further Recognises:

The USI Placement and Work-Based Learning Strategy 2021-2024, and the USI Submission to Longer Term Review of Student Nurse & Midwife Matters, and the motion Summer Time Placement 2021 AA5.

Congress Mandates:

A placement subcommittee chaired by the VP for the Academic Affairs to be set up with student representatives from any course which requires a mandatory placement including but not limited to teaching, social care, nursing & midwifery, allied health sciences and more.

Congress Further Mandates:

The VP Campaigns to run a campaign based on their input and to build relationships with trade unions and to run an annual campaign based on this feedback.

2022 AA 2 International and Postgraduate Fees:**TU Dublin SU**

Congress Notes:

That the cost for individual postgraduate courses and courses for non-EU students are dictated by the institution delivering the course.

Congress further Notes:

That these students pay far greater fees than undergraduate EU students, with significant variance across the sector in terms of what these students pay. Due to the significant financial pressure placed on students, greater transparency from institutions on the setting of international and postgraduate fees, and how this money is used by institutions is needed.

Congress Regrets:

That whilst there is guidance for how undergraduate fees are set, there is no such guidance for how fees are set for postgraduate courses and international students.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

USI President, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs with the support of the Regional Vice Presidents to conduct a review into the frequency and percentage fee increases for International and Postgraduate students in all member organisations, to be presented Comhairle Náisiúnta no later than March 2023.

Congress Further Mandates:

The USI President to Lobby the Minister for Further & Higher education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Higher Education Authority to create a national framework to standardise how fees are set, and how often they can be increased for these student cohorts.

Congress Therefore Repeals:

2021 AA3

2022 AA 3 Creative Student Representation**the Academic Affairs Working Group****Comhdháil Notes**

Creative arts students are facing the intersecting crises of the underfunding of both the arts and higher education. As well as this, the unique needs of creative arts students often go unconsidered in high level discussions around higher education funding.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

The number of students in the creative arts and entering the workforce is increasing each year, with funding for arts staying relatively similar. There is a growing difficulty in accessing grants or funding and the Arts Council funding is not available to undergraduate students.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Students in Creative Arts courses are required to spend significant amounts on additional course costs in software and material fees.

Comhdháil Believes

There is a need for informed discussions within USI, as well as interdepartmental communications to ensure that these students are not continually disadvantaged by a lack of collaboration between the Department of FHEIRS and the Department of TCAGSM.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Campaigns to coordinate an annual campaign seeking the following.

- ▶ Additional funding to cover material costs in all Higher Education Institutions
- ▶ Introduction of Arts Council funding for ungraduated artists to avail of outside of term time
- ▶ Allowing current creative arts students to avail of the Universal Basic Income pilot scheme for artists
- ▶ Increased mental health funding for art and design schools
- ▶ An end to the disparity between the funding for creative arts courses in comparison to more traditional courses.
- ▶ Allocation of funding to cover the costs of industry standard technology.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The creation of a Creative Arts subcommittee that tackles issues that are exclusively faced by

Notes

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 student representatives - freelance artist.

Comhdháil ALSO MANDATES:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to provide targeted support to member organisations with creative arts courses to promote and ensure representation of students at a local level

2022 AA 4 CONNECTING CREATIVE ARTS STUDENTS**Creatives Working Group****Comhdháil 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 and support within the Creative Arts is essential for progression and further development.

Comhdháil 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.

Comhdháil Recognises:

The need for support and promotion of such an event for creative arts students in all MOs.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs, VP Campaigns and regional officers to organise a one-day support and networking event for Creative Arts students to discuss and educate artists on issues such as, internships, international opportunities, funding grants. This event should also provide information on tax and finances.

2022 AA 5 Accessing Third Level Education Through Sports**the VP for the BMW Region****Congress Notes:**

The importance of sports as a pastime in student life and everyday life.

The value student participation in sport has on the reputation of third level institutes.

The continuous work done by athletes in order to perform, at peak performance, during the academic year.

Congress Mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó to prepare a position paper on recognising sporting abilities in CAO applications.

2022 AA 6 Open Access Policy**Maynooth Students' Union****Congress Notes:**

That the Irish Libraries Association (ILA) has warned of an electronic content crisis facing libraries and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The ILA has said "We are deeply concerned about the rising costs and unfair licensing conditions for such content"

Congress Believes:

Access to education is a fundamental right and with the rise in misinformation it is imperative that all people should have access to research, especially those funded through public investment and/or conducted through public institutions for the public good.

Congress Further Believes:

That the soaring subscription costs that students and libraries are facing create a further barrier to education and takes good quality and enlightening material out of the hands of ordinary people and students.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to lobby the government to take swift action to combat the extortionate subscription costs.

Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs, alongside the Vice President for Academic Affairs, to organise a campaign to highlight this issue and encourage postgraduate students and academics to

opt to make their work publicly available.

2022 AA 7 STUDY ABROAD & ERASMUS ACCESSIBILITY

the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Comhdháil Notes

International exchange opportunities for students continue to grow, with a significant number of students studying abroad during their degree. However, there can be significant social, physical and financial barriers preventing students from availing of these opportunities.

Comhdháil Believes

There are great benefits for students engaging in study abroad programmes.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to lobby for the increased funding of student exchange programmes and availability of grants.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to lead to work with, and 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.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with member organisation representatives to ensure their Higher Education Institution clearly communicates the available supports and physical accessibility of their partner institutions and to push for HEI's to continually lobbying for improved accessibility for students with disabilities in their partner institutions.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to support MO officers in lobbying for the standardisation of application processes and grade conversion tables in HEI's across the country.

2022 AA 8 StudentSurvey.ie

the Vice President for Academic Affairs

Comhdháil Notes

The StudentSurvey.ie is well respected and recognised across Irish Higher Education Institutions having been launched in 2013, and the Postgraduate Research survey in 2018, following years of lobbying from USI. The survey was created to ensure the gathering of empirical data from students in colleges across the country.

Comhdháil Further Notes

The USI and Students' Unions have worked to ensure the StudentSurvey.ie is recognised and engaged with by students, and are often the main driving force behind promoting the survey, using their own human and financial resources.

StudentSurvey.ie data should be readily available and accessible to student representatives to allow them to examine the findings and seek ways to action them through their institutional processes. The expectation or burden of data analysis should not be placed upon student representatives. USI and StudentSurvey.ie should aid Student Representatives to advocate for their role in strategy and decision making, using the findings of the survey.

Comhdháil Notes WITH CONCERN

The success of this valuable national initiative hinges on the power of the data generated to bring about positive, meaningful and long-lasting impact in the participating institutions. Despite significant efforts of student representatives and rising response rates, collaboration between student representatives and institutions is not always facilitated and sabbatical officers in most cases, do not have access to the institutional data. Students often do not understand the importance of the StudentSurvey.ie and as a result, some HEI's struggle with poor response rates.

Comhdháil Believes THAT

If students are empowered to understand the available data, and how this can facilitate change within their institution, they are more likely to engage in the survey.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to complete a review, with the support of the Regional Vice Presidents, to present to the StudentSurvey.ie Steering group no later than June 2023, which includes;

Notes

How member organisations work in partnership and collaboration with their institution on the promotion of the survey with a view to continually increase institutional response rates and address any barriers to student engagement with the survey

Good practice recommendations on the role of Students' Unions, including ways in which the StudentSurvey.ie data can be viewed, distributed, and engaged with by students and staff in partnership

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to promote the availability of accessible and relevant reports and resources following the analysis of data each year as a member of the StudentSurvey.ie Steering Group

Comhdháil Also Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Campaigns to co-ordinate a briefing session with the StudentSurvey.ie Project Manager for all officers, prior to the launch of field work each year, to inform on the StudentSurvey.ie processes and idea share for promotional opportunities. Also, to support MO's to work in partnership with their registrar or designated nominee, throughout the fieldwork period, return of results and analysis.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to facilitate a training session, following the publication of results, to support officers' ability to engage with the results and recognise the possible strategic actions arising from the survey findings. This should include the provision of a template for an institutional action plan arising from the findings of the survey for officers to utilise and crossover to their successors each year

2022 AA 9 EXAMINATION BEST PRACTICE**the Academic Affairs Working Group****Comhdháil Notes**

Following the swift transition to online learning during the pandemic, we saw the flexibility of the sector and assessment practices.

Comhdháil Believes

The accommodations made available should where possible, stay in place to support students with disabilities, caregivers, those completing part-time work etc.

Comhdháil Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to support officers in lobbying for the expansion of deferrals, flexible repeat scheduling and any other accommodations.

Comhdháil Mandates

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Welfare to conduct a review, in collaboration with member organisations on HEI policies and procedures including, but not limited to exam scheduling, repeats, illness support, extensions and provision of feedback, with the intention of creating a best practice framework for assessment in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.

2022 AA 10 Postgraduate Students Strategy**VICE-PRESIDENT FOR POSTGRADUATE AFFAIRS****Congress Notes:**

The existing postgraduate students strategy is due to expire at Congress 2021.

Congress further notes:

The significant changes that have occurred in the Postgraduate portfolio over the last three years and the need for wider consultation in the development of USI's Postgraduate Strategy going forward.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to work alongside the Postgraduate Working Group to create an updated strategy document to be presented to national council no later than June 2021.

Union Organisation

2022 UO (NC) 1 Casework Debriefing Session

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 Exec 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:

Each Exec Team member with responsibility for a Working Group to organise debriefing sessions, on the request of that working group, in order to best help officers. Debriefing sessions should be led by an appropriately skilled facilitator, and also encompass coping skills that officers can use in self-care exercises

2022 UO (NC) 2 Careers Fair for outgoing Sabbatical Officers

Comhairle Notes:

Every year near the end of term, some outgoing sabbaticals have difficulty about their next step when leaving the movement. USI and member organisations have alumni officers who might be able to assist in sourcing their next career opportunities.

Comhairle Further Notes:

The skills elected officers develop throughout their terms makes them excellent adaptable employees in a wide range of organisations. Many officers have gone on and shaped excellent careers who might be able to offer employment opportunities and advice for these officers.

Comhairle Notes with Concern:

That many officers can face unemployment for the few weeks or months after their term's finishes finding suitable employment.

Comhairle Therefore Mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó to organise a careers fair for outgoing sabbaticals no later than end of May each year

2022 UO (NC) 3 USI Support for Equality for Children Campaign

Comhairle Notes:

LGBT+ people in Ireland are currently still being discriminated against when it comes to LGBT+ Families. LGBT+ Families are currently prevented from having a legal relationship with both of their parents.

Comhairle Welcomes:

The enactment of the Children and Families Relationships Act (CRFA) in Ireland. This Act allows for some LGBT+ Parents to have a legal relationship with their families.

Comhairle Further Notes:

The CRFA still discriminates anyone who falls into the below categories:

- Children born to male parents
- Children born via surrogacy
- Children conceived or born outside of Ireland
- Children conceived using at-home insemination
- Children conceived using known or anonymous donors

Comhairle Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to join and support the Equality for Children Campaign and support LGBT+ parents in fighting this discrimination.

Comhairle Further Mandates

USI President, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI Executive Team to call on the Government to end this discrimination by publishing an Assisted Human Reproduction Bill to include all children born to LGBT+ families; and by updating policy, supports, benefits and services that benefit children of heterosexual parents to also include children of LGBT+ parents

Notáí

2022 UO 1 SU Autonomy

Presidents' Working Group

Comhdháil Notes:

That Students' Union autonomy has been compromised by higher education institutions for a number of years. It is unacceptable that some Students' Unions have had their funding withdrawn by their HEI which in turn has prevented many unions from operating to the best of their ability.

Comhdháil Notes with concern:

The attempts of higher education institutions to censor some students' unions, and encroach on their freedom of association.

Comhdháil strongly believes:

That Students' Unions should have the right to fully self-govern and self-direct union finances and governance structures and be free from interference from outside bodies.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The USI President to ensure the continuity of the recently established Students' Union Autonomy working group with member organisations. The President should also collate information on the national picture of Students' Unions around the country which can be used to share best practices including, but not limited to funding allocations, internal and external governance structures, Students' Union composition, number of union staff, relationship with HEIs etc

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The USI President and Coiste Gnó to devise a guidance document on the pillars of Students' Union autonomy in consultation with member organisations and key stakeholders. In addition, the Coiste Gnó should work with and lobby the Minister for FHERIS to implement legislation defining Students' Unions.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The USI President to lobby the Minister for FHERIS and HEA to agree on an oversight body that monitors funding allocations from higher education institutions to Students' Unions and has a procedure in place to deal with any disputes.

Comhdháil repeals:

I7 UOI

2022 UO 2 USI Mandated Training

Dublin Region Working Group

CONGRESS NOTES

Through training, sabbatical and part-time officers are equipped with crucial skills that enable them to best represent students.

CONGRESS COMMENDS

The existence of current mandated trainings on the USI policy file.

HOWEVER, CONGRESS ALSO NOTES

That existing mandates are spread across the policy file and it is therefore difficult to hold relevant USI Officers to account.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

Mandated trainings would be better consolidated into a single mandate.

THEREFORE, CONGRESS MANDATES

Members of the USI Coiste Gnó to provide training on the following issues to fully prepare officers for their work;

- ▶ Lobbying [VP for Equality and Citizenship]
- ▶ Casework [VP for Academic Affairs and VP for Welfare]
- ▶ Bystander Intervention [VP for Welfare]
- ▶ Governance [USI President]
- ▶ Media Training [VP for Campaigns]
- ▶ Part-Time Officer Training [USI Regional Officers]
- ▶ Postgraduate Affairs [VP for Postgraduate Affairs]

- ▶ Suicide Prevention [VP for Welfare]
- ▶ Anti-Racism Training [VP For Equality and Citizenship]
- ▶ Personal Development Training [USI Regional Officers]
- ▶ Students' Union Staff Training [USI President]

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES

The USI Coiste Gnó to provide further training on the following;

- ▶ Disclosure Training [VP for Welfare]
- ▶ Union Finances [USI President]
- ▶ Freedom of Information Requests [USI President]
- ▶ Crisis Response Training [VP for Welfare]

Repeals:

- ▶ 2021 NC 5 on Casework
- ▶ 2021 UO 1 on Lobbying
- ▶ 2021 UO 5 on Bystander Intervention
- ▶ UO I9 2 on Governance
- ▶ UO I9 8 on Media Training
- ▶ UO I9 I6 on PTOs
- ▶ 2021 AA NC I Postgraduate Follow Up Training
- ▶ 20 AA 8 Postgraduate Representative Training
- ▶ 20 WEL 8 Mental Health and Casework Training For Students' Unions Officers
- ▶ 21 UO NC I Regional Leadership and Personal Development Training
- ▶ 15 UO 3 Students' Union Staff Training

NOTE: IF UO I9-2 or UO I9-I6 are extended by Congress, this Motion will not be debated and will automatically fall

2022 UO 3 Higher Education Funding Campaign

Campaigns Working Group

Comhdháil Notes that:

The USI has spent over a decade campaigning for the reduction of the Student Contribution Charge.

Comhdháil commends:

The work of the Coiste Gnó and previous Coiste Gnó teams on campaigns for publicly funded education including; Cost of College, Education for All, Break the Barriers, etc.

Comhdháil Believes that:

The yearly brand change of a higher education funding campaign where the messaging remains wholly the same is detrimental to student engagement with the campaign.

Comhdháil Believes that:

A long running campaign would be more beneficial and would increase student participation in campaign actions.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Campaigns and USI President to work towards continuing the Cost of College campaign, rather than rebranding the national Higher Education Funding Campaign.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The VP for Campaigns to present an updated strategy paper with this longevity in mind to Comhairle Náisiúnta for approval.

Comhdháil repeals:

NA I9 -IO

Notes

NOTE: IF NA I9-I0 is extended by Congress, this Motion will not be debated and will automatically fall

2022 UO 4 USI Accountability

Maynooth Students' Union

Congress Notes:

After Congress, it is one of the roles of Comhairle Náisiúnta to hold USI officers accountable.

Congress Believes:

That as a democratic organisation accountable to its members, it is important that Comhairle Náisiúnta is empowered to hold officers accountable to the full extent of its ability and knowledge. Therefore, it is imperative they understand how meetings of Comhairle Náisiúnta are run

Congress Further Believes:

That without Officer Reports being voted on, Comhairle Náisiúnta cannot effectively hold USI Officers accountable as there are no repercussions. A structure by which reports are passed or rejected would ultimately increase the accountability of both Comhairle Náisiúnta and USI Officers.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The USI President to conduct a review of the accountability process, specifically officer reports, with a view to implementing a system of Comhairle Náisiúnta voting on them, with the appropriate structures in place if a report should be rejected.

Congress Further Mandates:

The USI President to ensure the circulation of standing orders to all members of Comhairle Náisiúnta before the first national council of any given year

2022 UO 5 Amendments to the USI Constitution for Regionalisation

the USI President

Comhdháil Notes:

That the organisation's constitution governs the ethos and operations of the entire organisation. It is imperative that the constitution is up to date, accurate and reflects the spirit of the organisation.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Institutes of Technologies are merging to become Technological Universities across the island of Ireland, spanning cross-county campuses, and larger student bodies. In addition, Technological Universities (TUs) have unique needs. Students' Unions are merging as a result of the creation of TUs, requiring a huge amount of resourcing, experience and advice.

Comhdháil Notes with concern:

That while the current USI Regional Officers are absolutely integral to providing local MO support, their roles are not tailored to fit USI's requirements from member organisations when it comes to Technological Universities, and will not be able to represent all TUs coming down the line. One example of this is the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands and Midwest, which spans across two different regions.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The President and Vice Presidents for the Regions to set up of a Constitutional Review Working Group to have a full review of the composition of the Coiste Gnó, role descriptions, schedules etc. This review should be completed no later than the December Comhairle Náisiúnta of 2023.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The USI President and Vice President for the Regions to collaborate and co-ordinate their engagement with member organisations until a new constitutional amendment comes into effect.

Comhdháil repeals:

2021 UO 13, 20 UO 6

2022 UO 6 MO Support Directory

Maynooth Students' Union

Congress Notes:

USI was established to represent the students of Ireland but also to support local Member Organisations in their time of need and provide expertise and experience to make them stronger.

Congress further notes:

USI is made up of Member Organisations who not only face a variety of challenges but all have

varying levels of resources and supports to meet those challenges.

Congress Believes:

That MO Presidents should be able to turn to their national union for support and guidance.

Congress Further Believes:

That even USI officers are not always equipped to support officers as they may be new to the job however should have some form of institutional knowledge they can turn to.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The USI President to compile and maintain a directory of various supports (including but not limited to people, resources, information etc.) in different areas (including but not limited to Autonomy, Welfare, Human Resources, Legal etc.) in order to be able to assist MO's in their time of need.

2022 UO 7 Support Sessions for Officers

VP Welfare

CONGRESS NOTES

The extreme stress that officers face on a daily basis as a result of their roles, as a result of the various forms of casework they may face and alongside further stress as a result of pressure put on them by their HEI, students and external organisations.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES

That officers often must rely on self-coping mechanisms due to the lack of tailored concrete supports in place for them.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That although working groups or spaces at NC can be useful to debrief, a Coiste Gnó 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 and the VP Academic Affairs to organize regular debriefing sessions, in order to best help officers. Debriefing sessions should be led by an appropriately skilled facilitator (where it is inappropriate for a Coiste Gnó member to lead), and also encompass coping skills that officers can use in self-care exercises. These are to include, but not be limited to: Casework debrief sessions, anger redirection sessions, and general informal spaces for officers to discuss their issues and stresses.

This repeals

WEL I9 I5 CASEWORK DEBRIEFING PROVISION

NOTE: IF WEL I9-I5 is extended by Congress, this Motion will not be debated and will automatically fall.

2022 UO 8 Trade Union Partnerships

Campaigns Working Group

Comhdháil Notes that:

That there is a need for students to become aware of their rights as workers and interns, no matter what sector they are working in.

Comhdháil welcomes:

The SIPTU-USI Partnership, renewed in 2019, as a means for furthering the work of USI on workers rights.

Comhdháil Believes that:

The USI needs to actively seek out similar levels of partnership with trade unions that represent student workers who are not represented by the work of SIPTU; including creative arts students, student nurses and midwives, student media interns, etc.

Comhdháil Further Notes that:

Partnership with trade unions plays a vital role in allowing the USI Coiste Gnó access to knowledge and resources surrounding workers rights.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Campaigns to advocate for elected Students' Union officers and their staff to become members of a union.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

Notes

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Coiste Gnó to actively seek out partnerships with trade unions that represent the different sectors of student workers and interns, and to provide updates on these partnerships to Comhairle Náisiúnta

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The VP for Campaigns to develop a position paper outlining the USI perspective on workers' rights across the multiple sectors of the students they represent. This position paper should be informed by students, students' union officers and trade unions.

Comhdháil repeals:

UO 19 -21

20 NA (NC) 7

NOTE: IF UO 19-21 is extended by Congress, this Motion will not be debated and will automatically fall

2022 UO 9 International World Days Standardised Calendar

TU Dublin SU

Congress Notes:

That there are certain dates that USI & MO's mark or celebrate each year.

Such as World Mental Health Day, Trans Day of Remembrance, and International Women's Day.

Congress Further Notes:

That it would be beneficial to both USI and MO's if there was a standardised calendar for all to work from on a yearly basis.

Congress Mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship and VP Welfare to compile a calendar of such days to be circulated to MO's before August 31st each year.

2022 UO 10 USI and STAND Partnership Strategy 2022-2025

the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

Comhdháil Notes

At the beginning of STAND and USI's collaboration in May of 2019, it was agreed that STAND staff would be present in the USI Office on a part-time basis, that STAND staff would facilitate Students' Union Training sessions and that they would attend Comhairle Náisiúnta meetings.

Comhdháil acknowledges

The partnership between STAND and USI is borne out of the mutual understanding of the importance of sustainability, the interconnectedness of local and global issues, and the role that young people must play in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Comhdháil applauds

The 10,000 Students Initiative which was launched in Autumn 2019 and has since grown into the primary collaboration between STAND and USI.

This initiative highlights the detrimental effects of climate change, the battles of social injustices, economic disadvantages, and political uncertainties. It therefore challenges third level students across Ireland to come together and act for a better world.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The adoption of the USI and STAND Partnership Strategy 2022-2025

USI AND STAND PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY 2022-2025

About USI

The Union of Students in Ireland is the national representative body for third-level Students' Unions in Ireland. Founded in 1959, USI now represents more than 374,000 students in Further and Higher Education Colleges across the island of Ireland. The goal of USI is to work for the rights of students and a fair and equal post-secondary education system in Ireland. USI is a full member of the European Students' Union (ESU) which represents students from 46 National Students' Unions in 39 countries, and a member of Eurodoc, the European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers.

About STAND

STAND is the Suas Global Citizenship Programme that brings about changes in third level students'

knowledge, skills, attitudes, and actions in relation to global justice issues.

Overview

STAND and USI began their collaboration in May of 2019. It was agreed that STAND staff would be present in the USI Office on a part-time basis, that STAND staff would facilitate Student Union Training sessions and that they would attend Comhairle Náisiúnta meetings.

The 10,000 Students Initiative was launched in Autumn 2019, and has since grown into the primary collaboration between STAND and USI. This strategy document formalises the collaboration between Suas's STAND Programme and USI through the 10,000Students Initiative. Additionally, it highlights STAND's support in training Student Union officers, and outlines the roles, responsibilities, and goals for the partnership. This partnership is a component of STAND's 5-year Strategic Partnership with Irish Aid ending in 2027. It will also be reviewed in Spring 2025, keeping in line with USI Comhdháil (Congress) to review policies every three years.

Summary of Strategy

- ▶ This strategy is divided into 3 key areas:
- ▶ Partnership Motivation
- ▶ Working Principles
- ▶ Commitment, Roles & Responsibilities

Partnership Motivation

Lead Officers: VP for Equality & Citizenship, VP for Campaigns, Regional Vice Presidents

This partnership is borne out of the mutual understanding of the importance of sustainability, the interconnectedness of local and global issues, and the role that young people must play in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Through this partnership between Suas's STAND Programme and the Union of Students in Ireland, both parties hope to:

- ▶ Reach students on third level campuses in Ireland to raise awareness and understanding about the root causes and consequences of global and social justice issues, and encourage action in support of a fairer, more sustainable world for all.
- ▶ Contribute to USI's Sustainable Development Goals Champions Programme
- ▶ Share information about STAND projects, programmes, and opportunities with student unions of third level institutions associated with the Union of Students in Ireland.
- ▶ Share resources to support the training of USI member organisations in a general sense, but more specifically to share global citizenship perspectives of sustainability, solidarity, and equality.
- ▶ Bring global activist voices and perspectives to the discussions within USI, and to make global connections to the local social justice issues addressed by both USI and STAND.

Working Principles

Lead Officers: VP for Equality & Citizenship, VP for Campaigns, Regional Vice Presidents

The STAND staff and the USI Coiste Gnó (Executive Team) will ensure that their wider organisations are aware of and understand this partnership's aims and objectives.

Through this partnership between Suas's STAND Programme and the Union of Students in Ireland, both parties will work to:

- ▶ Improve communication by identifying the USI VP Equality & Citizenship and a minimum of two other USI VPs who will serve as the USI Sustainability Subgroup. Therefore, remaining the main points of contact for the partnership
- ▶ Cultivate the inclusion of STAND as a regular Lá Coiste Gnó (executive day) agenda item, hold regular full team meetings on a quarterly basis to share calendars, discuss potential collaboration, and review lessons learned from previous collaboration.
- ▶ Ensure shared projects set direct goals that are reviewed against targets accordingly.
- ▶ Seek opportunities to support each organisation and promote each other's work through an understanding of shared values and missions.
- ▶ Establish regular team meeting between STAND and the USI Sustainability subgroup

Notes

with open invitation to any other Coiste Gnó members

Commitment, Roles & Responsibilities

Lead Officers: VP for Equality & Citizenship, VP for Campaigns, LU don Gaeilge, Regional Vice Presidents

2 joint (Autumn & Spring) campaigns per year under IO,000Students initiative

- ▶ STAND to develop concept
- ▶ USI to support finalisation of concept
- ▶ STAND to create materials, and coordinate with partners
- ▶ USI to distribute materials and encourage participation from Student Unions
- ▶ USI to join campaign events, and support as facilitators/hosts wherever appropriate
- ▶ USI to facilitate content of materials as Gaeilge where feasible

Students' Union Training

- ▶ USI to invite STAND to deliver trainings for Students' Union officers during Summer
- ▶ STAND to develop and deliver session on Global Citizenship, sustainability, student activism at USI Students' Union Trainings (SUT & SUT+)
- ▶ STAND to facilitate any other trainings, where possible, for Students' Unions throughout the year
- ▶ Miscellaneous support and collaboration
- ▶ Either party to be responsive to requests for facilitation, content creation, and dissemination of information when available to do so.

Conclusion

This document sets out the future direction of USI's work in Sustainable Development and Global Justice. This partnership includes regular meetings on an agreed basis between the two partners. It highlights a partnership that is committed to the sharing and collaboration of events between USI and STAND. It also acknowledges the involvement of the USI Public Relations Manager and the STAND Marketing Co-ordinator in the campaign development.

2022 UO II Coiste Gnó Plans of Work

VP Campaigns

Comhdháil Notes that:

The Coiste Gnó provides a plan of work to Comhairle Náisiúnta at the beginning of the first semester, outlining the work that the Coiste Gnó member hopes to achieve during their term.

Comhdháil Regrets that:

These plans of work are often prepared without consultation with other USI officers and do not accurately reflect the cooperative nature of the work done within the organisation.

Comhdháil Believes that:

The USI Coiste Gnó plans of work are a beneficial way of holding officers to account during their term and should be reflective of the collaborative work of the Coiste Gnó.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The USI President to work with the Coiste Gnó to provide an overall team plan of work to be presented to Comhairle Náisiúnta, outlining any work that will take place across more than one remit.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The USI President to provide Plan of Work updates to each Comhairle Náisiúnta alongside updates provided in the Policy File Tracker.

2022 UO I2 Training Days

Presidents' Working Group

Comhdháil Notes:

That the role of Students' Union Presidents and Deputy Presidents is incredibly vast, dynamic and reactive. USI must ensure that Presidents and Deputy Presidents are as best equipped and supported as they can be to lead their Students' Unions as effectively as possible.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

That many merged Students' Unions and Students' Unions with satellite campuses have officers with specific or portfolio responsibilities on their campuses that may be additional to all other officers.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The USI President and Deputy President to organise Presidents' & Deputies day no later than August 31st each year.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The USI President and Deputy President to consult with member organisations on the trainings they would like provided.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The USI President and Deputy President to include sessions for those officers with specific or portfolio responsibilities on their campuses.

Comhdháil repeals:

2021 UO NC 4

2022 UO I3 USI Awareness Campaign

TU Dublin SU

Congress Notes:

That the student movement has been at the forefront of social change with significant involvement of USI.

Congress Regrets:

That many students who are not directly involved with their union or USI are often unaware of who USI are and what they do for students. This is resulting in poor engagement from students with USI events and activities.

Congress Believes:

That a widespread awareness campaign has the potential to increase awareness of USI and therefore increase the reach and engagement of campaigns and activities.

Congress Mandates:

The VP Campaigns and the Regional VP's to create a working group to develop an awareness campaign about USI with Member Organisations from each region.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

That the awareness campaign be rolled out in person and online by USI in conjunction with all relevant MO's in October of the academic year.

2022 UO I4 ESU Participation

VP for the Southern Region

Comhdháil Notes:

USI are members of the European Students' Union. This membership allows USI to have a vital role in shaping international policies and informing national and local policies with international best practice.

Comhdháil Recognises:

Each year two USI Coiste Gnó members are assigned ESU Lead and Support. These officers attend European Student Conventions and Board Meetings on behalf of USI. Normally, the two officers can also bring a delegation with them to the events. The delegation represents USI and speaks on many topics pertaining to students.

Comhdháil Acknowledges:

Some Member Organisations may have difficulties with participating in ESU events due to the costs (Flights, Registration Fees etc) associated with participation.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The USI President to propose the two Coiste Gnó officers who are Lead and Support on ESU to Comhairle Náisiúnta by the second meeting of Comhairle Náisiúnta each year. These Officers must have a proficiency in social, academic and equality issues facing students. They shall be tasked with providing a comprehensive information session for Students' Union Officers on the European

Notes

Students Union at SUT each year.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The Coiste Gnó Lead and Support for ESU to co-ordinate a delegation, selected from Comhairle Náisiúnta participants, to each ESU event (Board Meetings, Student Conventions etc) where possible. Each delegation shall provide a detailed report on the event they have attended, which shall be circulated to Comhairle Náisiúnta at the following meeting.

Comhdháil also Mandates:

The Coiste Gnó Lead and Support for ESU to investigate funding opportunities to cover the associated costs with attending ESU events.

Comhdháil Therefore Repeals:

20 AAI

2022 UO 15 Regional Officers**USI Vice President for the Dublin Region****CONGRESS NOTES**

The benefit of having Regional Officers on campus and the experience and direction Regional Officers can give to local member organisations.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

Local Student Councillor/Class Rep Council meetings are the beating heart of local unions and attendees typically represent a cohort of the student population that are most engaged in union activity.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

Vice Presidents for the Regions be obligated to attend local union council meetings, provided they are given a minimum of 3 days' notice, or otherwise send their apologies in advance.

CONGRESS FURTHER MANDATES

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to visit MO's a minimum of four times per semester.

Repeals:

UO 19 7 Regional Officers

2022 UO 16 Motion on Unionisation Stance**DCUSU****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 the USI Officer board. This policy would cover how partnerships are sought out, agreed upon, and the length of time they are active for.

Congress Further Mandates

The USI VP for campaigns to ensure that consideration is given to the stance and record on unionisation and/or opposition of unionisation of any companies or employers who may be directly or indirectly promoted through USI channels, including but not limited to social media channels, newsletters, accommodation/hotel providers event sponsorship and competition prizes.

2022 UO 17 Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

USI Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs**COMHDHÁIL NOTES**

The importance of USI Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (VPPGA) is that they represent over all postgraduate students across the island of Ireland.

COMHDHÁIL REGRETS

The existing workload for the VPPGA is onerous as the VPPGA must sit on/chair numerous working groups, boards and committees and carry out many administrative tasks within a 16-hour working week.

COMHDHÁIL BELIEVES

It is necessary to explore all options when revising the postgraduate role, some of which include but is not limited to;

-Three part-time VPPGAs; one postgraduate taught representative, one postgraduate research representative and one postgraduate engagement representative to visit HEIs. These roles would represent both postgraduate student cohorts whilst supporting engagement, reduce isolation for the VPPGA in their work and allow for collaboration.

COMHDHÁIL THEREFORE MANDATES

The Union of Students in Ireland Coiste Gnó to conduct a strategic review of the VPPGA role before opening of nominations for Comhdháil 2023/24.

COMHDHÁIL FURTHER MANDATES

The USI VPPGA and Regional Officers to work together in consultation with MOs, postgraduate representatives and part time officers to review best practices to support part time officers.

COMHDHÁIL FURTHER MANDATES

The USI VPPGA to consult with Eurodoc on best practices of the postgraduate role and/or part time officer role in European Student Unions

COMHDHÁIL FURTHER MANDATES

The USI Coiste Gnó to review finances and/or secure/seek funding to remedy the added costs of restructuring the role.

Repeals:

2021 AA 13 AMENDING POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS STRATEGY

2022 UO 18 ELECTION SUPPORTS**the Vice President for Academic Affairs****Comhdháil Notes**

Member organisations run two major sets of elections each year, for class representatives and sabbatical officership elections.

Comhdháil Believes

The transition to online elections has improved the accessibility of many elections, but has also resulted in officers having less hands-on experience in orchestrating elections, including counting votes.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI Regional Vice Presidents to gather information on when, and how each member organisation conducts their elections each year and to coordinate with the Vice President for Academic Affairs in making best practice recommendations available to all member organisations.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The USI president with the support of the Regional Vice Presidents to collate a 'Returning Officer database' for those involved or previously involved in the student movement with a knowledge of voting systems to support member organisations with their elections.

Comhdháil Also Mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Academic Affairs to arrange Election Training prior to September of each year on including Electoral Commissions and election regulations, Referenda and Voting Systems and count procedure such as single transfer voting

This training should also include support for election process reviews, resolving issues such as tie-breaking and the re-open nominations.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Academic Affairs to create a glossary of key terms and explanations for member organisations based on their requirements and training each year,

Notes

including but not limited to the following;

- ▶ Constituency/Electorate
- ▶ Ballots, Secret, Online/Paper
- ▶ Quotas
- ▶ Proportional Representation

2022 UO 19 Accessibility of USI Events: Rotation of CN

Presidents' Working Group

Comhdháil Believes:

USI events should be as accessible and accommodating as possible.

Comhdháil Notes:

That is can sometimes be difficult for member organisations to attend all USI events in person based on the locations that are chosen.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates:

That Comhairle Náisiúnta will take place on a rotational basis in each of the four different regions. Where a member organisation can no longer host a Comhairle Náisiúnta, flexibility should be allowed to re-arrange Comhairle Náisiúnta going ahead in person.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The USI President to agree with Presidents' Working Group on the locations of Comhairle Náisiúnta for the year, no later than the second Comhairle Náisiúnta in August.

2022 UO 20 Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

USI Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Comhdháil Notes

The benefit of the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (VPPGA) attending committee boards and working groups connected to postgraduate education, research and innovation.

Comhdháil Further Notes

The benefit of developing and retaining relationships with a variety of stakeholders.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The VPPGA Affairs to attend the following committees, boards and working groups as often as is possible to represent the postgraduate student voice.

Boards and Committees

- ▶ National Framework for Doctoral Education Advisory Forum (HEA)
- ▶ Research Graduate Education Committee
- ▶ Eurodoc
- ▶ PGR Student Survey

Working Groups

- ▶ PGR Student Survey Editorial Working Group
- ▶ Tracking our Researchers Working Group
- ▶ Career Profiling Working Group
- ▶ Postgraduate Student Engagement Working Group

Stakeholders

- ▶ National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP).
- ▶ Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI).
- ▶ Irish Research Council (IRC).
- ▶ Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).

- ▶ Department Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science (DFHERIS).
- ▶ Irish University Association (IUA).
- ▶ Technological Higher Education Association (THEA).
- ▶ Enterprise Ireland (EI).
- ▶ Teagasc Research
- ▶ SIPTU
- ▶ Higher Education Authority (HEA).
- ▶ Higher Education Authority Statistics Department

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The VPPGA reviews and is up to date with reports on postgraduate affairs to support the postgraduate student voice.

Links for reference.

PGR Student Survey <https://studentsurvey.ie/reports>

Postgraduate Engagement <https://studentengagement.ie/resources/postgraduate-student-engagement/>

European Universities Reports <https://eua.eu/resources/publications.html>

Postgraduate Experience <https://postgraduatestudentexperience.com/>

Student Engagement <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/>

2022 UO 21 Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs and Coiste Gnó

USI Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Comhdháil Notes

There is a disparity in the stipend rates received by Postgraduate Research Students.

Comhdháil Further Notes

That the cost of living is rising whilst stipends remain relatively stagnant and are not fit for purpose.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

That Coiste Gnó to lobby for the creation of a National Minimum Stipend Rate.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

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

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to send out a stipend survey yearly to research postgraduate students to determine stipends nationally.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to carry out a comparative study on the stipend rate from year to year to determine if the actions taken by the Coiste Gnó, VPPGA and DFHERIS are addressing the disparities.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to report the comparative results back to the HEA Research Graduate Education Committee and the National Forum for Doctoral Education Advisory Forum.

Please refer to Postgraduate Student Survey 2022: <https://usi.ie/postgraduate-student-survey-2022/>

Repeals:

AA 19 - 4 THE CREATION OF NATIONAL MINIMUM STIPEND RATE.

2022 UO 22 Postgraduate Research Student Stipends

The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

Congress Recognises

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

CONGRESS FURTHER RECOGNISES

Notes

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.

2022 UO 23 Regional Officers**USI Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs****Comhdháil Notes**

The benefits of the Regional Officers working closely with the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (VPPGA).

Comhdháil Further Notes

The VPPGA role is a part-time policy officer role and developing engagement amongst postgraduates can be difficult given the limited amount of time and resources.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for the Regions to compile a contact list of all postgraduate officers and any officers interested in postgraduate affairs no later than 31st October each year.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to work with local member organisations, postgraduate officers and officers interested in postgraduate affairs to develop engagement between USI and the member organisations.

2022 UO 24 USI Strategic Review & Strategic Plan 2023-2028**National College Of Ireland Students' Union****Comhdháil Notes**

That as per UO 19-1, the cyclical nature of student representation often leads to an annual change in direction and shifts in priority as new Officers begin their term which is not conducive to long term organisational development or gathering momentum on key issues that the student movement contends with. Setting out a strategic plan which outlines a clear vision for the development of the USI as well as its Member Organisations is integral to the future growth and strength of our combined national voice.

Comhdháil Further Notes

As per UO 19-5, 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 but this is the last time such a plan was set out and a full strategic review is crucial to inform any strategic plan development.

Comhdháil Believes

That in order for the full potential of USI to be realised, we must adopt a long term vision for the organisation that future iterations of the Coiste Gnó and MO's can use to help guide their actions and ensure that we build, year on year, on the incredible work done by Officers within USI.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI President to carry out a comprehensive strategic review of USI encompassing all areas of the organisation including but not limited to governance, finance, democracy, political lobbying and campaigns to be brought before December Comhairle Náisiúnta 2022. This review should be carried out in conjunction with an external consultant and in consideration and consultation of the thoughts and views of USI Member Organisations.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

That upon the completion of this strategic review, it helps to form the basis of the development of a strategic plan for USI to be presented and ratified at Comhdháil 2023. The USI President should publish an annual report on the progress of this strategic plan at Comhdháil each year for the duration of the plan.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

A working group of Comhairle Náisiúnta be established to oversee and inform the full development and implementation of both the strategic review and strategic plan.

2022 UO 25 Progress Reports On Mandates

National College Of Ireland Students' Union

Comhdháil notes:

USI Coiste Gnó can be mandated to take on a large number of motions and it is not realistic to complete all of these mandates in one year.

Comhdháil recognizes:

The hard work being put in by the Coiste Gnó to complete a large number of motions and progress a multitude of these at any given time.

Comhdháil further recognizes:

The need for an efficient and clear way of tracking the current status of all mandates.

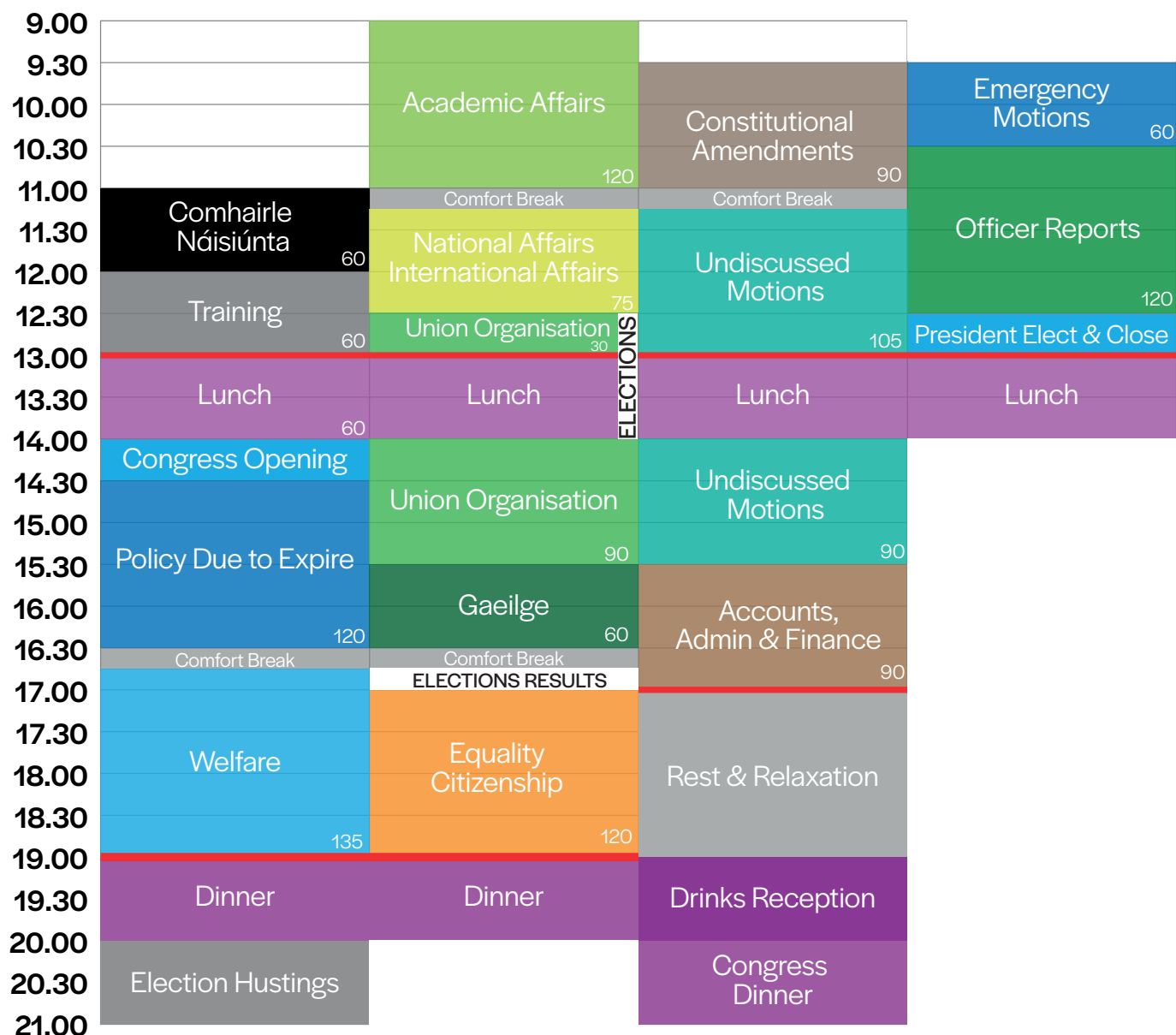
Comhdháil mandates:

That the Coiste Gnó submit a policy tracker as part of their reports to Comhairle Náisiúnta so MO's can see the current status of all mandates currently on the policy handbook.

Notáí

Notes

Clár-Ama



Notes on the timetable:

- ▶ Time allocated to a section or its placement in the timetable is not an indication of its importance; it's a reflection of the number and complexity of motions to be discussed in the session.
- ▶ If a session completes all the motions before it, Steering may, at its discretion, return to any topic previously opened not having completed its motions, or...
- ▶ ...with the agreement of Comhdháil, Steering may open the next section to be debated if a section is completed before its scheduled time.
- ▶ The end of any session is termed the 'guillotine'. Any motion underway will be brought to a summation and followed by an immediate vote.
- ▶ A red line is a 'hard guillotine' which cannot be moved.

