



Comhdháil

MMXXIV

25-28 March 2024 | Sligo



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

CD1: Rules | Motions | Clárrama

Comhdháil Social

Comhdháil Social events are opportunities to meet and enjoy the crack / craic with students from colleges all across the island. There is no obligation to attend these events, but we'd absolutely love to see you get stuck in to all Comhdháil has to offer.

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



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Steering Awards 2024



What now?

Each year, during the Congress Dinner (Wednesday night) the USI Steering Committee nominates a n d 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 pitiable small prize (HINT: it's an Easter Egg) and the bragging rights, remember to state your name and college any time you speak.

Protip: Your name and college are printed on your delegate card.

Fáilte Ón Uachtarán

Chris Clifford



A chara,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Comhdháil 2024. We are here representing 374,000 students from over 20 colleges across the island of Ireland.

Over the next four days, you will decide and shape the future direction of USI by debating, and voting on, motions and policy, and by electing the next leaders of the student movement.

Don't be afraid to throw yourself into these discussions, don't be afraid to disagree with the opinion of others. But do so not for the sake of it, but because you have an opinion formed by experience, evidence, or relevant research.

USI must be built on high quality discussion, to ensure high quality policy. We have many challenges ahead of us as a movement. Students working full-time jobs just to sustain their education, commuting hours on end and the severe lack of student accommodation. All while the cost of living continues to spiral. Unpaid work-placements riddle the system, postgrads are increasingly taking on more work and yet they, and many academics, are facing a future of uncertain, precarious contracts. Consent education is not yet a reality, mental health supports continue to be side-lined on campuses, and in our wider society.

Over the next four days, you will decide how we will tackle these, and many other issues. This is up to you. Each delegate here is representing 1,000 students. That in itself is an honour and a responsibility. The Irish student movement has been a leading political force for societal change. We don't just reflect internally; we recognise the role we have, and we demand a better future for everyone. This year, we have lobbied Government to implement digs legislation, registered over 4,500 students to vote in upcoming elections and have been one of the strongest voices for national support for Palestine.

We have a strong collective voice and we should continue to use it, and not get complacent about the importance of our campaigning, our support, our solidarity and our action on the issues affecting all of us, and build the kind of society we want to work and live in.

Chris Clifford,
President
22 March 2024

Key Staff at Comhdháil

USI staff are present at USI Comhdháil to support the delivery of the event and to speak to delegates about the programmes run by USI.



Martina Genockey *Public Relations & Communications Manager*

Martina Genockey is USI's Communications and PR Manager and has responsibility for maximising coverage of USI activities, events and campaigns, along with the President, Vice President for Campaigns and the rest of the Coiste Gno. Martina manages USI's social media accounts and will be live Tweeting and posting all the news from Comhdháil throughout the week (and yes, it's up to her who gets on the Tweet wall, so be nice!).

Martina holds a Master's degree in Journalism from TU Dublin, a professional diploma in Digital Marketing from the Digital Marketing Institute and an honours degree in English and History from the University of Maynooth and has a range of journalism, communications and public relations experience. She is really looking forward to a great week of coverage for the student movement and the work done by USI and SUs across the island.

Hello from The Congress Director

Ben Archibald



Dear Delegate,

On behalf of the staff of USI, It is my delight and pleasure to be one of the many (many, many) people welcoming you to USI Comhdháil 2024.

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 each USI event to keep the event safe and smooth. With 260+ delegates and observers, 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**.

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 18 Congresses as a delegate, officer, Steering Committee and Congress Director. My advice, for what it's worth? There are hundreds of fellow students around you to talk to, learn from and have fun with. Not everything will go the way you want it to - but this unique event in the life of students can be a place you make memories for the rest of your life. There's a thought.

Ben Archibald
22 March 2024

“Eat the mints. Drink the water. Accept that some people won't agree with you, and leave the debate on the floor.”

Sarah Hughes *Mental Health Programme Manager*

Sarah Hughes is the Mental Health Programme within the Union of Students in Ireland. Sarah works directly on any mental health research projects within the organisation and works alongside Government Executives such as the HSE to create positive change and ensure students' mental health is at the forefront of conversation at all times. Sarah is currently running the Open Up national student mental health campaign, and is available during Comhdháil to provide a safe space should anyone need it. She'll also be the voice on the end of the event phone.



Rachael Sarsfield Ryan *NStEP Co-Ordinator*

Rachael will be conducting research with delegates about the NStEP programme, which aims to improve students' ability to engage as class representatives with college QA systems. She'll be offering MASSIVE REWARDS to delegates who agree to take part in the research.

Niamh Murtagh *Student Engagement, Belonging, and Wellbeing Project*

Niamh will be assisting Rachael and conducting her own research with delegates about the student campus belonging and engagement programmes. Big prizes. Huge rewards. Say hi!

Welcome from the chairperson of Steering & Elections Committee

Cat O'Driscoll



Fáilte go Comhdháil 2024.

While democracy is falling out of favour in some parts of the world it's great to have you all here to show that every voice can be heard while making decisions in the best interests of those you represent.

Steering is here to keep you on track with time and the Clár, we also have vast experience to guide you through your work. We dream of procedural motions and relish asking for your name and college! If you have any questions about the debate process, how to form your speech or when to use a point of information, we have the answers.

We disagree respectfully on Comhdháil floor, don't address past speakers by name and the swear jar goes to a local charity. Steering are impartial on the topics you are debating and will have to be strict on time limits. There's lots to learn: I developed my public speaking skills from the podium, learned how to chair meetings from watching Steering in action and made the best friends during my time at many, many meetings of Comhdháil!

Don't forget Steering will be keeping an eye out for impressive first-time speakers, passionate speeches and other award-worthy behaviours. You are all here representing the students across the island and making decisions that will benefit students of the future. It's an important job and you are the best people for it!

Ní Neart Go Cur Le Chéile,
Cat O'Driscoll

Welcome from the Returning Officer Barry Clohessy



Dear Delegate,

Firstly, we like to congratulate each candidate for putting themselves forwards for election to the Coiste Gnó. Many (if not all) of us at Comhdháil know what it's like to run for election, and at this point, we would like to remind delegates to please respect each candidate as we come to the final stages of Lead USI 2024.

The function of the elections sub-committee is to ensure that the election of the USI Coiste Gnó at Comhdháil is independent and impartial. It's there to ensure that you have confidence in the conduct of the election at both the polling and counting stages.

A smooth running of the elections is important to ensure an accurate result in a timely manner, so I ask delegates to please ensure that you have your student card in your possession. At the same time, your identification is verified during registration; however, the sub-committee will be conducting spot checks to ensure that each delegate voting is a current registered student.

At the close of polling, the Elections Sub-Committee, with the assistance of USI HQ, will ensure that the ballot boxes are securely stored until the counting of the ballots. At the election count, a representative for each candidate (or the candidate) may be present but will be subject to strict confidentiality to ensure there is no premature release of results.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in ensuring an efficient running of this election. We hope you have a productive and engaging Comhdháil 2024.

Barry Clohessy
USI Returning Officer and Chair of Elections Subcommittee

Steering & Elections Committee **Who's Who?**



Cat O'Driscoll, Chairperson, Steering & Elections Committee

After studying Microbiology in UCC in my hometown I was elected Education Officer in 2011. I then served two terms as USI VP for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance before being elected to the ESU Executive. I ran NStEP from its establishment in 2016 until 2019 when I recruited and trained the first crisis volunteers for Text50808. I was coopted to Dublin City Council a week before Covid arrived in Ireland - great timing!



Jack Leahy - Chairperson, Comhairle Náisiúnta

My name is Jack Leahy and I am the chair of the USI Comhairle Náisiúnta. I was a sabbatical officer in TCD Students' Union in 2013/14 and was elected to serve as USI Vice President for Academic Affairs and Deputy President between 2015 and 2017. Since my time in the student movement ended, I have assisted as a trainer, a chair for the MSU Student Senate and a chair of the European Students' Union board. In my time as a student representative I was known for my deft use of procedural motions, so I'm looking forward to being impressed!



Barry Clohessy - Chairperson, Elections Subcommittee

Dia dhuit Comhdháil 2024. I am Barry, and I am delighted to be attending Comhdháil 2023 as part of the Steering Committee and as Returning Officer, particularly at the home of my alma mater. I have been involved with the movement since 2012 and have served as Vice President and President of IT Sligo SU and later as VP for the Border, Midlands and Western Region of USI. I have many fond memories of attending Comhdháil, and I hope you do after a fantastic few days debating at the democratic heart of USI.



Sean Gordon Dalton - Deputy Chairperson, Comhairle Náisiúnta

I am a Politics and Sociology graduate from Trinity College Dublin, and a proud Kilkenny man (hon the cats!). While at Trinity, I served for two years on TCDSU's electoral commission, facilitating the union's elections and council meetings. Currently, I work in political communications in the Oireachtas, where I also provide administrative support to senators, backbench TDs and political staff. Alongside my role on steering, I am also the Deputy Chair of Comhairle Naisiunta.



Aoife Deasy

Is mise an chéad duine a bhí tofa sa ról mar Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge (íochta!) Roimhe sin bhí mé mar Uachtarán, Oifigeach na Gaeilge agus Leas-Uachtarán do Leas don Aontas i gColáiste San Aingeal, Sligeach. Ina dhiaidh sin chaith mé bliain ag obair le Seanad na Mac Léinn go páirtaimseartha in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad. Is múinteoir meánscoile mé anois i nGaelcholáiste i mBaile Átha Cliath.

I was the first person to be elected into the full-time, paid role of Vice-President for the Irish Language with USI. Before that I was the President, VP for Welfare and Irish Language Officer in STACS SU. I was the chair of MSU Senate for one year and am now teaching through the medium of Irish in Dublin (but I am from Cork and am happy to talk all things Cork!)



Colm O'Halloran

My name is Colm O'Halloran and I'm delighted to be on Steering for Comhdháil 2024! I was the USI Vice President for the Dublin Region in 2018/19 as well as hanging around TCDSU as a Part-Time Officer/Student Leap Card Salesman for several years. I currently work in the political sphere and have a keen interest in the issues affecting students and young people. I have great memories of Comhdháil and it is a great place to make connections and friends as well as robustly debate policy for the student movement.



Aaron Frahill

My name is Aaron Frahill. From July 2018 to June 2019, I was the VP for Education on UCC Student's Union. In addition to this, I served three years as a Part Time Officer on UCCSU during my BAI undergrad degree and MSc. Finance masters, which included two years as Student Council Chair.



Fun Fact - If you laid all the members of Steering Committee end to end, you still couldn't get them to agree to moving a red guillotine.

Steering & Elections Contd



Ryan Carey

I am a graduate of Trinity College Dublin (BA (Hons.) History, M.Phil Public History & Cultural Heritage). Currently, I work in post-entry support for College Connect in DCU, a partnership of higher education institutions and community organisations which uses research to identify barriers experienced by people who are under-represented in higher education. I was involved with TCDSU throughout my time in college, holding various positions from faculty convenor to gender equality officer. I am the external member of the TCDSU Oversight Commission, the body responsible for overseeing the implementation of union policy and mandate.



Marie Lyons

Dia dhuit Comhdháil! My name is Marie Lyons and I'm really excited to be back at Comhdháil 2024! I teach Home Economics and Business in a school based in Dublin but still a Tipp girl at heart!

In the student movement I was very active, serving as Vice President for Welfare and Equality and later President of St. Angela's College, Sligo Students' Union and then serving two years in USI as Vice President for the BMW region and Vice President for Equality and Citizenship from 2018-2020 (despite two years on the USI Coiste Gnó I never got to have an in person Comhdháil so making up for that on steering!).

I'm on my second term as Speaker for MSU Senate and I've been an SUT tutor for the last couple of years. USI and Comhdháil has a special place in my heart, and I hope you all have a great time and make the most of the week setting the direction for your national union.



Anna Heverin

Hello everyone, welcome to Comhdháil 2024. I am delighted to be back at Congress as a member of this year's steering committee. I was heavily active with UCCSU in my time in college and previously served as the sabbatical President of UCC Societies Guild in my time in University College Cork. During my time in the student movement I was involved in big campaigns with USI on Marriage Equality, Repeal and worked with various political entities. This led me on to my career in the last few years working in public affairs, the Oireachtas and the trade union movement. I was also an associate trainer with NStEP and worked with many member institutions. I have a lot of lovely memories and connections made at congress in past years so I'm looking forward to hearing some good debates and meeting the delegations from each member organization.



USI elections

USI Elections use the system known as Single Transferable Vote. (Instant Runoff). STV systems allow the voter to vote for every candidate in order of their preference.

In the Voting Booth

Vote for candidates in order of preference. Mark the ballot paper by putting 1 by the name of your first-choice candidate, 2 by the name of your second-choice candidate and so on.

If your first choice candidate is eliminated during the count, your vote 'transfers' to your next choice, and so on, until one person meets the 'quota' and is deemed elected.

Only one of the preferences in your vote is active at a time. If your vote is transferred, it passes to your next highest preference for a candidate who is eligible to win.

During the Count

Ballot papers will be sorted by 1st preferences and counted together to calculate the quota.

The quota is a threshold number of votes which must be reached to secure the election of a candidate. It's calculated by dividing the total number of *valid* ballot papers by the number of seats to be filled plus one and, ignoring any fractional remainder, adding one to the result.

$$Q = \left(\frac{\text{Total Valid Poll}}{\text{Seats} + 1} \right) + 1$$

In USI Executive Team elections, each election has one seat available. Thus, a quota in a national USI election is calculated like this (with a total valid vote of 250 and one seat to fill):

$$Q = \left(\frac{250}{1 + 1} \right) + 1 = 126$$

USI Comhdháil tends to have an electorate of around 230-250 - so that's a reasonable estimate for a Policy Officer election where everyone can vote. Regional votes are all smaller.

USI Events Code of Conduct

USI wants all participants at events to have an enjoyable, productive and safe time. 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 in charge of safety at USI events

The Senior Staff Person

The senior staff person present will be introduced to attendees. They will be the person making decisions about the safety of the event and the conduct of the event. For any trilateral event in Northern Ireland, there will be two Senior Staff Persons present who will liaise with one another.

The Senior Officer

The Senior Officer will be introduced to attendees. They will liaise with the Senior Staff Persons on decisions about the safety of the event. For any trilateral event in Northern Ireland, the President of NUS-USI will be designated the Senior Officer.

Duty Safeguarding Person

The Duty Safeguarding Person may be a member of USI staff, a person hired by USI for the purpose or a suitably trained person from another organisation. This will be made clear at the opening meeting of any event.

SU Delegation Leader

Your SU has a delegation leader (DL). This will usually be 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. They should supply you with their phone number, and you should supply yours to them.

USI Safety Basics

USI residential events (events where USI arranges accommodation) may be attended by adults aged 18 and older only.

At a USI residential event, in your joining instructions and on your Event Wristband, you will find the telephone number for the Event Safety Person, who you can call at any time of the day or night to seek support or report anything which you think could be unsafe.

It is important that you understand that contacting the Event Safety Person doesn't get you or anyone else into trouble - we provide this number to ensure that the wellbeing of attendees at our events is protected. The safety of our members is our highest priority. If you need to call the number for yourself or on someone else's behalf, do so.

In an emergency

In what appears to be a medical emergency, you should immediately call for an ambulance by calling 112 and follow their instructions; you should then call the Event Phone Number to inform them that an ambulance is on the way.

If you witness or become aware of an incident of violence or assault, you should call 112 and ask for the Gardaí (Republic of Ireland) or Police (Northern Ireland). You should not take action which endangers yourself or anyone else.

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.

Your Safety

You are the person primarily responsible for your own safety, and you have a responsibility to promote safety for everyone at an event. 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 removed from the event.
Incidents of this sort should be reported to the Duty Safeguarding Person, your Delegation Leader or a member of USI Executive Team.

Respect for others

USI believes in the right to respectful freedom of expression for our delegates which recognises the right of others to a contrary opinion.

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.

Attendees at our events should be respectful of the freedom of expression of others, in particular relating to their identity; their gender and pronouns in particular should be respected by others.

Drugs and Alcohol at USI events

It's not acceptable to share or supply drugs at a USI event. Use of alcohol and unprescribed drugs may be illegal, can impair a user's judgment and endanger personal safety and health, and by extension pose risks to other attendees.

USI would prefer that you didn't take drugs at our events; national health guidance in Ireland advises that if you decide to take drugs, you should 'start low and go slow'.

Any person engaged in activity which endangers another

Code of Conduct (contd)

person or themselves 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.

Sexual conduct

USI has a zero tolerance approach to breaches of sexual consent and sexual harassment.

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

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, gender, sexuality or private life
Repeated unwanted sexual invitations or requests
Unwanted touching or unwanted sexually motivated activity
Sexual assault

No Pressure Events

Nobody owes an explanation to another attendee or to USI for sitting out part of an event, skipping a social event or taking some time and space for their own wellbeing.

You must not pressure anybody else into doing anything they are not comfortable doing.

"No." is a full sentence.

Accommodation and sleep

USI provides accommodation at some events.

- Rooms provided by USI will often 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 that room and are responsible for loss or damages there. Delegates should secure their rooms when absent to prevent loss or theft of personal effects.

USI Staff and facilitators

USI Staff and colleagues in NUS-USI work hard to deliver USI and NUS-USI objectives and events. Delegates should feel comfortable with approaching staff for support and information.

USI Staff 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 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.

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

If an allegation of misconduct is made to USI relating to which endangers or has endangered our members, USI will always support the right of an affected person to seek support from relevant authorities in whatever way it can.

If USI staff become aware of something which endangers attendees, you can expect the staff member to report it to the Senior Staff Person as appropriate.

Why would we eject a person?

In some circumstances, we might need to take the decision to eject a person from an event. Some of those circumstances include:

- If we feel that the wellbeing or security of participants 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.
- 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) in line with the Code of Conduct lies with each of the SU delegation leader of the person in question, the USI President, and the senior staff persons present. Any of these may take a decision to eject a person from an event.

The authority to direct that a delegate be required to leave the floor of a democratic event rests with the chair of the meeting.

The President or senior staff persons present may take whatever advice and make whatever consultations they feel are appropriate – their decision is final for the current event and no refunds may be made in respect of fees paid for attendance for an ejected person.

Banning from future events

In respect of a person who has seriously and/or repeatedly breached the Code of Conduct, appropriate action including banning an individual person may be taken by USI in the interests of the operations of the organisation and the protection of participants and staff.

Comhdháil Primer

Everyone at Comhdháil had a first time. There are rules to follow to ensure good order & ensure everyone gets a say.

Who is in charge in Congress debates?

On Comhdháil 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 one 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.

This year, just before Comhdháil opens, a vote will be taken by members of the Comhairle Náisiúnta to decide on changes to 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 Procedural Motions available are printed on the last page of this document.

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 26 February 2023

The timetable is adopted by Comhdháil, and can be amended by Comhdháil by a 2/3rds +1 majority. Steering Committee will oppose this motion on behalf of the Comhdháil.

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

Comhdháil Glossary

Comhdháil is weird. Know the jargon and fit right in.

Proposer

The person who submitted the motion to Comhdháil and usually the first speaker on the motion. Not someone requesting one's hand in marriage, unless that happens.

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. Not bathroom related.

"Name and College!"

What Steering will say to you if you forget to tell them who you are. Tell us 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 speaking rights, at the sole discretion of the chair.

"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, check yourself before you wreck yourself/comhdháil.

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 Vote

Counting close votes is difficult. If a vote is called and counted, you must sit silently as Steering Committee undertake a count. They may use their fingers and count out loud.

Staff Protocol

You cannot mention the glorious 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 or the staffer while not on Congress Floor and not during debate.

Congress Floor

The room where debates happen at Comhdháil.

RON

The obligatory alternative in every election. She doesn't even go here.

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.

Red Guillotine

A guillotine which cannot under any circumstances be moved. Great name for a 17th Century themed metal band.

A Previous Speaker

We don't mention the name of anyone who spoke before us. We pretend they have no name. 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. Nobody can go in or out of the room while a vote is taking place.

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 Comhdháil, 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 Chair of Steering will give you a shiny Creme Egg.

Emergency Motion

A motion relating to something having occurred after the deadline for Comhdháil Motions. Not bathroom related.

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. By all means, give it a go. Might work.

Congress TokTik / Instaface / Bebogram

Steering will give a prize (it's still an Easter Egg, could be an Easter bunny) 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.

Typographical Error

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

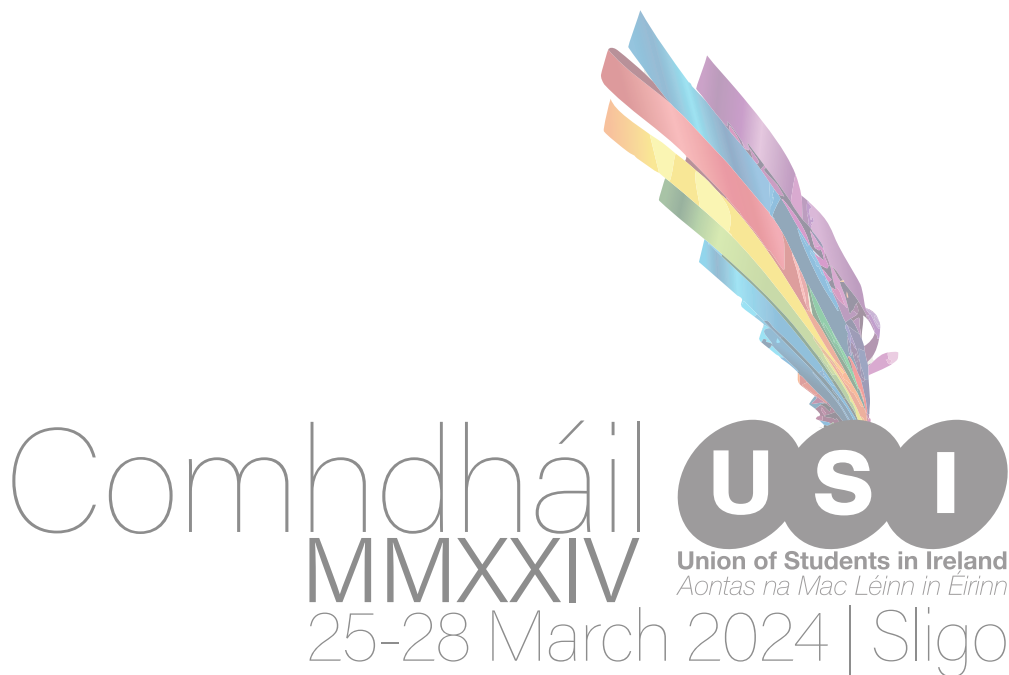
"Could the occupants of Room XYZ come to meet the Congress Director"

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.

Policies due to expire

USI policy lasts for three years before expiring. Member Organisations may opt to bring expiring policies back to Comhdháil for renewal.

The policies in this section have been selected for debate and, if passed, will become policy for another three years.



2018 AA 15 : The Marketisation of Third-Level Education

PROPOSED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Congress notes

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

Congress further notes

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

Congress recognises

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

Congress believes

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

Congress mandates

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

2021 EQ NC 2: Accessibility to Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

PROPOSED BY THE USI VP POSTGRADUATE AFFAIRS

Congress Notes

The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) conducted a survey in 2017/2018 which notes that 14, 720 students with disabilities enrolled in third-level education, representing 6.2 percent of the total student population. This notes a 17% increase in one year. USI applauds this increase yet notes that access to third level education is still very restrictive, and students with disabilities still form a minority within the overall student body.

Congress Notes

The need for an in-depth study on numbers of students with disabilities accessing third level education in Ireland, and the Institutional barriers faced by students with disabilities.

Congress Further Notes

That Students' Unions can play a vital role in the encouragement of more students with disabilities enrolling in third level education, highlighting areas of Institutional inaccessibility on campuses and lobbying their Institutions towards greater support of students with disabilities.

Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to work with MO's to highlight the need for, and resources required to greater enhance the numbers of students with disabilities accessing third level education in Ireland.

Congress Further Mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the government for greater investment in disability services across existing Higher Education Institutions on behalf of students with disabilities at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

2021 AA 1: Hidden Course Costs

PROPOSED BY THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil Notes

That many students are required to pay additional costs, on top of the student contribution/ tuition fee. This includes but is not limited to materials fees, field trips, uniform costs and medical costs. These can range from 10s to 1000s of euros/pounds.

Comhdháil Further Notes

In many cases, there is limited information provided to students in advance of enrolment on the additional costs that they will be required to pay throughout the course of their studies.

Comhdháil Believes

Hidden additional costs serve as a further reminder of the marketized Higher Education system that students across the island are being subjected to and may further inhibit students from progressing in their education particularly where these costs are mandatory.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Academic Affairs to lobby key stakeholders, including the Higher Education Commission when formed to require institutions to provide full transparency of all additional costs within their colleges to prospective students.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The USI Executive Team to support MOs in raising awareness of additional course costs within their own colleges, and in lobbying for the reduction or abolishment of all additional costs. The USI Executive Team to support NUS-USI members in ensuring that colleges in the North continue to comply with CMA requirements around publication of additional costs.

2021 AA 4: Lecture Recording

PROPOSED BY TU DUBLIN SU

Comhdháil Notes

Not all HEI's have a policy in place for the recording of online lectures.

Comhdháil further notes

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many difficulties for students when learning remotely. Lecturers refusing to record lectures has caused additional difficulties for students experiencing internet connectivity issues and outages.

Comhdháil regrets

That students have been put at a severe disadvantage academically this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and under additional stress as a result

Comhdháil further regrets

These disadvantages are hindering the progression of students' education already without lecturers refusing to record lectures and making their education even more challenging.

Comhdháil mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to provide support and resources to MOs who are looking to lobby to implement lecture recording in their institute.

2021 AA 6: Position on Proctoring

PROPOSED BY THE USI VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Comhdháil Notes

That many students have been forced to complete assessments, including examinations, online due to the pandemic that the world is facing. Due to these assessments having to take place virtually, the standard invigilation procedures can not take place.

Comhdháil Further Notes

Academic Integrity Procedures must still be followed to ensure that all assessments are taken

fairly and that these assessments are an accurate reflection of the work that all students have put in.

Comhdháil Also Notes

HEIs are currently looking into getting all online examinations fully proctored through different proctoring software like Examity etc.

Comhdháil Believes

There are a range of concerns related to proctoring of assessment including but not limited to privacy, mental health and accessibility associated with the use of proctoring software.

Comhdháil Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs, working through the National Academic Integrity Network to investigate proctoring and produce a paper outlining uses of Proctoring, how it relates to Academic Integrity and the impact it has on the student experience regarding assessment.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Regional Vice Presidents to work with MOs to compile a picture of current uses of proctoring in assessment and to use this, and the work of the National Academic Integrity Network to inform the development of position papers and/or statements in relation to proctoring.

2021 AA 14: Subsidies on Textbooks

PROPOSED BY NUI GALWAY STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil Notes

Students year in year out are forced to buy textbooks as part of their core reading lists. These are generally only relevant to the student for one year. These books can range in price from €10 anywhere up to the €100 mark. This adds an extra barrier for students to access education as it is another major expense on top of accommodation and equipment. Some of these books cannot be bought second hand due to a specific code on the inside which is used for course work and assignments which means it cannot be stocked in the library. These libraries already have limited resources. This year students have been forced to do their entire course predominantly online with limited access to their library, study spaces and other areas on their campus which they are paying for through their tuition and levy. The libraries across the country are doing all they can in terms of providing a click & collect and scan & deliver service but for some students, this is insufficient due to the lack of books and the slow turnover. During this pandemic, there has also been a limit in students purchasing second-hand books which normally reduces the costs of books. Students who cannot afford these books are at a disadvantage in their degree to those who can afford it.

Comhdháil Commends

All the work that is being done by the USI and MO's on the "Education for All campaign". In the year that's in it, this is one of the campaigns that has been pushed the most and engaged students.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI Academic Affairs Officer to work with MO's to lobby the Department of Higher Education, Innovation and Science to secure subsidies for students who are paying more than €50 a year for books.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

USI Academic Affairs officer to lobby for more Open Educational Resources and e-books to be used on reading lists rather than formal textbooks

2021 AA 17: Back to Education Allowance Reform Strategy Paper

PROPOSED BY THE USI VICE PRESIDENT FOR EQUALITY AND CITIZENSHIP
COMHDHÁIL NOTES

That the Back to Education Allowance Reform Strategy Paper (2018 AA 2) is due to expire at Comhdháil 2021.

Comhdháil believes

That the commitment to review the BTEA in the Programme for Government allows for an opportunity to address the current shortfalls within the current BTEA. Given the current economic climate the BTEA will allow for greater support to students returning to education.

Comhdháil Adopts

The proposed [Amended Back to Education Allowance Reform Strategy Paper](#)

2021 WEL 4: Regional Food Banks

PROPOSED BY THE SOUTHERN REGION WORKING GROUP

Congress recognises

That financial hardship is an issue many students experience during third level education. Students often work multiple part-time jobs, commute from their family homes to campus to save on rent costs or skip meals to save money. Eating healthily and having access to sufficient meals is extremely important for a person’s wellbeing.

Congress notes

Setting up a Food Bank requires you to rely on donations of products. Many organisations, including College Canteens, may throw out food at the end of the day for a number of reasons that include; being mislabeled, overproduced, are test-market items and/or products with short code dates. Most of the time this food is perfect to consume.

Congress further notes

Some charities currently work with supermarkets to collect foods and give them out to those in need. With the current economic situation, and the lack of funding for third level students, students’ who are struggling financially may find Food Banks beneficial to them.

Congress mandates

The Regional Vice Presidents to investigate and produce a guidance document to assist MO’s in setting up Food Banks. This guide should include information on external organisations that may be of help to MO’s.

Congress further mandates

This guidance document should be discussed with local MO’s when it is being produced to get input on what is currently in place in MO’s. This should be updated and produced no later than October each year.

2018 EQ 1: Gender Recognition of Students

PROPOSED BY INSTITUTE OF ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS’ UNION

Congress notes

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

Congress recognises

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

Congress Notes

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

Congress applauds

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

cies.

Congress therefore mandates

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

Congress further mandates

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

2018 EQ 5: Universal Design for Learning

PROPOSED BY NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY STUDENTS' UNION

Congress notes

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

Congress recognises

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

Congress mandates

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

12 CZN 2: Students in the Workplace

Congress notes

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

Congress welcomes

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

Congress notes with concern

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

Congress mandates

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

2021 NA NC 1: Support for the Gaeltacht Regions

PROPOSED BY: USI LEAS-UACHTARÁN DON GHAELIGE

Aithníonn An Chomhdháil

An luach a bhaineann leis na ceantair Ghaeltachta agus a thábhachtaí is atá siad do thodhchaí na Gaeilge, agus do stair agus cultúr an oileáin seo.

Anuas Ar Sin, Aithníonn An Chomhdháil

Go bhfuil géarchéim ag tarlúint anois sna ceantair Ghaeltachta ó thaobh cúrsaí teanga de agus gmbíonn fadhbanna ollmhóra ag daoine óga fanacht sa Ghaeltacht mar gheall nach bhfuil deiseanna fostaíochta ann dóibh nuair a chríochnaíonn siad sa Choláiste.

Creideann An Chomhdháil

Go bhfuil sé ríthabachtach na Gaeltachtaí a chaomhnú agus gur ceart don Rialtas maoiniú sásúil a dhéanamh ar na ceantair seo ionas go mbeidh siad fós anseo i gceann deich nó fiche bliana.

Go dtacóidh AMLÉ, trí obair an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge, le feachtas a bhaineann le caomhnú na Gaeltachta agus go gcuideoidh an LU Gaeilge le heagraíochtaí eile, stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar an Rialtas dul i ngleic leis an ngéarchéim sa Ghaeltacht.

Anuas Air Sin, Sanordaíonn An Chomhdháil

Go n-eagróidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge grúpaí fócais ar a laghad faoi dhó in aghaidh an tseamastair, le mic léinn ó na ceantair Ghaeltachta ar fad le plé a dhéanamh ar na fadhbanna is mó do dhaoine óga sa Ghaeltacht agus obair AMLÉ ar chaomhnú na Gaeltachta a stiúradh.

Comhdháil Notes

The value of Gaeltacht areas and their importance to the future of the Irish language, as well their importance in the history and culture of the Island.

Comhdháil Also Notes

That there is a language crisis happening in the Gaeltacht and that there are huge difficulties in keeping young people in Gaeltacht areas due to a lack of employment opportunities for them when they finish college.

Comhdháil Believes

That it is vital to preserve Gaeltacht areas and that the Government should provide adequate funding to these areas so that they are still in existence in ten- or twenty-years' time.

Therefore, Comhdháil Mandates:

USI, through the work of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge, to support campaigns to preserve the Gaeltacht and to assist other Irish language organisations in lobbying the Government to tackle the ongoing crisis in the Gaeltacht.

Comhdháil Also Mandates:

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to organise focus groups for students from all Gaeltacht areas, at least twice a semester, to discuss issues facing young people in the Gaeltacht and to shape USI's work on supporting the Gaeltacht.

2021 NA NC 2: Support for Dying with Dignity

PROPOSED BY TU DUBLIN STUDENTS' UNION

Congress Notes:

The Dying with Dignity Bill, is a bill in favour of introducing Assisted Dying in Ireland, which is a part of End of Life Care, often decisions made by those diagnosed with terminal illness or long term health implications that impact a person's quality of life.

Congress Further Notes:

The current bill proposed is currently going through legislation at the time of this motion being written up. The bill aims to legislate for the safe and monitored access to End of Life Care which includes the Right to Die. The current bill includes the provisional necessity for an independent medical practitioner to assess the case and safeguard against abuse, coercion or gaslighting.

Congress Recognizes:

The historic court cases taken by those who have sought a constitutional right to die or furthered this discussion, such as the abhorrent handling of the Cervical Check Cancer Scandal,

or those who have sought to overturn legislation such as Marie Fleming, Gail O'Rorke and countless others.

Congress Believes:

That bodily autonomy is a basic human right, and bodily autonomy derives from the absolute sovereign authority to make decisions that is best for one's self and that End of Life care is included in Bodily Autonomy and autonomy over one's health, wellness and future.

Therefore, Congress Mandates:

The Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship in conjunction with the Executive Team to lobby in favour of the Right to Die and to actively support the Dying with Dignity Bill.

Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice-President for Welfare in conjunction with the Executive Team to work with lobbying groups who have an in-depth knowledge on End of Life Care that encompasses empathy, compassion and understanding.

2021 NA NC 3: De-Platforming and Rejecting Fascism

PROPOSED BY TU DUBLIN STUDENTS' UNION

Congress Notes:

Fascism is a form of authoritarian ideology that focusing on power that uses forcible suppression of opposing views and opinions. It is a regressive and violent ideology that has seen an increase in reporting over the past years and now has now manifested into a full platform in 2020.

Congress Further Notes:

Fascism actively harms minority groups, progressive movements, and grassroots community equity campaigns by any means available, using the guise of political stances to protect itself from de-platforming and rejection from societal based values.

Congress Recognizes:

That students come from all walks of life, opinions, and beliefs. Political beliefs and alignments vary in all students and it is important to recognize and support all students in their access, progression, and completion of their education and/or progression to life-long learning.

Congress Believes:

That as a representative body we must ensure the protection of those who are most vulnerable in our society. Fascism actively aims to harm that core belief. We must ensure that access, progression and completion of education and its further progression into life-long learning must be safe from violence, oppression or hinderance, particularly from those with harmful, deceitful, or aggressive intent.

Congress Further Believes

That as a collective Union we should seek to include as many diverse opinions as possible, that does not actively harm, disrupt or de-platform the vulnerable, marginalized or oppressed in our society.

Therefore, Congress Mandates:

The President in conjunction with the Executive Team actively rejects and de-platforms forms of fascism and to further re-invest resources into protecting the most vulnerable and/or marginalized students in our society.

Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice-President for Campaigns in conjunction with the Executive Team and Presidents' Working Group to engage in de-platforming actions such as counter-protests where safe, and to work with Organizations, Member Organizations and the relevant Executive Team officers to ensure training for officers in de-escalation, de-platforming and rejection of fascism is

rolled out to all officers during key-training sessions.

2021 NA 1: Supporting Students in Direct Provision

PROPOSED BY NCI STUDENTS' UNION

Congress Recognizes

That students in direct provision are at a greater disadvantage when it comes to educational, financial, and mental health supports. The current asylum-seeking process in Ireland needs to be dramatically modified and better resource the administration of the asylum process in Ireland in order to allow for a quicker asylum reception process. The last official statistics published by the RIA was in November 2018. The average length of stay in Direct Provision is 24 months, with some residents having spent up to 10 or 12 years living in these conditions.

Congress Notes

That a report in 2020 by Doras outlined that asylum seekers are five times more likely to develop mental health & psychiatric issues. International Protection applicants experience a disproportionately high rate of mental health difficulties. They are up to fifteen times more likely to be diagnosed with depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder and five times more likely to be diagnosed with a psychiatric illness.

Congress further notes

USI does not directly represent second-level students as they are not in third-level education but must recognize the inequality faced by these students in direct provision.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to work with the Irish Second-Level Students' Union and relevant mental health organizations to provide mental health support and resources to students in direct provision.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to provide information resources to students looking to continue to third-level education. These resources should include institutes with sanctuary programs, mental health support services, and grants available to them.

2021 UO 10: Pre-Budget Submission

PROPOSED BY THE PRESIDENTS' WORKING GROUP

Congress welcomes

The annual publication of the USI Pre-Budget Submission.

Congress believes

That this document is a useful lobbying tool that can be used throughout the year to lobby for increased investment but also legislative changes that are required.

Congress mandates

The USI President to ensure the publication of an annual pre-budget submission that includes budgetary asks and legislative asks so the document can be used throughout the year to support Students' Unions when lobbying members of the Oireachtas.

2021 GAE 2: Cur Chun Cinn Na Gaeilge Sna Balleagraíochtaí // Promoting Irish In Member Organisations

MOLTA AG AN LEAS-UACHTARÁN DON GHAEILGE

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil

Go bhfuil an-obair déanta ag na balleagraíochtaí a ghlac páirt sa scéim Bonn na Gaeilge leis an nGaeilge a chur chun cinn ina gcoláistí féin.

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil

Go bhfuil an-chuid deacrachtaí ag roinn balleagraíochtaí páirt a ghlacadh sa scéim, go háirithe na hAontais ó Thuadh, agus na hAontais bheaga nach bhfuil mórán acmhainní acu.

Creideann an Chomhdháil

Go bhfuil an-tábhacht le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge sna balleagraíochtaí agus gur cheart tuilleadh forbartha a dhéanamh ar an scéim seo le cuidiú le balleagraíochtaí a bheith níos dátheangáí.

Mar sin sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil

Go ndéanfaidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge tuilleadh forbartha ar an mbonneagar seo in éineacht le heagraíochtaí Gaeilge ábhartha leis an scéim a leathnú agus deis a chur ar fáil do níos mó Aontas agus mic léinn a bheith páirteach ann. Ní mór deiseanna maoinithe a fhiosrú le heagraíochtaí ábhartha chun go mbeidh deis ag níos mó balleagraíochtaí páirt a ghlacadh.

Ina theannta sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil

Go gcruthóidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge pacáistí acmhainní do na balleagraíochtaí atá ag glacadh páirt sa scéim le treoireacha ar chonas spriocanna áirithe a chur i gcrích mar atá leagtha amach sa sceim, ionas go mbeidh siad in ann a bheith níos dátheangáí.

Aisghaireann 20 GAE 8

Congress Notes

That a lot of work has been done by member organisations who have taken part in the Bonn na Gaeilge scheme to promote Irish in their own colleges.

Congress also notes

That many member organisations have found it difficult to participate in the scheme, especially MOs in the North, and smaller MOs without many resources.

Congress believes

That the promotion of Irish within MOs is extremely important, and that further development should be made to the existing Bonn na Gaeilge scheme to help MOs become more bilingual.

Therefore, Congress mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to further develop the scheme with relevant Irish language organisations, to allow more MOs to participate in it fully. Funding opportunities with relevant bodies should also be researched in order to allow more MOs to engage with the scheme.

Congress also mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to create a resource pack with specific guidelines on how to complete certain actions as outlined in the scheme, so that they can become more bilingual.

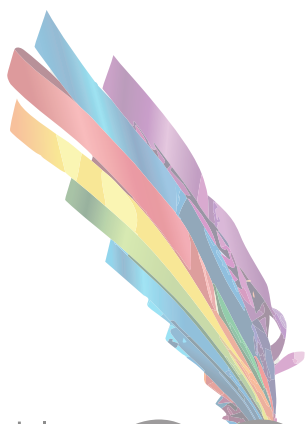
Repeals 20 GAE 8

New policy proposals and ratification of interim policy

Each member organisation may submit up to five motions to Comhdháil, each member of the USI Executive Team may submit up to three motions, and each committee of USI Comhairle Náisiúnta may propose motions too.

If these proposals are approved they will become policy of USI for three years, or until repealed by a future Comhdháil.

Also discussed will be interim policies adopted by the Comhairle Náisiúnta. These will be at the head of each section.



Comhdháil
MMXXIV
25-28 March 2024 | Sligo

USI
Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Welfare Motions

2024 WEL 1 Mandate on the provision and distribution of menstrual products. ***

PROPOSED BY VP WELFARE AND EQUALITY, CMLONG

Comhdháil notes with concern

A person who has a period will on average have 507 periods throughout their lifetime and will spend an average of €8100 in a lifetime on menstrual products.

Comhdháil notes with concern

Students' Unions have quite often borne the financial burden of buying menstrual products for students and distributing these, and that this financial burden disproportionately affects smaller Unions with lesser budgets.

Comhdháil also notes with concern

New menstrual products such as menstrual cups and period underwear are still taxed at a higher rate of 23%, making them less affordable. Period poverty disproportionately affects student groups. The National Strategy for Women and Girls has identified students as an at-risk group of period poverty.

Comhdháil believes

That these products should be provided free of charge as a necessary provision of healthcare for anyone who needs them, and should be widely available across campuses, nationwide.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The Vice President for Welfare and Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to campaign the governments, HSE and NHS for free menstrual products to be provided nationally, North and South of the border.

Comhdháil also mandates

The Vice President for Welfare and Vice President for Equality to collaborate with period product disrupters and key stakeholders to create a streamlined process in which Student Unions can avail of menstrual products at a substantially reduced charge, with focus on supporting smaller unions and unions who do not have a free menstrual product scheme in place yet, but to continue to lobby for products to be available for no charge at all, similar to the free national contraception scheme. The provision of these products should encompass a wide variety of choice.

2024 WEL 2 Student Mental Health Funding Policy ***

PROPOSED BY VICE PRESIDENT FOR WELFARE

Comhdháil Notes

The important role campus counselling services play in the lives of students. On-campus counselling services do trojan work, often without adequate resources.

Comhdháil Believes

That USI has an important role to play in lobbying for additional resources for campus counselling services. There is a need for USI to have a policy regarding the funding of student mental health services so that we can lobby politicians and speak on campus counselling funding in the media. PCHEI, the representative body of Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland has provided invaluable information and support in informing USI's student mental health funding policy.

Comhdháil Mandates

The adoption of the USI Student Mental Health Funding Policy, and that this policy be reviewed by the Vice President for Welfare each year.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The USI Vice President for Welfare to continue to work with PCHEI in the area of student mental health and collaborate on areas of common interest.

2024 WEL 3 Inclusivity of Free Contraceptive Services in Third Level Institutions ***

PROPOSED BY DCU STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil Notes

That the HSE Free contraception service, available for people aged 17 to 31 years, is a massive benefit to students across the Republic of Ireland. This can be of extra benefit to students when these services are offered within their third level institutions health centres. However, the structure of third level institutions' health centres greatly differ from each other. This means that health centres that privately hire in their medical staff from external agencies cannot access the HSE free contraceptive services scheme, which greatly disadvantages the students in these particular third level institutions.

Comhdháil Believes

That all HEIs should have equal access to engage with this scheme. Regardless of health and wellbeing frameworks within the individual HEIs students should be able to access national schemes within their higher education setting.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI VP Welfare to conduct a report on access to the free contraceptive scheme within each HEI and brings the results of this to the attention of the HEA, HSE and government officials when engaging in discussions around sexual health in HEIs.

2024 WEL 4 SUSI Grant Reform 2024 **

PROPOSED BY VICE PRESIDENT FOR WELFARE

Comhdháil Notes

Equity of access to higher education is a core component of USI's work. The USI SUSI policy 2021-2024 has been used to inform our lobbying, particularly our pre-budget submission. However, this policy needs to be updated.

Comhdháil Proposes

The adoption of the USI SUSI Grant Reform Policy 2024. This is an update to our 2021-2024 policy. Policy on thresholds and rates has been clarified. Policy on residence, estrangement, reckonable income, document translation, dependent children and more have been expanded upon. Any outdated policy has been removed.

Comhdháil Further Notes

This policy is not exhaustive and does not preclude additional policies or mandates regarding SUSI from being adopted by Comhdháil/National Council. Of note, there is specific policy coming forward regarding postgraduate SUSI grants as per 2023 WEL 4: Reforming SUSI: Eligibility Criteria for Postgraduates. Out of a desire to avoid policy duplication, postgraduate SUSI grants are not covered within this paper's scope.

Comhdháil Mandates

The adoption of the USI SUSI Grant Reform Policy 2024.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare and the Vice President for Academic Affairs to run a public consultation with students to update USI's SUSI policy each year. This can be via a town hall event, survey, social media, working groups and/or National Council. Based on the consultation, the Vice President for Welfare and the Vice President for Academic Affairs should update USI's SUSI policy.

2024 WEL 5 Men's Health: Movember *

Comhdháil Notes

That many male students experience specific health challenges, which deserve tailored campaigns and advocacy (Men’s Health in Numbers, MHFI). These include but are not limited to late presentation to health services, higher mortality rates, and a higher risk for developing preventable diseases. The Men’s Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a charitable all-Ireland organisation which works to enhance the health and well-being of men and boys. Our engagement in this forum to date has ensured we are up to date on developments that benefit male students.

Comhdháil Further Notes

Many students’ unions across Ireland participate in the annual “Movember” campaign to raise money for charity and promote men’s health. In 2023 USI became involved in the “Movember” campaign and provided support to member organisations for their own “Movember” campaigns, particularly through our “OpenUp” mental health campaign. This has been a positive, fun and engaging way to promote male students’ health, including mental health.

Comhdháil Mandates

For the USI Vice President for Welfare to continue engagement with the Men’s Health Forum Ireland.

Comhdháil Also Mandates

That the USI Coiste Gnó supports the international “Movember” campaign with a focus on both physical and mental health. Specifically, that the Vice President for Welfare and Vice President for Campaigns co-ordinate “Movember” resources with interested member organisations. The required resources are at the discretion of officers and Welfare Working group but could include social media graphics, fake moustaches, cardboard cutouts, competition facilitation, etc. USI should host a planning meeting by early October to establish interest and get sign-ups.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The VP Dublin, the VP South and the VP BMW to reach out to Students’ Unions in their region to provide support for “Movember” campaigns where this is wanted.

2024 WEL 6 The USI X Student Sport Ireland

PROPOSED BY TUS SU

Comhdháil Notes:

The USI are the largest representative body for students in Ireland. College in Ireland is much more than just the academic, Clubs & Socs are a huge part of the college experience. Where the USI has made great strides in representing students involved in societies the same cannot be said for that of clubs.

Comhdháil further notes:

That the governing body for sport in third-level education on the island of Ireland is Student Sport Ireland. SSI works alongside the national sporting bodies as well as international bodies to help provide students with the best access to sports as possible.

Comhdháil Believes:

That the USI should work alongside SSI to promote their activities to all students.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates:

That the VP Welfare develop a relationship and work alongside SSI to give ample student representation for all students on the island of Ireland

Repeal: (2021 UO NC7: Student Sport Ireland)

2024 WEL 7 Problem gambling in students

PROPOSED BY TUS SU

Comhdháil notes:

Ireland is currently in the grips of an unrecognized epidemic, 1 in 10 third-level students in Ireland have a gambling problem and The Irish Institute of Public Health found that adolescent gambling in Ireland is 2-3 times greater than that of adults.

Comhdháil further notes:

Gambling addiction has grown in recent years largely due to the increase in online betting apps, Half of people who bet through their smartphones become problem gamblers, according to a recent University of Galway study. According to the ESRI, 46% of all gambling industry revenue in Ireland comes from people who gamble harmfully or problematically.

Comhdháil notes with regret:

That there has been little to no work or awareness brought to this issue by the Union of Students in Ireland.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

For the VP Welfare & VP Campaigns to run a campaign and work with relevant organizations to highlight the negative impact of gambling and to highlight supports and resources available to those who suffer from gambling addictions through the campaign.

Comhdháil also Mandates:

The regional officers, VP Dublin, VP South, VP BMW to highlight supports around the time of student race days to Member Organizations by offering them information and resources to help students with gambling addictions.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The VP Welfare with the help of VP Campaigns to lobby the government to restrict the use of online gambling apps and reduce the risk of problem gambling in students. The VP Welfare & VP Campaigns at their discretion may liaise with similar organizations to assist in these lobby efforts.

2024 WEL 8 Need for increased supports in HEIs for students who require additional supports (Content Warning)

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil recognises with concern:

A worrying trend exists where diverse backgrounds are targeted solely for recruitment, with promises of tailored support that often vanish once enrolled at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This leads to concerning dropout rates.

Comhdháil expresses with disappointment:

Students facing complex needs, including trauma, experience widespread neglect within HEIs. Examples include denial of counselling access due to perceived complexity.

Comhdháil emphasises:

Urgent action is needed for comprehensive support encompassing childcare, bereavement, disability, mental health, financial hardship, and more within HEIs. Student services must address both academic and personal challenges, with awareness and guidance extended to all.

Comhdháil acknowledges:

Personal challenges like childcare, finances, trauma, and other complex issues significantly impact academic performance, creating undue pressure for vulnerable students.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

The Vice President Welfare is tasked with collaborating with Member Organisations (MOs) to identify and report pressing student concerns across Higher Education Institutions (HEIs),

including personal challenges such as childcare, finances, trauma, and more. The information and data gathered should be formatted into a report that can be utilised both by USI for national lobbying and by USI member organisations for local and institutional lobbying in this area.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The Vice President Welfare develop a comprehensive resource pack offering information on various personal challenges faced by students, including, but not limited to, recognising and managing stress, anxiety, and depression; identifying and dealing with unhealthy relationships; seeking support for mental health concerns; navigating financial difficulties and accessing available resources; managing childcare responsibilities and balancing studies.

2024 WEL 9 Anti-Smoking and Anti-Vaping Policy

PROPOSED BY VP BMW

Comhdháil Notes:

The widespread knowledge of the harms of smoking.

Comhdháil further notes:

While the long-term effects of vaping are not yet known, in the short-term vaping causes inflammation or irritation in the lungs. This is linked to scarring and narrowing of air vessels (Cleveland Clinic, 2024). Additionally, a 2019/20 outbreak of EVALI (e-cigarette, or vaping, product use associated lung injury) killed at least 68 and hospitalised thousands (Cleveland Clinic, 2024).

Comhdháil further notes:

Circa 1 in 5 people under 18 are currently vaping (HSE, 2022). The bright colouring and variety of flavours are particularly marketable to young people.

Comhdháil further notes:

The environmental damage caused by disposable vapes, including lithium entering water tables. Furthermore, there is no standard for the ethical sourcing of lithium.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates:

The VP for Welfare to lobby the HSE and other relevant government parties to maintain their anti-smoking campaigns and to incorporate information on the dangers of vaping.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The VP for Welfare to lobby the Minister for Health and the HSE to ensure vapes are in un-branded packaging with health warning, as cigarettes are already.

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department for the Environment, Climate and Communications for greater recycling facilities for disposable vapes and an accompanying information campaign on the dangers of improper vape disposal.

Union Organisation Motions

2024 UO CN 1 Motion on Cessation of Cooperation with Funders that do not pay Liveable Stipends

Comhdháil Notes:

The USI has collaborated with the Irish Research Council (IRC) since 2020 to run the “Why Research Matters” campaign, asking postgraduate researchers to submit posters and videos of their research for prizes up to €1,600.

Comhairle Náisúinta Further Notes:

The [IRC currently pays](#) their funded PhDs [22 percent below](#) the minimum wage.

Comhairle Náisúinta Believes:

It is disheartening for struggling postgraduate researchers to see their union collaborating with funders that pay them less than a minimum wage.

Comhairle Náisúinta Mandates:

USI should only collaborate with research funding agencies or other research funding bodies for competitions if that research funding agency or body pays their postgraduate researchers at a level equal or higher than the prevailing [living wage](#) and provide sick leave and parental leave to their PhD Researchers.

2024 UO CN 2 Motion on Electoral Reform

Comhdháil welcomes:

The increase in the number of non-sabbatical officers running for election in the last USI election season.

Comhdháil regrets:

The failure of the elections subcommittee to fulfil their duties to produce election regulations [D1.8, USI constitution]. As a result of this, there has been difficulty in ensuring equity in the running of the USI elections, particularly related to the running of unofficial hustings, campaign expenses and the resources available to candidates in contesting elections.

Comhdháil regrets

That these barriers and lack of clarity can prove difficult to overcome for sabbatical officers and students alike, and can be exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, and the access (or lack thereof) to MO resources.

Comhdháil also remarks

That the USI voting system is fragmented. Some unions have a free vote, whereas others have class rep mandates or student body vote mandates. However, the pre-mandated unions often have low turnout, calling into question the democratic legitimacy of the mandates. Similarly, it is clear from election results, that these mandated votes are sometimes not honoured by delegates.

Comhdháil notes:

“Ordinary students” running for election would benefit more from students like themselves getting to directly elect officers, rather than student union officers and class reps and PTOs, and this would also increase democratic participation in the USI and therefore mobilising capacity.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The USI President to commission a report into the running of the USI elections, including on hustings, equity and “ordinary” student participation and any financial barriers to the latter. The report should include recommendations related to how to ensure the fair and equitable running of elections. The Coisto Gno, as part of this, should also look into the feasibility of adopting universal direct election, specifically by considering the options listed within the strategy document presented to National Council on the 8th and Friday the 9th of December

2022, and any options outside of that it deems suitable.

2024 UO CN 3 Motion on Black History Month

Comhdháil notes

Black History Month began as a way of remembering important people and events in the history of the African and Caribbean diaspora, and is now globally celebrating Black excellence, the importance of remembering, uplifting and empowering an entire group of young activists.

Comhdháil further notes

The importance of recognising and celebrating Black History Month, given the significant lack of participation within student politics of black students, which invariably results in them feeling underrepresented.

Comhdháil applauds

The success of Pink Training, Women Lead and EMPower, amongst others, in encouraging and promoting a diverse range of students to run for leadership and representation roles.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The VP for Equality And Citizenship to run an annual Black History Month campaign during the month of February, with the dual goal of celebrating African culture, as well as encouraging black students to take up leadership roles in their institutions, community & professional lives.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The VP for Equality And Citizenship to ensure that the campaign is organised in partnership with black students and Officers, that it includes various external speakers/bodies, and is tailored to its respective target audience.

2024 UO CN 4 Motion on PTO engagement

Comhdháil notes:

That part-time officers form an integral part of the work done by member organisations and by USI.

Comhdháil acknowledges:

That USI have a number of channels used to communicate with Union sabbatical officers such as mailing lists, working groups, newsletters and direct communication from the Coiste Gnó. This communication is necessary to ensure cooperation between USI and MOs, and subsequently proper connection with the wider student populations and members of USI.

Comhdháil believes:

That efforts to engage the student population should first start with ensuring engagement, communication and interaction with Union Executive officers, and that for training to be useful and enriching for part-time officers there has to be acknowledgement of the difference in roles and responsibilities for different PTOs where for example an academic affairs convenor and a sustainability officer have completely different responsibilities and experiences and would subsequently solely benefit from more specialized training.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

The USI regional officers to work to create and regularly update email list for PTOs across regions that could be used to communicate information about USI campaigns, Comhairle Náisúnta and provide a way for the USI Coiste Gnó to engage with PTOs separate to the more detailed and extensive communication that would be sent to full-time officers.

Comhdháil further mandates:

That the regional officers work to facilitate training for PTO officers that is remit and role-based rather than region based prior to the start of the academic year in September, this would include working with other members of the Coiste Gnó to deliver sessions across a number of areas as well as general introductory session(s) that PTOs could pick and choose which to attend based on their role.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó establishes each year a space for PTOs across regions to communicate with each other, this platform can vary from term to term but should be established with consultation from PTOs and what would suit them best.

2024 UO CN 5 Motion on Support of UCU and IFUT Industrial Action

Comhdháil notes

The effect the cost of living crisis is having on workers in the Higher Education sector in Ireland.

Comhdháil Further Notes

That working conditions in HE are the learning conditions for our members.

Comhdháil Further Notes

The steps teaching unions for third level have taken towards industrial action.

An Comhdháil Further Resolves

To publicly support industrial action taken by members of the UCU and IFUT in the Higher Education sector to improve their pay and conditions and engage with IFUT in how best USI can support their actions.

To this affect Comhdháil Mandates

That the Coiste Gnó release a public statement in support of the UCU Rising campaign and any industrial actions of theirs or IFUT's members.

USI should also promote and encourage MOs to engage with their local IFUT branches and promote links in the common issues their respective members face.

2024 UO 1 4 Day Work Week **

PROPOSED BY THE DUBLIN REGIONAL OFFICER

Comhdháil Notes

4 day working weeks have been implemented around the world including Panasonic, Bolt and Kickstarter and has seen massive improvements to employees mental and physical health.

Comhdháil Also Notes

The benefits of a 4 day work week could improve productivity and moral in the student movement and could see less officer burnout.

Comhdháil Further Notes

As a national representation and a union we should lead the charge on this issue and show the benefits of a 4 day work week and how it would effect the work of the national student movement.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI President to formulate a feasibility report on the benefits of a 4 day work week and how it could be implemented for the Coiste Gnó at the December Comhairle Náisiúnta 2024.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

If the report is approved and has a positive reaction, and would show tangible results without effecting the work of the Coiste Gnó on a weekly basis, the 4 day work week shall be implemented on a trial basis beginning January 2025 leading up to Comhdháil 2025.

Comhdháil Also Mandates

The president to present a policy paper on the topic of a 4 day work week and how the trial went at Comhdháil 2025. If approved the USI shall adopt a 4 day work week permanently from July 2025.

MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil notes:

That accountability functions should be at the core of the work done by a Union, and that the opportunity for member organizations to hold officers accountable should extend beyond officer reports, which realistically serve solely as an overview of past work, to include more comprehensive reporting and questioning functions and include on-going feedback processes.

Comhdháil believes:

That USI should strive to question where there are areas for improvement and whether the Union is providing adequate representation, support and resources for member organisations and that MOs, alongside their members, are satisfied with the efforts of USI.

Comhdháil acknowledges:

Consistent Union accountability and high MO satisfaction can be difficult to maintain with different MO officers and different Coiste Gnó officers coming into office each year and consistent changes in campaigns, work and organizational culture. Despite this, USI should strive for a level of consistency in the quality of its work.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

The USI President ensures an external review of USI's accountability processes is carried out, this review should focus on whether or not the accountability structures of USI are comprehensive enough, whether they are adequate in ensuring that the USI Coiste Gnó's is held to account on their work, and that there is an appropriate level of active participation in accountability processes from MO officers.

Comhdháil further mandates:

That the USI President holds a quarterly (twice per term of office) satisfaction consultation sitting of the Presidents' Working Group that would allow the Presidents of member organisations to give feedback on and highlight areas for improvement on the Coiste Gnó's projects, campaigns, and upcoming plans. Additionally, member organization Presidents can offer insights into their Union's satisfaction levels concerning various aspects of the Union's work, and express preferences regarding what should be prioritised in the Union's future work.

Comhdháil further mandates:

That in conjunction, the Coiste Gnó create and disseminate an anonymized satisfaction and accountability survey (at the start of the academic year and the beginning of the new calendar year) to officers and student representatives from MOs, allowing them to give feedback across different areas of USI operations. This should give a broader idea of members' perspectives and views that can give context to USI's work going forward and develop the accountability function to go beyond work that has been done so far and look at what should be reformed, prioritized and focused on in the future.

Both the results of the survey and feedback from the consultation sitting should be consolidated and drawn up into summary reports that should be completed and presented to Comhairle Náisiúnta no later than the first Comhairle Náisiúnta in each academic term. The content of these reports should inform the Coiste Gnó's on-going work and decisions for a given quarter.

Amendment

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

To end of motion add:

Comhdháil Repeals:

UO 18 (NC) USI Accountability

PROPOSED BY THE VP FOR CAMPAIGNS

Comhdháil commends

The invaluable work of grassroots-level organizing facilitated by various unions in Ireland and internationally to build strategic and strong campaigns.

Comhdháil further notes

That grassroots organizing within the context of the student movement refers to a bottom-up approach to mobilization and advocacy, where the initiative for change originates from individual students or small groups rather than being imposed by top-down structures such as university administrations or external political organizations.

Comhdháil believes

That this approach to organizing has the input of students at the center of it, provides an opportunity for students to be involved in the planning stages of campaigning, and is characterized by its flexibility and ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The VP for Campaigns, where practicable, facilitate town hall-style meetings, activist training, organizers' assemblies and establish networks with students who wish to contribute to the organizing of the union on a certain issue.

Comhdháil further mandates

The VP for Campaigns to work with existing and up-and-coming grassroots groups such as Students4Change, BDS branches in HEIs, community action unions, and renters' unions to support their work and mobilize students for their initiatives where in alignment with USI policy.

2024 UO 4 VP Regional Bonding trips *

PROPOSED BY USI PRESIDENT

Comhdháil notes,

The removal of the Regional bonding days in the Constitution.

Comhdháil believes

Regional Bonding trips are a vital part of the networking system within USI and should still be implemented.

Comhdháil Mandates,

The Regional VPs to organize a bonding trip for the MO's in their specific region once a year before the commencement of the academic year where possible.

2024 UO 5 USI Service Provision *

PROPOSED BY USI PRESIDENT

Comhdháil notes,

USI has access to all affiliated MO's throughout the country and can be utilized as an access point for national businesses across the country. This service could be provided to give students of affiliated colleges throughout the country potential deals, access to services they may not have known about otherwise.

Comhdháil Mandates

Coiste Gnó to look at specific partnerships and affiliations that can support local MO's.

Amendment

PROPOSED BY THE USI PRESIDENT

Replace all clauses as below**Comhdháil notes,**

USI has access to all affiliated MO's throughout the country and USI can enable MO's to avail of services that businesses across the country provide. This service could be provided to give students at affiliated colleges throughout the country potential deals, access to services they may not have known about otherwise.

Comhdháil Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to:

- Identify companies and organisations that align with the values of USI

- ▶ Establish strategic partnerships and affiliations with these companies to provide exclusive benefits, discounts, and resources to member organizations.
- ▶ Ensure transparency and accountability in all company affiliations, with clear guidelines in place to safeguard the interests of member organizations and uphold ethical standards.
- ▶ Promotion and Communication:
 - ▶ Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to promote the newly expanded service provisions and company affiliations to member organizations.
 - ▶ Utilize various channels, including social media, newsletters, and direct communication, to raise awareness and encourage member organizations to take advantage of these offerings.
- ▶ Evaluation and Feedback:
 - ▶ Implement regular evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the expanded service provisions and company affiliations.
 - ▶ Solicit feedback from member organizations to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments to better meet their needs.

2024 UO 6 Research and Data Collection Training at USI provided Students' Union Training *

PROPOSED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR CAMPAIGNS

Comhdháil recognizes

The value brought by modern research tools that could be incorporated into the campaigning and lobbying efforts of student representatives.

Comhdháil notes

That data collection is a skill that assists building strategic and targeted campaigns, and that there is a multitude of mechanism for collecting data to supplement campaigning efforts.

Comhdháil further notes

That modern democratic tools for data collection such as Freedom of Information requests and other means of requesting information are governed by laws and rules that require technical knowledge to be effectively used.

Comhdháil recognizes

The legal and ethical considerations that must be considered when conducting primary research including surveys, questionnaires, and other means of collecting direct accounts from participants.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The President to ensure the provision of a session during Students' Union Training, organized annually by USI, that covers direct data collection methodologies (e.g. FOI Requests), for the purposes of campaigning and lobbying.

2024 UO 7 USI Website Review and Reform

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil notes:

That the USI website currently has an unfriendly and inaccessible user interface, layout and design and isn't mobile responsive. Containing a multitude of dead links, outdated information and articles and issues across different areas.

Comhdháil believes:

That communications and engagement systems are incredibly important in the work of USI, and that a website serves as a central location for members or people interested in the Union to go looking for necessary information, resources and reports.

Comhdháil acknowledges:

That there are many important things USI does, and a system such as the website might not traditionally be prioritized among other areas and aspects of the Union's work – but despite this, the fact the website's design, functionality and content actively impedes users engagement with USI as an organisation and stops them from accessing critical information or services is to the severe detriment of USI's functions across different areas.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

The USI President ensures the consistent review and update of the USI website's content, usability and interface is carried out quarterly. Review and updates should occur consistently across a given year, and a reporting feature independent of the site should be created and disseminated to member organisations to report issues and outdated aspects of the website.

Academic Affairs Motions

2024 AA CN 1 Motion on Proctorio

Comhdháil notes:

Proctorio is an example of online proctoring software. The primary function of software like this is to police academic performance by monitoring academic integrity during online examinations.

Comhdháil also notes:

This technology has raised considerable concerns amongst the third-level education community worldwide, and that across the world, students, staff and institutions have decided against Proctorio due to how problematic it is, like the University of California, Berkeley.

Comhdháil is concerned:

There are serious concerns about welfare, privacy, accessibility and bias that may result from the Proctorio-required recordings, including recordings of a student's home environment, image, audio, and computer screen while they are taking the exam. Discriminating factors with software like Proctorio include economical, gender, culture, race and disability status.

Comhdháil notes with great concern:

- It is biased against certain skin colours. It has been reported that it struggles to recognize people of colour.
- The scanning of a student's room and the collecting of information about a student's home environment as a breach of privacy. Students become vulnerable by showing their homes to unconscious or conscious bias and future discrimination, bullying or even harassment. An examiner viewing a student's personal living space and living condition, decorations/posters, and potential iconography is unacceptable.
- The detection system for flagging alleged academic dishonesty is unreliable and discriminates against living conditions. For example, if a student lives in a shared arrangement, and there are multiple people in the room, or noises are heard due to overcrowded apartments, this will trigger the system.
- Acquiring the right infrastructure, including affording a private room, a computer, web-camera and microphone and stable internet at home is stressful and expensive for audio and visual proctoring.
- Students with caring duties might find it difficult to find someone to take care of their

children while they are sitting an exam or making clear that they are under no circumstance be disturbed which induces anxiety.

- Being monitored in this way places extraordinary stress on students, at a time when young people’s mental health is in crisis worldwide, and this may affect academic performance as well as general welfare.

Comhdháil regrets:

That some universities, like Trinity College Dublin, have tried to implement Proctorio in certain faculties, as well as that individual lecturers are requiring the use of this software.

Comhdháil further notes:

The opposition of student unions to visual and audio proctoring for exams, and the need for the USI to support student unions in this and the use of Universal Design for Learning approaches to assessment.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

USI to adopt a stance against the use of visual and audio proctoring of exams by third-level institutions in Ireland. That the USI VP for Academic Affairs and President to support MO’s whose institutions are under threat of the implementation of such proctoring within their assessment schedule.

2024 AA CN 2 Motion to Cut Ties with University Rankings

Comhdháil praises:

In recent times, Utrecht University, a member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU), made the commendable decision to opt out of the Times Higher Education World University Ranking for 2024.

Comhdháil understands:

This decision was taken because Utrecht University prioritizes collaboration and open science, while university rankings often emphasize competition, which is in contrast to their values. Concerns were also raised regarding the one-sidedness and methodological practices of university rankings in general. It was also mentioned that they are ceasing the approach of using impact factors in research assessment, instead aligning with a commitment to open science and responsible research evaluation, and the national and international movement behind it.

Comhdháil praises:

The efforts of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (COARA), which Utrecht University is a member of, and its strategy to reduce reliance on rankings.

Comhdháil further understands:

That university rankings perpetuate social exclusion and promote a managerial approach that relies on numbers rather than holistic education. The corporate ethos present in these rankings pushes for the neoliberalization of our institutions, fostering a world of unequal opportunities and elitism.

Comhdháil also understands:

That university rankings can reflect colonial legacies, favoring former colonial powers and perpetuating inequalities in higher education. This inherently biased system influences the desirability of alumni within the job market and pits institutions against one another without considering the local context or individual countries’ unique needs.

Comhdháil is specifically concerned:

Numerous Western universities were built and rose to prominence on the back of slavery and the profits extracted therein. University rankings represent a form of intellectual imperialism, a “captive mind” in which universities outside of the Western world are forced to conform to Western corporatized ideas of what a university is and conform to the worldwide market of universities that is embodied by the idea of competitive university rankings. The requirement to conform to a paradigm stands at odds with the needs of local contexts and

individual countries, as well as to the principles of academic freedom, and represents neo-colonial encroachment by Western institutions on universities in postcolonial countries. The rankings force universities worldwide to conform to a prescribed framework, irrespective of their unique purpose or context. This, in turn, places pressure on universities to participate in the global knowledge production business, publish research in international journals (often inaccessible to the local population), and invest in endeavors far removed from the needs of their local societies

Comhdháil notes:

It is time for Irish universities to re-evaluate their participation in university rankings.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

That the USI VP for Campaigns and VP For Education and President write to all third-level institution presidents asking them to re-evaluate their participation in the university rankings system.

2024 AA CN 3 Motion on eBook licensing

Comhdháil states

The USI is concerned at the state of the e-book publishing and licensing scene. The multinational companies that have monopolized the market have hiked license fees, draining the taxpayer, our libraries and our institutions out of money, while leaving authors out of pocket. There are also severe restrictions on what libraries can do with e-books once purchased, such as simultaneous viewing limitations. Arbitrary limitations, sudden price increases and lack of access - our libraries are being held hostage by publishers.

Libraries cannot buy eBooks and eAudiobooks, they can only licence them. This means they have to accept the restrictions that publishers place on these items, something they do not have to do with print books.

Not all publishers make eBooks available for licensing to libraries. Unlike with print, parts of the universe of eBooks are off limits to libraries, through the decision of private companies. This situation does not exist with print as the copyright framework, through the first sale doctrine and its equivalents, enables libraries to buy whatever books they want. As libraries are no longer free to buy whatever they choose, collection development is impacted upon leading to a dearth of content in non-English languages, or titles for specific user groups.

The #ebooksos campaign has highlighted the unfair practices of publishing companies. The campaign that was originally started in the United Kingdom has reached Ireland and has resonated across the world with libraries. Knowledge should be accessible, but increasingly it has been turned into a commodity. For example, textbooks that cost “£44 for a print copy are £423 for a single e-book user and £500 for three users”. This is a ridiculous situation which shows that regulation is needed in the industry. By August 2023, more than 5,000 people, students and academics, have signed the open letter put forward by the #ebooksos campaign, including the Library Association of Ireland.

Last year, higher education and public libraries spent in excess of €3 million on ebooks.

Librarians in Ireland have demonstrated that some high-profile e-books are twenty times more expensive than their print equivalent, and a price differential of three to ten times is quite typical.. As well as this, in Ireland too terms and conditions attached to the e-books purchased by libraries can be Kafkesque.. related to this issue is the academic publishers - students know all too well the issue of when writing an assignment and being hit with a paywall and lack of institutional access. As a result, and in recognition of this situation, many student unions, such as Trinity College Dublin Students' Union have motions in support of open access. The situation is one in which neither libraries, authors nor students and institutions and their researchers come out positively. The taxpayer, and the government, is also held hostage to the whims of big publishing companies, and the subsidization to keep our libraries afloat in light of extortionate publisher pricing is a big burden on the exchequer.

Comhdháil endorses

The demands of the Library Association of Ireland, specifically:

- ▶ Significant reductions in annual database, journal subscription and open access costs, not increases or price freezes to recognise the reality of library budgets.
- ▶ Increased transparency and sustainability in ebook costs and licensing. In public

libraries, the average cost of an ebook is three times the cost of a print book, with far greater restrictions on how it can be used. In academic libraries the situation is even worse – academic ebook costs can often be ten times as much as for the same paper book. Price rises are common, sudden and appear arbitrary. The CIAEM cites examples of well-known publishers increasing costs for a single-user ebook by 200% or more with no warning in 2020.

- ▶ A deep discount on ebooks and e-textbooks where their print equivalents have been purchased in recent years. Instead at present ebooks are almost always more expensive, and frequently significantly and prohibitively so.
- ▶ Publishers to make all currently available and forthcoming books and textbooks available in accessible electronic format to libraries. At present approximately 20% of titles are available in e-format but this is much lower in certain disciplines. In some cases, a book is available as an ebook to an individual to purchase, but not available to a library to purchase.
- ▶ More flexibility in content selection to allow libraries to disaggregate collections.
- ▶ Ending ‘exploding licences’ – time-based licences that force books to be deleted from collections after a certain period of time.
- ▶ More government support for the creation and use of Open Education Resources (OER) and the associated curation infrastructure to ensure sustainable access.
- ▶ Copyright law reform to:
 - ▶ Remove the requirement for libraries to purchase versions of ebooks licensed specifically for library use which are subject to the aforementioned pricing and licensing obstacles.
 - ▶ Allow libraries to scan whole books they own in print where ebooks are unavailable or unaffordable for preservation and for controlled access to support research and learning.

2024 AA 1 Rethinking Assessment ***

PROPOSED BY: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil notes:

Traditional means of assessment are not always fit for purpose or reflective of the challenges that will be posed to students post-graduation in the working environment.

Comhdháil further notes:

Stress, burnout, and other mental health concerns are readily linked to the continuous use of traditional forms of assessment, particularly where the outcome does not match the effort needed.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

USI to support assessment reform initiatives throughout the sector, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to review mainstream assessment modes and advocate for the repurposing of assessment modes to ensure inter-sectional assessment with a focus on the constant adaptability of such modes to be reflective of the challenges of the modern day and the needs of students.

Comhdháil further mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Vice President for Postgraduate to emphasize, through their advocacy for assessment reform, the need for due consideration of the need of all students for accessible assessment.

2024 AA 2 Hidden Costs Support and Transparency **

PROPOSED BY ACADEMIC AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil notes:

That many students are required to pay additional costs, on top of the student contribution/ tuition fee. This includes but is not limited to materials charges, field trips, uniform costs, software costs, and medical costs. These can range from 10s to 1000s of euros/pounds.

Comhdháil further notes:

In many cases, there is limited, or no information provided to students in advance of enrol-

ment on the additional costs that they will be required to pay throughout the course of their studies, especially when specific paid software is used for teaching, but not made available for students. These costs are also often not covered by grants made available to students, such as SUSI.

Comhdháil further notes:

That these materials may sometimes be made available on devices owned by the HEI (for example, in computer labs), but not for use on students' personal devices.

Comhdháil believes:

That this is not an acceptable solution, especially for students who may have long commutes, who must work part time, or students with disabilities. These spaces are often also being used close to capacity, meaning that students have a very limited window in which to use them outside of class hours.

Comhdháil further believes:

Hidden additional costs serve as a further reminder of the marketized Higher Education system that students across the island are being subjected to, and may further inhibit students from progressing in their education particularly where these costs are mandatory.

Comhdháil mandates:

The USI President and Vice President for Academic Affairs engage with key stakeholders, including the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, to require institutions to provide full transparency of all additional costs within their institutions to prospective students.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The USI President and Vice President for Academic Affairs engage with key stakeholders, including the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, to provide adequate funding to institutions so that these costs do not need to be levied on students.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The USI Coiste Gnó to support MOs in raising awareness of additional course costs within their colleges, and in lobbying for the reduction or abolishment of all additional costs. The USI Coiste Gnó to support NUS-USI members in ensuring that institutions in the North continue to comply with CMA requirements around the publication of additional costs.

Comhdháil Repeals: 2021 AA 1: Hidden Course Costs

2024 AA 3 Student Survey Boycott and Reform **

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil notes:

That [Studentsurvey.ie](https://studentsurvey.ie) is an organisation and survey that gathers data on students' experiences of higher education across a number of areas. Having operated for 6 years, the survey utilises connections with HEI faculty and students' unions in order to carry out and promote the survey on a yearly basis, creating a set of recommendations for each institution that are then put forward to senior staff in institutions.

Comhdháil further notes:

That the survey more recently has been momentarily stopped due to a level of pushback from Students' Unions such as TCDSU and MSU, which both passed student survey boycott motions.

Comhdháil believes:

That student survey is a corporatised organisation that doesn't actively contribute to en-mass positive reform and change in HEIs that benefits the students, many USI MOs have put in countless hours of work in promoting the survey in return for increasingly low amounts of actual results and action from their institutions. The equivalent, the National Student Survey is boycotted in the U.K. by the NUS for similar reasons.

Comhdháil mandates:

That USI boycott student survey until which point that the survey takes a student-centric, holistic and structured approach to their process, acknowledging the influencing factors in the higher education landscape such as lack of funding, precarious tutor and teaching contracts, student exploitation, and treating students not as consumers but as the most integral part of higher education, as community members and as partners in their work.

Comhdháil further mandates:

That the VP Academic Affairs ensures that reforms to StudentSurvey.ie as an organisation and as a survey should be done with comprehensive consultation with member organisations and USI and that structurally, the survey’s reform moves to prevent inordinate exploitation of students’ union resources in StudentSurvey processes, to implement systems that puts pressure/must reform, and that the survey focuses not on ‘the amount of time and effort that students put into meaningful and purposeful educational activities, and the extent to which institutions provide such opportunities and encourage students to engage with them’ (StudentSurvey.ie website) and instead on teaching quality, student welfare, quality assurance processes, staff working conditions, socio-economic impacts of access on education and student wellbeing.

COMHHDHÁIL FURTHER MANDATES:

That the VP Academic Affairs lobbies StudentSurvey.ie to include as part of their system, if it is reformed and relaunched in the future, a need for on-going active commitments from HEIs in regards to implementation of survey recommendations, comprehensive and structured processes in the consideration of survey results and mandatory resource and promotion allocation from participating institutions.

2024 AA 4 North South Mobility Education Entry for Students *

PROPOSED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Comhdháil Notes:

Students both north and south lack information on how to pursue further and higher education outside of their jurisdictions. Students in the Republic of Ireland are unfamiliar with UCAS and writing personal statements, and students in the North find the CAO challenging.

Comhdháil Regrets:

There is a lack of accessible information available to students on how to study over the border.

Comhdháil Further Regrets:

The difficulties of grade requirements faced by students in the north when applying for the CAO with their A levels which act as a barrier to students’ mobility.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Vice President of Academic Affairs with the help of the Coiste Gnó to liaise with NUS-USI, the Irish Second-level Students’ Union (ISSU) and the Secondary Students’ Union of North Ireland (SSUNI) to push for better information and resources to allow for north-south mobility for all students. USI will also reach out to Universities Ireland on this.

2024 AA 5 Apprenticeship Representation in Ireland *

PROPOSED BY VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Comhdháil Recognises:

The Department of Further, Higher, Education Science, Innovation & Research has created more apprenticeships across many fields throughout the country.

Comhdháil Welcomes:

Apprenticeships as a means of education, allowing for more people to become learners in a way that best supports them.

Comhdháil Notes:

Currently apprentices have no representative body to protect and advocate for better conditions and further their rights as learners. Currently, there is no democratically elected voice for apprentices in the South of Ireland, this is fulfilled in the North of Ireland by the National

Society of Apprentices (NSoA)

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs with the in assistance of the Coiste Gnó to pursue an appropriate representative structure for apprentices. The VP for Academic Affairs will liaise with apprentices and appropriate bodies. They will also ensure democracy is at the core of this structure.

2024 AA 6 State Supports for Students Fleeing Conflict Zones *

PROPOSED BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT FOR CAMPAIGNS

Comhdháil Notes

That in most cases where students fleeing conflict zones arrive in Ireland and subsequently wish to continue their education, such cases are dealt with on a case-to-case basis in the absence of a national policy to inform the approach taken when such cases arise.

Comhdháil further notes

That specific conflicts where EU policy informs the approach taken by third-level education actors in respect of students displaced from those conflicts, there remains a need for a national policy for such cases, and current schemes for the enrolment of students in such cases do not cater to those with dual-citizenship that have not lived in EU/EEA States long enough to satisfy the residency requirement associated with the 'free-fees initiative' but have been forced to return to Ireland as a result of conflict in their country of residence.

Comhdháil notes with concern

The increasing impact of global conflicts on education, often seeing higher education institutions being partially or completely destroyed

Comhdháil believes

That all students fleeing conflict zones that have been granted international protection in Ireland, or in the case of those holding a dual-citizenship, have returned to Ireland, must be supported by the State in continuing their education in Ireland.

Comhdháil further believes

That students in such situations often have gone through a traumatic experience leaving considerations like tuition fees, making available official documentation and finding student accommodation to be extremely burdensome to resolve.

Comhdháil commends

The various institutions, individuals and groups that have supported the enrolment of students in such situations in Irish HEIs.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The VP Academic Affairs and the VP Campaigns to lobby the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, the Irish University Association, the Technological Higher Education Association, and Universities Ireland to produce a policy for the supported enrolment of students that have fled conflict zones and sought refuge in Ireland whether they wish to commence or continue third-level education in Ireland.

Comhdháil further mandates

The VP Academic Affairs and the VP Campaigns to highlight the need for such policy to mitigate issues including but not limited to: fee status, student supports, financial support, measures to ease integration of the students into HEIs and the inability of students to produce official documentation from their home institutions.

2024 AA 7 NStEP Oversight and Engagement *

PROPOSED BY VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Comhdháil Notes: The National Student Engagement Programme [NStEP], which was officially launched in 2016 as a joint initiative between USI, the Higher Education Authority [HEA] and Quality and Qualifications Ireland [QQI], to embed student engagement practice through championing meaningful staff-student partnerships in Irish Higher Education In-

stitutions. The work that has been undertaken so far through the NStEP programme including the roll-out of the class rep training programme, and the creation of National Projects, focused on specific areas within student engagement in Higher Education.

Comhdháil Believes: The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) is a valuable programme which assists Member Organisations greatly with the training of class representatives and can remove some pressure from SU officers.

Comhdháil Notes with Interest: USI assisted in spearheading NStEP's foundation and implementation to ensure class representatives are trained in areas such as representation, governance and signposting.

Comhdháil Mandates: The VP for Academic Affairs to ensure a strong relationship with the NStEP Programme Manager and their team- this should include regular communication, updates and quarterly meetings. This will be to ensure the contents and materials that NStEP produces are student centric, accessible and encourage class representatives to take part in student democracy.

Comhdháil Further Mandates: The VP for Academic Affairs to ensure the continued funding of NStEP to benefit class representatives for years to come by keeping in regular contact with the HEA and QQI.

Repeal: 20 AA 08

2024 AA 8 Accreditation for Participation

PROPOSED BY DCU STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil recognises:

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

Comhdháil further recognises:

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

Comhdháil notes:

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

Comhdháil Believes:

That involvement in these activities presents benefits for students both inside and outside of formal teaching, and that this should be reflected in the formal awards conferred on students.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs to research best practice across Higher Education Institutions in this area, both nationally and internationally, with a view to developing USI policy on Accreditation for Participation which may be presented to the appropriate bodies in HEIs by Students' Unions who wish to do so. This should include where participation in these activities can result in ECTS credits being awarded to students.

Comhdháil Repeals:

20 AA (NC) 2: Accreditation for Participation

2018 AA 4: Accreditation for Volunteering & Participation

Gaeilge Motions

2024 GAE 1 Bunú Ról Oifigeach Gaeilge **

GRÚPA OIBRE NA GAEILGE / GAEILGE WORKING GROUP

LUANN AN CHOMHDHÁIL: Go bhfuil sé de dhualgas ar an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn, agus go mbeadh an Ghaeilge níos lárnaí i saol na hOllscoile do gach mac léinn.

COMHDHÁIL NOTES: The responsibility of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge is to promote Irish, and that Irish will be more central in University life for students.

TUGANN AN CHOMHDHÁIL FAOI DEARA FREISIN: Níl ach beirt Leas-Uachtarán le Gaeilge Lánaimseartha lasmuigh d'Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn; Comhaltas na Mac Léinn Ollscoil na Gaillimhe ó 2022 agus Aontas na Mac Léinn, Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath ó 2024. Léiríonn an bheirt seo go bhfuil suim ag mic léinn sa Ghaeilge.

COMHDHÁIL NOTES: There are only 2 other full-time Leas-Uachtarán's don Ghaeilge outside of the Union of Students in Ireland; Comhaltas na Mac Léinn, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe from 2022 and Trinity College Dublin Students' Union from 2024. These 2 show that there is an interest in Irish.

MAR SIN, ORDAÍONN AN CHOMHDHÁIL: Go bhfuil sé de dhualgas ar Leas-Uachtarán Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn oibriú le MOs nach bhfuil oifigigh Ghaeilge lán-aimseartha acu chun ról an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge a bhunú, agus do na MOs nach bhfuil oifigeach Gaeilge ar bith acu Oifigeach Ghaeilge a bhunú.

THEREFORE, COMHDHÁIL MANDATES: That it is the responsibility of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to work with MOs that don't have a full time Irish language officer to develop a full time role, and for MOs that don't currently have an Irish Language Officer to develop an Irish Language Officer's role.

2024 GAE 2 Providing Irish Language Lessons for Student Union Officers **

LEAS UACHTARÁN DON GHAEILGE

Comhdháil Notes:

The Irish language is an integral part of Ireland's cultural heritage and national identity. Promoting the use and appreciation of the Irish language is essential for preserving and celebrating Ireland's linguistic diversity.

Comhdháil further notes:

Student Union officers play a crucial role in representing and advocating for the interests of all students, including those who speak Irish as their first language or wish to engage with the union throughout Irish. Equipping student union officers with proficiency in the Irish language will enhance their ability to communicate effectively with Irish-speaking students, understand their needs, and promote inclusivity within the student body.

Comhdháil believes:

Offering Irish language lessons to student union officers demonstrates a commitment to linguistic diversity, cultural awareness, and the promotion of bilingualism in higher education institutions.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to research into getting Irish Language Classes for members of the Coiste Gnó who wish to avail of them and to share information about language classes with Member Organisations.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to work with the Coiste Gnó and local Unions to research into getting Irish Language classes in their college/region for those who wish avail of them.

2024 GAE 3 Recognition of Irish Language Proficiency

LEAS UACHTARÁN DON GHAEILGE

Comhdháil notes:

Proficiency in the Irish language is an asset that enhances individuals' employability, academic credentials, and professional opportunities.

Comhdháil further notes:

The Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) (European Certificate in Irish) and other equivalent qualifications serve as internationally recognized certifications of Irish language proficiency.

Comhdháil mandates:

The Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to lobby the relevant authorities, such as the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to acknowledge and value the importance of Irish language proficiency by considering it as a valuable asset in academic evaluations through official certifications and qualifications, such as the Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) (European Certificate in Irish) or equivalent qualifications and to invest in initiatives aimed at promoting the use of the Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) (European Certificate in Irish) or equivalent qualifications within third-level assessments.

Comhdháil further mandates:

The Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to work with the NUS-USI President to look at the further expansion of Teastas Eorpach na Gaeilge (TEG) (European Certificate in Irish) exams to the NUS-USI region.

National Affairs Motions

2024 NA CN 1 Motion on Housing Affordability Definition

Comhdháil believes:

Projects funded through capital grants to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), on the premise of affordability, lack clarity on the condition of 'affordability,' leading to potential inconsistencies and the misuse of State funds when such projects do not satisfy their purpose of providing affordable Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA).

Comhdháil is concerned:

That the undefined nature of the affordability condition poses a risk to student renters, and for it to be effective, there is a need for a clear definition, including a reference to a specific price ceiling that is enforced on those projects.

Comhdháil believes:

USI advocates for outlining affordability terms as a percentage of the minimum wage, until the living wage replaces it, taking into consideration students' part-time employment and realistic income levels.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

That while in the maximalist demand housing should be free, affordability should be defined by the USI in the minimalist demand as the monthly rent being up to 30% of a monthly national minimum wage net income, for both private and public purpose-built student accommodation.

Comhdháil also mandates:

That this definition of affordable housing be used not just for purpose-built student accommodation but for all housing by the USI, and that the USI holds the government accountable using this definition, while ultimately campaigning for free housing.

2024 NA CN 2 Motion on Legalisation of Drugs

Comhdháil respects

That decriminalisation of drugs is a step in the right direction, but considering the benefits of a legalised approach, this only presents as a compromise.

Comhdháil worries

That only Cannabis would be decriminalised, without the implementation of country-wide, easy access drug identification & testing centres or harm reduction campaigns. Some politicians & TDs may use this as a sign that they are "progressive" for their own personal gain, all the while disregarding the people who are directly impacted by the prohibition and war on drugs. Regardless, real-life examples of decriminalisation should be enough proof to start changing our drug policies, such as the case with Portugal with drug overdoses and imprisonment cases.

Comhdháil recognises

That the legalisation of drugs allows for a completely regulated market that has oversight by the Government and its Departments. The benefits of this could be, but is not limited to:

- ▶ Reduction in crime, corruption and funding of criminal organisations.
- ▶ Access to safe drugs that are not contaminated or laced with other substances such
 - ▶ as Fentanyl.
- ▶ Access to drugs with a labelled degree of strength/potency.
- ▶ Access to drugs for medical use.
- ▶ Access to better education and harm reduction services for all people who use drugs.
- ▶ Supporting local businesses, farmers and other establishments with a local production & supply of drugs (such as the case with Peru and Bolivia's Coca industry).
- ▶ Tax revenue that can be directed towards drug treatment services, education and harm reduction.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The Coiste Gnó to lobby the government for the legalisation of drugs.

Comhdháil further mandates

The VP for Welfare and the VP for Campaigns to organise and hold campaigns lobbying for the legalisation of drugs and make submissions on relevant consultations.

This should include work with NGOs in this area, specifically including writing legislation and working on organisations on informational campaigns.

2024 NA CN 3 Motion on Fair Pay for Fair Work

Comhdháil notes

- ▶ That many working students under the age of 20 are paid less than the current National Minimum Wage, which for young people under 18 years old is only €7.91 in the south of Ireland and as low as £4.81 in the north of Ireland.
- ▶ That the youth committees of Mandate TU, UNITE the Union, and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions established a campaign addressing this on the evening of Monday 29th May, with the intention of gaining support from like-minded bodies such as USI-AMLÉ before a public launch at ICTU's Biennial Delegate Conference in July 2023.
- ▶ That this campaign seeks to abolish sub-minimum rates of pay - in practice and legislation - through campaigning and amendments to the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018, and the right to request additional hours of work.
- ▶ That the ICTU Youth Committee has sought the support of USI-AMLÉ and its Member Organisations.
- ▶ The passing of motion UO24 at Comhdháil 2023, indicating USI-AMLÉ's intention to develop closer links with ICTU to campaign on issues which effect young people.

Comhdháil believes:

That a Fair day's work deserves Fair pay, and sub-minimum rates of pay are a form of age-discrimination which uniquely affects young people, for whom we are one of the island's leading representative bodies.

That young people are entitled to more control over the hours they work, and employers must not abuse them by keeping large reserves of under-employed staff.

Comhdháil mandates:

That the USI-AMLÉ publicly support the young trade unionist lead campaign to abolish sub-minimum rates, and the right to additional hours.

That the Coiste Gnó and Regional VPs will cooperate with the campaign by encouraging MOs to engage.

2024 NA CN 5 Motion on Transgender Healthcare & Harm Reduction Campaign

Comhdháil notes:

Transgender Healthcare and Gender Affirming care in Ireland was ranked the worst in the EU among the 27 member states in October 2022. This ranking was announced by Transgender Europe (TGEU) which is a group funded by the EU and campaigns for the “complete de-pathologisation of trans and gender-diverse identities”.

TGEU Trans Health Map shows the overall status of trans-specific healthcare in each EU member state based on information collected on 6 factors:

- (a) type of trans healthcare and coverage available in the country;
- (b) requirement for a psychiatric diagnosis before hormonal treatment or surgery;
- (c) waiting time for first appointment with a trans healthcare professional;
- (d) groups excluded or made to wait longer to access trans-specific healthcare;
- (e) youngest age for puberty blockers;
- (f) youngest age for hormones.

Each member state could score up to two points for each of the six criteria. Out of a potential 12 points, Ireland received just one.

<https://tgeu.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/tgeu-trans-health-map-2022-en.pdf>

Comhdháil notes with concern:

According to the National Gender Service website the current waiting time for an initial assessment after referral is ‘between three and three and a half years’. This initial assessment is only obtained after the referral process which is also a lengthy process.

Due to the aforementioned barriers put in place to gender affirming care, many transgender students are turning to self medicating with hormones which are purchased online.

‘The NGS’s Current policy of advising GPs not to provide blood tests or HRT (hormone therapy) to patients who are ‘self-medicating’, such as by sourcing HRT online or accessing private trans healthcare services. Blood tests are required by trans people who are self-medicating or accessing private trans healthcare services as a basic safety check. However, these are currently being denied to trans patients because the NGS advises GPs not to provide them. Monitoring hormone levels via blood tests is an essential part of risk management, so advising GPs against doing so has a detrimental effect on trans people’s well-being.’

<https://gcn.ie/trans-demand-gender-affirming-healthcare/>

<https://nationalgenderserviceireland.com/waiting-times-3/>

Comhdháil commends:

The work being carried out to date by grassroots activist organisations in Ireland such as ‘Transgress the NGS’ and ‘Trans Harm Reduction’, the latter of which is carrying out a GP action project, organises laboratory testing of HRT sources, provides injection supplies, provides a healthcare fund and offers a peer support network.

Comhdháil believes:

Student Unions’ and USI have always been at the forefront of creating change in government policy and helping their members on the ground with the issues that they face.

Grassroots organisations such as ‘Transgress the NGS’ and ‘Trans Harm Reduction’ are key

players in effecting changes for our students across the country.

Comhdháil mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship in conjunction with the VP Campaigns and VP Welfare reach out to these group and work on:

1. Lobbying the government for a change in their policies and a stark improvement of the transgender healthcare offered in Ireland through whatever avenue the officers deem appropriate and most effective.
2. Whilst this is being done, the aforementioned officers seek to work with these grassroots organisations to run a trans harm reduction campaign to offer students who are self-medicating or considering self-medicating access to clear and easily accessible harm reduction information.

2024 NA 1 General Election Campaign ****

PROPOSED BY THE CAMPAIGNS' STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Comhdháil notes

The opportunity presented at the time of a general election which, with effective campaigning, could yield favorable results for the student movement, particularly the asks that have shaped union policy on the long term.

Comhdháil further notes

That during a general election time, organizations from across civil society will be working on securing favorable results for their cohorts through the production of general election campaigns that often include the production of organization manifestos, direct and collective lobbying, and effective voter mobilization.

Comhdháil believes

That the academic year 2024/25 will likely coincide with a general election campaign.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The VP Campaigns, through their work with the Campaigns' Strategy Committee, to produce a student manifesto for the upcoming general election based on current USI policy, in the form of budgetary and legislative asks, and for the final draft of the manifesto to be presented no later than the sitting of Crossover Comhairle Náisiúnta.

Comhdháil further mandates

The VP for Campaigns to ensure the publicization of the manifesto through organizing launch events at various member organization campuses, the production of digestible promotional materials for circulation once the date of the general election is set, direct and collective lobbying, and organizing other national and local actions.

Amendment

PROPOSED BY THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR THE DUBLIN REGION

Replace Clause Comhdháil Notes with:

Comhdháil notes

The opportunity presented at the time of Local, European and General elections which, with effective campaigning, could yield favourable results for the student movement, particularly the asks that have shaped union policy on the long term.

Replace clause Comhdháil Further Notes with:

Comhdháil further notes

That during a the time of such elections, organizations from across civil society will be working on securing favourable results for their cohorts through the production of election campaigns that often include the production of organization manifestos, direct and collective lobbying, and effective voter mobilization.

Replace clause Comhdháil therefore mandates with:

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The VP Campaigns, through their work with the Coiste Gnó and the Campaigns' Strategy Committee, to produce a student manifesto ahead of all such elections, based on current USI policy, in the form of budgetary and legislative asks, and for the final draft of the manifesto, where possible, to be presented by the VP for Campaigns for the approval of Comhairle Náisiúnta.

Replace clause Comhdháil further mandates with:

Comhdháil further mandates

The VP for Campaigns to ensure the publicization of the manifesto through organizing launch events at various member organization campuses, and through the production of digestible promotional materials for circulation once the date of such elections are set.

The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write a Student Guide to Elections which will inform the student body on the election relevant to student issues and interests, focusing on providing an overview of the political institution for which the election is being held, information from each party's manifesto and the wider political landscape at the time of its publication.

The USI Coiste Gnó to run a campaign around the time of any such elections to improve student access to voting through lobbying for weekend voting, on campus polling stations and the eligibility to vote to be extended to those aged 16 and over.

2024 NA 2 USI Student Accommodation Position Paper 2024-2027 ****

THE USI CAMPAIGNS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

Comhdháil adopts:

The [USI Student Accommodation Position Paper 2024-2027](#).

Comhdháil Therefore Repeals:

20 N (NC) 8, 20 N (NC) 8B, EM 20 a 1, 2021 UO 16, 2021 UO 19, 2023 N (NC) 1

2024 NA 3 Motion on adopting the report by the Citizen's Assembly on Drug Use to advocate for a health led approach ***

PROPOSED BY: CMLOG

Comhdháil Notes: That the current regime of drug laws is draconian, disenfranchising, classist, and cruel.

Comhdháil Further Notes: That the criminalisation of drugs has impacted working class and disadvantaged areas disproportionately, causing thousands of deaths in deprived rural and urban areas.

Comhdháil Believes: That the recent report by the Citizens Assembly on Drug Use, which voted in favour of a health-led approach, is foundational document in the movement to decriminalise drugs, and to treat drug use as a healthcare issue.

Therefore, Comhdháil Mandates: That the USI Executive Committee campaign for the full implementation of the CA's recommendations.

Comhdháil Further Mandates: That the USI VPs for Campaigns and Citizenship and Equality shall organise a national campaign for the decriminalisation of drugs, and to advocate for a health-led approach.

2024 NA 4 Unethical Investments Audit **

PROPOSED BY THE CAMPAIGNS WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil notes

That HEIs are public-private bodies that have autonomous investments through investment funds, endowment funds, staff pension funds, and other mechanisms.

Comhdháil further notes

That in their capacity as public bodies, HEIs fall under the scope of the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Comhdháil believes

That as such investments are a result of a mixture of student money and public funds, students must have full knowledge of where such money is being invested in, ensuring ethical considerations are at the core of such decisions.

Comhdháil further believes

That existing union policy advocates against unethical investments and for the campaigning of getting HEIs to divest from such unethical investments where they arise and which have been previously exposed to include investments in the fossil fuel and war industries, and in companies on the BDS list.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

The VP for Campaigns leads an annual audit of the investment portfolios and external partnerships, whether academic or otherwise, of all HEIs through accessing such information under the mechanism devised under the FOI Act 2014 and to present the findings of such audit to the wider student population.

Comhdháil further mandates

The VP for Campaigns, where the findings of such an audit show that a HEI has investments that would be considered unethical according to existing union policy in this area, organize a campaign to get the HEI to divest such investments.

2024 NA 5 USI taking a stance on abolishing direct provision **

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil notes with concern:

The alarming increase in hate crimes targeting refugees seeking asylum in Ireland in recent months. Individuals fleeing war-torn regions in search of safety and security, find themselves facing hostility and danger in a country that should offer them refuge.

Comhdháil notes:

Direct Provision was introduced as a short-term solution to help accommodate refugees, however, due to the failure of the Government, refugees have had to stay in Direct Provision for up to 7 years.

Comhdháil notes in conclusion:

That Refugees have been subject to hate crime and inhumane living situations whilst going through a multitude of traumatic experiences which include the process of seeking asylum itself.

Comhdháil applauds

The Abolish Direct Provision Campaign and Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI) for their efforts to raise awareness on the issues facing refugees in Ireland.

Comhdháil mandates:

The USI VP Equality and Citizenship, with the support of the VP Campaigns to advocate for improved conditions for those seeking international protection in Ireland.

Comhdháil further mandates:

VP Campaigns to work with the Campaigns Strategy Committee to produce a position paper on Direct Provision by the September 2024 meeting of Comhairle Náisiúnta as step in the

direction to ultimately take a position in favor of abolishing direct provision.

2024 NA 6 Title Parity of Funding for Technological Universities

PROPOSED BY: TU DUBLIN SU

Comhdháil Notes

Virtually all IOT's (Institutes of Technology) across the island of Ireland have now merged to become TU's (Technological Universities).

Comhdháil Notes with Concern

Despite some (very limited) progression in discussions / governmental pressure surrounding the borrowing capacity of TU's, significant disparities still exist between the ability of TU's to borrow money (from the government) compared to so-called 'legacy institutions'.

Comhdháil Further Notes with Concern

The inability to borrow within TU's is one of the primary factors preventing TU's from investing in affordable PBSA (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation) i.e. without a framework, TU's cannot borrow to build, meaning they are entirely reliant on capital grants, which will likely never appear (evidenced in the 434 million announcement that exists only within the context of a long-term, low-interest, loan system which TU's cannot access).

Comhdháil Believes

The accelerated development of a Borrowing Framework for TU's would remove barriers to the construction of PBSA within TU's, allowing for greater equity across HEI's on the island of Ireland, as well as alleviate pressure of the housing crisis on third-level students.

Comhdháil Therefore Mandates

The President and Coiste Gnó to consistently lobby the appropriate ministers in the Irish Government / the HEA to develop a Borrowing Framework before the 5 year limit on the ring-fenced '434 million' for student housing dissipates.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The President to draw this to the attention of the HEA, to request all delegates at Comhdháil and SUT (Students' Union Training) to send off drafted emails (draft prepared by the President) to the relevant ministers (list prepared by the President) demanding that a TU Dublin borrowing framework is expedited, given the implications on students across the island of Ireland, to publish an open letter to the relevant Ministers demanding the same, and all other actions requested at National Council (with appropriate majority of votes) deemed necessary to achieve this parity of funding for TU's.

Comhdháil Therefore Appeals the motion '2021 AA NC 8'

Amendment

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Remove: Entire clause

"Comhdháil Further Mandates"

And Replace with:

"Comhdháil Further Mandates

The President to draw this to the attention of the HEA, to request all delegates at Comhdháil and SUT (Students' Union Training) to send off drafted emails (draft prepared by the President) to the relevant ministers (list prepared by the President) demanding that a TU borrowing framework is expedited, given the implications on students across the island of Ireland, to publish an open letter to the relevant Ministers demanding the same, and all other actions requested at National Council (with appropriate majority of votes) deemed necessary to achieve this parity of funding for TU's."

Equality Motions

2024 EQ 1 Legislative Impoverishment of Carers and Persons With Disabilities ***

SUBMITTED BY BMW WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil notes:

€450 is the weekly wage needed for a high standard of living (Immigration Advice Service)

Comhdháil further notes:

Carers Allowance, Invalidity Pay and Disability Benefit are set well below this figure.

Comhdháil further notes:

Disability Benefit, Invalidity Pay and Carers Allowance come with strict limits on income, permission to acquire education and accessing employment.

Comhdháil further notes:

Ireland has the 5th lowest employment rate for disabled persons in the EU. The harsh impositions and inadequate provisions condemn disabled persons and carers to poverty.

Comhdháil therefore mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to:

Raise Disability Benefit and Carers Allowance to match the cost of living

Automatically transfer students qualified for receiving Invalidity Pay to Disability Benefit

Abolish the harsh limits on income and working hours

2024 EQ 2 Transgender Healthcare (NI) ***

PROPOSED BY: USI VP FOR EQUALITY & CITIZENSHIP

Comhdháil Notes:

The main public health service for trans and gender diverse adults to access gender-affirming care in Northern Ireland is the Brackenburn Clinic. The service provides assessments, psychological supports and onward referrals, where appropriate, for hormone replacement therapy and surgery. The only way to be referred to the service is either via a GP or a mental health professional.

Comhdháil Notes with Concern:

Due to lack of funding, staffing issues, and a breakdown in the service, as of 2023 the waiting list currently has patients waiting up to 4-6 years for their initial appointment. The Gender Identity Clinic (GIC) had no patients being accepted to the service from 2018-2020, which has since resumed but now refuses new referrals due to the backlog of patients trying to avail of the service. Over the last few years, the NHS has been slowly becoming more privatised, which has led trans patients to turn to private healthcare and self-medicating (administering their hormone replacement therapy themselves). Despite GPs being allowed to provide bridging prescriptions for trans patients, a survey of users of private health provider, GenderGP, found that [80% of NHS GPs had refused](#), despite having no real grounds to do so.

Comhdháil Commends:

The work done by organisations such as Transgender NI and The Rainbow Project to highlight the current issues the face transgender healthcare and the community.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Equality & Citizenship and VP for Welfare to engage with and supporting the NUS- USI President to:

Invest in and reform local healthcare provision to:

- ▶ Eliminate waiting lists for mental healthcare.
- ▶ Ensure no disruption in care pathways when people turn 18 or move house and move across the UK.
- ▶ Update regulations in gender-affirming healthcare to give GPs and nurse prescribers the powers to prescribe hormones.
- ▶ Support and endorse trans organisations and activist groups in Northern Ireland.
- ▶ Lobby the Government and NHS to invest more funding to GIC’s in Northern Ireland.
- ▶ With the VP for Campaigns, to run a “Trans Healthcare Campaign” to all the MOs in Northern Ireland to highlight the issues facing the trans community regarding transgender healthcare.

2024 EQ 3 Transgender Healthcare (ROI) ***

PROPOSED BY: EQUALITY & CITIZENSHIP WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil Notes

Transgender healthcare and Gender Affirming care in Ireland was ranked the worst in the EU among the 27 member states in October 2022. This ranking was provided by Transgender Europe (TGEU), a group funded by the EU, who campaigns for the ‘complete depathologisation of trans and gender-diverse identities’. The ranking itself was based on the following six factors:

- Type of trans healthcare and coverage available in the country.
- Requirement for a psychiatric diagnosis before hormonal treatment or surgery.
- Waiting time for first appointment with a trans healthcare professional.
- Groups excluded or made to wait longer to access trans-specific healthcare.
- Youngest age for puberty blockers.
- Youngest age for hormones.

Each member state could score up to two points for each of the six criteria. Out of a potential twelve points, Ireland received just one.

Comhairle Notes with Concern

The National Gender Service (NGS) recently reported that they are “seeing people referred between three and three and a half years ago”. However, this statement is fundamentally misleading given the exponential growth of wait lists; statistical analysis of data accessed through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request indicates that those added to the list now may be waiting over 11 years to be seen.

Waiting times of this length, as evidenced by the myriad of surveys available, are increasing the risk of self-harm and suicide amongst an incredibly vulnerable population. Despite these abhorrent wait times, the NGS continues to advise GP’s not to prescribe Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), a life-saving intervention, to transgender and non-binary patients. This has, unsurprisingly, lead to increasing numbers of transgender people ‘self-medicating’ (taking HRT medications accessed through unregulated sources).

Comhairle Commends

There is significant work and advocacy being carried out by grassroots activist organizations in Ireland such as ‘Transgress the NGS’ and ‘Trans Harm Reduction’; the latter organization has pioneered the ‘GP Action Project’, organizes laboratory testing of HRT sources, provides injection supplies, provides a healthcare fund, and offers a peer support network.

Comhairle Mandates

USI to support and endorse organisations like ‘Transgress the NGS’, ‘Trans Harm Reduction’,

'Trans & Intersex Pride Dublin', 'Trans Healthcare Action' and 'TENI' i.e. publicise them and their events regularly on social media, encourage students to attend their events and direct actions, and ensure USI attendance (wherever possible) at these same events.

Comhairle further Mandates

USI to fully endorse and platform the recommendations of 'Transgress the NGS', 'Trans Healthcare Action', and 'Trans Harm Reduction' (e.g. in relation to GP's prescribing HRT and blood tests to trans-identifying people), to platform their recommendations on the topic of Trans Harm Reduction, to fully denounce the NGS (National Gender Service), the HSE, and the 33rd Government of Ireland for its abject failure to adequately support Trans people, and to ultimately support the recommendations by TGEU & WPATH.

Comhairle further Mandates

The VP for Equality & Citizenship, in conjunction with the VP for Welfare, to:

Collate/Source a list of best-practice recommendations for college-run health services in line with the demands of Transgress the NGS (i.e. an informed consent model) that can be easily communicated to local health services via each local MO.

Work directly and regularly with local MO Officers to educate college-run health services on the life-saving benefits of prescribing HRT and blood tests, the risks of not treating those who self-medicate, and legal protections in place.

Roll out a campaign & 'handbook' / shareable document, detailing information on 'Trans Harm Reduction', methodology of such, and areas where this can be improved via activism (e.g. such as platforming the GP Action Project).

Endorse, platform and promote the 'GP Action Project', run by Trans Healthcare Action in order to build a network of Trans-Friendly GP's

Lobby all necessary parties (including but not limited to: Government / Minister for Health, Minister for Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, HSE, NGS) to overhaul the current trans healthcare model (centralised, pathology-based) in favour of the legislative and healthcare recommendations provided in TGEU's (Transgender Europe's) 'Guidelines to Human Rights-Based Trans-Specific Healthcare, 2019' and WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Healthcare) Standards of Care Version 8.

In conjunction with the VP for Campaigns, develop a comprehensive escalation plan (to be presented at the second National Council of the academic year (24/25), aimed at achieving point (4), which must include one targeted direct action (e.g. at Pink Training 24/25), before March 2025.

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2024 EQ 4 Pink Training **

PROPOSED BY: TU DUBLIN STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil Notes:

Pink Training is an annual event run by USI that brings together members of the LGBTQIA+ 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 LGBTQIA+ 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 LGBTQIA+ community.

Comhdháil Recognises:

Pink Training is organised by the VP for Equality and Citizenship each year and is a significant undertaking for the Officer. There is also currently a document in existence, drafted annually by the outgoing VP for Equality and Citizenship, that explains how the incoming VP for Equality and Citizenship should run Pink Training. However, there is no formal procedure in place that mandates the VP for Equality & Citizenship on how to select speakers for the event. This may potentially cause issues such as a lack of diversity amongst speakers and/or topics, as well as conscious or unconscious bias during the selection process.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Equality And Citizenship and Coiste Gnó to continue to organise the annual USI Pink Training. This event should continue to include sessions that tackle nuanced LGBTQIA+ perspectives such as race, body positivity, disability, drug harm reduction, asexuality and other extended topics deemed relevant. The topics should be explored in a way that isn't seen as 'tokenistic' or simply '101' sessions.

Comhdháil further Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and any other Coiste Gnó member involved in the organising of Pink Training to continue to produce an annual Event Planning Document after the training each year, within three months of the Training, and pass it over to the incoming VP for Equality and Citizenship each year.

Comhdháil further Mandates:

The VP for Equality & Citizenship to establish a formal procedure by which they select speakers for the annual Pink Training event. This procedure must include a standardised application process (i.e. whereby all potential speakers fill out a form requesting to deliver a talk(s) at the event), followed by a formal panel who review and select applicants from these applications. This panel must consist of the VP for Equality & Citizenship, the USI President, and three student-members that are voted for annually at National Council. Selected speakers shall be limited to a maximum of two different talks, in order to ensure a diversity of speakers.

This motion therefore repeals 2022 EQ 5: Pink Training

2024 EQ 5 Motion in Support of Sex Workers and Engagement with the National Women's Council

PROPOSED BY COMHALTAS NA MAC LÉINN, OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE

Comhdháil notes

Sex work is defined as the sale of any sexual services, performances, or products for material compensation, including online sex work and pornography.

Comhdháil further notes

The phrase 'decriminalization of sex work' has been politically coopted by individuals, such as the National Women's Council, who believe that the Nordic model is the only way to support sex workers. Under the Nordic model, sex buyers are criminalized while sex workers are decriminalized, however, additional working supports such as hiring security, accountants or drivers remains illegal. Worryingly, it is also illegal under the Nordic Model for two or more sex workers to live together, as under the Nordic Model this constitutes a brothel, and allows landlords to evict tenants should they discover that the tenant is engaging in sex work. Many individual sex workers and sex work organisations, such as Sex Workers Alliance Ireland, have gone on record to say that the Nordic model has been created under the false pretence that all sex work is abuse and always leads to sex trafficking and exploitation, without the model acknowledging that consensual sex work exists. They confirm however, that prohibitions, like the one of the Nordic model, and stigmatization are the biggest problems for sex workers, which do cause real harm. It was also reported on the 19/02/2024 that the Council of Europe's human rights commissioner agreed with sex-worker-led organisations that the decriminalisation of sex work will improve outcomes for sex workers. The Sex Workers Alliance Ireland undertook peer research of the Criminal Law Sexual Offences Act which brought the Nordic model to Ireland in 2017. Their most important findings are listed below:

This law has not prevented people from engaging in sex work.

It has negatively impacted safety measures making survival more perilous.

Instead of making workers safer it has made sex work much more dangerous and decreased faith and trust in Garda amongst workers. Crime against sex workers has increased significantly under this law.

This law has failed to reduce numbers of clients but instead it has worsened behaviour of clients toward sex workers.

Sex workers have lost bargaining power and are therefore seeing clients they might have previously refused to see and engaging in acts they might not have previously considered.

Existing supports for workers are severely lacking and tend to be focused on workers that are actively trying to exit sex work.

Comhdháil further notes

That a meeting was held with the National Women's Council, SERP, Ruhuma and the National Immigration Council on the 23/1/2024 in the National Women's Council offices in Dublin. This was attended by USI Officers, VP Academic Affairs, VP Equality and Citizenship and VP Welfare, as well as officers from MO's.

From this meeting, it was clear that the National Women's Council pro-Nordic Model stance still holds strong, and can only be changed through passing a mandate at their Annual General Meeting in June.

Comhdháil mandates

The USI Coiste Gnó shall retain an anti-Nordic model policy and that the VP Welfare and VP Equality and Citizenship attempt to engage further with the National Women’s Council, through meetings, workshops and communications.

Comhdháil also mandates

That USI bring an anti-Nordic mandate to the National Women’s Council 2024 AGM. Should this motion fall USI Coiste Gnó will consider disaffiliating from the National Women’s Council, exiting before the next affiliation payment.

Citizenship Motions

2024 CZN 1 Extra-Curricular Activities Engagement *

PROPOSED BY DCU STUDENTS’ UNION

Comhdháil Notes

That engaging in extracurricular activities in leadership positions and/or attending events and activities run by Students’ Unions, Clubs and Societies and Volunteering organisations can provide students with an improved student experience at university.

Comhdháil Further Notes

That engaging in extracurricular activities can come with hidden costs for students, and sometimes these costs can be a deterrence for students to engage in activities outside the classroom.

Comhdháil Believes

That as an organisation we should be pushing to increase participation in student activities, and reduce any barriers to students engaging in activities.

Comhdháil Recognises

That the level of financial support given to students to engage in extracurricular activities varies in each Member Organisation of USI.

Comhdháil Mandates

That the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship along with the USI Vice President for Welfare conduct a research activity on assessing what financial barriers are in place for students to engage, including but not limited to; Clubs and Societies activities, Union activities; and volunteering opportunities in each Institution.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

That the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship along with the USI Vice President for Welfare using their findings conducts a report on their findings and suggestions on removing barriers for student engagement, and present their findings to the relevant semi-state and state bodies in the lead up to and for inclusion in Budget 2025.

Amendment

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS’ UNION

Remove all of clause “Comhdháil Further Mandates:”

Replace with:

Comhdháil Further Mandates:

That the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship along with the USI Vice President for Welfare using their findings conducts a report on their findings and suggestions on removing barriers for student engagement, and present their findings to the Comhairle Náisiúnta after the report is finished and to the next Comhdháil after to be used for both local and national lobbying of HEIs, state and semi-state bodies”

2024 CZN 2 Reckonable Residency Reform *

PROPOSED BY: EQUALITY & CITIZENSHIP WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil Notes:

Students and researchers attending Irish HEIs who are citizens of nations outside the EEA face many obstacles to remaining in Ireland after programme completion.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Most non-EEA citizens pursuing higher education in Ireland are forced to maintain Stamp 2 (student) visas for the duration of their programmes, which restrict many rights while residing in the State.

Comhdháil Notes with Concern:

Stamp 2 visas do not count towards reckonable residency, which is used to determine eligibility for Irish long-term residency and/or citizenship.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Equality & Citizenship and VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the Department for Justice for Stamp 2 visas to count toward reckonable residency for the purposes of legally remaining and contributing to Irish communities long-term.

2024 CZN 3 Election Campaigns *

PROPOSED BY DUBLIN REGION WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil notes

Local, European, and general elections are an integral part of lobbying for change and on issues that directly affect students.

Comhdháil also notes

The USI have an opportunity during these times to talk to parties and to ensure students are mentioned in every manifesto and program for government.

Comhdháil therefore mandates

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

Comhdháil also mandates

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

Repeals 15 CZN 7: General Election Campaign & 09 NA 4

2024 CZN 4 BusConnects and the NTA *

PROPOSED BY THE DUBLIN WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil Notes

The rollout of the BusConnects by the NTA (National Transport Authority) is a welcome change in the way public transport is operated, offering increased 24hr services, and increased connectivity between campuses. BusConnects impacts most higher education institutions in Dublin, and may affect other cities in Ireland in the future.

Comhdháil Further Notes

There have been significant delays in the rollout of the redesigned routes, in particular of the E-Spine that would connect multiple campuses across Dublin. The delays of these routes, and the removal of previous routes as part of the phased rollout, has a serious impact on commuting students and their commutes to their HEI, as well as travel between campuses of some institutions.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI Coiste Gnó to endeavour to obtain a place on the relevant decision-making bodies within the NTA.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The USI Coiste Gnó, in particular the regional officers, to lobby the NTA to involve the student perspective and voice on these rollouts and to make sure considerations are taken that no area is forgotten.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to produce information on any new route introduced by the NTA that impact an MO campus to inform students of the changes and how it may affect students.

Comhdháil Also Mandates

The Coiste Gnó to report back at every second Comhairle Náisiúnta on updates surrounding public transport.

2024 CZN 5 Non-EEA Residency Permit Reform

PROPOSED BY: EQUALITY & CITIZENSHIP WORKING GROUP

Comhdháil Notes:

Students and researchers attending Irish HEIs who are citizens of nations outside the EEA face many obstacles to their legal status over the course of their programmes, particularly those of greater than one year in duration.

Comhdháil Further Notes:

Non-EEA USI members enrolled in multi-year programmes are required to attend annual interviews with An Garda Síochána to prove they are persisting through such programmes as originally intended, as well as provide proofs of residency, financing, and private insurance to varying extents.

Comhdháil Notes with Concern:

The cost to renew residency permits is €300 per annum, independent of the other financial burdens required per individual; immigration interviews are continually backlogged and difficult to obtain; and County Dublin allows for online permit renewals.

Comhdháil Mandates:

The VP for Equality & Citizenship, VP for Academic Affairs, and VP for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the Government (such as the Department of Justice and any other relevant party) and advocate for:

- 1.) Online residency permit renewals available nationwide.
- 2.) Reduction of permit fees.
- 3.) Abolition of the annual renewal requirement for those enrolled in multi-year programmes.

Accounts & Finance Motions

2024 AF 1 USI Commercial Entities Engagement Strategy *

PROPOSED BY DCU STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil Notes

External commercial entities such as but not limited to event agencies, promoters, marketing agencies and brands often look to use Students' Unions and the Union of Students Ireland as ways to engage with new customers.

Comhdháil Further Notes

That engaging with such companies can provide a benefit to students and provide students with new opportunities.

Comhdháil Believes

That it is of utmost importance that there is a fair, transparent and clear procedure that aligns with the USI Constitution is accessible to all Member Organisations outlining the criteria of what external commercial entities USI engage with.

Comhdháil Further Believes

Engagement with commercial entities should, where applicable, provide USI with financial benefits directly to the organisation.

Comhdháil Mandates

The USI President develops a clear procedure on the selection and vetting of external commercial entities that USI will consider working with in the future. This procedure shall be presented to the next Comhairle Náisiúnta for discussion, and sent to the next Comhdháil for approval.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

Annually the USI President develops and reviews a costing rate guide for external commercial entities to engage with USI.

Comhdháil Further Mandates

That USI only works with commercial entities whose values align with stances approved by Comhdháil and the values of the USI Constitution.

AMENDMENT

PROPOSED BY MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

Remove:

“Comhdháil Notes: External commercial entities such as but...

and replace with

“Comhdháil notes: External entities and companies such as but...”

Remove:

“Comhdháil Mandates: The USI President develops a clear procedure on the selection and vetting of external commercial entities that USI will consider working with in the future”

and replace with:

“COMHDHÁIL MANDATES:

The USI President develops a clear procedure on the selection and vetting of external entities and organisations that USI will consider working with in the future”

Remove:

“That USI only works with commercial entities whose values align with stances approved by Comhdháil and the values of the USI Constitution...”

AND REPLACE WITH

“That USI only works with external entities and companies whose values align with stances approved by Comhdháil or Comhairle Náisiúnta and the values of the USI Constitution...”

2024 AF 2 Mediation for MOs

PROPOSED BY: COMHALTAS NA MAC LÉINN, OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE

Comhdháil Notes:

Mediation is a delicate and sometimes necessary step needed for MOs to carry out their responsibilities in a cohesive work environment.

Comhdháil also Notes:

This service is a privilege that not all MOs can afford, either due to cost or lack of resources.

Therefore, Comhdháil Mandates:

That the Coiste Gnó of USI will make themselves available to organise mediation for MOs that feel they would benefit from the service. The mediatory services will be requested by the MO through the Coiste Gnó member of their choosing and comfortability.

Constitutional Amendments

2024 CA 1 Vice-President for Postgraduate Affairs

TUS STUDENTS' UNION

Comhdháil replaces Article 5.12.1

'5.12.1 The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Postgraduate) shall have responsibility, in a part-time capacity on the Union's Executive Team, for the Union's work on policy and engagement with postgraduate students.'

With

'5.12.1 The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Postgraduate) shall have responsibility for the Union's work on policy and engagement with postgraduate students.'

Comhdháil replaces Article 5.12.2

'5.12.2 The VP/Postgraduate shall assist the VP/Campaigns with campaigns in relation to postgraduate issues.'

With

'5.12.2 The VP/Postgraduate shall assist all other Vice Presidents in relation to postgraduate affairs.'

Comhdháil inserts Article 5.12.4

'5.12.4 The VP/Postgraduate shall also be responsible for supporting Member Organisations regarding postgraduate affairs within their own institutions and shall produce research and develop support structures, as required by the Member Organisations.'

Comhdháil replaces Article 5.14.3

'5.14.3 Members of the Executive Team (except for the VP/Postgraduate) shall have their salary matched to a grade in the Irish Civil Service, to be decided upon by Governance Committee. The starting salary of all officers (except for the VP/Postgraduate) shall be matched to the same level except for the President which shall be one grade higher.'

With

'5.14.3 Members of the Executive Team shall have their salary matched to a grade in the Irish Civil Service, to be decided upon by Governance Committee. The starting salary of all officers shall be matched to the same level except for the President which shall be one grade higher.'

2024 CA 2 Constitutional Amendment: Removal Of Regional Vice Presidents

PROPOSED BY: TU DUBLIN STUDENTS' UNION

Delete 5.16, “The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region”

Delete 5.17, “The Vice President for the Southern Region”

Delete 5.18, “The Vice President for the Dublin Region”

Delete 5.8, “The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region” and all its subsections.

Delete 5.9, “The Vice President for the Southern Region” and all its subsections.

Delete 5.10, “The Vice President for the Dublin Region” and all its subsections.

7.1.3 add;

“In the case of the regional committees, the President shall nominate a member of the Executive Team or a member of Comhairle Náisiúnta to serve as chair during the period of office.”

Further, in the event that this motion were to be carried-

Delete all references to the elections of these positions.

2024 CA 3 Merging The VP for Welfare and The VP for Equality and Citizenship

PROPOSED BY: TU DUBLIN STUDENTS’ UNION

Delete 5.5, “The Vice President for Welfare”.

Change 5.7, “The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship” to “The Vice President for Welfare, Equality and Citizenship”

Change 5.7.1,

“The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship (hereinafter referred as to as VP/Equality) shall have responsibility for implementation and development of all Union policy in relation to issues of discrimination on the grounds specified in S.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the grounds of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.”

to

“The Vice President for Welfare, Equality and Citizenship (hereinafter referred as to as VP/WEC) shall have responsibility for implementation and development of Union’s welfare policy and all Union policy in relation to issues of discrimination on the grounds specified in S.75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and the grounds of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004.”

Change 5.7.2,

“The VP/Equality shall assist the VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns for the defence and promotion of students’ rights in areas of equality and citizenship.” TO

“The VP/WEC shall assist the VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns for the defence and promotion of students rights in areas of student welfare, equality and citizenship.”

Change 5.7.3, “The VP/Equality shall have overall responsibility for the running of Equality, Citizenship and LGBTQ training events such as Pink Training.” to “The VP/WEC shall have overall responsibility for the running of Welfare, Equality, Citizenship and LGBTQ training events such as Pink Training

Change 5.7.4, “The VP/Equality shall be the chairperson of the Equality & Citizenship Committee.” to “The VP/WEC shall be the chairperson of the Welfare, Equality & Citizenship Committee.”

Change 5.7.5, “The VP/Equality shall assist VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns on, and shall be responsible for; running events and campaigns relating to citizenship in areas such as environmental and civic, social and political participation, with particular emphasis on voter registration; working with community and voluntary groups etc.” to “The VP/WEC

shall assist VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns on, and shall be responsible for; running events and campaigns relating to citizenship in areas such as environmental and civic, social and political participation, with particular emphasis on voter registration; working with community and voluntary groups etc.”

Add 5.7.6, “The VP/WEC also shall have special responsibility for the provisions of welfare publications and material.”

Further, in the event that this motion were to be carried-

Delete all references to “The Welfare Committee”

Delete all references to the election of “The VP for Welfare”

Change “The VP for Equality & Citizenship” to “The VP for Welfare, Equality & Citizenship” where “The VP for Equality & Citizenship” is mentioned.

Change “The VP/Equality” to “The VP/WEC” where “The VP/Equality” is mentioned.

Change “The Equality & Citizenship Committee” to “The Welfare, Equality & Citizenship Committee” where “The Equality & Citizenship Committee” is mentioned.

2024 CA 4 Changes to Regional VPs 1

PROPOSED BY USI PRESIDENT

Replace 5.8 The Vice President for The Border, Midlands and Western Region with the following:

“5.8 The Vice President for Western Region:

5.8.1 The Vice President for the Western Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Western) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Coiste Gnó.

5.8.2 The VP/Western shall communicate the message of the Union to ordinary members, Member Organisations, external organisations and the general public through various means including, but not exclusively, social media, traditional media, meetings, conference events, updates to Councils, campaigns and training events. When conducting campus visits, a minimum of one week’s notice, where possible, is to be given to MOs by the VP/Western. The VP/BMW must conduct a minimum of one contact to each MO in between Comhairle Náisiúntas.

5.8.3 The VP/Western shall communicate regional and Member Organisation’s issues to the Coiste Gnó and support MOs with internal issues relating to but not limited to, team disputes, relationship with their HEI, and student engagement.

5.8.4 The VP/Western shall work with all Colleges in the Western Region to develop their Unions focusing on Unions who have been suspended or where a College does not have a functional Union, to assist the students of that College to establish one.

5.8.5 The VP/Western shall be responsible for the implementation of Union campaigns within their region and will assist MOs when requested in the run-up to or during campaigns, events, projects, initiatives, within reason when available to improve the student experience and promote the Union.

Support MOs in their region with matters relating to local government such as planning objections, engaging with city & county councils, transportation and applying for grants.

-Assist with Union Organisation ensuring best practise in union democracy and structure

To assist Member organisations with affiliations and partnership agreements

- Will be responsible for support and training of part time officers .

5.8.6 The VP/Western will chair the Western Regional Working Group.”

Replace 5.9 The Vice President for the Southern Region with the following:

“5.9 The Vice President for The Eastern Region:

5.9.1 The Vice President for the Eastern Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Eastern) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Coiste Gnó.

5.9.2 The VP/Eastern shall communicate the message of the Union to ordinary members, Member Organisations, external organisations and the general public through various means including, but not exclusively, social media, traditional media, meetings, conference events, updates to Councils, campaigns and training events. When conducting campus visits, a minimum of one week’s notice, where possible, is to be given to MOs by the VP/Eastern. The VP/BMW must conduct a minimum of one contact to each MO in between Comhairle Náisiúntas.

5.9.3 The VP/Eastern shall communicate regional and Member Organisation’s issues to the Coiste Gnó and support MOs with internal issues relating to but not limited to, team disputes, relationship with their HEI, and student engagement.

5.9.4 The VP/Eastern shall work with all Colleges in the Eastern Region to develop their Unions focusing on Unions who have been suspended or where a College does not have a functional Union, to assist the students of that College to establish one.

5.9.5 The VP/Eastern shall be responsible for the implementation of Union campaigns within their region and will assist MOs when requested in the run-up to or during campaigns, events, projects, initiatives, within reason when available to improve the student experience and promote the Union.

Support MOs in their region with matters relating to local government such as planning objections, engaging with city & county councils, transportation and applying for grants.

-Assist with Union Organisation ensuring best practise in union democracy and structure

To assist Member organisations with affiliations and partnership agreements

- Will be responsible for support and training of part time officers

5.9.6 The VP/Eastern will chair the Eastern Regional Working Group.”

Replace 5.10 The Vice President for the Dublin Region with the following:

“5.10 The Vice President for Student Engagement

5.10.1 The Vice President for Student Engagement, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Engagement) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison with the VP/Western and the VP/Eastern on any support that they may need.

5.10.2 The VP/Engagement shall be responsible for in – person & on/off campus student engagement through various events/promotional campaigns.

5.10.3 The VP/Engagement shall be responsible for supporting MO’s in securing sponsorship and affiliations with local businesses.

5.10.4 The VP/Engagement shall work with the National Student Engagement Programme (NSTEP).

5.10.5 The VP/Engagement shall be responsible for training, development and empowering of student activism.

5.10.6 The VP/Engagement shall foster collaboration and partnerships between MO’s and other organizations to strengthen the collective voice of students and address common challenges related to student engagement, well-being and rights.

5.10.7 The VP/Engagement shall be responsible for student consultation and bringing mean-

ingful feedback to the Coiste Gnó in ways to properly engage the student population.

5.10.8 The VP/Engagement will chair the Events, Marketing & Commercialization Working Group. “

Replace Schedule G4 with:

‘The Western Region’ is defined as the counties of which an institution resides in Kerry, Limerick, Cork, Tipperary, Clare, Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon, Longford, Leitrim, Donegal.’

Replace Schedule G5 with

‘The Eastern Region’ is defined as the counties which an institution resides in of Waterford, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, Laois, Kildare, Wicklow, Dublin, Meath, Westmeath, Louth, Offaly, Cavan, Monaghan.’

Replace Schedule G7 with

‘The region governed by the Trilateral agreement is defined as the Counties of Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone.’

Delete G6 and renumber as appropriate.

If passed VP Eastern will replace VP South and VP Dublin and VP Western will replace VP BMW.

2024 CA 5 Changes to Regional VPs 2

PROPOSED BY PRESIDENTS WORKING GROUP

Replace 5.8 The Vice President for The Border, Midlands and Western Region with the following:

“5.8 The Vice President for The Border, Midlands and Western Region:

5.8.1 The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/BMW) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Coiste Gnó.

5.8.2 The VP/BMW shall communicate the message of the Union to ordinary members, Member Organisations, external organisations and the general public through various means including, but not exclusively, social media, traditional media, meetings, conference events, updates to Councils, campaigns and training events. When conducting campus visits, a minimum of one week’s notice, where possible, is to be given to MOs by the VP/BMW. The VP/BMW must conduct a minimum of one contact to each MO in between Comhairle Náisiúntas.

5.8.3 The VP/BMW shall communicate regional and Member Organisation’s issues to the Coiste Gnó and support MOs with internal issues relating to but not limited to, team disputes, relationship with their HEI, and student engagement.

5.8.4 The VP/BMW shall work with all Colleges in the Border, Midlands and Western Region to develop their Unions, focusing on Unions who have been suspended or where a College does not have a functional Union, to assist the students of that College to establish one.

5.8.5 The VP/BMW shall be responsible for:

The implementation of Union campaigns within their region,

Will assist MOs when requested in the run-up to or during campaigns, events, projects, initiatives, to enhance the student experience and promote the Union.

Support MOs in their region with matters relating to local government such as planning proposals, engaging with local organisations and city & county councils, transportation and applying for grants.

Assist with Union Organisation ensuring best practise in union democracy and structure

To assist Member organisations with affiliations and partnership agreements
 Will be responsible for support and training of part time officers
 5.8.6 The VP/BMW will chair the BMW Regional Working Group. ”

Replace 5.9 the Vice President for the Southern Region with the following:

“5.9 The Vice President for the Southern Region:

5.9.1 The Vice President for the Southern Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Southern) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Coiste Gnó.

5.9.2. The VP/Southern shall communicate the message of the Union to ordinary members, Member Organisations, external organisations and the general public through various means including, but not exclusively, social media, traditional media, meetings, conference events, campaigns and training events. When conducting campus visits, a minimum of one week’s notice, where possible, is to be given to MOs by the VP/Southern. The VP/Southern must conduct a minimum of one contact to each MO in between Comhairle Náisiúntas.

5.9.3 The VP/Southern shall communicate regional and Member Organisation’s issues to the Coiste Gnó and support MOs with internal issues relating to but not limited to, team disputes, relationship with their HEI, and student engagement.

5.9.4 The VP/Southern shall work with all Colleges in the Southern Region to develop their Unions focusing on Unions who have been suspended or where a College does not have a functional Union, to assist the students of that College to establish one.

5.9.5 The VP/Southern shall be responsible for:

The implementation of Union campaigns within their region,

Will assist MOs when requested in the run-up to or during campaigns, events, projects, initiatives, to improve the student experience and promote the Union.

Support MOs in their region with matters relating to local government such as planning objections, engaging with city & county councils, transportation and applying for grants.

Assist with Union Organisation ensuring best practise in union democracy and structure

To assist Member organisations with affiliations and partnership agreements

Will be responsible for support and training of part time officers

5.9.6 The VP/Southern will chair the Southern Regional Working Group.

5.9.7 VP/Southern to organise a regional bonding event throughout the year. “

Replace 5.10 The Vice President for the Dublin Region with the following:

“5.10 The Vice President for the Dublin Region

5.10.1 The Vice President for the Dublin Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Dublin) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Executive Team.Coiste Gnó.

5.10.2 The VP/Dublin shall communicate the message of the Union to ordinary members, Member Organisations, external organisations and the general public through various means including, but not exclusively, social media, traditional media, meetings, conference events, updates to Councils, campaigns and training events. When conducting campus visits,

a minimum of one week's notice, where possible, is to be given to MOs by the VP/Dublin. The VP/Dublin must conduct a minimum of one contact to each MO in between National CouncilsComhairle Náisiúntas.

5.10.3 The VP/Dublin shall communicate regional and Member Organisation's issues to the Executive TeamCoiste Gnó and support MOs with internal issues relating to but not limited to, team disputes, relationship with their HEI, and student engagement.

5.10.4 The VP/ Dublin shall work with all Colleges in the Dublin Region to develop their Unions focusing on Unions who have been suspended or where a College does not have a functional Union, to assist the students of that College to establish one.

5.10.5 The VP/Dublin shall be responsible for

The implementation of Union campaigns within their region ,

Will assist MOs when requested in the run-up to or during campaigns, events, projects, initiatives, to improve the student experience and promote the Union.

Support MOs in their region with matters relating to local government such as planning objections, engaging with city & county councils, transportation and applying for grants.

Assist with Union Organisation ensuring best practise in union democracy and structure

To assist Member organisations with affiliations and partnership agreements

Will be responsible for support and training of part time officers

5.10.6 The VP/Dublin will chair the Dublin Regional Working Group. ”

2024 CA 6 Elections Subcommittee

PROPOSED BY: PRESIDENTS WORKING GROUP

To replace 6.2 The Elections Subcommittee with the following:

6.2 The Elections Subcommittee

6.2.1 Steering Committee shall have an Elections Subcommittee to which four members of Steering Committee shall be elected by the whole of Steering Committee.

6.2.2 Quorum for Elections Subcommittee shall be half plus one of the total memberships of that subcommittee.

6.2.3 From their number, Elections Subcommittee shall elect a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson. The Chairperson of Steering Committee may not also chair Elections Subcommittee. The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of Elections Subcommittee shall be the Returning Officer and Deputy Returning Officer, respectively, of the Union.

6.2.4 Elections Subcommittee shall be responsible for the running of all Union elections including inter alia setting deadlines for submission of nominations, receiving nominations, determining the validity of nominations and of candidates, organising hustings at Comhdháil or Comhairle Náisiúnta, organising polling, counting votes, and declaring results in accordance with the terms of this Constitution.

6.2.4.1 Elections Subcommittee shall, no later than 21 December in each year, publish regulations for the conduct of elections. These regulations will contain at least:

- a) any spending limits to be imposed on candidates for election to a role on the Coiste Gnó.
- b) any regulations relating to the conduct of elections

In the absence of newly published regulations, the regulations previously in force shall remain in force. In considering new regulations, the Elections Subcommittee shall have due regard to the need not to impose unnecessary regulations.

6.2.5 Elections Subcommittee shall receive, investigate, and adjudicate on all complaints relating to the running of Union elections; organise and chair Comhdháil elections, make regular reports to Comhdháil and Comhairle Náisiúnta regarding Union elections, and act as

a credentials vetting Committee for delegates to Comhdháil.

6.2.6 Appeals relating to the conduct of Elections Subcommittee in elections may be forwarded to the Chair of Governance for consideration.

2024 CA 7 Grammar, Numerical and Irish Language Changes

PROPOSED BY LEAS UACHTARÁN DON GHAeilGE

To replace all references of ‘The Organisation’ or ‘USI’ with ‘The Union’

To replace all references to ‘Executive’ with ‘Coiste Gnó’

To replace all references to ‘Comhdháil’ with ‘Comhdháil’

To replace all references to ‘Policy Manual’ with ‘Policy File’

To replace all references any mention of ‘Committee’ with ‘Working Group’ except mentions to the Campaign Strategy Committee

Replace

“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;”

With

“5.1.9 An Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge”

Notes

Procedural Motions

This year, Comhairle Náisiúnta is voting before Comhdháil commences on minor changes to procedural motions for management of debates. Since it is not known if Comhairle Náisiúnta will make any changes to the Procedural Motions, you can find the unchanged set and the proposed changes below.

Procedural Motions as they stand at the time of printing

- 9A. A motion that the question now be put
- 9B. A motion that the question not be put
- 9C. A motion that the question be taken in specific parts
- 9D. A motion to refer (or refer back) the matter to a specified later time or meeting or Officer or Committee or National Council
- 9E. A challenge to the Chairperson’s ruling
- 9F. A motion of no confidence in the Chairperson;

Procedural Motions New Proposal

- 9A. That the motion should now be put to a vote after a summation
- 9B. That the motion should not be voted upon
- 9C. That the motion should be taken in specific parts and that a vote should take place on each of the parts, with the objective to remove a part of the motion
- 9D. That the motion be sent for consideration to a specified nominated decision-making body with a timeline, within USI
- 9E. That a decision made in this session by the Chairperson be challenged and overturned
- 9F. A motion of no confidence in the Chairperson of this session
- 9G. That the debate on the motion should hear a specified number of rounds of speeches and then go straight to the vote after a summation

How to use them

Approach Steering Committee at the back of the room and indicate to them which Procedural Motion you wish to invoke.

For a Procedural Motion 9G you should have in mind how many rounds of speeches. If your request is in order, you will have one minute to speak in favour of the motion.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9.00				
9.30				
10.00				
10.30		Academic Affairs 60	Administration & Finance	
11.00		Comfort Break 15	Comfort Break 15	Emergency Motions 60
11.30	Comhairle Náisiúnta 60	Academic Affairs 60		
12.00			Constitutional Amendments	Undiscussed Motions 60
12.30	Training & Conduct 60	Rúin Gaeilge 60		
13.00			105	The President-elect
13.30	Lunch 60	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch-to-go
14.00		Elections		
14.30	Comhdháil Opening	Officer Reports 75	Constitutional Amendments 90	
15.00				
15.30	Policy Due to Expire	National Affairs 75		
16.00			Undiscussed Motions	
16.30	Comfort Break 120	Comfort Break 30		120
17.00	Welfare 75	ELECTION RESULTS	Research Breakouts	
17.30		Accounts 45		
18.00	Union Organisation 60	National Affairs 45		
18.30			Rest & Relaxation	
19.00	Dinner	Dinner		
19.30				
20.00			Congress Dinner & Revue	
20.30	Election Hustings	Equality Citizenship 60		
21.00				
21.30				

Notes on the timetable:

- ▶ Time allocated to a section is not an indication of its importance; it's a reflection of the number and complexity of motions to be discussed in the session. 'Undiscussed Motions' sessions are designed to ensure that all motions have an opportunity to be heard
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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.