

Minutes

UCDSU Council Meeting 2

Monday, 6 November 2023, 6pm
Venue – Fitzgerald / Hybrid upon request

A. The declaration of a quorum by roll call

The Chair declared that Quorum had been met.

B. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of Council 1 were put to a vote and clearly carried

C. Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

D. Presentation from the Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

Chris Clifford (President), Zaid Al-Barghouthi (VP Campaigns), Bláithín Sheehy (VP Gaeilge) and Nathan Murphy (VP for Dublin Region) gave a presentation of how USI works, as well as some of their recent activities and priorities. The purpose of the presentation was to outline to Council why UCD Students' Union should consider joining USI.

Zaid Al-Barghouthi outlined that the student movement needs UCDSU, as the biggest individual body of students on the island of Ireland.

Ruairi Phelan (English, Drama, Film & Music Stage 2) asked would there be a cost increase to the student centre levy. Martha Ní Riada (UCDSU President) outlined that there would likely be an additional cost of between €5-€8 per year per student.

Tsz Ching Pang (Social Sciences CO) asked whether USI would campaign on any referendum, as the referendum did not reach the quorum last year. The Chair flagged that the decision in relation to USI presence on campus during a vote would be up to the Returning Officer.

Simon Van Beek (Business CO) asked about the joining process. Affiliation would likely be ratified at USI's annual congress, with membership commencing for the following Academic Year.

A question was asked if the USI structures would have to change if UCDSU joined. This would mean an evaluation of the resources of the Union. UCDSU would become the largest voting bloc at the annual USI Congress.

Ryan Corley (MsC Science) asked about UCDSU current positions held on national boards and whether these would be impacted by any rejoining.

Simran Khatri (International Campaigns Coordinator) asked would USI support UCDSU in their local campaigns, in the event of UCDSU rejoining. Zaid outlined that USI doesn't like to overstep but that absolutely, USI would be there to provide ongoing support.

Declan Scott (2nd Year Physics) asked how UCDSU's independence, where it chooses to push, would be affected, if UCDSU affiliated, as there would need to be a level of alignment. Zaid flagged that any mandate in the USI policy file only binds the USI Team, and not individual member organisations. These MOs can influence them and decide to what extent they engage with them.

Ben Sweeney (2nd Year History) asked about how UCDSU's representation at USI Congress would be selected. This is selected by the MO themselves.

Ruairi Phelan (English, Drama, Film & Music Stage 2) flagged that the environment of USI has been raised as an issue by student press; in respect of harassment, dignity and respect. Zaid said that these are legitimate concerns and that he was satisfied all steps have been taken to implement a zero-tolerance policy in the organisation.

E. Presentation of UCDSU Budget

Martha Ní Riada (President) presented the SU's budget for the upcoming year. Martha flagged that this would need Council approval.

- Operating at a deficit for this year and due to COVID-19 and inflation, the union reserves are being used at present.
- There has been an increase in the capitation grant for the first time since 2007. There will be further ones for the next two years.

- Income from events does not equate to profit, but rather gets channelled into free events and services.

There were a number of questions from the floor:

- Simon Van Beek (Business CO) asked where the reserves are vis-a-vis where they ought to be.
- Ryan Corley (MsC Science) asked about a living wage being provided for the shop workers. A meeting of the UCDSU CLG Board of Directors will take place specifically on this.
- Psychology Stage 2 Rep asked about plans to improve the budget. Martha outlined that the union has been lobbying for an increase in the budget given from UCD in recent years, and that UCDSU is not a business.
- A further question was asked by a Business rep about the level of reserves being dipped into. Martha suggested that she could take this question away and bring a more detailed response back to Council.
- Ruairi Phelan asked for an inflation cost analysis.
- Architecture Stage 3 rep asked for details about the increase in capitation.
- Cillian Murphy (Arch & Eng CO) asked whether budgets could be seen as well as accounts.
- Architecture Stage 3 Rep asked about contingency plans for the organisation in the event of significant events such as COVID-19 recurring.
- A question was raised by an ordinary member of the union in relation to how the accounts are audited and verified.

Further questions can be submitted by email if done so quickly.

F. Elections

Returning Officer outlined how the voting process would work and people were invited to put themselves forward for the following positions.

- a. Residences Campaign Coordinator
 - Shauna Young
 - Reopen Nominations
- b. First Year Promotions Officer (ENTS Forum)
 - Lily Gnojewski
 - Noah Johnson

- Blessed Fonkoh
 - Peter Falvery
 - Evan Fitzpatrick
 - Reopen Nominations
- c. Non-alcoholic Events (ENTS Forum)
- Annie Buick
 - Ben Sweeney
 - Reopen Nominations

The following candidates were successful:

- Non-Alcoholic Officer - Shauna Young
- First Year Ents - Blessed Fonkoh
- Student Residences Campaign Coordinator - Annie Buick

G. Items for Approval

H. Motions on notice

- a. Motion on solidarity with Palestine - Martha Ní Riada

Council notes: The deeply concerning nature of the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territories and in Israel in recent weeks, the resulting loss of innocent lives, and the potential for further escalation in the Middle East.

Council further notes: These developments are a direct outcome of Israel's blockade and restriction of Gaza and the West Bank, along with its policies of apartheid and the forced displacement it enforces in the West Bank and within its own boundaries.

Council believes: Calls that Gaza maintains access to essential necessities such as food, medicine, fuel, and humanitarian aid should immediately be heeded, but they do not go far enough. The plight of the Palestinian people has been fastened by the role played by the international community, in particular the United States and the European Union, both of which have been active participants on the perpetuation of war crimes against the Palestinian people.

Council further believes: The raid carried out by Hamas on October 7th has been rightly condemned. It is still vital that the broader context and root cause of this violence, decades of hostile military rule over an entire civilian population, is not forgotten. Therefore, we also condemn elements within the media which seek to offer propaganda cover for the colossal damage being done to Gaza, as well as the world's largest social media platforms, which appear to be curtailing the reach of content that is critical of the actions of the Israeli Government.

Council acknowledges: The deep emotional toll of the violence on students from impacted communities and stands in solidarity with students facing heightened levels of Islamophobia and antisemitism.

Council recognises: Since 2018, UCD Students' Union has been a supporter of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign and in line with policy set by Union Council, has organised Palestine Awareness initiatives both on campus and online.

Council therefore mandates: The President and the Campaigns & Engagement Officer to lead UCD Students' Union in calling upon international powers and the Israeli Government to bring about an immediate ceasefire and bring the campaign of genocide to a halt.

Council further mandates: UCD Students' Union, as previously mandated in 2021, to continue to hold Palestine Awareness week events each year in conjunction with relevant societies, interest groups, and the wider student body. This will fall under the remit of the Campaigns & Engagement Officer.

Proposed by: Martha Ní Riada (she/her, UCDSU President)

Seconded by: Miranda Bauer (she/her, UCDSU Campaigns & Engagement Officer)

Speakers 'FOR' and 'AGAINST' the motion were heard. A procedural motion 9P (vote by role call) was called by Simon Van Beek (Business CO) and approved. The room was asked to make sure that they had signed before the Chair conducted the roll call. The final tally was:

FOR: 81

AGAINST: 1

Therefore the motion was clearly carried.

b. Motion regarding mandatory lecture recordings - Kylie McCardel

Council recognises: Rights of students with disabilities are still heavily unsupported by lecturers campus-wide.

Council notes: Access to a "University for All" requires that learning must be accessible and equal for all students, regardless of their ability to be physically present in every lecture.

Council further notes: The requirement for lecturers to provide either lecture recordings or legible, typed lecture notes (or both, if they wish) would be an invaluable resource for students unable to attend some or all lectures due to their personal circumstances.

Council also notes: Some professors may face strong reluctance to providing lecture recordings (due to concerns of job security or intellectual property protection, for example), and the option to solely provide legible lecture notes is paramount to ensuring university-wide compliance with this motion.

Council reaffirms: The rights of disabled students and their access to their course material is heavily infringed by the lack of a general requirement to provide such resource, and it would be to the student body's benefit to request same.

Council therefore mandates: That the Education Officer, Welfare Officer and Disability Campaign Coordinator lobby every college in UCD to ensure that lecturers to provide either lecture recordings or lecture notes as these resources would provide an invaluable access to education that is currently lacking for many disabled students.

Proposed by: Kylie McCardel (Disability Rights Campaigns Coordinator)

Seconded by: Jill Nelis (Welfare Officer)

An amendment to the motion was carried so as to assign it to relevant officers, as UCDSU Council cannot mandate the university.

Speakers 'FOR' and 'AGAINST' were heard.

The motion was put to a vote and was clearly carried.

c. Motion to establish a Coiste Gaeilge / Irish Committee - Aoibheann Brentnall

Council notes: That the Irish language is an important part of Irish society and the Union could do more to use and promote the Irish language in their publications and encourage the University to comply with the Official Languages Act 2021.

Council acknowledges: The reliance on an executive officer to be fluent in Irish is not a sustainable practice for the Union in relation to promotion and use of the Irish language.

Council believes: That Irish should be used more widely by the Union in their promotions and the union should work towards having bilingual publications. The Union should also lobby the University to do the same.

Council therefore mandates: That a Coiste Gaeilge / Irish Committee should be established that is chaired by the Oifigeach na Gaeilge. The committee will have a subcommittee that will deal with some translations for the Union. The committee overall will advise the Union on the promotion and use of Irish language.

Proposed by: Aoibhinn Brentnall, Oifigeach na Gaeilge

Seconded by: Miranda Bauer, Campaigns and Engagement Officer / Sarah McGrath, Education Officer

Speakers 'FOR' and 'AGAINST' were heard.

The motion was put to a vote and was clearly carried.

I. Items for Discussion

- a. Permit parking availability on campus - Deferred to the next Council meeting
- b. Draft of UCDSU Climate Action Policy - Deferred to the next Council meeting
- c. Splitting the Engineering and Architecture College Officer constituency - Cillian Murphy (Eng and Arch CO)
 - Question was asked if the split would be along discipline lines or building lines.
 - One contributor said that this is perhaps long overdue, particularly given the unique nature of the issues faced by students in Richview.

- Regarding the impact on the elections, this would attract more votes at a local level.
- Additional support would be needed for APEP students who already feel a level of disconnect.

J. The reports of Non Executive elected roles

All reports available in the Council 2 folder

- a. **Environmental - Ellen Curran - Carried**
- b. **International Students - Simran Khatri - Carried**

Reports passed and carried

K. The reports of each Executive Officer

Erin Hoare - Science College Officer

No questions. The report was carried.

Tsz Ching Pang - Social Science College Officer

Question about SS Instagram and it is in the process of being set up. There were no further questions and the report was carried.

Aisling Moloney - Law College Officer

Taken as read and the report was carried.

Louise Campbell - Arts and Humanities College Officer

Taken as read and the report was carried.

Tia Cullen - Health Sciences College Officer

Update that there needs to be an addressing of the School of Medicine electing their own internal class ambassadors for boards and committees. Tia asked what the exact role of these class ambassadors is vis-a-vis the SU's role as the entity that elects class reps. T

There was also a successful College Council held recently.

No further questions were asked and the report was passed.

Cillian Murphy - Engineering & Architecture College Officer

Taken as read. Cillian's report was carried.

Simon Van Beek - Business College Officer

Taken as read and carried.

Jill Nelis - Welfare Officer

Taken mostly as read. Jill brought to Council's attention a Town Hall coming up on Monday 13 November about proposals to reform disability payments. Jill asked that all Council take note of the date and that there is big support behind this. There were no further questions and Jill's report was carried.

Neo O'Herlihy - Entertainments Officer

Neo spoke to his report. He flagged his role in supporting the Welfare Officer in running SHAG Week. He thanked people who attended this and the Animal Farm.

There were no questions on his report. Neo's report was subsequently carried.

Martha Ní Riada - President

Martha flagged work ongoing with the launch of the Housing Survey, the facilitation of the consultative referendum on PhD rights, and the composition of the next Governing Authority.. There were no questions for Martha and her report was carried.

Marc Matouc - Graduate Officer

Marc outlined the work that has been done since June. He brought attention to the launch of the Smurfit Shuttle Bus, and that he is putting together a report for UMT SEG on Smurfit. There were no questions for Marc and his report was carried.

Sarah McGrath - Education Officer

Sarah sent her apologies for the evening.

Miranda Bauer - Campaigns & Engagement Officer

Miranda was not present at this stage so her report was deferred.

L. Questions on notice

M. Questions not on notice

N. Motions not on notice

O. Items for noting

- a. Upcoming presentation on student-funded amenities -
Council #3 - Monday 20 November
- b. Working Group for a UCDSU submission on Green Paper
on Disability Reform
- c. Exam Information Sessions
- d. Trade Union Week: w/c Monday 20 November

P. Submission of motions to be on notice for next meeting

Q. Any Other Business.

Meeting adjourned at 20:41