

## FULFILLING THE POLICIES

Ultimately, the policy of the USI is decided by its members, and I promise to work my hardest to fulfil as much of the policy document as possible.

**USI Congress decides policy and its Officers are merely the instruments by which those policies are implemented.**

## EXPERIENCE

- \*UCDSU Education Officer 09/10
- \*UCDSU Union Council – 07/08, 08/09, 09/10
- \*UCD Governing Authority 09/10
- \*UCD Academic Council 09/10
- \*UCD Science Undergraduate Programme board 07/08, 08/09
- \*USI National council 08/09, 09/10
- \*USI Officerboard 08/09
- \*UCDSU Science Programme officer 08/09
- \*Part of the team which organized the Grants protest in Wicklow Co. Council and speeded up the receipt of grants from that Council by a fortnight
- \*Part of the officerboard that students on the streets nationwide, including over 20,000 in Dublin, campaigning against the re-introduction of 3<sup>rd</sup> level tuition fees
- \*Directly targeted Green TDs in a national lobbying campaign against 3<sup>rd</sup> level tuition fees with great success
- \*Has fully participated in USI campaigns since 2007, on issues ranging from accommodation shortages to SHAG week
- \*Increased student representation on university committees in UCD, including a major increase in Staff-student committees at a School level
- \*Successfully contested an increase in Postgraduate fees for the 09/10 year in UCD
- \*Introduced new out-of-hours study areas in UCD
- \*Created University policy on demonstrator and tutor standards, international fees, and reading resources.
- \*Reversed cuts in summer Library opening hours

Contact me with any questions, comments, or queries on particular issues!

Donnacha.osuilleabhain@gmail.com

I'd be happy to speak to you, at your college or at Congress

**Vote No. 1 Donnacha Ó Súilleabháin  
for USI Education Officer**

**VOTE No. 1 DONNACHA Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN**

**FOR USI EDUCATION OFFICER**



**VÓTÁIL UIMHIR 1 MAR  
OIFIGEACH OIDEACHAIS**

## WHO IS DONNACHA Ó SÚILLEABHÁIN?

My name is Donnacha Ó Súilleabháin and I am the Education officer in UCD Students' Union, on a sabbatical year from a BSc in Neuroscience. I hail from Achill Island in Co. Mayo, and since I came to Dublin four years ago I've become heavily involved in student life from societies like PhotoSoc to the Students' Union.

I was heavily involved this year in lobbying members of the Oireachtas in the fight against third level fees, and in the Irish Times ad campaign on the same issue.

As education officer in UCDSU I gained much experience through sitting on the Governing Authority of the university, on the Academic Council and on nearly 40 other committees overseeing a range of academic and structural issues. I have contributed to these committees and fought for the wellbeing of students at every opportunity.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in UCDSU - as a class rep, programme officer and this year as a sabbat and I want to take the experience I've gained over the last three years to USI.

I'm very interested in the areas of quality assurance and access to Education, and promise to work passionately and tirelessly on your behalf if elected.

## WHY DO I WANT TO DO IT?

As I said already, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in UCD Students' Union, representing the views and defending the rights of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> level students for the past three years. Working on the frontline of student support is an intensely rewarding experience. I feel that I have a lot to give to the membership of USI whether it be dealing with the challenges which arise on a national level over the next year, or through supporting their local officers behind the scenes. We are entering a challenging period in higher education, what I want is an opportunity to do my best for USI and for the country's students.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

Ireland is at a turning point in relation to quality assurance - many multinationals, including Google, have lost confidence in the standard of our degrees, and accusations of grade inflation are rife in the national media. The Minister for Education has recently announced that he is drafting legislation to set up a new qualifications and quality assurance agency that will merge the HETAC, FETAC, NQAI and IUQB. It is imperative that USI have a voice on this new body.

As Education officer, Donnacha will work to ensure

-That the HETAC and IUQB undertake a thorough review of the current accusations of grade inflation, and that concrete steps are taken to counteract any devaluation of the Irish degree internationally.

-That any draft legislation which is produced on Quality Assurance emphasises and secures the importance of student evaluation in QA, and that adequate student representation is a core principle in the process, all the way from class rep level to the board of any new body which is founded.

## ACCESS TO EDUCATION

For the first time in 1968 years, the maintenance grant was cut by 5%. In addition to this recipients of the Back to Education allowance (BTEA) had their entitlements to the maintenance grant removed. Notwithstanding the fact that the maintenance grant has been woefully inadequate since its inception in the 1970's, and has NEVER increased in line with inflation, this is a disgraceful attack on the most vulnerable in our education system, and needs sustained campaigning and innovative approaches to prevent further cuts and reverse previous ones.

As Education officer Donnacha promises:

-To demand a re-instatement of the maintenance grant for BTEA recipients

-Work for a more efficient grants system, making savings through administration, not by cutting back on students

-To ensure that the Student Support bill, which we have worked so hard for, does not fall by the wayside and is implemented immediately.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

USI has a lot to learn from its European colleagues ESU, and in particular our neighbours in the UK, the NUS. We have already proven to be excellent partners with the establishment of NUS-USI, however, there is much to be learned by all parties on many other fronts. In order for USI to be the very best union it can be, dialogue must be had with these other students' unions on officer training, best practice and a whole range of related measures.

This years education officer, Hugh Sullivan, has already done great work in this field, and if elected education officer, Donnacha promises to strengthen information sharing between our partners, inviting them to events such as UOS to get their input and perspectives, and sending delegates to similar events.

## WORKING FOR YOUR OFFICERS

For the members to benefit fully from USI, their local officer must be supported fully in their day-to-day roles. As a local sabbatical officer this year, Donnacha benefitted greatly from the support structures in USI.

As education officer, Donnacha promises to

- Ensure a vibrant education working group, where productive idea-sharing means a better deal for students across the country. If a visibility campaign is particularly effective in Carlow IT, why shouldn't it work in IT Tallaght?

-Communicate national developments regularly to local officers, so they are best equipped to deal with whatever may arise.

-Organise relevant modules that enable them to help the personal cases they will have through the year, on a legislative level as well as on an interpersonal level.

-Provide officers around the country with briefing documents on any major policy issues which may come up throughout the year.