

**VOTE NO. 1 JONO CLIFFORD
FOR USI DEPUTY PRESIDENT**



**VÓTÁIL UIMHIR 1 MAR
LEAS UACHTARÁN**

The Campaign

Students still need to 'Demand a Better Future' – The issue of Fees may be somewhat on the backburner but it cannot be ignored. There is a massive possibility that a General Election will be called and we need to be aware of this. USI must link in with all possible future Government Parties and ensure that Fees are not a priority for the Party in any guise. I will connect with all Party leaders as early as possible with an aim to creating a link with them to assist us with this issue.

This year more than any previous year the Grant System has been severely lacking. Thousands of Students are still waiting to receive any form of payment with the result being many students having to drop out. This is unacceptable. Ground is finally being gained on the Student Support Bill but we cannot rest now. I hope to ensure that the Student Support Bill is implemented successfully. And I also feel that by linking in early with Politicians we can gain ground on this issue. We can gain a lot more by lobbying politicians and using them rather than automatically working against them and I believe this should be our method.

However this is not enough, as we've seen on numerous occasions Politicians are not always eager to support our cause and when this happens it's time for Direct Action. I feel we need to more targeted in this regard and look at this on a local level and build it up to National.

I have often said we need to 'light small fires' and I do believe that this is the best method. Our argument is much stronger when we are putting pressure on Politicians if they have seen it in their local paper or heard it on Local Radio.

We need to be in the media much more, I will work constantly with the USI Press Officer to ensure that we are a much more visual and known organisation, through the use of viral media, in particular YouTube. I will also request that all COs, gain permission for there to be a USI section in their College Papers where possible, and that there be a USI logo on each CO website with a direct link to the USI Website.

USI needs to be a proactive organisation seeking solutions for students. USI needs to look at the long term and look at what may or may not happen. In my experience I have seen so many different issues facing students many of which could have been predicted. I feel that by planning adequately at the start of the year and ensuring that Officerboard hit the ground running at the start of their term we can have a much more proactive organization and I aim to ensure this happens.

I want to see the current logo changed to a logo that actually means something to our members, and will undertake the responsibility to do this.

The North – I feel that USI has not linked in with COs in the North as much as it could over previous years. I aim to work closely with the NUS/USI President and Northern COs and assist them in any campaigns which they request of me.

Student Image

All too often is our argument for Students' Rights weakened by instances of Anti Social Behaviour. I want to ensure that the negative media which Students get is minimized.

I plan to run a campaign early in the year advising students not to become involved in any form of Anti Social Behaviour. I aim to develop the document put together this year and add more information about campaigns which have proved successful in COs previously, such as the 'Sssh' Campaign and the 'Love thy Neighbour' campaign.

I also believe that we need to do more for the National Charity. Every year the National Charity is neglected by USI even though there is huge potential to raise a substantial amount of money for a very worthy cause.

Also if students are seen to be giving back by raising money for Charity this will lead to much better media for students which will in turn lead to a much stronger argument for students when fighting other issues.

Non affiliates - I believe a new approach needs to be taken with Non Affiliates. The current method has not proved successful so now we must start afresh. I believe that contact needs to be made as early in July as possible and the question of re affiliation needs to be put. I think we need to sell the benefits of USI to Non Affiliates and find out from them what they want to see USI doing and if this will benefit not just possible re affiliates but all COs also. USI needs to be sold to Non Affiliates and I believe I can do this.

HOW CAN WE GET MORE STUDENTS INVOLVED IN USI?

We need to get Students involved in USI. I will ensure that all COs have at least one USI Rep on Campus. This person can make sure that all USI Material sent to COs is distributed as I know from my own experience this can often be a burden on SUs.

I intend to run a campaign early in the year, 'What is USI?' This campaign will consist of Postering, Flyering etc. and meeting Class Councils, explaining the basic principles of the Organisation.

This year saw the Inaugural USI Activist Academy. In my opinion this is a huge opportunity for us to get Students more involved and more aware of what USI is. The typical student is oblivious to the fact that they are part of a National Union which is fighting for them. The Activist Academy is the perfect opportunity to get students involved and in turn have them 'spread the good word of USI'.

There is no reason why next year the Activist Academy cannot be as big if not bigger than Pink Training. This is one of my main aims for next year, if elected I aim to make Activist Academy the biggest training event USI runs and gain more interest and more activity among the student population with regard to USI.

So WHY SHOULD YOU VOTE FOR JONO?

I have spent the past 3 years involved in the Student Movement and since my first day of office my targets have always been the same. To create awareness thus increasing involvement and if elected Deputy President I aim to do the same. To get more Students on Ground Level aware of USI.

My first sabbatical role in a Union was as Vice President Education of IT Tralee Students' Union, here I created an entirely new class rep system, with record numbers attending Class Rep Training and Class Rep Councils. This was one of my main achievements that year. I was then elected as President and went on to become in what was to be a long battle in the form of the 'Fight against Fees'. IT Tralee held a protest against this which had a massive proportion of Students march. This was in turn down to the effective Class Rep System we had put in place the previous year. I believe I can do this on a national level and get more students involved.

I feel this year has prepared me so much for the role of Deputy President. As Southern Area Officer, I have been on the ground meeting Students trying to create awareness of USI and what we do. I feel that in many COs I have achieved this

I believe that I can bring USI back to where it needs to be and that is to the Students. We need to get students on the ground level, fighting for their rights and not being afraid to stand up for themselves.

I believe USI is an organization that can influence people so much when it is effective. And we need only look at past achievements to see this. USI campaigned for Gay Rights long before anyone else, NUS/USI was created long before the Good Friday Agreement; USI was demanding that contraception be made easily accessible long before anyone else dared to talk about it.

We are the Future, Let's be the Now