

VOTE
LINDA KELLY #1
FOR USI PRESIDENT



VÓTÁIL UIMHIR 1
LINDA NÍ CHEALLAIGH
MAR UACHTARÁN AMLÉ

About Linda

I'm originally from Cork and moved to Dublin in June 2008 to take up my position as USI Equality Officer. I was re-elected by the membership at Congress 2009 to serve another year as Equality Officer. Before working with USI, I completed a BSc (Hons) Speech & Language Therapy degree at University College Cork.

My Vision for USI

If elected, I will work toward creating a national student organisation that engages with students from every corner of the country, supports students unions to deliver the best service at local level and wins for students on the issues affecting them.

I believe USI is not realising its full potential. There are a number of reasons for this, which, if elected President, I will focus on. USI needs to:

1. **Engage & empower** students & students unions to create a united national voice;
2. **Develop the skills base** within and the professionalism of the organisation;
3. **Fulfil its mandate** as set out by the members.

Making USI work for Students

If I am elected, USI will implement a twin 'Engage & Empower' membership strategy.

USI will engage students by

- a) Rebranding USI and creating an updated, interactive, online media strategy;
- b) Providing a range of services to COs and students such as, national services agreements with major suppliers, student discount card (common in many countries) See service provision below.
- c) Targeting advertising & marketing of USI's message through various youth media outlets.

USI will empower students through

- a) Residential Activist Academy events in both Semester 1 and 2 as well as a more comprehensive series of training events;
- b) Open public meetings on campuses across the country to promote the USI message to the student body and listen to their needs and
- c) Easy to use lobby packs on different issues available on the website for students to download and use throughout the year.

A United Membership

The re-affiliation of NUIM has been one of the great successes that I have been involved in over the past 2 years. If elected, USI will encourage and promote the benefits of USI membership to **all** students, in particular targeting students and officers in the three remaining non affiliate colleges and in the further education sector.

USI will also seek to re-engage all unions in the democratic structures and activities of the union, in particular those based in Northern Ireland. If elected, USI will continue to support NUSUSI and work in conjunction with them to implement the new bilateral agreement

Making USI work for Student Unions

One of the core functions of USI is supporting local unions and it is an area of work that we do well. However, we must now develop this area. If elected, USI will create a dedicated services section and a more comprehensive training programme.

Service Provision

USI has the potential to facilitate the delivery of cost effective commercial services to the benefit of COs and their members around the country without distracting from the mandate of Officerboard. If I am elected, USI will look to broker deals with major suppliers in areas such as, for example, printing, travel, insurance, phones, clothing, student discount card . While being of major benefit to COs these initiatives will also create a new income stream for USI which will rebalance the income of USI and reduce the current high dependence on affiliation fees.

Training

USI provides excellent officer training during UOS as well as Pink Training, Green Training and Activist Academy during the year. These are hugely successful events and we now need to develop a more comprehensive programme of training events to run throughout the year. If elected, USI will create a programme of training which will add the following training modules: Part time officer training; Events Training; Media Training; Club and Society Committee Training and Election Training.

Communication & Accountability

Communication is vital to creating a culture where officer board and local students unions work in partnership. If elected, USI will develop a) mass text messaging; b) a dedicated members section on the USI website and c) regular phone and email contact to all CO Officers.

It is also important that COs hold officers to account in a fair and transparent manner. If elected, USI will create a system whereby all officers create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) Short, Medium & Long Term goals which will be presented at the first National Council of the year and reported on to COs every month.

Creating a Professional Organisation

USI is acting on the national stage with other national organisations and a government that have huge resources and expertise at their disposal. USI must become more professional in order to fully exploit our strength to the benefit of all students. If elected USI will be run, not as a business but in a business like manner and undertake to do the following:

- **Officer Board:** All national officers will be given much more comprehensive training for their role. This will take place before UOS;
- **Staff Resources:** If elected USI will create a new staff position - Administrative / Operations Officer. This position will alleviate officers from a lot of the mundane administrative tasks and allow them to fully focus on achieving their mandates. It will also allow the General Manager to effectively utilise his business and commercial expertise to the benefit of USI and its members;
- **Cairde USI:** This year USI celebrated its 50th Anniversary and at that, we launched our USI Alumni organisation. Having met a number of former officers, it is clear that they are in a unique position to provide expertise and guidance to the organisation as well as being in positions where they can now assist USI in achieving its agenda. If elected, Cairde USI will be developed fully.

Fulfilling Our Mandate

Access to education is currently under attack. The threat of tuition fees remains; the grant system is in meltdown and the student services charge is a very real barrier to many wishing to participate in third level. USI must win for students on these issues in order to ensure equality of access to education. If elected, I will present the 'USI Roadmap to Success' to the first meeting of National Council which will outline our strategies in each key policy area within the union for 2010/2011. Two areas we will focus heavily on are the:

Students Services Charge:

- ✓ Continue to campaign for the abolition of the students services charge and call for a legal clarification on the definition of 'student service';
- ✓ In the interim, cap the charge until an independent investigation into the distribution of the charge in all Higher Education Institutes is carried out;
- ✓ Immediately stop all additional 'student services' levies currently being asked of students.

Student Support Bill:

- ✓ Enact the Student Support Bill by the end of 2010 and ensure student representation on all committees tasked with implementing the Student Support Bill;
- ✓ Create a set of interim guidelines to be adopted by all awarding bodies until the Student Support Bill is implemented fully including at a minimum, an online application system and electronic fund payments;
- ✓ Oppose cuts to all student financial aids, lobby for the reversal of the budget decision on the BTEA & Grant and support all efforts to increase funding for student assistance funds

If elected, USI will also commission research into the student experience, the impact of tuition fees on student participation and coordinate existing MA & PhD research in the area. USI will then convene a conference for all education stakeholders to present the results of our research which will place us as the leading stakeholder in the third level sector. This will be accompanied by a more targeted and proactive media approach.

Experience

- Member of officerboards responsible for defeating fees & capping the reg fee;
- Representing students at a national level to Government, HEA, AHEAD, ICOS & IFPA;
- Leading, restructuring & rebranding a national campaign;
- Representing USI in the media (TV, print & radio);

Having spent two years on officer board I know the organisation and what the role of President entails. With this experience and knowledge of the organisation, I can hit the ground running from the 1st of July which will be of huge benefit to the organisation and its members.

I am dedicated to creating a national organisation that works for its ordinary members, that supports local students union and that wins over policy makers on the issues affecting students across Ireland. If you share this vision, if you want to be part of this USI, then vote

Linda Kelly #1 for USI President

Join the campaign: www.facebook.com/lindaforpresident & lindaforpresident.wordpress.com