



TU Dublin Students' Union
Student Council Officer Report 23/24
Tuarascáil Oifigeach Comhairle na Mac Léinn
Aontas na Mac Leinn, Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta,
Baile Átha Cliath 23/24



Officer Name: <i>Ainm an Oifigeach</i>	Brian Jordan	Email Address: <i>Seoladh Ríomhphoist</i>	president@tudublinsu.ie
Officer Position: <i>Seasamh an Oifigigh</i>	President	Period of Work: <i>Treimhse Oibre</i>	10 th November – 5 th December 2023

Key Points of work carried out since last meeting
Príomhphointí ón gcruinniú deireanach

Welcome back to the Union! The festive season is well and truly in action and that can only mean one thing; fun, chaos and presents (the presents being your delightful presence at this Student Council). In keeping with my ritualistic bureaucracy, the structure of the political side of TUDSU remains as follows:

- 1) President & Democracy
- 2) Academic Affairs
- 3) Welfare & Equality
- 4) Events & Fundraising
- 5) Communications & Media
- 6) Campus & Facilities
- 7) National Affairs & USI

The only amendment since November is the 'Campaigns' sub-committee which has been shelved for now, given that every single campaign within it also falls easily within another sub-committee (e.g. Blanchardstown Transport is a campaign, but easily falls within Campus + Facilities). Fear not, campaigns are still happening! Without further ado:

President & Democracy

We finally, after months of lobbying, emails and Governing Body politics, received a meeting with the University COO (Denis Murphy), where he provided the accounts for the Student Development Fund (there is approximately 7 million present), the precise breakdown of student numbers, and the allocation of the student charge.

There are some areas that require follow-up (including our ongoing query of the potential underpayment of 300,000), and he has set a meeting up for us to meet again in early February; he was the one to suggest a 2 hour 'handover' with ourselves, the new General Manager (whomever they may be), and our new Finance Executive, to ensure that the Union & University are on the same page. This is a significant win personally, for the Union, and is a show of 'partnership' within the UET.

Student Facilities Working Group is due to meet tomorrow (will have occurred by the time Council meets), and it is expected that the topic of a 'student levy' is to be mentioned. The stance of the Union (which aligns with current Student Council Policy) is that before any discussion of a levy is had, that this committee will present a comprehensive proposal for a Student Centre, with costings, and with significant Union input prior, during, and after. In any case, this committee is slow-moving and no real levy proposal will (in my view) appear for some time.

Partnership Agreement (a mechanism to formalise the inherent relationship between the SU + University, as well as agree annual goals such as a data sharing agreement) has, for the first time in months, reached a milestone. The Registrar, finally, established a working group where we met + discussed what both parties wish to see from such an agreement. A new draft is in the works, and the University, finally, appear to want to sign one that isn't entirely tokenistic.



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Democracy has taken a positive turn; student council positions are nearly all filled (e.g. with three councillors being elected to ex-officio PTO positions, those need to be replaced), Faculty Reps have been recruited, and all Part-Time Officer positions have been filled. With the new Representation Executive in place, and our Leads excelling, democratic functions are running far more smoothly.

Given how many new Part-Time Officers are present, the President (me) and senior Leadership team have agreed to run a second 'Training day' for the new recruits (and those who missed the initial one). Furthermore, a comprehensive policy outlining reporting structures, hours, wages, and all of the operationally exciting things, was approved and circulated with the PTO's a few weeks ago. They now feed directly into our weekly meetings, and we've seen a decrease in any 'anomalies'.

Other updates include a planned 'plebiscite' on a 'Vote of No-Confidence in the Irish Government' (it could make headlines, will engage usually 'disengaged' voters during elections, and can create useful Union policy for future teams), some schedule changes (i.e. to enhance Officer accountability as voted on by Council), and a likely 'Affiliation campaign' with USI, in order to align with virtually every other Union in the country (that hold a neutral affiliation campaign every three years).

In future, Council updates / Democracy may be moved under a heading called 'Representation', given our staff cohort has been (thank you) replenished; however, Representation will remain a priority status item for the President at all times (given its political roots).

Other major overall updates relate to assigning our VP for Events & Engagement as our 'Deputy of Campaigns' (which, it must be noted, has been a significant support to the President), while our VP for Communications + Media remains our formal Deputy, and retains all voting rights at National Council, and within the organisation, in my absence.

To address the far-right elephant in the room; some of our campuses were affected by the riots in Dublin city last week. Thankfully, to our knowledge, all of our students are safe, and our Deputy of Campaigns was exceptionally pro-active in all of our public correspondence. Students were notably unhappy with TU Dublin's optically poor response throughout the two days (Thursday + Friday), but the Union's far more rapid response received significant social media 'approval' i.e. reputationally, the Union remains positive by all measurable accounts. Exceptional work by the Deputy of Campaigns + the General Manager.

As of the time of writing, there was an additional incident in Central Quad (Grangegorman) that resulted in a number of armed Gardaí being present, as well as an individual allegedly possessing a 'knife' (everything else remains unfounded so I'm unable to confirm/comment). The TUI + Porters are (subjectively) scared, and the Union will seek to support them in demanding the University improve safety standards across TU Dublin.

Finally, on the topic of student accommodation, the primary issue remains: the current Government have failed to establish a 'Borrowing Framework' which means that TU's (including TU Dublin) cannot borrow from the government (the central mechanism by which 'legacy' universities build student accommodation). The Union continues to lobby for this + has repeatedly pushed for USI to do the same; their progress has been notably slow.

Academic Affairs



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Class Representative statistics have improved significantly over the past few weeks, due to the co-option stage (similar to the previous year; it is a significant outreach project by the Student Advisors, to which we are immensely grateful), and the current statistics are as follows:

- Blanchardstown = 92%
- Bolton Street = 73%
- Aungier Street = 71%
- Tallaght = 65%
- East Quad = 59%
- Central Quad = 49%

The second round of Class Representative meetings took place with slightly lower than average attendance (but very good engagement from those in BST + EQ), and all students in the database were sent the class representative handbook. Main concerns include standard casework, with the News Media Outlet + Bolton facilities topping the political list.

Upcoming Academic Affairs campaigns include the Winter Exams period (i.e. promote our current resources which are extensive and comprehensive, exam stands on each site for Union exposure).

Upcoming political goals include finalising our stance on the Student Survey (which is not running this year thankfully), finalising the Student Charter (via the new Student Experience Committee), and amending a motion on supporting the Access programme.

Welfare & Equality

Mental Health Week & SHIFT week took place during November. Social Justice Week was rescheduled to the first week in December (same week as 'Christmas Week'), with the main events (that I'm aware of) being Dance Classes and a Clothing Appeal. The focus has shifted towards planning Semester 2 events, with Rainbow week planning already in motion. Shoutout to Deputy of Campaigns for his championing of the new ECWG (Events + Campaigns Working Group) which is accelerating planning stages for these events-heavy campaigns.

Policy work is proceeding nicely; the WEA Lead is finalising comprehensive proposals for the 'Period Products Initiative' and 'T-Fund' (mandated by Council, come across the SU sector) which are due for submission at the next SEC (Student Experience Committee). Gender neutral signage was delivered and implemented onto Grangegorman (at long last). A much more comprehensive policy around all things Trans Healthcare is being submitted by VP Blanchardstown + President to Council.

Events & Fundraising

The past month has seen remarkable success with sold-out events, including the Nightmare Realm event and Halloween Ball. Nightmare Realm sold all 200 tickets (and was very popular amongst students), while the Halloween Ball sold 420 tickets; the Ball made a profit of 4500.



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Upcoming Christmas Week events (which has been highly anticipated by the student body given its success in other Dublin universities) include Bingo Loco, a Christmas Market, Christmas Jumper Day, Sketch and Sip, Christmas Tree Decorating, and many, many Elf Suits + Santa costumes!

As well, it should be noted that all budgets and communications forms have consistently been submitted both correctly and on-time, and have been communicated well internally (with the team) and externally (students). As well, the events themselves have been creative and the student body are responding very well via social media – shoutout to the VP for Events & Engagement!

As well, Fundraising Efforts have ramped up significantly in the past month for the Irish Cancer Society. The main event for Semester 1 is Shave or Dye which has over 70 students signed up (and just shy of 3000 euro raised via this initiative alone). Not to brag, but the President is currently in 1st Place on the GoFundMe!

Another optical fundraising event is our Charity sleepout which will simultaneously raise funds and raise awareness about student homelessness and safety, which is very timely. Finally, our Semester 2 fundraising efforts include Relay for Life and many other surprises!

The past month has been a testament to the Union's ability to engage and entertain the student body. The success of our events, both in terms of attendance and finances, is commendable. Looking forward, the Christmas week events are poised to continue this trend of community building.

Communications & Media

No additional progress on media outlet since September Board update; plan remains for VP Communications & Media to conduct market research on some sort.

Leadership (General Manager, Leads, President) discussed how to progress this project. Updated plan is for our Membership Survey to include questions on the media Outlet, while our new focus group system (via Student Council) to allow for focus group-level information to be gathered. As well as that, the President is to review the initial Media Outlet update from September and make a formal request to the board to hire someone externally to assist with the project set-up (using the budget allocated for the Media Outlet already, which is running well below budget).

The VP for Communications & Media is planning a 'Students' Union' awareness campaign (most likely a well-shot video that can be recycled in subsequent years) in Semester 2, with the goal being to explain what the Union actually does. Updates expected by the next Board.

Recent media posts (EUT+, Pink Training, Riot Response) have performed very well, with the Riot response in particular becoming one of our most 'liked' posts ever. Credit to VP for Events & Engagement for their rapid response in what became our 'Riot Crisis response Team' chat! This is a welcome trend given that media interest usually drops towards the end of semester.

National Affairs / USI

Some national topics (that were discussed in previous sections) include Student Survey agreeing not to run for a year,



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the Dublin riots, and the worrying upwards trend of anti-migrant + racist rhetoric. USI Pink Training was a success in that we occupied virtually all of our delegate spots (compared to many MO's who had barely 50% attendance), and our very own President was a speaker. The event itself was adequate. Their annual EmPower event (to empower people from diverse backgrounds to go for positions in leadership) had 6 attendees.

National Council is fast approaching (taking place mid-December in University of Galway). As mentioned previously, the Executive are going to recommend we hold an Affiliation campaign in line with what most other MO's do regularly (e.g. MSU votes every 3 years), as we aim to engage our student population better.

Campus & Facilities

The CVP's are finalising the Food Voucher initiative (launch due Wednesday 6th December), as well as Union stances on the gyms, parking, and canteens. President has FOI'ed the University for information regarding both seating in Grangegorman + Parking in Blanchardstown (as the University have ignored a dozen emails over several months from the Union requesting this information), with results due back before the end of December.

CVP's all sit on the Green Campus committee where they've requested that more bins are placed on each campus (particularly Grangegorman), which has been well-received. Bolton bike facilities are improving i.e. they finally shut down the location that faces the street; SU to locate the new facility + advertise to its members. Accessibility is being improved on Blanchardstown with the lift key access finally being removed (endorsed by Disabilities office).

President finally managed to reinstate furniture negotiations with the University i.e. they located the missing 25,000 from three+ years ago and we are now entering the procurement process. CVP for City has finalised two comprehensive documents on BST + Linenhall, due for circulation with several key University staff next week.

Summary

Incredibly busy times but due to some 'shining stars' in the organisation, we are progressing with our myriad workplan items and retain strong student support. Happy holidays!



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Meetings Attended (and Number) <i>Tinrimh Choistí agus Cruinnithe (agus Líon)</i>	Events/Activities Attended <i>Tinrimh Imeachtaí / Gníomhaíochtaí</i>
Disabilities Office [Deirde Staunton] x 1 Academic Affairs Weekly x 3 Welfare & Equality Weekly x 2 Pink Training Organisation x 1 Student Finance Committee x 2 Communications + Media Weekly x 2 Finance Executive Desk Assessment x 1 Finance Executive Interviews x 1 Student Council x 1 Student Experience Committee x 1 Student Interview [East Quad] x 1 Student Survey Meeting [Mark Russell] x 1 Leadership Weekly x 3 PhD Stipend Discussion [Mary McNamara] x 1 PhD Stipend Discussion [Brendan Jennings] x 1 Food Voucher Finalisation x 1 Governing Body EDI Sub-Committee x 1 Partnership Document Meeting x 1 University Finances Meeting x 1 Events + Campaigns Working Group x 2 Campus + Facilities Weekly x 2 University SHW [Safety, Health, Welfare] x 1 Constitutional Review x 2 Gym Access + Furniture [TU Dublin] x 1 Governance Committee [USI] x 1 Payroll Actioning x 1 Payments Actioning x 2 Palestine Solidarity On-Campus Event x 1 National Council x 1 Student Charter [USI] x 1 Representation Weekly x 1 Board Report Preparation x 1 Partnership + Leadership Meeting x 1 Anti-racism Solidarity Group x 1 TUDSU CLG FARC x 1 Academic Council Preparation x 1	EUT+ Trip [Paphos, Cyprus] Pink Training [University of Galway]



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Student Council Preparation x 1		
Gifts Received <i>Bronntanais a Fuarthas</i>	Personal Expenses <i>Costaisí phearsanta</i>	
N/A	N/A	
Additional notes <i>Aon nithe eile</i>		
Happy Holidays!		