



**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*



<b>Officer Name:</b> <i>Ainm an Oifigeach</i>	Brian Jordan	<b>Email Address:</b> <i>Seoladh Ríomhphoist</i>	president@tudublinsu.ie
<b>Officer Position:</b> <i>Seasamh an Oifigigh</i>	President	<b>Period of Work:</b> <i>Treimhse Oibre</i>	5 <sup>th</sup> December – 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024

**Key Points of work carried out since last meeting**

*Príomhphointí ón gcruinniú deireanach*

Happy New Year and welcome back to a new season of the Union show! I hope you all had a well-deserved break over the festive period, I hope all exams went well, and if you need any support regarding repeats, remember that the Advice & Advocacy Service is always there for you! For the Chair of Council, apologies, you'll have to figure out any repeat exams yourself.

Final reminder, the structure of this report 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*

**President & Democracy**

The Union firstly featured on several major news outlets (RTE, Virgin) following our attendance at the launch of Voter Information for the upcoming Irish March Referenda. The Union Executive, after reviewing the ongoing discourse on wording, has agreed to propose a 'Vote Yes, Yes' stance to Council. Assuming Council approval, the Union will launch a combined 'Voter Registration' & 'Vote Yes in the March Referenda' campaign for TU Dublin students which should garner media attention.

The Union will be holding its own Referendum as well on 'USI Affiliation' as well as a Plebiscite regarding 'No Confidence in the Irish Government'. These will occur in conjunction with our Springtime Elections which means that, while we will need clear, concise messaging (so that students do not get confused between everything), we should also break SU voting records!



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The main ongoing concern is our attendance at Student Council, which have struggled to recover since the 'RON' situation in October. Furthermore, despite repeated communications, some students had to be removed (in line with policy and procedure) due to repeated absences. With 30 spaces left to fill, the Union held a very intense recruitment period, which was highly successful – we now have more than enough nominations to fill each space. Assuming most of these translate to successful elections, Council attendance should be rectified. Credit to the Deputy President (and entire Executive) for their work on this, it was a real show of teamwork!

Additional Council / Policy work includes proceeding with an amendment to Schedule I of the Constitution (aligning TUDSU's Constitution with CLG's one) at the next Council; this ensures that the President will automatically be 'Deputy Chairperson' of the Board. This is expected to be completed by the first Council in February.

The Union's BDS list will go live next week (as mandated by Council) and will announce the Union ceasing all partnerships with implicated organisations (for us this is chiefly Coca Cola & Dominos). Additional escalation plans include demanding the University also adopt a BDS policy, and come out in support of Palestine (which is unlikely but mandated & symbolic).

The President has also organised a meeting with members of the HEA Board (after 6 months of USI inaction, I just did it myself, and it was not hard) to discuss a HEA Review of the Student Charge. Correspondence with them has been very positive and is a show of the Union's level of influence.

Furthermore, the President sent formal correspondence to Minister Harris, Minister Donohue, and various Opposition Parties on the topic of the Borrowing Framework (i.e. TU's cannot borrow, and therefore the 434 million announced for student accommodation is inaccessible to us). The response was disappointing (although not unexpected) in that it appears as if such a framework will not be developed for several more years (when the funding is only available for 5 years). In any case, the Union will publicise this shortly in order to lightly encourage students to Vote 'No' in the upcoming Plebiscite.



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Finally, some positive news includes progress with Grangegorman Common Room Furniture; this project is nearing completion (25,000 euro of seating agreed 3+ years ago with University) meaning the Union will receive positive press in comparison to the University (where seating remains limited).

### **Academic Affairs**

Class Representative statistics have continued to improve, and are divided by campus as follows:

- Aungier Street = 69%
- Blanchardstown = 92%
- Bolton Street = 83%
- Central Quad = 72%
- East Quad = 57%
- Tallaght = 57%

The third round of Class Representative meetings are due to take place next week, with turnout expected to be high given the new semester & newly elected representatives. These will also facilitate Student Council by-elections.

Major Academic Affairs campaigns coming up include 'HERoic Academics' (campaign celebrating the many wonderful female-identifying people in academics and the achievements they have achieved), 'Academic Integrity Phase Two' (which will collect data in a unique and exciting way on how students actually view AI, their understanding of it, etc)

Major policy work includes the Student Charter, which is due for completion in the March meeting of SEC (Student Experience Committee), followed by Academic Council approval in April. This document will ideally commit lecturers to deadlines for providing feedback, amongst other things. Other major policy work includes the Academic Calendar, where we have submitted our final feedback for review at Academic Council (note restrictions exist due to National Negotiations around Contracts).



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**Welfare & Equality**

Upcoming Welfare & Equality campaigns include Culture Week (already occurred), Pride Week (ongoing) and SHAG (2 weeks). Special credit must be given to the VP for Events & Engagement for coordinating these entirely and assisting the WEA Lead in their rollout. Following discussion with the President, the VP for Events & Engagement will not be directly supporting any more W&E campaigns due to unfair work levels being placed upon him – he has been a credit to the team this semester.

Major policy work includes the T-Fund and the Period Product Initiative; extensive proposals were drafted by the WEA Lead, and the President submitted them to the SEC for (hopeful) approval. Additional areas of work including working with the Medical Services in relation to Trans Harm Reduction (this has been championed by the President and VP for Blanchardstown), Sensory Rooms (nearing completion via the Disabilities Service), and a stance / response on the 'Green Paper on Disability Reform', which is likely going to admonish / reject it.

Final areas of work relates to firstly Gender Neutral Signage; it has been implemented in Grangegorman, but there are outdated/offensive versions in all other campuses. Paul McDunphy is not communicating with me since this request, and President has escalated it to EDI GB (passion project of mine). Other project relates to improving campus Accessibility (championed by VP for Blanchardstown) which has seen all lift access become public in recent days!

**Events & Fundraising**

The main events coming up under the remit of VP E&E is RAG Week (26<sup>th</sup> February); new initiative is to hold a major 'day' per campus (improving a sense of 'campus culture' & engagement). Events to include Dun Tanks, Shave or Dye, DJ performances, 'Pie the President' (yay), and much more! This week aims to maximise fundraising efforts for the Union.



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Other major fundraising activities include 'Relay for Life' (25<sup>th</sup> April) and will be 'the most ambitious fundraising activity in the history of the Union' (we're very excited!) This will aim to increase funds further. Currently, VP E&E has raised over 5200 euro (President still winning on GoFundMe).

Furthermore, VP E&E has been providing significant support to W&E campaigns and has pioneered SHAG, Pride Week, and Culture Week. However, these have been significant time investments and so President and VP W&E agreed to retract any further direct support so that he can excel within his current mandates, manage workload, and assist with Membership Survey Exercise.

Finally, VP E&E has applied for 10,000 euro in funding for common room improvements in order to improve the student experience & Union perception given the complaints towards University facilities (or lack thereof). VP E&E also continues to Chair ECWG successfully.

### **Communications & Media**

First up; excellent progress on the media outlet! Six-month plan has been established between President, GM, and VP C&M (composed of market research, followed by definitive proposal to Executive, Council & Board, and pending outcome of this, likely recruitment of editor). Primary research to include questions within TUDSU Membership Survey, Council Feedback Mechanism, and finally, a small-scale trial via TUDSU TV to gauge journalist skill, capacity, and interest.

VP C&M has met with School of Media to support this trial. Following this, terms of reference / proposal for media outlet (initial findings: likely digital newspaper with social media component) will be presented to all relevant parties (executive, board of directors and student council by end of March/April 2024). Following approval & interest, launch of outlet for S1 of 24/25.

In terms of general communications, the Union has received excellent exposure in recent weeks; RTE, Virgin Media, Newstalk (Voter Information), RTE Radio Drivetime (Accommodation) and Phoenix FM (Blanchardstown events / elections).



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As well, to improve student understanding of current work being underdone, Communications Executive to identify any gaps in posting schedules and use to spotlight work updates (e.g. progress being made on moving exam period). Busy period upcoming given the significant number of promotion requires for elections, referenda, plebiscites, campaigns, strategy development and much more.

### **Campus & Facilities**

The CVP's and President held a 'strategy half-day' where they developed policies around all major 'campus' and/or facility issues, including: Parking, Blanchardstown Transport, Bolton Street + Linnenhall, Canteens and Gyms. These policies not only cement Union views, but also indicate the significant work that was undertaken by the CVP's in recent times (e.g. months of negotiations, FOI claims, significant research, etc) They also consist of detailed action plans for the next 5 months.

#### **Parking**

The results of an FOI (submitted by the President) exposed that the University plans to introduce parking fees for Tallaght, does not plan on allowing students to park in City campus at all, and does not have a transparent mechanism for dealing with clamping issues. CVP's devised a list of solutions to mitigate against this and will be engaging with the University shortly.

#### **Blanchardstown Transport**

Blanchardstown campus remains inaccessible; however, the Union secured formal agreement from the University that they would endorse a campaign to improve it; actions include following up with all local Councillors & TD's, working with the VP for Sustainability in TU Dublin to develop a media campaign, and utilising USI as a final measure.

#### **Bolton Street + Linnenhall**

Many small works are being carried out in both Bolton Street + Linnenhall, but still vastly insufficient given the state of disrepair. Media campaign planned, along with mobilising class representatives, questioning the University via high-level for a, and ultimately a direct action.



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### Canteens

Despite acquiring lunch vouchers across all campuses, pricing issues remain, as well as lack of seating and suitable options. In fact, prices have increased again in the Blanchardstown campus, and students in Council are preparing a mandate for the Union to demand the non-renewal of Aramark contracts. As such, the team has developed short-, medium-, and long-term goals (including the realisation of a Canteen Oversight Committee, the University to put in a price freeze, and ultimately to not renew contracts with Aramark services. These will progress over the next month.

### Successes

Quick fire list of successes (entirely down to the work of the CVP's): Seating in BST common rooms entirely refurbished, peeling paint request (via University) sent to contractors, free gym hours have been guaranteed Monday-Friday, water fountain replacement tender has gone out, bike facilities in BST moved, noticeboards tender for CQ+EQ has gone out, EQ gates have been activated, Blanchardstown lifts have all been made accessible (no longer key access), new seating confirmed for Blanchardstown common room (via Disability service), update on improved bin services due from next Green Campus / Sustainable Council committee, and University has invited the Union for a full strategy down to finalise the Tallaght Master Plans. Credit must be given to the three CVP's who have achieved a **phenomenal** number of immediate goals while also progressing long-term issues and assisting with a significant number of Welfare & Equality policy work.

### USI & National Affairs

At the most recent National Council (January), a TUDSU mandate with clear actionable items on how to tangibly work on improving Trans Healthcare was rejected by the VP Equality & Citizenship. The rationale given was 'insufficient time' (the mandate would stretch across 3 years) because he has '2 events coming up' (please note 'Empower' had 6 attendees), and because we 'can't ask GP's' to follow Trans Harm Reduction recommendations. The Executive are incredibly disappointed, as were some Trans activists the President has been in contact with. Furthermore, it was voted down unanimously (but it turns out Queens did not vote, TCDSU was not present, and neither was MSU).



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Since then, USI has decided to host a 'Trans Healthcare Town Tall' to ask people what they want them to do for Trans Healthcare. Summary: 140,000 euro of affiliation fees continues to not serve the needs of our students. They have also attended a TCD Trans Healthcare protest. This feels like a performative attempt at careerist sabbaticals with no actual interest in improving things. Shock.

Next National Council is in February (Carlow), and USI has finally finished the first draft of their 'Constitutional Review'. Changes are all minor, and no mention of changes to their Officer Structure (i.e. 3 Regional Officers at a cost of 90,000 a year despite the presence of mass media). The Executive has established a 'task-to-finish' WG to review it + provide feedback within 2 weeks.

Nothing else major from USI; election season has begun and we're being asked to nominate people (with no manifestos) so the Executive has agreed that to ensure a baseline quality of nominations, we will only nominate those who provide manifestos. No movement on most TUDSU mandates from last Congress, nor action regarding the HEA. President (me) took matters into our own hands and have a meeting arranged with the HEA, and received correspondence from Harris on the Borrowing Framework. National affairs being delivered via a strong local Union (TUDSU).

**Summary**

The workload is admittedly intense and most of the staff and some astounding Officers are at maximum capacity. We have made as many changes as possible to balance this workload but ultimately some work areas will slip if all teammates are not committed. We hope that will our own Election season beginning shortly, that we will not lose resources to careerism. Otherwise, I would like to personally thank everyone for making this year incredibly goal-orientated & successful.





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<b>Meetings Attended (and Number)</b> <i>Tinrimh Choistí agus Cruinnithe (agus Líon)</i>	<b>Events/Activities Attended</b> <i>Tinrimh Imeachtaí / Gníomhaíochtaí</i>
Student Finance Committee (TU Dublin) x 2 Culture Week Catch-Up x 1 Academic Council Pre-Meeting x 1 Academic Council x 1 Student Council Agenda Review x 1 Leadership Weekly x 6 Community Liaison Committee x 1 WEM (Weekly Executive Meeting) x 4 Campus & Facilities Weekly x 6 LCSP (Local Community Safety Partnership) x 1 TUDSU CLG Board Meeting x 2 Student Programme Feedback Group x 2 Learner Assembly Meeting x 2 Architecture Project Review x 1 Officer Meetings (1-on-1) x 3 Governing Body Chair Meeting x 1 Partnership Document Review Group x 2 Procurement Meeting x 2 Communications & Media Weekly x 3 Academic Affairs Weekly x 3 Welfare & Equality Weekly x 3 Representation Weekly x 2 Academic Calendar Catch-Up x 1 Student Charter Catch-Up x 2 Student Charter Final Review (TU Dublin) x 1 Election Launch Preparation Meeting (TUDSU) x 1 ECWG (Events & Campaigns WG) x 2 Safety, Health, Welfare (Bolton, TU Dublin) x 1 Campaign Planning (Leadership) x 1 Risk Management Committee x 1 Community Liaison Committee x 1 PTO Timesheet Planning / Meetings x 3 Gaeilge PTO Catch-Up x 1 EUT+ Physical Week Preparation x 1 EUT+ Work Review x 1 SEC Preparation x 1	Launch of 'Voter Information' (National Referenda) EDI Solidarity Event (Pan-University, Riots) TUDSU CLG Board Christmas Dinner TUDSU Christmas Dinner (Officers + Staff) Part-Time Officer Training (Delivered most sessions) National Council (December, Galway) National Council (January, Online) Gender Pay Gap Review (TU Dublin) Executive Training (Resilience + Communication) Interview (RTE Radio Drivetime) Governing Body Strategy Day x 1



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SEC (Student Experience Committee) x 1 Electoral Commission x 1 TUDSU CLG FARC x 1 Recall of Office Process Review x 1 PPP (CQ, EQ) Liaison Meeting x 1 Gym Facilities Meeting (TU Dublin) x 1 Membership Survey Planning x 2 Faculty Board (H&S) x 1	
<b>Gifts Received</b> <i>Bronntanais a Fuarthas</i>	<b>Personal Expenses</b> <i>Costaisí phearsanta</i>
N/A	N/A
<b>Additional notes</b> <i>Aon nithe eile</i>	
Someone please tell me I'm doing a good job, I am so incredibly tired.	