



**Comhaltas na Mac Léinn  
OÉ Gaillimh  
NUI Galway  
Students' Union**

### **STUDENTS' UNION COUNCIL**

6:00pm, Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021

Venue: Online via Zoom

#### **Present:**

Pádraic Toomey (SU President), Emma Sweeney (VP/Education Officer), Róisín Nic Lochlainn (VP, Welfare and Equality Officer), Erin Mac an tSaoir (Oifigeach Na Gaeilge , Irish Officer ), Niamh Quinn (International Students Officer), Michelle Mitchell (Mature Students' Officer), Clare McHale (Convenor of the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies), Aoife Buckley (Convenor of the College of Science and Engineering), Evan O'Flaherty (Convenor of the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences), Victor Igonin (Convenor of the College of Business, Public Policy and Law), Sebastiaan Bierema (Postgrad Research Officer), Martin Smyth (Postgrad Taught Officer), Barry Sugrue (Societies Chairperson), Patricia O'Mahony (Disability Rights Officer), Cheyanne Nwaonukwube (Ethnic Minorities Officer), Fionn Sexton Connolly (SU Council Chairperson).

#### **Apologies:**

Maeve Arnup (Gender and LGBT+ Rights Officer)  
Kirsty Moran (Clubs captain)

#### **Absent:**

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## **MINUTES / MIONTUAIRISCÍ**

### **WELCOME / FÁILTE**

Class reps and attendees welcomed to council. Agenda/Clár for the meeting outlined by the chairperson.

The minutes of the previous meeting (20 Eanáir 2021) were passed as a fair and accurate reflection of that meeting.

Proposed by: Adam Mullins

Seconded by: Patricia O'Mahony

### **ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES**

Maeve Arnup (Gender and LGBT+ Rights Officer)

Kirsty Moran (Clubs captain)

Apologies accepted.

### **PRE-NOMINATED A.O.B / A.G.E RÉAMH AINMNITHE:**

Election of a secretary. Only one nominee.

### **OFFICER REPORTS / TUAIRISCÍ NA NOIFGEACH:**

Written electronic reports were sent out and emailed to SU Council members.

Glactha go bhfuil na miontuairiscí léite.

The Chairperson invited questions on Officer Reports

Simeon Burke queried the decision not to oppose changes to the Code of Conduct proposed at Academic Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December which allows fines, reprimands and in cases expulsions to be imposed on students for breaches of COVID-19 Public Health Guidelines.

SU President noted that objections had been raised to earlier drafts of the amendment to the Code of Conduct and that the SU Council had approved and passed the amendment considered by Academic Council.

A discussion ensued on the amendment to the Student Code of Conduct, and the Code of Conduct in general.

## **MOTIONS / RÚIN**

Motions have been distributed to all class reps through electronic mail in pdf formats.

### ***Motion regarding Increasing staffing levels for the NUI Galway Disability Support Service***

#### **Council notes:**

While the Disability Support Service has recently been allocated funding, this funding is only to provide learning supports for students such as additional sound-proof booths and adjustable desks. As such this funding cannot be used to hire additional staff which are required as the number of students with disabilities studying in NUI Galway increases.

#### **Council notes with concern:**

Due to the increased numbers of students registering with the Disability Support Service, the service has become severely understaffed with students failing to get support due to the workload on support staff. The Disability Rights Officer has been in contact with dozens of students this year who were failing to get supports in a timely manner.

#### **Council mandates:**

That the NUI Galway Students' Union lobby the university for the provision of additional staff within the Disability Support Service to meet the current and increasing demand on the service.

Proposed by: NUI Galway Students' Union Disability Rights Officer

*VÓTÁIL: Motion passed*

### **Recording of lectures motion AS AMENDED BY THE COUNCIL.**

#### **Council notes:**

That the recording of live lectures, tutorials, labs and workshops when we return to oncampus learning would greatly benefit those unable to attend.

#### **Council believes:**

That recording lectures, tutorials, labs and workshops will make NUIG a more accessible place for those who cannot attend every in-person lecture.

#### **Therefore, Council mandates:**

The Students' Union of NUIG to campaign for all lectures, tutorials, labs and workshops to be recorded when we return on campus learning.

Proposed by: Kate Gaughan

*VÓTÁIL: Motion Passed.*

## **Athrú Príomh-Ainm an Chomhairle go Gaeilge**

### **Aithníonn an Chomhairle**

Go bhfuil tábhacht ar leith ag baint lenár n-aitheantas mar chomhaltas dátheangach.

### **Creideann an Chomhairle**

Gur cheart go mbeadh príomh-ainm an chomhairle as Gaeilge chun aitheantas ceart a thabhairt don stádas dátheangach seo.

### **Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Chomhairle**

Go cuirtear “Comhairle na Mac Léinn” in áit “Class Rep Council”. Tiocfaidh an athrú seo isteach ag an gcéad chomhairle eile.

## **Athrú Príomh-Ainm an Chomhairle go Gaeilge -Change Primary Name of the Council to Irish Motion**

### **Council notes:**

That there is a particular importance regarding our status as a bilingual union.

### **Council Believes:**

That the primary name of the council should be in the Irish language to give proper recognition to this bilingual status.

### **Therefore, Council Mandates:**

That “Comhairle na Mac Léinn” be put in place of “Class Rep Council”. This change will come into effect at the next council.

Proposed by: Róisín Nic Lochlainn Students’ Union Vice President, Welfare and Equality Officer.

*VÓTÁIL: Motion Passed. (In effect from the next council.)*

## **Motion on access to module material for first year science students. AS AMENDED BY THE COUNCIL**

### **Council Notes:**

Students have not covered enough topics in their current modules to decide on what modules to pick at the start of the following semester.

### **Council Believes:**

Giving access to the first three pre-recorded lectures of the next semester’s options will give students a chance to see what the modules they must pick

from will be like, and they can choose their modules for the following semester accordingly.

**Therefore Council Mandates:**

The Students' Union of NUI Galway to campaign for all students to get access to the first three pre-recorded lectures of all the modules that they have to choose from.

Proposed by: Laura Ilupeju.

*VÓTÁIL:*

*Motion Passed.*

**Motion on Defunding the Gardai (as amended by the proposer prior to council)**

**Council notes:**

The powers and responsibilities of An Garda Síochána are far too great than what it can and should be able to exercise upon residents of the state.

**Council notes with concern:**

An Garda Síochána's role in enforcing the Magdalene Laundries and Mother & Baby Homes, their murder of George Nkencho and their treatment of the traveller community and people of the working class is all evidence of the service's inability to appropriately exercise the current extent of its powers.

**Council believes:**

Many of the current responsibilities of An Garda Síochána would be better served with a more community-based approach.

**Council mandates:**

Comhaltas na Mac Léinn OÉ Gaillimh recognises the need to defund An Garda Síochána and have the funds reinvested in community integrated programmes.

Proposed by: William McCabe

*VÓTÁIL:*

*Procedural motion 9B "That the question not be put" Passed.*

**Anti-CETA Motion**

**Council Notes:**

That section 3 ii of the NUIGSU Constitution states that a fundamental objective of the SU is "To act as the recognised representative body for registered students within the University and to represent their interests".

**Council Also Notes:**

That the proposed EU-Canada Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) contains an Investor Court System (ICS), where multinational corporations can bypass domestic courts and seek financial compensation from the State for perceived breaches in investment protection standards.

**Council Further Notes:**

That this threat of litigation is likely to create a 'regulatory chill effect' where the state will resist the introduction of public policy measures which could damage investors' profits e.g. an increase in the minimum wage, rent controls, and strengthened environmental standards.

**Council Believes:**

That the state should not prioritise the interests of corporations over the public interest, i.e. the interests of NUIGSU members.

**Therefore, Council Mandates:**

That the NUIGSU campaign against the government's efforts to ratify the EU-Canada Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement.

Proposed by: Conall McCallig

*VÓTÁIL: Motion passed.*

## **USI Mandate Motion**

**Council Notes:**

That USI Officers are currently voted on by class representatives at SU Council on a "winner takes all" basis; i.e. all delegates are obliged to vote with the majority.

**Council Further Notes:**

That this system of voting is deeply undemocratic.

**Council Believes:**

That USI Officers should be voted on by the student body as a whole. NUIG delegates should be obliged to vote in proportion with the wishes of the NUIG student body.

**Therefore Council Mandates:**

That the USI mandate be scrapped, and replaced with a system in which all students shall have the right to vote for USI Officers, and NUIG delegates shall be obliged to split in proportion with the votes of the student body.

Proposed by Conall McCallig

*VÓTÁIL: Motion passed.*

## **Publicly-Funded Education Motion**

### **Council Notes:**

The pressure, financial and otherwise, faced by students and staff in higher education, which has been exacerbated in recent years by increases to the student contribution, rental prices, and other costs related to higher education.

### **Council Also Notes:**

The need for a higher education system which is free at the point of delivery for all students, including international students, and is publicly funded through general taxation.

### **Council Opposes:**

The exploitation of labour in higher education, which includes the use of student labour in unpaid course-related placements and internships, and the casualisation of contracts for teaching staff.

### **Council Believes:**

That health services and academic support services are of great importance to students, which must be free at the point of delivery.

### **Therefore Council Mandates:**

Campaign for the following:

- A higher education system that is fully publicly funded, and free at the point of delivery for all students, including international students;
- Properly funded essential services for students such as healthcare and counselling;
- An end to unpaid student placements and other forms of student labour exploitation, and for student workers to be paid a living wage, including all staff employed by the Students' Union;
- College-level recognition of all teaching staff and teaching assistants as workers, who should be offered permanent contracts and a living wage.

### **Establish a committee which will oversee and build this campaign.**

Membership shall consist of:

- Chair;
- Secretary;
- Education Officer;

- President;
- Welfare Officer;
- Student Representative participating in a professional placement or internship for credit;
- No fewer than 6 Ordinary Members.

Members shall be appointed by application.

#### **Duties**

- Develop a strategy to achieve the aims as outlined in 1);
- Engage and mobilise students in all faculties.

#### **Meetings**

Meetings to this committee shall take place at least 3 times per teaching term. The agenda of this committee shall be compiled by the secretary or chair from submissions from the members of the committee.

#### **Review**

The Committee shall, on or before April 31st 2022, review its own performance and its terms of reference and shall report its conclusions and recommendations for the campaign going forward to Union Forum.

Proposed by: Conall McCallig

#### **VÓTÁIL:**

*Following discussion, a procedural motion 9D Passed "That the motion be referred back" with changes inputted.*

### **Motion Regarding the Amended Student Code of Conduct**

#### **Council Notes:**

That the presence of Garda patrols in the residences is being utilised by the Campus Living management teams to actively deter breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Council acknowledges with grave concern:

That the motion passed in this Council to amend the Code of Conduct was passed in good faith, so as to limit the involvement of An Garda Síochána in disciplining students who breach the code of conduct.

#### **Council believes:**

- That students in Corrib village were subjected to invasive tactics by An Garda Síochána, while they patrolled the complex with no prior warning.
- The University and Campus living staff have contradicted the promise to avoid the involvement of An Garda Síochána where possible, by actively utilising the Guards as a means of deterrence.



- Under Article 3. of the NUIG SU Constitution, the Union has a clear responsibility ‘to represent its members and promote, defend and vindicate the rights of its members at all levels of society’.

**Therefore, Council Mandates:**

The NUIG SU to fully withdraw all consent, support, and promotion of the amended code of conduct.

*(Note, in the interim of the proposal of the motion, Emma Sweeney, Education Officer, took over the chairing of the council)*

Proposed by: Fionn Sexton Connolly

*VOTÁIL: Procedural motion 9D accepted “that the motion be referred back” with edits to include more information. Motion was postponed to another time.*

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION / MÍREANNA PLÉ:**

**Galway City Plan**

The SU President noted that Galway City Council is seeking contributions to its City Plan and outlined his intention to make a submission. He asked for ideas and suggestions on what should be included.

Several suggestions were made to the SU President for inclusion in the submission including:

- Housing
- More bins (or increased bin size)
- Proper provisions for the travelling community, appropriate and comprehensive sanitation, more space and access to sites of accommodation
- Transportation, more pedestrian footpaths, pedestrian bridges over roads, making sure there are enough public buses and that they run on time
- Waste Management
- Public Restrooms
- Disability Access, widening of footpaths, wheelchair access
- Pedestrian Access
- Flood Defences at the Spanish Arch to be made more permanent and less intrusive looking
- More sheltered seating areas
- More shelters for homeless
- Footpath on the Salmon Weir Bridge is too narrow
- Promotion of the Irish Language
- Promotion of Cycling and more bicycle lanes
- Cross Street Upper and Lower to be kept pedestrian in the future
- More park and rides
- Sustainability and development of green areas, plants, wildlife, flower bombs

## **Motions for USI Congress**

Motions for the upcoming USI Congress were discussed.

(Motions on textbooks, institutional autonomy, fines and fees, student levies.)

The Vice President Education Officer, Emma Sweeney will circulate the motions via email tomorrow.

## **POINTS FOR INFORMATION**

### ***Erasmus Students***

The Vice President Education Officer, Emma Sweeney highlighted ongoing work to fight for keeping general student mobility this year.

### ***College Councils***

The Vice President Education Officer, Emma Sweeney outlined details of upcoming College and Faculty Councils.

Arts: Week of the 8<sup>th</sup> March, 5<sup>th</sup> April

Others: 15<sup>th</sup> march, 12<sup>th</sup> April.

### ***Student Survey***

The SU President urged first, final year and postgrad students to participate in the Student Survey. He noted that the survey results affects the University's international and national rankings, so the University might be more likely to listen.

### ***Hair Razor***

Shave or Die fundraiser looking for participants. Sign up.

### ***CÉIM***

Looking for leaders. Sign up.

## **A.O.B.**

### ***Societies***

Barry Sugrue, Society Chairperson welcomes any messages and emails in relation to societies, any questions or involvement.

### ***Reusing Materials***

Manoj Kataram (MSc Biomed Engineering) suggested a permanent place for pickup and drop off of unwanted materials, so that students can leave stuff they do not need

that is available for free for other students to pick up. There could be a permanent place, perhaps at the SU space below the library. If such project is not in the work, speaker would like to bring it up in a future motion.

The SU President noted that there had been planning for such a project, however momentum was disturbed by Covid-19. Will resume and get working on it as soon as possible.

### ***Exam Results***

Sean Cameron, 2<sup>nd</sup> yr history class rep noted that students got midterm grades back in February which was very late. He asked if there were any repercussions for lecturers who don't have assignments graded on time.

The VP and Education Officer agreed that the situation was difficult for students and noted that she could send a paper to all head of schools and lecturers to give feedback on assignments and timely corrections.

Joe Mee (2nd Year Engineering) would be interested in working on it with the students union, as late results have been a huge issue for engineering students as well.

Emma Sweeney, VP and Education Officer would love to work on that. Strength in numbers. Urges participation and reps to email her experiencing similar issues.

It was also noted by Adam Mullins (1BDT1) that some Semester 2 timetables were not circulated until the first day of Semester 2.

### ***An Gaeilge***

Erin Mac An tSaoir, Oifigeach na Gaeilge noted that he has planned a meeting and welcomed any students to join. He noted that he is seeking 'video people' for a video series as part of a national campaign and speakers who are open to share their experience with Irish

### **Other Issues**

Several other issues were raised that the VP Education and President will deal with.

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Students Union Council meeting is concluded at 22:02 on the 22/02/2021.

Minutes were prepared by Szilvia Nemeth, SU Council Secretary for the record of council.