



MSU Activity Report 2017/18

Maynooth Students' Union

A few words from...

Leon Diop

MSU President 2017/18

A Chara,

It is with great pleasure that I may present to you the MSU Activity Report for the academic year 2017 / 18. This year was packed full of campaigns, initiatives, and events right through the two semesters, all with the ambition to promote our core principles and enhance the student experience in Maynooth.

If you read through the timeline of our year I am confident in saying that MSU has delivered on behalf of the students of Maynooth. While we didn't get to cover every area and every aspect, and there may be things we could have done better, we made inroads to enhance the student experience and promote student life.

Whether through events, campaigns, representation or initiatives such as NsTEP, we have provided a benchmark for future progress to cover new and ever developing issues. As I embark on my second term in office, I look forward to us furthering our main goal: A Students' Union that works for its students.

Leon





August

USI Students' Union Training+ *Ongoing Training*

SUT+ and was held at Queen's University Belfast Students' Union. This event combined training with a pressure simulation - an in-tray exercise designed to expose student leaders to some of the political and interpersonal pressures they would experience throughout their term.

SUT+ unites student officers from across Ireland as members of the executive committee of the fictional Ballybreag IT - a large college with many of the traits of a University in an IT setting. MSU officers experienced tough decision making, challenging and traumatic narratives and an understanding of their own contribution to workplace stress.

SU Building Refurb *Service Improvements*

It was a very busy Summer for refurbishments. Alongside the improvement works in the Shop we also completed a lot of work in the SU building itself.

The whole building got a new lick of paint and vinyl signage was installed to help you navigate through the building. The printing and binding facilities were moved to the Info Centre and an all new Clubs & Societies Hub was introduced upstairs. We also recovered the Venue floor and extended the counter space in the Bar. Phew!

PrEP Campaign *Student Campaigns*

MSU joined other SU's alongside the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) in a rally outside the health regulator's office joining calls for the introduction of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to treat the growing HIV crisis in Ireland.

The rally was organised by Act Up with the aim of putting PrEP on people's agenda, to try and ensure that in a time when we have a rising HIV rate, that we have access to all of the preventative tools that are out there. While PrEP was later made available in Ireland by prescription in December 2017, it is not covered by the HSE and campaigning will continue in this area.

MAP Launchpad Orientation *Representation*

This was a residential orientation programme designed to support and ease the transition to third level for students who are coming to Maynooth University through the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and/or the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE).

Incoming students supported by the Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP) can get to know fellow first years, ask questions and find out advice from existing student leaders on how to navigate the University. MSU provided entertainment for students at their Saturday social events, and gave talks and showed events videos.



August

USI #StudentsForChoice Taskforce Planning

Representation

2017/18 was a big year for the #StudentsForChoice movement as the 8th Amendment Referendum was fast approaching. Students' Union representatives elected to the #StudentsForChoice taskforce met in August to plan the campaign for the year ahead.

Among the priorities was planning for the many demonstrations planned in the lead-up to the referendum and providing effective support for SU's on a local level to mount campaigns.

USI Accommodation & Finance Guide Launch

Student Campaigns

The collaborative project, which is carried out annually, was launched in late August. The updated and redesigned guide was given to over 16,000 third level students across Ireland giving advice on the rights of tenants, updated legislation and also advice for students on accommodation and budgeting.

Defeat Your Repeats

Student Campaigns

This online campaign helped students who were doing repeats. We teamed up with MU Accommodation to make sure students were aware that they could stay on south campus.

September

MU Orientation Week

Representation & Events

We had an amazing time getting to meet and talk to all the new first years attending Maynooth this year! As part of the Orientation Tour each student visits the SU, meets the Team and and learns about the Union. We also debated the important issues- like, 'Does pineapple really belong on pizza?'

We also ran a number of lunchtime and evening events in the specially erected stretch tent outside the SU for the first years. From comedy to magicians, toga parties to Bingo Loco- there really was something for every taste!

MSU Freshers' Week

Events

We hosted some of Ireland's biggest acts during Fresher's Week including The Academic, Chasing Abbey and Neil Delamere. Our aim was to provide a variety of events and activities to help new students socialise together and have fun.

Evening events for the week were 'Way Too Many DJs', 'The BIG Gig' w/ The Academic, the 'Freshers' Ball' w/ Blonde & Chasing Abbey rounded off by 'Full On Comedy' headlined by Neil Delamere.



LUCAN (BUS)

If you don't drive the 66 bus will be your best friend.

Housing Estates on the 66 Bus route

- Weston
- Kew Park
- Hillcrest
- Ardeevin
- Lucan Village
- Ballyown
- Hermitage

Dublin Bus Fare

- €2.70 (single)
- €5.40 (day return)
- €30.60 (weekly return)
- €153 (monthly)



July 2017

USI Students' Union Training *Ongoing Training*

Each year the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) provide training for elected officers, this year it took place in Athlone IT. The purpose of SUT is to provide full-time officers with the skills required to plan and execute a successful year as a sabbatical officer.

Sabbatical officers from MSU were introduced to key modules on their roles, including events and marketing, drugs harm reduction, accommodation, policy making, academic engagement, campaigns planning and management, and media relations.

MSU Shop Refurb: Londis JH *Service Improvements*

MSU runs a number of commercial services with the aim of enhancing student life and providing great value on campus. This Summer we completely renovated the Londis Shop in the John Hume Building, giving it a modern look while increasing the services on offer.

New product lines were added to our offering and the extra shelf space meant we could introduce all new student lunch deals. In particular, the addition of Smooch ice-cream and smashed milkshakes proved very popular!

August

Commuter Travel Guide *Student Campaigns*

With the large amount of commuting students in Maynooth we prepared travel information for students so that they can try and find the most affordable way to get to college.

This consisted of social media posts, making students aware of the different routes to and from Maynooth and also the different prices for their transport.

Accommodation Guide *Student Campaigns*

Accommodation is still a growing concern but Maynooth Students' Union have worked closely with the University's accommodation office to coordinate our efforts to ensure students find accommodation as easily as possible.

The Union created and distributed flyers looking for landlords to take students and those interested have contacted the accommodation office. We also established a Facebook group to put landlords and students looking for accommodation in touch- there are currently over 6,500 members in this group.

SPOTLIGHT: **Digital Badging**

Recognising Participation

MSU continues to innovate in ways to promote student engagement and reward student involvement.

Digital Badges (sometimes referred to as open badges) are an online way to recognise the skills and achievements of Maynooth students. MSU are the first Students' Union in Ireland to introduce such a system for rewarding its student representatives.

Students are familiar with getting results from exams as a percentage grade, but how about a badge that proves you received training in student engagement? Or that you were involved in the local community? Or that you excelled in a particular task?

Those are the kinds of achievements that will not be captured on a results sheet, but which potential employers would be keen to see on a job application, and which would make a student's CV stand out from the crowd.

These Badges are a validated indicator of accomplishment, skill, quality, or interest that can be earned in many learning environments. We at MSU have set up this system so we can recognise all the hard work and skills students obtain during their time as a REP.

Academic REPs in Maynooth University are invited to apply for the different Badges that are available. There are differing standards and criteria that must be met for each badge. After a candidate is deemed to have achieved the required standard they receive a link to their digital badge that they can use on their online profiles, such as Linked In.

The Digital Badging system was so well received in the Representative area of the Union that we also introduced it for MU Clubs & Societies. All award winners for 2017/18 received a digital badge recognising their achievement that they could display on behalf of their Club or Society. We look forward to developing our badging system during 2018/19!





September

MSU Freshers' Ball

Events

The MSU Freshers' Ball was once again one of the most anticipated events of the year. A sell-out crowd were in attendance and Blonde, with support from Chasing Abbey, sent everyone home happy.

The Freshers' Ball is the key event of Freshers' Week and sees the SU Building become home to Maynooth's biggest student party! Credit to the organisers from Health & Safety through to Security and the First Aid crew. Everyone enjoyed themselves in a safe and secure environment.

MU Clubs & Societies

Training Day

Ongoing Training

Over 200+ club and society committee members attended the annual clubs and societies training day this year.

Committee members received various presentations concerning budgeting, event planning, social media strategy and how to make MSULife work best for their own Club or Society.

ARC March For Choice

Student Campaigns

September 30th saw the MSU officers join the 6th annual ARC 'March For Choice'. This was the first of many national protests that took place throughout the year as support was galvanised towards repealing the 8th Amendment.

The march began in Parnell Square and made its way through the city to Merrion Square. It was noticeable how many young people were engaged with thousands taking to the streets.

Jump In: MU Clubs & Societies

Fairs Day

Ongoing Training

Time and again, we hear students tell us that the time that they spent as part of a Club or Society is something they remember fondly when they leave college. Joining a Club or Society is about much more than just the activity- it's the sense of camaraderie that comes from making friends with a shared interest.

Every September the Clubs and Societies Fairs Day descends on the Phoenix Sports Halls where students can browse everything there is to offer and sign up on the spot!



SPOTLIGHT: Staffing the SU

Service Provision

While the core of the Union revolves around the elected officers, it takes a dedicated team of staff to allow the Union and its officers to shine. And at MSU we are proud of our staff team!

This year we were able to add some new faces to the full-time staff listing; Sandra took up the role of Operations & Finance Manager, ensuring the SU was on a solid footing and working towards its goals; outgoing SU President Dillon was retained to further the student democracy and representation functions; Ann Marie was brought in to drive the student experience from our front desk; Eddie brought his experience in campaigns and communications to the Union and Fiona provided some much appreciated retail knowledge to the ever busy shop.

These new positions complimented those already in place in the areas of events, services, finance and clubs & societies - allowing the Union to further serve the needs of the growing Maynooth student population.

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LIGHT**

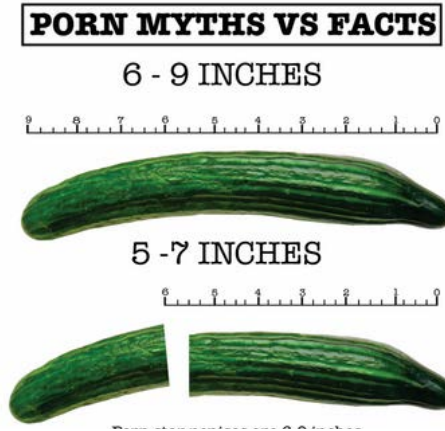
Perhaps the most unique aspect of staffing in Maynooth is the amount of students who are involved. Each year, students are employed as part-time operational staff across the organisation. We truly believe that they are the most friendly, skilled and enthusiastic team that you will meet on any campus in Ireland - thank you all!



Did you know?
Ailsa Hughes, one of our front desk crew, broke into Ireland's women's rugby team this year!



Did you know?
Our Shop manager, Brian, was nominated for Manager of the Year at the ShelfLife Awards!



October

Charity of the Year Selection

Charity & Community

This year Jigsaw came out on top in the Charity Selection vote cast by all Club and Society captains/ presidents. Jigsaw, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health, aim to ensure that no young person feels alone, isolated and disconnected from others around them.

World Mental Health Day

Student Campaigns

MU Mental Health Society hosted a coffee morning before we raised the Amber mental health flag outside the SU. We raised the flag to show students that we are a campus that works to ensure all students with mental health difficulties are listened to, represented and supported.

SHAG Week

Student Campaigns

This year during Sexual Health Awareness & Guidance (SHAG) Week we continued to open up the dialogue on consent and sexual empowerment. In particular, the campaign ran a digital and poster campaign highlighting the misrepresentation of sex in the media.

We distributed Sexual Health packs across campus and also had over 1000 students engage in our workshops and events, including a Durex Magician and sexologist Emily Smith, that provided them with greater knowledge on sexual health issues facing them and their peers.

Safety Week

Student Campaigns

This initiative was set up to make students more aware of the risks associated with certain behaviours and to provide them with the knowledge to make informed choices about their personal safety.

In the SU Building there was an installation of 187 balloons- one for every fatality on Irish roads during 2016. We also ran a social media and poster campaign highlighting road safety, alcohol awareness and personal safety when walking home alone. These were complimented by on campus activities such as the RSA 'roll-over simulator'.

S Cubed Initiative

Volunteering

This is a project in which students seek to help students and has the support and interest from the Access Office, CTL and Student Services. Every Wednesday, around 30+ students will wear red hoodies to identify themselves as S Cubed peer helpers and students were available to approach these students if they are lost or need assistance.

S3 (S Cubed) is a student led initiative in which S3 leaders can help signpost students to the relevant services that they may need. The initiative was formally launched and to date we have received positive feedback from both leaders and students using the service.



SPOTLIGHT: National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)

Fostering Engagement

2018 is an important year for student engagement as it saw Maynooth Students' Union and Maynooth University working in partnership to launch and develop the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) on our campus. The Officer of VP Education will lead the project for MSU and The Office of the Dean of Teaching and Learning is co-ordinating the project for MU.

During 2017 a partnership agreement as signed between MSU and MU and the first the first cohort of MSU Academic Reps received NStEP Class Rep training on campus.

NStEP is a collaborative initiative established by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). The National Student Engagement Programme works with 23 Higher Education Institutions, including Maynooth, to develop student capabilities and institutional capacity to enhance student engagement at all levels across the higher education system.

Overall, the NStEP programme aims to:
Develop student capabilities to engage in quality enhancement and assurance activities at all levels of the higher education system.

Support institutions in developing processes and activities, which support/facilitate the meaningful engagement of students.

Strengthen the value placed on student engagement across Ireland and develop tools and resources to support a common understanding and build effective practice.

In February we hosted the Maynooth Institutional Analysis; a day-long workshop, facilitated by NStEP and SPARQS, to identify themes and priorities, which are suitable for a partnership approach here..

The energy that was created between students and staff during the Institutional Analysis day was palpable- now we need to work hard to realise the vision of a campus that delivers on meaningful student engagement at all levels.





October

#EducationIs Demonstration: Fund The Future.

Representation

MSU joined USI and our colleagues in other HEI's across the country in marching to support the call for the Irish Government to Fund The Future of Irish education.

At the demonstration, students from across the country called on the Irish government to make a historic long-term decision and invest in the publicly funded third level education model as outlined in the Cassells report. Students believe that an income-contingent loan scheme is not a viable solution to third level funding as a burden of €20,000+ debt upon graduation will deter people from applying to college.

Academic REP Training

Representation

Academic REPs are the lifeblood of the Democracy element of MSU. Each year, classes across the University elect one of their own to represent their views and uphold their rights. To help REPs to do this, we put in place a suite of training that equips students to be effective representatives.

Took place in the Venue and was facilitated by Niamh, the SU VP Education, along with facilitators skilled in the various areas of student representation. The REPs were also address by MU President Prof. Philip Nolan, who spoke of the importance of the Academic REP system.

First MSU Student Senate Meeting of the year

Representation

The current MSU Student Senate structure entered it's second year and looked to go from strength to strength. Indeed, the eyes of many other Union's were on us as our structure has been seen as a pioneering one.

Senate members were elected to help govern the Union and hold its officers to account and met a subsequent five times to discuss motions and mandates on behalf of Maynooth students.

November

The BIG Grudge Quiz: MSU -v- DITSU

Events

The ultimate grudge match: MSU threw the gauntlet down and DIT Students' Union (DITSU) responded! 5 rounds of complete mayhem- from General Knowledge through to Mattress Surfing (don't ask!).

The SU Venue was packed, with DITSU bringing a full double decker bus out to meet the Maynooth challenge. It all ended up coming down to the final beer-pong challenge, with Leon Diop making the shot to win it for MSU! The big winners on the night though were Jigsaw- with all monies raised going to them.

SPOTLIGHT: **DeStress Maynooth** *Student Campaigns*

Stress levels can be higher than usual around exam time. While a bit of stress can help for students to stay motivated and focused, too much can be pretty unhelpful.

We built on our previous award winning DeStress Maynooth campaigns with the aim of helping students lower their stress levels and achieve the best academic grades that they can.

MSU ran a campaign for the duration of each Study and Exam week. We provided students with healthy breakfast and lunch options in the library to make sure that they had something to eat, as many had been travelling early or didn't have an opportunity to leave the library for lunch.

Among the most popular activities were the Bunny Zone and Pet Farm, where students got the chance to meet some of nature's best stress relievers! Each semester we ran both of these events, with the SU becoming home to bunnies, alpacas, pigs, sheep, chickens and mischievous goats!

We also provided toiletries in all the library bathrooms to keep students feeling fresh during their study hours and set up 'Bubble Wrap' pillars so that students could pop their stress away!

There was a social media and poster campaign providing students with some useful advice, tips, and tricks on how to get through your exams, along with important details on who to contact if students needed help or advice during the always hectic exam period.

Niamh (VP Education) and Aoife (VP Welfare & Equality) was available in the library during these times to talk to student about any problems that they were facing during the exams such as timetabling and study stress.



Pink training 2017 crew



November

Pink Training

Training & Development

Pink Training is the largest LGBTQ+ training event in Europe, where hundreds of LGBTQ+ students and their allies get together to celebrate and get informed about their rights, their access to power and what they can do to bring about positive change in Irish society.

MSU organised for 20 Maynooth students to attend Pink Training this year in NUIGSU. They had the opportunity to attend workshops on topics like: LGBTQ+ sex ed, supporting someone coming out, challenging stigmas in sport and gaelic cultures in Ireland, and the Trans* movement in Ireland.

Upskill Week

Student Campaigns

UpSkill Week was a brand new initiative for MSU. There was an identified need for students to acquire employable skills outside those taught on their course. To meet this demand we hosted workshops facilitated by the Post Grad and Careers offices.

Practical sessions in hospitality and barwork were run in our own Bar and we had LinkedIn on campus giving students the inside track on job hunting through their platform. This campaign was nominated for a Student Achievement Award.

December

Maynooth Christmas Festival

Events

MSU focussed it's efforts on delivering a full schedule of events across the festive season in the run-up to students breaking for the holidays, remaining open as normal for the final week of term.

We erected a Christmas Tree outside the SU, hosting a Christmas lights 'Switch On' event as the first of our Christmas Schedule which continued with Christmas Karaoke, comedy, carol singing, busking and live nightly entertainment in the SU Bar and Venue.

Community Clean-Up Crews

Community & Volunteering

The herculean efforts of the Maynooth Tidy Towns committee in running clean-up initiatives throughout the year is something to be applauded.

To give them some much needed time off, MSU organised student clean-up crews to hit the streets at key times during December to make sure everything was ship-shape for the mornings rush hour.

Our thanks go out to every student who volunteered for this initiative- it wasn't easy to be on the streets so early, but you made a difference.

NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE

Be mindful of your fellow Maynoothians- they may have a disability you cannot see.



EPILEPSY

Students may have seizures brought on by stress, tiredness, tension or alcohol- triggers differ from person to person.

**INVISIBLE
DISABILITY**

MSU | NO LABELS | NO LIMITS



NOT ALL DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE

Be mindful of your fellow Maynoothians- they may have a disability you cannot see.



CANCER

Students may have long term physical issues either as a result of the cancer itself or from the treatment.

**INVISIBLE
DISABILITY**

MSU | NO LABELS | NO LIMITS



SPOTLIGHT:

No Labels No Limits Campaign

10th-14th April 2017



This week celebrated all our student members who face challenges on a daily basis, but excel as Maynoothians nonetheless. The campaign's aim was for students to be informed that people all around you are everyday heroes, even if they might sometimes need some extra support.

A particular focus this year was on what are known as 'Invisible Disabilities'. Conditions such as Anxiety, Crohn's Disease and Arthritis (to name only a few) affect many students around campus but can go unseen. We wanted to break the silence and stigma surrounding disabilities because at MSU we believe labels are for jars, not for people.

The campaign began with a poster and digital drive drawing attention to the fact that everyday on campus there will be students with hidden disabilities and you might not be aware of the challenges they have to overcome. If you are more mindful of others you can help- even just by being patient behind someone a queue, holding open a door or helping someone if they appear unsteady.

A highlight of the was our 'Stand-Up Speak-Out' session where students with disabilities spoke about their experience on campus. 4 students took to their microphone and spoke about the hidden, and not so hidden, disabilities that affect them every day.

This session was captured on video, shared online and proved to be one of the most popular videos on our social media channels this year. Thank you to everyone involved including the Maynooth University Access Office and especially the students themselves.

Workshops facilitated by Enable Ireland gave students and insight into what it is like to be on campus with an intellectual disability or to be a wheelchair user- really insightful sessions that complimented the message of the week perfectly.

We also looked back on the findings of last years campaign and are delighted to report that works continue on making Maynooth a more accessible campus. We will keep working to ensure the University campus meets the access needs of all its students.



January 2017

DeStress Maynooth Exam Campaign

Student Campaigns

Stress levels can be higher than usual around exam time. While a bit of stress can help for students to stay motivated and focused, too much can be pretty unhelpful.

We built on our previous award winning DeStress Maynooth campaigns with the aim of helping students lower their stress levels and achieve the best academic grades that they can. We achieved this through running food and snack stations in the library, providing toiletries in the toilets and destress events such as the always popular Pet Farm and Bunny Zone!

Jump Back In: Clubs & Socs Fairs Day 2

13th December

It's never too late to join a Club or Society! If a student missed out during Semester One we run another Fairs Day at the beginning of Semester 2.

Once again, the Phoenix Sports Halls were filled with music, drama, sports demos and juggling as Clubs and Societies showcased themselves to prospective members. Semester 2 is traditionally a busy time for Clubs and Socs as they run their main events and start to have one eye on the end of year Awards and BICS.

February

NStEP Institutional Analysis Workshop

Representation & Engagement

NStEP (The National Student Engagement Programme) is a collaborative initiative established by USI, the HEA and QQI. It works with 23 Higher Education Institutions, including Maynooth, to develop student capabilities and institutional capacity to enhance student engagement at all levels across the higher education system.

Students, along with staff of the Union and University, worked with facilitators to tease out what student engagement should mean on campus and put in place the initial steps of the programme.

Maynooth Games

18th January

The Annual Maynooth Games took place early in February, with over 20 teams of 4 taking part. The Games sees the teams work to solve riddles and complete challenges over the course of the week with the winners crowned 'Maynooth Games Champions'.

This event was first run 3 years ago as a commuter friendly that encouraged students to work as a team and to get out there and explore their campus. We look forward to developing on that idea as we develop this event for next year.



SPOTLIGHT: MU Clubs & Societies Awards

Recognition.



Each year MSU organises the Maynooth University Clubs & Societies Awards Night. This is where the University's Clubs & Societies and their committee members are recognised for the tremendous work that they have done over the past year.

Marking the applications for these awards is a collaborative effort between MSU and the University's student services and is no easy task. The winners were as follows:



Best Video:

MUCK (MU Canoe & Kayaking) Soc.

The Civic & Charity Award:

Green Campus Society

Best Poster:

Drama Society

Give A Little Do A Lot:

Tramps (MU Trampoline Society)

Best Photo:

MUCK (MU Canoe & Kayaking) Soc.

Best First Year Athlete :

Sofiya Nykolyuk (MU Archery Club)

Best New Society :

The Purpose Movement

Best Society First Year:

David Ryan (MU DJ Society))

Society Person of the Year:

Roisín Ní Mhaoláin (Cuallacht na Gaeilge)

Clubs League:

Tramps (MU Trampoline Society)

Societies League:

Dance Society

Club Executive of the Year:

Joe Fenlon (MU Trampoline Society)

Society Event of the Year:

Dominicon (MU Games Society)

Club Event of the Year:

24 Hour Bounceathon (MU Trampoline Society)

Athlete of the Year:

Noel Hendrick (MU Trampoline Society)

Most Improved Society:

MU DJ Society

Most Improved Club:

Rovers

Best Society:

MU Dance Society

Best Club:

Ultimate Frisbee





March

WellFest *Student Campaigns*

We all know College can get us bogged down and sometimes we forget to have a bit of self-care, well that's what WellFest was all about! A packed schedule of both Daytime and Nighttime events focusing on Mental, Physical and Sexual Health, worked together to focus students minds on their wellbeing.

MSU's WellFest was based in a marquee between the JH and Arts buildings which housed workshops, chill-out zones and events. Each evening keynote speakers including Ibrahim Halawa, Kenneth Egan and Rosanna Davison addressed students on mental and physical health issues.

MSU Students For Choice Position Paper Launch *Student Campaigns*

On foot of the MSU mandate to campaign to repeal the 8th Amendment, the MSU Students For Choice committee was established with the aim of building an evidence based, informational campaign driven by a detailed Position Paper.

This paper provided a legislative and historical timeline and outlined MSU's 'Three Reasons to Repeal the 8th Amendment'. These 3 reasons formed the basis of the message we wanted to relate to Maynooth students. Following the launch we joined the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment's 'Votes For Repeal' gathering in Dublin.

Irish Survey of Student Engagement *Representation*

ISSE is a quantitative survey of the experience of first and final year undergrad and taught postgrad students, the findings are used to create index scores for student engagement. Maynooth's response rate improved year on year, which was very encouraging.

The Survey culminates in a Report that examines the findings in order to suggest how institutions can work to improve student engagement and add value to the college experience.

MSU Executive Elections *Democracy*

Each year Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) hosts elections to fill positions on MSU's Executive Committee. MSU have four full time positions (President, VP Education, VP Welfare & Equality, and VP Clubs, Societies, & Student Engagement) and six part time positions (Arts, Celtic Students, & Philosophy Faculty Convenor, Social Science Faculty Convenor, Science & Engineering Faculty Convenor, Postgraduate Representative, Oifigeach na Gaeilge agus Gnóthaí Cultúrtha, and Events & Promotions Officer). These officers, other than Postgraduate, will take up office on July 1st.



SPOTLIGHT: **MSU Events 2017/18**

Throughout The Year

**SPOT
LIGHT**

MSUENTS kicked off the 17/18 academic year with a two-week extravaganza as part of Orientation and Fresher's week. Orientation week had a range of student engagement activities including magic shows, comedians, a hypnotist and a toga party to name a few.

We hosted some of Ireland's biggest acts during Fresher's Week including The Academic and Chasing Abbey. The Graduation Ball and the Welcome Back BBQ were also part of the September schedule. We also had an Irish line-up for our Comedy Night which was headlined by Neil Delemere.

As part of our entertainment programme for the year we provided free entertainment in the Bar every Monday-Thursday night during term. This was supplemented by Clubs & Societies events and other one off happenings, such as the Witches Rave at Halloween. We had our own fortune teller on site and some great prizes for the best costumes- always a highlight!

The MSU -v- DITSU Quiz was an unforgettable experience (mattress surfing anyone?) which raised funds for Jigsaw. Our Christmas programme of events included quiz nights, christmas specials, DJ takeovers and a special festive performance from Bingo Loco.

In semester 2 we ran two main gigs, Spring Break (featuring Little Hours and Keywest) and the annual Beach Party. For the Beach Party we sold 1600 tickets in less than a day. A mammoth production effort gave us 3 stages, 10 tones of sand and 1600 very happy guests (despite the rain!).

A new initiative saw us get off campus and run a water Zorbing event on the Royal Canal dock area in the town, open to the community and students alike.

A review of all events will take place this summer to ensure we are delivering the best event schedule for the coming academic year.



April

Student Achievement Awards *Recognition*

The Student Achievement Awards, in its fifth year, is the annual opportunity for the Student Movement in Ireland to recognise the contribution of students to the life of Ireland and the student community.

Maynooth was delighted to receive three nominations this year:

- Class REP of the Year: Katie Deegan
- Education Campaign of the Year: UpSkill Week
- Environmental Activism of the Year: Mireia Guardino-Ferran

We are so proud of everyone involved- and especially Katie who took home the Award!

MU Clubs & Socs Awards *Recognition*

Each year MSU organises the Maynooth University Clubs & Societies Awards Night. This is where the University's Clubs & Societies and their committee members are recognised for the tremendous work that they have done over the past year. Marking the applications for these awards is a collaborative effort between MSU and the University's student services and is no easy task.

New for 2017/18 was the Clubs & Societies Digital Badging system- each winner received a digital badge as recognition of their efforts which they could display as part of their digital profiles.

USI Annual Congress *Representation*

USI Congress is the governing body of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) where hundreds of student representatives from across the country convene to elect the USI leadership, direct the policies and set the agenda for the moment for the years ahead.

MSU sent a delegation of thirteen students to USI Congress this year, held in NUI Galway, where each member addressed Congress floor on a range of student issues.

Community Week Event: Zorbing on the Canal *Community & Events*

April 16-20 was MSU's 'Community Week' - a week that aims to promote the importance of community for safety and fun, while also strengthening the bond between our students and the town that they belong to.

'Zorbing on the Royal Canal' was the key event of the week and the first Water Zorbing event to take place in Maynooth. All the proceeds went to the young people's mental health charity, Jigsaw. Zorbing made for an exciting spectacle which brought the students of Maynooth and the wider community together to share the fun!

questions

for a better union



SPOTLIGHT: **MSU Annual Student Survey**

You Speak: We Listen.

**SPOT
LIGHT**

2018 saw the first implementation of a revised and structured survey instrument for the Union. Over 700 students from across the population participated in this survey, contributing to a valuable data set on how students engage with their Students' Union, their University and with their studies and welfare.

Student opinion is at the heart of MSU's work planning and enhancement processes, and is integral to informing how the Union can improve the quality of everything we do. The survey of annual opinion, in this context, explores the understanding of the Union and its activities, and, also, examines the societal and personal factors that impact on the student experience.

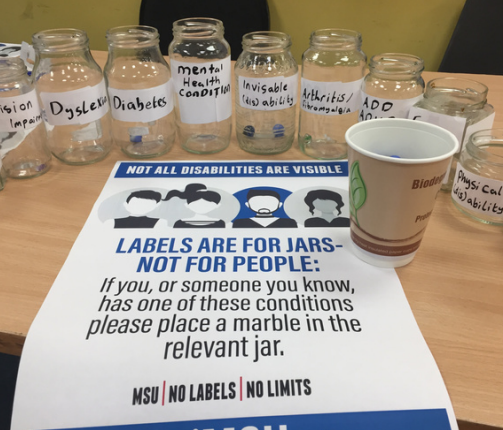
The results of the survey are intended to add value at institutional level, and to inform Students' Union activities. A full report with 10 recommendations has been presented to the Union Officers to inform their planning for the coming year. Among these recommendations were the following;

Increased promotion of Structure and Roles
While students feel positive about the Union in general, many do not understand its various parts and personnel. How the Union goes about its business, from Officers and Executive through to Senate and Elections should be consistently promoted in a clear fashion.

Prioritise Health and Finance information
Currently, health and finance issues dominate the student experience with recognition of University financial supports very low. While SU campaigns always strive to cover as many areas as possible during the year, particular focus should be given to consistent promotion of financial and health information.

Explore the work/life balance of students
Many students are working in excess of 10/15 hours per week on top of their studies. College workload and work commitments are reported as a barrier towards further involvement. The SU should explore what supports/opportunities can be offered to students in this position.

Prioritise MU facilities improvement
A clear priority for students is for the SU to work towards improving University facilities, in particular recreational spaces. The SU should be up front in how it is going to go about this and report back to the student population with regular status updates.



No Labels: No Limits

Student Campaigns

This week celebrated all our student members who face challenges on a daily basis, but excel as Maynoothians nonetheless. The campaign's aim was for students to be informed that people all around you are everyday heroes, who might sometimes need some extra support.

A particular focus this year was on what are known as 'Invisible Disabilities'. Conditions such as Anxiety, Crohn's Disease and Arthritis (to name only a few) affect many students around campus but can go unseen. A highlight was our 'Stand-Up Speak-Out' session where students with disabilities spoke about their experience on campus.

Board of Irish College Societies (BICS) Awards

Recognition

Higher education is more than exams, coursework and lectures, and students who are involved in running college societies know this. The purpose of the National BICS Awards is to recognise the huge effort made by the many individuals who run student societies across Ireland.

The National Awards are a means of recognising this dedication and are an opportunity to celebrate the importance and value that societies contribute to college life. Maynooth sent 8 entries and while we didn't win any silverware, we learned so much and will be back next year to go one step further!

May

MSU Repeal Week

Student Campaigns

Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) showcased a week of events as part of it's student-led campaign to remove the Eighth Amendment from the Constitution.

Highlights included; 'The Everyday Stories Exhibition' an illustration & storytelling project, consisting of 30+ images and true stories, highlights the Impact of the 8th Amendment; The MU Literary & Debating Society's debate on whether SU's should be involved in the campaign; a voter reg drive in the library and Repeal workshops and talks from Michi Hyams and Amnesty International.

MSU Student Centre

Representation

May saw the appointment of a design team for a new Student Centre, a home-from-home for students and a focal point for student life. The new building will open in early 2021 and serve as a hub for MSU, clubs, societies, events, and a variety of activities that help to create that special sense of belonging, so unique to the Maynooth student experience.

The new building will create an iconic destination on campus that is welcoming, vibrant, friendly and inclusive, built and operated to the highest sustainability standards.

MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION: The Team 2017/18



MSU Executive Members

Leon Diop

- President

Niamh Halpenny

- VP Education / Deputy President

Aoife Fennell

- VP Welfare & Equality

Darragh Moran

- VP Clubs, Societies, & Student Engagement

Julian Nagi

- Arts, Celtic Studies, & Philosophy Faculty Convenor

Stephen McConnell

- Social Sciences Faculty Convenor

Mark Kelly

- Science & Engineering Faculty Convenor

Killian Brennan

- Postgraduate Representative

Kevin Boushel

- Oifigeach na Gaeilge

Ciaran Watts

- Events & Promotions Officer

MSU Staff Members

Sandra Byrne

- Operations & Finance Manager

Mary MacCourt

- Clubs & Societies Administrator

Mary Banahan

- Clubs & Societies Administrator

Ann Marie Cudden

- Front Desk Administrator

Louise Kiernan

- Accounts Assistant

Colin Maher

- Events Co-ordinator

Dillon Grace

- Union Development Administrator

Eddie Corr

- Campaigns & Digital Content Creator

Services Staff

Brian Torley

- Shop Manager

Jackie Lyons

- Retail Assistant

Fiona Tierney

- Retail Supervisor

Declan Power

- Bar Manager

Conor Hassett

- Bar Manager

MSU Board of Trustees

Paddy Hennessy (Chair)

Richard Hammond (Deputy Chair)

Leon Diop

Dillon Grace

Sandra Byrne

Naoise O' Cearuil

Ciara Gleeson

Ben Finnegan

MSU Activity Report 2017/18

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