

MSU Activity Report 2019/20

Maynooth Students' Union - the year that was



A message from the MSU President



A few words from Katie Deegan, MSU President 2019/20.

This was an incredible year for Maynooth Students' Union. As President I have enjoyed every minute of working alongside you all! I've spent six years in Maynooth and it's hard to believe it's all over.

We fought several battles on campus and won! We fought to bring back the maths support centre for ALL students, we protested against the hike in rents on

campus and they were reversed, and we will continue to fight the increase in postgraduate fees! We also made a number of changes on how we do things this year. We made orientation completely sustainable giving 3,000 first years their MSU customised sustainable fresher pack! MSU services supplied Fairtrade tea and coffee all in compostable cups. We also had the first ever SU and university discussion about racism and inclusion on our campus that I'm sure will bring real change to our Maynooth University.

We didn't do all of this alone. All of the SU's achievements were possible because of your input, feedback and passion. Without it, well we would not exist. So I want to take this opportunity to thank you all. From the bottom of my heart you really have made my time here amazing.

Maynooth is a wonderful place, it's full of lovely people who are sound, it's vibrant, albeit a little weird at times. But most of all it's a community and I am so proud to have been a part of that community! I cannot wait to see what's in store for MSU over the next few years, and I'll be sure to pop back and visit.

See you all soon, Ní neart go cur le cheile

Katie xx

July & August 2019



Trans Pride, Dublin

We attended Trans Pride in Dublin along with the Union of Students in Ireland to show support for all of our trans and non-binary students, and to raise awareness of the issues still faced by trans and non-binary people in this country and around the world!

USI Students' Union 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. Officers receive training in different areas, some specific to individual roles and some general training that will aid all sabbatical officers during their time in office.

Senator Consultation Day

In order to make sure that the SU was tackling the issues that students are facing, we held a Senator Consultation Day, where the Student Senators could help feed into the plan of work for the upcoming year.

Belfast Pride



MSU attended Belfast Pride with the Union of Students in Ireland in order to help fight for Marriage Equality in the for all students across the island of Ireland. MSU ran a bus free for students to and from the march.

Can You Dig It?

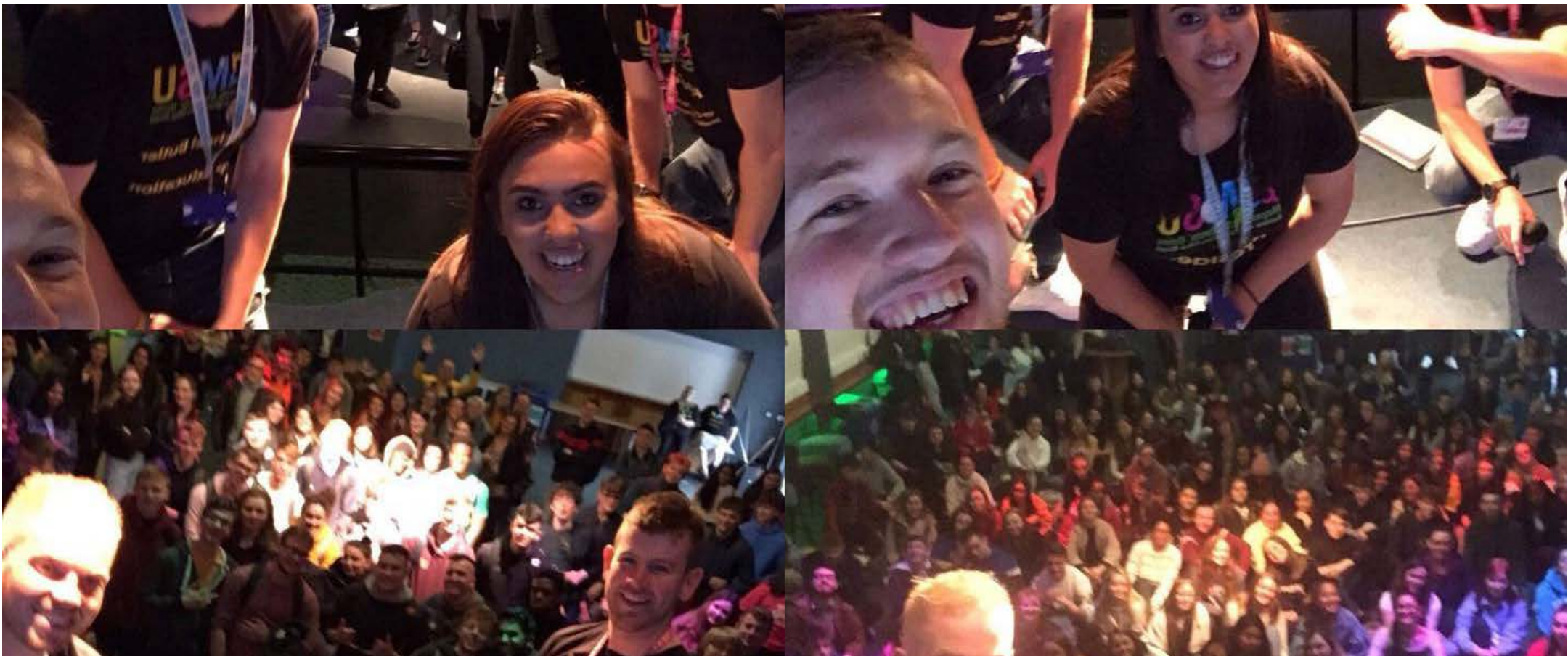


MSU worked to highlight to students their rights in relation to accommodation as tenants, as well as highlight supports that students could avail of when dealing with accommodation issues. We also assisted students in their housing search through our Facebook Accommodation page.

Students' Union Training +

SUT+ was held in Queens Belfast SU and united student officers from across Ireland as members of the executive committee of a fictional college, with many of the traits of a University in an IT setting. MSU officers experienced tough decision making, challenging narratives and an understanding of their own contribution to workplace issues.

September & October 2019

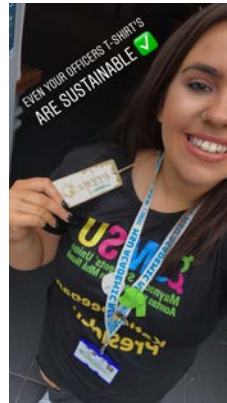


MAP Launchpad Orientation

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, gave talks and hosted workshops.

First Year Orientation



At the start of the Academic Year we welcomed 3,000 incoming first year students as part of the Orientation program! We handed out sustainable Freshers Packs and ran events for the entire week that students could attend in order to meet new people and help settle into their college experience. We got to meet so many amazing first years students and got to give them an insight into how we could support them throughout their time in Maynooth!

Drugs and Alcohol Awareness

During the first few weeks of the academic year we promoted information of Harm Reduction in relation to Drugs and safety and sensibility in relation to alcohol. The first few weeks of the year can be a time when people may be drinking alcohol or taking drugs, and we want to be sure that if they are that they are doing so in the safest manner possible.

Turn Maynooth Pink



On October 2nd we turned Maynooth PINK in aid of the Irish Cancer Society! In conjunction with MU Clubs & Societies we hosted a Coffee Morning, Table Quiz, Tye Die event and Big Gig in the Venue.

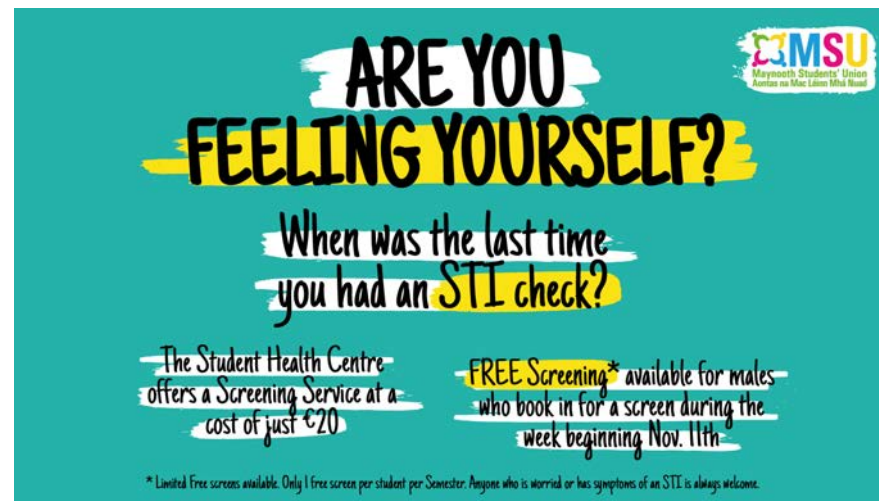
Board of College Societies (BICS) Weekender

This was the first year of a BICs big weekender. The intention of this weekend was to gather all of the students reps from clubs and societies. All the reps went on a 2 day trip which was full of C+S workshops, policy writing and C+S

development. This was a great weekend that was ended with a trip to an activity center to help the student representatives get to know each other.

SHAG Week 1

This year during Sexual Health Awareness & Guidance (SHAG) Week we continued to open up the dialogue on consent and on getting regular sexual health screening. In particular, the campaign highlighted the theme that what someone wears does not equal consent.



We distributed Sexual Health packs across campus and hosted a number of workshops and events. We also worked successfully with the Health Centre in MU Student Services to provide free STI checks for a 2 week period and promote this service to the student body.

Maths Support Centre Protest



<https://youtu.be/tpiPHtbrHwk>

When MSU received word that the MSC was closed for 3rd and 4th years we took immediate action. We consulted with students affected and took to a protest for the reversal of this decision. The protest resulted in the maths department calling us forward for a meeting. This resulted in the MSC returning to action after the mid-term when suitable tutors were identified.

Academic Rep Training

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.



Training took place in the Venue and was facilitated by Michael, the SU VP Education, along with facilitators skilled in the various areas of student representation. It was a great success with the Programme Advisory, Academic Advisory, Teaching and Learning department, Registrar, The Writing Centre, MSU staff and officers all in attendance. NStEP training also took place on Thursday the 24th October which focused on how to effectively deal with problems that students may encounter in the classroom.

IT Department Lobby

MSU liaised with the I.T. department regularly this semester about the constant issues being brought forward by students about Wi-Fi and slow logins to University PC's. The I.T. Department advised us that the more complaints they directly receive the better position they are in to implement improvements. We coordinated a campaign to encourage students to consistently email the department with their problems which resulted in the introduction of an improvement schedule.

November & December 2019



Mind Yourself Week



Mind Yourself was MSU's Mental Health Week campaign this year. This week was all about making sure students know how they can keep their Mental Health in tip top shape! We had loads of events ran across the week by the Students' Union and the various Clubs and Societies on campus

MSU @ Fridays For Future



In October MSU mandated to strike in solidarity with the Primary and Secondary students of Maynooth. Every Friday at Midday we sent representatives to the weekly Fridays For Future Strike in Maynooth. Fridays For Future Ireland are a branch of the global #FridaysForFuture movement. Our aim is to force the Irish government into taking action on climate change in Ireland, we want our government to align itself with its commitments to the Paris Agreement.

Pink Training

MSU attended the Union of Students' in Ireland's Pink Training, a weekend training event focused on LGBTQIA+ issues. Training focused on the wide issues around sexuality and gender, and provided an amazing opportunity for LGBTQIA+ people and their allies to learn more about their community and network with others.

Mature Students Seminar

MSU hosted the Union of Students in Ireland's Mature Students' Seminar. The Mature Students' Seminar was a one-day event of talks and workshops aimed at equipping mature students with the tools they need to succeed in college, as well as encouraging them to be leaders on their own campuses. This event was free and open to all mature students who are currently studying across Ireland.

Irish Support Centre



1pm - 3pm
SE233*
*SE011 on 9th April & 7th May ONLY

Gach Déardaoin
Every Thursday

Fáilte roimh chách
All welcome

 
In partnership with
Roinn na Nua-Ghaeilge and the
Froebel Department

The MSU Oifigeach na Gaeilge & Gnóthaí Cultúrtha and VP Education met with the Irish department to discuss the implementation of this initiative. This led to a trial and its successful introduction in Semester 2.

See The Ability Week

During the See The Ability Week, we ran multiple events to highlight the struggles that students with disabilities face on campus and in daily life, while also promoting the abilities of people with disabilities. We had events such as Wheelchair Basketball, Accessi-Bingo, and Blindfolded Sandwich making!

WiFi Lobby Morning

IT'S
OUR
TIME
TO
.E.A.D.

SICK OF THIS

Unable to join the network
"eduroam"

OK

LET'S TAKE ACTION

JOIN US FOR A
LOBBY MORNING

**THURSDAY
28TH NOV**

YOUR SPACE, SU
11:00 AM

SH*T?

MSU
Michigan State University
Rising on the Left the Best

MSU held a lobby morning in conjunction with the LEAD initiative to lobby the University to invest more money into the Wifi on campus. The lobby morning was effective with university staff members attending to speak with the student population and explain the problems which occurred in the last 2/3 weeks. Following this lobby event on Thursday the 28 th of November in Your Space, the I.T. Department promised to build stronger communications with the Union and outlined their schedule of improvement works.

12 Days of Christmas Draws

This year we held a mega free prize draw in the SU Front Office. Whether students came in to purchase a Student Leap Card, or they simply came into say hi, they could enter into the draw. Three draws were held each day on the run up to the Christmas holidays, with the delighted winners calling over to the SU Front Office to receive their prize. There were a total of 29 contributors giving us a total of 67 prizes. These prizes included, Hampers, Student Leap Card vouchers, One 4 All vouchers, A Month's Free Travel with an MU Bus service, Book Shop vouchers, power-banks, hoodies, chocolates, etc. the list was amazing.



The finale was held in “Your Space” and saw the students busily collecting items to win one of our fantastic prizes. Thank you to all our partners/suppliers who donated. Let's hope next year's event can be even bigger and better :)

January & February 2020



DeStress Maynooth

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.



Can't find a seat in the library?



SILENT STUDY ROOM

Visit Meeting Room 1 at the SU to get your work done in peace and quiet this exam season. Your Space will also be open!



We achieved this through increasing the campaign from 2 weeks to 3 and providing the following activities; free food in the Library every day; reduced price tea & coffee in the SU Shop; Silent Study rooms in the SU; extra study spaces booked across campus; free toiletries in the toilet facilities in the Library and; a daily raffle for great prizes!

The MSU Leadership Series

The MSU Leadership Series was a new initiative which set out to inspire leadership and encourage minority, oppressed and under-represented groups to run for positions of leadership. Diversity has never been stronger across Irish campuses. However, research has shown that this diversity isn't reflected in the type of student who runs for leadership positions. What MSU and the world needs are more people from different backgrounds to bring their experiences and student story to the decision tables.

MSU
Maynooth Students' Union
Aontas na Mac Léinn Mhá Nuad

EPISODE 1
Student Representation Leaders
In Conversation With:
Katie Deegan
MSU President
Michael Butler
MSU Vice President, Education
Ciarán Watts
MSU Vice President, Welfare & Equality
Paul Kenny
MSU Vice President, Clubs Societies & Student Engagement
1pm, Tue 11th Feb
Your Space @ MSU

EPISODE 2
Women In Leadership
In Conversation With:
Vicki Phelan
Author & Women's Health Advocate
Síona Cahill
Shortlisted 'Women In Youth Activism'
Katie Deegan
MSU President
1pm, Wed 12th Feb
Your Space @ MSU

THE MSU LEADERSHIP SERIES.

Each episode focussed on a different theme and demographics and provided students with the chance to hear from inspiring leaders, ask questions and consider the next step of your leadership journey. Speakers included; Vicki Phelan (Author & Women's Health Advocate); Síona Cahill (Activist, Feminist & Shortlisted 'Women in Youth Activism'); Katie Deegan (MSU President); Dr. Ebum Joseph (Author & Diversity Advocate); Leon Diop (Student Leadership Advocate); Noah Halpin (Transgender & Non-binary Advocate); Kerrie Leonard (Paralympian); Mark Smith (Actor) and; Adam Kane (Disability advocate). The Leadership Series was a great success and is sure to be repeated.

Student Survey & INDEx Survey

StudentSurvey.ie 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. We worked very closely with the University to improve increase uptake of the survey with our VP Education Michael organising students to conduct promotion in the library and distributing Goody Bag prizes via social media. The 2020 response rate was 6% higher than for 2019, so we are very pleased with this outcome.

student survey.ie

We Got Work To Do:

Learning Methods



46% | Have 'often' or 'very often' worked with other students on projects or assignments.

27% | Experienced work with academic staff on activities other than course work.



New for this year was the Irish National Digital Experience (INDEx) Survey. Following the completion of the survey, a partnership group comprised of staff and student representatives was established to determine students' needs and perspectives with respect to: a) digital graduate attributes; and b) digital learning and teaching. In particular, the group will plan, implement and report on the findings of student focus groups informed by the outcomes of the survey.

Student Feedback (SELE) Reform

The SELE survey was a standard instrument to allow students to provide feedback on individual modules and used to take place at the end of each module. Student participation had dropped largely as students didn't feel there was any improvement in the module following the survey. Another issue was students believed it was no benefit to do the survey during week 12 as the module was over by then.

Michael, the MSU VP Education, worked on this all year with the MU Dean of Teaching and Learning and organized a working group to provide feedback to the Dean from the students perspective. The feedback system was then reformed. The main changes are; that it would take place mid semester; each module will have separate questions to ensure relevance and; it will be monitored by the Head of Department.

Let's MUve: Physical Health and Positive Action Week



Our Let's MUve campaign was focused on empowering students to get their 2nd semester off to a great start through physical exercise and positive action! We had the RSA on campus promoting road safety, and hosted debates around the General Election to inform students of their choices for voting. We also had CPR training ran and had multiple exercise classes ran during the week! This also saw the start of our Couch To 5K program!

SHAG Week 2: The Second Coming



SHAG Week 2: The Second Coming was the 2nd Sexual Health campaign of the year! It focused more on the topic of sexual health in the context of relationships while continuing to promote physical sexual health. It saw the return

of favourites such as Sex Toy Bingo and the drama “The Kinds of Sex You Might Have In College” as well as new elements such as the “How to Get Ahead in Bed” workshop as well as Kink Education workshops! We had the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre on campus talking to students, and once again we had Free STI Checks available in the Health Centre and free condoms and lube widely available across campus.

MSU Charity Week



<https://youtu.be/H1I4rEsCBzo>

Every year Maynooth Students' Union and Maynooth University Clubs & Societies choose a charity and fundraise on their behalf for the whole college year. This year at a meeting of Clubs & Societies Council, where a number of charities were nominated, students voted for Ataxia foundation Ireland.



The Fundraising Team in action!

For charity week we ran a wide range of activities from pottery, free haircuts, bingo loco, photo booths, etc. This was a great week for raising money and also awareness for the charity of the year. The support shown by students was amazing and it was reflected when we raised over €7,000 in one week.

Fair Trade Coffee Morning



This was held as part of the Fair Trade Awareness two week programme. Colleagues from Green Campus, USI, joined MSU and we held a Fair Trade Coffee morning (26th Feb). Our main guest speaker was a representative from Tony Chokolonely, who chatted about Child Slavery in respect of the Cocoa Trade. This proved to be a really informative event.

EMpower: Empowering Ethnic Minorities

EMpower is a one day event run by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) of talks and workshops aimed towards third level students from an ethnic minority who may be interested in leadership positions, in their Students' Unions, clubs, societies, or elsewhere in the community which was attended by some of our students.

'Ask Angela' Initiative Launched

Whether you're on a night out with friends, meeting someone for the first time, or on a date that just isn't working out; if you're uncomfortable and need some support, Ask for Angela can help. The initiative encourages people who find themselves in an uncomfortable situation out to 'Ask for Angela' at the bar. The code word lets bar staff know if you're feeling uncomfortable and need a way to get out of your situation.

ON A DATE THAT ISN'T WORKING OUT?
FEEL LIKE YOU'RE IN AN UNSAFE SITUATION?

ASK FOR ANGELA!
GET HOME SAFE!

FEEL LIKE SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT?
TINDER DATE NOT WHO THEY SAID THEY WERE?

**APPROACH A STAFF MEMBER AND
ASK FOR ANGELA.**

STAFF WILL IMMEDIATELY KNOW YOU NEED HELP
AND WILL GET YOU OUT OF THE SITUATION
QUICKLY AND DISCREETLY.

Maynooth Purple Flag
MSU Maynooth Students' Union
SU BAR & VENUE | MAYNOOTH
SAFER MAYNOOTH

This initiative was brought to Maynooth by Maynooth Community Council in partnership with Safer Maynooth and Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) and MSU Bar & Venue Maynooth are proud to support it.

MSU Representation 2019/20



1274
Minutes in Session



64
Motions Submitted



7
Meetings Held



53
Motions Approved



57



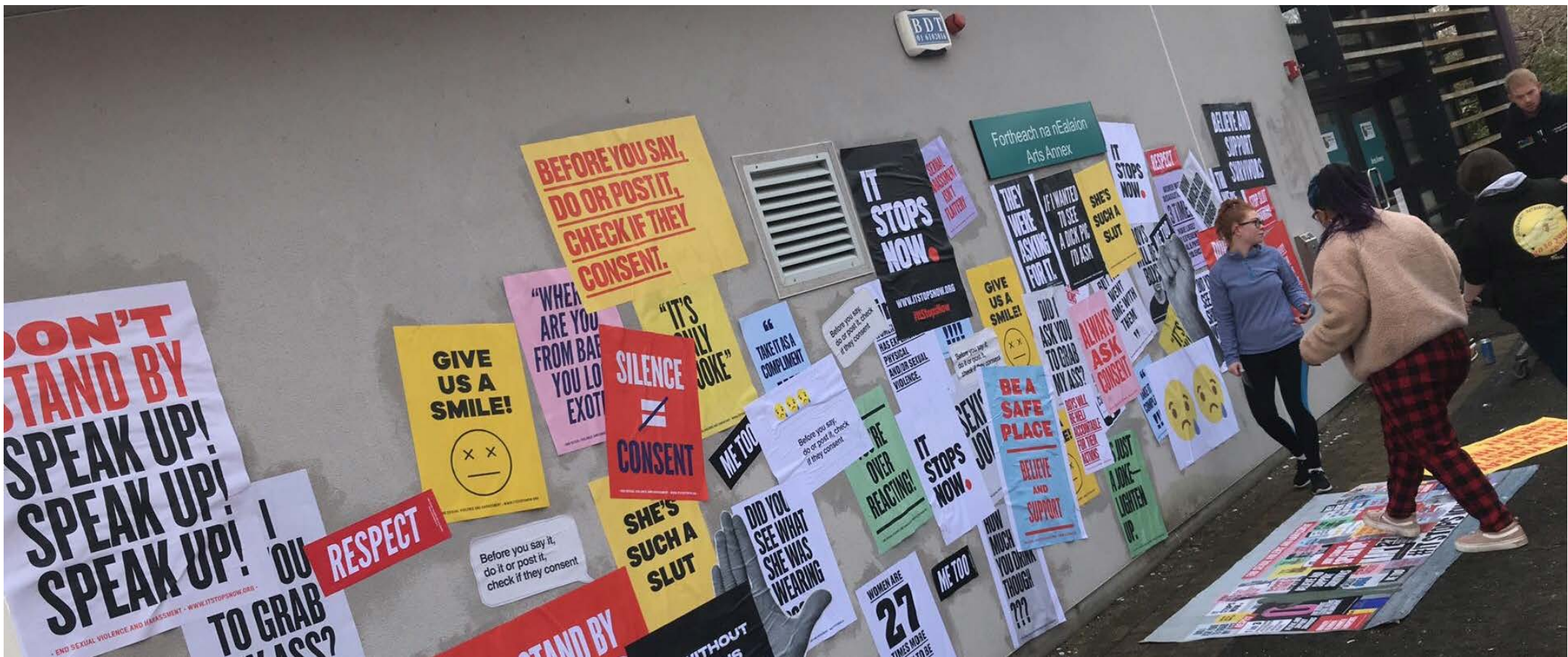
81%

MSU Executive Team 2019/20

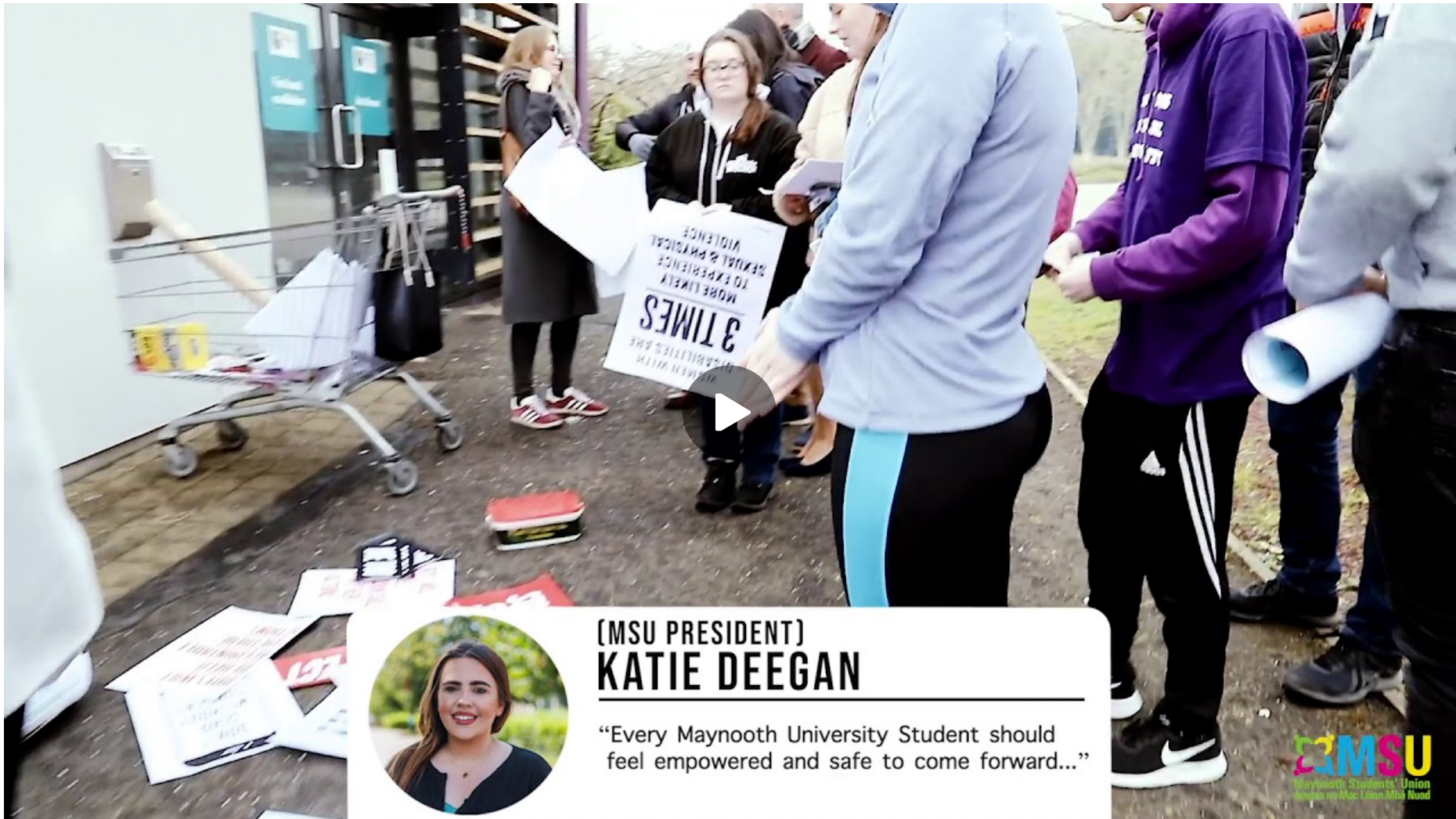
- Katie Deegan - President
- Michael Butler - Vice President for Education
- Ciarán Watts - Vice President for Welfare & Equality
- Paul Kenny - Vice President for Clubs, Societies & Student Engagement
- Julian Nagi - Arts, Celtic Studies & Philosophy Faculty Convenor
- Áine Keenan - Social Sciences Faculty Convenor
- Finn Nolan - Science & Engineering Faculty Convenor

- Ruairí Weiner - Oifigeach na Gaeilge (Irish Language Officer)
- Kevin Ryan - Events & Promotions Officer
- Rebecca Kavanagh - Postgraduate Representative
- Vacant - Doctoral Postgraduate Representative

March & April 2020



It Stops Now Mural



(MSU PRESIDENT)
KATIE DEEGAN

“Every Maynooth University Student should feel empowered and safe to come forward...”



<https://youtu.be/SSZFA60Z3Oo>

The It Stops Now campaign builds a culture of zero tolerance of sexual harassment and violence in third-level institutes by raising awareness and developing training and policy resources for students and staff. On March 5th an engaging mural installation as installed by students with the aim of dispelling popular myths and engrained

attitudes towards sexual violence and harassment. You can be the change. Believe and support survivors. Don't stand by, speak up. Before you say it, do it, or post it, check if they consent.

Social Justice Committee

This year saw Social Justice Week held on the week of the 9th March. MSU Officers and staff were very much involved in this event, which was a collaboration between MU, MSU and St Patrick's College. Some events were held in Your Space during the week. Unfortunately due to Covid-19 health restrictions some of the end of week events were postponed.

'ENOUGH' Protest



ENOUGH



POORLY FUNDED SERVICES

HIGHEST FEES IN EUROPE

INCREASING PG FEES

INCREASING RENTS

PROTEST 11am-6pm
MARCH 9th Outside JH

Maynooth Students' Union was incredibly disappointed by the decision of Maynooth University to increase on-campus rents by 3% this coming academic year 2020/2021. This was a decision reached without any involvement from MSU in representing the student voice. MSU immediately moved to protest this decision and call on its reversal. We organised a protest outside the John Hume building on campus where we spoke with students about how this decision would impact negatively on the student experience. We collected over 2,000 signatures on the day and continued our protests by pitching tents on the green and continuing to protest until the COVID-19 crisis forced us off campus.



While the COVID-19 crisis brought a premature end to our physical protests we continued to engage with University authorities in challenging this decision. We also engaged with media outlets and politicians to keep this issue on the agenda. The pressure worked however, with the University publicly reversing the increase on April 23rd. We

want to sincerely thank each and every Maynooth student for engaging on this issue- we look forward to continuing to represent your interests and working to make the Maynooth student experience the very best it can be.

COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 emergency saw the closure of the campus during March. We immediately put in place measures to ensure our core representation services were catered for online. We liaised with MU services and departments to ensure that students were kept up to date with the emerging news and had all the contact details they needed in one central location.

We Are Maynooth

Originally planned to be an on campus event, we moved this campaign online with the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown. We highlighted music, TV shows and films from different culture and backgrounds, urging all students to come together under the 'We Are Maynooth' banner.

MSU Services & Facilities

2019/20



SU BAR
& VENUE | MAYNOOTH

85

- Performers Booked in
SU Bar & Venue



178

- Free Events run by MSU



105,000

- Beverages Served



35,000

- Chicken Goujons Served



1,574

- Items of Merchandise Sold



8,000



It was a busy year for MSU Services & Facilities!

MSU Front Office introduced a Payzone point facility to allow staff/students pay a bill/upload credit to their Student Leap Card or upload credit to their mobile phone. In response to an increased demand for printing in the Front Office we introduced a second computer which speeds up the time spent here, whilst still availing of our student friendly prices. We also updated both computers to Windows 2010 to better our service.

The **MSU Bar, Venue, Your Space and Meeting Rooms** were also very busy. Between the all day food offering, free nightly entertainment, hosting Clubs & Society events and facilitating student group bookings there was never a dull moment in the student Centre!

The **MSU Londis Shop @ JH** had a fantastic year offering students quality service and products at affordable prices. This effort was recognised in November when we won the Londis Retailing Excellence award. This year we also expanded our lunch offerings, made an effort to link up special offers to MSU campaign weeks and launched our own social media channels.

May & June 2020



COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 emergency saw the closure of the campus during March. We immediately put in place measures to ensure our core representation services were catered for online. We liaised with MU services and departments to ensure that students were kept up to date with the emerging news and had all the contact details they needed in one central location.

We also adapted our remaining campaigns to work solely online. This included the annual DeStress Maynooth exam support campaign. Regular online Q&A and support sessions replaced the usual library visits and students were provided with the support and advice they needed during this unusual exam period.

USI Annual Congress

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. This year, USI Congress was held online, and Maynooth's delegation contributed greatly to the various debates, raising multiple motions and speaking on different issues affecting students.

[Visit our Website](#)



