

## **Guide to the differences between the current USI constitution and the proposed USI constitution**

The text in black is the current USI constitution. The text in blue is part of the new constitution that we must vote on. This is simply a summary of **changes** in the constitution. Please see the full constitution at <http://iadtsu.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/USI-Constitution-Special-Congress-January-2012.pdf> for detailed descriptions of officer roles, national council, congress etc.

1. USI Officer Board is a Standing Committee of National Council and is composed of the elected officers of the Union. Officer Board is composed of:

- a. The President (Full Time)
- b. The Deputy President/Campaigning Officer (Full Time)
- c. The Education Officer (Full Time)
- d. The Welfare Officer (Full Time)
- e. The Equality Officer (Full Time)
- f. The Area Campaigns Officers, one for each of the Eastern, Southern, Northern & Western regions (Full Time)
- g. The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) Rights Officer (Full Time)
- h. Oifigeach na Gaeilge/ the Irish Language Officer (Part Time)
- i. The Environmental Awareness Officer (Part Time)
- j. The Postgraduate Officer (Part Time)

1. The Officer Board is composed of:

- a. The President (Full time)
- b. The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance (Full time)
- c. The Vice President for Welfare (Full time)
- d. The Vice President for Campaigns (Full time)
- e. The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship (Full time)
- f. The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region (Full time)

- g. The Vice President for the Southern Region (Full time)
- h. The Vice President for the Irish Language & Culture
- i. The NUS – USI President (Full time)

There are a couple of changes here.

1. The Campaigning Officer of the current constitution is no longer the deputy president. Instead, in the new constitution, all officers are given the title of Vice President and at the start of their term; the President must nominate another member of the Officer board to act as their Deputy in their absence, or, in the event of their death, resignations or incapacity.
2. The previous Education officer's (Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance) role included being 'responsible for the development, implementation and planning of the Union's education policy, including that of postgraduate students and their studies in conjunction with the postgrad officer'.

The new role states that the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance states that the officer has responsibility for

- a. The Union's work on academic policy and quality assurance at levels five and upwards on the National Qualifications Framework, including, full-time and part-time students in Further Education & Higher Education, students on Labour Market Activation Programmes and Apprenticeships. This change brings the role in line with current developments in Education.
3. The Equality Officer has been changed to the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship. The VP/Equality & Citizenship now has a special focus on LGBT rights including carrying out the Union's policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, encouraging the participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in the Union and working to eliminate prejudice against the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

The VP/Equality & Citizenship shall have overall responsibility for the running of Equality, Citizenship and LGBT training events such as Pink Training.

The VP/ Equality & Citizenship shall assist the VP/Campaigns in relation to campaigns relating to citizenship in areas such as the environment and civic, social and political participation, with particular emphasis on voter registration; working with the community and voluntary groups.

4. The LGBT Rights Officer position has been removed.
5. The Area Campaigns Officers have been broken down.
  - a. There is no longer an Eastern Area Officer. Instead, it is in the President's role that s/he shall nominate an appropriate member of the officer board to assist colleges in the East not covered by the Area Officers.
  - b. Alongside existing duties, the VP/Border, Midlands and Western Region & the VP/Southern area shall, where colleges in their area do not have a function Union, assist the students of that College to establish one.
6. All officers are paid apart from the VP/Irish
7. All officers may now be elected for 3 terms as opposed to 2
8. Pay increments: Previously, the President, if re-elected to a second term would be eligible for a pay rise of no more than €8,000. In the new constitution, should **any** officer be re-elected for a second or third term, in the same position, they shall receive a long service increment or increments as decided by the finance committee.
9. **Impeachment and Discipline:** In the current constitution, it is stated that a two-third majority vote of a quorate National Council has the power to dismiss an elected officer or Chairperson of any committee. This is subject to appeal to congress.

In the proposed new constitution it states all elected officers are deemed to be employees of the Union as defined by the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977-2007 and shall be subject to and have the protection of employment legislation for the time being enacted in the State.

The Union shall also keep an up to date employee procedure manual including but not limited to employee grievance, disciplinary, dismissal and bullying and harassment procedures as well as codes of conduct to be approved by National Council at least every 3 years.

Dismissal of an officer shall be sanctioned by a supermajority of National Council or Congress.

10. Vacancies: In the current constitution it is stated in the event of a vacancy occurring among the full-time/part-time officers by reason of dismissal, long-term incapacity, resignation or death, National Council will hold an election for the vacant post. In the case of area campaign officers a special regional standing conference will be held to elect a new officer.

In the new constitution, if a vacancy arises, other than the President, then the following should apply:

If the vacancy arises and there is six months or more Officers' term unexpired, there shall be a by-election at the next National Council.

If the vacancy arises and there is less than six months of the Officers term unexpired then the President shall nominate a remaining member of Officer Board, or in exceptional circumstances, with the consent of National Council, appoint a member of National Council to assume the responsibilities of that officer.

Should a vacancy arise in the case of the President, an election shall take place at a meeting of National Council to be held not later than 28 days after the vacancy has arisen.

11. Advisory Panels: Not later than the second national council each year the VP/Academic, VP/Welfare and VP/Equality shall each present National Council for their ratification with a list of nominations of people they deem appropriate to advise them in relation to specific areas of their portfolio. These nominations, once ratified, shall constitute an Advisory Panel that the Officer may convene, in whole or in part, to assist them in their work

during their term of office. They shall be unpaid but may draw expenses, as set out by Finance Committee, where such expenses were incurred subsequent to a specific request for assistance from the member of Office board in charge of that panel.