



Technological University Dublin Students' Union

SPOTLIGHT

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2023/24



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The TU Dublin Students’ Union Elected Officer Team 2022/23
Vice President for Events and Engagement – Ian Kelly, City Campus Vice President – Peter McCann, , Vice President for Academic Affairs – Shauna O’Toole, Tallaght Campus Vice President – Sheran Bahadir, President – Brian Jordan, Vice President for Communications and Media – Louise Kavanagh, Blanchardstown Campus Vice President – Jeremy Lawler, Vice President for Welfare and Equality – Nekesa Khisa Nancy



The TU Dublin Students’ Union Elected Part-time Officer Team 2022/23
Back L-R: International Student Officer - Marco Nocerino, Gaelige Officer - Éadaoin Ó Snodaigh, Disabilities Officer - Ciara McKenna, Ethnic Diversity Officer - John Benedict Divinagracia
Front L-R: Sustainability Officer-Amber Thomas, LGBTQ+ Rights Officer- Jamie Murphy, Placement Officer: Dominique Baldwin, Not pictured is the 23/24 Postgraduate Officer, Avice Meyá

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Section I: About TU Dublin Students' Union

An Introduction to TU Dublin Students' Union

TU Dublin Students' Union serves as the independent and democratic voice for nearly 27,000 students at TU Dublin.

Tracing its roots to the Irish student movement, TU Dublin Students' Union evolved from the early Student Representative Councils of the late 1950s to the pioneering Irish Students' Unions of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The union is affiliated with USI (the Union of Students in Ireland), the national representative body for students in Ireland.

TU Dublin Students' Union upholds a proud tradition of advocacy, representation, and the promotion of students' interests. Membership is automatic for all TU Dublin students.

The operational functions of TU Dublin Students' Union are managed by a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG), owned by the students of TU Dublin through their union membership.

The following is a summary of some of the key milestones of the academic year 2023/2024.



Mission – TU Dublin Students' Union is the independent representative organisation for students at the Technological University Dublin (hereinafter referred to as 'TU Dublin' or 'the University'). TU Dublin Students' Union acts in the best interests of its members, to advance and defend their rights, primarily in relation to their education and welfare as TU Dublin students, and as citizens.



Vision – TU Dublin Students' Union wants to ensure that each TU Dublin student will have a positive and transformative experience to assist them in reaching their full potential academically, socially, and professionally, and to develop as ethical and informed individuals.



Values – TU Dublin Students' Union is student-led, democratic, inclusive, transparent, accountable, ethical, respectful, empowering, and professional.

**TU Dublin Students' Union Constitution, 2023*

A Message from the Chair of TU Dublin Students' Union CLG

2023/24 has been a very successful year for TU Dublin SU CLG and I am delighted to contribute to this report which outlines the important work carried out by the Union. The Report reflects the commitment, hard work, resilience, and resourcefulness of the sabbatical team, ably led by Brian, our staff and the large numbers of students contributing as class reps, part-time officers, and members of Council.

Despite the accommodation and cost of living crises continuing to impact students, your Students' Union has worked to build on previous achievements, including the successful completion of the SU Survey and the bedding down of the new officer structure and corresponding staff structure reflective of the student experience in TU Dublin. This work reflects the efforts of the Union's leadership to ensure that the organisation is best placed to deliver for its members' interests and learn from the experience of previous generations of officers and activists.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Board of TU Dublin SU CLG for their continued support over the last year, both retiring Board members and new members joining. Their commitment, knowledge, expertise and tireless support for the work of the Union is to be commended and speaks to their tremendous commitment to our Students' Union. I also want to pay tribute to our recently appointed General Manager, Jessica Gallagher, her recently retired predecessor, Mary Scally, and all the TU Dublin SU staff who have shown great determination and resilience to ensure professional high-quality service delivery in challenging circumstances. In conclusion, the sustained progress made, and positive results are extremely encouraging, and I look forward to the Union building on them and ensuring a stronger, resilient, reflective, and more inclusive TU Dublin SU.



Deiric Ó Broin Chairperson of TU Dublin Students' Union CLG



Brian Jordan President of TU Dublin Students' Union 23/24

"It's been real, as they say. Incredibly, beautifully real."

The last twelve months have been a whirlwind. As always, we planned everything down to the day, and of course, external factors made adherence to this damn well near impossible. Whether it was private student accommodations attempting to illegally enforce 51-week leases, the riots that took place in the streets of Dublin city, or a genocide orchestrated by Israel – no organisation can ever truly be prepared for that.

And yet, we were. I will always be so, so proud of the strength and agility of the staff, officers, and very students that we represent. No matter what the challenge was, or unexpected, 'unplannable' event – we reacted with logic, pride, and determination.

This was made possible through a shared belief. We all believe that we are doing the right thing for students. And that is so beautiful and rare.

I'll miss that aspect of the Union. That feeling that we're all working towards a common good. Even if we didn't quite always get what we wanted, there were always unexpected wins – and so many of them! Whether it was the increased security on Grangegorman campus, the significant increase in seating across all sites, or the increase in PhD stipends – we have so, so much to be proud of.

And there's so much that we don't see. I cannot tell you the number of students I ran into in the last few weeks who 1) recognised me, and 2)

A Message from the outgoing President of TU Dublin Students' Union

thanked me and the Students' Union for everything we did over the last two years. I'll be the first to admit that I never fully saw the work of the Students' Union when I was a student. So, to have students recognise and say it outright, felt really, truly special. And then there's the messages online. From students we helped appeal an exam result, to those we simply signposted to counselling – we'll never see the results of that, and yet, we have inextricably touched the lives of so many.

Finally, we often forget just how powerful Students' Unions can be. Whether it's registering thousands of students to vote in elections or holding a plebiscite on their confidence levels in the Irish Government (unsurprisingly, it was low) or lobbying the Higher Education Authority into conducting a National Review of the Student Charge (yes, we really did do that), we have power. So often we see Union's around the country waste it, or target the wrong people (or worse, get 'burnout' after 3 weeks). But I'm proud to know that we did our very best with the power the students placed into our privileged hands.

I will always feel like we could have done more, and I think that's a good thing. It means we still care, and we still have fight left in us. I hope the Students' Union does that for years to come – inspire and make more of us care. It's how lives get changed, and how the world becomes a better, fairer place for all.

Thank you, *TUDSU*, for everything.

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TU DUBLIN TU

A Message from the incoming President of TU Dublin Students' Union

Change is often daunting, and I can relate to this sentiment. However, it is a crucial component of growth and learning. As a Students' Union, we experienced this first-hand last year with the introduction of new officer roles and a revised organisational structure. Throughout this period, our team embraced various approaches, which allowed us to gain invaluable insights and experience. This transition has equipped us with the knowledge and skills to better serve our student community and to continue evolving as an organisation.

We recently conducted a membership survey, the U survey, to better understand our students' perspectives and lived experience. The data collected has highlighted areas where change is necessary, and we are committed to implementing these improvements. TU Dublin Students' Union has faced many challenges over the years, and we anticipate this year will present its own. However, one constant remains: our organisation's resilience and unwavering dedication to the welfare of our members. We are determined to continue evolving and responding to the needs of our student community.

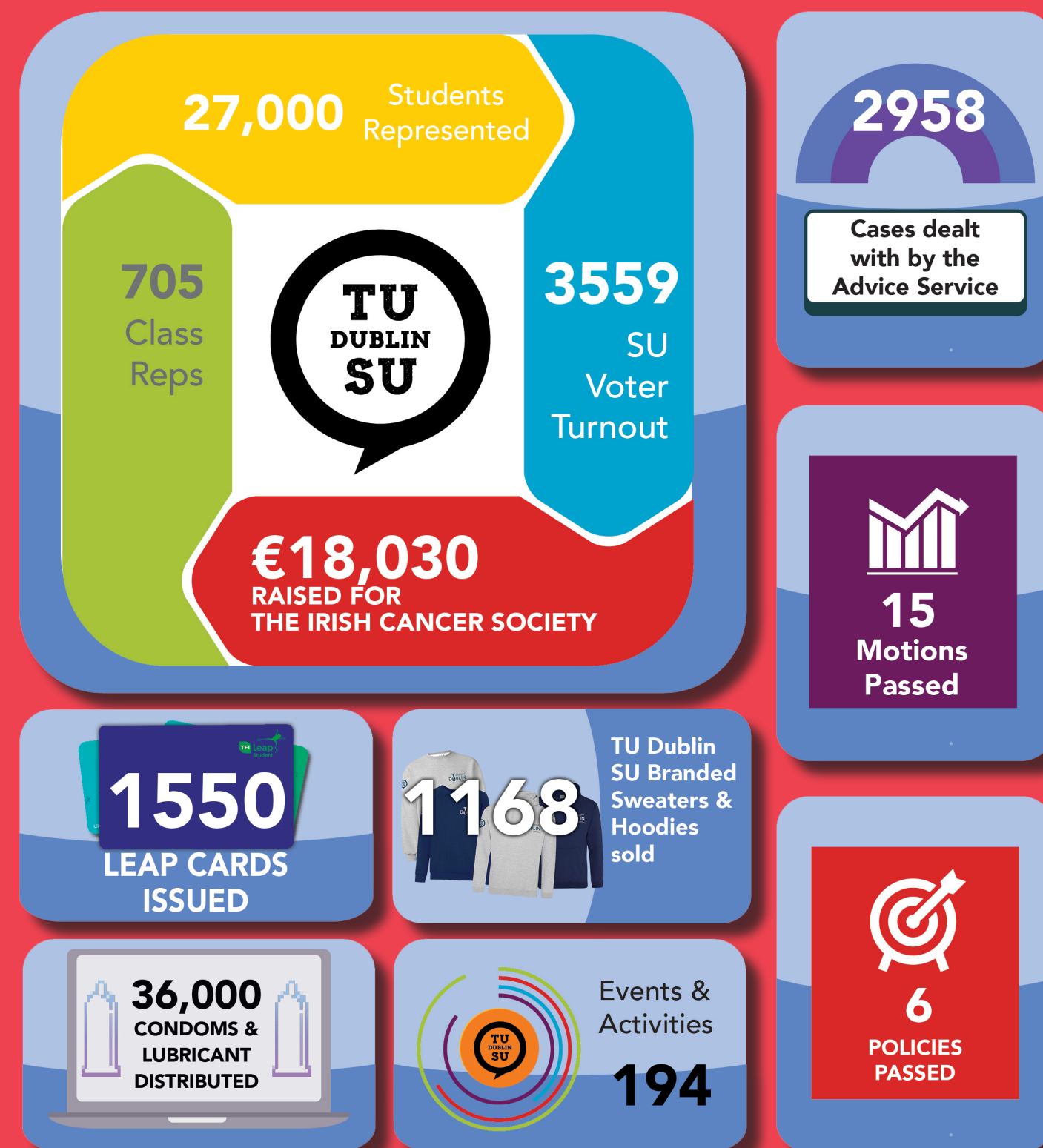
Last year, a plebiscite revealed a lack of confidence among our students in the current government. In line with the theme of change, a general election will take place during this academic year. TU Dublin Students' Union is dedicated to encouraging our members to actively participate by casting their votes and making their voices heard. We believe in the power of student engagement and are committed to empowering our community to influence positive change.



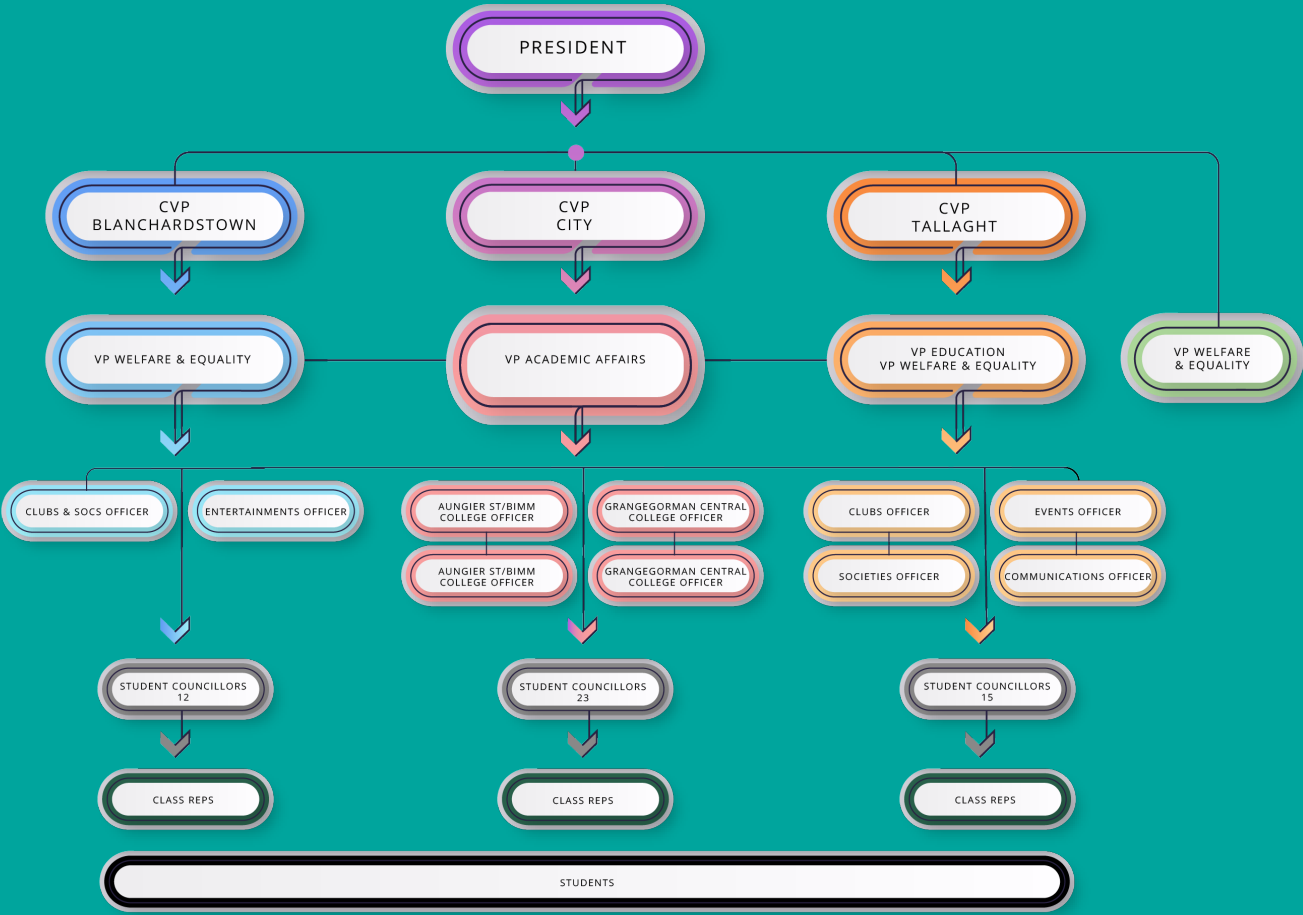
Shauna O'Toole, President of TU Dublin Students' Union 24/25

We hope this document demonstrates our dedication to working tirelessly on behalf of our students. We are open to embracing change, even when it feels daunting, because we believe it leads to the betterment of our student community. While we recognise that there is still much to accomplish and that external factors may present challenges, we have confidence in this wonderful organisation's ability to always strive for what is right and to learn from our experiences along the way.

Section II: TU Dublin Students' Union 2023/24 The Year in Review



Spotlight: Democracy & Representation



Democracy

As a democratic organisation, democracy is how we facilitate the election of student representatives and collect direct votes from students on important issues.

Class Reps

The Class Reps system is the most localised representative structure in the Students' Union. The objective of the Class Rep system is to assemble students to meet with their officers to discuss ongoing student-related issues and academic affairs.

With over 900 class rep positions available, in the 2023/24 academic year, 701 positions were filled across all campuses. With a 70% representation rate at the local level, each campus met a total of 4 times over the academic year to discuss issues from campus facilities, exams to the academic calendar. That's 24 meetings across the year!

Faculty Board Reps

Faculty Board Reps are elected to represent the students of their Faculty on their Faculty Board. Faculty Boards are responsible for the oversight of programme portfolio, student profile and performance, student experience, assessment, implementation of validations and reviews as well as the implementation of the Quality Framework. This year we filled the 6 student representative seats on each faculty board:

- Arts & Humanities: 6
- Business: 6
- Sciences & Health: 6
- Engineering and Built Environment: 6
- Computing Digital and Data: 6

THAT'S 30 STUDENT REPS!

Student Councillors

Student Council is the highest decision-making body in the Students' Union, compiling of elected Councillors from each campus, Part-Time Officers and members of the Executive. Aspiring Student Councillors seek election through the Class Rep Meetings, where a total of 81 student councillors were elected through this stream. By February 2024, the Student Council was at full capacity after a successful Students' Union-wide effort by-election.

Electoral Commission Members

The Electoral Commission is the regulator of all elections and electoral activities of the Students' Union. Comprised of 6 members, the Commission is made up of 4 student members, an executive member and an Independent Chairperson.

The Electoral Commission student members are elected through the Student Council, where any registered student of TU Dublin can nominate themselves and be elected. The President nominates a member from the Executive, and the Independent Chairperson selection is undertaken by way of a recruitment process.

At the Annual Union Elections, the Electoral Commission comprised 5 members, with 3 student members on the Commission. A singular term on the Electoral Commission runs from November to November.

CLG Members

Student members of the Students' Union CLG make up 6 positions of the 10 overall positions allocated. The remaining makeup of the CLG members are the Postgraduate Officer, CVP for Blanchardstown, CVP for City and the CVP for Tallaght. The latter members are ex-officio to the CLG, and the other 6 members are elected through the Student Council. Nominations to become a student member of the CLG is

open to all students.

Of the elected student members, a minimum of one member from Blanchardstown and Tallaght respectively must be represented and at least two student members must be from City Campus.

During the 23/24 academic year, all student member positions were filled.

Board Directors

Within the 14 Board Directors of TU Dublin Students' Union CLG, four positions are allocated to Student Directors. Of these positions, one is allocated to Blanchardstown, one to Tallaght and two to City Campus. Nominees for these positions are electable through the Student Council, and once elected, they serve on the Board of the CLG for a one-year term, with the option to re-run for a second.

Student Board Directors are elected at the final Student Council Meeting of the year for the following term. At Student Council in April 2023, all Student Board Directors were elected.

Deputy Chair of Student Council

The Deputy Chair of Student Council is elected to provide cover in the event that the Independent Chairperson of the Student Council is absent from a Meeting.

Nominations to become the Deputy Chair are open to all elected Student Councillors, and a vote must be taken by the second Student Council of the year.

Aoife O' Brien was elected the Deputy Chair of the Student Council and chaired one meeting throughout her tenure.

PTO's

10 Part-Time Officers were to be elected by the Student Council for the 24/25 academic year. Of these 10 positions, five were contested at Student Council on March 13th amongst 7 candidates.

The Officers elected at the Part-Time Officer Election was Gender Equality, Sustainability, Ethnic Diversity, Gaelige and Disabilities.

As five positions went uncontested, a by-election was called for Student Council on April 16th 2024. 7 candidates contested 4 outstanding positions, with ACCESS the sole position left uncontested.

The by-election elected the Placement Officer, International Student Officer and LGBTQ+ Officer. The Mature Student Officer candidate did not win their election and thus, both the Mature Student Officer and ACCESS Officer positions remain vacant going into the 24/25 academic year.

STUDENT COUNCIL



FTO's

Annually, students of TU Dublin take to the polls to elect their incoming Students' Union Executive Team. Typically conducted in March, eight full-time positions are to be filled.

The eight positions received fourteen nominees. The Presidential contest received the most nominees with three, and with all other overall positions receiving two each respectively. The campus-based positions received one nomination each.

Between the days of March 19th – 21st 2024, polls across TU Dublin campuses open to all TU Dublin students. The final turnout of the annual election was 12.8%.

All positions were elected on the Count Day, March 22nd 2024.

EC Chair Election

After a successful three-year tenure which saw regulatory oversight of three annual elections and countless other electoral interventions, Independent Chairperson Glenn Fitzpatrick, finished his term on June 30th 2024. The Students' Union conducted a recruitment campaign, which received two applications and saw the selection of Kelly Rennick as Independent Chairperson of the Electoral Commission.

The Students' Union gives it thanks and best wishes to Glenn Fitzpatrick, and the very best of luck and support to Kelly Rennick.

USI Affiliation Referendum

The Student Council voted to hold an affiliation referendum on the Students' Union membership in USI, in March 2024.

Conducted cocurrently with the annual elections, 75% of the TU Dublin electorate overwhelmingly voted to remain a member of USI.

Plebiscite

Schedule G of the TU Dublin Students' Union Constitution was triggered for the first time in its existence under the procedure of holding a plebiscite this year. The outcome of a plebiscite shall be binding on the Union's policy for a period of 5 years.

This year's Plebiscite question asked, "Do you have Confidence in the current government of Ireland (33rd Dáil)?"

The outcome of this Vote indicated that 73.3% of the electorate do not have confidence in the 33rd Dáil of the Government of Ireland.

Representation

Representation is how we facilitate the voice of students through decision making structures.

MEETINGS:

Class Rep Meetings

Class Rep Meetings, conducted across all campuses, took place on four occasions across the academic year. There were a total of 20 Class Rep Meetings held in 2023/24.

Class Reps throughout these meetings elected Student Councillors, who then went on to pass mandates to the Executive.

Faculty Board Meetings

Six student representatives sit on Faculty Boards, with a total of 6 meetings per faculty being undertaken in 2023/24.

The total of Faculty Board Meetings attended was 30 Meetings.

Student Council Meetings

During the 2023/24 academic year, the Student Council met on seven occasions, on each TU Dublin Campus at least once as per the Constitution.

Throughout the seven meetings, part-time officers were elected, student members to various representative bodies were elected, motions and policies were passed and discussion and deliberation on key student and academic matters were prioritised.

Over these seven meetings, the Executive was mandated on sixteen occasions through motions and eight policies entered the policy book.

With each mandate and policy representing such important issues for students, the Students' Union took mountainous policy strides with the adoption of a BDS Policy, with the decision to conduct an affiliation referendum for the first time in the Union's constitutional history and actioning key mandates in the academic, welfare and social areas of the Union.

Executive Meetings

The Executive Meetings of the Students' Union were organised to be held weekly for the 2023/24 Executive Team. Key decisions on the day-to-day operation and political direction of the Union were taken throughout these meetings. The Executive met a total of 39 times under a standing agenda which saw updates on their remits, working groups and ongoing campaigns and mandates.

RECOGNITION:

Class Rep Awards 2024

The reflect on and reward our dedicated, committed and passionate student volunteers and representatives for their invaluable contribution to developing and strengthening students' experience in University, the Union hosts an annual ceremony to reward and acknowledge these contributions.

For the 2022/23 Class Reps Awards, we received just over 500 nominations, and we are delighted to announce that this year we have broken that record with a whopping 688 nominations from student across TU Dublin for the 2023/24 Awards.

The Class Rep Awards winners as nominated by the students and selected by the Executive are as follows:

Arts & Humanities | MSc Hospitality Mngt - Doan Thi Dieu Thao
Business | Business - Saurabh Shah
Engineering & Built Environment | TU821 - Emil Sobocinski
Sciences and Health | TU882 - Aoife O'Brien
Computing, Digital & Data | Cyber Security & Digital Forensics - Lan Ngai.

Spotlight: Academic Affairs

Introduction

The Academic Affairs remit within TU Dublin Students' Union entails 6 key areas as set out in the Academic Affairs policy set by Student Council.

- **Representation & Advocacy:** Lobbying for students on issues related to their education in TU Dublin and ensuring that the student voice is heard in all University academic decision-making structures, policy areas and processes.
- **Class Representative Oversight:** Coordinating the development and promotion of Class Rep elections on all campuses to increase active participation and engagement in the Class Rep system. Ensuring sufficient training and other events for Class Reps to improve their ability to advocate for student groups and improve the academic experience at TU Dublin.
- **Monitoring Academic Affairs Casework:** Work with the Student Advice & Advocacy Service to identify key trends in Academic Affairs related casework and work to address them within the University.
- **Event & Campaign Planning:** Organising and delivering information and awareness events and campaigns including but not limited to information on students' rights and university regulations, feedback opportunities, and other areas in line with their agreed political platform.
- **Policy Development:** Developing and implementing Union policy positions on academic matters for consideration and approval of Student Council and reporting on this work to Council.
- **Meeting Preparation:** preparing representatives for meetings in all forms from Class Rep Meetings to University Meetings – agreeing agendas, positions, speakers and any other relevant information ahead of time to ensure the best use of our seat at the table.

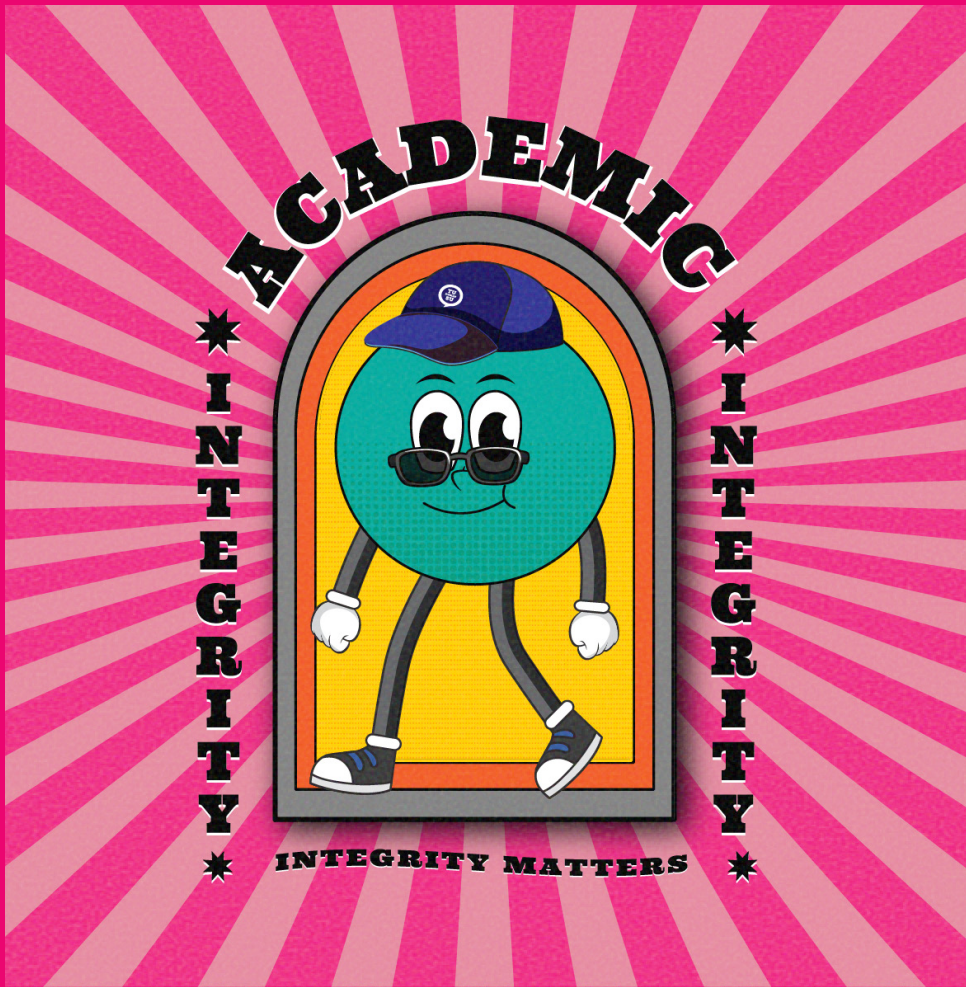
The Vice President for Academic Affairs oversees this remit with the support of the Academic Affairs Working Group.

Academic Representation & Advocacy

A key part of the Academic Affairs role is to represent the academic interests of TU Dublin students and advocate for them with various stakeholders.

Here's who we worked with in the academic year 23/24 on the student's behalf!

- Exams Office
- NTUTOR Student Champions
- Quality Assurance
- Library Services
- Chaplaincy
- Heads of Learning Development
- Student Services Hub
- Student Success
- Academic Integrity
- Education Model Team
- Student Services
- TU Dublin Academic Affairs, Learning Teaching & Assessment Team
- NStEP
- ESRI
- Minister for DEFHERIS
- Manchester Metropolitan Union
- UCD Students' Union
- Carmichael
- WonkHE
- UK Students' Unions



EVENTS & CAMPAIGNS

Supplementals

The Supplemental Exams Campaign started from the 14th of August 2023 to support students with exam stress and uncertainty. The goals of the campaign were to:

Reduce Stress

Support Students undertaking supplemental Exams

Provide information, advice and advocacy to students

This was achieved through stakeholder engagement, promotion of exams information and FAQs on social media, our website and throughout campus with banners and digital screens as well as officers on each campus giving out free 'energy boosts' in the form of snacks for students sitting exams/studying.

Don't Drop Out Until You Drop In

The annual student retention campaign 'Don't Drop Out Until You Drop In' took place during the month of October focusing on raising awareness among students of the key deadline of the 31st of October 2023 as the final date to drop out in order to get your fees refunded. Furthermore, the campaign highlighted the various supports available to students to help keep them in college if that is what they wanted or to help them to leave the easiest and most stress-free way.

Academic Integrity Awareness Campaign

The Vice President for Academic Affairs launched this year's Academic Integrity Awareness Campaign which will be run throughout the academic year highlighting the importance of knowing the rules and utilising the various supports available to students. The campaign launches with social media posts, videos and posters promoting our website. The Team is also worked with NTUTOR to develop an Academic Integrity Guide resource for TU Dublin students. The second half of our Academic Integrity campaign for the year was called 'Integrity Matters' which focussed in large part on data collection of student voice and opinion on Academic Integrity and the rising threat of AI culminating in our first position paper on Academic Integrity!

Exams 101

We held two further exam support campaigns to support students during exam times. Free snacks were given out on each campus by officers to give for students sitting exams. Key Exams/Assessment information was made available on our website which was promoted to students and our Advice team was on hand to help students over the two exams weeks.

HER-oic Academics

The Vice President wanted to highlight the achievements of women in academics. This campaign consisted of social media graphics and a display in the foyer of the East Quad. The campaign aimed to inspire the female-identifying students in TU Dublin that women have and will excel in academics.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Student Charter

A draft Student Charter between the Students and TU Dublin was developed by the SU Team. After months of negotiations through the Student Experience Committee and the Student Charter sub-group bringing together the best parts of Charters of other institutions we were delighted to see the first TU Dublin Student Charter approved by TU Dublin Academic Council, on 1st of May 2024.

Policy Review and Feedback

Throughout 2023/2024 TU Dublin Students' Union has been collaborating with TU Dublin's Academic Affairs in developing and updating a range of key academic policies, to ensure that the student voice is represented and that these policies protect and enhance the rights of students into the future.

Assessment Compendium

The VP Academic Affairs was excited to officially launch the TU Dublin Assessment Compendium in January 2024. This document is the result of a combined project with TU Dublin's Learning, Teaching and Assessment and the NTUTOR student champions. The publication outlines a number of different forms of assessment and gives students ratings and opinions on them. At the LTA Showcase on the 19th of January TUDSU joined the Champions in giving a presentation to lecturers and academic staff advocating for more authentic forms of assessment.

Academic Calendar

Following consistent lobbying on behalf of the TU Dublin Students' Union team, the Academic Council is now considering major changes to the TU Dublin Academic Calendar which we believe will be of benefit to students. The biggest change focuses on moving the Semester 1 exam time from January to before Christmas!

Meetings

As a part of their work the Academic Affairs team sat on a number of important decision-making meetings and committees on various levels of the University.

Including but not limited to:

- High Level Academic Governance
- Academic Council

Subcommittees:

- Student Experience Committee
- Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee
- Academic Regulations, Policies and Procedures Oversight Committee
- University Programmes Board

Working Groups:

- Assessment Handbook Working Group
- Digital Education Policy Implementation Working Group
- LTA NTUTOR Student Champion Working Group
- Graduate Attributes Working Group
- Liberal Arts Working Group

Faculty Board:

- Arts & Humanities Faculty Board
- Sciences & Health Faculty Board
- Computing, Digital & Data Faculty Board
- Engineering & Built Environment Faculty Board
- Business Faculty Board

Spotlight: Events & Engagement

Introduction

As part of its mission to ensure that each student enjoys a positive and transformative experience during their time at TU Dublin, the Events and Engagement team at TU Dublin Students' Union is tasked with enhancing student life through the provision of extra-curricular events and activities, encouraging students to explore new interests and meet people beyond their immediate courses.

An impressive total of 194 events and activities were organised in 2023/2024. These ranged from seminars and film screenings to fundraisers and nights out, with events taking place both on and off campus.

While traditionally evening events such as the Freshers' Ball and RAG Ball have always been a big success, TU Dublin Students' Union made a conscious effort in 2023/2024 to provide a wider range of offerings during college hours, to ensure that the programme of events could cater for as many students as possible.

Throughout 2023/2024 the team also endeavoured to increase participation and engagement amongst students affected by the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, most of the events and activities run under the auspices of TU Dublin Students' Union were free. The following are just some of the key highlights from a momentous year:

Student Orientation

At the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year, TU Dublin Students' Union welcomed thousands of new students to the campuses of TU Dublin. The Student Officer Team and staff worked in collaboration with the University to facilitate class addresses and organise a variety of events and activities to make students' first day on-site as exciting and fun as possible.

Freshers' Fortnight

For the 2023/24 academic year, Freshers' Week commenced with two weeks of dynamic events and activities in late September, marking a strong start to the year.

A total of 10 events were hosted across the University's multi-campus locations, as well as at select off-site venues, with a diverse range of activities scheduled both during the day and in the evenings. Student engagement was exceptional, with all major events reaching full capacity within days.

This year, we introduced a refreshed approach by moving away from the traditional Freshers' Ball and exploring new themed experiences, including a Taylor Swift Night, Bingo Loco, and a Comedy Night. These events were met with overwhelming enthusiasm and proved highly successful.

Halloween 2023

A fiendishly good programme of events took place during 'Halloweek' at the end of October 2023. The specially organised Haunted Tours of Grangegorman proved particularly popular amongst students.

A monster week of activities concluded with a spooktacular Fancy Dress Ball, which took place at The Workmans club and saw over 400 students in attendance. We also returned to Ireland's only indoor nightmare realm in Mary's Lane which sold out 200 tickets within days.

Christmas

In the lead-up to the Christmas break, the team organised a week of seasonally themed festive events for students to enjoy. Building on the success of Bingo Loco during Freshers' Week, a special Christmas edition was hosted, alongside Christmas-themed Sketch and Sip workshops at Lower House and Aungier Street. These events provided students with a lively and engaging way to celebrate the holiday season.

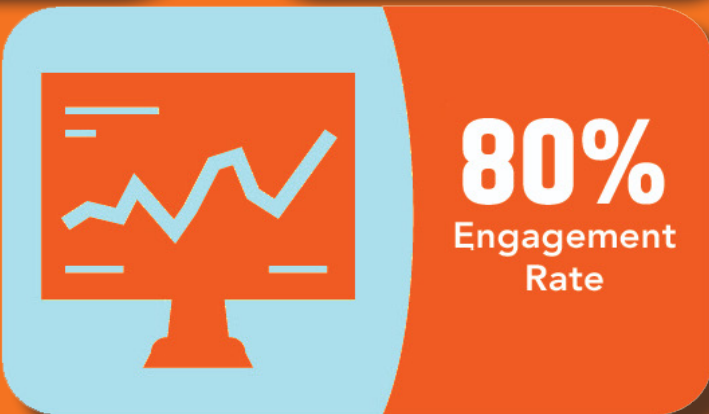
Student Awards Ceremony

The annual TU Dublin Student Awards ceremony took place at Dublin's Radisson Blu Hotel in late April 2024, celebrating student achievements across a range of areas, including Welfare, Education, and Events & Engagement. Organized by TU Dublin Students' Union, the awards recognized students who demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, and impact within the university community.

A total of fifteen awards and honours were presented on the night, including five Class Rep Awards, jointly sponsored by the University. Additional awards were given to students who proudly represented their local campuses throughout the 2023/24 academic year.

A key highlight of the evening was the conferral of Honorary Membership of TU Dublin Students' Union upon Mary Scally, the outgoing General Manager. This prestigious honour recognised Mary's exceptional dedication to supporting students and guiding Elected Officers throughout her many years of service.

The ceremony also featured the presentation of a cheque for just over €18,000 to the Irish Cancer Society, TU Dublin Students' Union's designated Raise and Give (RAG) charity partner for the 2023/24 academic year. (For more on RAG, see Section III).



Spotlight: Welfare & Equality

Introduction

The Welfare and Equality team of TU Dublin Students’ Union is committed to promoting inclusivity, raising awareness, and supporting students throughout their time at TU Dublin. As part of this work, TU Dublin Students’ Union organised a series of impactful campaigns addressing critical issues and fostering a supportive environment for students throughout the 2023/2024 academic year. Included in this work, TU Dublin Students’ Union organised a series of impactful Welfare and Equality campaigns throughout the 2023/2024 academic year, to address important issues and encourage a supportive, welcoming environment for students.

Welfare and Equality Campaigns

Black History Month

For the month of October, a campaign with the theme of Black & Irish: Challenging Racism Together ran various events including talks, an exhibition, a gallery visit to IMMA, film screening and dance workshops. Guest speakers included Black & Irish, and the Exhibition of African art, objects and photography was run with the International Institute of African Studies Ireland. Dance workshops and a film screening in the Stella ran in conjunction with Dance and Africa Societies.

Mental Health Week

In October 2023, a week-long campaign was run dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of mental health. University-wide activities were organised, such as speed venting, pinata smashing, self-care packs, compliment notes and information stands hosted by the youth mental health service, Jigsaw.

SHIFT Week

SHIFT week took place on the week of the 13th of November and kicked off with a ‘Big Sexy Quiz’. Held in The Woolshed and hosted by the performer Aria Nasty, there was a turnout of 72 students who participated in sex education-themed question rounds and won many prizes. The week continued with information stands facilitated by the TU Dublin health centre nurses across all campuses, promoting SH24 kits and free contraception. Ben Lindsay of the Health Promotion & Improvement department of the HSE held an information stall promoting STD/STI awareness and contraception also. Two Sketch & Sip events were held with attendees being encouraged to paint a sexy Santa.

Social Justice Week

Social Justice Week in collaboration with the Chaplaincy Service took place on the week of December 4th and saw TU Dublin Students’ Union engage in a clothing drive for the Capuchin Day Centre across all campuses. There were also cultural dance workshops that aimed to improved intercultural relationships within the student community as social justice issues can often be international, so it is important to foster supportive communities within TU Dublin. Workshops took place in Tallaght, Blanchardstown and Grangegorman, with sessions in Salsa, Filo Hip Hop, Afro and KPop.

Culture Week

The week of students’ return to campus for second semester on January 22nd saw Culture Week which had a lot of input from the International Student PTO and support from the Ethnic Diversity PTO also. The focus of the week was multicultural integration and celebration. Events included multicultural food festivals across Blanchardstown, Tallaght and Grangegorman, a movie night in Lower House, a cultural dress day, a talent show in Aungier Street, and exhibitions and games nights across all campuses.

Pride Week

This year’s Pride Week campaign took place from January 29th with the theme of ‘What We’ve Done, What We’ll Do’ which encouraged reflection and optimism. This campaign included an online information piece with historic facts and figures, including the progress Ireland has made with regards to LGBTQ+ rights and a spotlight on 3 historical LGBTQ+ figures through history. Events included a movie marathon in Lower House, Giant Jenga in common rooms with Pride Facts, a badge bonanza where pride badges were handed out on all campuses, and a Queer Careers talk with speakers Annie Hoey from the Labour Party, Lola Gaetano and Karl Wallace from the Arts Council and Brendan Cushen from Dublin Bus. The week finished with a music and poetry showcase in Aungier Street.

SHAG Week

Second Semester’s Sexual Health Awareness Week during the week of February 12th included a sexual health awareness roadshow with educational elements and games that had the Students’ Union Executive moving from campus to campus throughout the week. Events in the roadshow included ‘Find the Clit on Campus’, an interactive social media piece, informative reels about PEP/PrEP, stealthing, consent and safe sex practices, a ‘Condom Pool’ where students were encouraged to search for sex positive prizes, and ‘Consent Twister’. The HSE ‘Spin the Wheel’ Roadshow also came to the Grangegorman campus on the Wednesday to engage students with information and prizes.

Two evening events took place including a sold-out Sex Toy Bingo where students played bingo, were entertained by drag queen Donna Fella, won sex toy prizes, and ended the night with a sing-along and dancing. On Thursday, a Drag Race competition was held in the Workman’s Club, hosted by Drag Queen Mizza Dublin. Two participants competed against each other in a talent show style content for prizes.

EDI Week

This EDI week during the week of March 4th focused on Neurodiversity. This was marked with an information campaign on Instagram that explained what is meant by Neurodiversity and who falls under that umbrella. A virtual EDI reading group was organised for lunchtime on Wednesday the 6th of March to discuss sections of books with Neurodiverse characters and the importance of representation in media and art.

Climate Emergency

The Climate Emergency Campaign was organised to overlap with Green Week from March 11th-15th. The theme of this campaign was Circular Economies and aimed to increase understanding of current consumer-focused economies and the circular alternative. This was done through Instagram, an article on the Students’ Union website and a book and clothing swap that acted as a physical demonstration of the concepts explored.

Image-based Sexual Assault

This campaign, from April 15th-19th aimed to raise awareness about ‘Coco’s Law’ which came into effect in 2020 and made the sharing of intimate images online without consent a punishable crime. This campaign raised awareness using posters on all campuses and a lollipop hand-out on the 18th where lollipops were individually labelled with QR codes that linked back to a webpage with further information.

Supporting Students in Sex Work

This campaign, from 10th-12th of April, was largely an online informational campaign which provided neutral information about the current laws in Ireland around sex work, explained the Nordic Model, and provided information on how students who may be involved in sex work (online and in-person) can protect themselves. This information was made available through Instagram and the Students’ Union website and also sign-posted to support services both internally and externally such as RUHAMA and Sex Workers’ Alliance Ireland. A self-care workshop was incorporated into this campaign, based in Grangegorman, by a past-pupil on Wednesday the 10th.

Alongside campaigns, many awareness pieces ran throughout the year on various relevant topics including accommodation, Internation Student entitlements, elimination of violence, drug harm reduction and disordered eating.



234
food vouchers
for City Campus
since January

119
Blanchardstown and Tallaght
canteen food vouchers

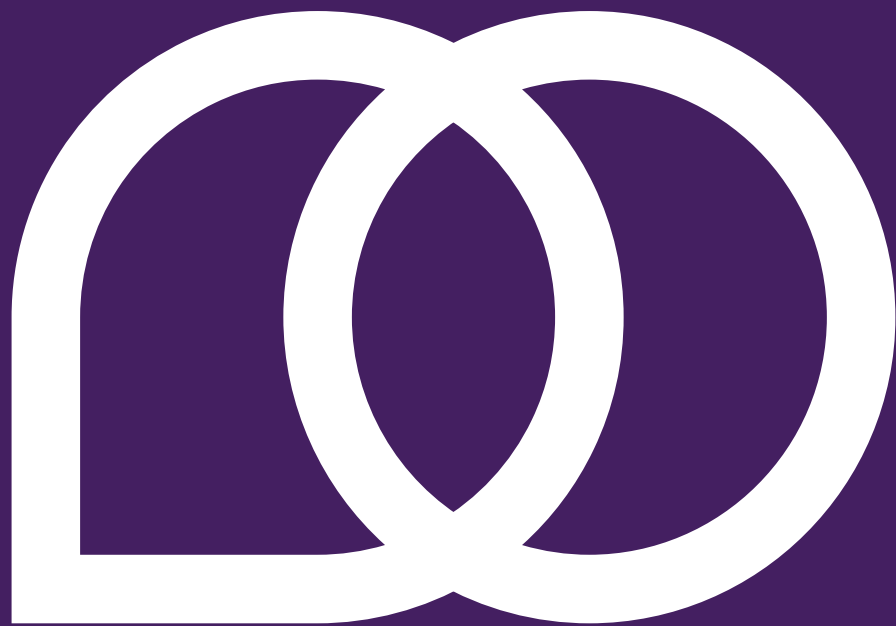
16,000
Lubricants
provided to
students

20,000
CONDOMS
DISTRIBUTED
ACROSS ALL
CAMPUSES

Mature Student
Breakfasts run
in collaboration
with the
Chaplaincy and
Pastoral Care
Service

WEEKLY

8
New Microwaves



STUDENT ADVICE & ADVOCACY SERVICE

Introduction

The Student Advice Service provides free, confidential, and independent advice, information, support, representation, and advocacy to all full and part-time TU Dublin students. Students can approach the Student Advice Service with any issues they might experience during their time at TU Dublin.

Meet the Team

TU Dublin Students' Union's experienced Student Advice Team has the knowledge, resources, enthusiasm, and expertise to support students across a range of areas including financial, academic, and personal. The staff of TU Dublin Students' Union support students in a variety of ways, including the following:

- Explaining and guiding students through university procedures
- Helping students to explore their options
- Providing assistance and/or advocacy
- Signposting to other services
- Listening
- Providing information

How Students Initially Engaged with Advice & Advocacy Service in 2023/24

2956 students contacted the TU Dublin Students' Union Advice & Advocacy Service in 2023/24 between August 2023 and July 2024 inclusive. Most of these engagements were through walk-ins at 43%, where students had face-to-face interactions with staff. Students also engaged with the service via the social media channels operated by TU Dublin Students' Union, such as Instagram, TikTok and the website's live chat function.

While some students chose to raise certain issues publicly on these platforms, most student contact with the Advice and Advocacy Service was conducted using private messaging on the online channels. At 32%. Email played a significant role with 16% using the dedicated advice service email address advice@tudublinsu.ie, and 7% reaching out to Student Advisors directly on their individual work email addresses. 2% of students who initiated contact with the Advice Service did so over the phone.

Casework Trends

Students had a variety of reasons for contacting the TU Dublin Students' Union Advice & Advocacy Service during 2023/2024. Queries encompassed social, academic, and financial areas, ranging from interest in getting involved with TU Dublin Students' Union, to queries on financial aid and grants, and questions about the University's quality assurance processes and facilities. The most prominent areas of concern among students were queries relating to leapcards, exams and assessments followed by queries around the services and facilities in the University.

TU Dublin Students' Union Campaigns

The Year in Pictures

2023/2024



A large red speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom left. Inside the bubble, the text "TU DUBLIN SU" is written in a bold, red, distressed, stencil-like font, stacked in three lines.

**TU
DUBLIN
SU**

Section III: TU Dublin Students' Union & The Wider Community

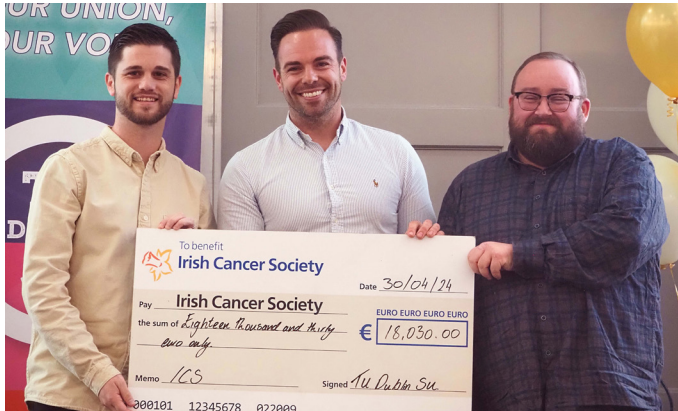
TU Dublin Students' Union RAG Charity Partner 2023/24

'Raise and Give' (RAG) is an annual fundraising drive organised by students' unions throughout Ireland and the UK to raise funds for specific causes and charities nominated by their respective student bodies. The initiative engages students in a host of events to collectively raise funds for their chosen charity throughout the academic year. In the past, TU Dublin Students' Union has fundraised for organisations including Belong To, Saoirse Women's Refuge and Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association.

TU Dublin Students' Union's chosen Charity Partner for 2023/2024 was the Irish Cancer Society, a community of patients, survivors, volunteers, supporters, health and social care professionals and researchers. Together they are transforming the experiences and outcomes of people affected by cancer through advocacy, support services and research.

This charity held particular significance for Student Councillor Aoife O'Brien, who proposed partnering with the Irish Cancer Society. Her recommendation was driven by a personal connection, as the charity had provided invaluable support to her mother.

These efforts resulted in the presentation of a cheque for over €18,030 to the Irish Cancer Society at the annual student award ceremony in April. The amount raised demonstrates the generosity and compassion of the TU Dublin student body, who came together to support this worthy cause and make a real difference in the lives of those affected by the disease.



Spotlight: National & Education Issues

Words by Shauna O'Toole, outgoing VP Academic Affairs (Incoming 24/25 SU President)

While it's important to celebrate the positive aspects of our Students' Union, we must also acknowledge the challenges our students face. The reality is that many of our students are grappling with significant issues, such as the housing crisis and the escalating cost of living, exacerbated by broader governmental shortcomings.

According to the U Survey, a substantial portion of our students commute long distances due to the scarcity of affordable student accommodation. 44% stating that their commute is unmanageable. This situation severely hampers their ability to fully engage in the college experience, as many rush back home after classes to work and support their education financially. Moreover, 67% reported that the cost-of-living crisis is adversely affecting their student experience.

The impact extends beyond logistics; it affects students' mental well-being and sense of community. Our survey revealed that 15% of students struggle to make friends, and 25% feel disconnected from the student community. This detachment from the full college experience is a pressing concern.

However, there is hope. Our students expressed a lack of confidence in the current government, and with an upcoming general election, there is potential for change. We, as a union, will actively encourage our students to vote and make their voices heard. Furthermore, we will collaborate with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) to advocate for the issues that matter most to our members, who have affirmed their desire to remain engaged with USI.

History shows that student activism can lead to significant change. The water marches, which saw 80,000 people mobilize, are a testament to the power of collective action. With 256,785 students in Ireland, according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO), our collective voice can be a formidable force in shaping the future of our country. Together,

we can advocate for a fairer Ireland that serves all its citizens.

Ní neart go cur le chéile (There's no strength without unity).



The logo for TU Dublin Students' Union (SU) is a purple speech bubble shape. Inside the bubble, the text "TU DUBLIN SU" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font, stacked in three lines: "TU" on the top line, "DUBLIN" on the middle line, and "SU" on the bottom line.

**TU
DUBLIN
SU**

Section IV: TU Dublin Students' Union Services 2023/24

TUDSU+ Services

Introduction

TU Dublin Students’ Union continues to develop and source a range of additional services and products in response to the evolving needs of its membership. This includes the supply of merchandise and items such as lab coats and goggles, university branded clothing, etc., that the University is not able to provide.

TUDSU+ Services

As part of its efforts to meet student demand for a variety of items and services, TU Dublin Students’ Union has set up TUDSU+, an innovative new venture that covers all the Students’ Union’s common room events and activities, as well as the distribution of promotional products and the sale of TU Dublin SU merchandise.



TUDSU+ Office Lower House Grangegorman Campus

The TUDSU+ service covers the following: *

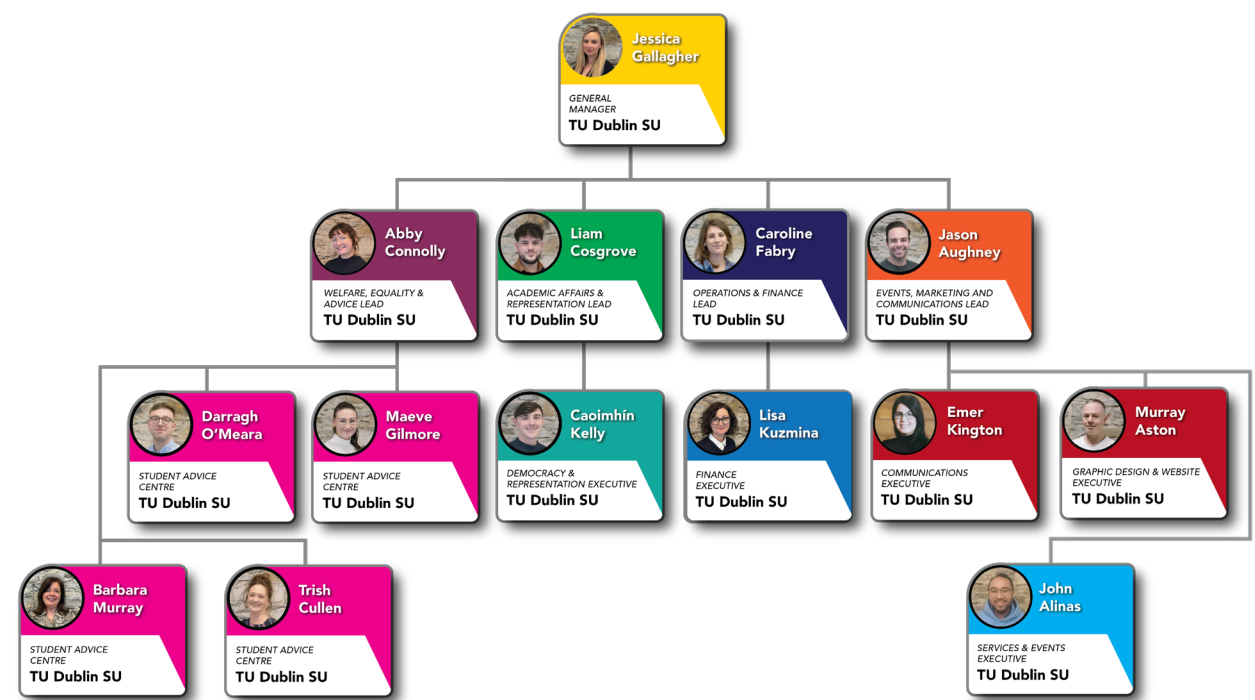
- Sale of Student Leap Cards
- Sale of Branded Merchandise
- Sale of Lab Coats and Goggles
- Distribution of TU Dublin SU Branded Promotional Materials
- Provision of themed events and activities in TU Dublin Students’ Union
- Common Rooms
- Provision of Pool Tables, Games Consoles, Table Tennis and Vending Machines

**Services may vary across campuses*

The 2023/2024 academic year was a busy one for TUDSU+ and the following is a summary of the kinds of activities undertaken by the service:

- 1168 TU Dublin SU Branded Sweaters and Hoodies sold
- 47 Class Orders consisting of 434 Hoodies and 27 Sweaters
- 1550 Leap Cards issued
- 38 Total Marketing Activations including (9) Tallaght, (5) Blanchardstown, (15) Grangegorman, (7) Aungier Street and (2) Bolton Street

TU Dublin Students' Union Staff 2023/24



Section V: Looking Forward to 2024/25

Incoming Student Leadership Team 2024/25



L-R: Naomi Sebastine (CVP Tallaght), Peter McCann (CVP City), Fatima Said (VP of Welfare and Equality), Shauna O'Toole (President), Princewill Aguele (VP of Events and Engagement), Ema Radlinskaite (VP of Communications and Media), Sheran Bahadir (VP of Academic Affairs), Esmeraldi Doda (CVP Blanchardstown).

Incoming Student Part-Time Officers 2024/25



Top L-R: Gender Equality Officer - Annabel Biddulph, Placement Officer - Fiona Ennis, Sustainability Officer - Yvonnick Hessou, Lower L-R: Gaeilge Officer - Éadaoin Ó Snodaigh, Disabilities Officer - Oisín Putt, Not Pictured: International Student Officer - Sravani Gaddamanugu, Ethnic Diversity Officer - Israel Ngombo, LGBTQ+ Rights Officer - Charlie Beaudelot, Postgraduate Officer - Avice Meya.

#USurvey

Background

TU Dublin Students' Union (TU Dublin SU) carried out a survey to gather the opinions of its members in order to gain insights into what it is like to be a TU Dublin student as well as a better understanding of student and university staff perspectives on TU Dublin SU's activities. The project commenced on the 24th of January 2024 and was called the U-Survey.

Comprehensive insights were gathered through an online survey, student focus groups, and staff interviews; these will be used to inform strategic initiatives to enhance the student experience and determine TU Dublin SU's future priorities. The survey was open to all students across TU Dublin and was run over three weeks. A total of 3,453 students completed the survey, representing a response rate of 12% of TU Dublin students. To ensure independence, the data collection was contracted to Crowe Ireland with recommendations coming from the data analysis findings. In addition, confidentiality and anonymity were assured to all participants throughout, to ensure the integrity of the process and the validity of the responses.

TU Dublin SU established a Working Group of SU officers and SU staff to act as the main point of contact for the project. In particular, Crowe Ireland and TU Dublin SU developed survey questions in collaboration. This approach ensured that the questions posed to students were informed by sectoral experience.

Based on the SU's desired areas to be explored, the survey and the subsequent engagements with staff and students were structured around three main themes. These themes were Student Experience, SU Awareness and Communications.

These three overarching themes served as the foundation for the high-level findings derived from the opinion-gathering exercises. By organising the analyses around these key areas, we aimed to provide actionable insights to enhance the SU's effectiveness and responsiveness to student needs and expectations in the future.

High Level Findings

Variations in the student experience across campuses highlight the desire of the student body to see the SU targeting improvements in safety, facilities, and social spaces. While overall satisfaction is positive, specific concerns require focused attention to ensure a satisfactory experience for students across all campuses.

While a strong understanding of the SU's purpose existed, awareness of SU officers and events varied between campuses. Mixed responses regarding engagement with SU activities indicate opportunities for enhancing communication and promotion efforts. While there was unanimous praise for the SU's communication efforts, with particular emphasis on the high quality and professionalism exhibited in the SU's messaging, there were constructive criticisms regarding the strategic approach to communication. Tailoring events and campaigns to address diverse student needs could foster greater participation and inclusivity within the SU.

Accommodation also emerged as a significant concern, with only one-third of students reporting that they could secure suitable housing for the academic year. This highlighted the broader challenges students face beyond their academic demands. This showed the need for comprehensive support systems to alleviate financial pressures on struggling students.

Survey results indicated that 73% of student respondents are engaged in paid work outside of their lectures. Additionally, 5% are providing caregiving for a family member, and 7% are involved in volunteering. These findings illustrate the extensive demands on students and the financial pressures they face to attend college.

During the student focus groups, participants reiterated the necessity of working while attending college, stating that it would be impossible for them to do so otherwise. Some students mentioned having to miss lectures to attend work. Notably, a significant number of students are working between 10 and 37 hours weekly, which, combined with academic and commuting responsibilities, creates substantial time management challenges.

Student opinion of the relevance of the Students' Union campaigns varied across campuses. Approximately 35%–50% of respondents indicated that the campaigns were moderately aligned with their needs. This suggests a mixed perception regarding the effectiveness of SU campaigns in addressing the diverse needs of students. Overall, the analysis suggests a desire for the Students' Union to be more responsive to student needs, transparent in its operations, and more inclusive in its approach to representing diverse student interests. There is also a call for the SU to make use of more effective communication channels, with a focus on issues directly impacting

the student body. Based on the findings, we propose five key recommendations to enhance TU Dublin SU's effectiveness in representing and serving student needs.

Recommendations

High level recommendations from the USurvey include:

Student Engagement: It is recommended to increase efforts to enhance student engagement by organising more events tailored to the needs of TU Dublin students. This includes advocating for improved facilities on each campus through focused lobbying efforts directed at the University administration. Furthermore, an increase in student engagement would also lead to an expected increase in awareness of the SU's purpose and activities. It was noted by both staff and students that there should be an increase in events and activities to engage students while also fostering a community within the University.

Communications and Social Media Strategy: It is recommended to improve the established brand of TU Dublin SU and develop a clear communications and social media strategy. This strategy should utilise diverse communication channels to reach all students and convey important messages effectively. This will help to keep students informed about the activities of the SU and ensure better connectivity.

Leadership on Social Issues: It is recommended to establish TU Dublin SU as a leader in addressing social issues affecting students. The SU should take proactive action on issues such as public transport, the housing crisis, and the cost-of-living crisis, demonstrating a commitment to advocating for student welfare, and driving positive change within the University community. There was a strong agreement from both staff and students that the SU should prioritise campaigning on issues that are directly impacting the student experience at TU Dublin.

Increased University Partnership: It is recommended to progress the work taken so far in establishing a Student Partnership Agreement with the University to address student-related issues further and collaborate on shared areas of interest. A notable amount of time and work has been dedicated so far in developing the agreement to date. It is imperative to harness the consensus from both University staff and the SU to ensure that the agreement is adopted and implemented.

Addressing the identified challenges and implementing the recommendations will enable TU Dublin SU to better serve the needs of its students and enhance the overall student experience across all campuses. By prioritising student engagement, communication, proactive leadership on social issues, and partnership with the University, TU Dublin SU can ensure a continued improvement to the overall student experience and increase student engagement.

The findings from the U Survey report have shaped our focus for the coming year and were influential in drafting our workplans. The findings have provided clear direction for aligning our planned efforts with the needs of the students we represent.



Re:Union Network Event



Last year, we took an exciting step to reconnect with our community by creating a new LinkedIn network and planning a special gathering for those who had served as officers of DITSU, ITBSU, ITTSU, and TUDSU.

The Union has undergone significant changes since its inception in 1972, when students first elected a sabbatical officer at Bolton Street, continuing the legacy of the Student Representative Councils that were active in the 1950s. With the former DIT, ITB, and ITT merging to form TU Dublin, now an established multi-campus University, it felt like the perfect time to reach out and reconnect.

On September 7th 2023, we organized a special launch event at our new base on TU Dublin's Grangegorm campus. The evening was a celebration of the Union's history and achievements and an opportunity to gather invaluable input from former officers. The event was filled with heartfelt conversations, nostalgic stories, and the joy of reuniting with old friends while making new connections.

As we reflect on that memorable evening, we're excited to announce that more network events are being planned for this coming year.



TU Dublin SU Offices



TU Dublin SU Office, Aungier Street City Campus



TU Dublin SU Office, Bolton Street City Campus



TU Dublin SU Office, Lower House City Campus



TU Dublin SU Office, Blanchardstown Campus



TU Dublin SU Office, Tallaght Campus



TU Dublin SU Office, Bradogue City Campus

Thank You!!

A heartfelt thanks from all at TU Dublin Students' Union to everyone who supported and contributed to all the hard work and campaigns for and on behalf of students throughout the 2023/24 academic year.

Stay Connected!

How To Reach TU Dublin Students' Union:

- Email: advice@tudublinsu.ie
- Instagram: [@tudublinsu](https://www.instagram.com/tudublinsu)





www.tudublinsu.ie