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# UUSU Candidates Information Pack 2017

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Including  
Information on the  
Student Officer  
election and the  
available  
roles

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Contact Stuart Cannell  
[s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk) with  
any questions you may have

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**PLEASE NOTE**

THERE IS TO BE NO ACTIVITY THAT CAN BE CONSTRUED AS CAMPAIGNING BEFORE 4PM ON FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY. THIS CAN INCLUDE, POSTING YOUR INTENTION TO RUN ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR TELLING LARGE GROUPS OF STUDENTS ABOUT YOUR NOMINATION.

IF IN DOUBT IN REGARDS TO THIS, PLEASE CONTACT THE RETURNING OFFICER, KEELIN MCGROGAN.

[Keelin.mcgrogan@nistudents.org](mailto:Keelin.mcgrogan@nistudents.org)

## **PART I**

### **Key dates**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
06.02.17	11.00	Magee campus (MD106) - nominee information session
06.02.17	15:00	Coleraine campus (E207) – nominee information session
07.02.17	11:00	Jordanstown campus (16G29) – nominee information session
07.02.17	15:00	Belfast campus (BA 02 009) – nominee information session
13.02.17	12:00	NOMINATIONS CLOSE
13.02.17	12:00	Deadline for printed manifestos and posters
24.02.17	TBC	All campuses – candidate’s information session
24.02.17	16:00	Campaigning begins
27.02.17	13:00 – 17:00	Candidate’s question time (Coleraine Campus). All candidates must attend this session. It will be held in the university television studio and broadcast live across Facebook.
06.03.17	09:00	VOTING BEGINS
08.03.17	12:00	VOTING CLOSES
08:03.17	20:00	Coleraine campus - election party and results announced. Buses will be provided from each campus to ensure that all candidates can attend

### **General Introduction**

Every year Ulster University Students' Union facilitates an election to take place to elect seven Student Officers who will be mandated to lead the Students' Union.

These seven Student Officers form the Student Executive, one of the main decision making bodies within the Students' Union.

### **Who can become a Student Officer?**

Any full member of the Students' Union can nominate themselves to become a Student Officer. This includes if you are studying for any part-time or full-time degree that is awarded by Ulster University and being taught directly by the University.

You do not need to have prior experience, however it would be helpful if you were a good communicator, work well in a team and have some knowledge of the Students' Union and how it operates. Basic meeting and organisational skills would be a great asset, and it may help if you've had past experience / involvement in any of the Students' Union committees but this is in no means essential. All that is required is that you are a full member (i.e. a registered student or a current sabbatical officer) at the relevant campus. For Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs positions you must be a student at the relevant campus. The President and the Vice-President Campaigns and Communications can be from any of the University Campus, as can the Sports Union President – although they must be a Sports Union member.

### **Roles available**

There are seven roles available within the Student Officer elections:

President (overall)

Sports President (overall)

Vice-President Campaigns and Communications (overall)

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs, Belfast

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs, Coleraine

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs, Jordanstown

Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs, Magee

Below is a list of responsibilities that is expected from each Student Officer:

The **President** shall:

- Represent students and student interests internally and externally to improve the student experience;
- Have Executive power between meetings of the Union's decision making bodies, to which they will be answerable for all decisions taken. They will also be also to call Emergency Student Executive meetings if required;
- Allocate specific briefs of responsibility to the Executive Committee members at the beginning of their term of office and as the need arises;
- Be the Chairperson of the Student Executive Committee and Trustee Board and other sub committees deemed relevant;

- Be the principal spokesperson of the Union and ensure that there is adequate dissemination of information within the Union, its members and other appropriate bodies;
- Be responsible for the co-ordination of all Union overall campaigns;
- Be responsible for the co-ordination and timetabling of all Union Elections and Referenda;
- Be responsible for the co-ordination of attendance at conferences/training events;
- Process application for Life membership;
- Be a Trustee of UUSU and carry out all duties and roles pertaining to this position. Through the powers of being a member of the Trustee board, can delegate any of these powers to a relevant and suitably skilled committee or department of UUSU.

The **Sports President** shall:

- Represent students and student interests internally and externally to improve the student experience;
- Be responsible for all sporting activities of the Union, as directed by the Sports Union Constitution and its democratic structures in accordance with Schedule 4;
- Be a Trustee of UUSU and carry out all duties and roles pertaining to this position.

The **Vice-President Campaigns and Communications** shall:

- Ensure UUSU is a campaigning Union which produces positive outcomes for its' members;
- Ensure all members of the UUSU are well informed about their Union;
- Regularly consult the UUSU membership;
- Ensure students are providing feedback to their University on their student experience;
- Be a Trustee of UUSU and carry out all duties and roles pertaining to this position.

The **Vice-President Academic and Student Affairs** shall:

- Represent students and student interests internally and externally to improve the student experience;
- Provide advice to students and promote awareness of welfare issues;
- Regularly undertake membership engagement through monthly Student Engagement initiatives;

- Provide academic representation to all students by attending University Committees and reporting on academic issues. The VPs will also provide advice on academic related problems to students;
- Promote participation in the Union and ensure the democratic principles of the Union are upheld which includes ensuring the Student Council is elected and functioning effectively;
- Promote participation in Societies by assisting with the set-up and running of student-led Societies, including ensuring the financial procedures followed by Societies is correct;
- Ensure the Union and the University have an excellent reputation within the local community;
- Be the liaison between the students and the management of the Club Bars to advise on campus entertainments. On sites where a UUSU Club Bar is not in operation the VP shall liaise with external partners to provide entertainment for students at the relevant site;
- Be a Trustee of UUSU and carry out all duties and roles pertaining to this position.

### **Future Employability**

Being a member of the Student Executive is great personal development and will give you an opportunity to develop a wide range of transferable skills and improve your CV. This will include skills that relate to the overall management of an organisation. Specific skills include; financial management, presentation skills, negotiation skills, assertiveness, leadership, lobbying, chairing meetings, dealing with conflict and developing a broad understanding of the issues affecting students in higher education. As the public face of the Students' Union you will deal with senior university staff and meet a variety of interesting individuals.

### **Testimonies from previous Student Officers**

*"I was an average student in Coleraine when I decided to run for election and definitely wouldn't have been seen as favourite to win but I still decided to give it a go – after all life should never be about the 'what if's' or the 'if I had have' when you look back on your student life you should be able to say you made the most of it. At the end of the day as with life the success of your election campaign and your year in office will be determined by what you put into it. If you believe in something go for it, take a chance and it may just be the best thing you ever did, and it definitely was for me."*

#### **Adrian Kelly**

Grad ICSSA Assistant Consultant, Capita Asset Services, Dublin. VP Coleraine - 2008/2009 Overall President –20 09/10 and 2010/11

*"You have a great team behind and with you the entire way and it has hands down*

*been the most satisfying, enjoyable and priceless experience. Make what you want of elections and carry through your enthusiasm and drive to succeed!"*

**Jane Murphy**

Sports Union President, 2012/13 and 2013/14

*"There is no way that I would ever have gained the skills and responsibility I have undertaken in this position so quickly or so early in my career anywhere but in the Student Union. It has without doubt helped me in my employability and at the same time I have been able to help other students by voicing their views on their behalf within the university."*

**John Cunningham**

Vice President, Magee, 2012/13 and 2013/14

*"I have grown in confidence, knowledge & ability. My time within the Students' Union has even changed my career aspirations! I've met people I will be friends with for a very long time, I've been provided with opportunities of a lifetime. If you are seriously considering running for elections & you have a fair idea of what the job entails, I would really urge you to go for it – the experience can be quite literally, life changing."*

**Jemma Dolan**

Vice President Campaigns and Communications, 2012/13 and 2013/14

*"All of this knowledge has made my future look extremely bright in the face of employers and also connections in certain industries I am looking to get into. If you want to stand up, take charge, take responsibility and meet 100s of new people that will help you with your job and help you in life, then this is a position to go for! You will come from this Job a changed for the better. Good luck and enjoy."*

**Malachy McCrudden**

Vice President, Belfast Campus, 2012/13 and 2013/14



## PART II

### Nominee Information meeting

Ulster University Students' Union will organise for a Nominee Information meeting to take place on each campus, leading up to the close of nominations. Below is a list when each meeting shall take place:

- Magee Campus: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February at 11:00 (MD106);
- Coleraine Campus: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February at 15:00 (E207);
- Jordanstown Campus: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 11:00 (16G29);
- Belfast Campus: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 15:00 (BA 02 009).

Within each meeting the Democracy and Campaigns Coordinator and Student Engagement Manager will go over a vast range of valuable information for candidates to understand, including important campaign techniques that can be used over the election timetable.

This is also an opportunity for students to ask more detailed questions and receive a better understanding of what will be expected if a student is to run for one of the positions available.

### How to nominate yourself

We operate all our elections through an online election website: [www.uusuvote.com](http://www.uusuvote.com). It is through this website that you will be able to nominate yourself and upload relevant information for fellow students to view. Below is a list of information that you will need to be aware of and include things that you will need in order to complete your nomination:

- You can only nominate yourself for one position within this election;
- You will need 15 fellow students to act as 'proposers', if you are nominating yourself for a campus-based position and 30 if you are nominating yourself for an overall position. The list of proposers will be published to ensure transparency;
- Make sure you upload a photograph of yourself so that when voting occurs, prospective students know who you are;
- We provide candidates two ways in which to promote themselves – an **online** platform (through the voting website) and **paper** platform (we print out manifestos and posters that you can use).

### Election website material

You have a number of ways in which you can use your online space on the voting website. Firstly, make sure you upload a photograph of yourself so potential voters can see who you are! Additionally, you can either write about yourself and why

students should vote for you, create and embed a PDF or you can create a YouTube video that can be embedded. We leave this entirely up to you. You have until Monday 13th February (12:00) to upload and embedded anything that you wish on the online platform.

In addition to this, a candidate can create further online material that can be shared throughout social media, however, this will be covered under the Campaign heading within this document (page 12).

### **Printed material**

You have the opportunity to create a manifesto and a poster. These will be printed out for you on yellow paper. There are a number of ways in which you can print these out, as follows:

A4 page (single sided)  
A4 page (doubled sided)  
A3 page (single sided)

This can be used to hand out to students to encourage them to vote within the campaigning window. Key information should include: what you want to achieve within the role; why students should vote for you; voting dates; the link to the voting website and of course a photograph of yourself. The deadline is Monday 13th February (12:00) to e-mail this to the Students' Union. Any delay may result in your manifestos not being printed out.

The price is subject to change and currently is as follows:

1 A4 single-sided: 2.5 pence  
1 A4 double-sided: 4.5 pence  
1 A3 single-sided: 4.5 pence

We provide candidates with a limited amount of printing allowance, as follows:

Overall position: £45  
Campus position: £20

We allow candidates to decide how many manifestos and posters they wish to print off, within the limited budget. This gives candidates the opportunity to only spend the money on manifestos and creating their own posters by hand – it is entirely up to the candidate.

A candidate could decide to create a double sided A5 manifesto and have two printed to each A4 page, or a candidate could use the double sided A4 page to print a A5 four-page leaflet by folding it in half to create a cover page, two inside pages and a back page – it is entirely up to the candidate!

Please note that all printed work will be printed as black ink onto yellow paper.

Candidates are not allowed to digitally print out any further posters or manifestos. If a candidate wishes to create more posters, this can be done by hand.

Please note that printed manifestos and posters are not uploaded to uusuvote.com and instead are emailed to the Students' Union ([s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk)).

## **Manifesto - what should you do**

Firstly, check out our repository of manifestos and poster to help you get inspired [here](#) (for those reading this as a print out or off-line, this link will take you to [www.uusu.org/downloads](http://www.uusu.org/downloads) and there is a file entitled 'Manifestos and Poster Examples'.

A manifesto should essentially get your message across to prospective voters and give them an understanding of what you want to do in the position that you are campaigning for. It should be clear, concise with your photograph included and perhaps a catchy slogan.

A well-written and interestingly designed manifesto can make a significant difference in influencing people to vote for you. A survey carried out by NUS into voter attitudes revealed that many people did not vote in union elections because it was often unclear what the candidates stood for. They wanted to know who the candidate was, what they believed in and what they would do if they got into office.

Think about what would influence you to vote for someone. What do you believe? What are the current issues of interest to students? Do you believe that transport to the university should be improved? The student representative system could be better? There should be better sports facilities? Whatever they are, make a list of your beliefs.

You need to select the ones that you think would be popular with students, but are also achievable. There are many candidates in union elections who have announced that they will make the beer cheaper, only to be given a lesson in economics by other candidates in the election. Below is a list to help you assemble your printed manifesto:

- Select the issues off your list as priorities that you will concentrate on throughout the election;
- Outline each issue and how it affects students and what you would do about it if you were elected;
- Be concise and to the point;
- Think of snappy titles about each of your points. Voters tend to scan read election materials, so it is crucial to draw them in with a headline;
- Who are you? It is amazing how many candidates forget to tell the voters anything about themselves. Students will often vote for candidates who they have something in common with, so briefly outline: what course you are on; where you are from; your experience as a student and any current involvement in student issues and activities;
- Make it clear which post you are standing for;
- Don't forget to ask people to vote for you!

Remember, you have a week to campaign and two and a half days for voting. Ration your manifesto's to ensure you have enough to last!

### **Poster - what should you do**

A poster should act as a reminder for prospective voters to who you are and what you stand for. It is entirely up to each candidate how their poster is created and what message is included. The only thing we ask of candidates is to be creative! It can be created on Photoshop or done by hand and scanned in.

You have the opportunity to have these printed digitally by the Students' Union or you can make your own posters by hand and use your allocated funding to primarily print manifestos (or a mix).

Please note that all printed work will be printed as black ink onto yellow paper.

Candidates are not allowed to digitally print out any further posters or manifestos. If a candidate wishes to create more posters, this can be done by hand.

Please note that printed manifestos and posters are not uploaded to uusuvote.com and instead are emailed to the Students' Union ([s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk)).

### **Candidates meetings**

The candidates meeting is being held on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February on each campus. The time of this meeting has not currently been set.

It is mandatory for all candidates to attend this meeting.

During this meeting candidates will be required to sign up to the Code of Conduct and given their manifestos and posters to begin their campaigning.

Campaigning must not begin until 16:00 on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February to give all candidates a fair chance to receive their printed material. If a candidate is found to be campaigning before this time and date they could be disqualified from the election.

### **Campaigning**

Campaigning is entirely up to each candidate. In previous years there has been a significant rise in the use of social media as an output for information and the use of videos.

Candidates are allowed to spend their own money on additional materials that could be used throughout the election. The Students' Union does not have a definition surrounding 'additional materials', however, this could include food and drink that is given out to potential voters or spray paint etc. to create your banners and t-shirts. The allocated amount of money that a candidate can use is as follows:

Overall position: £100  
Campus position: £60

If a complaint is raised in regards to a candidate overspending, the Returning Officer may ask for your receipts – so keep a copy of all receipts!

We would highly recommend the follow, however, these are just general helpful pointers:

- Use social media as much as you can to inform your fellow students to vote for you and why you are an ideal candidate, however, get out and talk to students. In an age of social media and online communication it is absolutely vital that candidates still actually engage with students;
- Create a presence on the campus with banners, t-shirts and posters;
- Have your supporters help you campaign and get out in small groups to tell as many students about you and your campaign as possible;
- Have a message that is memorable, clear and concise;
- Have fun!

If you are unclear about any of the rules surrounding campaigning, please get in touch with the Returning Officer.

### **Candidates question time (hustings)**

This will be held on the Coleraine Campus on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February between 13:00 – 17:00. It will be televised across Facebook and recorded to ensure that all students have a chance to view what each candidate states in their speeches and answers.

These are your opportunity to promote your policy ideas, your strengths and yourself to ordinary students who don't know you.

You will have a chance to make a short speech and then to answer questions from the audience. The speech length is decided by the Chair, who is usually the Returning Officer or their nominee.

All candidates must attend Question Time. If for a good reason you cannot make it, your apologies must be submitted a reasonable time before the candidates question time begins.

If you fail to turn up without submitting apologies by the required time you shall be deemed to have withdrawn your nomination. Apologies may be handed to the Returning Officer.

## **PART III**

### **If elected, what is expected of you**

Student Officers will be given a contract which outlines terms and conditions on contractual hours but you can expect to do more depending upon the time of year, projects and campaigns that you may be involved in. Sometimes it will feel that you will need to work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to get everything done. While out of office hours working is necessary, it is not necessary to overwork. Assistance is available within the Students Union to support you and to avoid overload and stress.

However, you don't always have a choice about your workload, sometimes you will need to attend events or meetings no matter what you would rather be doing. An important aspect of the role of a Student Officer's role to understand is that it is not just a 'job'. You are representing others who may be depending on you and what you do and say. Therefore, attendance at key events may be very important to the people you have been elected to represent.

### **If elected, what support will you receive**

All Student Officers will receive an induction programme organised by the outgoing Student Officers and relevant staff members in the first week.

The Student Executive will receive an induction pack and in the first couple of months will attend Student Executive training that covers the legal and financial responsibilities. All Student Executive members will be sent on relevant USI, NUS and NUS-USI training programmes.

You will receive much of your support from the Students' Union staff team. They are employed to run the operational activities of the Students' Union and to help you, as elected officials, to achieve the objectives of the Students' Union.

### **Summary**

Here is a summary of the main points that you will need to know surrounding the Student Officer elections:

- Get your nomination in early to give you the most time to plan your campaign;
- Upload a good photograph of yourself and any text, videos or PDF documents you want to have beside your photo on the website;
- Send in your manifesto and poster to the Students' Union to be printed ([s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:s.cannell@ulster.ac.uk));
- The deadline for nominations and manifesto/posters being emailed to the Students' Union is Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 12:00. If you submit after the deadline your nomination will not be considered;
- You must attend the candidate's information session to sign the Code of Conduct and to receive your election material on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February;

- At 16:00 on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February you can start campaigning, so you can start wearing those election t-shirts that you might have created and start posting on social media;
- You must attend your respective candidates question time to answer questions from your fellow students;
- Voting is between 09:00 on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March and 12:00 on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March. This is the best opportunity for candidates to get out and encourage students to vote for them. All voting is done through the election website, [www.uusuvote.com](http://www.uusuvote.com);
- Results are announced the evening of Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March on the Coleraine Campus. Buses will be provided from each campus to ensure that all candidates can attend.