

S/M/S4.015|3-19|

MANDATE

Demand for Action on the Student Funding Crisis

Submitted by: LEAD Caucus (By LEAD Caucus Leader, Liam Cosgrove)
Seconded by: Anna Travers (Accommodation Senator), Luke Buckley (Independent Senator), Eibhlin Fortune (Science and Engineering Faculty Assembly Member), Nicole Carr (HEAR Senator), Craig Mac Gabhann (Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy Faculty Assembly Member), Seán Masterson (Independent Senator)

Student Senate notes with frustration:

Maynooth University students pay the second highest fees in Europe.¹ The number of students in Maynooth University has grown rapidly over the past 5 years.² The allocation of circa €1.53 million in student funding for student life through MSU for MSU operations, clubs & societies, and student life has not risen since 2015/16. This year we have seen a drop in funding to €665,000, for MSU operations and its provisions of facilities, services, and student life activities. On top of this reduction in budget, the University also has withheld €100,000 from the 2018/2019 funding.

Student Senate notes with pride:

Maynooth students Union provides high quality student services and facilities including but not limited to; support from officers, informative and educational campaigns, free events and activities, student employment opportunities, rooms and event spaces, numerous opportunities to promote charitable causes, products and services through the MSU Londis and Students' Union bar, and highly efficient representational structures.

Student Senate notes with concern:

Maynooth University has not provided students with the much needed clarity as to where the €1.53 million in student funding has been allocated. As a result of this Clubs & Societies and Maynooth Students' Union have no insight into their future nor how they are currently valued by Maynooth University. It is also concerning that Maynooth University have not published a development plan for the future of Clubs & Societies.

¹ European Commission Report, 2017.

² Maynooth University's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 p. 12.

S/M/S4.015|3-19|

Student Senate believes:

There is a severe lack of funding in Maynooth Students' Union and the student life experience of Maynooth University Students overall. Maynooth University should acknowledge the value Maynooth Students' Union provides and appreciate that the student life experience is a key element to ones' college experience. Funding this important part of a students life is imperative.

Student Senate believes:

Maynooth University should be proud of having one of the most successful Student Unions in the country. Maynooth Students' Union have shown their value to the University through award winning academic representatives, impressive charity fundraising, unique and envious representational structures, meticulous and precise budgeting procedures, commitment to environmental sustainability, high employee standards that comply with legislation, and nationally recognised award winning delegations.

This value that we provide to Maynooth University and it's students is not without cost. This cost must be recognised by the University to ensure the greater development, innovation, and future success of Maynooth Students' Union.

Student Senate believes:

The lack of clarity surrounding the allocation of funding and the future of clubs and societies is leading to a disconnection between students and the University. This breakdown in communication is inherently contradictory to point 4.1.4 of Maynooth University's Strategic Plan 2018-2022. 'We will develop the relationship between the University and Maynooth Students' Union, clarifying the role and responsibilities of each and aligning our strategies for student life, clubs and societies, and student support.'³

Recommendation 12 of the CINNTE review stated 'The Review Team recommends that the University consider a pattern of regular meetings between the President and the President of the Students' Union in order to enhance the partnership.'⁴ The lack of communication surrounding these key issues completely contradicts the recommendation that the Quality & Qualifications Ireland agency suggested.

The Higher Education Authority Guidelines 2010 outline a framework for good practice with regards to a two tiered forum⁵ where students get an equal input into

³ Maynooth University's Strategic Plan 2018-2022, p. 38.

⁴ QQI CINNTE Institutional Review Report of Maynooth 2019, p. 29.

⁵ Higher Education Authority Review of Student Charge August 2010

S/M/S4.015|3-19|

decision making surrounding the allocation of student funds. This further emphasises the need for joint communication on student funding.

Student Senate therefore mandates:

The MSU President to lobby Maynooth University to instate funding to our proposed budget for the 2019/2020 financial year, and to provide the Union with the withheld €100,000 from the 2018/2019 financial year.

Student Senate further mandates:

The MSU President to lobby Maynooth University to implement a partnership committee between the Union and the University and to instate a heads of agreement with the University.

Student Senate further mandates:

The MSU President to lobby Maynooth University to provide Maynooth Students' Union with oversight of the planned allocation of the €1.53 million student funding, and their plan for the future of clubs and societies under their control.