

Officer Report of the President of Maynooth Students' Union (MSU) to the Student Senate



Niall Daly

President | Uachtarán

PERIOD OF WORK: FRIDAY, 1 JULY 2022 – TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2022

EMAIL: PRESIDENT@MSU.IE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senate,

What a year this has been so far.

When I ran for election last March, the Student Centre had just been “postponed”. I don’t think at the time any of us realised just how dire that situation would become. I came into office with a fresh host of initiatives and ideas, ways in which I was going to make the position of President better, and ways in which I was going to make Maynooth Students’ Union better. However, when we learned that Maynooth University was on track to cancel the Student Centre due to “rising costs and inflation”, a lot of that fell to the wayside and we were left picking up the pieces of the disastrous decision that the Governing Authority had made.

For the last 5 weeks, the MSU Executive have worked incredibly hard on the #WheresMyLevy campaign. I have worked every day, every evening, most nights and weekends since to see this campaign become what it has. When we committed to #WheresMyLevy, we acknowledged that some things would have to give. Unfortunately, certain aspects of the Union have fallen to the wayside, I haven’t been able to be as responsive to emails as I would have liked, my initiatives and ideas that I came in to office with have been put on hold until the conclusion of this campaign. But what has this campaign yielded so far? The most successful student protest in MSU’s history, with over 1,100 students walking out of their lectures on 6 October 2022 to showcase their frustration and anger with the decision. The most successful protest in history, until the next one on 25 October 2022, where 1,500 – 1,800 students walked out of their lectures and joined their Executive in a march to the President of MU’s office where we handed in our petition outlining the demands of the students – the petition which was the most signed in MSU’s history. While some things outside of it definitely required more attention, there is a lot to be proud of in #WheresMyLevy. In the current climate of a funding dispute, staffing crisis, and more, which I will provide a comprehensive update on at Senate, there was simply no way #WheresMyLevy could have been as successful as it was if we didn’t drop virtually everything to do it – that’s the nature of a crisis I suppose.

In light of this, I apologise for the delay in getting this report to you. I recognise that the timing is somewhat unacceptable, but I hope it is also understandable given that we have been engaging in MSU’s largest and most intensive campaign and mass action in years and years, potentially ever. Could I have done better in this report? Absolutely. However, I wanted to give you as good an understanding of this period of work for me as I could. With Senate being postponed, and given the timing, I ended up having a Governing Authority, Board of Trustees, and Student Senate report due on the same day. This day was on the midterm last week, and I also

decided to take some annual leave to visit my mother on that week too. It feels that the timing of it all was just wrong and incredibly difficult to work around, but again, I do apologise for the delay in getting this to you. I can give you my word that this will not happen again.

The last 5 weeks have been completely deflating, but the MSU Executive have pushed through and persevered because, while it is difficult, it is what we love to do. I am proud of every single member of the Executive, and every single Student Senator, Academic Representative, student volunteer, and student who has supported their Union during that time. I think we have made a very good go at showcasing not just MSU, but what MSU is capable of. As our first opportunity for mass action in a very long time, there have been a lot of learnings. I have learned a lot. I certainly don't know everything just because I am the President, but with the support of my Executive, staff, and everyone else, I have had such an opportunity to learn and grow. I will probably use some of my State of the Union speech to reflect on these learnings at the first meeting.

Anyway, that's enough of that. I am looking forward to a fresh new year of the Student Senate. For me, Senate has always been a fun and engaging place. A place for civic engagement on campus, a place to make friends, and a place to grow. I am certainly not the same idiot who stumbled into MSU nearly 5 years ago. And I hope that Senate can provide some of what I got from it to you. It's important to use it as a tool for accountability, but also unity. Read reports, ask questions, hold your Executive accountable. But I can tell you as your President that now, more than ever, we need to stand together. There is no way in hell that we can fight Maynooth University if we are just fighting each other. I am in the process of arranging a few trips for Senators to bond with each other and their Executive, and learn a bit about certain democratic structures outside of MSU, as well as consultation sessions on our plans for the year, amongst other things to keep us all in tune with each other and on the same page.

I have gone on for far too long at this stage, so I will leave it here. Many thanks for reading this and thank you in advance for any questions you may have.

Ní neart go cur le chéile,

Niall Daly
MSU President

CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Article 10.6 of the MSU Constitution sets out the constitutional responsibilities of the MSU President. I have outlined my constitutional responsibilities below and have commented on my progress in fulfilling them.

List of Constitutional Responsibilities:

- 1. The President shall be the CEO, First Officer & Chief Spokesperson of the Union and shall be ultimately responsible for the administration of the Union. All staff of the Union shall ultimately be responsible to the President.**
 - On Friday, 1 July 2022, I stepped up from the position of Vice President Education and Deputy President to MSU President.
 - On becoming President, I assumed the role of CEO, First Officer, and Chief Spokesperson of MSU.
 - The role of President means that I am the line manager of each Sabbatical Officer, and all members of the MSU Executive report to me.
 - With the support of the Director General, we manage all of the full-time staff of MSU.
 - With the support and advice of my Executive and staff team, I perform the role of Chief Spokesperson.

- 2. They shall exercise and perform the powers and functions conferred on the President by this Constitution and any additional functions, duties or responsibilities conferred by the Student Senate.**

- 3. In conjunction with the finance function of the Union they shall be responsible for preparing a master budget for the Union for approval by the Board of Trustees and ensuring strict adherence to that budget.**
 - Work on the budget is currently ongoing.
 - The finances of the Union are presenting concern for this academic year.
 - I will expand on this point further at Senate, but conscious of an ongoing funding dispute and difficulties, everything is taking longer than anticipated.

- 4. They shall be responsible for the strategic development and overall direction of the Union.**
 - With a new team starting on Friday, 1 July 2022, the overall direction of the Union is going to shift naturally.
 - In leading the formation of the MSU Executive's Plan of Work, we have developed one which will determine the direction of the Union for 2022-23.

- 5. They shall be ultimately responsible for the financial affairs of the Union and establish regulations for the financial administration of the Union.**
 - Refer to Constitutional Responsibility 3.
 - Sabbatical Officers have been offered Finance Training to ensure that they know how to spend money and budget for campaigns.
 - I will be working with the SMT, particularly the Director of Finance, throughout the year to ensure that our financial regulations are up to date and appropriate for the organisation.
 - In 2018-19, when Maynooth University (MU) were allowed to audit MSU, there were a number of policies were recommended for the Union to implement. Over the years, these have been developed and I had the opportunity to present them to MU's Audit and Risk Committee in September.

- 6. They shall be ultimately responsible for the provision of entertainments for members of their Union.**
 - I work with the Sabbatical Officers and staff of the Union to develop all of our entertainments.
 - One of the biggest so far that I have spearheaded is Freshers Fest.
 - If the Executive want to run events, it is generally in consultation with me.
 - I have worked with the Events Team on the entertainments in the MSU Club for the entirety of Semester 1.

- 7. They shall be ex-officio chair of all meetings of the Union, except where otherwise explicitly stated in the Constitution but may delegate any of these positions to another officer.**

- 8. They shall have plenary powers between meetings of the Executive to fulfil the aims and objectives of the Union, but shall be responsible to the Executive and the Student Senate for these actions.**
 - During the summer months, the Executive has met fortnightly. This has continued into the semester.
 - While I have had plenary powers, I have not made any major decisions without consulting my Executive.
 - This is something I will continue now that the Student Senate has begun, consulting both the MSU Executive and Student Senate on major decisions and actions taken.

- 9. They shall have the right of attendance and address at all meetings established within the terms of this Constitution.**

10. They shall be, ex-officio, a member of the University's Governing Authority and Academic Council.

(a) They shall endeavour to sit on all relevant committees and sub-committees of the University.

- I am a member of Maynooth University's Governing Authority, as well as the Vice President Education and Deputy President, Vice President Student Life, and Postgraduate Representative.
- I am a member of Maynooth University's Academic Council, as well as the Vice President Education and Deputy President.
- Refer to the Committees section of this report for an extensive overview of the University committees and sub-committees I sit on.

11. The President shall maintain a record of all boards, committees and other bodies within the University, and the Union representation at each.

- I have a document titled 'Appointments to be made under Articles 9.20 and 9.21 of the MSU Constitution'.
- This is a record of MSU representation on all boards, committees, and other bodies within the University.
- All appointments to these boards, committees, and other bodies within the University were done with the consultation and approval of the MSU Executive.

12. They shall be responsible for leading all national campaigns on behalf of the Union.

- The Union of Students in Ireland's national campaign this year so far has focused on cost-of-living demands.
- They coordinated a national student walkout on Thursday, 13 October 2022.
- Given our coordination of MSU's collective action around the same time, and in consultation with the USI President, MSU did not take part in the national student walkout.
- I am waiting to hear whether they will be coordinating a national protest in Dublin as they have in previous years.
- If they do, MSU will aim to bring a large delegation of students to it.

13. They shall be ultimately responsible for all Union publications.

- I ensure to proof read and sign off on anything that is published on behalf of MSU.

- I try maintain an appropriate level of oversight without micromanaging the Sabbatical Officers or staff.
- An example of this is the Student Handbook for Orientation. While the Director General and I got final sign off, I was happy to let the Vice President Student Life and Communications and Campaigns Support Coordinator take the lead on the main body of the content.

14. They shall nominate one of the sabbatical officers to deputise and specify the order of succession amongst the Vice Presidents.

- The Deputy President of MSU for 2022-23 is the Vice President Education.
- The subsequent order of succession is the Vice President Student Life followed by the Vice President Welfare & Equality.

15. They shall maintain a record of all boards, committees and other bodies within the University, and the Union representation at each. They shall ensure that this record is included in any crossover document compiled for the training and reference of their successor.

- Refer to Constitutional Responsibility 11.
- I will ensure that this record is included in the crossover document for my successor in June 2023.

16. They shall ensure that full crossover training is provided for all incoming officers of the Union and shall be ultimately responsible for ensuring that each sabbatical officer provides a cross-over manual and abides by HR policies implemented by the Union.

- Crossover Training took place in June 2022.
- In May 2023, I will ensure that all outgoing Sabbatical Officers provide a crossover manual to their successors.
- Sabbatical Officers are aware of Union HR policies and abide by them.

17. They shall ensure that all Executive members produce and publish officer reports six time per year and at least three times per semester.

- All members of the Executive have been provided with Officer Report Training.

18. They shall liaise between the Executive and the Board of Trustees between meetings of the Board of Trustees.

19. For the time that the Union is a member organisation of the Union of Students in Ireland, the President shall be the principal delegate and spokesperson to the National Council and Annual Congress of the Union of Students in Ireland.

- With the exception of one, we have attended USI's Comhairle Náisiúnta since the start of our terms.

PLAN OF WORK

At the beginning of this Executives term of office, we created a plan of work. The Plan of Work is the guiding document for the executive. Below is how I have contributed to the completion of the Plan of Work.

- From early-July, the MSU Executive have worked on our Plan of Work for 2022-23.
- By the end of August 2022, we had one finalised that we were happy with.
- I wanted to ensure that Senators were consulted on the Plan of Work, but then we were hit with the cancellation of the construction of the Student Centre.
- Given that this has taken nearly every waking minute (including weekends) since, these consultation sessions have not had an opportunity to take place.
- The Plan of Work does not need to be approved until the second sitting of the Student Senate.
- Therefore, I will be circulating the draft Plan of Work after the first sitting of the Student Senate for Senators' feedback and potentially try to coordinate some consultation sessions ahead of the second sitting.

MANIFESTO INITIATIVES

While running for the [insert position], I outlined several manifesto pledges. Throughout my term I will make progress on each of these promises to the best of my ability.

List of Manifesto Initiatives:

1. Events
 - To continue to offer class Events in the Union, we need a full-time Events Co-ordinator to support our Officers, students, Clubs and Societies in doing so.
 - It will be my priority to secure funding from Maynooth University to hire an Events Co-ordinator for the 2022-23 academic year.
2. Equality
 - Provide vital support to the MSU VP Welfare & Equality in the running of their Equality initiatives and campaigns.
 - Focus on supporting a potential Equality Part-time Officer in their role on the MSU Executive.
3. Student Partnership
 - On all levels, we need to lead the conversation and action on student partnership.
 - I will build on the progress made over the last few years, ensuring it continues to become a reality and that MSU is always equally at the forefront of institutional partnership.
4. Student Engagement
 - There can be no structures without a strong team behind them.
 - We need a full-time Democracy Co-ordinator, and I will fight to secure funding for one from Maynooth University.

Events

- In a meeting with MU's Bursar on 6 July 2022, I negotiated commitments to an increased level of funding for staff recruitment for 2022-23.
- One of the positions that these commitments extended to was an Events Coordinator.
- We went out to recruit an Events Coordinator recently, but it was unsuccessful.
- We will be going out to recruit this position again with a view to an Events Coordinator starting in January 2023.

- I consider this manifesto initiative completed as we have the funding agreed, however, we will continue to strive to hire the critically important Events Coordinator.

Equality

- I have and will continue to support the Vice President Welfare & Equality in all of their campaigns and initiatives.
- Examples include Local and National Traveller Pride Week back in July.
- The Vice President Welfare & Equality consults with me on the majority of their campaigns and initiatives.
- It is a priority for me and the MSU Executive to pass a new Constitution this academic year.
- Part of this new constitution will involve a Part-time Equality Officer.

Student Partnership

- I will provide an in-depth update on the status of the Partnership Agreement at the first sitting of the Student Senate.
- We have pursued partnership at all levels since July 2022.
- Examples of this include with the NStEP agreement and Student Success Initiative.

Student Engagement

- In a meeting with MU's Bursar on 6 July 2022, I negotiated commitments to an increased level of funding for staff recruitment for 2022-23.
- One of the positions that these commitments extended to was a Democracy Coordinator
- We went out to recruit a Democracy Coordinator recently, but it was unsuccessful.
- We will be going out to recruit this position again with a view to a Democracy Coordinator starting in January 2023.
- I consider this manifesto initiative completed as we have the funding agreed, however, we will continue to strive to hire the critically important Democracy Coordinator.

MOTION & MANDATES

There are many motion & mandates that require participation from my role. Throughout my term I will make progress on each of these motion & mandates to the best of my ability. Below is a list of all active motion & mandates that require my participation, with updates on my progress with each one.

List of Motion & Mandate:

5. Competition in Public Transportation to Maynooth University & St. Patrick's College Maynooth
6. Mental Health Training
7. Motion to Increase Wheelchair Accessibility on Campus
8. EOAC Implementation: Officer Report Circulation
9. Demand for Action on the Student Funding Crisis
10. MSU take action against second hand smoking within John Paul II Library
11. Motion to Increase the Number of Brown Bins on Campus
12. Stance Against Light Natural Gas in Ireland
13. The Introduction of Charges to Maynooth University Student Health Centre
10. Maynooth University Close for National Elections
14. The Promotion of MSU Student Senate
15. Senate Wall
16. Demand for Action on Student Funded Levy Projects
17. Executive Officer Report Training
18. Policy Manual Update to MSU Student Senate
19. MSU Constitution Update to MSU Student Senate
20. MSU Independence Dossier
21. Financial Transparency
22. Fairtrade
23. MSU Support of Seanad Reform
24. MSU Student Email Communication
25. Student Study Space on Maynooth Campus
26. Emergency Motion to MSU Student Senate on Campaigning against Image Based Sexual Abuse International Students Day Commemoration
27. Alteration of MU's Name Change System
28. 'How to Use Your Union' Infographics
29. Promotion of Supports for Students with Disabilities
30. MU & MSU Sexual Harassment Policy Review
31. ISL Interpreter to be Present at Student Senate
32. Separation of the Vice President Welfare & Equality into Vice President Welfare and Vice President Equality
33. Clubs & Societies COVID-19 Booklet
34. Trans Healthcare & Support Resource Provision
35. Living Wage

36. Continued Action on Student Funded Levy Projects

EOAC Implementation: Officer Report Circulation

- EOAC was rejected by the 2020-21 Student Senate.
- As I didn't then, I do not believe that EOAC is an effective mechanism for accountability.
- If anyone would like to see the EOAC return, please email me.

Demand for Action on the Student Funding Crisis

- We are in an ongoing funding dispute with MU regarding approximately €78k of withheld funding.
- With the support of the Board of Trustees and MSU's Audit and Risk Committee, we are in ongoing discussions with MU about the restoration of this funding.
- We will have to consider our route forward should MU not restore that funding.

Promotion of the MSU Student Senate

- We are exploring ways in which we can promote the Student Senate this academic year.
- We will likely be recording meetings and uploading them to the MSU YouTube channel thereafter.
- We will be posting links to each meeting on the newly revamped MSU Student Senate page on the MSU website as well.

Demand for Action on Student Levy Funded Projects

- Refer to General Activity - #WheresMyLevy

Student Study Space on Maynooth Campus

- Refer to General Activity – #WheresMyLevy

Separation of Vice President Welfare & Equality into Vice President Welfare and Vice President Equality

- When this proposal was passed, very little research was done surrounding the feasibility of it.

- Having reflected on the proposal, it does not seem feasible.
- It will be a matter for the CRRC to discuss.
- We will be encompassing this into our constitutional review.
- The Part-time Equality Officer is part of this too.

Clubs & Societies COVID-19 Booklet

- This is an outdated motion.
- We will be seeking to repeal this.

Living Wage

- Maynooth Students' Union's services are living wage employers.
- This now extends to the MSU Club which we implemented from 2022-23.

COMMITTEES

I have listed the committees that I am a member of and have tried to give a description of their remit and some of the activities they undertake. I have also listed my contribution to these committees below.

Committee that the [insert officer position] is a member of:

1. (GA) Governing Authority (HAS MET)
2. (GA) Finance, Human Resources and Development Committee (HAS MET)
3. (AC) Academic Council (HAS MET)
4. (AC) Academic Discipline Board (HAS MET)
5. (AC) Teaching & Learning Committee (HAS MET)
6. (AC) Campus Life Committee (HAS MET)
7. (MU) Postgraduate Feedback Council (HAS NOT MET)
8. (MU) Library Committee (HAS NOT MET)
9. (MU) Campus Watch (HAS NOT MET)
10. (MU) Parking appeals committee (HAS NOT MET)
11. (MU) Master's task force (HAS NOT MET)
12. (MU) Health and Safety committee (HAS NOT MET)
13. (MSU) Executive Committee (HAS MET)
14. (MSU) Student Senate (HAS NOT MET)
16. (MSU) Constitutional & Representative Review Sub Committee (HAS NOT MET)
17. (MSU) Board of Trustees (HAS MET)
18. (MSU) Building steering sub-committee of student senate (HAS NOT MET)
19. (CMC) Club Management Committee (HAS NOT MET)
20. (MU & MSU) Capitation Committee (HAS NOT MET)
21. (MU & MSU) Clubs and Societies Committee (HAS MET)
22. (MU & MSU) Campus Watch Committee (HAS NOT MET)
23. (MU & MSU) Project control board (HAS MET)
24. Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Congress (HAS NOT MET)
25. USI National Council (HAS MET)
26. USI President's Working Group (HAS MET)
27. USI Border, Midlands, and Western (BMW) Regions Working Group (HAS MET)
30. (GA) Equality, Diversity, Inclusion & Interculturalism (HAS MET)
31. (MU) Student Financial Support Steering Committee (HAS MET)
32. (MU) Laptop Loan Scheme Oversight Committee (HAS NOT MET)

Governing Authority

The Governing Authority has responsibility for the strategic direction of the University, the management and administration of its revenue and property and the general conduct of its affairs.

- The Governing Authority is confidential, however, refer to General Activities - #WheresMyLevy for an update regarding the Student Centre. It has met 2 times this year so far.

Finance, HR, and Campus Development

(GA) Finance, Human Resources and Development Committee The Governing Authority has established a Standing Committee of the Governing Authority, the Finance, Human Resources and Campus Development Committee ("the Committee") which shall have an oversight role in relation to monitoring the implementation of the University Strategic Plan, the management of the finances and human resources of the University and the management of the assets of the University.

- The FHRDC is confidential, however, refer to General Activities - #WheresMyLevy for an update regarding the Student Centre. It has met 2 times this year so far.

Academic Council

Academic Council controls the academic affairs of the University, including the curriculum of, and instruction and education provided by, the University.

- There have been 2 Academic Councils this year so far.
- There have been little items of interest to students except for student progression numbers discussed.

Academic Discipline Board

- There have been a number of Academic Discipline cases this academic year.
- Given the nature of the committee, I cannot comment on its dealings.

Teaching & Learning Committee

- T&L Committee has met once this academic year.

Campus Life Committee

- Campus Life Committee has met once this academic year with another meeting next week.

MSU Executive Committee

- The MSU Executive Committee has been meeting fortnightly since July.
- An Achoimre (summary) of all meetings can be found on the MSU website.

MSU Board of Trustees

- Board has met 2 times since the start of the year.
- Most of Board's time has been occupied by the Student Centre and ongoing funding dispute with MU.

Clubs & Societies Committee

- Clubs & Societies Committee has met 2 times this year.
- We have met to discuss Special Events Funding, formation of new C&S, and C&S capitation for 2022-23.

Student Centre Project Control Board

- The Student Centre Project Control Board met at the end of July to consider avenues related to the Student Centre project.
- For updates on the Student Centre, refer to General Activities - #WheresMyLevy.

USI National Council/Comhairle Náisiúnta

- The USI's CN has met 3 times this academic year.
- The MSU Full-time Officers have attended 2 out of 3.
- At AOB of one of the meetings, we discussed the Student Centre, solidarity from other Unions, and our actions. This resulted in social media posts and protest attendance from other students' unions across the country.

USI Presidents Working Group

- The USI Presidents Working Group meets prior to every Comhairle Náisiúnta.
- It provides a forum for Presidents of students' unions to discuss issues that uniquely affect them, and areas of mutual interest.

USI BMW Working Group

- The USI BMW Working Group meets prior to every Comhairle Náisiúnta.
- It provides a forum for students' unions in each region to discuss issues that affect them and the region.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Interculturalism Committee

- This committee has met 2 times this academic year.

- MSU provides a comprehensive update on our EDIIC initiatives at each meeting.

Student Financial Support Steering Committee

- This committee has met once this academic year.
- It provides key updates regarding policy and legislation on student financial supports such as SAF and SEF.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

The work of [insert position] is not just confined to constitutional roles and manifesto initiatives. There is a wide variety of activities undertaken by me in the execution of my role. I have given a comprehensive list of these activities below.

List of some of the main other general activities undertaken:

1. #WheresMyLevy
2. Attended Seanad for HEA Bill
3. Crossover Bonding
4. TSI Launch
5. Ukraine Day of Independence
6. Belfast Bonding
7. Maynooth & Kilcock Green Forum
8. Community Engagement Initiative
- 9.

#WheresMyLevy

Following the Cancellation of the Student Centre:

STATEMENT FROM MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY & MAYNOOTH STUDENTS' UNION

On Friday, 23 September 2022, Maynooth University's Vice President External Relations called me to discuss a joint statement between Maynooth University ("MU") and Maynooth Students' Union ("MSU") on the cancellation of the Student Centre. I informed the Vice President External Relations that I was not in a position to consider this on my own and that I would have to consult the MSU Executive. In accordance with the MSU Constitution (2019), the earliest I could convene a meeting of the MSU Executive was the following Monday, 26 September 2022. The meeting took place at 17:00 and concluded at approximately 19:00. As soon as the meeting ended, I called MU's Vice President External Relations and informed them that the MSU Executive had unanimously voted to not make a joint statement with MU and instead make our own on the cancellation of the Student Centre. This resulted in MU emailing students and making a statement on their website at approximately 19:45, with MSU's statement being published on Instagram at approximately 20:00.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS FOLLOWING STATEMENTS

Tuesday, 27 September 2022: BBC News | [Maynooth University student centre project cancelled.](#)

Tuesday, 27 September 2022: Leinster Leader | [KILDARE: Work on new student centre at Maynooth University is stopped due to cost issues.](#)

Tuesday, 27 September 2022: Kildare Now | [KILDARE: Work on new student centre at Maynooth University is stopped due to cost issues.](#)

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: I wrote to the Chair and members of the Student Centre Project Control Board ("PCB") seeking an immediate meeting of the PCB to discuss the decision of the University's Governing Authority and to consider the next steps in relation to the Student Centre levy funded project.

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: Newstalk | ['I feel like I've been robbed' - Maynooth students anger over abandoned centre.](#)

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: Irish Times | [Maynooth University terminates construction of new student centre project.](#)

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: Irish Examiner | [Backlash as Maynooth University terminates new student centre plan due to spiralling costs.](#)

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: RTE.ie | [Maynooth University stops construction of new student centre over 'rapidly escalating costs'.](#)

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: The termination of the construction of the Student Centre levy project is covered on RTÉ News: Six One with me on behalf of MSU representing the concerns of the student body.

Wednesday, 28 September 2022: Head Topics | [Maynooth University scraps new student centre over cost.](#)

Thursday, 29 September 2022: Catherine Murphy TD wrote to the at Committee of Public Accounts (PAC) - a standing committee of Dáil Éireann – asking for the University to provide a full statement to address the three aspects of their relation to terminate the project and if the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) would brief the committee on historic financial statements relating to Maynooth University in the context of the way in which student contributions to the project were accounted for

and if a liability now arises for the University in respect of claims for refunds and or reimbursement.

Thursday, 29 September 2022: Highland Radio | [Anger as Student Centre plan is dropped by Maynooth University.](#)

Thursday, 29 September 2022: Senator Mark Wall raises the issue in Seanad Éireann.

Friday, 30 September 2022: MSU issued a Follow Up Statement Against the Termination of the Construction of the Student Centre Levy Project addressing the disingenuous and misleading claims being made by Maynooth University on the issue.

Monday, 3 October 2022: MSU launches its Online #WheresMyLevy petition calling on the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (FHERIS), Simon Harris TD, to support the students of Maynooth in these demands and to aid them in bringing them to the attention of Maynooth University.

Monday, 3 October 2022: I wrote to MU President requesting an urgent meeting to discuss the Student Centre project and for a fresh commitment to be made to reaffirming the University's commitment to a Student Centre project to be funded from the levy and to ensuring its prioritisation over other capital developments on campus. The earliest time that the MU President could meet with me was Tuesday, 11 October 2022.

Monday, 3 October 2022: I wrote to the Bursar seeking a freeze to the levy with no increases to the charge for a period of at least five academic years beginning 2023-24. I received no reply.

Tuesday, 4 October 2022: MSU launches its paper #WheresMyLevy petition calling on Maynooth University to: 1) publicly state their commitment to delivering a student Centre and ensure its prioritisation over other capital developments on campus, 2) freeze the levy, with no increases to the charge for a period of at least five academic years beginning 2023-24, and 3) be transparent in its communication as to how the student levy is being used, prove their commitments to joint oversight of the fund, and work in good faith with MSU and the students of Maynooth to regain their trust.

Wednesday, 5 October 2022: I wrote to members of the Oireachtas outlining seeking support for the students of Maynooth (who are constituents of the members contacted).

Wednesday, 5 October 2022: I received confirmation that Réada Cronin TD will raise the issue in Dáil Éireann.

Wednesday, 5 October 2022: I received confirmation that Catherine Connolly TD has submitted a Parliamentary question to Minister Harris.

Wednesday, 5 October 2022: I received confirmation that Senator David Norris has signed our #WheresMyLevy petition.

Thursday, 6 October 2022: I received confirmation that Aodhán Ó Ríordáin TD has submitted a Parliamentary question to Minister Harris.

Thursday, 6 October 2022: I received confirmation that Bernard J. Durkan TD has contacted Minister Harris on MSU's behalf regarding this issue.

Thursday, 6 October 2022: MSU organises #WheresMyLevy #LevyWalkOut with over 1,000 students walking out in support of the #WheresMyLevy campaign.

Thursday, 6 October 2022: #WheresMyLevy is the #1 trending hashtag on Twitter in Ireland.

Thursday, 6 October 2022: Irish Examiner | [Maynooth University students to stage walkout in row over levy.](#)

Thursday, 6 October 2022: Hot Press | [Maynooth University students stage walk-out over failed construction of new centre.](#)

Thursday, 6 October 2022: iRadio | [Maynooth students stage walk-out in row over cancelled student centre plans.](#)

Thursday, 6 October 2022: RTE.ie | [Maynooth Students' Union walk out over halt to new centre.](#)

Thursday, 6 October 2022: SocialistParty.ie | [Maynooth student centre: We were robbed – what should we do about the €150 levy?.](#)

Thursday, 6 October 2022: Catherine Murphy TD raises the issue at the PAC. C&AG informed the PAC that they would prefer not to offer a view until they examined it fully in the context of the 2021-22 annual financial statements but commented that the issues that the Deputy outlined are issues that do deserve answers and that the

C&AG will be examining this as part of the audit of the University. The C&AG stated that in term of the way that the student levy is accounted for the student levy income is taken as an income into the University and that there isn't a restricted reserve in which that money is being accumulated. The C&AG stated that there was an accumulated fund as far back as 2014 which was being earmarked for expenditure on the centre. The Chair of the PAC suggested that the PAC would write to the University seeking an explanation on this matter.

Thursday, 6 October 2022: The President of the Union of Students in Ireland invited me and the Vice President Education and Deputy President to a meeting with Minister Harris to outline the concerns of the students of Maynooth.

Friday, 7 October 2022: I received confirmation that James Lawless TD has submitted topic for debate in the Dáil Éireann next week.

Friday, 7 October 2022: Dublin Live | [Angry Maynooth students stage walk-out after proposed campus centre is scrapped](#).

Tuesday, 11 October 2022: I met with the President of MU to discuss the petition demands.

Wednesday, 12 October 2022: MSU in collaboration with MU Literary & Debating Society facilitate a "This House Would Reject the Student Levy" debate.

Wednesday, 12 October 2022: MSU issued a members' update stating that to date MU has not agreed to the demands of the students of Maynooth and that the campaign will continue.

Thursday, 13 October 2022: MSU President, VP Education / Deputy President, and VP Welfare & Equality Dáil Éireann to watch James Lawless TD raise this topic for debate and engage with members of the Oireachtas.

Friday, 14 October 2022: MSU announces what's next for #WheresMyLevy:

We will be releasing a '**Student Experience On Campus**' survey to assist the MSU President in meeting with the Maynooth University Bursar to discuss Maynooth University's short-term interventions on campus. We will be on the ground asking students to take part from Monday, 17 October - Friday, 21 October.

We will be on the ground with the **'Support our Students, Build our Building'** petition from Monday, 17 October - Friday, 21 October. If you haven't signed it yet, make sure you do as every signature gets us a step closer to our demands.

We will be holding a **#WheresMyLevy Q&A session** for all students during the week. This will provide an opportunity for you to get up to date with our actions, have your questions answered, and learn how you can get involved with all the next steps.

We are welcoming students to our **volunteer group** to help us promote and action all the steps involved with the #WheresMyLevy campaign. If you are interested in joining, reach out to the page or email president@msu.ie.

The MSU President will be **meeting with the Maynooth University Bursar** on Friday, 28 October.

Monday, 17 October 2022: Members of the MSU Executive and student volunteers are on the ground with the 'Support our Students, Build our Building' petition and 'Student Experience On Campus' survey.

Wednesday, 19 October 2022: I circulated 'Planned Student Gathering' document to Damien Travers (An Garda Síochána), Ivan Griffin (Campus & Commercial Services), David Guildea (Site Security Supervisor), Daniel McDermott (Health & Safety), Michael Rafter (Interim Director of Estates and Capital Development) and Rev. Prof. Michael Mullaney (President, St. Patrick's Pontifical University). This document outlined a plan for a march to take place the following Tuesday, 25 October 2022, including a detailed risk assessment.

Wednesday, 19 October 2022: I contacted the President of MU informing them that the MSU Executive had voted to coordinate our next action the following Tuesday, 25 October 2022, and that it would include a march of students and delivery of our petition to Riverstown Lodge. I asked that the President of MU be present to receive the petition at approximately 12:00.

Wednesday, 19 October 2022: MSU announces March to Riverstown, its next action in the #WheresMyLevy campaign, on Instagram.

Friday, 21 October 2022: I receive a reply from the MU President's Office informing me that they will not be present during March to Riverstown but that Dr Tony Gaynor, MU's Director of Governance, will meet me to receive the petition in their place.

Friday, 21 October 2022: Maynooth branch of IFUT offer statement of "full support" and solidarity to MSU regarding March to Riverstown on their social media.

Monday, 24 October 2022: Members of the MSU Executive and student volunteers are on the ground with the 'Support our Students, Build our Building' petition and 'Student Experience On Campus'. Posters and leaflets advertising March to Riverstown are also handed out.

Monday, 24 October 2022: Darren O'Rourke TD shares March to Riverstown graphics on their social media channels.

Monday, 24 October 2022: Bríd Smith TD sends email of solidarity with the student protests in Maynooth.

Monday, 24 October 2022: College Tribune | [Termination of Maynooth Student Centre Plans Causes Upset \(collegetribune.ie\)](https://collegetribune.ie)

Tuesday, 25 October 2022: MSU organises March to Riverstown. Approximately 1,800 students walk out of their lectures at 11:11 to join the MSU Executive in marching to Riverstown Lodge and me in delivering the petition which had amassed almost 4,000 signatures.

Tuesday, 25 October 2022: Catherine Murphy TD, Cian O' Callaghan TD, and Gary Gannon TD hold March to Riverstown posters on the steps of Leinster House at 11:11 in solidarity with the students of Maynooth.

Tuesday, 25 October 2022: iRadio | [Maynooth University students continue to protest for their Student Centre - iRadio](https://www.irishtoday.com/story/entertainment/2022/10/25/maynooth-university-students-continue-to-protest-for-their-student-centre-1.6411111)

Wednesday, 26 October: Members of the MSU Executive and student volunteers are on the ground with the 'Student Experience On Campus' survey.

Wednesday, 26 October 2022: The College View |

<https://www.thecollegeview.com/2022/10/26/wheresmylevy-over-1500-people-protest-at-maynooth-university/>

Friday, 28 October 2022: The MSU Director General and I met with the MU Bursar and Interim Director of Estates and Capital Development to discuss MU's short-term interventions in light of the cancellation of the Student Centre. I presented them with the results of the 'Student Experience On Campus' survey which had 2,070 responses.

MEETING WITH MU BURSAR AND INTERIM DIRECTOR OF ESTATES AND CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

On Friday, 28 October 2022, the MSU Director General and I met with the MU Bursar & Interim Director of Estates and Capital Development to discuss the short-term interventions that MU were implementing on campus and to consider the next steps for the Student Centre project. The current short-term interventions, the results of the 'Student Experience On Campus' survey, unexplained levy fund expenditure, and next steps for the current Student Centre and new Student Centre project were discussed.

UNEXPLAINED LEVY FUND EXPENDITURE

On Wednesday, 30 March 2022, the MU Director of Finance shared an excel file on the levy forecast cashflow. This document included revised estimates for the forecasted additional cost of delivery of the programme to the value of circa €6.35m. However, the file also showed additional expenditure from the levy fund in the year 2021/22 to the value of €6.35m. This was raised at the time, but no clear answer was forthcoming. The MU President indicated in a recent meeting that the €6.35m expenditure related to a land acquisition. However, in the meeting with the Bursar, the Bursar was unable to answer what the €6.35m was spent on and indicated that circa €4m of that sum was spent on land but was unable to elaborate on what the

balance of the sum was spent on. The Bursar committed to confirming what the €6.35m encompassed.

UPDATE ON NEW STUDENT CENTRE

The status of a new Student Centre remains uncertain to MSU. Indications from the MU President are that a new Student Centre is not guaranteed and that MU and MSU may need to meet to agree again what will be delivered from the student levy fund for current and future students in a post-Covid world.

The MU Bursar, however, has indicated that their understanding is that a new Student Centre is to be delivered and that a paper on this topic will be submitted to the next Governing Authority meeting.

'STUDENT EXPERIENCE ON CAMPUS' SURVEY RESULTS

Population: c. 15,000

Responses: 2,070

Confidence Interval: 95%

Margin of Error: 2%

1. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied, please indicate your level of satisfaction with existing buildings and facilities on-campus?

1	508	28%
2	735	36%
3	662	32%
4	143	7%
5	22	1%

2. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied, please rate your level of satisfaction with Maynooth University's short-term interventions on-campus?

1	937	45%
2	732	35%
3	313	15%
4	72	3%
5	16	1%

3. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being completely disagree and 5 being completely agree, please rate the following statement: "I feel as though my needs are met at Maynooth University".

1	522	25%
2	706	34%
3	611	30%
4	196	9%
5	35	2%

4. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being completely disagree and 5 being completely agree, please rate the following statement: "Maynooth University has effectively communicated with students on meeting their needs".

1	1,145	55%
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2	615	30%
3	233	11%
4	58	3%
5	19	1%

5. On a scale of 1 – 5 with 1 being extremely unlikely and 5 being extremely likely, how likely are you to recommend Maynooth University to a friend?

1	377	18%
2	474	23%
3	687	33%
4	419	20%
5	113	5%

6. What would you suggest as interventions for students on campus?

New Student Centre	1,766	86%
Existing Students' Union Building Extension	1,066	51%
MSU Londis Shop Expansion	1,404	68%
Large Furnished Common Room	1,376	66%
TV Room	610	29%
Games Room	781	38%
Bean Bag Room	841	41%
Increased Seating in John Hume Building	1,417	68%
Increased Seating in Arts Building	1,199	58%
Increased Seating in Phoenix	1,190	57%

Increased Parking On-Campus	1,661	80%
Amphitheatre [Behind Arts] Renovation	572	28%
Dedicated Prayer Room	393	19%
Improved Washing Facilities in North Campus Accommodation	549	27%
Other	251	12%

7. What is your Period of Study?

1 st Year Undergraduate	815	39%
2 nd Year Undergraduate	505	24%
3 rd Year Undergraduate	428	21%
4 th Year Undergraduate	194	9%
Taught / Research Postgraduate	110	5%
Doctoral Postgraduate	18	< 1%

The next Governing Authority is set to take place this Thursday, 10 November 2022, so I will have a comprehensive update on this at the next sitting.

EXPENSES CLAIMED

To ensure that I am transparent and accountable for my expenditure below is a list of all expenses that I have claimed.

List expenses claimed:

- I have claimed no expenses since taking up my new position in July 2022.