

A full-page photograph of Marie Sheedy, a young woman with long, wavy blonde hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a grey tweed jacket over a mustard yellow top and black tights. She stands in a grassy field with a bridge structure in the background. The text 'Vote MARIE SHEEDY' is overlaid on the image. 'Vote' is in a stylized, cursive font with a green-to-blue gradient and a white outline. 'MARIE SHEEDY' is in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a black drop shadow.

Vote MARIE SHEEDY

FOR VP ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

#1 TWO YEARS EDUCATION OFFICER #2 WITSU PRESIDENT #3 LEADERSHIP QUALITIES #4 HIGHLY VERSATILE OFFICER
#5 RELATABLE #6 EMPATHETIC, RESILIENT AND FRANK BY NATURE #7 STUDENT FOCUSED
#8 CREATE CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS

hello humans!

My name is Marie Sheedy and at Congress 2019

I want to be elected your new VP for Academic Affairs for the Union of Students in Ireland.

I am adaptable, relatable, empathetic, resilient and frank by nature, but why does that matter? It will allow me to be a highly versatile officer when it comes to achieving the goals of USI for 2019/20 and onwards. I believe in practical and implementable solutions to issues, tangible actions that have fast and noticeable impacts. I am not here to reinvent the wheel, nor to make false promises.

I intend on being a support and a driving force of change on Officer Board next year. I guarantee you, that I can achieve what I set out to do in this manifesto if elected by you, the students of Ireland.

about me

I graduated from Waterford Institute of Technology in 2016 with an honours degree in Design (Visual Communication). Following this, I was elected as VP for Education in WIT Students' Union and held that position for two years. My third year as part of the WITSU sabbatical team has been spent as President. I have a lot more to give, and the position of Academic Affairs is where I can prove to be most beneficial as part of USI Officer Board this year.



achievements

I WAS PART OF THE TEAMS THAT INTRODUCED:



INSTITUTE WIDE
WORK PLACEMENT
SURVEY

51

NEW GENDER
NEUTRAL
BATHROOMS



3 NEW PART-TIME POSITIONS (POSTGRAD, MATURE STUDENT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT OFFICER)

CRC TERMS OF
REFERENCE
DOCUMENT



REVIEW OF
RESPECT AND
DIGNITY POLICY

WE ALSO:

- Reformed our Class Rep and Convenor system - last year seeing 224 elected Reps, the highest number of Reps for WITSU
- Went through Constitutional review (introducing three new part time officers)
- Submitted and passed upwards of 15 motions through Congress for the first time in years for WITSU.
- Won best delegation at USI Congress 2018 of which I was delegate leader.
- Won SAAI award for contribution to student life 2018.
- We were the first Students' Union to bring the Ask for Angela campaign to Ireland.
- Attended all USI national marches/demos in the last three years.
- Organized and hosted the first WITSU Awards Ceremony.
- Co-organized Waterford's first ever student festival WITSU Fest.

I HAVE BEEN ELECTED AS:

- USI Finance sub-committee member 2018/19
- Secretary for Southern Region WG USI 2018/19
- National Forum International Panel student reviewer 2016
- International panel student reviewer 2016 with National Forum

WE FOUGHT AND BATTLED AGAINST:



NON-FUNCTIONING
ACADEMIC COUNCIL
FOR NUMBER OF
MONTHS



LIBRARY
CLOSURES

UNWANTED
COURSE
CHANGES.

POOR
MOODLE
USAGE



what i want to do for you

- Improve engagement by visiting a different campus bi-weekly and from that campus hosting skype/hangouts style calls regarding the various aspects of the Education Officers roles, particularly policy development and casework support.
- Lobby and work alongside the National Forum to secure a third intern and base them entirely in the USI offices. This would allow us to work closely with the NF in terms of developing national student partnership guidelines and to review the relationship to encourage more direct student structures and parameters, ensuring a more collective and representative approach to policy development within USI and nationally.
- The next phase of NStEP will be central to how we engage students.



LOBBYING

Currently the Higher Ed Act 1971 dictates how many student representatives we are allowed to have on AC and GB. This act is being replaced by the **Higher Ed Act 2020**. It is absolutely critical that students are at the forefront of this act. This is our opportunity to increase student participation at the highest decision making bodies of our HEI's and would facilitate a much more inclusive and open discussion around school specific issues or requirements. It also ensures that we have a more equitable vote on issues at these tables, and are not vastly outnumbered by staff or management.

I will keep the topic of **Publicly Funded Education** at the forefront of all discussions this year. We must constantly keep up the discussion around the funding of higher education. In the past number of years, we have seen students become accustomed to high fees, unaware of what had previously been in place. It's time for us to break through the barriers and make the Government listen to our demands and for the Government to listen to student demands.

#FundTheFuture was a further step in showing solidarity between students, lecturers and trade unions. We need to continue actions like this and keep the discussion of Publicly Funded Education as the lead topic going forward.



Facilitate meetings with representative bodies and student representatives as currently they aren't getting a true picture of what's happening within various HEI's. Similarly, they don't have practices around engaging students efficiently or effectively. We need to ensure that **representative bodies** know the truth of what students want, what their experience is, and how they feel about their Institution. We can achieve this through the Vision for technological Higher Ed in Ireland. This is something I would work on tirelessly throughout the year, facilitated by the suggestions and ideas of our students and our **student representatives**.

To ensure that **quality assurance** is central to this, we must also develop and expand on the QA reviewers pool through QQI. This combats the issue of self assessment vs external review and combines both for a much more synergetic approach. Funding for training for this can be sought through the representative bodies to safeguard our quality assurance processes, with the individual HEI's paying the student reviewers while on their respective campuses.



NATIONAL FRAMEWORK ON STUDENTS' UNION AUTONOMY

This will be intrinsic to our work on student partnership this year. If we can achieve higher representation on our academic boards, as stated in the above point, then we can assure Students' Unions maintain their rightful role as vehicles to transmit the student opinion and emphasize the student voice. We must continue to strive towards a national framework around SU autonomy.

TU MERGERS

It is vital that you elect someone with a knowledge and understanding of the complexities of TU. This covers every aspect of the merger from early discussions, application drafting, requirements from the TU of staff and students, what the benefits are, and how to form a successful entity combining the wants, needs and requirements of that region.

I will facilitate teams going through merger process using the document developed this year and will add to it based on discoveries found along the way. We must ensure the process of TU formation to be student and not politically driven. Our HEI's are our educational institutions, they are not pawns in a future election campaign.



innovative and new

GDPR BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR SU'S

This document will act as a “how to” and “what to remember” guide for MO's when ensuring their Unions are GDPR compliant. Essentially, it will be a draft data protection policy with procedures that can tie in with a huge number of things from casework to paper/online elections. It can be tailored to suit small/medium/large HEI's, whilst also taking into consideration the autonomy of the organizations.

GOVERNANCE TRAINING MODULES AT SUT AND SUT+

Further extend governance modules to include business & legal terminology, practical debate skills, and provide officers with sample agendas from AC & GB to help assist them in navigating governance meetings in their HEI's, to empower them to ask the student focussed questions, and to be confident in their ability to challenge opposition.

POLICY WRITING

More policy writing/development training, as every single officer should be looking at their Institute's own policy alongside their own Union. We must strive towards constantly improving the student experience, and policy development is one of the most implementable ways to achieve this.

MORE CASEWORK TRAINING AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

Let us link in with officers wellbeing and encourage more collaboration between Education, Welfare, and Equality Officers. I intend to link in with the VP Welfare to ensure our sabbatical officers in our affiliated MO's are equipped with practical and useful guides on how to mind themselves this year, because if you don't look after yourself, you become less capable of helping someone else.



things we can improve on:

APPRENTICESHIPS

We need to engage with SIPTU regarding democratizing them. Needs a national programme of work - a coordinator who gets in to the colleges and speaks to apprentices around the issues they are faced with. Ways to engage specifically in IoTs with regional officers help.

FE AND ADULT LEARNER TRAINING

I want to build on our growing links with the Further Education and Training sector, to ensure that we can grow our FE membership and support their needs nationally.

FEES/INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES

Policy work around how/why some are integrated without paying fees. Placement can be very diverse based on discipline and region, we need to establish a best practice document for our students to make sure they are looked after and aware of all associated costs with placement.

SUSI REVIEW

A national review on SUSI is required. This review must cover its use (how SUSI is spent), adjacency impacts, postgrad difficulties, 3 year independency rule etc. There are a number of issues with SUSI so in order to get a broader picture, we must review it nationally. Findings from this can be used towards our argument for publicly funded education. It would strengthen our calls and requests in budget 2020 and 2021.

LINKS WITH ISSU AND SECOND LEVEL SCHOOLS

We have an opportunity at rallies and marches to strengthen and develop these relationships further. Relationships will have improved after our national action #FundTheFuture on March 21st

LEAVING CERT REFORM

It is vital that we keep a constant eye to the Leaving Cert reform and ensure that students are prepared going forward in their academic lives.

BREXIT

We must not allow Brexit to continue to impede on the decision of funding for higher education. The funding of higher education is the most central action and value of the USI and we must always remember that. Along with this, I feel that students are under-informed when it comes to Brexit, and we should try and communicate this better to them.

why me?

- It is paramount that you vote for an Officer Board that will facilitate the development of USI. I truly believe that I can give you something new that this role hasn't had in a number of years.
- I will dedicate my time to improving and bettering the student movement for those involved this year and those thereafter.
- I am *enthusiastic, dedicated and passionate*, but most importantly, I want to create conditions for success for all officers handling education or academic affairs positions, and I will do so with pride if you grant me the opportunity.

