

# Forógra Uachtaránachta

## Tadhg Conall Dáithi Ó Néill

### Cé mise?

Dia duit. Is mise Tadhg Ó Néill agus táim ag rith d'Uachtarán d'Aontais Mac Léinn. Is mac léinn i mo bhliain dheireanach as Dún Dealgan, Contae Lú mé atá ag déanamh staidéar ar Ríomheolaíocht, Theangeolaíocht agus ar an nGaeilge. Bhí páirt ní beag agam i go leor gnéithe shaoil na mac léinn: Bhí mé ar choiste an Chumann Píoráideachta le dhá bhliain; Chabhair mé le go leor cumainn nach raibh mé ar an gcoiste; Chabhair mé le himeachtaí neamhshochaí a eagrú ar nós Fóraim Shaoirse Cainte an téarma seo chaite.

I rith mo chuid ama sa choláiste seo, thug mé faoi deara mic léinn ag éirí ní ba mhíshásta lena n-aontas ó sheimeistear go seimeastar de réir a chéile mar a d'éirigh sé saíte i scannail, cúrsaí polaitíochta gáifeacha, agus fadhbanna tromchúiseacha bullaíochta. Thug an t-aontas túis áite dóibh siúd atá lárnach ann cumhacht polaitíochta a fháil seachas do deacrachtaí na mac léinn. Má thoghfar i m'uachtarán mé, tá sé i gceist agam teacht ar réiteach ar na ceisteanna seo trí leasú an aontais agus díriú ar cheisteanna na mac léinn thar aon ní eile.

### Glan suas an tAontas

Le blianta beaga anuas, d'fhás cultúr bullaíochta agus drochmheasa san AML lena bhfuil an tAontas thíos. D'fhág uachtarán a bhí tofa go daonlathach agus oifigigh páirtaimseartha eile mar gheall air sin. Ní féidir an fhadhb seo a ligean chun leanúint in aon aontas mar bhaineann sé bonn cùis an aontais. Conas is féidir leas ár mball a chinntíú má dhéantar dochar dó? Má thoghfar mé, ní chuirfidh mé suas le haon saghas bullaíochta ar bith agus cinnteoidh mé gur áit shábháilte é an t-aontas do na mic léinn dá seasann sé.

Rinne sraith feachtas agus agóidí dona dochar do chlú an aontais freisin. Is sampla cruthanta é feachtas na samhla anuaidh. Ní dhéanann gníomhaíochtaí ar nós agóidí aontáí post agus oícheanta eolais faic ach dochar do chlú an aontais agus na coláiste tríd is tríd. Ní bhaineann seo faic amach ar son na gcúiseanna níos mó dá maíonn siad ionadafocht a dhéanamh. Mar uachtarán, cinnteoidh mé go mbeidh an ghníomhaíocht agóide go léir fiúntach agus nach ndéanfaidh sé dochar do na cùiseanna, don aontas, ná do na mic léinn dá ndéanann an t-aontas ionadaíocht.

Ina theannta sin, bhí an drochchlú a tháinig mar gheall ar na nithe seo ina chuíis le hardú bhuíon mhac léinn nach fearr leo a bheith mar bhaill an aontais. Molann siad ballraíocht roghnach an aontais. Níl milleán agam orthu as seo agus ceapaim go bhfuil an ceart acu córas fágtha an aontais a éileamh. Tacaímse freisin le córas fágtha ó thaobh moráltachta de mar chreidim go bhfuil sé mícheart ar fad ballraíocht aon bhuíne a bhrú ar dhuine ar aon chuíis mar is sárú chirt shaoirse comhlachas é.

### Díriú ar cheisteanna na mac léinn

Theip ar na páirtithe i dTeach Laighean mic léinn i gcónaí ar cheisteanna a bhfuil tionchar díreach ar ár n-oideachas

agus ár gcaighdeán beatha, tá na tionchair is léire le feiceáil sa ghéarchéim titheochta agus chostas maireachtála. Mar Uachtarán, déanfaidh mé mo sheacht ndícheall obair le gnóthaí áitiúla chun níos mó margáí a chruthú do mhic léinn chun costais laethúla a mhaolú a oiread agus is féidir. Ceann de na smaointí atá agam ná obair leis an gcoláiste chun fóirdheontais a thabhairt don Pav nó don Bhutrach. Is leis an Aontas Mac Léinn an teach tabhairne ollscoille in a lán ollscoileanna in Éirinn agus in áiteanna eile na hEorpa, cén fáth nach féidir linne é sin a dhéanamh? Ní dhéanann sé aon chiall gur cheart go mbeadh an Pav níos costasaí ná roinnt tithe tabhairne lastigh de 2 nóniméad shiúil ó gheataí na Coláiste.

Mar chomaitéir, tógann m'aistear beagnach 2 uair gach bealach. Ar ndóigh, bhí tionchar olc aige seo ar mo chuid staidéir agus mo shaol sóisialta ar an gcampas. Tuigim nach mise an t-aon duine amháin atá ag fulaingt leis seo, bheadh aidhm mhór ag m'uachtaránacht saol na gcomaitéirí a dhéanamh níos éasca mar sin de. Chuimseodh sin rudaí ar nós stocaireacht ar chomhlachtaí iompair chun seirbhísí níos minice a chur ar fáil agus obair chun deimhniú go mbeadh an campas oiriúnach do chomaitéirí.

Mar Uachtarán, ba mhaith liom deireadh a chur le polasaí 'Smoke-Free Campus' na coláiste. Is annamh a chuirtear i bhfeidhm é agus tá roinnt áiteanna ar an gcampas a bhfuil eolas ar mhic léinn mar limistéir caite tobac go neamhoifigíúil. An fhadhb a bhaineann leis seo ná, mar atá maíomh ann go bhfuil cosc ar chaitheamh tobac, nach gcuirtear luathreadáin ar bhoscaí bruscair, agus nach bhfuil aon áit ach ar an talamh chun toitíní a mhúchadh go sábháilte. Bíonn urlár na limistéar caite tobac lán le bunanna toitín mar thoradh. Mar uachtarán, agus mar duine nach gcaitheann tobac, dhéanfaidh stocaireacht ar an gColáiste chun níos mó limistéir caite tobac a chur ar fáil chun coláiste níos glaine a bhaint amach.

### Ceisteanna móra a bhainnean le mic léinn

Sraith cheiste amháin a bhíonn tábhachtach dom ná príobháideachas agus saoirse nádurtha, is ball mé leis an gCumann Píoráideachta ar an gcampas ó thíos mo chéime agus bhí mé ar an gcoiste le 2 bhliain. Nuair a bhíonn rialtais agus corporáidí, in Éirinn san áireamh, ag éirí níos eascairdiúil leis na cearta seo, is cúis mhór diomá dom é ciúnas an AML. Is don ghlúin seo na mac léinn a dhéanann cionta ar na cearta seo an damáiste is mó, mar is muidne a eagraíonn ár gcuid saolta ar líne gach lá. Mar sin, má thoghfar mé, tabharfaidh mé an aird chuí ar na cearta seo agus déanfaidh mé agóid ar gach foras a sáraíonn iad, is cuma cé acu an Choláiste, an Ríaltas níos corporáid príobháideacha.

Ceist eile faoina bhfuil mé an-tógha ná an Ghaeilge. Mar Ghaeilgeoir, ba mhaith liom obair a dhéanamh le hOfigeach na Gaeilge chun an teanga a chur chun chinn ar an gcampas a oiread agus is féidir, brú a chuir ar an gcoláiste chun comharthaí dátheangacha a mhéadú thar campas san áireamh.

# Presidential Manifesto

## Tadhg Conall David Ó Néill

### Who am I?

Hello. I'm Tadhg Ó Néill, and I am running to be the President of your Student Union. I am a final year Computer Science, Linguistics and Irish student from Dundalk, County Louth. During my time in College I have been actively involved in many aspects of student life, from being on the committee of the Pirate Party for two years, to helping around many societies where I was not on the committee, to helping arrange and organise non-society events like last semester's Free Speech Forums.

In my time in this College, I have seen student's satisfaction with their Union steadily decline semester by semester as the Union has been embroiled in scandals, engaged in performative politics, had serious problems with toxicity, and let students issues play second fiddle to gathering political clout for those directly involved. My goal, if elected, will be to solve these issues by cleaning up the union and focusing on the issues of students first and foremost.

### Clean up the Union

In recent years, the SU has seen a growing culture of bullying and general toxicity that has been a massive detriment to the Union, culminating in the resignation of a democratically elected President as well as several Part Time Officers. This is not a problem that can be allowed to persist in a Union of any kind, as it undermines the entire point of the Union. How can we ensure the welfare of our members if we ourselves are harming it? If I am elected, I will be taking a zero tolerance approach to bullying of any kind and will make it my top priority to ensure that the Union is a safe place for the students it seeks to protect.

The reputation of the Union has also been damaged by a series of poor campaigns and protests, last years effigies campaign being a prime example. Actions like protesting jobs fairs and information nights for courses in the University do nothing but damage the reputation of the Union and the College a whole, all the while achieving almost nothing for the greater causes they claim to represent. As President I will ensure that all protest action is constructive and not discrediting or disruptive to the causes, the Union, or the students represented by the Union.

Furthermore, the bad reputation caused by these things has spawned a group of students who would rather not be members of the Union, who propose making Union membership optional. I can't blame these people for wanting this, and I think that they are completely justified in demanding a mechanism for students to opt out of Union membership. I also support the ability to opt out on a moral basis, as I believe that it is completely wrong to force membership of any group onto any person for any reason, as that is a violation of ones right to the freedom of association.

### Focus on students issues

The parties of Leinster House have consistently failed students on issues that directly impact their education and quality of life, the worst effects of this obviously being the joint Crises of Housing and Cost of Living. As President, I will do everything I can to work with local businesses to create as many deals as possible for students to help cut down on their expenses as much as possible. One idea that comes to mind is to work with the college to subsidise the Pav or the Buttery to make them cheaper. Many Universities both in Ireland and in the rest of Europe have their student pubs owned by the Union, or at the very least subsidised by the University, why can't we? There's no good reason that the Pav should be more expensive than several pubs within a 2 minute walk from the College gates.

As a long distance commuter my commute takes me roughly 2 hours each way, naturally this has negatively impacted my studies and social life on campus. I know that I am far from being the only person on campus who suffers from this, and working to make college life easier for my fellow commuters would be a strong goal of my presidency. This would include things like lobbying transport companies to expand the frequency of services and working to ensure that campus is more commuter friendly.

As President, I would also lobby to abolish the College's 'Smoke Free Campus' policy. It is extremely rarely enforced as it is, with several areas around campus being unofficially known to students as smoking areas, the problem with this is that as there is a pretence of smoking not being allowed, ash trays aren't installed on bins, and there's nowhere to safely put out and bin cigarettes. This leads to the floors of these unofficial smoking areas being littered with cigarette butts. As President, and a non-smoker at that, I would lobby for more designated smoking areas and to have them better signposted and enforced to help keep the College clean.

### Wider issues that affect students

One set of issues that have always been near and dear to my heart is privacy and natural freedoms, so much so that I've been a member of the Pirate Party on campus since the day I learned of its existence and why I was on its committee for two years. As governments and corporations around the world, including in Ireland, are becoming increasingly antagonistic towards these rights, the silence of the SU has been disappointing to me. The current generation of students are perhaps the group most affected by any infractions, as it is us who organise our lives the most online. Therefore, if elected, I will give these rights the attention they deserve and protest their infringement by any body, be it the College, the Government, or a private corporation.

Another issue for which I am passionate is the promotion of the Irish language. As a Gaeilgeoir myself, I plan on working with the Irish Officer to promote the language on campus as much as possible, including a push on the College to expand dual language signage across campus.