

Ronan Cahill's Manifesto

UL Student President Candidate 2024/2025

YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE, YOUR PRESIDENT

Cahill Will Fight YOUR Battle

My name is Ronan Cahill and I am asking for your vote to be re-elected as your Student President for 2024/2025.

I am your current UL Student-Life President where over the past year I have been representing UL Students at both a local and national level, leading UL Student-Life. Last year when I was elected my dream came through. Ever since I sat in the Concert hall on the first day of first year for orientation, watching the then Student Life President enter the stage and engage with us first years, I wanted to be that person and so this time last year when I was elected, that dream was realised. Last year I told Students that "Cahill Will Fight Your Battle", and since I was elected that is exactly what I have been doing. I absolutely love UL and this university has shaped me into the person I am today, giving me the best of friends, the most amazing memories and the greatest year of my life, where I have been doing everything I can to better the lives and experiences of all current UL Students. I acknowledge that not every student in UL has had the same incredible experience I have had and that is the reason I ran for this role in the first place because I want to do everything I can to ensure as many students as possible feel heard in UL and have every chance to integrate into the amazing community we have here in the university, make priceless memories and become the person they want to be.

The role of the President is an extremely busy one, sitting on over 45 different committees within the University fighting for students so this role requires a phenomenal amount of energy. The Student President is paid for 39 hours a week but I don't think I have had a week where I have worked less than 50, a lot of the time it reached 60, but I love it. I love every single minute of it because the work we do in UL Student-Life and in my role as Student President impacts lives and helps make this incredible college experience even better for students of UL. If you vote to re-elect me as your Student President, I will continue fighting every single day for every single student and I will make the biggest positive impact possible for the students of UL. I have given so much, but I have so much more to give.

I ran last year promising to bring my energy, passion, determination and good vibes to be the representative voice for UL Students which I have done and I promise to continue doing. It is unrealistic to expect that the person you elect as your Student President can perform miracles but it is not unrealistic to expect them to fight for their promises and do everything they can to achieve what they say they will, which I have done and I want to continue to do! Cahill is fighting your battle and Cahill will continue to fight your battle!

New Student GYM

All of us students here in UL know how poor the GYM Facilities are on "Ireland's Sporting Campus" and last year I promised to push a New Student Only GYM to the front of UL Sports Agenda. This is exactly what I have done. I have fought and made it clear to the University that we need a New Student Only GYM for students and they have listened. I have recently updated Student Council on the progress made around this and this project will be confirmed this year. It has been agreed to move this project forward introducing a brand New Student Only GYM for students which also includes a female only training area. This Gym will be for UL Students only ensuring we have adequate facilities to provide for the bettering of every UL Students physical and mental health. Whether I am re-elected or not, this will be delivered. I made the promise and I will keep it.

Commuter Hub

Our Commuter Hub has been a massive success and is a great facility to provide for the ever increasing number of commuting students in our community. With regards the accommodation issue for students and the growing distance some UL students have to commute, I have established this project as permanent, which I promised to do. The majority of mornings I have been in the Student Centre at 7:30 setting up to provide free tea's coffee's and breakfast for students commuting to college. This was a big commitment but I jumped out of bed to do it, seeing the positive impact it was having for students. The accommodation crisis has led to this university to having an unacceptable amount of students commuting to college and I have made this clear to the University and the President Kerstin Mey. They listened and took some responsibility. I fought hard and received over €7500 and a full years funding for UL Student-Life to continue running this initiative ensuring we can provide even more free food and breakfast to students who are commuting to college making the Commuter Hub permanent. I promised this last year and I delivered. This is a big win for commuter students but I know it is not enough.

If you re-elect me as your Student President I will ensure that the Commuter Hub continues to grow and I will fight for a permanent space which is fully funded and ran by the university, introducing a space with lockers, more microwaves and drying pods to help ease the burden of commuting to college. The University and the lack of accommodation they have built has caused this problem and as Student President I will fight for them to take more responsibility.

More Students More Accommodation

Every single UL Student can relate to the stress and pressure of finding accommodation in Castletroy and other areas. This year as Student President I have heard countless stories about students sleeping in their cars and on couches and this should simply not happen. Last year I promised that if I was elected as Student President I would lobby the University to place this to the top of their agenda. The University owns the Travel-lodge building which currently has vacant floors at the top and after months of lobbying the university they have confirmed to me that they have been granted planning permission to introduce student accommodation in this space which will result in 90 more student beds. This alongside the opening of 80 student beds in rhebogue at the start of this academic year has meant that 170 more student beds have been confirmed during my time as president, but I know this is just a drop in the water with the accommodation crisis we currently have.

I made it clear to the University that we need a major accommodation project to really tackle the accommodation crisis we have and they are working to deliver hundreds of new beds. If you vote to re-elect me as your Student President I will ensure that the rest of these plans are followed through and that hundreds if not thousands of affordable students beds are delivered. This fight needs continuity and as Student President I will make sure no progress is lost and even more student accommodation is built.

All students are unfortunately aware of the horror landlord stories that have come from off campus accommodation. This year we have introduced FREE LEGAL AID within UL Student-Life which provides students the opportunity to seek advice around tenancy rights and leases. I promised last year to do everything I can to put an end to these cowboy landlords and I will continue to do this by promoting this Legal Aid to students so that they are aware of their renting rights. Last year I met with Minister Simon Harris in Leinster house and I showed him articles surrounding these shocking landlords in Limerick and called him out for not being more vocal around these issues. If re-elected as Student President I will continue to push for the introduction of laws on a national level that protect Students renting rights. Students have been continuously screwed by landlords and this needs to stop.

More FREE Car Parks

Every single student who has driven to UL knows the struggle of having to try and find a car parking space. It is clear with our growing number of students and commuter students in particular we do not have enough parking space on campus for students. I have been continuously fighting with the University and Local council around this issue and it has been made clear that the County Council will NOT grant planning permission for more car parks due to the traffic issues in Castletroy and with the governments policies around more sustainable travel. This for me is not good enough. If you re-elect me as Student President I will ensure that the University reallocates current staff car parks to become student car parks giving students more parking options. I made it clear last year that I do not believe students should have to pay to park their cars on their campus and I promised to do everything in my power to make the university look at taking this cost away. This has been a tough battle for not only me but numerous Student Presidents before me. I am not accepting defeat in this battle and if re-elected as Student President I will push harder on the University to turn these staff car parks into student car parks and to make all parking free. Sometimes talking is not enough. I promise as Student President I will stage the biggest demonstration ever seen in the University of Limerick, if needed, blocking the gates of the college until they deliver these requests Students have demanded for years. If they won't listen, we will make them listen and I am the Student President to make this happen and solve the issues around parking for students once and for all.

New Student Centre

This year we will be moving from our home in the courtyard to our brand new Student Centre opposite the Library. This Student Centre will be one of the best in the world and will help transform the experience here on campus for students. We need a strong passionate leader with positive energy to take us into this new era as a Union and I am the Student President to do this. As Student President this year I have fought to ensure that all clubs, society's and student spaces that were originally planned are guaranteed within this building and I am the President to see this project over the line and ensure this new Student Centre matches the needs and requirements of all students. I will ensure that our New Student Centre will be breastfeeding friendly for Student Parents with special pods provided for those who want privacy when breastfeeding. I will also carry on the great work by this years Student Communities Officer in ensuring we provide a permanent sensory space for students, making sure neuro-divergent students feel included in our community.

This year UL Student-Life provided a massive drop of food crates in the courtyard, this was amazing seeing students grab essential supplies. If re-elected as Student President I will ensure that UL Student-Life invests in thousands worth of food essentials to be provided to students for free to help tackle the rising cost of living crisis students face. Our new Student Centre will have a huge open entrance to the building and thousands worth of food will be dropped here multiple times for students to take.

Clubs and Society's Space

Clubs and Society's are the heart and soul of our student body and have had an incredible impact on positively affecting the student experience here in UL. Our new Student Centre will provide a huge increase in the amount of space available to clubs and society's but It will not be enough. With us moving into the new Student Centre it will leave our current building vacant. If re-elected as Student President I will fight to keep this building as ours for extra Clubs and Society's space. This will mean

that Clubs and Society's will not be limited with spaces and will ensure that the heart and soul of our Student body can continue to grow and grow. I have built valuable relationships with the University Management this year and I will do everything in my power to ensure this space is not lost for students.

Student Events

This year as Student President I worked hard to ensure that UL Students Voices were heard and more suitable, highly demanded and diverse events were provided. This year we had D.O.D, OBSKUR and The Tumbling Paddies take the courtyard stage which saw the place absolutely rocking. The courtyard gigs gave me some of the best memories I ever made in my time here in UL and so if you vote to re-elect me as Student President I promise to keep delivering bigger and better events on campus. These gigs have been getting expensive but as Student President I promise to bring down the costs of these events to around €15 per ticket in order to make these amazing events more accessible and affordable for students.

I know that not all students want alcohol related events and so this year as Student President I introduced 'Welcome Back Wolfpack' which saw a huge firework show in the middle of campus which is UL's biggest ever non-alcoholic event to date. This is only one of so many more inclusive diverse events I will bring to campus and if you vote for me to remain as your Student President I promise to keep delivering.

Student Welfare and Safety

Unfortunately, we have all seen tragic stories of students around the country who have lost their lives to Alcohol and Substance abuse. We cannot stop people from taking drugs, but we can help minimise the harm caused by these substances through education. I will continue on the great work carried out by this year's Welfare Officer in ensuring the 'Welfare Tent' which is a pop up that provides students with harm reduction information and tips around staying safe while enjoying themselves, becomes a more permanent fixture on campus and at events. This will help students make informed educated choices and reduce the harm that these substances have on students.

This year I have lobbied on campus bars to introduce Anti-Spiking initiatives to help make students feel safer while out socialising. This has led to the Stables and other campus bars investing in anti-spiking test strips to provide to students to test their drink if they suspect they have been spiked. If re-elected as Student President I will continue to push this initiative on campus and into the bars and clubs in Limerick City to raise awareness and do everything I can ensure no UL Student is a victim of spiking on campus and off campus.

If re-elected as Student President I want to introduce the 'SafeCab' initiative. The Majority of UL Students go into Limerick City on a weekly basis to socialise. This has led to students being stranded sometimes without money or at times too intoxicated to get back to Castletroy. I will establish the 'SafeCab' initiative within UL Student Life and with taxis in Limerick, which will mean any student who is stranded or unable to pay for a taxi home for any reason will be able to get home without paying on the spot. Taxis can bill the trip back to UL Student Life and UL Student Life will cover the cost and then arrange a payback plan with the student. This will ensure that no student is left stranded in Limerick City and will be able to safely return home after a night out.

Food on Campus

Every student here in UL is aware of the lack of accessible, affordable and diverse food options we have here on campus. As part of my role as Student President, I sit on the UL Catering Committee where this year I have heavily pushed the formation of a UL Food Philosophy. This Food Philosophy will be published soon and will apply to any new food outlets on campus and I have fought hard to make sure that the student voice was represented in this. In this Food Philosophy it includes everything from outlets having to offer a €6 full meal to students to outlets having to provide more halal, vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options along with the potential of including more small local business's like La Cucina to campus. This is a project I have invested a lot of energy in this year and will transform the range of food we have available on campus making it more accessible, affordable and suitable to meet the needs of our diverse growing student population in a more sustainable way. I am the President to see this through and ensure the University follows through on this plan. If re-elected I will ensure we have a better, cheaper and bigger selection of food on campus.

Electronic Student Card

Technology is always advancing and it is important we keep it up with it here in UL. Last year I promised to continue to work on previous efforts made by to introduce an Electronic Student Card for students to make getting in and out of the library a whole lot easier. This project has progressed massively but these things take time. I am currently working with the Information and Technology Division within the University to finalise a project around a UL Engagement App which will be a one stop shop for all information you need within UL. Instead of having to flick from the counselling website to webpage to the Academic Registry webpage for your potential respective needs, this app will have all of these University departments accessibly available. This app will also include an electronic student card for students. This project has never been so achievable after the hard push I have placed this year and while I haven't exactly got it over the line yet, if you re-elect me as your Student President I can ensure this does not fall through again and this Electronic Student Card and promised idea I gave to students becomes a reality.

Repeat Exams/ I-Grade

Taking feedback from students into consideration I feel the current Repeat process is not fair. Students who fail an exam or those who receive an I-Grade especially should not be penalised and prevented from graduating with their class. I will push the university and respective boards to review this process with the aim of offering early January or Summer repeats to give everyone the opportunity to receive their Degree at the same time. This year the Student Officer Team has done incredible work surrounding the cost of repeats. UCD and UCC have recently had their repeat fees abolished and while it remains a goal for this year to push for the removal of these costs, I am the President you need to ensure this work continues and this cost is taken away with students then no longer having the additional stress and worry around exams about the potential cost of repeats.

You the Students of UL placed trust in me last year to do everything I can to better the lives and experiences of all UL Students. This is a clear plan of what has been done, what could be done and what will be done only if you vote and empower me to finish what we started along with much more and that is the reason you should vote for me, to continue bringing unlimited energy, passion, good vibes and determination to be the representative voice for all UL Students because Cahill Will Fight YOUR Battle.

Vote RONAN CAHILL for Student Life President 2024.

Issued by Fiachra O'Callaghan, Campaign Manager for Ronan Cahill.

