

Lesley Barrett Manifesto for Deputy President Tallaght Campus

Hi! My name is Lesley. I am the current Welfare & Equality officer on Tallaght campus. Before starting this roll, I was studying Applied Social Care, I graduated from this course in November 2020. During my time as a student, I represented my class as their class rep. I was then elected as the School Rep for business and humanities department, representing the voice of over 1000 students. My social care degree has proven to be very useful during my time as officer. My passion, drive and experience, accompanied with my training, ensured that I was well equipped to not just listen to students, but more importantly, actually hear what they were saying.

I have been a student, I've struggled to meet assignment deadlines, I've struggled financially, and I faced the challenges that emerged from Covid with the move from on-campus to online learning so I know some of the issues facing students on a daily basis. If elected I will keep listening to students and represent the issues you raise. Now more than ever with such uncertainty you will need not just that listening ear but that strong voice to represent you at the forefront of all decisions being made by the University.

That's a bit about me. Anything else you want to know or if you would like to join my campaign email voteforlesley@gmail.com or follow me on Instagram [@lesleyfordeputy](https://www.instagram.com/lesleyfordeputy).

I don't believe in making empty promises that can't be met. I am conscious that we don't know what next year will look like in light of the ever-changing Covid situation. Regardless of whatever situation we find ourselves in, the one certainty I can offer is my commitment to work hard for every student.

Here's some areas I want to cover if elected:

Representation

- Local representation is so important for our campuses across the TU. I've sat on both local and national boards representing you, our students for the last year. As your deputy I want to ensure equality of services and resources across the campuses.
- Over the past 5 years I have fought passionately to reduce the barriers students face accessing higher education.
- I want to see an increase in student representation on boards and committees across the university. The student voice is paramount in the transition back to campus.

Equality

- One issue that is plain to see is the lack of diversity within the union and student council. We represent a wide diverse student population so we should reflect that. It is great that we have student representatives from diverse background involved, but I want more. I mean more students with disabilities, more mature students, more students from different cultural backgrounds and more students of colour.
- We have a fantastic access office on the Tallaght campus, who I've built a strong relationship with this year. They work on various supports for students such as Student Assistance Fund, Childcare Assistance Fund, The crèche, access routes to name a few. If elected deputy I want to work with the access office to develop more supports for students.

Coru

- Undoubtedly there has been issues with Coru before this pandemic. However, Covid has seen major issues with placements for students. This is not just a local, but a national issue. What it has highlighted is the difficulty for both students and educators to engage with Coru in a meaningful way. We want some clear-cut black & white guidance from them and what we are getting is all grey! I'm not saying I can sort this all out, that would be a lie, no one person can, but I have been engaged both locally and nationally in work to get meaningful engagement from Coru. If elected I would continue to push this issue.

Unity

- Following on from those two points I believe in the power of the student voice. From my work with USI and students on a national level to address the Coru issues has thought me there is a strength, and wealth of ideas when people come together. I believe if we can get more students involved from all walks of life and come together, that strength in numbers will drive the needs of students to the forefront when we are living with life after Covid.

Care after Covid

- That leads me to my final point (for now!). There is no doubt that students have suffered throughout this pandemic and continue to suffer. The measures implemented by the government such as increasing student assistance fund, increases in funding towards mental health services on campus, and the €250 one off payment were all welcomed and much needed. But students have been studying remotely for the last year and its going to be difficult to transition back to 'normal' college life. I want to work towards ensuring that the good things like, remote learning for those who find it difficult to attend, can be kept and that there's factors to mitigate the negative effects, like lobbying for continued increase for SAF and mental health funding.

So, now let's look at why you should vote for me:

1. **Local** – One reason I want to be your deputy president is because I genuinely care about students' rights and wellbeing not just in the overall TU but on our campus. I am a Tallaght native who studied on Tallaght campus, so I am familiar with issues that students from Tallaght and surrounding areas face. I want to ensure going forward that the voice of Tallaght students is represented and, heard.
2. **Experienced** – I am not afraid to ask the difficult questions or raise the contentious issues. As a class rep I had to raise issues on behalf of my class often, and it was uncomfortable at times, but I always persevered and spoke up, because it was needed and the right thing to do. During my time in the union, I have always spoken up for what I believe is in the best interest of students. If elected Deputy I would be sitting on boards and committees where it is paramount the student voice is heard, I won't be afraid to speak up for you.
3. **Serious** – Anyone who's been to any events I have ran this year knows I like to have a laugh and have fun. Who doesn't? But, when there's work to be done, and issues needing to be dealt with, I get down to business. I put my all into everything I do for students and take it very seriously. That's a quality I think is very important to have in a Deputy President.
4. **Level-headed** – It's all well and good being passionate and outspoken on student issues, but If you can't do it with a level-head its less likely you will be listened to. Which could mean the issues you are presenting go by the wayside. I have experience in committee and board meetings, I have chaired meetings, I have built up relationships with staff in Tallaght campus and across the TU, and I know how to present issues in a calm and professional way, without losing the importance or significance of those issues. When presenting an argument, I will research the facts to back up the points I'm making. This means people are more likely to listen and take the issues seriously. You need that in someone representing you.
5. **Egalitarian** – (I had to look up the definition of this one to check I was using the right word!) It means 'favouring social equality' (Dictionary.com, LLC, 2021). That about sums me up in a nutshell! Its not just about equality it's about equity too. That means I want to ensure that all students, regardless of their background or heritage have opportunities to excel and enjoy the full university experience.
6. **Y-Not?** – Let me finish by saying, I genuinely wouldn't be running for this position if I didn't think I could do it and do it well. I wouldn't be running if I wasn't genuinely passionate about the student movement and representing the needs of both Tallaght and TU wide students. This is not just another job opportunity to me; this is something I genuinely care about and I'm passionate about. I will give my all to representing you.
On March 23rd – 24th put your trust in me and give me your vote for Deputy President on the Tallaght Campus.

**Believe in better, believe in Barrett and
Vote L.E.S.L.E.Y for Tallaght Deputy!!
#LesForDeputyPres**