



STRATEGIC PLAN
2020–2024



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1. Foreword

from the Chair of the Management Advisory Board

This strategic plan, marking the first of its kind for Mary I Students' Union (MISU), is an important step for MISU. The plan has been adopted by a mandate of MISU Council, and it contains the key strategic objectives for the development of MISU until the end of the 2023/24 academic year.

The goals identified in this plan outline the vision for MISU for the coming years, and provide a structure for achieving this vision at a time of significant change for MISU, MIC and the wider higher education landscape. MIC is growing as an institution in many ways, student numbers are increasing and becoming increasingly diverse, and the disciplines and domains of educational experience offered in Mary I are expanding as well.

While these changes may pose challenges for MISU, there have always been, and there always will be, external pressures that influence student life at MIC. In my time here I have seen MISU responding to a range of significant changes and challenges, including the introduction of the 'new' four-year B.Ed and B.Ed and Psychology courses, the rolling out of the joint B.A with UL, and the incorporation of MIC Thurles, to name a few.

As Chair of the MISU Management Advisory Board, who provide oversight, guidance and support to the union's elected officers and staff, for me, the most important aspect of this plan is the degree to which it is informed by **your voice**.

Yes, I can still remember the things that I cared about as a student in MIC. However my memories are no substitute for direct feedback from you, the current students, and you were very forthcoming with your input. On behalf of MISU, I would like to thank you for your contributions and for helping to make this Plan a reality. I would also like to thank everyone who worked on this plan or has contributed in some way to seeing it reach this point.

Over the last decade I have seen a diverse range of people taking on various roles within MISU, each bringing their own enthusiasm and vision to these roles. The timeframe for this strategic plan extends beyond the term of individual officers. This will provide greater opportunities for MISU officers to collaborate with those who came before, and those who follow. The possibility of such meaningful continuity has allowed for greater ambition in developing the strategic objectives and I look forward to seeing the impact of the implementation of the strategic plan over the coming years.



Cillian McHugh

Chair of the MISU Management Advisory Board

2. Joint Introduction

from the President and General Manager

As President and General Manager of MISU, we have different roles and are responsible for separate functions but we work together to achieve the shared mission of the Union.

The President's role is to oversee the representation, advocacy and leadership work of MISU and act as elected leader of the organisation. The General Manager's role is to oversee MISU's operations and services and provide support to the elected officers.

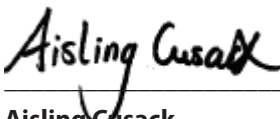
We feel that it is important to introduce this strategic plan together as it represents an ambitious and challenging plan for both the representative and operational sides of MISU and the successful achievement of our priorities and goals will depend on each of our complementary functions as we work with you and for you over the course of the next four years.

The development of this strategic plan, which was prepared with the assistance of Crowe Consulting, included a consultative process which involved collecting and evaluating your views on MISU's services and activities; some reflection and self-evaluation of our systems and structures; and a significant planning exercise to look at;

Where we are now,
where we want to be,
and how we will get there.

While the plan sets out a range of goals and priorities, the ultimate ambition in planning for the future is to help the elected officers and staff to ensure that you continue to get the kind of MISU that you want and that your Union grows and improves for the future.

The students of MIC expect and deserve to be served by a students' union which is dynamic and modern in its outlook and offers facilities and services which meet your needs. We hope that this strategic plan enables us to do this, and we hope that you will enjoy this journey as much as we plan to.



Aisling Cusack

MISU President 2019/20

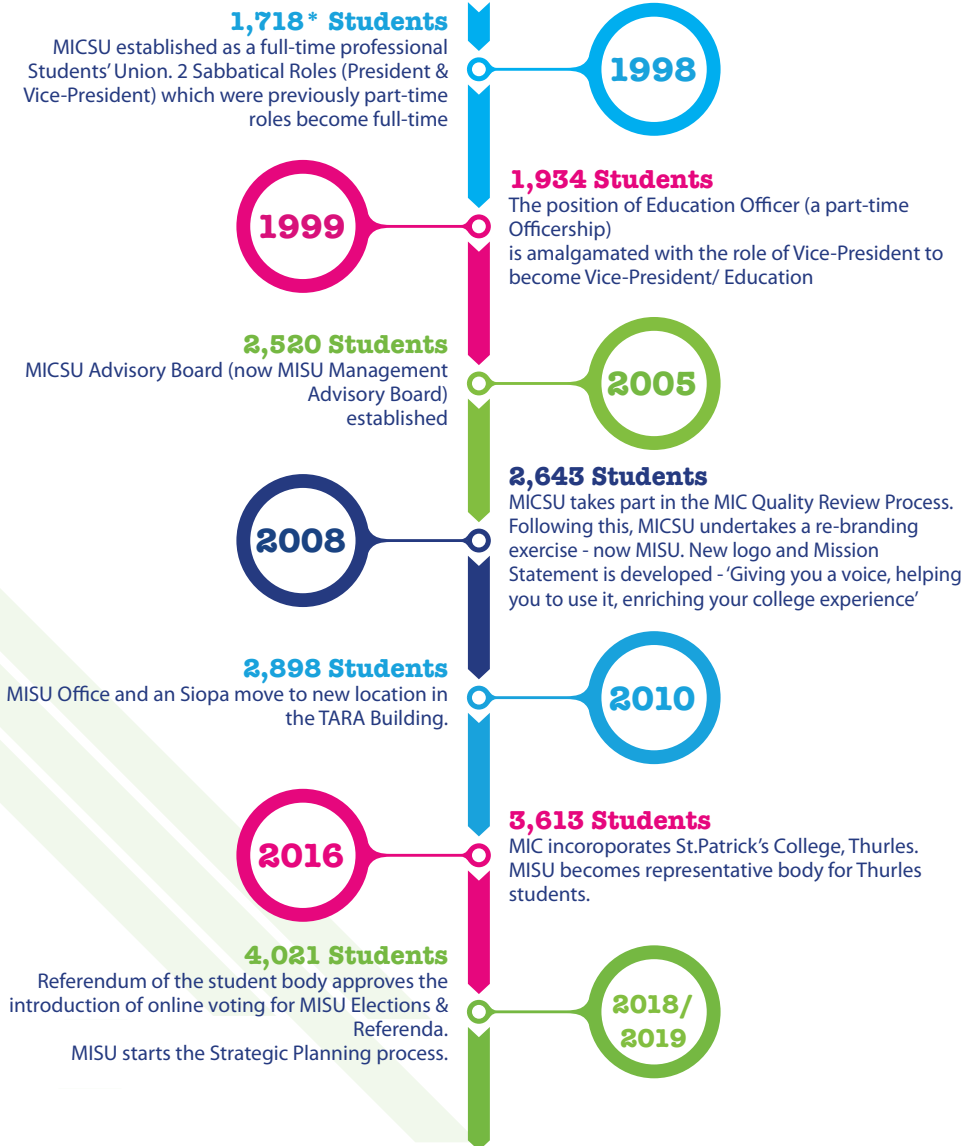


Dee Kennelly

MISU General Manager

3. MISU's History

The following highlights the growth and development of MISU (formerly MICSU) since 1998



*Student numbers based on capitation figures

4. Who We Are & What We Do

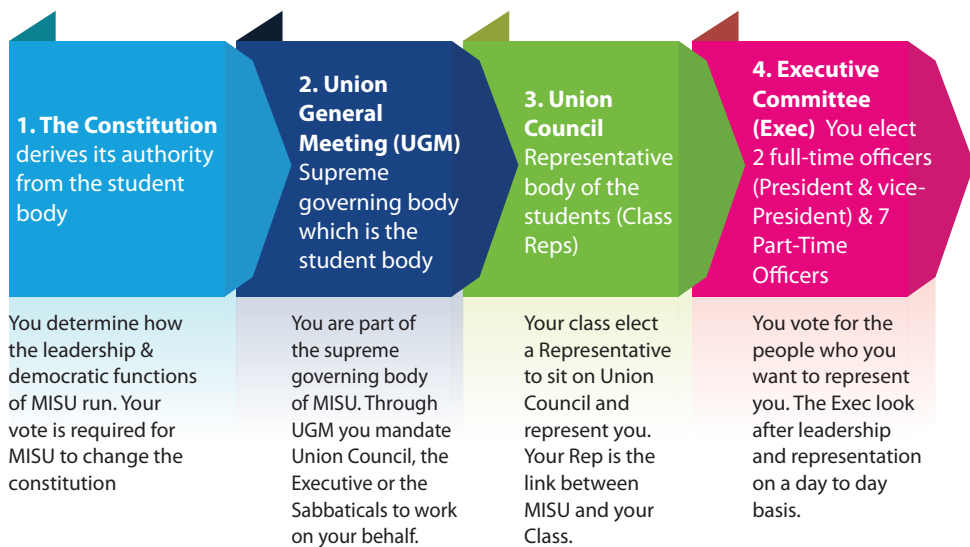
Mary I Students' Union (MISU) is the recognised representative body for the undergraduate and postgraduate students of Mary Immaculate College (MIC)¹. MISU has been a full-time professional representative for the MIC student body for more than two decades, advocating on your behalf, representing your views, and providing services to you.

As a student of MIC, you are an integral part of the MIC community, and as a member of MISU, we are here to champion your voice and your experience within that community. MISU works to enhance life in MIC so that your rights are protected, your needs and entitlements are met, and your time here is made valuable to your education and development, as well as fulfilling and enjoyable.

MISU is a democratic organisation, with our structures and systems defined by our constitution². The MISU constitution is a binding document which has been passed by referendum. It outlines the functions and objectives of MISU, indicates how goals should be achieved and outlines how the union is governed.

The following outlines how our representative structure works and the role which you, as an MIC student, have within this structure:

MISU Representative Structure



¹ MISU is the recognised Students' Union for MIC under the provisions of MIC Instrument of Governance

² The MISU constitution is available online at MISU.ie

A referendum is the ultimate decision-making device of MISU and the Union General Meeting (UGM) is the supreme governing body. The Union Council, which consists of class representatives, is the representative body of the students of MIC and determines the policy of the Union and mandates the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee (full-time and part-time officers) is responsible for implementing Union policy and managing the day-to-day leadership, advocacy and representational activities of MISU. The Executive Committee is elected by you to work for, support and listen to you, and work with college management to address issues affecting you during your time at MIC.

MISU's operations and commercial services (such as an Siopa) are overseen by a general manager supported by a team of dedicated staff. The MISU Management Advisory Board provides oversight for all aspects of the Union.

Student life has changed dramatically in recent decades with the student population having trebled. MIC is now a multi-campus institution with MIC Thurles having joined the community in 2016.

MISU has grown and evolved alongside the college during this time and the scope and scale of the work we do has increased significantly in recent years, and will continue to do so. It is important that we are in a strong position to meet these changes, deliver on our core values and ensure that student advocacy, support and representation is at the centre of what we do.

5. Our Mission, Vision, Values and Principles

5.1 *Our Mission*

Our mission is:

Giving you a voice,

helping you to use it.

Enriching your college experience.

All the activities and operations which are carried out by our class reps, officers and staff are guided by our mission statement as well as this strategic plan.

5.2 *Vision*

In implementing this strategic plan, our vision is to be a students' union that:

Continues to represent, support and advocate on your behalf;

Communicates effectively with you and for you;

Ensures your overall student experience is at the centre of college life;

Provides you with the required services;

Continues to be transparent and accountable in what we do and how we do it;

Is a dynamic, creative and responsive organisation; and

Continues to contribute to the MIC community.

5.3 Values and Principles

Our values and principles underpin what we do, how we do it and what we believe in:

Our Values

Welcoming
Empowering
Inclusive
Participative
Positive
Relevant
Supportive
Student-centered



Our Principles

Democratic
Accountable
Transparent
Professional
Pro Active
Fair & Equitable
Efficient & Effective

6. Our Strategic Priorities for 2020–2024

In this strategic plan we have set out our four high-level priorities to work on over the next four years.

These priorities are:

Representation, Advocacy and Leadership

Student Experience

Services

Structures and Systems

Each priority has a set of goals and a timeline by which they should be completed, and we have set out below how they will benefit you as a student.

These strategic priorities were identified through consultation with students, officers, MISU staff and relevant stakeholders. This consultation process included surveys, workshops and focus groups.

These priorities and goals will direct us in achieving our **Mission** and **Vision** while upholding our **Values** and **Principles**.

6.1 Representation, Advocacy and Leadership

MISU's officers and class reps will ensure that your voice is heard, your needs are met and your rights and entitlements are protected.

	Goals	By	What this means for you
1	Engage with college to ensure sustainable funding and support of MISU is protected by MIC	2020	<i>Your Union remains adequately resourced and properly valued by MIC.</i>
2	Campaign for the continued improvement and development of all MIC student support services.	Annually	<i>Support services offered by MIC meet your needs.</i>
3	Work in partnership with MIC to achieve common goals, while also holding the college to account for the achievement of its own strategic goals where they are about improving the student experience³.	Annually	<i>An enhanced student experience.</i>
4	Establish a system for engagement with external communities and stakeholders, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other students' unions and higher education institutions; • The local communities in Limerick and Thurles; • Elected representatives and state bodies; and • Other groupings when required. 	2020	<i>Your voice will be heard on a local, national and international level.</i>

³ Specifically, MIC strategy goals 2.3.2.L and 2.3.6.A

6.2 Student Experience

MISU will enrich your student life by offering and facilitating valuable opportunities.

	Goals	By	What this means for you
1	<p>Expand, update and document a communications strategy which addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How we listen to your views and opinions; • How we update you on relevant information relating to student life; and • How we promote and market our services and facilities. 	2021	<i>You will know the best way to communicate with us and we will be clear and consistent in how we deliver information to you.</i>
2	<p>Improve our services and the facilities available on the MIC Thurles campus to ensure there is equity of services across both campuses.</p>	2021	<i>You will have a range of services and facilities to meet your needs regardless of the campus you are based on.</i>
3	<p>Foster a welcoming and friendly environment for students in all MISU spaces.</p>	2020	<i>You will be welcome and your contribution valued.</i>
4	<p>Conduct a review of MISU clubs and socs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and overcome barriers to participation; and • Assess demand for a variety of extra-curricular activities. 	2023	<i>You will have a variety of clubs and socs led by students, which are easy to get involved in and open to everyone.</i>

6.3 Services

MISU will provide essential services which meet the needs of a diverse and growing student body.

	Goals	By	What this means for you
1	<p>Annually evaluate our academic, welfare and support services to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and consistency; • Student satisfaction; and • Timeliness of responses to student queries. 	Annually	<p><i>You will be provided with the best services possible</i></p>
2	<p>Annually evaluate our commercial services to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure quality and consistency; • Monitor usage and footfall; and • Improve customer satisfaction. 	Annually	
3	<p>Develop a sustainability plan for commercial services to ensure MISU is well placed to take advantage of opportunities and address challenges.</p>	2023	<p><i>You will have a Union that is planning for the future and ensuring that it will benefit future generations of MIC students.</i></p>
4	<p>Increase student use of the MISU lounges on both the Limerick and Thurles campuses and promote them as spaces for relaxation and entertainment.</p>	2020	<p><i>You will have a place on campus to take a break and chill out.</i></p>

6.4 Structures and Systems

MISU will work on its systems and structures to make the union efficient, effective and sustainable for the long-term future.

	Goals	By	What this means for you
1	<p>Establish an engagement strategy with the student body which addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who our members are; • What our members' needs are; • How we can engage with our members; and • How we can tailor and improve our services to encourage and support engagement. 	2023	<i>You will have a clear understanding of the ways in which you can get involved in and/or interact with MISU and it will be easier for you to do so.</i>
2	<p>Review the constitution and update our representative structures to make them simpler and more accessible.</p>	2021	<i>It will be easy for you to understand how your Union works and the ways in which you can be a part of it..</i>
3	<p>Document a performance management system for sabbatical officers which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and handover; • Communication protocols and standards; • Minimum standards for representation and leadership responsibilities; and • Policies and procedures for delivering advisory services. 	2021	<i>Your officers will have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to ensure that your Union provides professional and high-quality services year on year.</i>
4	<p>Document a performance management system for part-time officers which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction and training; • Roles and responsibilities; and • How MISU's systems and structures work. 	2022	
5	<p>Review and redefine the role of the class rep in MISU.</p>	2021	<i>The role of class rep will be enhanced and developed to make sure to give you a voice.</i>
6	<p>Review the overall achievement of this strategic plan and develop a successor strategy.</p>	2024	<i>Your Union will continue to develop.</i>

7. Implementing the Strategic Plan

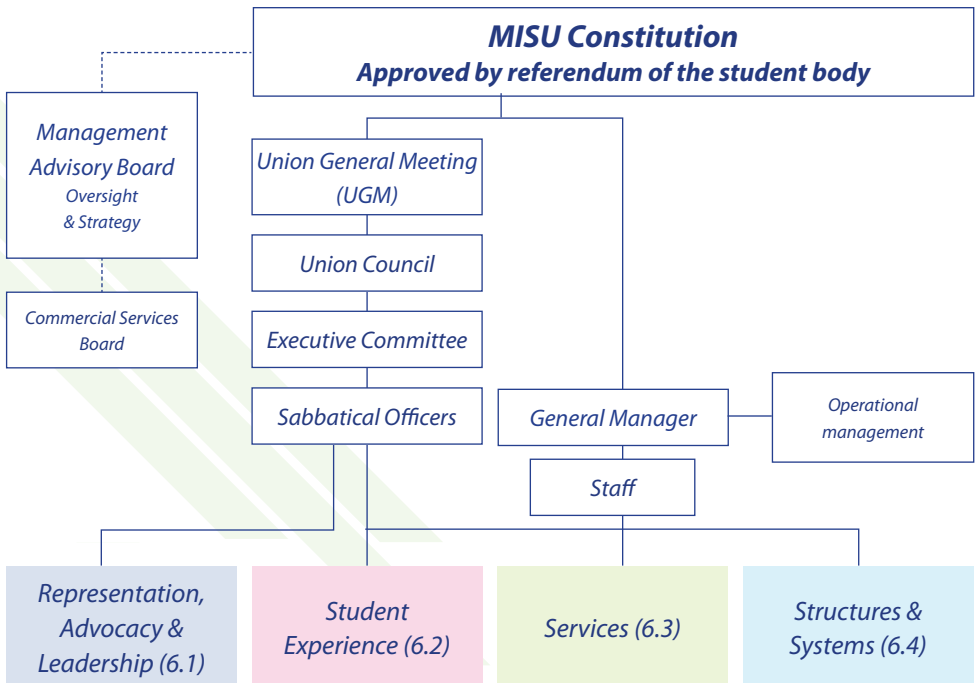
7.1 Implementation and Reporting

7.1.1 Overview

The Strategic Plan 2020–2024 is an overarching set of priorities and goals which provide a clear, long-term vision for how MISU should develop. It will run in parallel with the day-to-day operations of MISU, and it will be complemented and enhanced by the new ideas and objectives put forward by the new executive officer teams each year.

This strategy was adopted by a mandate of Union Council on 06.11.2019. The implementation of this strategy is the shared responsibility of the current and future executive officers, class reps and staff of MISU for the next four academic years. The executive officers will ultimately be accountable to Union Council for reporting on the progress in working towards the plan, and any changes to the goals and priorities.

The following diagram outlines the organisational structure of MISU within which delivery of the strategic plan will be overseen:



7.1.2 Union Council

Union Council, as the representative body of the students, must hold the executive officers accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to the implementation of the strategic plan. However, they must also be aware and accept that there may be obstacles for the officers in achieving these goals.

Overall, Union Council needs to be satisfied that the executive officers have operated in good faith to try and implement the plan even if some of the aims are not met.

The President will provide progress updates to Union Council for each of the goals, at the first and last meetings of the academic year.

7.1.3 The Management Advisory Board

The Management Advisory Board is responsible for strategic oversight within MISU. The General Manager and sabbatical officers will provide updates at each meeting of the Management Advisory Board on the implementation of this strategic plan.

The Management Advisory Board will provide **advice, guidance** and **challenge** to the officers and staff on how best to approach implementation of this strategic plan.

7.1.4 Operational Planning and Monitoring

The MISU General Manager will function as the programme manager for the priorities and goals within this strategic plan. This means that s/he will have overall responsibility for monitoring progress, assisting with day-to-day operational planning and project management of any initiatives directly linked to the delivery of the priorities and goals of this strategic plan.

This does not mean that the General Manager is responsible for delivering this strategic plan, but that s/he is responsible for ensuring that all of the officers and staff share these objectives and that there is continuity with and progress on the plan up to 2024.

7.2 Resources and Servicing the Strategy

Some of the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2020–2024 will be delivered within the existing resource base of MISU. However, additional funding will need to be sourced in order to deliver on others.

The General Manager, in conjunction with the President and in consultation with the Chair of the Management Advisory Board, will be responsible for sourcing and securing any additional funding which is required to deliver on any aspect of the strategic plan. The President will update Union Council accordingly.



