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29 March 2007

'Up to 100' TDs, Senators and election candidates - including the Party Leaders and Education Spokespersons from the Government and Opposition - will meet with Student Leaders in Dublin this morning and throughout the afternoon (Thursday 29th March).

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Lobby of the Oireachtas 2007 takes place at Buswells Hotel on Molesworth Street from 10am-8pm.

In one-to-one talks with Party Leaders, backbenchers and General Election candidates, students representing 50 colleges will press every political party to include a Manifesto Commitment to focus investment on Third Level education.

5 STAR Future, launched today, calls for all the Parties to prioritise action in 5 areas:

Student grants "Grants must be increased and the grants system reformed"

Treatments (38) healthcare "Promised medical and GP visit cards must be allocated"

Accommodation "A Taskforce must be established to review Student Accommodation"

Representation "Improved representation of students by students is critical: within colleges and on national education bodies"

Future minded investment "The infrastructure of colleges requires urgent investment"

USI President Colm Hamrogue said: "Politicians must remember that education of the people is greater than any one political ideology.

"The lobby gives politicians and candidates from all parties an opportunity to meet with Student Leaders drawn from all over the country.

"TDs are learning about the critical investment needs facing Third Level education, as seen through the eyes of the students who experience the effects of underfunding every day. Students see crumbling lecture theatres, understocked libraries, and campus health centres unable to cope with the level of demand.

"TDs and Senators will be asked to support USI as we call for every party to include a Manifesto Commitment setting out new additional investment for Third Level education with reference to 5 key areas. These areas are set out in the document we launch today, the 5 STAR Future agenda."

USI Education Officer Bernadette Farrell said: "Students want to know how the parties will tackle the lack of proper student representation, and the chaotic, unfair way of assessing grants.

"Students want specific pledges on missing medical cards, the absence of affordable student accommodation, and decaying college campuses.

## Irish Press Releases

“The social and economic arguments for raising public investment are overwhelming. Public investment in Ireland’s third level system must be increased to Nordic levels.

“We are saying that the next government of Ireland must ensure a 5 star future for colleges and students - today, tomorrow, for good.”

ENDS

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