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DIT: Students Union

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By Margaret Donnelly

FOUR out of five leaving certificate students rejected offers of diploma and certificate courses from DIT last year.

According to statistics released by the CAO last week, DIT made 10,728 offers of diploma/certificate courses to students but only 1,918 accepted the offer.

Last year DIT was the most popular choice for leaving certificate students with 7,875 listing it as their first degree choice last year. Diploma/certificate courses in DIT were also the most popular choice for students, with 14,175 students listing it as their first choice, it was almost twice as popular as IT Cork, who had the second highest amount of first preferences.

However, as an institute of technology, DIT suffers high drop out rates, with one third of students dropping out of all IT courses last year.

The institute has a take up rate for its degree courses of 47% against an average of 70% for other universities. Combining DIT's degree, diploma, and certificate courses, the Institute made 13,878 offers to students last year of which only 3,427 were accepted - a hit rate of 24%.

According to the DIT Admissions Office, it made more than 10,000 offers of diploma/certificate courses to students last year because working from statistics over the last number of years it has to make this number to fill its places.

Margaret Nicholl works in the admissions office. "We very rarely fill our quota on the first round of offers so if we are forced to make a lot of offers in the knowledge that people will not always take the offer." 

The admissions officer added that for a variety of reasons DIT is a very popular first preference choice for leaving cert students.

"We have a huge variety of courses on offer - 33 degree and 43 diploma/certificate - and we have the largest student body of any college in the country."

"On top of that we have a good rapport with secondary schools all over the country. If a schools asks us to come and talk to their students about our courses we will send a representative to the school.

"We also pride ourselves on our open day, on January 22 we hold an open day of all campuses in Bolton St where we are expecting to have our usual number of 4,000 prospective students," added Nicholl.

Meanwhile a report in the Irish Independent on Monday, January 10th, said that "DIT has emerged as the most sought after college among Leaving Certificate students."

The report claimed that "confidential CAO figures show that last year it topped the first preference league tables for both degree and diploma/certificate courses."

Last year DIT had the highest number of first preferences for degree courses - a total of 7,875 for 1,500 places.

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By Samatha Rowntree

A DIT student has been gunned down while on holiday in Mexico. Eoghan Cranley, a final year environmental design student in Mountjoy Square, who was murdered on a beach on January 11.

The Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed to the DIT Independent that he was shot in an apparent mugging while out walking on a beach in Acapulco on Tuesday evening, January 11th.

Eoghan was invited to stay with family friends in Mexico and had travelled there for a millennium holiday. He had worked during the summer to pay for the trip. He had been sending his mother emails and was said to have been in top spirits.

He had gone bungee-jumping last week. His Father, Eugene Cranley, the former president of the Society of the Irish Motor Industry, said he was "devastated" with the news. "He loved water sports and skiing and went down to the beach regularly. He was an accomplished artist and big into aesthetics and the creative designer with a distinctive and original approach to his work."

Eoghan was a very promising life has been cut short in this way," he added.

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Eoghan Cranley redesigned the restaurant in South Great George's Street environment was right up his alley.

The 24-year-old had previously redesigned the Marx Bros restaurant in Dublin's South Great George's Street. He was an airy type of fellow," said Mr Cranley.

In a statement to the DIT Independent John O'Connor, Head of the School of Art and Design at Mountjoy Square, said staff and students of the School of Art and Design were deeply shocked by the murder.

"Eoghan was a very creative designer with a distinctive and original approach to his work."

"He had a lively personality and was well known and liked in the school. It is a tragedy that such a promising life has been cut short in this manner," he added.

Sarah McGovern, President of DITSU, said she was saddened with the news. "Eoghan's death is a great loss to the Institute and at this time all our sympathy and thoughts are with his family and friends"
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DIT Bolton Street students can contact us at e-mail: mbrownedit@eircom.net

Terms and conditions apply
Disability policy launched

By Dermot Keyes

A NEW POLICY for DIT students with disabilities was launched in Angler Street on December 2, and according to the Institute was the result of two years work conducted by their Disability Committee.

The policy was formally launched in Angler Street on the initiative of Cllr Mary Freehill, the DIT's Disability Officer and Cllr Mary Freehill, addressing the gathering of Institute officials, as well as past and present students, the new policy as a fresh approach in the Institute's responsibilities towards students with disabilities.

The new document, she said, "aims to give coherent form to the development of policies for students with disabilities and to provide a basis for further improvement to the changing needs of the Disability Committee." was founded in May 1996, and examined areas such as accessibility of the Institute's sites to disabled students. With more than 90 students with disabilities currently studying in DIT and most of the sites built long before Government regulations required facilities such as wheelchair accessibility, the Committee chairperson Susan Lindsay knew that improvements were required.

The Committee's terms of reference from 1996 to 1999 involved "identifying methods of good practice in other third level institutions", as well as the examination and facilities that were currently available within DIT and the development of a policy on disability.

After further examination, the Committee reviewed and extended its terms to include five other areas, the most notable being a development of examination policy as well as an attempt to heighten disability awareness amongst both staff and students. The policy states that "the Institute is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities are not disadvantaged in examinations."

The Committee admits that "the age and design of some of its buildings presents a number of constraints to disabled students." A recent survey of the DIT sites was undertaken and according to the policy, "a programme of work has commenced to adopt the main buildings, which are in accessible to the blind," not use such alt texts are inaccessible to the blind.

"There exists however an alternative test, which can be called into the main helmet at the design stage. This is a text based command, which tells the screen reader that the Institute is completely accessible to all students with disabilities, and added the disability policy committee's recommendation.

A spokesperson for the disability committee chairperson Susan Lindsay knew that improvements were required.

For disabled students seeking accommodation, the Institute will provide a list of student flats and digs with various amenities, such as lifts and wheelchair accessible bathroom.

Scanning devices, closed circuit television and magnifying software as well as a software package for students with dyslexia is promised. Providing assistance to students with learning difficulties.

Enlarged photocopying, taped lectures, braille text as well as the transcription of lecture notes are other learning based features of the new policy. A chief source of learning and research is of course the library and each such DIT library is to be made aware of special needs or requirements.

Specially adapted electronic equipment is to be installed in a number of libraries.

The role of the Disability Liaison Officer to the success of the new policy is vital, As the main contact for students and advised, they are the policy states "to contact the disability liaisons officer in the first time (or commencing students) to discuss in the OIT or for support services they may need during their course of study."

The Liaison Officer's role includes the co-ordination of specific educational supports such as notes in braille, and so to the sending of applications to the Department of Education's special fund for students with disabilities. Not to be undone, the Students Union is drafting a policy on disability which it hopes will ensure that students may participate fully to all aspects of life in the Union.

With both documents published, the way forward for students with disabilities at DIT is to appear to be greatly enhanced. Three years of work by the Disability Committee should hopefully result in improved facilities and services for the disabled students in DIT.

Funding for projects

THE Higher Education Authority has announced a £10 million programme for research in third level institutions for the coming three years.

The second cycle of this programme will run from the end of last term and if the Government goes for the chance of securing funding, a proposal is due before the end of the current academic year.

Proposals from individual departments are currently being drafted and are to be discussed at a special meeting of the OIT Academic Affairs Committee on January 28.

According to its organisers, the HEA programme is designed to encourage institutional development and co-operation. The HEA also say the programme is an extension of the programme from 1996, which provided clear evidence of the project contributing substantially to the advancement of teaching at undergraduate and post graduate level. "In relation to these later two criteria, this project will be added to the list of proposals to be considered in the second cycle."

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Survey of lecturers

By Margaret Donnelly

Education Correspondent

DITSU are to conduct a survey on the standards of lecturing standards despite TUI objections to the proposal.

DIT set up a Quality Assurance Committee in 1992 (under the DIT Act of 1992), for maintaining, and enhancing academic standards, and quality in all courses. This committee was started to assure lecturing standards in the Institute.

The Institute has proposed surveys of this type in the past but the issue was rejected by union leaders. In response to this DITSU are to run a survey themselves.

Sarah McGovern, explained to the DIT Independent that “the aim of the survey, and its findings, is not a get pregnant fired but to let lecturers know what the students think of them and to get areas improved.”

However, Eddie Conlon, Dublin Colleges representative on the executive committee of the TUI has said that his union knew nothing about the survey. “We are currently in the advanced stages of negotiations with DIT,” he said.

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management on the issue of quality assurance,” said the union representative.

He added TUI are in favour of a quality assurance procedure and agreement on the issue very close. He was unable to comment on any knock on effects a student union survey would have on these negotiations.

Meanwhile, the DIT Independent understands that a similar survey to that of the students’ union may also be carried out by lecturers.

The Q6 form will ask students to rate lecturers on a number of issues, such as punctuality and method of teaching, under the guidelines of unacceptable, acceptable, good, and very good.

Also under scrutiny will be content of syllabi, the balance between theory and practical work, time allocation to different course elements, administration of course, integration of course components, integration of subject into overall course and the resources available to students such as lecture/tutorial rooms, library facilities, laboratories and equipment (range and quality).

Students all over DIT can expect to see posters in their colleges explaining what is happening. The following week class reps will be issued with forms to hand out to each student after each class asking them to fill them out on the performance of each lecturer.

Lecturers will be assessed by students on a number of issues such as presentation of the lecture, standard of delivery, punctuality, tutorials, project work, effectiveness of communication, methods of teaching, handling of questions/discussions, and use visual aids.

The students will also be given the chance to add their own comments to the form. Courses will also come under scrutiny with students being asked to list the good and weak features of their course. DITSU has still to decide to whom the reports will be given but it is believed that the heads of courses will receive copies of the reports.

New student website

A NEW web site aimed solely at the student market has gone online. The website, Flunknet (www.flunk.net), in a special agreement between the DIT Independent and its webmasters, will also include the DIT Independent online.

According to Flunknet’s Olivia Morohan, the site aims to provide students with up to date relevant news and as well as a host of other features including chatrooms, bulletin boards, classified ads and free email.

The site also has a comprehensive entertainment section, and will include the latest on clubs and gigs in Dublin, as well as other cities nationwide. The site also includes a student’s link database, according to the site “is filled with student survival information, everything from finance to food, sex to accommodation”.

Chef to compete in major competition

By Margaret Donnelly

A STUDENT chef is Cathal Brugha Street is to represent the college in a major national cooking competition.

Jonathan Adarson will face competition from 12 colleges to win the final of the Knorr Student Chef of the Year. The competition is on February 23 in the Waterford Institute of Technology. He has been studying Professional Cookery in Cathal Brugha Street for the past two years and was chosen from 30 entries to represent the DIT.

The student had submitted a written recipe for a full meal, including a starter and desert, and describe the methods of making each meal. DIT has yet to win the competition. Waterford Institute of Technology have won the award twice, and Cork and Galway/Mayo ITs have taken one award each.

This year students will receive an all expenses trip to the culinary deserts, taking place this September in Berlin. “The winner will be able to see at first hand the competition and will also have the opportunity to cook with the Irish team.”
Part time fees may be abolished

By Margaret Donnelly, Education Correspondent

THE Government is to consider the abolition of part-time fees following recommendations from its Commission on the Points System. The Commission's report recommended the abolition of part-time fees saying that everyone should have access to the same financial support whether on a full-time or part-time basis.

The report also recommended that there should be more scope for transfer and progression, particularly to degree level, from national certificate and diploma courses.

The Union of Students in Ireland has welcomed the report, brought out on December 8, and says that such a move is necessary to ensure a highly skilled labour force and the continuation of current economic prosperity.

Philip Madden, Present of USI, said "our current prosperity is largely a result of our highly educated work force."

However to keep Ireland competitive in the 21st century we have to give people every incentive to continually re-skill to meet changing needs.

According to Ian Russell, Education Officer with USI, the abolition of part-time fees for part-time courses is not a new thing.

"It was recommended by the de Buitre Committee on Student Financial Support in 1993 and these recommendations must be implemented now."

The final report stated: "The Commission on the Points System considers that a person who did not enter third-level education on leaving school should have access to the same financial support as a school leaver, if he wishes to enter third-level education later in life, whether that be on a full-time or on a part-time basis."

Mountjoy Sq student wins marketing award

FIONNULA Daly, who graduated with a degree in administration marketing in December, has won a top award for her analysis of a market case study.

The award, an engraved Waterford Crystal Bowl, was presented by the National Field Marketing Manager of Lites Marketing Group, Aidan Connelly. "We are delighted to be involved in these awards."

The standard of these analyses continues to rise every year and it is great to know that new marketers are entering the work place with such a strong academic understanding of the industry," said the manager.

The competition, which in its first year, is open to final year marketing students in Mountjoy Square. According to a Lites spokesperson, the competition was started to recognize the close relationship the company have with both the college and its graduates.

The award is part of our ongoing programme of co-operation with the Marketing Faculty in DIT, added the spokesperson.

Film student scoops top award

A FILM student has won a major national film award for work carried out as a student in DIT. Deirdre Lynch has won the 1999 Jesuit Film and Video Competition in the documentary category with 'Salt of the Earth'.

Deirdre ordered a revealing portrait of life in terenuret Dublin during the 1930’s, 40’s, and 50’s and was given a public screening last year in the Irish Film Centre.

The major national film and video award attracts entries from over 20 third level institutions and is sponsored by Independent Newspapers with promotions from the broadcast and print media advertising.

Deirdre made the film as part of her course work for the Certificate in Media Production and is now studying Communications in Aungier Street.

DIT play on Irish team in world skills competition

By Ray Foley

A TEAM of competitors who were chosen to represent Ireland in the 35th World Skills Competition in Montreal is made up mainly of lecturing staff from DIT.

The team, which also features experts trained in other colleges including Athlone IT, Sligo IT, Galway/Mayo IT and NCAD is 18-strong, nine of whom were chosen from the ranks of DIT to represent their country at the internationally renowned competition.

The Irish team was awarded two gold medals, two silver and three bronze, and was placed third in the competition just pipped by Chinese Taipei (Taiwan) in second, and Austria who came in first place.

The previous best of the Irish was finishing in sixth place in 1997. The winners of the two gold medals were John Gallashe for his skills in brickwork and Rita Dempsey for waiting (food and beverage), both from DIT.

The other skills the Irish featured in were fitting, carpentry, industrial electronics, CNC milling, and graphic design.

The performance of the competitors this year is the highest ever achieved, and DITSU Overall President, Sarah Mc Govern, was suitably delighted by the achievements of the DIT representatives.

Expressing her congratulations to the team, Mc Govern said: "I'm very proud that there were so many successful participants from DIT, and it shows how capable the Institute is in producing quality awards and training courses."

She went on to say that "there is a huge pool of untapped potential in the rest of the Institute."

Minister for Education & Science Micheal Martin also congratulated the team success and praised their ability to compete with the best other nations have to offer.

On the achievement of the group the Minister said "Ireland can be justifiably proud of this year's tremendous achievements winning two gold, two silver and three bronze medals and eight diplomas of excellence."

Bolton St to host major conference

By Samantha Rowntree

The incredible contribution of architecture to the world's environmental and educational needs will be examined at an international architectural education conference hosted by Bolton Street on February 11th and 12th.

The main theme of this conference, to be held in Bolton Street, is to tackle the future direction of architectural education in the 21st century.

The future for architecture is uncertain as it's being viewed by society as a form of art.

Ironically, says the organisers, this is happening at a time when there's a need for innovative research and design in the field to solve environmental problems and develop new products.

The conference will ask how architects can contribute to the plans for change. It will also question their influence on forces such as business and politics.

There will be presentations from keynote speakers representing international institutes.

They include Professor Juhani Kallio from Finland and Professor Edward Robbins from Harvard University.

The conference is the culmination of a week of events in the School of Architecture.

Students of the School will be involved in group work around Dublin City from February 7.

There will be an open critique of student's work resulting in a prize giving ceremony on February 11th.

Careers office to hold jobs day for retail students

The DIT careers office are hosting a careers day for retail students in Mountjoy Square on February 2nd.

The School of Retail and Services Management have collaborated with the careers office to put on the event, from 10am to 12.30pm on the day.

According to Carol Kelehan, careers advisor for the School, "Ireland and UK retailers will be well represented in the careers office on the day."

"These retailers will seek applications from certificate and degree students as well as management trainees in their stores."

The event is open to all retail students and is free across DIT faculties.

"Anyone with an interest in retail management is encouraged to attend with their CVs," concluded Kelehan.
Students visit European Parliament

A GROUP of journalism students from Aungier St took part in the first ever official visit by the School of Media to the European Parliament.

The group, headed by senior lecturer in journalism and former Irish Times Media Correspondent, Michael Foley, visited the Strasbourg plenary session of the Parliament during December 13 to 16 last.

MEP Mary Banotti hosted the tour and gave oral presentations on the work of the Parliament and her own work on education and child welfare issues in the European Union, as well as her work within the EPP Group.

She also organised briefings on parliamentary operation from Avril Doyle and John Cushnahan, both MEPs, Banotti also hosted an official lunch for the tour.

The DIT group also had briefings on the partnership between the Parliament and Ireland from Jim O'Brien, who heads the European Parliament Office in Dublin as well as Examiner European Editor, Mark Hennessy who spoke about the work of a journalist in Europe.

The journalism students also visited the European Court of Human Rights, and were met by the most senior Irish member of the judiciary in Strasbourg, Mr Justice John Hedigan, who sits as Ireland’s representative on the Court.

He spoke about the change in international relations within Europe and the effect the court has had on the lives of millions of Europeans.

The 15 students represented both undergraduate and post graduate students in journalism.

The group also included lecturer in Journalism at the Institute, David Quin.

The group of journalism students who took part in the first visit of the school of media to the European Parliament

Who says size doesn’t matter?

THE Students’ Union in Aungier Street have moved their now regular Wednesday night out to Club Mono, formerly the Mean Fiddler.

Alan Coleman, Deputy President at the site said the move was taken because of the results of a student survey conducted by the SU, which overwhelmingly supported a change from the old venue, the Palace nightclub. “Students have become bored of Planet Murphy’s and would rather go somewhere else exclusive to Aungier Street,” added the sabbatical officer.

Coleman said that students could expect free admission to the club on Wednesday nights and also added that special promotions including £2 a pint or shot, £1.50 for Bacardi Breezers and Aftershock, £2.25 for Bacardi Breezers and Bacardi Ringo have been added to help make the transition a success.

D’Aungier zone moves

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D’Aungier Zone was first started in 1995 by the then site president, Siobhan Weeks. It was originally held in Sorohan’s, which is now under new management.

The move to Planet Murphy’s was made by last year’s President, Dan Pender. Kevin Street will continue to hold their night out in Planet Murphy’s.

Reports of the latest news and events

Students need a campus, to call home

Opinion by Thomas Felle

I remember travelling to Belfast for a USI national Council Meeting around Halloween in 1997. It was my first time in the then troubled city, although ceasefire had been called, the gun and the bomb were still decisive parts of Northern Irish politics.

After settling into a hostel on the Lisburn Road, the next port of call was Queens University, a towering period building in the heartland of the city. Off campus, but not far from there lay the Queen’s student centre, a building completely run by the students union in the university.

Modern architecture it was not, and, from the outside at least, it wasn’t anything special. But once inside, you had a feeling there was something special about the place.

Apart from the obvious benefit of two bars, a club and a sizable lounge, the centre also included services for the students’ union executive, a board room for meetings, general administration and meeting rooms for students who needed a travel stable stamp or the postcard card just wanted a chat with an officer because their rent was late and they didn’t know what to do about it. The student centre also contained a laundry, a small grocery shop and a news agents.

It was nothing special, but it was something special for Queen’s students. It was a place they could go on a Monday evening to dry their laundry, a place they could have a drink in at a reasonable price (£1 a pint when there’s a promotion on), a place where they could congregate and not feel like they were alone.

DIT students have never had it so good. Students’ union officers work hard, and the back up and supports staff also ensure on an ongoing basis that the interests of students come first.

But we have never had a ‘student centre’. For those of us old enough to remember the USI bar in Temple Bar, city centre students at least had somewhere to go and meet other students without being charged exorbitant charges and inflated prices for a drink.

The Purse was never anything special, but it was a home from home for many students. At the Purse they wanted to be somewhere instead of their dump bed sit on a cold October night in their first year in college.

With the centralisation of the Institute’s headquarters comes a lot more room, 65 bars if it fact.

A student centre is surely the least students deserve.

A special centre will give DIT students a place to go to, where they can at the very least expect to meet some of their class mates, and hopefully meet other people in a student friendly environment, something that the city’s clubs are quietly turning out not to be.

Accommodation burning issue for everybody in Dublin, could also be tackled with the development of an apartment complex, with single rooms built to student needs.

Six foot square beds sit in Rooms, quite well until it starts to rain.

Such accommodation could hardly be called with little capital investment through public private partnership as much as the Corn Village in Galway.

Prices may not decrease substantially from that of the Ranelagh bed sits, but size, security and availability may vary.

Even on a purely academic point, the DIT library does need to be centralised.

A central location where the majority of published material is available and it could be opened in line with student needs would undoubtedly benefit students.

Worries about intruders would no longer be an issue on a campus, as it has been in the past when talk of longer opening hours around exam times was mentioned.

But there are far more important reasons why DIT needs a campus.

Last week’s the announcement that the national centre for the performing arts was to be located in Dublin City University was of course good news for DCU.

After the successes of Michelle de Biran at the last Olympics, calls for an International standard 50m swimming pool were echoed around sports circles and at the Department of Tourism and Sport, Appledore in DCU was seen as a possible location for this.

Now that DIT has a modern facility to house a head quarters, there are no reason why it cannot bid for such national amenities.

It benefits everybody.

Staying on the sporting front, a full sporting complex would clearly benefit everyone involved and hopefully improve performance and hopefully put on display the fit and healthy image of the city.

The familiar chant that the city is our campus really doesn’t wash anymore.

We need facilities here, and it is not unreasonable to expect same.
As long as I could remember, I had always dreamed of seeing the cities of Europe. So when I finally escaped the confines of school and made it to Stuttgart, I decided to spend my first summer in a student paradise. A land where cheap drink flowed and pubs stayed open 'til three. A land where beer had practically been invented.

Much to my parents' dismay, I booked a one-way ticket and catching my German phrase book, set off alone to the promise of a job in some remote Bavarian village. But as the plane touched down at nightfall in Stuttgart, panic set in. The sudden realisation that I really had no idea where I was or what I was doing, made me curvish my travelogues.

As I stood miserably by the baggage reclaim, a bored suit checked by and was picked up by a gruff, bearded, Ronnie Drew lookalike. I recognised him as one of the loud-mouthed Dubs who had sat behind me on the flight over, chatting up the cabin crew. Nothing my warped expression, he offered to help. Two hours later, I was sitting in O'Reilly's, an Irish pub in west Stuttgart, listening to Finbarr and his boisterous and toasting my good fortune at having found other Irish expatriates.

Found the hotel I was to work in, nestled between sloping forests and a rushing river. My boss, a terrifying man in lederhosen, showed me to a cellared room. Dimmed at this darkened place I was to call home, I sobbed myself with thoughts of a looking better in the morning.

For the first two hours, I was sitting in O'Reilly's, an Irish pub in west Stuttgart, listening to Finbarr and his boisterous and toasting my good fortune at having found other Irish expatriates.

The early evening sun gave the city a honeyed glow as we gathered on the steps of the Kingsbaur, a magnificent building supported by columns. The sudden realisation that I really had no idea where I was or what I was doing, made me curvish my travelogues.

The following day, after having sampled a little too much of the local beer, I wobbled off again at my bedtime to the summer job in the Bavarian Alps. With a little regret, I left the picturesque city of Stuttgart and my newfound friends, and took the three-hour train journey to my Heidi-like home for the summer. The trained trundled through breath-taking forests and mountain scenery and I constantly had to suppress the urge to yodel!

Obertsdorf, the village I was to work in, was spectacular. Jagged, snow-capped mountains encased this idyllic town. Cowbells sounded in the surrounding fields and cable cars inch ed slowly skywards. No traffic. No beeping horns. No noise. But unfortunately that also meant no people. It looked like it could be a long four months.

Refusing to give in so easily, I found the hotel I was to work in, nestled between sloping forests and a rushing river. My boss, a terrifying man in lederhosen, showed me to a cellared room. Dimmed at this darkened place I was to call home, I sobbed myself with thoughts of a looking better in the morning.

It didn't. In fact, it got progressively worse. The work was horrendous. My title as 'general assistant' would have been more accurately termed had it been 'general dogshack'; I stuck it out for two days but I knew this remote life was not for me. I longed for the city. Noise, cars, shops. Suits on lunch and buskers singing. I picked up my unpacked bags and got the next train out of there.

Stuttgart welcomed me back. Deep in a valley and surrounded by hills and forests, the city is a prosperous centre of both industry and culture. Stuttgart is famous for its Mercedes Benz and I was suitably impressed to see many examples being driven through the city's sunny streets.

Even the Hauphabetl, the bustling train station, sported an enormous Merc silver logo. Little did the car giants realise that it would become one of the most significant elements of my trip. A guiding star on nights out, as the beer flowed we joined in the singing and dancing.

Stuttgart has an exciting nightlife which you can be assured I took part in. The biggest and best known club in town is 'Perkins Park'. With two huge dance floors, it played a good mix from techno to rock 'n' roll. However, my favourite club was 'Klim Bim'.

It lacked the style of 'Perkins Park' and with the ageing DJ sporting a dodgy Bon Jovi haircut, it's not for dedicated clubber. But with my flat across the street and the Irish pub next door, what more could a student have asked for?

Germany is renowned for its efficient transport system and visitors should defiantly use this to their advantage and explore as much of the neighbouring towns and villages as possible. Tübingen and Heidelberg are laid-back university towns. A short twenty-minute train ride will take you there and the wide variety of great pubs and restaurants will keep you entertained. Disney-based his fairy-tale castles on the one in Heidelberg and it's a must see.

The great thing about mainland Europe is you can take a day trip to almost any other European country for next to nothing. For £50 return, I flew to Amsterdam and explored the infamous city on the banks of the Amsterdam.

As impressive as Amsterdam is though, Stuttgart had captivated me. Thoughts of the balmy summer evenings spent among friends, drinking the local beer warmed my winters. So for all you travel lovers out there, if you are considering Germany as your travel destination this summer, consider Stuttgart.
For all your financial needs, please contact your local student officers.

Julie Martin - DIT Kevin Street and Aungier Street

Ciara Toomey - DIT Mountjoy Square, Cathal Brugha Street and Bolton Street

Opening Hours

DIT Kevin Street: 10am - 12.30am daily
DIT Aungier Street: 1.30pm - 3.30pm daily
DIT Mountjoy Square: 3.00pm - 4.00pm (Monday)
                        10.30am - 11.30am (Tuesday)

DIT Cathal Brugha Street: 2.15pm - 3.30pm (Thursday)

DIT Bolton Street: 9.30am - 11.45am and 1-2pm
                  (Monday, Wednesday and Friday)
                  1.00am - 3.30 (Tuesday)
                  9.30am - 12.45pm (Tuesday)
Enjoying The Beach

Jamie Hannigan reviews the latest movie releases

THE BEACH

I'm not really a fan of Leonardo Di Caprio, you should know that before you read on. He always seemed to me like a guy who was a technically brilliant, but who was always just Leonardo Di Caprio you never believed for a second that he was anything other than an actor. In The Beach, the fourth film from the writer/director/producer team behind Trainspotting, Di Caprio plays Richard, an American backpacker with a taste for something a little off the tourist trail.

Whilst spending the night in a seedy Bangok hotel, he meets Daffy, (Robert Carlyle) a paranoid fellow traveller, who gives him a map to an island "a place where he'll find the perfect beach," a place unsullied by tourists, which Richard naturally sets off to find. On paper, it can't fail: beautiful locations, beautiful people, sex, violence, and for the ladies, a buff (and mostly half-naked) Di Caprio. There are problems and the romantic subplot-never really kicks in, and we're never satisfactorily told just why Richard starts going all Apocalypse Now in the second half.

These are minor quibbles, however. Boyle's inventive visual flair lives up the extremely straightforward story, while Di Caprio is wonderfully refreshing and trying to win any awards but straight forward story, while Di Caprio is wonderfully refreshing and not trying to win any awards but

Patricia Arquette as Frankie Paige in Stigmata

End of Days, he was the devil incarnate, in Stigmata, he's a priest-scientist investigating alleged miracles for the Catholic Church. Frankie Paige (Patricia Arquette) is a Pittsburgh hairdresser, a hard drinking, hard-shagging slacker chick who also happens to be an atheist.

This makes it all the more strange when she starts showing the signs of stigma and the wounds Christ supposedly limited to the extremely religious.

Byrne is dispatched by the Vatican to investigate, and general waxiness ensues. Whatever the two films may look like, this is not the next Exorcist. Despite the violent flash-on sequences when Frankie starts experiencing the stigma, there is little or no tension. Byrne and Arquette are good, but you don't get a chance to know them and the camera jerks about like a demented NYPD wannabe while the editing makes Con Air seem sedate.

BRINGING OUT THE DEAD

If you see one film this year, you should get out more. But if you are the unsociable type and can only spare cash for one cinema ticket, you could do worse than checking out Bringing Out The Dead, the latest from the writing/directing team of Martin Scorsese and Paul Schrader, who brought us the classic Taxi Driver over twenty years ago.

Like that film, Bringing Out The Dead's central character is a tortured loner whose job involves driving around the main streets of New York city. But whereas Taxi Driver's Travis Bickle ended up killing people, Frank Pierce (Nicholas Cage) is an ambulance driver, haunted by visions of people he failed to save. Set over three hellish nights and two days, the film follows Frank's increasingly hallucinogenic grip on reality. This doesn't sound like a whole barrel of laughs, but there is humour. It may be black-as-hell gargary humour, but it's funny nonetheless.

If you want mindless fun, try End Of Days. If you want to leave the cinema feeling like Martin Scorsese has dragged you around in an ambulance for two hours (and I mean this in the best possible way) then see Bringing Out The Dead above all else.

STIGMATA

Two things will ring through your ears start bleeding. The second

Leonardo di Caprio in The Beach and right: Mathew Broderick is Inspector Gadget

The film is ingeniously split into three versions of the same story and deserves to find 100,000DM (as lot, apparently) and get it to Herbie Goes Bananas (Depp), an idealistic policeman in 18th New York whose unorthodox scientific methods lead to him being assigned to investigate a number of mysterious deaths in the remote town of Sleepy Hollow. The catch is that the victims were all decapitated, and the locals blame the legendary Headless Horseman. As the sceptical Crane delves further into a logical motive behind the killings, he finds himself drawn to the mysterious Katrina Van Tassel (Christina Ricci), daughter of one of his chief suspects.

In addition to being an exhilarating homage to the old Hammer horror films, Sleepy Hollow also features a three-way sword fight to rival the climax of The Phantom Menace. And what more could you want than that?

SLEEPY HOLLOW

Tan Burton and Johnny Depp had a lot to live up to. Their previous collaborations - biopic Ed Wood and the fairytale Edward Scissorhands were lauded with both critical and public acclaim, and much was hoped for their latest, Sleepy Hollow.

Well, not to belabour a fine point, but this film is absolutely terrific and deserves to be seen on nothing less than the biggest screen you can find.

Burton's trademark visual style have never been used as well before, while the story is scripted from the original Washington Irving story by Se7en writer Andrew Kevin Walker

The story finds Ichabod Crane (Depp), an idealistic policeman in 18th New York whose unorthodox scientific methods lead to him being assigned to investigate a number of
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The Independent looks at the effects of

When eating is a problem

By Jenni Duggan

It has been estimated that approximately one in five Irish people between the ages of 15 and 30 will suffer from an eating disorder at some stage in their lives.

Most of those who suffer will make a spontaneous and full recovery, however there are also many sufferers who will be more affected and require intensive treatment programmes. Despite an increase in cases, there is still a stigma surrounding eating disorders. Like depression, and other psychological disorders, people are not keen to admit their disorder and often feel ashamed of their condition.

Eating disorders are only symptoms of something deeper that is going wrong. For those suffering from an eating disorder controlling their bodies and their food intake is a way of feeling in control when they feel there is little else they are in control of in their lives. Often with eating disorders, there is dissatisfaction with their bodies, which is often due to low self-esteem.

In western society only slim figured people are considered to be beautiful. There is a perception that fat people are stupid and ugly. Many jokes are made about fat people and this is evidence of this perception. Everyone we are bombarded with images of thin 'beautiful' people in magazines and on television. Teenagers are particularly aware of this and make up a large percentage of those who suffer from eating disorders.

There are many of magazines aimed at this age group which feature adverts and fashion pages with good looking slim models. Is little wonder with all these images there are some people who are completely dissatisfied with their body shape and size.

Dieting is widespread in our culture and it is estimated that approximately 70 per cent of women between the ages of 25 and 54 will admit to being on a diet at some stage in their lives. Every time we turn on the television or open a magazine or newspaper there are adverts about new ways of dieting and features about how to keep our weight down. Due to this obsession with dieting and image, it is not always easy to detect when someone has a problem.

Possibly the most well known eating disorder is anorexia nervosa. Sufferers of this disorder will under eat, often to the point of starvation.

The main symptom is an obsession with food and body weight. Losing weight is the number one aim and due to a distorted body image, those suffering from this disorder perceive themselves as being fat even though in reality they are often dangerously thin. This disorder is most likely to occur at times of stress or unhappiness. Those suffering from anorexia are usually very lonely and tend to isolate themselves and withdraw from social contact.

A similar eating disorder is bulimia. The main symptom of this disorder is repeated episodes of compulsive binge eating often with self induced vomiting and laxative abuse.

This disorder can be quite difficult to detect as sufferers can be very secretive about their condition. Many sufferers never seek professional advice and often only when they become medically at risk that their disorder comes to light. While eating disorders are more common in females, the number of reported male sufferers has increased greatly over the past few years.

Many sufferers never seek professional advice and often it is only when they become medically at risk that their disorder comes to light. While eating disorders are caused by psychological factors they lead to physical problems which can become extremely serious. It is important therefore that a person who suffers from an eating disorder gets professional help.

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The causes of eating disorders are hard to pin down. Lack of self-esteem, family problems, emotional problems, personal insecurity, and abuse are the most common reasons someone exhibits some signs of disorder. But even harder to pin-down are the reasons why people, especially teenage girls, develop an eating disorder. According to Carmel Smith of Weight Watchers Ireland, Christmas is a very dangerous time of the year for people trying to lose weight.

There is so much food and drink around, and people tend to eat a lot of fast food after parties as well. We try to encourage people to keep up regular exercise throughout Christmas, and in that respect, treat it like any other time of the year.

That sounds easier said than done, as most people view Christmas as a time of indulgence, and remembering to keep up daily power-walking is put to one side. But Weight Watchers is, in a way, like a social centre in itself.

"We are, essentially, a support system," explained Carmel. "We hold meetings every week, where we encourage people not to think about weight loss. Losing weight is basically about changing what you do, and if you are going to make changes, you have to be happy with them.

The Weight Watchers policy is based on a fairly simple points system. Every food is valued, and members are allotted a certain amount of points everyday. This way you can still eat your favourite food, as long as you don't exceed the daily allocation of points. Members are encouraged to read labels, and the purchase of products don't display sufficient nutritional information on their labels is not recommended.

Since the points system was introduced, the age profile of members has increased. The average age of subscribers is now between 18 and 45 years.

Olivia Kelly, a 23 year old student in DIT Aungier street, has recently joined Weight Watchers.

"I try every year that I will try and eat more healthily, but I generally never get round to it. But this year I was feeling especially fat so I went along to Weight Watchers to try and feel better about myself."

Olivea admitted she approached the experience with a sense of dread, but was pleasantly surprised. "I was expecting everyone to be massive, but they weren't. It's kind of like AA in a way. I thought a lot of people would be there for a quick fix, but there are people who have been going for years, it's just to have it as a sort of support group."

Initial subscription fees to Weight Watchers are £6, and that covers the cost of the first class as well. Classes after that cost £7.90 a week and last an hour. Members record their weight on a weekly basis. "I think it's fantastic value", Olivia said, "I think how much you'd have to spend to join a gym for a month. At least with this you have a group to encourage you."

"It’s hardly surprising, therefore, that more people join Weight Watchers in January than in any other month. According to Carmel Smith of Weight Watchers Iceland, Christmas is a very dangerous time of the year for people trying to lose weight."

Mary O'Neill has some healthy advice

Mary O'Neill is a Weight Watchers member and has some healthy advice for students as they begin to think about eating disorders. According to the Weight Watchers members, more so than family, are probably more likely to notice changes in a person's behaviour as they are in daily contact with them and may even be living with them. A tendency to avoid eating in front of people, to hide the amount being eaten - too much or too little, regularly missing meals, food disappearing and "I've just eaten" are all common signs of someone with an eating disorder.

But how do you confront someone who you think has a problem? Ross has found in her work that it is usually friends or family who come to her concerned about someone they know. She says that confronted about the individual is being confronted.

"You have to be supportive. It's no use attacking someone, you'll just close up and deny it completely. You need to be soft and let them know that you care."

"All DIT colleges have welfare officers who have been trained by both US and DITU to deal with such problems. We can also put people in touch with councils who are outside the college. Her advice if you think you may have a problem or you know someone who has, get help."

Weight Watchers is not the way to go for everybody though. Some people prefer to devise their own methods of weight loss, and find the whole support group idea a little disconcerting. Others believe that weight loss is not so much about eating less than it is about keeping fit. Elaine, another DIT student from Mountjoy Square decided to count her Christmas indulgences by joining her local gym.

"I really think the only way to get slim is to keep fit, and then you can eat and drink as much as you like", she said.

Elaine attends the gym everyday. It cost her £45 to join and is £34 a month after that. With that kind of cost, on top of all the other bills and expenses with which students are bombarded, it is probably wise to attend as often as possible in order to get value for money. She joined with her friends and sees it as a good way of making friends.

"There's always people to chat to down there, and most people join along with someone else. It's stressful at the start but you get used to it. The hidden expense is getting there and all the special clothes you have to wear. So maybe it's not so difficult after all, once you can summon a little bit of motivation.

The Weight Watchers in Mountjoy Square's Welfare Officer, Yvonne Ross talks to Margaret Donnelly and gives some advice for students worried about eating disorders.

Mountjoy Square's Welfare Officer, Yvonne Ross talks to Margaret Donnelly and gives some advice for students worried about eating disorders. The causes of eating disorders are hard to pin down. Lack of self-esteem, family problems, emotional problems, personal insecurity, and abuse are the most common reasons someone exhibits some signs of disorder. But even harder to pin-down are the reasons why people, especially teenage girls, develop an eating disorder. According to Carmel Smith of Weight Watchers Ireland, Christmas is a very dangerous time of the year for people trying to lose weight.

"It's very difficult to for anyone else to become aware of it. But even in self denial that they have a problem, they know. She says that confronted about the individual is being confronted.

"You have to be supportive. It's no use attacking someone, you'll just close up and deny it completely. You need to be soft and let them know that you care."

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"It is very often difficult to recognise someone with an eating disorder as there are no clear cut signs. However, the signs are obvious - and people should be aware that any kind of sudden behaviour, such as a sudden obsession with exercise, is also a sign that someone could be developing an eating disorder," says Ross.
AFTER all the predictions of planes falling from the sky, impending nuclear disasters and all the other Millennium palaver, we're all still alive and returned to college life.

As DIT students (in their dozens) declined to say anything or proved too dumbstruck at the sight of a camera lens, a number of victims, sorry volunteers bravely stepped into the fray to tell the DIT Independent what their New Year's resolutions were. An ancient, if not always upheld tradition, resolutions usually last for about the length of time that you think about making one! Here's how some students hope to make Y2K different to how they were, An ancient, camera lens, a number of dozens) declined to say if not always upheld if they're 21st century Joes. We're the student price only.

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At all DITSU campus shops from January 17th to 28th
**DI T has cycling cream**

*By Margaret Donnelly*

ONE of Ireland's top cyclists, Gary McQuaid, is currently training in Lanzarote to qualify for the Irish cycling team.

Gary, who is a first year business student at Aungier Street, is training with members of the Olympic team who are on endurance and heat training exercises in the Canary Islands.

If he succeeds he will be in one of the smallest clubs in Ireland. There are only two professional cyclist in Ireland, Morgan Fox and Kieran Power both turned professional last year and are the first professional cyclists in this country since Sean Kelly.

The DT Independent spoke to McQuaid's father, Kieron, who represented Ireland in 1972 at the Olympics about his son's chosen sport.

"Gary is currently in Lanzarote where the weather and road conditions are more suitable for cycling. He's gone for two weeks on the recommendation of cyclists who travelled last year and hopes that it will improve his chances of becoming a full Irish International."

"Gary will have to go abroad to further his career. There are no professional cycling teams in Ireland and to cycle in something like the Tour de France you have to be part of a professional cycling team."

"He will currently cycle 200K races and at the moment his aim is to gain as much experience as possible, because cycling is all about tactics, and you have to have experience to have tactics."

McQuaid, from Rathfarnham, cycles for the Emerald Cyclist Club which was starting cycle racing as a schoolboy. The 19 year-old

**Aungier Street show the way in indoor soccer blitz**

*By Daniel Metcalfe*

A HOST of YMCA sports hall, students from Aungier Street indoor soccer club put on a display of four-aside football to warm the hearts of all involved in a bitter mid-week afternoon.

After a series of league matches and knock-out stages, the biggest club in DT held its title and a semi-final for the afternoon was two semi-finals followed by the final.

The first semi-final was contested between the current holders Dimbos Lunchbox and Well-Oiled Stallions. Unfortunately for Well-Oiled Stallions it wasn't much of a contest with Dimbos Lunchbox scoring ten unanswered goals.

Brendan Owen and Niall Crevey in action in the final

Jarchester and second years Michal Maguire scored the first two goals, Faughan only for Brendan Owen to equalise. By now the large crowd of spectators present were turning up the noise and the game became more heated with several late tackles.

Jarchester went ahead again, this triggered more vociferous encouragement from the crowd. The contest was now bubbling over, until for a short challenge by Jarchester keeper Paul Mollahan incensed the crowd, a brief scuffle ensued between Brendan Owen and Mollahan. These shenanigans were quickly dealt with by referee and co-organiser Peter Duming.

The impressive Alan Maher then kept his cool and equalised, to tie the game at three each. The scoring continued when Flynn put Jarchester ahead with a thunderous volley, only for the more familiar Bostooners to score twice, with two designs for the winners and half that amount for the runners up there was plenty to play for.

The tension showed in the opening few minutes as neither teams touch passed the ball quite wrong. Both keepers were repeatedly forced into fire saves.

It was left to Niall Creavey, the smallest player on the pitch to open the scoring for Dimbos Lunchbox, after a save by Gareth Keogh. Creavey added another when he finished a move he started with a super cross court pass to Ciaran Horan.

Dave Barry in the Lunchbox goal continued to make important saves and also managing to make an advancing impetus to score.

It seemed only Alan Maher believed that the now weary looking Mighty Bostoons could win and he proved this by scoring the games fourth goal. At 3-1, the game was still up for grabs until the closely marked Glenn Dalton showed some impressive close control and then released the free flowing Ciaran Horan to make it 4-1.

Niall Creavey continued to prove the most industrious player in the game forcing save after save from Keogh. The mighty Creavey scored his fourth goal and the team fifth after a superb solo effort and a clinical strike run and had to leave the pitch.

The defence of Casi Brugha B, e was mistress without results and nothing was able to pass through their walls. Wing play was excellent and helped Casi Brugha B, e in their pressure with captain Audrey Smyth and Katie Draper.

Casi Brugha B, e's next game will be on the 26th February and deemed a draw when weather conditions forced the game to be abandoned and done enough to guarantee place in the league final where despite a valiant effort team were beaten.

Team to compete in Holland

THE DT Independent hockey team will compete in international hockey competitions in Holland in February. The team are to play a number of exhibition matches against Dutch teams from February 21 to 26. Anyone interested should contact Kevin Smyth, DT Independent, Sean Byrne.

**Hockey team take the sticks**

By Katie Draper

CATHAL Brugha Street's hockey team had a long way to go to get through to the semi-finals as runners up to IT Cork. Their first match was a double-edged battle against Tallow IT and Athlone IT.

Tallaght got the upper hand last year and a determined Cathal Brugha Street gave a fine fight this time. The first half saw a fine tight game which the controlled play but were unable to score despite the efforts of Cathal Brugha Street goalkeeper Robert Morgan.

The second half started off as the last finished but a break for Cathal Brugha Street saw the side taking the lead and defending leading to a corner in the second half. John McKenna who set up Olona Cashin for their only goal a second time was not a strong side.

However forwards John Kelly and Chris Kenny took the game to Athlone and managed to score. According to one bystander Kenny crashed into the goal frame and after a 15 minute stoppage to slow down after a particular sticky kick run and had to leave the pitch.

The defence of Cathal Brugha St. was mistress without results and nothing was able to pass through their walls. Wing play was excellent and helped Cathal Brugha St. e in their pressure with captain Audrey Smyth and Katie Draper. Cathal Brugha St's next game will be on the 26th February and deemed a draw when weather conditions forced the game to be abandoned and done enough to guarantee place in the league final where despite a valiant effort team were beaten.

Abhan Dunne, overall secy will be able to pass through their walls. Wing play was excellent and helped Cathal Brugha St. e in their pressure with captain Audrey Smyth and Katie Draper. Cathal Brugha St's next game will be on the 26th February and deemed a draw when weather conditions forced the game to be abandoned and done enough to guarantee place in the league final where despite a valiant effort team were beaten.

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All right, go if you must, but don't come back here pissed.

The one with the atmosphere

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