DIT Independent, 1st.-31st. of March, 2000

DIT: Students Union

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High failure rates a worry for engineers

By Jennifer Duggan
ONE in three engineering students in the institute fail sessions exams.

According to a confidential report of examination statistics, prepared for the Academic Council, the Faculty of Engineering has one of the highest failure rates out of all the faculties within DIT.

The DIT Independent has seen a copy of the draft report, which has been produced by the Examinations and Awards Committee of the Academic Council.

It breaks down the exam results of all courses in all faculties over the past four years, giving the percentage of students who passed exams each year.

According to the report, the overall pass rate for the entire faculty of Engineering for the 1998/99 college year was 68.73 per cent, which is almost 15 per cent lower than any of the other faculties.

Overall pass rates for the past academic year are between 85 and 90 per cent. In part time engineering, the figure was even lower, with only 34 per cent of students passing exams.

While the high failure rate does not affect every course within the Engineering faculty, there are a number of both degree and diploma courses which have above average failure rates.

Among the degree courses within the faculty of Engineering which have the highest failure rates are the Structural Engineering degree, with only 56.25 per cent of second year students passing their exams last year. Also in there is the Mechanical Engineering Degree, with only 28.57 per cent of second year students passing their exams last year and only half of students in their final year of the course passing.

The Building Services Engineering Degree also has a high failure rate with only 58.33 per cent of third year students passing and it also has the highest rate of failure among final year students with only 20 per cent passing last year.

There are also high failure rates within some of the Engineering Diploma courses. The Technician Certificate/ Diploma in Civil Engineering course has only a 48.15 per cent pass rate in the first exam of last year.

The Certificate/ Diploma in Building Services Engineering also had a low pass rate with less than half of first year students passing their exams last year and only half of the first year students studying the Certificate/ Diploma in Transport Engineering/ Motor Industry Management passed their exams last year.

However, Don Byrne, the Acting Head of the Department of Engineering, denies that these figures are accurate and says that they had not yet been checked by the individual departments.

He believes that the pass rate for Engineering "could not be that low, they look very wrong and their validity must be questioned". A spokesperson for DIT also added the results were not binding and as they were not final, and could be "easily taken out of context".

Other courses to suffer badly from high failure rates are the languages and business studies course in Kevin Street, where last year only 37 per cent of second year students passed sessional exams.

In an article this week, The Irish Times, a spokesperson for DIT was quoted as saying that the report was a work in progress. A spokesperson for DIT said the results were not drastically different to those of other courses. "The regulations are student friendly, there are reasonable explanations for each of the cases," he added the spokesperson.

Corrections and clarifications

In our edition of January 2000 we published a front-page article on the take-up of offers of diploma and certificate courses from DIT last year.

The DIT Independent now corrects the statements attributed to Ms Margaret Nicholl (who was incorrectly described as working in the DIT Admissions Office) were never made by her.

We are also amending apologies to DIT and its employees (and in particular to Ms Margaret Nicholl) for the distress, offence and embarrassment caused by the article.

College and SU may face action over funding rule

Exclusive - By Thomas Felle

THE Students’ Union and DIT could face legal action if they fail to change their “no funding of political parties’ societies” stance.

A motion by the DIT Young Fine Gael Society at the party’s young Ard Feis has condemned the “anti-political atmosphere and structures created and maintained by the communist one-party style students’ unions throughout DIT”.

The motion also called on its national executive to “seek freedom of speech. Yet their societies are the only voice to represent students set up societies when they want to meet discuss policies with TDs and Ministers.

“Students Unions like DIT should be set up stand on club” and societies.

Youth Officer with the party. She says it is not just a problem with DIT, it is a problem amongst all ITS.

"Institutes of Technology have a very poor record of freedom of speech, yet their student representatives expect to be censored when they want to meet discuss policies with TDs and Ministers.

“Students Unions like DIT must allow students to have freedom of speech," she added.

The Youth Officer said that she has tried to help students set up societies when requested, but found a real problem coming into DIT to set up stands on clubs and societies.

Continued on page 8

Results of survey on SU satisfaction: page 13
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Summer Work Scheme rejected by students

By Collin McGann

A RECENT survey has revealed that the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs' Summer Job Scheme is in need of urgent reform.

The survey, carried out by the Union of Students of Ireland (USI) of 600 community and voluntary groups who offer summer work to students, shows that less than half of the places available on the scheme were filled last year.

USI President, Philip Madden, said "one result in particular stands out from this survey. More than half of those surveyed called on the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs to increase the hourly rate of pay under the scheme. At present, students are paid €3 per hour."

This is despite the fact that the Government is committed to increasing the minimum wage by €4.40.

"To refuse to pay students the statutory minimum wage is to deny them the basic rights and to devalue the important community work they undertake under the scheme," added Madden.

The department has said it is "their mission to promote social well being through income and other supports, which enable people to participate in society in a positive way". Some of the sponsors have agreed that they are achieving this through their present efforts.

\[\text{\textit{We believe that the students gain very valuable experience and insight into the whole area of disability and it gives them an awareness which they will have for the life of their needs and abilities of these less fortunate than themselves.}}\]

Many students have both orally and in writing expressed their deep appreciation of the opportunity to work with others less fortunate on completion of their placement. Others were of the opinion that "voluntary organisations and community life in general would receive a massive boost and low income family inequality would be better rectified if the criteria was less strict and the hours of pay were improved".

Cian O’Callaghan, Welfare Officer with USI, agreed with the latter opinion saying "the vast majority of the sponsors surveyed expressed satisfactions with the scheme. However, they felt very strongly that the Government is revising the scheme to die a slow death rather than reform it. He also believes that three reforms that are needed are an increase the rate of pay, an increase in the number of hours that can be worked under the scheme and to abolish the means test."

Mr O’Callaghan said "without these reforms the Government will put much valuable community work in danger."

\[\text{\textit{The Union of Students in Ireland wrote to the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs to increase the hourly rate of pay under the scheme even more.}}\]

The response was an increase of 20p.

\[\text{\textit{We believe that the students gain very valuable experience and insight into the whole area of disability and it gives them an awareness which they will have for the life of their needs and abilities of these less fortunate than themselves.}}\]

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The Grant

At the last survey in April 1997, it was revealed that the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs’ Summer Job Scheme would cover more than 30,000 students and that on average, students would receive between €1,000 and €1,500.

\[\text{\textit{The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs’ Summer Job Scheme is in need of urgent reform.}}\]

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs has called for a grant to increase the minimum wage of students from €3 to €5 per hour.

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\[\text{\textit{The grant is supposed to cover all a student’s living expenses, but it does not even pay the rent in most cases. Students have the right to a roof over their heads, adequate financial support and access to education, which is not limited by their ability to pay.}}\]

\[\text{\textit{Our educated workforce is the direct legacy of the Celtic Tiger phenomenon. And yet, some people can only dream of a college education, and many others drop out because they do not survive on the disgracefully low grants," added the USI president.}}\]

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**Women students get less money: USI**

By Clara O'Brien

FEMALE students are earning 7 per cent less than their male counterparts for their part-time work, according to a new USI survey.

This can add up to a loss of over €180 per student over a college career. Commissioned by USI, the survey showed that on average, men earn €8.90 per hour while women earn the lesser amount of €8.40.

"While the gap may be getting smaller (i.e., down 7%), it is not very encouraging for women in this day and age to see that men are still earning more," said Sarah McGovern, overall DITSU President.

"I would look to USI to nationally campaign for 'real' equal opportunities for all," said Phillip Madden, President of USI commented, "the survey found that in general men and women were undertaking the same kind of part-time employment, and yet a significant gap exists."

USI urges both employers and employees to be vigilant to ensure that men and women earn 'equal pay for equal work.'

This loss can lay the foundations for further inequality in the workplace.

Figures from the Central Statistics Office illustrate the fact that, on average, women earn 64% of men's wages.

The results will come as a blow to equality groups, coming so close to International Women's Day. According to Emma Dowling, Women's Rights Officer for USI, "On International Women's Day we can celebrate the fact that in recent decades, the world's women have made tremendous progress towards achieving equality with men."

However, she went on to add that "no where in the world can women claim to have the same rights and opportunities as men.

The figures quoted in your article do not therefore reflect a rejection of DIT as a 3rd level Institution but in fact indicate the impressive performance of may of our applicants in their Leaving Certificate examinations.

The results allow them the considerable benefit of receiving two offers at the same time for both a Degree and a Certificate/Diploma.

My fear is that such a misrepresentation could adversely affect the perception of our students externally and also send a wrong message to future potential students and those who advise them."

Declan Glyn
Director, External Affairs

"Politics of self-interest" ruffles feathers: page 8

**Corrections and clarifications**

The DIT Independent published a front-page article entitled "DIT most rejected College" in the January edition of its newspaper.

The article quoted a Margaret Nicholl, from the Admissions Office in DIT. The Editor has since learned that Margaret Nicholl does not work for the Admissions office. The editor accepts that no such conversation with Margaret Nicholl ever took place.

The DIT Independent further accepts that the quotes related to the story were therefore inaccurate. The editor wishes to apologize to Margaret Nicholl and Vincent O'Hara, DIT Admissions Office, for any incompaetencies caused.

This is no way reflects on the good name of the journalist in question.

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**"DIT most rejected college" - an unfair treatment**

"Dear Sirs, I refer to your January 2000 publication and the front-page article entitled "DIT is most rejected College". I found this to be an extremely negative headline based on an inaccurate analysis of the offers/acceptance figures quoted later in the article and reflecting badly on our student population which, I believe, deserves an awfully lot better. The reason our Admissions Officer makes so many offers for Diploma/Certificate courses is that we are aware that the time the offers are being processed that a large proportion of these applicants are being offered DIT degree courses simultaneously and many will accept a Degree rather than the Diploma/Certificate offer. It doesn't mean that those who reject the Certificate/Diploma offer are choosing to attend another 3rd level Institute instead of DIT."
Peter Durning - Site President
21-year-old Business Studies student Peter Durning, from Aungier St, is running for the position of Site President. Peter intends to improve the quality and variety of clubs and societies; provide more entertainment for students, by adding to existing events within the college; encourage student involvement in making Students Union decisions. If elected, Peter will continue to be approachable and one of the students; he does not want to be placed on a pedestal. Though Peter is impressed with the present Students Union, he feels that it falls short in a number of areas. Peter promises to make a difference in the Union and describes himself as having: "the passion to satisfy all students' desires", furthermore, he says this is what he intends to do.

Kellie Dalton - Site Dep President/Welfare Officer
A 20-year-old student from Mountjoy Square, Kellie is running for the position of deputy president/welfare officer. She feels that DIT students deserve the best and if elected she would put herself in the position to provide this for them. Kellie promises to keep students aware of all welfare and entertainment issues weekly, in her opinion "the students should always come first". Being one of the younger nominees Kellie puts entertainment down as one of her top priorities. In doing this she will attempt to make the Union more approachable place for new students. She cites her friendliness and maturity in dealing with personal issues as her main strengths.

Damien Fallon - Site President
Damien, an Administrative and Marketing student in Mountjoy Square, is one of the more optimistic candidates. He is of the opinion that the students of Mountjoy Square deserve better and he is "the man to kick a bit of life into the college". Damien offers a fresh and positive outlook to the position of president. His main aims for the year include attempts to further the grant situation, more internet access and improved computer facilities and, of course, entertainment. He highlights the computer situation saying the whole thing is pretty basic and not enough to meet their requirements. Damien's main attributes are charisma and flair but also the respect for the position and the students.

Gary Guilfoyle - Site President
Gary is running for Site President so that he can improve the over all position of students in Mountjoy Square, and of all students in DIT. He is looking for an increase in the amount of facilities available for students, and also to add to the protest over the increasing accommodation problem. Gary's main policies are geared to create a better standard of living for students, and so offer them a better chance of passing exams, and enjoying college life to the full while they are here. Having attended college once before, Gary feels he has a better understanding of what it's like to be a student, and a personal knowledge of the kinds of problems faced by undergraduate students.

Catherine Power - Site President
Catherine is one of the long line of candidates who cite entertainment as one of the main areas in need of improvement. Studying Professional Cookery in Cathal Brugha Square, Catherine has decided that with an annual decrease of motivation in DIT students it is time to start working to improve the atmosphere in the college. In the past she has seen the level of student involvement in the running of the Union decreasing and feels there is a need to remedy this. Her ideas for improvement include more events for part time students and a "back to basics" policy that would involve working as a team with all support and student services e.g. Sports Officer and Counsellor.

Roslyn Farrell - Site Dep President/Welfare Officer
Roslyn has already spent a year as Equality Officer in Cathal Brugha Square. During the year she was involved in the Welfare Campaign dealing with eating disorders, rape and violence against women.

Ruth Allen - Site Dep President/Welfare Officer
As an extremely outgoing person, Ruth feels she would be able to offer the students a more friendly way of getting in touch with the Students Union.

Kevin Street
Nicky Lawlor - Site President
Following his years as a Student of DIT, Nicky wants to further work for the students as the Site President. He is especially interested in furthering Student entertainment and making the DIT more transparent and available for the Students.

Des Alvey - Deputy President/Welfare Officer
Des' approach to the campaigns is enthusiastic and optimistic, he describes himself as "electric and different". A 20 year old Kevin Street student, he has always had an interest in the DITSU and enjoys dealing with people. In order to satisfy students needs Des promises to offer students honesty and hard work coupled with a new and exciting approach to entertainment.

Des wants to ensure that the SU in Kevin Street remains a voice and tool of the students. His main policies include offering open and caring service in the welfare department, a more exciting entertainments year and being accountable for all his work. Doing this will involve students essentially being able to see him at work. As for further information on Des' campaign plans he says "just wait and see".

Lyndsey Jones - Deputy President/Welfare Officer
Lyndsey is a twenty year old Applied Science student in Kevin St. Although she is only a first year student, Lyndsey says that she has had her 'ups and downs' like every other student and hopes that her experiences will be able to benefit others.

Her policies include: Improving college facilities including canteen food and student accommodation; Get students involved in issues that concern them; Put in place better facilities for disabled students; Put more money into grants and clubs and socs.

She is also interested in travelling around the country promoting DIT for potential students. During her year as Deputy President, Lyndsey hopes to "gain experience, to help others and to give everybody the time of their lives."

Peter Durning - Deputy President/Welfare Officer
Peter Durnings main aims are: to get quality assessment of lecturers up and running, course committees and entertainments. His main focus for the year is to improve student's performance in making Students Union transparent and available for all students in the College. In doing this he will attempt to make the Union a more approachable place for new students. He cites his friendliness and maturity in dealing with personal issues as his main strengths.

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The students' union elections are on Wednesday, March 29th. Please use your vote.
Jean O'Sullivan - Dep President/ Welfare Officer
A 20-year-old applied electronics student, Jean wants the position of Deputy President/ Welfare Officer so that she can offer a constantly available friendly face and ear to any students who have problems they want addressed. She feels she is different to all the other candidates because she promises to be available any time. Jean's main policies are to: Set up an information stand at the start of each term, dealing with various issues like Health and Examination/Stress techniques; Provide free condoms at each social event; Properly facilitate vending machines in all toilets; Introduce Lecturer quality assessments.

Alan Wolfe - Dep President/ Welfare Officer
Alan is the youngest candidate running for election this year and sees this as his unique selling point. Despite his age he has been involved in the Union for the last year as Entertainment Officer and feels that he could provide students with services not readily available, such as programmes for unplanned pregnancy, family issues, abuse and drug addiction. Alan ensures privacy and confidentiality with students. He also promises to further the development of links on the campus scheme. The Applied Electronics student would like to see increased availability in the provision of welfare loans and his relationship with the student body will help to facilitate this.

Overall
Vincent Dooley - Overall president
Vincent Dooley is the only candidate for the position of Overall President. Having already spent a year as Vice President in Kevin Street and the previous year as part time entertainment officer, he says he is inordinately qualified to hold the prestigious position. He has always admired previous presidents and expects him to be a great honour. He believes every student should have a quality, hassle-free and enjoyable college career. "I will ensure that all services are used to their full potential and will bring new services online as soon as possible." Also, he adds, "the students should see exactly where their money is going and what it is doing; they should be represented at every level throughout the DT and everywhere else." His main policies are: Facilities, including Grangegorman, ensuring that all student's needs are catered for in the development of this site, especially sports, accommodation and a bar. Welfare: An increase in welfare services and make sure that all students know about them all. Education: Quality assurance of lecturers.

Bolton Street
Marguerite Fitzpatrick - Site president
21-year-old Marguerite Fitzpatrick is in her final year of Property Economics in Bolton Street. She is running for the position of president because she believes she can fairly and justly represent the views of students. "I hope that I can make college life as enjoyable for others as it has been for me," she says. SU is a brilliant facility and it should be maximised and utilised to the highest level. I intend to make students realise the benefits of getting involved and how much it can enhance student life." She says she can offer youth and enthusiasm and can bring a "much needed feminine touch" to Bolton Street. Her main policies are to: Introduce the Q4/Q6 assessment; Enhance relations with students and the SU; Negotiate facilities already provided by the University and to show a series of presentations concerning the various welfare services. Neal promises to ensure that all students have access to help and information concerning issues ranging from pregnancy to lack of funds, and to try and make students' voices more heard by implementing their ideas concerning welfare and Union issues.

Helle & Rom
Time for change in election standing orders
Opinion by Thomas Felle
MUCH work will in the coming days made of the handfuls of posters being given out to candidates running in the forthcoming DIT SU elections, as places for sabbatical positions for representatives the circa 22,000 students. Such elections are, at the outset, reasonably fair. Candidates are given a set amount of posters, access to the same photocopying equipment and are under no circumstances allowed to use materials in canvassing that other students would not have access to. However, it does discriminate against everybody. Candidates should have the right to spend personal money, up to a limit, on campaigns. A certain allocation, perhaps £250, should be made available to candidates from central funding, and candidates should be allowed to spend up to a higher limit, say £1000, for personally running campaigns.

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Aungier Street

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Mountjoy Square

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Catherine's main aims are: to get quality assessment of lectures up and running, course committees and entertainments. Her experiences of the last year give her a valuable insight into the needs of students and the contacts she has built up will take a lot of pressure from her.

Roslyn Farrelly - Site Dep President/Welfare Officer
Roslyn has already spent a year as Equality Officer in Cathal Brugha Street. During the year she was involved in the Welfare Campaign dealing with eating disorders, rape and violence against women. As a result of this experience she feels that Cathal Brugha students need to become more aware of the issues which concern everyone such as rape, accommodation, and eating disorders.

Roslyn classes herself as very approachable and easy to talk to and so hopes that her personality may encourage students to deal with her. She is also willing to work closely with the counsellors in order to make students as comfortable as possible.

Ruth Allen - Site Dep President/Welfare Officer
As an extremely outgoing person, Ruth feels she would be able to offer the students a more friendly way of getting in touch with the Students' Union.

She wants to be able to help students with any problems or queries they might have, and to always be available for them.

Ruth wants people to know that she will only ever be a phone call away, and will be a good listener for the students, helping to raise awareness about different campaigns she is interested in, like anti-smoking, Cancer, unexpected pregnancies, contraceptives, Date Rape, AIDS and Alcoholism.

Kevin Street

Nicky Lawlor - Site President
Following his years as Sabbathet and Deputy President, Nicky wants to further work for the students as the Site President. He is especially interested in furthering Student entertainment and making the DITSU more transparent and available for the Students.

His main aims are: to increase the numbers of Societies and Clubs, and enhance the already existing ones; to seek Corporate sponsorship so he can keep Entertainment big and cheap; to fight for the speedy development of the Grangegorman site in relation to Sports Facilities, Student accommodation and a Student bar; and to further develop the Quality Assessment of Lecturers campaign. Nicky reckons that his best attributes are his experience, motivation, and organisational qualities.

Des Alvey - Deputy President/ Welfare Officer
Des' approach to the campaign is enthusiastic and optimistic; he describes himself as "electric and different". A 20 year-old Kevin Street student, he has always had an interest in the DITSU and enjoys dealing with people. In order to satisfy students needs Des promises to offer students honesty and hard work coupled with a new and exciting approach to entertainment.

Des wants to ensure that the SU in Kevin Street remains a voice and tool of the students. His main policies include offering an open and caring service in the welfare department, a more exciting entertainments year and being accountable for all his work. Doing this will involve students essentially being able to see him at work. As for further information on Des' campaign plans he says "just wait and see".

Lyndsey Jones - Deputy President/ Welfare Officer
Lyndsey is a twenty year old Applied Science student in Kevin St. Although she is only a first year student, Lyndsey says that she has had her 'ups and downs' like every other student and hopes that her experiences will be able to benefit others.

Her policies include: Improving college facilities including canteen food and student accommodation; Get students involved in issues that concern them; Put in place better facilities for disabled students; Put more money into grants and clubs and so on.

She is also interested in travelling around the country promoting DIT for potential students.

During her year as Deputy President, Lyndsey hopes to gain experience to help others and to give everybody the time of their lives."

Will Nelson - Deputy President/Welfare Officer
His understanding of student issues and the students union are two of the ways in which Will feels he is unique as a candidate running for the position of Deputy President/Welfare Officer.

An International Business and German student, Will is in 21 and has been a student for four years. He feels he is "in a position to make a positive contribution to the students' union", and outlines his policies as: student accommodation issues; Ongoing sexual health campaigns; the development of the DITSU web site and e-mail as a welfare tool; helping Students participating in the Erasmus programme, and to cap the capitation fee. He promises Kevin Street students he will do everything in his power to help anyone with a problem; "no matter how big or small."
Jean O'Sullivan - Dep President/ Welfare Officer

A 20-year-old applied electronics student, Jean wants the position of Deputy President/ Welfare Officer so that she can offer a constantly available friendly face and ear to any students who have problems they want addressed.

She feels she is different to all the other candidates because she promises to be available any time. Jean's main policies are to: Set up an information stand at the start of each term, dealing with various issues like Health and Examination Stress techniques; Provide free condoms at each social event; Properly facilitate vending machines in all toilets; Introduce Lecturer quality assessments.

Alan Wolfe - Dep President/ Welfare Officer

Alan is the youngest candidate running for election this year and sees this as his unique selling point. Despite his age he has been involved in the Union for the last year as Entertainment Officer and feels that he could provide students with services not readily available, such as programmes for unplanned pregnancy, family issues, abuse and drug addiction. Alan ensures privacy and confidentiality with students. He also promises to help further the development of links on the Emacs scheme.

The Applied Electronics student would like to see increased availability in the provision of welfare loans and his presence in the student body will help to facilitate this.

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Overall

Vincent Dooley - Overall President

Vincent Dooley is the only candidate for the position of Overall President. Having already spent a year as(batch) at site president in Kevin Street and the previous year as part time entertainment officer, he says he is imminently qualified to hold the prestigious position. He has always admired previous presidents and electing him would be a great honour. He believes every student should have a quality, hassle-free and enjoyable college career. "I will ensure that all services are used to their full potential and will bring new services online as soon as possible." Also, he adds, "the students should see exactly where their money is going and what it is doing. They should be represented at every level throughout the DIT and everywhere else.", His main policies are: Facilities, including: Grangegorman, ensuring that all students' needs are catered for in the development of this site, especially sports, accommodation and a bar. Welfare: An increase in welfare services and make sure that all students know about them all. Education: Quality assurance of lectures.

Bolton Street

Marguerite Fitzpatrick - Site President

21-year-old Marguerite Fitzpatrick is in her final year of Property Economics in Bolton Street. She is running for the position of president because she believes she can fairly and justly represent the voice of students in Bolton Street so that I can make college life as enjoyable for others as it has been for me," she says. "This is an important year for Bolton Street as the new students arrive. I believe Bolton Street is a brilliant facility and it should be maximised and utilised to the highest level. I intend to make students realise the benefits of getting involved and how much it can enhance student life." She says she can offer youth and enthusiasm and can bring a "much needed feminine touch" to Bolton Street. Her main policies are to introduce the Q4-Q6 assessment; Enhance relations with students and the SU; Negotiate strongly for student needs, promotions and sponsorship; Tackle the problems of computer deficits and theft in college.

Neal Cromien - Deputy President/ Welfare Officer

Neal feels that with his previous positions as a Class Rep, a Student Councillor and a part time Public Relations Officer, he has the necessary experience to properly represent students as a Welfare Officer. He wants to offer students a review of the facilities already provided by the Union, and to show a series of presentations concerning the various welfare and services. Neal promises to ensure that all students have access to help and information concerning issues ranging from pregnancy to lack of funds, and to try and make students' voices more heard by implementing their ideas concerning welfare and Union issues.

Neal, a mechanical engineering student, feels he is the candidate with the drive and determination to ensure all students get the most from their Union, and their time in college.

Colm Sharkey
Deputy President/ Welfare Officer

Colm's main aim is to be easily available to any student who needs, and as he claims that he looks like Senator Bob, this shouldn't be difficult!

Colm wants to be able to offer students a shoulder to cry on when they have problems, and to create more awareness in the student body of their rights and privileges as students. He cites his other main policies as: To hold a meningitis awareness day for students. To continue the success of the supervised study program; To represent the students on various academic boards.

Time for change in election standing orders

Opinion by Thomas Felle

MUCH work will go into the coming days in the making of posters and handing out leaflets, in running in the forthcoming DITSU elections, as places for salaried positions for representatives the circa 22,000 students in the Institute are filled. Such elections are, at the run-up campaign stage, a rule of thumb. Candidates are given a set amount of posters, access to the same photocopying equipment and are under no circumstances allowed to use materials in canvassing that either students would not have access to.

However, it does discriminate against everybody. Candidates should have the right to spend personal money, up to a limit, on campaigns. A certain allocation, perhaps £50, should be made available to candidates from central grants and candidates should be allowed to spend up to a high limit, suitable for personally running campaigns.

Winston Churchill once said of democracy that it was the worst form of government, apart from all the rest. It is true. The present system is inherently undemocratic, and discriminates against all candidates. While it is obviously much easier to have a rule that says candidates are not allowed to spend personal money, the nature of this rule should not exist because it is easier to enforce. There is a precedent for such election expenses.

Scriptions in similar universities have similar systems. What is needed is a clear policy, setting out good practice principles, whereby no member who has already served three years within a campus executive elements of complacency inevitably set in.

What is new is that such officers cannot be elected to the second term of office within the national student lobby group, having already served three years within a campus executive elements of complacency inevitably set in.
When drinking becomes a problem

John Roycroft reports on the attempts to address some of the consequences of alcohol abuse

A MAJOR campaign to raise student awareness to the hazards of alcohol was launched last week across all the DIT campuses.

The poster led project shows a variety of colour pictures with young people in various stages of revellers or illness during a night out in all to familiar poses.

The poster proclaims 'Great Night Last Night, Worth It? Or Can You Remember?'

Leading with the picture of a young man with his hands in his pockets, wearing a t-shirt, the surrounding images degenerate to scenes witnessed many a night club lavatory.

Vinny Dooley, who heads through the campaign, is keen of Kevin Street Students' Union believes that due to the

"Balls, societies and even sporting events are all promoted by drink companies and we are asking students to do is to be aware of the consequences," he added.

Along with the poster drive, the campaign also

hired an actor to perform as a drunk at three DIT locations. Without any trampolines, the man fell about in his drunken ballet until porters (very realistically) removed him from the scene.

According to Dooley, this raised a significant response from the students who witnessed his ejection that varied from sympathy to disbelief: the latter effect drink had on this man.

A number of film screenings were also held at the student union bar to ensure an emphasis on the tragic effects of alcohol abuse on the individual.

Films such as Nicholas Cage's having Las Vegas' attracted great interest.

Vinny Dooley believes that the campaign was a great success and many more students will be meeting in the coming weeks to decide whether to stage other events that would raise awareness to alcohol abuse.

"We are not asking people to quit drink all together, that would be ridiculous, all we are saying is to take it easy," he added.

College & SU may face action over funding rule

From page 1

I have written to the Students' union to inquire exactly what the position is, however I have never received any reply," she added.

However, in a statement to the DIT Independent, Students' Union President, Lisa Niamh, has hit the nail on the head at allegations of unfair treatment of political parties by the Students' Union. Nevertheless, 'there was no fund- ing policy for political societies.'

"All sites in the DIT have refused permission to political parties to set up stands in the colleges, mostly because the requests came during clubs and societies days.

"To our knowledge the only political society to be refused funding was the Society of the Fianna Fail society in Mountjoy Square. [It] was refused funding as it was for the first time at the Ogra Fianna Fáil conference.

"Fine Gael have not applied for funding through any of the students' union offices this year, they were however offered funding in Kevin Street and were treated no differently than any other club or society in the college.

The statement continued that it was the policy of the social and committee in DIT that political societies can be funded as any other society except where there is a contribution toward the main party organisation.

It is the policy of DITSU that political parties, like all other outside organisations, may have access to colleges at mututalley suitable times," concluded the statement.

Professor Anthony Clare and students at the Business Breakfast at Jury's Hotel

"Politics of self interest" ruffles feathers

Dear Mr Felle,

First of all I'd like to say that I have read some of your column's in a newspaper. It is where a journalist can express opinions on issues which might not see print in the regular news items in a paper. When written properly, it is a healthy objective piece of journalism at its best. However, when not written well, it shows up a poor journalist whose views are as dated and dated as the article he has written.

There is huge apathy in Ireland at the moment in relation to politics. It is unfair to say South Dublin last year, where the overall turnout was 29.5 per cent. In recent surveys by various agencies, political apathy is strike up and down the age brackets and social background.

Moves are afoot to try and make the postal vote more accessible with Saturday voting also on the cards. This will further open the student vote.

Most of the people I know have an interest in Irish politics, the political climate and what is going on around them, even if they say that they don't comment on politics they know about it and are tuned in.

There are many reasons for political apathy in Ireland - the DIT inquiry, two Tribunals, Anambcher, Charlie Haughey, political scan- dals and "... more revelations..." to name but a few.

I myself have no political persuasion, and if I did, I would not force it on anyone by expressing it here. I don't vote the way it was done and unfortunately is still done in places, by scratching down the ballot paper looking for he initials of my Grandfathers, Father's, Uncle's and Brothers party. When I vote, I vote for the candidate I feel what they stand for, along with whom they are. I don't vote for the party - regardless of who is actually running for them, just to make up the numbers.

Let the political parties brawn, try to show each other up, scream and rave and add fuel to the bureaucracy of the Oireachtas in the Dáil. There is absolutely no place for such feeble attempts of debating a topic or motion in that fashion in DIT. The political parties are too keenly aware of the journalists, Dáil cameras, and the public personas to make such long term decisions, which have long term gain easily. They are too concerned about where their next vote is coming from, to be assertive and work for the good of the people.

You said in your editorial... "DIT students wouldn't even bother turning up for a meeting [which would be important at the moment]. You obviously are badly informed in the affairs of the DIT Students Union Council and have not attended any recent council meetings to research your editorial properly.

I refer in particular to the Council meeting in December, held in Kevin Street, where there was an intense discussion on the facilities issue at Grangegorman. That was one instance of democracy working as if it was intended to work, where an issue got discussed, all proposals were made and accepted, and a deadline was made for these proposals to be implemented. Seeing a problem, proposing a measure to fix it, and actually seeing it fitted with a results is what democracy encompasses and it is immensely satisfying to see it work.

There are around 50 on the DITSU council and at every meeting there is at least 75 per cent of attendance. Every decision shows the dedication and the serious nature of the Council. Observers are extremely welcome to participate in the discussions - something, which doesn't happen in the Dáil.

You also said: "Our council is a complete waste of time..." the politics of self interest, consensus and personal rivalry are more common than the only cards played." I take particular disdain to this smug remark, as in my opinion it is a poor attempt of a sweeping generalisation more commonly attributed to the tabloids.

In actual fact what you said would be more appropriate to the Dáil - not the DITSU council. When we make decisions in council we are not thinking of our next term in office, we have a mandate to serve the best interests of the student body and are accountable to them. We are therefore not there to make political gain and make others look inferior, but to make a real difference and be hopefully satisfied with the job we have done.

In my opinion, it is best to leave the political parties to do their 'work' in the Dáil, and leave the Council Free of as much bureaucracy as possible to get on and do its work. Students have more faith in their fellow students that then do in some dissident political party, which claims to represent them better than they can represent themselves.

A student can come to me in a corridor and ask about something. If I can't answer the question, of if I am asked to look into it - all I have to do is raise it at council and get is resolved quickly, effectively and efficiently.

In relation to the funding of political orientated clubs and societies, I personally agree with the stance of not funding them directly. However, I am fully behind the practice of funding them indirectly, i.e. if such a society wanted to hold a meeting, they can apply - and receive funds, to organise and hold the meeting.

We are here not to play the part of parents in the wider political arena. We are here to represent students, and work on their behalf. We do a good job, in my opinion and I do know a councillor that has been elected that isn't proud and satisfied with DIT Students' Union Council.

I hope I have made my feelings clear. I fear however, that you have not get be balls to publish this letter, as that would require real journalist - to present all the facts in a clear and concise manner, to make a fair and true argument, and to above all, to concede it you are wrong.

Jarlath Molloy
DITSU Councillor
for the past 54 years Irish waters have been protected against possible aggression by a small fleet of Irish Naval boats. As the years passed, the roles of that fleet changed, turning more to search and rescue, policing, and in recent years to fisheries protection and drug interdiction.

One of the most lucrative and popular areas for fishing amongst a host of European fishermen lies directly 150 miles west of the Galway coastline, in a place called the Porcupine Bank.

In shallow waters are a perfect breeding ground for the Atlantic’s fish to feed, and for French, Spanish and Irish fishermen to fight over catches. The job of policing quotas and stopping underfishing from ramming each other rests with the Irish Navy.

More and more international drug barons are finding new avenues of approach to European drugs markets.

The western and southern coastlines have in recent years become hot spots for such traffickers to unload their cargoes and to travel to European capitals to sell their wares.

Along with the Gardaí, the Irish Navy monitors and patrols the West’s shores.

Last year alone, the Navy were responsible for some €500 million worth of seizures on the western seaboard, everything from cocaine to cannabis.

However, the Navy has always contended that they are doing this job while being woefully underfunded and they say they could do a lot better with more resources and more ships.

Their complaints, it would appear, have fallen on deaf ears.

The Cabinet are this week discussing the future roles of the Defence Forces, including the possibility of downsizing the Navy.

At a time when the 10 year review of the force is coming to an end and the rumour that the upcoming White Paper may contain details of their demise, many of the crew feel they may have no future in the force.

“This is especially true among the officers,” asserts Lt Commander Pat Allen, Captain of the Le Deirdre.

The plans for the future of the force, as drawn up in the Department of Defence green paper, are to reduce to four the number of offshore patrol vessels patrolling Irish waters in a multitasked role, the other four vessels would be used for fishery protection only and neither the crew nor the ship would be armed.

The staffing on the ship would also be cut in half.

“Once a team acts as back-up while the other does the job,” explains Power, “We are armed with an assortment of handguns, rifles, shotguns, pyrotechnics and radios, and are in constant communication with the bridge on Deirdre. Once we get close however, strict silence is observed.”

The naval ship could be positioned as much as five miles away, and would, on radar at least, look like any normal fishing vessel.

“We are very careful not to act suspicious, as doing so might alert the drug traffickers, continues Power.

The sailors used on boardings are the most experienced in the crew, and the

Department of Defence green paper, are to reduce to four the number of offshore patrol vessels patrolling Irish waters in a multitasked role, the other four vessels would be used for fishery protection only and neither the crew nor the ship would be armed.

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The sailors used on boardings are the most experienced in the crew, and the

job is the most dangerous they carry out.

Each person is kitted out with water-proof suits, bullet-proof jackets, batons, face masks and helmets. The teams are picked from a variety of specialisation on board, so that the boarding crews are able to cope with anything.

“We have engine room operators, communications experts and ordinary seamen in the parties.”

Very often the drug traffickers may try to scuttle the ship or try to send a radio message to another ship it may be working with, so our team needs to be able to respond quickly to any eventualty, adds the First Officer.

The operations can take days to complete, with undercover surveillance being the most important aspect of a successful completion.

“Surprise is our greatest asset, and some boardings can take up to 15 days to complete,” he added.

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The biggest Rag Ball in
February 24th, 2000

"Myself and a few friends had a drinking competition and we each bet £10 that we could drink more during the week than the other person. We all had to be there when the drinking was being done or it did not count. We got through about 20 pints and a handful of shots a night and it was all neck and neck until one guy pucked all over the other three on Wednesday. We spent the bet money on dry cleaning."

"This is my fourth year going to RAG Balls and I would have thought that after the disaster the point was two years ago we would have learned our lesson. It's too big and nobody wants to listen to the music, you can't have a good time because you get too spread out and end up losing your friends. The music this year was especially bad."

---

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The Point Depot

Some thoughts on RAG Week

Traditionally, it is a time when grants are squandered in Pizza parlours and fast food outlets on anything that could be considered soakage for the real work that has to be done by students. Drink, drink and more drink.

It is a time when the landlords of Dublin go a begging at the prospect of no rent being paid, when the ESB are on overtime sending out final reminders. It was once a time when almost certainly the phone was disconnected for non payment of arrears, though the advent of pay-as-you-talk mobiles has lessened this somewhat.

It is a time when the farmers of the country look up their cattle and put their daughters out to pasture in anticipation of the hoards of students heading away on buses to the middle of nowhere, and needing the toilet every ten minutes.

But it is a time that anyone who ever went to college will remember fondly, whether they like to admit it or not. The hard core students will have absolutely no memory of the event, but sketchy memoirs by friends and a few dejas vues will jog a few memories. For those who don't, here are just a few thoughts from DIT students about their Weeks. Names have been changed to protect the innocent and the not so innocent.

Isn't it a good thing it only comes around once a year.

"RAG week is a great week because we have no lectures. No lectures means we have no college so there's no need to come to college or to go to any of the crappy events that are on. RAG week events are always really poor and apart from the fact that it is for charity it has no real impact on students at all!"

"It's a really fun week, and the trip was the best part for me. It was my first one and going to Kilronan was great. There's nothing quite like spending a day on a bus full of drunk students, with nothing on their minds other than getting drunker!"

"What I remember most is me friend (of course it's your friend) who had a bet she could score a guy a night and two at the RAG Ball. She almost made it, except for the fact that her boyfriend caught her snogging on the first of Thursday night's lucky winners and decked him!"

"MASTURBATING IS NOT A CRIME"
AIB on Campus

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)
10.30am - 11.30am and 1-1.30 (Tuesday)
9.30am - 12.45pm (Tuesday)
Survey shows mixed news for students' union

Many students do not know who their sabbatical officers are.

The survey was conducted before RAG week. A representative sample of almost 500 students from across the five sites, all years and from all courses were interviewed.

The wired world

Conor O'Dwyer takes you through the world wide web

The world wide web provides content on everything but the skill is in finding what you want. Finding websites that you want has become more like a journey.

The first step on your journey is the search engine; www.yahoo.com www.infoseek.com www.lycos.com www.altavista.com

The yahoo site is more of a directory than a search engine because a directory merely points to other search engines to compile the results of your query. The Metacrawler site is one of these. In the last month we have seen a few Irish Search Engines come to the market.

www.unions.ie
www.nicole.ie

The Union site has been set up by Independent Papers Limited and draws from its wide selection of printed publications for content. Nicole is a site set up by an Irish IT worker so it doesn't have a catalogue of actual printed publications to draw from but in some ways this is better as it is less prone to push its own information first.

One of the most used resources of the Internet are the newsgroups and mailing lists.

These were the original services when the Web was first set up before a topic you really wanted to hear, you would ask for it.

Browsers (Netscape or Explorer) are programs that read files from the web and show them in a graphical way.

www.liszt.com lists over 90,000 mailing lists, these are on a range of topics but you can travel to comput- ers. A mailing list is a list of email addresses of people interested in a certain topic, each month an email is created and sent to everyone on the list.

www.dejnews.com is a site which allow you to search through newsgroups.

These are places where you can post messages on a subject and read other messages that have been posted by other people.

Both newsgroups and mailing lists can be very useful in getting information of subjects of interest.

WANT TO LISTEN TO THE PAST

Ever missed your favourite radio program or heard that they covered a topic you really wanted to hear, well you can.

By accessing the RTE site www.rte.ie you can listen to the last show produced.

In order to do this you need a program called RealPlayer, this can be downloaded at www.realplayer.com. To download any program you create a folder on your hard drive (it can be named anything you want) and then click on the button on the website.

The program is then downloaded to your computer, you then locate and launch the file you downloaded by exploring your hard drive or choosing the Run option in the Start menu. (The file is where your Web browser saved it.)

This will start the RealPlayer 7 Basic Complete Download set-up process so you can listen to audio feeds or streams. This is like lis- tening to the radio only is online and it is a recording.

What's available?

Sport; News; Current Affairs; Music; Arts

My head is wrecked, the project is done if I could just find out about X. Well the word this week is Law, since we are all so dishonest or willing to bend a few rules, law is changing and evolving at a huge rate.

Where better to keep up with this change than on the internet.

The Trinity College web site www.tcd.ie/Library/People/Eliab che.Gleeson/law.htm provides great links to sites such as www.catalaw.com, this site could be best described as "a searchable index of legal materi- al which is really a catalogue of all legal catalogues".

The site has 4 sections; Legal topics; Regional Law; Extra Information such as sites dedicated to finding firms which specialise in legal issues.

A keyword search tool. The Trinity site provides 5 great links which is a great place to start a search on law.

O Conor O'Dwyer is a Business Management student in DIT Mountjoy Square

Ocean Competition

The Dit Independent have teamed up with Ocean to bring you this month's competition question: Which band did pop faves Sive join to launch the Ocean site? (Hint: The answer is at www.oceanfree.net) site.

The first 5 entries will receive an Ocean internet pack. Please email your entries to thewiredword@ireland.com.
Legs
Eleven

Jenni Duggan goes to the campest night in town at the George

WHEN most of us think of bingos we think of local community centre on a Thursday night with our

Granny. Or else we think of that programme on RTE, with the annoying theme tune "Jelly Bingo, Tuesday Nights ..."

However on Sunday evening in the George, the game was not half as long as the whole new meaning. Swapping the boring old spencer call- ing out the numbers in a monotone voice with a

Drag queen and you're halfway there.

Strange as all this may sound, I can safely say that this is one of the best outings I've had ever.

With the zany, 1997 Alternative Miss Ireland winner, Shirley Temple Bar as the host, you can sit back and have one night of fun with a twist before returning to the drudgery of work the next morning.

The night kicks off at about 7pm with Shirley aka Declan Buckley running out onto the stage immediately cracking jokes to get the crowd going. Declan describes Shirley as a "bit of a bra", she can get away with a lot because of her school girl innocence. She gives her own running commentaries on current affairs, politics and other topical issues and likes to air her views.

Bingo in the George is not just a game and a few wise cracks. Its a performance and a show. Not only is Shirley a comedian, she is also a talented performer. She emphatically mixes the words to songs and dances energetically in perfect time to the music. She even has her own rather tasty male dancers. STEPS watch out.

The George is probably the largest and most popular gay bar in Dublin. Because of its clientele, many heterosexual people feel uncomfortable about going there. Also Declan says, "there are a lot of people out there who might not necessarily have any problems with gays, they just wouldn't cross the door of a gay bar for whatever reason in their head".

The one thing Declan is most proud of about his Sunday show is that it has gone someway in changing this attitude. "People don't feel as intimidated to walk in because they feel that they are coming in to watch a show and when it is over, they can walk out." Bingo in the George and Shirley have been talked about on radio and television and this has helped to make the George an acceptable to those who normally would not even dream of visiting. The 10 yards of the George, let alone inside. "The doors of the George have opened up to a whole new audience and we are very very proud of that".

Shirley is often joined on stage by alternative drag queens, especially favourite of the crowd - "Squad of Three". Alternative Miss Ireland winner, Vada is a real treat. There is lot of banter between them and good hearted camaraderie. "There's no animosity, we're like one big happy family".

Get your sash and tiara because Alternative Miss Ireland is back, and this year it promises to be more exotic and absolutely fabulous then ever before, writes Rebecca Kelly

This year marks the sixth anniversary of the outrageous beauty pageant which takes place on Sunday March 19th in the Olympia Theatre, Dame St.

According to the organisers, the pageant extravaganza is open to all, which can include men, women, children and animals!

This year's show is tipped to be the most flamboyant yet with contestants from places as far flung as America and Australia.

"There are two contestants from Belfast, one from America and there's even an Australian taking part this year", Toni Walsh, resident DJ of HAM, at the Pod, Harcourt St., told The Liberty.

"The show throws up all sorts of things, and what is beautiful too is that you'll see the audience getting into the spirit of things. A lot of the audience dress up as they really want to be as glam as the contestants".

Sponsored by Smirnoff, the tongue-in-cheek event is in aid of a good cause, with all the proceeds going to CAIRED. The past three shows have raised over £15,000 for the voluntary organisation. CAIRED was founded in 1985, in order to provide a professional support service for children and adults affected by HIV and AIDS throughout Ireland.

This year the proceeds will go towards CAIRED's Child and Family service which consists of a 'Summer' and an 'After Schools' project.

"We presently care for over one hundred children between the ages of three and sixteen years at our Dublin centre and we are the only organisation in Ireland to provide such a service", says Shreeva Groome, the Fundraising Co-ordinator of the forthcoming event.

"This year, our fundraising initiatives are of even greater importance as our centre is being demolished to make way for Luas and so we must raise a staggering £175,000 to cover the costs of relocation while maintaining our existing services".

Dubbed the most 'significant post-cultural event of the year' by the organisers, it follows the tradition of beauty pageants worldwide with daytime, swimwear and eveningwear categories.

Over the years, Alternative Miss Ireland has launched beauties such as Miss Isle, Miss Tress, Miss Shirley Temple Bar, Miss Tammy Lilliette and the current title-holder, Miss Vada Bon Revre! Some of the previous winners of have gone on to bigger and brighter things.

Miss Shirley Temple Bar, the 1997 winner, now hosts the game based night bingo session in the George and also makes regular appearances at Grinle, Friday's alternative cabaret night at the Pod, Harcourt St.

The time and effort put into the individual acts by some of the contestants has astounded the organisers, which include Rory O'Neill and Trish Brennan.

One year, a candidate arrived on stage in a coffin carved from ice to Madonna's "Frozen". Former reigning queen, Miss Tammy Lilliette, won the show in 1998 with her version of Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On", complete with sailor boys and the prow of the ship from Titanic.

This year, the show has moved from its former club venues to the larger Olympia Theatre to cater for the increase in audience attendance.

Word of the impressive cabaret costume and set design has gotten out and tickets are being snapped up for the March 19th extravaganza.

"The whole show has stepped up in the past few years in terms of it's exposure", explains DJ Toni Walsh, "You can feel it reaching a critical mass. It is entering the mainstream but hasn't lost any of its edge and originality".

The glittering show not only boosts colourful contestants but also claims an exciting line-up of judges. Recent years have seen the likes of Van Morrison, Shovel, Ratif Orbeck, John Reynolds, Brenda Fricker, and Louis Walsh. "We've got some terrific judges this year", says Toni, "People like Emily O'Reilly, the journalist and Eileen Dunne, which is a bit of a coup for us'.

The rest of the line-up include the photographer Conor Morgan, and surprise guest judges to be announced closer to date.

If you want to catch the forthcoming Alternative Miss Ireland, you better hurry as tickets for the glitzy event are disappearing fast.
Pints and Pigtails

Prior to the 1997 Alternative Miss Ireland competition, Declan Buckley was just a relatively normal marketing graduate from DCU. A bit mad maybe, a bit of a joker, but just a normal guy with a normal job.

That all changed however, when a friend, involved in the Alternative Miss Ireland competition, asked him to enter because they were short of contestants. Always game for a laugh, Declan decided why not?

With the help of 'friends, drink and a lot of bullshit talk', an idea was formed and Shirley Temple Bar was born. Shirley, they decided should be a sassy young teenage schoolgirl from the Coombe.

While Declan himself is not actually from the inner city, he has many memories of coming across a young friend who was younger with his mother.

"Shirley is drawn from old memories of someone brought up in Dublin would have, like going to Boyens restaurant for tea and cakes with your granney."

Not for a moment did Declan expect that when he entered in the Alternative Miss Ireland he would win. However win he did and since then has been nowhere looking back.

Only a couple of months after his victory, Declan had traded in his job of being five-to-nine office job for performing on stage as a drag queen.

Not what you would call a typical career move.

"It's a complete accident, I would never have imagined myself doing this, five years ago I would have been told, 'look, Dec. in five years time, you're going to be doing a drag show in the George every Sunday', I would never have believed them. I would probably have committed suicide."

Declan does not really consider himself to be a drag queen, he comes from the traditional sense of the word.

For him 'drag queen' conjures up an image of a 'big haired, eyelashed man dressed up as a middle aged woman wearing Joan Collins outfits and is very brassy and tacky'.

While he admits that Shirley is tacky, Declan defends her by saying that it is "just who she is".

Declan sees his act as 'a kind of a character, as acting, and because Shirley is a different gender to the person who is playing her, that is Shirley, he would probably take up acting because I love it - performing'.

As one would expect, Declan's parents were a bit taken aback when he told them of his new career. "Their reaction was a bit like a hesitant 'ok', and my mum would turn to my Dad and whisper 'where did we go wrong?'"

In the however they got more used to the idea.

"I think now that they see that the intention from my part is nothing other than professional, in that it's not some weird thing that Declan likes wearing tight that they can accept it more."

His siblings have no problem with his new career but they do find it amazing, 'they come along to the show with their friends and just laugh'.

While Declan is very extrovert and enjoys his job, he still gets embarrassed when he has to explain what he does for a living to people he doesn't know very well or people he hasn't seen in a long time. In fact he 'cries and goes red in the face'.

Shirley is by no means your typical teenage. Unlike many normal teenagers, she has many quirky hobbies and interests.

One of the things she enjoys doing most is ribbon gymnastics and some day hopes to get to the Olympics. Despite having made television appearances and being in the newspapers, Shirley has not let her fear of going to her head. "She's seen too many teenage sensations fizzle out in their early twenties and she's dead wise to that carry on."

She is also a very sensible teenager. Unlike many of her peers she doesn't drink, drugs.

However she is partial to a few pints.

"She's too sensible, she drinks like a fish though, and goes knacker drinking with her friends in the fields every Saturday with some flagons of cider."

We can all probably remember our childhood idols and these days, if you were to ask any twelve year old girl who they admire, they would more than likely answer Britney Spears or some other anorexic breast implanted pop sensation.

But not Shirley Temple Bar. Oh no, Shirley's idol is not a pop sensation but rather a panto sensation. Yes, you've guessed it - none other than Twink!

According to Declan "it kind of started as an ironic thing as most young kids in Dublin would have role models in more of a Britney Spears direction rather than Twink... Shirley's line is 'Twink does everything, she has big respect for Twink'."

Among her best friends are fellow drag queens, Panti and Vada Bon Reve, last year's Alternative Miss Ireland. Declan describes them as 'one big professional family'.

They often perform together and with their different styles, they contrast very well. Panti is like the quiet one of the group, a bit like a mother figure.

Shirley is the youngest of the group and is treated like a bit of a child. "When we work together, the people organising never talk to Shirley and they hand the drinks to the other two, they never give Shirley the drinks."

Shirley was only twelve years old when she won the Alternative Miss Ireland and recently celebrated her fifteenth birthday

However Declan reckons she's getting a bit old and that he's going to have to do something about this.

"Shirley is getting too old now, she doesn't want to grow up anymore... she might have to go and get some age

reversal treatment and go back in time or something."

At the moment, Shirley has no major plans for the future. According to Declan, things are going nice and slowly, for the next while she'll be touring around, doing this, that and the other. And as for any hopes for stardom, Declan just replies "we'll wait and see."

On Sunday evening in the George, the game has been given a whole new meaning. Swap the boring old gezer calling out the numbers in a monotone voice with a drag queen and you're halfway there
Jamie Hannigan looks at the latest film and video releases

The Insider

The trouble with adapting real-life events into film is that far too often the facts are grossly over-simplified to make them fit into a neat 111 hour slot. Thankfully, director Michael Mann (Heat, Last Of The Mohicans) has gone for the other approach and has deservedly received an Oscar nomination for his trouble.

Like Heat, The Insider is a film of two halves and two men, tobacco-industry whistle-blower Jeffrey Wigand (Russell Crowe) and 60 Minutes producer Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino).

Wigand's interview with the 60 Minutes television show would turn out to be the most explosive and damaging indictment of the tobacco industry to date, but the segment was pulled by CBS station heads, who feared that a lawsuit from cigarette giants Brown & Williamson would jeopardize an upcoming merger. It's here that the film really comes alive, evoking memories of the classic All The President's Men.

Pacino is terrific, but it's Australian actor Crowe (last seen in LA Confidential) who quietly steals the show as an average white-collar Joe whose life is being forcibly unravelled because he told the truth.

The Insider is a beautifully made film, and only the most heinous of cinematographers will be put off by the 160min running time.

Holy Smoke

On paper, Holy Smoke looked fascinating. A young Australian woman (Kate Winslet) is travelling around India with a friend when she comes under the spell of a religious guru. Her dis-

The Green Mile

The last line spoken in this film can sum it up succinctly: "Sometimes, the Green Mile can seem so long." And at three hours and eight minutes, it is in definitively long. It's odd though, but after seeing it, you can't really pinpoint any aspect of the story that could have been dropped to speed up the running time. The story, following the lives of guards and prisoners on Death Row in an American prison during the Depression, moves along at its own gentle, old-fashioned pace.

Obvious comparisons are going to be made with director Frank Darabont's last film The Shawshank Redemption, both are period dramas set in America, both are based on stories by Stephen King. But despite the same cast, music, lighting and well, pretty much everything except the actors, The Green Mile is a very different kettle of fish.

The arrival of convicted child-killer John Coffey, a gigantic, 7-foot black man, on the Mile has profound effect on the lives of everyone around him, not least chief guard Paul Edgecomb (Tom Hanks). The exceptionally gentle and childlike Coffey (Oscar-nominated Michael Clark Duncan) starts to have Edgecomb believing that he may be innocent, not least when condemned man starts showing signs of having miraculous healing powers.

Shawshank's strength lay in its utterly grim set-up, which made the final conclusion so uplifting. The Green Mile, however, has few truly evil characters (Tom Hanks, Row after all), and the seemingly forgone conclusion makes it a little less gripping than it could have been. It may not quite be The Shawshank Redemption, but The Green Mile is well worth 188 minutes of your time.

Girl, Interrupted

Girl. Interrupted on the other hand, couldn't have ended soon enough, and it was a good hour shorter than The Green Mile. Based on the book by Susanna Kaysan about her real-life stay in a mental hospital in the 60s, Girl, Interrupted is about - you guessed it - a young girl (Winona Ryder) called Susanna Kaysan who checks herself into a mental hospital in the 60s after a lack-lustre suicide attempt.

Along the way she meets up with the usual clichés, the pathological liar, the scatterbrained victim, the anorexic, the lesbian and the resident sociopath, a fiery Angelina Jolie, who tries her hardest to give the movie a much needed kick-start.

Ryder also does her best in a role that has you rooting for the guards to take out nightsticks and start beating the crap out of her. Whoopi Goldberg is the nice head nurse (everyone in Girl, Interrupted is nice) who gets so fed up with Kaysan that at one point, she drops her into a bath of ice-cold water, snapping: 'You're a lazy, self-indulgent little girl who is driving herself crazy.' The trouble is, this is something you'll have figured that out after the first half-hour. Maybe the first ten minutes.

In fairness, the acting is uniformly good, Jolie's performance has earned her an Oscar nomination, but the script is so irritatingly predictable and linear that by the end, you can't wait for Angelina Jolie to get a lobotomy and Winona Ryder to turn into a large Native American and smother her with a pillow... oh wait, no. That's what the Girl, Interrupted wanted to be, but just didn't have the balls for.

Video reviews

The Mummy

The sad thing is, The Mummy has a really great opening sequence. It's dark, scary and epic all at the same time - the sort of thing that Raiders Of The Lost Ark was able to do so effortlessly. Those first ten minutes of The Mummy set a precedence that Indiana Jones would find hard to follow. Unfortunately, we don't get Harrison Ford. We get Brendan Fraser on autopilot. We don't get giant boulders or snake pits or Nazis. We get lots of computer-generated effects chasing people we could care less about around some admittedly pretty locations.

The plot? Oh yes - an Egyptian High Priest is put to a "living-death", but a bunch of idiots resurrect him a couple of thousand years later. The mummy sets about bringing his lost love back to life and unleashing a lot of bad stuff on the world or something... to be honest, I really couldn't pay attention. I did last year, when it was on the big screen, but even then it was pretty weak. On video, there's not much point. Apparently, there's a sequel due in 2001. Some people never learn.

The General's Daughter

The General's Daughter is a film that is bound to be damned in faint praise. It's difficult to criticise it outright, it's well made, well-acted... and considering director Simon West's last film was the mind-numbingly awful Con Air, The General's Daughter is pleasantly sedate.

But there's no BITE to it. There are some great lines, but little that'll stay with you. It's a movie, but without the suspense. You can guess who's responsible from the word go (he may as well have an "I DID IT" sign on his chest). John Travolta has one of his better commercial roles as Warrant Officer Paul Brenner, a sharp-tongued military detective investigating the murder of the title character.

But far from being the Army Golden Girl she was heralded as, the General's Daughter had more than a few skeletons in her closet.

The tagline runs "Go behind the lens" but unfortunately, it's that simple. The American Military LIE to protect themselves? No, really? Well that IS a surprise. Unlike the film, sadly.
Students to rock airwaves with radio station

Niamh O'Donoghue on DIT FM

If Simba the lion king had no worries, then the Hakuna Matata breakfast show crew won't sweat a tear when they kick off DIT FM at 8pm on March 27.

With up beat tunes mixed with comic interludes, DJs Louise McSharry and Lorraine Gleeson promise not to be too hard on those Monday morning hangovers.

If you are a fan of eighty's music then 'The Time Warp' is the show for you.

Every day from 10 to 11pm Orlaith Gildea and Niamh Kavanagh will get you in the retro mood until the mid morning magazine show comes on air at 11 o'clock.

Roving reporter Eilis McGuirk will be out and about to find the views of the people while back in studio Brendan O'Brien and Jenni Duggan will review the daily newspaper headlines and deal with interesting issues such as cosmetic surgery, travel and much more.

Once more Dermot Keyes and Ray Foley will make you laugh till your sides split with their hilarious sketches to give the show that humorous edge. If you are a fan of Westlife, The Venga boys, Dove or Atomic Kitten then you must tune into The Red Light Radio at 12pm.

The program presented by Gerard Quinn, Celine McGillicuddy and Siobhan O'Connor will include exclusive interviews with all the superstars mentioned above.

Their will be numerous competitions with the prizes donated by Planet Hollywood and if you want to impress or just shock your friends with weird and wacky facts from around the world to live up that party, well here is the place to pick them up.

From 2 to 3.30pm Laura Foley, Miriam Roddy and Anna Guaghan keep the public up to date on the latest films, videos, web sites and DVDs. The show will also feature snippets of the hilarious gags from comedians such as Brendan Burke, Des Bishop and Simon O'Leary.

With give-aways galore sponsored by Pepsi and Virgin and natty music tunes, this show promises to be very entertaining.

A variety of different shows will air at the 3.30-4pm slot each day.

The 'Final Whistle' deals with sports issues of the day from 4 to 4.30pm and will feature interviews with Sean McCague the president of the GAA and many other sporting personalities.

Presenters Malachy Clerkin, Brendan O'Brien, John Roycroft and Mark Sheahan will cover a wide variety of sports such as Gaelic, Soccer, boxing, Rowing, Formula one and the Irish Olymipic team.

They will preview and review all the big matches before the Virgin Chart show comes on air at 4.30pm with Orlaith Gildea and Niamh Kavanagh charting out the hits.

The 'Bottom Line' evening show has a packed line up featuring the news issues of the day, interviews with politicians and councillors, traffic updates, book reviews, competitions, studio discussions and newspaper reviews. Presented by Trudy Waters and Alison O'Brien, it promises to be informative, light and interesting.

At 6pm every evening 'Best of the Bands' kicks off with four exciting new bands every evening. The winner will receive a demo deal.

100 copies of the winning demo, the printed insert and colour print worth a total of £500 from Trends studios. Jenny Holmes and Mary Carton will also be talking to hot bands Bliw, La Roca and Eots Sweeney from Hot Press will also be in studio.

From 7 to 9pm Eimear Lowe and John Hegarty will play a blend of dance, easy listening and alternative music to round off the evening. The show named Soundcraft will feature interviews with top DJs David Holmes, Desy Balmer and Glen Brady.

Eimear and John will have loads of prizes to give away and The Disconnections and Sinead Buckley of Liquid HiFi will also be in studio.

DIT fm will have news on the hour and the news will also be read in Irish twice daily. With such a wide, varied, hectic schedule DIT fm promises to keep everyone entertained throughout the week.
Karting Krazy as Bolton Street crowned Kings

By Thomas Felle

A SIX-member karting team from Bolton Street became heroes for the second year running when they won the All Ireland Inter-varsities Karting Championships on March 11.

The team, headed by captain Paul O’Riordan, won the championship Grand Prix held last year at Dungarvan in the Republic and this year’s event was also held in Dungarvan.

Paul O’Riordan said that the 2012 edition was a controversial decision, but one which we had no choice but to abide by.

"The decision was made by the Irish Karting Association. A competition has been held in Dungarvan for the past four years, but this year it was moved to Waterford and we had no choice but to accept the decision. It was a hard decision to make, but we had no choice.

"Our team is a very experienced one and we are confident of winning the championship. We are looking forward to the competition and we expect to do well."

The grand prix was run over four heats, with team members in relay like fashion competing for twenty minutes at a time before coming in to the pits to refuel and change drivers.

The event is very serious and the team captains clocking laps, and advising on team strategy and how points can be scored.

The DIT team were low in second place, and were ahead on the track for most of the grand prix. However, a driver on the last lap of the race ran out of petrol and the race was temporarily stopped.

The crash happened at the loop and left the DIT driver unhappy for 5 minutes before being brought to hospital. He was released from hospital with a broken arm, but his condition has improved.

According to Ray Nangle, karting is an exception to the danger associated with motor sport. "While pushing a fine-tuned kart to its limits around purpose built circuits with acceleration from 0 to 60 mph in 4.5 seconds. It is easy to get it wrong and spin.

"As a team we have to cater for this with accuracy in the karting next coming on driver are expecting to see a clear road even though they are only less than a second behind, and outside of their reaction time."

The late great Ayrton Senna said "there is only two types of motor sport that give you the adrenaline buzz drivers are looking for, pro Karting and F1!"

According to Ray Nangle, karting is one of the most successful clubs in DIT, it suffers from a lack of recognition, according to Chairman Ray Nangle. "We find it difficult to get the finances we need to run the club, as it costs much more per head to participate. Some of the sports officers have in the past refused to sanction spending on the grounds that we were not a club with the history of GAA, Soccer and Rugby.

"But things are improving. Last year’s win brought much-needed gratuity and hopefully this win will bring more. The DIT Karting club has won back to back All Ireland Inter-varsities a feat neither GAA, soccer or rugby clubs in DIT have managed," added the Chairman.

The event, organised by the DIT, cost about €4,000 to stage. Karting is one of the most expensive of all sports, with 15 minutes karting at any of the country’s karting tracks costing between £15 and £25, depending on the track qualities.

The Tyranny track is the largest purpose built karting track in Europe, and is one of the biggest motor sports tracks in Ireland, with Mondello being the only one bigger in the Republic. "The Inter-varsities were held here," adds Nangle, "as it was the best place to hold it. It's purpose built, and the karts are extremely fast, toping out at 70 mph."

To infinity and beyond - the famous trip to Tyanagh

Thomas Felle remembers the last time a bus load of DIT students went to Tyanagh

IT WAS a cold wet afternoon in mid-February when three buses loaded with DIT students set off for Tyanagh, a small village in County Galway.

The population (479) suddenly grew dramatically as 150 raggers poured off buses and into the village's two pubs turned bars by Arthur Gordon Guinness.

Harrys, a famous farm land house, had a drop at the bar, and the local pub, the Guinness tap, was well used by the left running, filled glass after glass of creamy satisfaction.

A place where Heinieken on tap was a Celtic myth didn't tap those less accustomed to country life, never mind the habits of the Dutcheer beer, but a 150p soon quieted the most irritable of dissenters.

Hour after hour the clock struck time, each seeming longer than the last, each beckoning the hour when alas the mystery tour would have leave.

It soon emerged that the barrels were running dry, the optics had long since perished and the Guinness tap was not expected again until the following week.

For those too small to be heard at the bar, a game of football on the main road connecting two local towns seemed a good idea. The passing traffic was none too impressed, nor was the local Sergeant, who demanded his Garda hat for the first time in 10 years to do some "official business."

Still, those who sat at the hearts of the monster roaring turf and ash fires enjoyed their chasers, and sounds at those prices posed no problem.

A crowd of locals gathered as word spread of an invasion in the village: Those who came half dressed in FCA uniforms were sooncalmed with the prospect that a hoard of 20 something young were awaited in the many snags that breached the drinking establishments.

But all too soon the time came to depart, so back on the busses the students got, after spending a lifetime in the sleepy village, they were to leave Tir na nOg to return to a world where nobody knew their name and where a drink never became without a VAT receipt.

A few students, so infatuated with the thatched cottaged wonders, decided they might take a souvenier, such was their affinity.

None too impressed a shot gun engaged in Bull McCabe like scenes as threats of damage being done should a lag not be returned were chanted.

It was, the busses pulled off into the west and almost as quickly as they had arrived, and the students left the drinkers paradise, never to return.

As DIT karters drove through the village on their way back to Galway city, not one stopped to see the 8th wonder.

It was not their fault, none of them could have known that apart from being the Karting capital of Europe, the village had once housed one of the greatest sessions ever witnessed by students.

Golf outing takes students to new heights

By Daniel Metcalf

The golf society in Aungier street held their second outing of the year at Annes golf club in February. It was another success for event organised by the golf committee, David Flynn, Ken Gage, Dan Tooie and Shane O’Loughlin.

Several weeks prior to the outing the committee had been hard at work mount

A golf outing takes students to new heights

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The golf society in Aungier street held their second outing of the year at Annes golf club in February. It was another success for event organised by the golf committee, David Flynn, Ken Gage, Dan Tooie and Shane O’Loughlin.

Several weeks prior to the outing the committee had been hard at work mounting a poster campaign, booking buses to and from the college to the course, and ensuring that everyone in attendance would be taken care of and where the event was taking place.

The competition attracted the largest entry to date, almost double their previous outing and raised over 1000 pounds for the island golf club last December.

The best thing about this society is that for only 10 you go out and enjoy a game of golf with a friendly crowd who are at the same time competitive.

No matter if your handicap is in the low single figures, or if you don’t even have a handicap, an enjoyable day golf with a meal and a few pints is guaranteed.

The competition was won by Paul Grehan playing off a handicap of 24 who had 39 points in very windy conditions.

He just piped David Flynn and Shane O’Loughlin. The three were the only ones to beat their partner after their handicap.

The golf committee are hoping to stage another outing in March at Royal Dublin, so lock out for another siege of posters around Aungier St nearer to the game.

The committee are hoping to attract sponsors for the event, so if you think it will be another success.

Also at the end of the year there will be the annual inter-DIT golf outing in City West golf club.

Every year this is a fun day out for all levels of golfers.

If you want to become a member of the society just ask a few questions about when and where the next outing is taking place, contact the golf committee mentioned above or everyone at the students union.
Clap hands for handball

Bolton Street Students Union Deputy President, Bernie O'Reilly, recently travelled to the US to represent DIT in an international Handball competitions with a team from DIT

O'Reilly got to the last sixteen of their categories.

Paul Gunner' Brady who has a World title and several All-Ireland titles went one step further and won the Mens Open Singles beating Brad Alesi from Texas in a thrilling match. (21-15, 21-13).

All the lads paired up for the doubles, with Paul Gunner' Brady and Padraig Gaffney reaching the final of the mens open. Unfortunately they lost to a doubles team from Lake Forest Chicago.

On the overall colleges title DIT came 4th, out of 25 colleges.

Points were accumulated from the top scoring 6 men and 6 women for each college, so DIT did extremely well considering their single female member.

All in all the 10 day trip was a huge success, a once in a life time experience for all the players.

We would like to thank our coach Mr. Frank Sempie and Mr. Tommy Barton (Director of the Tournament in SMSU).

Also to all our sponsors: Marathon Coaches, Eircom, The Irish Times, Cool (for supplying bottled water to bring with us), Derek (you know who you are) and DIT for all their support, particularly Veronica in student services, The Irish Handball Council and Paul Reynolds from Trinity College who had to share a room with us. DIT claimed four of the seven available titles at the All-Ireland College Intervarsities Handball on February 5th. The event held in Croke Park and UCD had competitors from several colleges, universities and institutes countrywide.

Results: The winner of the Mens 'A' singles was Paul Gunner Brady from Mountjoy Square.

The Mens 'C' singles turned into a DIT versus DIT game. Anthony O'Sullivan from Kevin Street was the winner while Darren Mc Ardle of Bolton Street was runner up.

The DIT mens 'A' team won the overall Championship. The team were Paul Gunner Brady from MJ Square, Padraig Gaffney Bolton Street, Steven Mc Dermott from MJ Square, Gerard Mc Ardle from MJ Square, Darragh O'Gara of Bolton Street, Bernie O'Reilly of Bolton.

Paul Brady (right) and Padraig in their DIT strip in the doubles final

Street Student Union won the Women's 'B' singles.

The teams were under the coaching of Frank Sempie. If you are interested in playing handball, whether you are a beginner or have played before, the Handball Club trains on Monday night in UCD at 7:30 and on Tuesday nights in Croke Park from 8:00.

Beginners are always welcome. Who knows, maybe next year we'll have a full ladies team?

For further information contact your Students Union or Bernie O'Reilly or Padraig Gaffney in Bolton Street.

Sports star of the month

This month's sports star of the month is Paul Gunner Brady pictured above in the blue shorts, a student in Mountjoy Square, a heading for another All-Ireland Handball title. He already has a world title and several All-Ireland titles under his belt. The 21-year-old from Mullahoran, Co Cavan has a chance to claim the All-Ireland Senior men's singles 40x40 title.

This most prestigious title would be well deserved for Paul, for this year he's won the Mens 'A' singles the All-Ireland college intervarsities.

Here's just some of his achievements: Winner of the USHA International Collegiates Mens Open singles (the top honour) 2000. Member of the DIT Handball Team which won the 'A' Division title for the overall in the USHA Collegiates, February 2000. Now an 'All American' All Star - 2000. Finalist in the Mens Doubles in the USHA Collegiates 2000. Winner in the Mens Singles in the Irish Intervarsities 2000 (Representing DIT) Member of the DIT Mens 'A' team which won the overall title in this years Irish (2000). Member of the DIT Mens 'A' Team which won the overall title in Irish Intervarsities 1998; World Champions 1998; Shield Provincial Titles, County Titles, Minor Titles, All-Ireland titles, at all levels, basically very many many to mention them all. Will compete in the Senior 40x40 final 4 in weeks time, the Irish Nationals, in the Scottish Amateur Open, and in the World Championship in October.
All right, go if you must, but don't come back here pissed.

The one with the atmosphere

THE
PALACE NIGHTCLUB