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The DIT Examiner: the Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union April, 1994

DIT: Students' Union

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A Governing Body has finally been appointed for the Dublin Institute of Technology, four months late, but the honeymoon period could be shortest ever.

The DIT Act provides for the election of two academic staff representatives to the Governing Body but it met for the first time last week without these two representatives, and also without the two student representatives also provided for in the Act. It will meet again this week to discuss the institute's budgets for the next two years and the Teacher's Union of Ireland (TUI) has expressed deep dissatisfaction with the current situation.

"We have taken legal advice on the matter and have been told that any decisions taken by the body as it is can be challenged in the courts," Eddie Conlon, the DIT Examiner, Mr Conlon is the vice chairman of the Dublin College's branch of the TUI.

"We are very unhappy with them meeting without the staff representatives being present."

The reason that there are no academic and student representatives on the governing body is that none have been elected and the reason for that is that last November the TUI and a part time teacher (EIT) took out a high court action to prevent the election from taking place on the grounds that the regulations set by the old governing body precluded EPTs from voting in such elections.

Last month the High Court decided that the EPTs had full voting rights. It is an extremely messy situation. According to Mr Conlon, the old regulations are now invalid and so elections cannot be held under them. Yet, up to now there has been no Governing Body set to new election regulations.

Eddie Conlon

A spokesperson for the Department of Education said that new guidelines have been issued and were sent to the Directors of the six DIT sites last Wednesday. "It's up to the colleges now," she said. The guidelines call for gender balancing.

Even with the issuing of the new guidelines, Mr Conlon reckons it could take between three and four weeks for elections to take place, opening up the possibility of interim legal action against the governing body should the TUI decide it is appropriate.

"The longer it goes on the messier it's going to get," he said.

Asked what was the Department's feeling on the threat of legal action from the TUI, the spokesperson said, "I am not in a position to comment about that."

Chairman of the new Governing Body, Professor Ray Kinsella told the DIT Examiner that he is anxious that the staff and student representatives be on board as soon as possible.

"They are a most essential dimension, not just for good governance, but for the efficient operation of the governing body."

He said that this point had been emphasised at the first meeting. "We would want a situation where right from the outset staff and students would be participating in all major decisions and developments." Even without the potential legal problems, the new Governing Body is hardly getting off to a flying start. Because of the decision taken by the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach, to introduce amending legislation to the DIT act, the current governing body will only sit for one year. Since January, Ms Bhreathnach has been pushing for 40% representation of women on the governing bodies of the DIT and the 11 Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs). This they had largely refused to do, pointing out that they were under no legal obligation. Consequently the Minister refused to accept their nominations. Now, to break the deadlock, she has accepted the nominations, but only temporarily it seems.

Professor Kinsella said that it was unfortunate that the governing body had only been appointed for one year.

"Naturally it would be better if we had a longer time period, we'd all prefer that but there are certain difficulties there and we must work within these."

He said that he believed a lot could be accomplished in a year.

Dr. Brendan Goldsmith

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has again said that it will not use union funds to pay the legal costs owed to the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), this despite the recent decision by Trinity College to hand over £14,000 in capitation funds to the receiver appointed for SPUC.

"We are not going to pay, USI is not going to pay, the student support trust is going to pay, that's the money that's fund raised," said Helen O'Sullivan, incoming President of USI.

"USI is not going to pay union funds and that's always been clear."

The Student Support which is campaigning for donations to raise funds to clear the union's debts has so far raised about £10,000, leaving a shortfall of approximately £45,000. However, the matter will not as simply resolved as that.

Students protesting last month over costs row

"Between ourselves, TCD and UCD, it's £25,000 but £14,000 is half and Trinity only really owe a third so it's not like we only have four or five thousand to raise," said Ms O'Sullivan.

The decision by the Trinity College authorities to pay the money caused surprise in USI and Trinity College Students' Union, because they had previously asserted that they would do all in their power not to pay. But this did not include breaking the law, pointed out Peter Fitzgerald, President of Trinity Students' Union, and so the capitation fees due to the union went instead of the receiver. The Students' Union was not informed prior to the decision being taken.

"We were informed when everyone else was. It would have been nice of them to let us know, polite to say the least," He described the suddenness of the decision as a "bombshell" but was not surprised that the money had been paid.

"The always said they'd pay when push came to shove."

The lack of such an amount of money will certainly cause hardship for the union. Mr Fitzgerald said that the students will "really hurt during the summer" and that students would ultimately suffer.

The DIT Examiner attempted to contact the college secretary in Trinity College, Mr Michael Gleeson, but was told that he was "unavailable to talk about that item."
The DIT Examiner
DITSU, DIT Kevin Street, Kevin St., Dublin 8. Ph/Fax: 4783154

Governing Body

So the Dublin Institute of Technology finally has a new Governing Body. This is to be welcomed but the delay in setting it up and the temporary nature of the new body reflects badly on the DIT, through not fault of its own, and the Minister for Education, Niamh Breenathach, whose intransigence on the matter of gender balance has succeeded only in antagonising the VEC and the TUI and presented the effective and democratic functioning of the DIT and the country's 11 RTCs.

Further, the Minister's determination to have 40% women's representation on state bodies means that the make up of the new body will have to change next year in line with hastily introduced amending legislation which will come into force at that time. This sort of tinkering with an Act which, though criticised in places, was designed to herald a new dawn for the DIT does not instil confidence. Come next year, the work of the Governing Body, whose members will be used to working with each other and will have developed, it is hoped, effective working relationships, will be disrupted as new members are appointed.

It is not surprising that the Minister is trying to amend the situation which existed under her predecessor when 11 out of 12 chairpersons on the governing bodies were men and this is as it should be but she seems to have embarked on a gender balance crusade. Her aims are laudable - the balance ought to be redressed - but her bull headed methods may not do anyone any favours in the long run.

The Editors replies

With regard to the results of the survey, Mr Woods writes that 78.5% of students regarded the food quality as adequate, very good or excellent whilst only 21% regarded it as Not Good or Poor. In response to the question "How would you consider the portions of food served in the canteen?" 84.4% of students regarded it as Adequate, Very Good or Excellent whilst only 15.5% replied Not Good or Poor.

The Editor replies

In response to the question "What do you think of the quality of food in the canteen?" 78.5% of students regarded it as Adequate, Very Good or Excellent whilst only 21% regarded it as Not Good or Poor.

In response to the question "How would you consider the portions of food served in the canteen?" 84.4% of students regarded it as Adequate, Very Good or Excellent whilst only 15.5% replied Not Good or Poor.

Both of the above would suggest that a very substantial majority of students are either reasonably or more than reasonably happy with the present operation.

The Committee has sought at all times, comments as to how service might be improved. No practicable suggestion has been or will be ignored.

The canteen in Kevin Street has operated for over 20 years under the management of staff/student committee. The prices of tea and coffee are comparable with prices charged in other DIT colleges and are cheaper than some. The cost of the main lunch meal is the cheapest of all the Colleges with ample portions served as the survey demonstrated.

The question of facilities, furniture etc. are outside the control of the Canteen Committee.

Yours Sincerely,
Brendan Woods,
Secretary

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

The article in the January issue of your paper under the heading "Survey Results - As Expected" which relates to the Canteen in Kevin Street College, contains a number of inaccuracies and omissions.

The article states that the price of tea and coffee was increased twice this year.

This is not correct. In fact, the price of tea and coffee has not been increased since 1989. The article further states that one of the reasons for the price increases was that the price of coffee rose on the commodities market. This is not correct. Increases were necessary to pay for the increase in staff wages due under the current PESP agreement. Is the author suggesting that such wage increases not be paid?

The comments on the survey itself are selective. The so-called survey of staff resulted in 19 responses and was acknowledged by the organisers themselves not to be valid, yet reference is made to it. In response to the question "What do you think of the quality of food in the canteen?" 78.5% of students regarded it as Adequate, Very Good or Excellent whilst only 21% regarded it as Not Good or Poor. In response to the question "How would you consider the portions of food served in the canteen?" 84.4% of students regarded it as Adequate, Very Good or Excellent whilst only 15.5% replied Not Good or Poor.

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The Names That Matter

The following have been appointed to the new Governing Body of the Dublin Institute of Technology:

Professor Ray Kinsella (Chairman), Dr Brendan Goldenhill (President of the DIT), Dr Patrick O'Meara (TCD) and Ms Phil Kenna (Non academic staff representative).

VEC nominations:
Mr Peter Burke, Cllr Mary Freedhill, Mr Michael O'Halloran, Cllr Vincent Jackson, Cllr Lucia O'Neil, Mr Tom Simpson,

VEC Nominating Bodies:
Frank O'Reilly (ICTU), Mr Pierce Pigott (Institute of Engineers), Dr Tom Hardiman (Dublino Chamber of Commerce), Mr Niall Meghan (IBEC), Ms Maureen Dunne (INOU).

Two staff representatives and two student representatives have yet to be appointed. It is unusual that the incoming President of DITSU be named as one of the student representatives.

This year that will be Colman Byrne, currently Convener of the Students' Union in DIT Mountjoy Square.

Clarification

It has been brought to our attention that in an article in the previous edition of the DIT Examiner headed Central Banking it could have been construed that the Central Social and Cultural Committee was a committee run by Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union (DITSU).

This is not the case; it is a committee of which DITSU is a member. The reference to the committee at one point as a 'company' was a typographical error.

Should you encounter anything you feel should be clarified in this, or any other issue of the DIT Examiner, please contact the Editor and these matters shall then be clarified in the next issue.

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The Editors replies

With regard to the results of the survey, Mr Woods writes that 78.5% of students regarded the food quality as adequate, very good or excellent. To lump together statistics in such a fashion is in itself misleading, for, by the same token, 68.09% of students regarded the food quality as adequate, not good or poor. It does not seem the most appropriate way to comment on the survey.

With regard to the portions served in the canteen, the students' satisfaction was referred to in the article by Deputy Convener Claran Crosbie, who also expressed the union's disappointment with the staff response.

There is some confusion regarding the quote about the price increases. The Students' Union maintains that the price of coffee has increased this year, as has the price of chips. These are the two increases referred to by Mr Crosbie. His quote suggests that the price of coffee increased twice this year; this is not the case and The DIT Examiner aplogises for the misunderstanding it may have caused.
The administrative staff at the heart of a dispute in the Dublin Institute of Technology have voted to accept proposals from the Department of Education and will not now be going on strike this week.

But Jim Behan, Chairman of the Administrative Staff Association in the DIT, warned that the fighting might not be over yet.

"We'll have to wait until the end of May when the final structures are in place. We might have to do a bit of fighting. I think it's going to be a long summer."

Under the DIT Act of January 1993 the Vocational Educational Committee and the Dublin Institute of Technology have separated and administrative staff have transferred from the VEC to the DIT. The dispute centres around the promotion of administrative staff.

The Department of Education has been insisting that three principal officers, Finance, Building Services and Personnel, be required to have a third level qualification once the person has relevant experience. IMPACT, the union representing the administrative staff, was reasonably willing to concede the personnel post and to give it a confined filling.

Staffing structures have been put in place, though the VEC had handled administration since the split, as it had the computer software necessary. "We've all been doing extra work, the people in Ballsbridge are running two payrolls for example."

The agreement between the DIT and the VEC ended on March 31st and no system has been set up to replace it, though the DIT has said that one was being set up.

For now, trouble has been averted but the DIT may not be out of the woods yet. Final proposals for staffing will be made at the end of May and these could cause problems.

"I'm not saying we'll accept them but we will be in negotiation," said Mr Ryan.

A fourth principal officer post has also been created. This long-term temporary post will have a confined filling and will be reviewed after an unspecified number of years.

"We're still not particularly happy with the situation," said Mr Ryan. "We still don't see the need for third level qualifications on the finance post."

However the feeling at the meeting held last week seems to have been that there was not reason enough to take action at the present time. Out of 152 who voted, 100 voted against strike action. It had become clear to both sides in the dispute that interim staffing proposals would have to be accepted if the institute was to continue operating efficiently.

"Since the DIT split from the VEC no staffing structures have been put in place," said Mr Behan. The VEC had handled administration since the split, as it had the computer software necessary.

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Striking the Right Note

Tucked away on Chatham Row, off Grafton Street, is a medium sized red brick building, not very imposing, just there. Were it not for the music constantly emanating from it, seems, the very walls and the steady stream of people entering and exiting with cases of unusual shape, you might pass by without giving it a glance. For this is DIT Chatham Row, the College of Music, noisily going about its business but without attracting the occasional attention or high profile afforded the other constituent DIT colleges.

The college of music has not featured in previous issues of the DIT Examiner - it doesn't seem to attract news and news does not emanate from it. It has a low profile and certainly is not one of the Institute's big guns. Eilis Farrell is the Deputy Principal of the college and has noticed that DIT Chatham Row has not made an appearance in the paper. Aside from any journalistic lapses, which are naturally denoted most strenuously, why is this so?

"I suppose that because in institute terms, we would have been one of the last to have whole-time students and degree courses. We only had our first degree course in 1986. So it's been a question of developing those, whereas the other colleges would have had whole-time students for much longer. Also it's because we had a history of teaching first and second level students and for that reason we would have been different from the other colleges."

There is also the obvious and obviously detrimental physical location of the college of music. Other sites either physically stick out or are associated with large numbers of third level students wandering in and out or simply hanging around. Given that DIT Chatham Row has only 80 such students at the moment, it is somewhat less a surprise than it should be that people often forget that it is a third level institution.

The disadvantageous location is the biggest problem for Dr Farrell and not only because it needs to leave the college out of sight and out of mind.

"For example, the third level students here have very few facilities, not enough space to practice, not enough space for them to even have rehearsals. Our concert band, which is one of the highlights of the musical world in Dublin, practice in a small hall which seats comfortably about 60 people but there are 60 people in the band and the noise they make reverberates back on themselves. So we've been very short changed in terms of space for student facilities. If you've ever whinged or griped about the size of your common room, glance around that of Chatham Row (it won't take long) and gripe no more. I've seen fridge freezers delivered in larger boxes."

Dr Farrell believes that the college has been undervalued and the above reasons have certainly contributed to this unfortunate situation.

"Music education in schools in this country is in a very poor state; we're providing at first and second level an awful lot of the functions that should be done in schools. But they have nowhere else to go and so they come to us. And so I think there should be a greater awareness of what the college has contributed over the years to the development of music education in this country."

Dr Farrell is a cheerful, energetic person who smiles a lot and talks in lengthy bursts, and so when she says something startling it can take time to register. Consider her next statement.

"If it wasn't for somewhere like here probably wouldn't be half the musicians returned and there'd be a very poor state of music in this country, if any. That is a very big thing to say, especially when considering the importance placed in music in this country. Our fondness and reputation for music are aspects of ourselves we are rightly proud of, and yet that statement slipped past me in the interview."

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She is eager to point out that DIT Chatham Row provides the practical training for most of the third level students studying at universities. Oral training, vocal training, that sort of thing. But the thing is that for the most part of their overall degrees from other universities. "We never have had any recognition for the contribution we've made to the universities. She believes that within the changed institute, DIT Chatham Row may have the power to change this situation.

"In the past we've tended to send students abroad very young for specialised training and I think that we have the conscience here to train them and if we had the facilities we would be keeping them here and then sending them abroad much later."

"Ah yes, facilities, space, money. Any and all of the above would be much welcomed and they are issues that the college has tried to highlight in the past, to limited avail."

"We've been pushing for a long time. Someone made a comment once, if there was a strike on in the college of music, they could strike for 10 years. Music is not something of a lesser importance so you've left. Probably if we had a physics department in Kevin Street, we'd get something a lot quicker.

"We have to lobby twice as hard as more essential services. We'd be regarded as more of a fringe benefit, or as ornamental rather than useful."

Dr Farrell is not, however, pessimistic, indeed she seems incapable of being so. "I am hopeful about the future. I think with Hillcrest and with the College of Commerce we'll be more content."

"With the College of Commerce moving some time in the future to the new Bishop Street premises, it has been suggested that the college of music could move there. Dr Farrell does not think that this is a viable option because of the specific needs of a music and drama department.

"We wouldn't all fit in Rathmines I don't think. With music you need practice facilities for students, you need sound proofing, large rooms for rehearsals, smaller rooms for different types of ensembles. There are certain things a music and drama department need.

"I mention Bishop Street as a potential future location for the music department. Dr Farrell beams, as if a hundred ideas for the building suddenly spring to mind."

"I wouldn't mind taking over Bishop Street. We're just waiting in hope for this faculty return. I think everyone is in the same situation. No-one knows what's happening."

"My last gripe is about administration. There's a lot of petty administration, a classic case of the further up you go, the further away you get from your students. I'm not the sort of person who's good at making logical decisions, but I'm useless at petty little decisions. She adds, as if I hadn't guessed, "the administration load is huge here. As if to underline the point, the phone rings again."

She

Dr. Eilis Farrell

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Mc Peakes

DIT Chatham Row

Grafton Street, Dublin 2
Striking Distance is a dumb film, but what's not to like? There's nothing wrong with dumb films. Gladiator was a dumb film. Road House is one of the dumbest films in recent years and yet both were enjoyable in their own charmingly thick way. The reason I mention those two films is that they were directed by the same man who directed Striking Distance, Rowdy Herrington.

The problem with his new film, which he also co-wrote, is that it wants to be more: it wants to be a thriller, a mystery and a drama about family, loyalty and honour. Rowdy can handle action films but he has tried too hard with Striking Distance, padded it with too much stuff, making it too thin in all the wrong areas and paradoxically, fluffy all over.

Bruce Willis, wisely not covering up his thinning hair, plays Tom Hardy, a cliche cop, a maverick, a loner, a cop on the edge, a drinker. A former homicide detective in Pittsburgh, he was busted down to river patrol after the death of his father, apparently at the hands of a serial killer he had been chasing. Not convinced that the right man was being charged with the killings, he spoke out, angering his family, members of the police force, it seems, since the time of the Keystone Cops. Now, two years later, the murders have started again, but this time the killer seems to be taunting Tom and setting him up.

In the face of fierce opposition from fellow officers, he sets out to find the killer. But why the resistance from the police? Is something being covered up? Of course it is, that's why no-one questions the series of absurd, preposterous decisions that are taken. This is a bad movie. In a straight forward, dumb action movie, the plot can take the seat furthest back in the orchestra pit, but if something more thoughtful is intended, it's best to make the film somewhat plausible, to keep it in our world.

Assisting Tom in his endeavours is his new by the book partner, Jo Christman, played by Sarah Jessica Parker. She has the thankless second fiddle, love interest, dame in distress role and is not required to stretch her talents beyond the wearing of shorts and tight tops.

Striking Distance is a clumsy film: it's got action but no excitement, drama but no emotion and a surprise that doesn't. There is a good supporting cast, including John Mahone, Dennis Farina and Timothy Busfield, but not much to support and Willis is merely OK in the leading role. He seems much happier when he's John McClane, dying harder than anyone in town.

(Opens May)
Damian O'Brien makes his fluffy farewell speech

In the weeks and days leading up to this year’s annual USI Congress, worries were expressed by a number of delegates that this was to be a congress spectacular only for the boredom it was guaranteed to engender. The motions didn’t look all the interesting, they said, there won’t be much debate and all we can look forward to is getting heroically drunk. They were half right.

Congress ’94, held once again in the comfortable surroundings of the Talbot Hotel in Wexford, was a sporadically interesting affair during the day and a life-threateningly drunken one once darkness fell. Only occasionally did the debates spark into life, most notably during the debates on the prioritization of the Irish language version over the English in all university sectors, during which the colleges of the technological and professional sectors fell.

Consequently, the enforcement of gender quotas and the introduction of common academic calendar was debated, far from it in fact. On some subjects people were only too pleased to speak, on others it would have been easier to get people out of bed on Sunday morning than to get them onto the podium. Repetition naturally abounded. The election results are printed elsewhere but two things are worth mentioning. Mike Egan received a unanimous vote and a rapturous cheer. Is he really that nice? Should anyone have that burden?

Secondly, when Helen O’Sullivan was announced the winner in the presidential election, the applause was genuine, as were the cheers, but there was in them sympathy and respect for the other candidate, Damian O’Brien. Helen spent the rest of the day beamimg and Damian did not feel too bad. That was how it seemed. That was not such a surprise, given that some people were murmuring ‘good morning’ as they brailled their way up to their rooms. But by 10.45, sessions of congress were well under way and there were, as Paul McReedy from DIT Kevin Street, irately pointed out, only about 20 delegates in the hall. The turnout was, he said, disgraceful. The hall gradually filled up as slightly dell people were only too pleased to speak, on others it would have been easier to get people out of bed on Sunday morning than to get them onto the podium. Repetition naturally abounded. The election results are printed elsewhere but two things are worth mentioning. Mike Egan received a unanimous vote and a rapturous cheer. Is he really that nice? Should anyone have that burden?

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speaking time long before she needed it. She was to appear again. And again.

The sessions were timetabled to go on past 6.30pm but the room had to be cleared for dinner, so almost everyone repaired to the bar and then made an effort to clean up before sitting down to eat. It was a noisy affair then the previous night, including an utterly out of control cabaret type event, a disco and the kind of concentrated boozing that is frowned upon by right-thinking members of society everywhere. The day manager, who met some of the revelers on his way down to work the next morning, remarked that he had never seen anything like it in his life.

Sunday was always shaping up to be a somewhat tame affair but began brightly enough with Tracie RTC taking the seat allotted to UCD and then refusing point blank to move, on the grounds that other people had been moving about all weekend. It was, to say the least, petulant.

The highlight of that day was the long awaited farewell speeches by, in particular, Tom Duke and Damian O’Broin. Both had a fairly high fluffy quotient, this despite Damain’s assertion the previous night that he intended to rattle the skeletons in the closets. Perhaps he was better off not so doing. Tom was more direct, more business-like, butDamian predicted greater things for USI in the future and then took the applause. Helen, the incoming president, was also called upon to give a speech. Unprepared and very unwell, she still managed to be comprehensible. Just not for very long.

And that, really, was that. All that was left was to watch the faces of Manchester United fans grow more and more ashen as United fans come to the end of a defeat, the defeat of a lifetime, the defeat of their lives. Manchester United fans leave the ground. It’s a shame.

It’s not like it in his life.

The traditional dinner on the third day of Congress

Delegates at USI’s Annual Congress

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Stressed Out

It doesn’t matter that you have been doing them since the days when the Inter-Cert was the greatest academic obstacle you thought you’d ever see. It is immaterial that you have been consistently successful over the years, averaging 70% and upwards, and it is perfectly irrelevant that you are well prepared for them this year: exams are stressful; it’s that simple. Stress is part of life and exam situations can help you learn to deal with stress. But that’s not an especially comforting thought. Especially not now.

Susan Lindsay is a student counsellor in the DIT. At the moment she is counselling, on average, five students a day, and work is “hectic”. There have been many requests for referral. Too much pressure. Unfair on the student. They can’t be expected to compress all they’ve learned into three hours. We’ve heard them all before, but that doesn’t mean they are not valid or accurate statements. But things are changing. These days the exams in many courses are divided, with one set at Christmas and another at the beginning of summer.

Semesterisation is “basically a good idea” for exam purposes, according to Ms Lindsay.

“The whole thing is that it should be an early warning system, that you’re identifying at Christmas students who are having difficulties and who are not quite meeting the required standards, but in fact it creates an additional work load for us. "Yes, I think it can work but there has to be the back up support there; they’ll obviously have to improve resources because there’s only so much we can cope with. If they are going to change things like that, there is a fall out and there are consequences and they need to provide support. I don’t think they really have done that.”

Ms Lindsey believes that prevention, preferable to cure, can begin a long time before the first signs of stress ever emerge: “If you train particularly lecturers dealing with first year students, because you really need to nip things in the bud there, if you could even train them at a training seminar, in particular in learning techniques, they could pass on this information and help students to manage their time more effectively.”

She acknowledges that this poses certain difficulties, that some staff would be better than others at this and that there would need to be some sort of management policy necessary to encourage staff to carry out such work, and that, quite simply, some wouldn’t have the time to do it.

She is also in favour of what is called ‘peer support’, a programme in which older students, those veterans of the system, are trained to talk about exams and exam stress to first year students. "Something coming from them can mean more than from a

Talking head, a lecturer or even us.” It’s an idea not without merit but would rely on the goodwill of older students and the willingness of first years to listen at a time when they are wallowing in the fresh newness of college life, when they don’t even want to think about exams.

For the time being, though, she feels, and this one will doubtless bring sweeping changes, getting things in order, sorting things out. For those who think that sitting in front of a huge pile of notes and assiduously ploughing through them in search of that just finished feeling, and that deceptive sense of accomplishment, she advises breaking down the paper mountain into a number of smaller, more manageable piles, “It can make it less daunting.” She is also a big fan of key cards, though they are best for more factual subjects. She cites their portability as one major bonus.

The best thing coming up to exams though, she feels, and this one will doubtless generate groans the length and breadth of the city, is to sit down and answer test papers to, using the exercise as a dress rehearsal for the real thing.

Her final words of advice on the subject are simple and obvious and the very words every student should whisper before every paper: “Don’t panic.” They are worth remembering.

Susan Lindsay

The winner of the competition will receive a case of Moosehead lager worth over £50.00.

Five runners up will each receive a Moosehead T-shirt and Moosehead baseball cap.

Q: Since 1867 where has Moosehead Premium Lager been brewed and bottled?

A. Brussels

B. Madrid

C. Halifax, Nova Scotia

Rules

Only open to members of D.I.T.S.U. Employees of D.I.T.S.U. and Guinness are not eligible to enter.

Send Entries to

Guinness/DITSU Competition

The DIT Examiner

DIT Students’ Union

DIT Kevin Street

Dublin 8

Name ____________________________

Collego ____________________________

Course ____________________________

Year ____________________________

Student No. ____________________________

Answer ____________________________

Moosehead baseball cap.
Last month saw the various DIT sites whipped into something of a frenzy, or in some places a fairly light froth, as the elections for the students’ unions took place. Naturally, the most high profile campaign was that for overall president. While it was generally felt that Colman Byrne and Eanna Ó Bradaigh were the favourites, no-one was sure which way it would go. In the event, Colman won by a substantial margin, thanks in part to an impressive and highly successful campaign on his home turf. Elsewhere there were one or two surprises and, after the event, a little post election bitterness, expected of course, but never pleasant. All in all though, a quiet affair.

The DIT Examiner congratulates all of those who emerged victorious and offers commiserations to those whose plans will now have to change.

### Results of the DIT Students' Unions elections

#### Overall President of DITSU:

- **Position: Overall President**
  - **Total poll:** 3751
  - **Spoiled votes:** 74
  - **Total valid poll:** 3677
  - **Quota:** 1839

  **Byrne, Colman:** 1745 (+245 in second count) = 1997
  **Mulholland, Anne Marie:** 700 (eliminated after first count)
  **Ó Bradaigh, Eanna:** 1225 (+209 in second count) = 1434
  **NT:** 246

  **Byrne, Colman elected.**

#### DIT Cathal Brugha Street:

- **Position: Deputy Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 608
  - **Spoiled votes:** 14
  - **Total valid poll:** 594
  - **Quota:** 298

  **McNulty, Sinead:** 299
  **O’Toole, Dermot:** 295

  **McNulty, Sinead elected.**

- **Position: Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 608
  - **Spoiled votes:** 3
  - **Total valid poll:** 605
  - **Quota:** 303

  **Joyce, Colin:** 291 (+49 in second count) = 346
  **McCabe, Ciara:** 99 (eliminated after first count)
  **O’Neill, Alison:** 215 (+34 in second count) = 249

  **Joyce, Colin elected.**

#### DIT Bolton Street:

- **Position: Apprentice Officer**
  - **Total poll:** 856
  - **Spoiled votes:** 26
  - **Total valid poll:** 830
  - **Quota:** 416

  **Dempsey, David:** 308
  **Flanagan, Alison:** 424

- **Position: Deputy Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 760
  - **Spoiled votes:** 27
  - **Total valid poll:** 733
  - **Quota:** 367

  **Barry, Mark:** 82
  **Flanagan, Alison:** 651

- **Position: Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 865
  - **Spoiled votes:** 26
  - **Total valid poll:** 830
  - **Quota:** 416

  **Haughey, Ronán:** 495
  **Reilly, Christopher:** 161
  **Smith, Marie:** 174

  **Haughey, Ronán elected.**

#### DIT Rathmines:

- **Position: Apprentice Officer**
  - **Total poll:** 741
  - **Spoiled votes:** 9
  - **Total valid poll:** 732
  - **Quota:** 367

  **Donohoe, Matt:** 308
  **Moran, Lar:** 424.

  **Moran, Lar elected.**

#### DIT Kevin Street:

- **Position: Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 750
  - **Spoiled votes:** 21
  - **Total valid poll:** 722
  - **Quota:** 367

  **Crosbie, Ciarán:** 566
  **No:** 166

  **Ryan, Helen elected.**

- **Position: Deputy Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 743
  - **Spoiled votes:** 12
  - **Total valid poll:** 733
  - **Quota:** 367

  **Ryan, Helen:** 302

- **Position: Clubs and Societies Officer**
  - **Total poll:** 897
  - **Spoiled votes:** 19
  - **Total valid poll:** 878
  - **Quota:** 440

  **Pedreschi, Damian:** 443
  **McCaulley, Mary:** 435

  **Lee, Mark elected.**

- **Position: PRO**
  - **Total poll:** 900
  - **Spoiled votes:** 9
  - **Total valid poll:** 889
  - **Quota:** 449

  **Whelan, Cathal:** 449

  **Hughes, Greg:** 418
  **O’Neill, Eoghan:** 244

  **Hughes, Greg elected.**

#### DIT Mountjoy Square:

- **Position: Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 879
  - **Spoiled votes:** 19
  - **Total valid poll:** 860
  - **Quota:** 440

  **Gillooly, Felicia:** 408
  **Hughes, Greg:** 418
  **O’Neill, Eoghan:** 244

  **Gillooly, Felicia elected.**

- **Position: Deputy Convener**
  - **Total poll:** 897
  - **Spoiled votes:** 19
  - **Total valid poll:** 878
  - **Quota:** 440

  **Lee, Mark:** 443
  **McCauley, Mary:** 435

  **Lee, Mark elected.**

- **Position: Clubs and Societies Officer**
  - **Total poll:** 879
  - **Spoiled votes:** 19
  - **Total valid poll:** 860
  - **Quota:** 440

  **Pedreschi, Damian:** 443
  **O’Driscoll, Cathal:** 446

  **Pedreschi, Damian elected.**

- **Position: PRO**
  - **Total poll:** 900
  - **Spoiled votes:** 9
  - **Total valid poll:** 889
  - **Quota:** 449

  **Whelan, Cathal:** 449

  **Hughes, Greg:** 418
  **O’Neill, Eoghan:** 244

  **Hughes, Greg elected.**

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  **Flanagan, Alison:** 424

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  **Whelan, Cathal:** 449

  **Hughes, Greg:** 418
  **O’Neill, Eoghan:** 244

  **Hughes, Greg elected.**
This June, Helen O'Sullivan takes over from Tom Duke as President of the Union of Students in Ireland. She takes over at a time when USI has just moved into a modern and stylish new headquarters in Temple Bar, when it has recently had a reactivation victory in UCG and is still basking in the afterglow of an extremely well received presentation at last year's National Education Convention, the invitation to partake in which was a kudo in itself.

It is not however, all roses. The spectre of the abortion debate has come back haunting to collect the outstanding £15,000 in court costs. Add to this the treacherous troubles in Club USI, an impending reactivation vote in UCG that is up in the air and the very real possibility of further costs being awarded to SPUC in the future and you have an organisation that is going through a sweet and sour period. Was it ever any different?

For the incoming President,nowhere is the ongoing situation with SPUC can have only one outcome, at least in the short term. It is her most pressing worry.

"One way or another SPUC are going to get their pound of flesh. That's not to say that the money is going to come from affiliation fees because it won't. That was a decision that was made a long time ago, but they are going to and we're really going to have to look at fund raising." Like all in USI she is concerned that SPUC will be awarded further costs from the European court case - some have speculated that these could amount to £100,000 - but remains committed to the stance the organisation has taken.

"I don't think we can ever drop the case until its been seen through one way or the other. I would hate to see it dropped."

Aside from this very obvious and worrying situation, Ms O'Sullivan, currently women's rights officer in USI, has a number of priorities. Listing them off is as natural as breathing at this stage.

"Probably the most important and the one that sticks out is the need to increase communications between USI and the local unions because once you have that you're forging very strong links and obviously that strengthens the whole organisation, makes all the other work a lot more achievable.

"But she is also keen to resource the local unions in order to facilitate proper training. She favours a research, training and development officer rather than just an elected officer in charge of training. She agrees with the proposal made at Congress to abolish the position of Union Development Officer in Dublin but would like to see a regional officer appointed for the West of the country. This will be debated at Special Congress."

"Communication and Resourcing, they're the two.

"Communication at Congress took a technological step forward this year with the introduction of simultaneous translation into English of Irish speeches. A Constitutional Amendment statement that translation equipment be available for all Conferences, Councils and Officer Board Meetings of USI, has been referred back to Special Congress and Ms O'Sullivan will be asking the proposer of the motion to restrict it slightly, for the sake of practicality."

"We really do need to set up our Irish language resource properly, we need to budget for it properly too. I would be worried that we wouldn't be able to achieve everything set out in the constitution. I would rather have a workable policy than have an aspirational one."

Students and students' unions have been attacked recently, or at the very least challenged, for lacking a radical edge, for softening and turning all pragmatic and law abiding. Where are the huge protest marches, the unrepentant radical socialists? Where's the corduroy for God's sake?

"It is probably true that students demand less vociferously these days and have a better relationship with authorities than in the halcyon days of the sixties and seventies, but this brings its own difficulties. Ms O'Sullivan believes that USI has a new found respectability among the powers that
be, but she advises caution, "because it's one thing to have this new-found status but if it's a question of trying to buy us off with platitudes, you have to be very wary. You must never be compromised by position, that's one way of disabling an organisation."

She highlights the praise lavished on USI for its presentation at the National Education Convention. "And it deserved it: it was excellent but at the same time you have to make sure you're not compromised."

Well, it's not an exhortation to storm Leinster House but the scepticism seems alive and well. No paseran indeed.

As a woman who has fought tooth and nail for women's autonomy and who is a vigorous supporter of gender balance, Ms O'Sullivan must be in support of Education Minister Niamh Breathnach's attempts to enforce gender balance on all state bodies and governing bodies. But I suspect that she has, as do many, a problem with the manner in which the Minister is going about the task. Many have derided the Minister's heavy handedness, especially her decision to bring in amending legislation next year for the governing bodies of the DITs and RTCs.

"Looking at the people she's dealing with, I think she needs to be heavy handed. She certainly didn't try a softly softly approach, which probably lost her a lot of support at the beginning. But I think she's doing the right thing."

Meanwhile in Cork, the Minister has refused to approve the nomination to UCC's governing body of newly elected Students' Union President Fergal Shanahan because he is male. Yvonne Willis, vice president of the students' union has refused the seat, which traditionally goes to the President.

"The whole issue in Cork, the real issue is not gender balance," insists Ms O'Sullivan. "The real issue is that they only have one student representative and instead of pushing to have the male president nominated, they should be pushing to have two student reps and they're really missing the boat on this one."

But the fact remains that at the moment they have none and surely one democratically elected representative is better than none. I ask whether she thinks the Minister is by her actions hindering the effective operation of the Governing Body in UCC.

"Yes she is," she answers quietly.

On May 9, the students of UCC will vote on whether or not to reaffiliate with USI. Obviously the more colleges and universities under the umbrella of the organisation, the more influential it becomes and so reaffiliation must be part of every President's brief. Ms O'Sullivan is not sure how the Cork vote will go, though she points out that USI won't have the level of co-operation it had in UCC. Elsewhere, there are problems. St Patrick's College, Maynooth, is something of a maverick and a reaffiliation was roundly defeated last year. Trinity is different again.

"There are a lot of problems in Trinity, I think its mainly financial. The union there has awful problems with its finances." She is of the opinion that once the question of the affiliation levy is sorted out it will become an awful lot easier to reaffiliate colleges.

"The debate is about money rather than politics. It comes down to affordability and you invariably end up talking about money. It's a big shame."

Helen O'Sullivan seems to have no illusions about the year to come. There will be times when it may seem like a huge mistake and she admits to having "plenty of nerves" about her near future. But that is not necessarily a bad thing.
What's On And Where

Aimee Mann former singer and lyricist with 'Ti Tuesday released her debut solo album, 'Whatever', last year to universal critical acclaim and few sales. Her undemanding delivery and generally light sound disguises deeply personal, bared to the bone songwriting that is worth dwelling over. Clever, emotionally naked and intense, she plays the Gaiety Theatre on May 1 and should on no account be missed.

Her special guest has been confirmed "Mike Peters. The name is familiar, isn't it? Peters was the lead singer with The Alarm - remember 68 Guns? and has now formed a new band, The Poets. Last month he released a new album, Back Into the System. Wonder has he changed his big hairstyle? We shall see.

Tori Amos materialised onto the music scene a few short years ago with the deceptively catchy "Crucify" from her impressive "Little Earthquakes" album. The classically trained pianist with the decidedly impenetrable lyrics and a fairly high weirdness quotient has just released his new album, "Under the Pink", from which the single "Cornflake Girl" was taken. She plays The Stadium on May 4th.

Antipodean wonder band Crowded House take the stage at The Point on May 12th. One of Ireland's most under-rated singers, Freddie White, plays An Béal Bocht. Now based in America he moves a welcome return to our shores to deliver songs from the finest in his imitable fashion. His ability to put his stamp on other people's work, among them Randy Newman Tom Waits (Martha), Ray Charles and Guy Clarke, has tended to overshadow his own songwriting ability. In the mood, the Cork man can deliver a blistering set with just that voice and that guitar.

Jackson Browne has been quiet for a few years, unless you count the high profile collapse of his relationship with Daryl Hannah. But he's back now with a new album, I'm Alive, one of those bouncing back efforts which marks a move away from the politically flavoured Lives in the Balance. Expect a mature audience for his concert at the RDS Simmonscourt on June 6th.

At The Point, on June 12th, is Bonnie Raitt, a woman who can belt out a rootsy number or deliver a heart rending ballad with equal aplomb. A great live performer and no mean songwriter herself, she has also in the past chosen songs from some of the best writers around, including John Hiatt and Paul Brady.

This Saturday, one of Ireland's most under-rated singers, Freddie White, plays An Béal Bocht. Now based in America he makes a welcome return to our shores to deliver songs from the finest in his imitable fashion. His ability to put his stamp on other people's work, among them Randy Newman Tom Waits (Martha), Ray Charles and Guy Clarke, has tended to overshadow his own songwriting ability. In the mood, the Cork man can deliver a blistering set with just that voice and that guitar.

The extremely prolific and if anything, increasingly popular, Mary Black will give a one off benefit concert on Thursday in the National Basketball Arena, Tallaght. The concert is in aid of St Martin's Centre for the Severely Handicapped, St Joseph's School, Tenerure. Her band is top rate, the catalogue of songs is second to none and the woman herself has a voice as pure as crystal.

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The Bank of Ireland RTÉ Proms starts on Friday, 27th May and runs until Friday, 3rd June. Don't forsworn it won't be made up of those Pomp and Circumstance scenes we're used to from Last Night of the Proms on BBC. Among the highlights will undoubtedly be the Rodgers and Hammerstein Musical Extravaganza with the RTE Concert Orchestra, on Saturday, 28th May; Verdi Requiem which will feature, amongst others, Bernadette Groeney and an Evening with Eleanor McEvoy, currently on the crest of a wave.

There will be a Last Night of the Proms, beginning at 8pm on June 3rd. Appropriately enough, the theme is Going to America and will include music from George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein. An absolute treat.

On a slightly different note is Buddy, currently packing them in at the Olympia. It's a singing and dancing nostalgia fest recalling the short, glorious career of the hugely influential Buddy Holly, played to perfection here by Martin Fisher. All the favourites are there to be relished and sung along to - Oh Boy, Peggy Sue, That'll be the Day. Is it theatre? Is it concert? Is it tribute? Probably it's all three and it's damned good fun, whatever it is.

Moving away from music completely, Jack Dee will do his thing in the National Stadium. This man is something of a find: a three piece suit, a morose expression and a finely tuned sense of the ridiculousness of everything and the talent to turn it alive a dead pan comedy, as anyone who has seen him on stage or watched his Channel 4 series can testify. He has a superb sense of timing and can combine this with a physicality that belies his buttoned down image. Even his TV ads are funny. Catch him if you can.