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

DIT Students' Union

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Still No Governing Body

The Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach, has said that she is still "very disappointed" with the recommendations made by VEC's on appointments to Governing Bodies, despite the fact that Dublin VEC believes that its final list of nominations for the governing body of the Dublin Institute of Technology meets with the requirements regarding women's representation.

Mr Costello expressed surprise at the Minister's stance. "I would repeat that we have fulfilled the spirit and the letter of the 40 per cent requirements and we are happy that we have done so," he said. He pointed out that three out of six nominees would be 50 per cent.

The Minister said that she was anxious to appoint governing bodies as soon as possible but that she was very unhappy with the present proposals from the VECs, given her statutory obligation to ensure gender balance and the clearly set out policy of government on the matter.

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Yet last week Ms Bhreathnach told the Dail that of the five VECs who have submitted a full list of recommendations, none have reached the required gender balance. Of the five VECs who have submitted a partial list of recommendations, she said that only one had exceeded the 40% female representation she is seeking for governing bodies.

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The dispute over women's representation on the boards of the Dublin Institute of Technology and the country's 11 RICs has left them without governing bodies since the end of January. Local vocational education committees have repeatedly said that they are unable to implement the Minister's gender balance guidelines. They have pointed out that they cannot force nominating bodies to alter their choices and are not legally obliged to do so.

The Minister said that although there had been some resentment that the Department of Education was being too rigid in its interpretation of the law, she got a lot of sympathy with the minister because she was a prisoner of legislation to an extent.

"She's trying to get it right at the beginning. She's anxious that it be up and running as soon as possible." The CDVEC had also been in dispute with the Department over its insistence that a representative organisation with the power to nominate one member of the DIT's governing body. The CDVEC has now changed its original appointment, Forbairt, which had been turned down by the department, to the Marketing Institute of Ireland.

"We understand that this is acceptable," said Mr Costello. The Minister said that she would be shortly making an announcement on the best way to proceed on the issue.

Students Take To The Streets Over Costs Row

"S-B, S-P-U, S-P-U-C, SPUC OFF!" The cry rang around the city centre last Wednesday as students marched peacefully from Parnell Square to Díl Eireann, demonstrating against what they called the attacks by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) on students' unions.

More than 500 people took part in the hastily arranged march. "It was a decent enough attendance," said Helen O'Sullivan, USI's Women's Rights Officer. She conceded that the unseasonably pleasant weather on Wednesday was a considerable asset in that respect.

Among the speakers at the rally were TD Eamonn Gilmore, former president of USI and Mr O'Sullivan. She told the DIT Examiner that USI would now be looking to pay the money claimed by SPUC. USI and TCD students' union have met with their legal advisers to discuss the issue and there was a general feeling that they would not be able to avoid paying the costs sought by SPUC.

Two weeks ago SPUC successfully applied to the High Court for the appointment of a receiver to recover costs of £29,000 awarded in 1989 in the SPUC v Grogan and others abortion information case. In that case, SPUC obtained an injunction preventing 15 officers of USI, TCD and USI students' unions from providing information on abortion clinics.

Since those costs were awarded to SPUC, the case has been to the Supreme Court and the European Court of Justice and back to the High Court. Final costs could be over £200,000 according to Tom Duke, President of USI. "SPUC have been trying to silence us and close us down for over five years now and they appear to show no sign of relenting in their misguided legal crusade."

Tony O'Brien, Chief Executive of the Irish Family Planning Association, described the action taken by SPUC as an attempt to weaken the protest. He added that the campaign had not been successful in raising public awareness about the issue.

Gardai help one lost soul find the rest of his friends

"legal but it is not moral."

"The action is the death rattle of a failed campaign to deny the fundamental human rights of Irish citizens. A campaign which has been comprehensively rejected by the Irish people in a referendum. Little can now be achieved by SPUC apart from vengeance."

The Student Support Trust is campaigning for donations to raise sufficient funds to enable them to satisfy their unions' debts, or alternatively to provide for the establishment of new union structures, if they do not survive the current action. Among the trustees are TDs Jim McDaid, Liz McManus, Derek McDowell and Alan Shatter, playwright Frank McGuinness and Senators David Norris and Mary Henry.
This week in one the most ferociously busy across the DIT. Posters adorn every flat, vertical surface in the constituent colleges and frantically campaigning candidates will be impossible to avoid.

Election week is noisy, intrusive, invigorating, exciting and, above all, relevant. To you, the student. It is easy to be dismissive, to play no part in the run up and then simply cast an ill-considered vote on polling day. Any half-wit can do that. It is far better for all concerned that you watch what's going on, see who's running, listen to what they have to say and decide who makes the most sense. Then cast your vote.

Students' Unions and students' unions' politics are important. They are there to deal with issues that affect students, individually or as a whole, be they relatively localised or national. True, they have been denounced occasionally as cliquish and irrelevant vessels for ego trips but the vast majority of people standing for election do so for the right reasons. In any event, it is your choice who represents you, so if you don't bother to turn out on polling day, can you justifiably complain in the future?

This is the third edition of the DIT Examiner. We are happy with the start we have made and have listened carefully to both the praise and the criticism that has come our way. Both are welcome.

We would also welcome letters from students and staff because it is through such feedback that we can learn more about the issues that are most affecting people. If there are any DIT events coming up in the next month or so, please feel free to let us know. Write to the above address, or fax or phone.

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Autonomy Vote Defeated In Poor Turnout

Plans for women's autonomy within the DIT students' unions were dealt a blow last week when a referendum on the issue was comprehensively defeated by a margin of three to one.

The amendment proposed that "The Women's Rights Officers who are women shall be elected by women only". On the day, 103 students voted for the amendment, 336 voted against. Three other proposed amendments to the constitution were carried. A total of only 452 votes were cast.

Blame for the poor turnout has been placed on the timing of the referenda - it coincided with one college's rag week and followed immediately on the heels of others. The referenda had to be held last Thursday the latest possible day.

Many students were not even aware of the issues and followed immediately on the heels of others. The referenda had to be held last Thursday the latest possible day. Only 452 votes were cast.

"But I think in the future that people will see that it is a positive thing." She felt that even if a more vigorous campaign had been organized for the amendment, there would have been an equally vigorous "no" campaign.

Last year each college affiliated to USI agreed to bring up to issue of women's autonomy within the student body. The discussion will now undoubtedly quieten for a while but the issue is far from dead.

Eddie Conlon, vice chairman of the Dublin Colleges Branch of the Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) has said the union is delighted with the decision taken in the High Court last week which judges part time lecturers in the Dublin Institute of Technology to be academic staff with full voting rights.

The decision means that almost 200 part time lecturers working in the DIT were entitled to vote for academic staff representatives on the institute's governing body.

"We are delighted, obviously thoroughly vindicated by the decision," said Mr Conlon. "It shows that we were fully justified in taking the action."

The high court action was taken last November by the TUI and one of the part time teacher's (EPT's) to prevent the DIT from holding elections for its Governing Body. The action followed regulations set by the old Governing Body which precluded the possibility of EPTs from voting in such elections.

The judge said last week that he could see no difference between an EPT and a temporary, full-time teacher who is entitled to vote, thus the named EPT teacher was a member of staff in the DIT and entitled to vote in the election.

The DIT was given 21 days to appeal the decision, but Mr Conlon does not believe that the institute will take such a course of action.
With a brace of awards already, no fewer than 12 Oscar nominations and more pre-release column inches given over to it than Jurassic Park, it would be easy to get caught up in the hype surrounding Steven Spielberg's latest film, Schindler's List. Phrases like "one of the most important films ever made", "Spielberg's masterpiece" and "totally unforgettable" could easily trip off the tongue and fall onto the page, safe in the knowledge that they'd have plenty of like minded company. But, trite as they are, such phrases are appropriate, though in a truer sense, inadequate. Schindler's List, a three-hour plus, black and white film directed by the master of family entertainment, is a great film. Read the word carefully. Consider it. Great.

It tells the story of Oscar Schindler and the so-called "Schindler Jews" who owe him their lives. During WWII, Schindler, ensured that the Jews, more than 1,100 of them, who worked in his enamel works factory outside Krakow, were saved from the labour camps and later from Auschwitz death camp. No one will ever be really sure why he did it, risked his life and lost his fortune, and thankfully, Spielberg doesn't waste his time trying to tell us. Instead, staying quite faithful to the book on which it is based, his film shows us what this enigmatic man did.

The film opens with Schindler taking advantage of the German's conquering of Poland. He sees his chance to make a fortune, for as he tells his long suffering wife, the one thing that had always lacked in his business ventures, the one component that he needed to succeed, was war. Lient Nesson plays Schindler and he is ideal for the role. He has the sheer physical presence we would expect of such a man, combined with the good voice that enabled him to bed wife, the one thing that had always lacked in his business ventures, the one component that he needed to succeed, was war. Lient Nesson plays Schindler and he is ideal for the role. He has the sheer physical presence we would expect of such a man, combined with the good voice that enabled him to bed

Amon Goeth was a monstrous individual, who would sit on the balcony of his villa overlooking the camp and with his rifle arbitrarily shoot people below. A single crack, a gout of black blood and a body slumps. There is similar singled out killings during the horrifying ghetto liquidation scenes (Ralph Fiennes, sloppily overweight and blank eyes is chilling). This reviewer does not flinch from violence on screen and Schindler's List is not a particularly violent film, but the sheer arbitrary nature and shocking suddenness of the acts of violence depicted here are very difficult to watch and not a little upsetting.

It is the scenes in the ghettos, which Schindler observes from a hillside that force his hand. He begins to take greater risks, relying on his accountant, Itzhak Stern (Ben Kingsley in a beautifully understated performance) to keep an eye on the money while he indulged the Nazis, including Goeth. He had set up his own sub camp for his workers, to protect them from Goeth, in whom it is hinted he sees himself as he could so easily have been.

When the Nazis, starting defeat in the face, order the closure of Plaszow and the transportation of all workers to Auschwitz as part of the "Final Solution", Schindler, his life already unutterably changed, acts again, drawing up with Stern the list that would save lives.

Steven Spielberg brings a restraint and maturity to this remarkable story that he has only ever hinted at in the likes of Empire of the Sun and The Colour Purple. The sentimental pitfalls and emotional heavy handedness are skillfully avoided and the film is all the more affecting for it. He has also put away most of the cinematic toys that he has used so wonderfully in the past - the film has an up close documentary feel at times, most memorably in the sequence in the Auschwitz showers. But his often used bright white light is still there and his handling of big, busy scenes is as sure as ever.

Schindler's List is a story of survival in the mider of the apocalyptic systematically executed carnage of the Holocaust. It is horrifying, shocking, desperately moving and triumphant. Spielberg shows us the bravery of one man but has also portrayed moments from the central event of the twentieth century in a way that is hard to forget. He has also created a great piece of cinema.

Last year Tom Cruise, Hollywood superstar and sex symbol, played Mitch McDeere, a brilliant but callow young lawyer who outfoxed the Mafia, the FBI and his own corrupt law firm in Sydney Pollack's over long, bloated, convoluted, hugely successful thriller, The Firm. This year, Julia Roberts, Hollywood superstar and sex symbol, plays Darby Shaw, a brilliant but callow young law student who gets involved with the FBI, the CIA, and, going one better than Tom, the White House, in Alan J. Pakula's over-long, slightly less bloated, convoluted and hugely successful thriller, The Pelican Brief.

The similarity is not surprising, given that both films were adapted from books by John Grisham, a man who has found out that there is something even more lucrative in America than being a lawyer. We are in familiar Pakula territory here, the land of corruption. Be it personal or countrywide, legal or political, it has been here before with the likes of The Parallax View and All the President's Men, far superior films, incidentally.

The film opens with the murder of two Supreme Court judges. For reasons best known to herself, Darby Shaw puts together a brief, outlining her theory as to why they were killed, and even better, who did it. People in high places get a copy of it and before you can "she knows to much" they're after Darby. Suddenly her lover is dead and she is on the run, frightened, so alone, breathless, but always well dressed and coiffed. Eventually she turns to intrepid Washington Herald reporter Gray Grantham (Darby. Gray. Mitch. I wouldn't like to be one of John Grisham's kids) for help. He is played by Denzel Washington, an ace pilot, which is as good as a lot of actors get on their best days. Together, they try to figure out what is going on and why people persist in chasing them. The audience is lucky. Every now and then we are sat down and a character actor patiently straightens out the more intricate strands of the plot.

There are powerful and supposedly dangerous people in suits all over the film and they start to bleed after a while so that you find yourself caring little about the plot and just try to keep up with the runners knowing that a plot expert on pre-release will turn up shortly to sort out the story. This is a serious problem with a sure to give you the goose bumps and suddenly you have to wonder why you are paying attention to the plot, you are less likely to see the bad guy with the gun emerging from the shadows. Roberts does a huge amount of running in this film (a darby) but the audience does little jumping.

Still, she is fine, if unimpeachable, in what is seen as a come-back role, though she hasn't actually been away and Pakula holds it all together with his customary professionalism. A little less conspiracy and a little more thrills wouldn't have gone amiss though.

Oskar Schindler has a word with one of his workers.

Denzel Washington and Julia Roberts try to look worried.
There is a facet to the students' union in DIT Cathal Brugha Street. College of Catering, that makes it unique among the DIT Students' Unions. It is a position that has been a vital lifeline for students over many years, affording them practical experience in their field, perhaps opening doors but always providing that much needed cash at short notice. This seemingly most munificent of posts is that of Employments Officer. At present the part-time position is held by Carmel Fagan, a 19-year-old hotel management student. A new office will take over in September.

"Basically what I am is a link between the employers and the students. I'm there when people need workers. I'm there to take the call, find out what they want, how much they're going to pay, when and where, and then I relay it back to the students and anyone interested comes to me."

The work is generally organised on pay per hour casual basis - this suits the students, who are, presumably, concerned not to fall behind in their college work. The set up also doesn't place any long term demands on the employer. The incidence of full-time work following on from such casual employment is low.

"Around about now I get a lot of students coming in to ask about summer positions and the only way I can do that is if someone rings in and says 'I want someone part-time' and there's the possibility of summer work. By and large, we don't get a lot of full-time employment. Mostly, its casual stuff which the students are interested in. You know; we need money for next week, let's work tonight."

"The main rule is that if you don't turn up, if something happens that was your fault, then you are blacklisted, you won't have any more dealing with the union as far as employment is concerned, at least for the year." Ms Fagan is quick to point out that there hasn't been any such incidences. "There'll always be people who don't turn up because they couldn't find the place or got the date or time wrong, or something. There are always going to be some small mishaps like that, but generally we don't have much bother." Naturally, not everyone is suitable for every job; sometimes experience is required and so the employment officer has to be careful about who goes where. Not surprisingly, tact and diplomacy are at a premium and people are asked about their previous experience.

"You have to be very careful about certain places which have a certain type of service, things like that. You can't send people who have no practical experience in the industry out to large hotels; they'd just be lost and it would totally destroy their confidence apart from anything else."

In a place like the College of Catering, the idea of an employment officer seems like common sense and judging from the repeat business, it has been a success.

"Big hotels like the Grand in Malahide and the Conrad have always used the college. What we said was 'we're going to put you in touch with so many students, give you all their details; they're yours, you hold onto them. If you want more workers, get back to them, but if they can't work, get back in touch with us. It's worked pretty well so far."

The situation has proved mutually beneficial over the years as the students are well-placed to give a hotel a dig out when the need arises. Students go home with money. Everyone is happy. But there are certain rules that have to be followed, by employers and employees.

"We have to set standards and one thing is wages. Anything under three pounds an hour and we're not interested. Most casual work goes by the hour."

The other stipulation for employers is that once the students are working for them, they are not the responsibility of the union, particularly if the work is regular.

For students doing the work, the rules are simple, there is little room for misunderstanding.

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College Round Up

Bolton Street
Bolton Street will hold its Arts week from the 14th-16th March. Amongst the highlights will undoubtedly be a staging of "Ritual for Dolls", the Bolton Street Drama Society play which won three awards at the recent MAD Festival. The society will also be staging a play titled "God". The week kicks off with a blues gig on Monday. Tuesday is carnival day featuring face painting, jugglers and fire eating. Culture is the order of the day on Wednesday with music from a string quartet. It is not the order on Wednesday, when the venue is The Furnace and the occasion is the Arts/Paddy's Day Ball.

Exhibitions during the week include a photo exhibition with a special rag theme which was not known at time of going to press. Other events include a cookery competition and a trathnóta Gaeltacht, through which trathnóta was not known at time of going to press.

Mountjoy Square.
At the end of the month, the Marketing Communicator will be published. On the 25th, the annual COMAD dress dance will take place in Jury's Hotel. The event is, needless to say, for-
Central Banking

It's not often that disappointment is expressed over the presence of unused money, cash sitting idle, just waiting to be used by some enterprising group of students. But, amazingly, that is the situation with DITSU's Central Social and Cultural Committee.

The what? you may ask, and if you do, then you will have inadvertently stumbled over the reason for the exist-

ence of this relatively untouched store of cash. Very few people seem to know that it exists; the people who dole it out know only too well about it and one or two societies have taken advantage of it but the majority of students and societies either don't know about the central social and cultural committee or have not availed of it for reasons unknown.

Dave Carmody is General Secretary of DITSU. He explained what the committee is and the strange situation it finds itself in.

"There's a local council in each of the colleges which deals with funding societies on a local level and the idea of the central is that they try to promote similar activities on a DIT-wide basis and for that reason it's composed of members from each of the colleges."

The committee is made up of the chair of each of the local councils and two student reps, one being the nominee of the president of DITSU (Colman Byrne is this year's nominee) and Dave Carmody is the other member. The money comes from the capitalization fee and it is there for the taking, provided certain criteria are met. These include that the event being planned covers as many DIT colleges as possible and that it is not an event being duplicated at local level.

"We also don't want people using it as a last resort, using the committee after they've been refused locally either for good reason or because there's a shortage of funds in the college. It has to be promoting DIT-wide activity."

This makes sense but what is a little strange is the lack of applications.

"At the beginning we were concerned that it was very well known, there would soon be no money left, that everyone would stop applying locally, saying 'oh, this is really a DIT activity' and they'd be refused at stage one and they'd then say 'well, there's no point in applying because the money is already committed'."

The result of such trepidation was that the money built up over two years and began to gather dust. Very few applications have come in, the only two this year being for the recent MAD festival in Sligo and the DIT's Pink Festival. That leaves a substantial amount of the fund, about four thousand pounds per year (1% of total capital) untouched by student plans.

But DITSU has a plan for at least some of it. The company is organizing an exhibition for the institute's students. A gallery or exhibition space is to be hired for two or three weeks and in it will be examples of work from DIT courses. The exhibition will consist of "from what the bakery people can do to the applied physics people and everything in between," says Mr Carmody.

"So money is being set aside from what was available last year and what's available this year and we are waiting on the go-ahead from the DIT authorities. These very much in favour of it and it's just a question of the planning and getting a team to do it.

The exhibition will eat up some of the fund but by no means all. It's out there. The committee meets every six weeks to consider applications and is keen to see the money put to good use. Dave Carmody may be sorry he ever gave this interview.
A Woman's Place

Let's look at some figures. In the present coalition government there are 15 ministers and a further 15 Ministers of State. Of this 30 there are five positions held by women: the Minister for Justice, Máire Geoghegan Quinn; the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach and the Ministers of state at the Department of Enterprise and Employment (Mary O'Rourke), Department of Finance (Eithne Fitzgerald) and the Department of Social Welfare (Joan Burton). Their work, especially that of Máire Geoghegan Quinn and Niamh Bhreathnach, is extremely high profile. They are women with substantial political clout, examples of the success that can be achieved by women in the political world, still largely the preserve of men. Other women might be encouraged by their determination and will to succeed, but there are still only five of them. One sixth.

It seems reasonably safe to assume that the relatively low participation rate by women in national politics is one of the contributing factors to the lack of participation by women at student union level. Obviously it is not the only factor but examples, if not role models, are important. Again, the figures are revealing. A recent USI Women's Participation survey showed that of 189 executive posts in affiliated colleges and universities, 68, or 36%, are held by women. Of the 51 sabbaticals, only 14 of women sabbaticals within the DIT. Only two, Anne-Marie Mulholland and Lorraine Ho, out of 11, are women.

"I think it's quite easy to stand for a part-time post, and certainly the elections are not as contentious," says Ms O'Sullivan. "It's not as tough a fight. Two out of 11 is not very good." There are a couple of conclusions to be drawn from this: the most obvious is that women are not being elected. But it also suggests that women are not running for election to the sabbatical posts.

internal democracy. There is obviously something drastically wrong because women aren't running or aren't winning. Basically they're not there.

Politics at any level requires self-confidence in large, sometimes irritating amounts. If a woman is planning to enter a male dominated environment, then presumably this self-confidence level would have to be off the scale. Ms O'Sullivan agrees that the absence of such a quality has been a serious hindrance. It's all about self-confidence. I have been trying to do this year has been to organise training events, simply to build up women's confidence skills. "Training events designed to achieve just that have been held and the upcoming women's congress will also address the problem. She hopes that in an all female environment, women will feel more comfortable about getting up in front of a crowd to make a speech or make a point. "The they'll feel more power and certainly more confident when it comes to annual congress, or when it comes to the next class rep meeting or general meeting. It's all about self-confidence. I think that when you have to deal with sexism and remarks and sexual harassment, you find that women have had a lot knocked out of them and it is quite difficult to get up. I mean it takes someone with a really thick skin to be able to do that." Helen O'Sullivan is encouraged by the increase in the number of female TDs but is "very disappointed" that gender quotas are still not being applied in state and governing bodies. Ms O'Sullivan is unequivocal. She is completely in favour of gender quotas and doesn't believe that, with a confined gender quota system, an unsuitable person could be chosen for a position.

"I think that as a committee, board or a job there are basic requirements, so the playing field has to be levelled to an extent and if they want to pick their percentage of women I have absolutely no problem with that. And I think its unfair that for centuries men have been elected and chosen simply because they are men."

So does this mean that we should turn around now and do the same for women? "We're talking about trying to redress a balance here. It is a concession and I hope in an emergency measure until we are playing our full part." Even in the short term, the idea of concessions tends to engender heated debate. Feeding tends to rise when it suggested that women should have concessions, often translated as special treatment.

"I think the first thing is women's autonomy or even better, that all students' unions should have a women's rights officer." At present, 13 of the 18 colleges affiliated to USI have a women's rights officer. (see results of referendum in DCCU this week). The heated debates surrounding this issue are nothing compared to what ensues when the subject of women's autonomy is brought up. Ms O'Sullivan believes that women alone should have the power to elect their own representatives, readily accepting that it is a suggestion that raises hackles and that it is not a flawed idea.

There are negative aspects to absolutely everything but I think we have to look at the pros and they really do outweigh the cons. If we look at other organisations that have positive action for women, or women's autonomy, it has increased women's participation. NUS might not be the best example of a national union but women's participation there has rocketed since they introduced women's autonomy and that's what we want."

She argues that the reason a women's rights officer is present in the first place is to redress the balance and campaign on issues that just don't affect men. "I think that we're quite able to elect a competent representative and I think it's up to us to decide who that is and certainly it's up to us to decide the direction of our campaigns or at least choose the agenda. But God, we need everyone on board."

It is a subject upon which she gives no ground. Men, she says, have no criteria which would give them the right to elect a women's rights officer. "On what grounds does a man choose a woman's representative? It doesn't make sense to me. I don't think its democratic."

And yet elections for DIT's women's rights officers in the past have not been restricted to women voters so is there an implication that different officers would have been chosen had the voting been restricted to women. Helen O'Sullivan argues that is not a question of competence. "It is not to say that the women elected then are any less competent. What we are talking about is the empowerment of women." Men, she says, have no vested interest in electing a women's rights officer. "It's more about women being able to elect them than stopping men from electing them."
Views From Within

Anne-Marie Mulholland is one of only two woman sabbaticals in the DIT Students' Union. The 22-year-old is Convener in DIT Cathal Brugha Street, College of Catering, the only one of the DIT colleges with an overwhelmingly female student population (72% of full-time students, 72% of evening and part-time students, 43% of apprentices). Not surprisingly perhaps, three of the last four conveners have been women and two of the elections were uncontested.

She does not feel that this made easier her decision to enter student politics.

"I think a lot of women are actually more critical of other women than men; it's the whole society we live in. Another woman student might look at you and go 'oh look, she's a woman, I'd be able to do that job' and would criticise you more but at the same time, it's a good thing because they can see that a woman can do it and it's not just men who can survive in these positions."

The college is numerically dominated by women and four of the few office holders in the union are women but this has not meant that sexist comments are never uttered in Cathal Brugha. In that respect, it is like every other place.

"If someone comes in to ask about sports and I'm standing there and Declan (Declan Power, Deputy Convener) is standing there, they'll ask Declan because he's a man and if someone comes in to ask about a welfare loan, they'll ask me because I'm a woman."

Such treatment, while regrettable, is nothing compared to the opinions some other individuals have offered.

"Sometimes, you get people coming in saying 'I want this and I want that' and you tell them, 'well you can't have that because...' and then they go, you know the usual unrepeatable, 'all you need is a good --'. I've had that said to me on numerous occasions.

It is not surprising, then, that when women are asked about being in positions of influence in what is often perceived as preserves of the male of the species, they often talk about thick skins, determination and patience.

"You have to be prepared for people to think that you're not going to be as good as another man at the job. For example, I've often had people ringing up about sponsorship or different things and they go, 'Could I speak to the convener?', and I'd go 'what's it in connection with?' and they'd say 'I'd rather speak to him himself'. And the first few times it happens, you say, 'well, it's actually me' but you say it nicely to them.

"People automatically assume that the Convener is a man. Or you get people saying things like you're doing a good job, for a woman, but it's really a job for a man."

Ms Mulholland believes that "you just have to be able to fight your corner, to be able to stand up. When all the lads are sitting around laughing at something, you have to be able to say, 'listen that's not fair', in a good humoured way, not every two minutes go 'I'm not accepting that comment, that comment degrades. You have to be able to do it in a good humoured way and still get your message across."

Ann-Marie Mulholland finishes her tenure as Convener this year but her political appetite has been whetted; she is running for overall President of DITSU.

Nothing But The Same Old Story?

Lorraine Ho (21) is deputy convener of the students' union in DIT Mountjoy Square. Her experience of students' union politics has been somewhat different to Ann Marie's. She has not been on the receiving end of the kind of verbal abuse that her colleague has had occasion to endure but she believes that there is a reluctance within the students' unions to delegate responsibility to women.

"I feel that my superiors have this built-in fear of delegating to females. They're afraid to delegate authority. I can see that. I think they reckon we can't do the work. And I think that goes for overall, DITSU and COMAD SU."

She describes her year in student politics as "an experience" that was good in some ways.

Ms Ho was the only woman who ran for the position of deputy convener (another woman candidate dropped out early on). She admits that when she saw her opponents she didn't think she stood a chance. She was new to union politics, though she knew the way things worked, having been involved with the fashion society.

"When I saw that the people running for Convener and Clubs and Societies were new, I felt more comfortable." Out of four people who ran for Convener, only one was a woman.

Ms Ho believes that more men run for office because women are intimidated. And this feeling of intimidation reaches a lot further than the world of student politics.

"Even in a simple lecture environment, it's always the guys who are standing up, professing their ideas." She says that with men dominating such lecture proceedings, women finally give up trying and resign themselves to not being heard.

The situation is partly the fault of lecturers, according to Ms Ho.

"They should really say to guy, 'give this girl a chance.' I know its really creating a barrier, but they're not going to be heard otherwise."

She does not believe that speaking louder, or roaring, would do any good, "If you want to say something and the only way you're going to be heard is if you roar, you'll either be roared down by a guy across the class or else everyone else says 'will you ever take it easy'. This seems to tie in with the old chestnut - aggression being seen as assertiveness in men but sterility or hysteria in women.

But it's a form of aggression, being able to point your finger, part of politics! She nods. "I suppose."
Run Ragged

The headaches may only now be just beginning to dissipate; the memories will linger forever, assisted, it must be admitted, by incriminating photographic evidence.

The DIT has barely emerged from a spate of rag weeks, days filled with abseling, tripping (to Galway you understand), bed-pushling, bouncy boxing, eer swilling and regretting. Here then, for your perusal, are some of the high and low lights from the various Rag Weeks 94, captured for posterity.

- Sleeping rough on O'Connell Street
- DIT Rathmines - a very casual pub crawl
- Bouncy Boxing with DIT Cathal Brugha St. - as ridiculous as it looks

McPeaks

Freshly Made
Sandwiches & Rolls

Suppliers to all
DIT Student Union Shops
Iron Stomach competition, DIT Kevin Street - before the deluge

Holding up well in the COMAD pub crawl - the eventual winners.

Sponsored shave in DIT Cathal Brugha Street - he's only laughing because he can't see what he looks like.

Bolton Street dare devils absail down Abrakebabra, breaking nothing more than a light.
Recently, DIT Kevin Street and DIT Rathmines held their annual fashion shows. Both events were outstanding successes, a credit both to those who performed the considerable amount of strutting that was involved and those faceless people in the shadows who did the leg work. We salute you all and present a small but heartfelt photographic tribute to a fine upstanding, occasionally upstaging, body of men and women...

Suzy McCormack, DIT Rathmines

Deiric O’Broin with Dr. Brendan Goldsmith and Rathmines Director Jim Hickey. Over whose head is that star shining?

DIT Kevin St. Deputy Convener Claran Crosbie spots somebody laughing at

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: The animal most associated with Canada is ....?

1. The Moose
2. The Koala Bear
3. The Herring

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 ____________________________
College ___________________________
Year ______________________________
Course ______________________________
Student No. ________________________
Answer ____________________________
Hair by Alison
Special Student Rate
all Week
2 Kevin Street
(Beside Junction Pub)

Don’t forget to vote in the Student Union Elections on Thursday. You can choose who represents YOU!

NIGHT CLUB TECHNOLOGY
Suppliers to the DIT Students Union
DISCO CENTRE
now open at
12/13 EUSTACE STREET
TEMPLE BAR
DUBLIN 2
TEL: 6772235/6797686

... of FASHION

Shashi Ramkissoon, DIT Kevin St.

Kevin Street Attitude

Behind the scenes, DIT Rathmines

... now fix hat firmly on head. Ridiculous look is complete.
Bob Jordan, DIT Kevin St.
or all students' union presidents and conveners dress in jeans and a sweater or casual shirt. We just think they do, because most of them are students, or mix with students, so we generally perceive them to be so attired. Of course there are exceptions.

Colman Byrne, currently convenor in DIT Mountjoy square, is one such exception. Dressed in dark trousers, jacket, white shirt and noisy tie, he looks more like a young ambitious employee who wears a shirt and tie to work. People ask me why. When I'm talking to a tutor, lecturer, or administrator, they do, because most of them are students, or mix with students, so we generally perceive them to be so attired. The idea that the job can talk the talk, dismissing, as do the bureaucrats, work together as much as possible. A cynic might sneer at such sentiments. Colman Byrne would shrug.

He does not know what he'll do if he loses and even if he wins, says he is not sure about a future in politics.

"I don't know. I like politics. But I never had a particular political put me in the way. I don't know who my mother voted for, or my father. I think my grandfather voted for Fianna Fáil. A Fianna Fáil councillor told me that he did."

DITSU needs a long term plan because he believes that its biggest weakness is is that the president will only be there for 12 months and by the time a successor is getting used to the job there's only a couple of months left.

"As a long term plan is needed. Continuity."
Eamonn Ó Brádaigh
Convener
DIT Kevin Street

All three candidates running for the position of overall President have stressed the "hands on" approach they believe is necessary for DITSU in the coming years. How much of this is election-speak we will find out in the next year, but he is removed. I don't agree with his being removed but the fact is that with all the groundwork that had to be done, a new position..." he notes. "getting it up and running and respected in the institute, he had to remove himself."

But now he feels that the President has to be seen more by the students throughout the DIT because "I don't know if students know the person is there at the moment."

Mr Ó Brádaigh believes that this approach is vital for the long term success of DITSU.

"You have to have this hands on approach for the simple reason that you have to be in touch with what the students are saying and feeling. You cannot lock yourself away from it, sit in your office in Kevin Street and just deal with Sabbatical officers and DIT Council. You have to be seen around the colleges in what aspect you can."

He has straightforward idea of where he organise events, such events would help to integrate students more.

The increase in centralisation within the DIT and the students' unions is ongoing but change is never easy and if people think that their influence is being taken away, they tend to react accordingly.

"Its time people realised that we are one institution. DIT students have voted for a common constitution. We have to work on the plus side of working together rather than the negative, that 'it's such a big institution, everything's going to be centralised, people on the fringes aren't going to get included.' She feels that each college has to retain its own identity while also recognising itself as part of a larger identity.

Last week, a referendum was held within the DIT colleges to decide on the thorny issue of women's autonomy within the unions. In a low turnout, it was comprehensively defeated by a margin of three to one. Anne Marie Mulholland is in favour of women's autonomy.

"What went wrong was that it was very quick, we were tied for time. There was no other way to do it, it had to be done before nominations opened. As well as that the people who were very anti the thing came out to vote before people who were one way or the other."

The possibility of a referendum on the issue was first discussed back in January. Ms Mulholland concedes that those who proposed and were in favour of the referendum should have gotten out and campaigned on the issue.

"Yes, I suppose. If things hadn't been so hectic at that particular time, it could have been run..." she waxes "...I still don't think it would have won. I'd like it to have been won but the more of a 'yes' campaign there would have been, the more a 'no' cam-
Looking After No. 1

The Dublin Institute of Technology is going through a period of change and development. Some of the changes, by their nature, will only be realized slowly but others are happening quickly and quietly. Their speedy implementation is to be welcomed but it is this very efficiency which could leave students in the dark regarding schemes and structures of which they can avail.

How many, for example, are aware of the personal accident insurance scheme which covers all DIT students?

It has been in operation since early September last year and covers students all year round, no matter where they are. There are very few exclusions, say Dave Carmody, General Secretary of DITSU.

"Piloting a plane is one, suicide is another. Or anything ridiculous."

The scheme developed from a concern over the number of injuries received by students representing the DIT in sporting activities. From minor problems to serious injuries, there was confusion with regard to liability so DITSU began to investigate the possibility of introducing a scheme that students could avail of in the event of accidents.

Upon investigation we noticed that this scheme was in practice in some of the other universities in Ireland so we looked at the practicalities and found out that it wasn’t that difficult to put it into place. So at the moment all full-time students are covered and what we’ve done is added £5 onto the fees and that pays the insurance premium.

It is a wide ranging scheme covering all students all year round.

"So for example if you are working to help pay your fees, say as a kitchen porter in a restaurant and you get burned or suffer a bad injury, you can claim off this scheme. If you’re grape picking in France and get knocked down in a hit and run, this scheme will pay out."

The amount paid out naturally varies. Death benefit is £5,000 and the highest amount that can be received is £100,000, in the event of total incapacitation.

There is a lower limit of £50 on claims, which is designed to ensure that people will not make claims for visits to the doctor, facilities which, Mr. Carmody points out, are available locally.

"The scheme is for serious claims and we thought we had to have a £50 level so people would only claim for legitimate claims."

Because of its relative newness, many students are not aware of the existence of the scheme. This limits its usefulness.

"We’ve informed all the colleges that if there is a death or a serious injury they should contact the family and tell them about the scheme."

The procedure is that if that something happens to you and you incur these costs you apply to Dermot Hegarty, students services officer. He will send you out a claim form to which you will then attach all your documentation and send off to the insurance brokers."

Competition Winner!
The winner of last month’s Guinness/DITSU Competition was Kevin & ret student Leanne Carmody. She wins a case of Canadian Moosehead lager worth £30. She will also suddenly have many new friends.

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

The answer to the question, The Animal Most Associated with Canada is of course: The Moose