DIT Student Union

1995

The DIT Examiner: the Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union Special Edition, April 1995

DIT Students 'Union

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Recommended Citation
DIT Students’ Union: The DIT Examiner, Special Issue, April, 1995. DIT, 1995

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DITSU triumphs in USI Elections

The new President of USI will be Colman Byrne, currently Overall President of DITSU. He will be joined on the incoming executive of USI by another DITSU officer, Helen Ryan, who was elected Welfare Officer. Helen is presently the Site President of DIT Kevin Street’s Students’ Union.

In the end, after a vigorous campaign by both candidates, Mr Byrne won the election quite handsomely, by 100 votes to Bob Jordan’s 55. Mr Jordan is the Deputy President of USI. This is the first time in five years that the mantle of President has not been passed from one USI candidate to another and will be seen by many as a vote for change. Mr Byrne believes that this was crucial to his victory. “I ran my campaign on that. It needs change, needs energy, new blood, but I wasn’t asking people to vote against someone else. I was asking them to vote for me.” He said that he did not think he would win by such a margin but professed himself ‘delighted’ with such a result. Mr Jordan, of whom outgoing President Colm Kavanagh spoke very fondly in his speech on the final day on Congress, said that he will now be bowing out of Students’ Unions politics, as he had promised himself if he failed in his attempt to become president.

“I’m going to get a job,” he told the delegates at the Ardilaun Hotel in Galway where Annual Congress was held this year. This election had been a tough one to call and few were prepared to pin their colours to a particular mast, at least not publicly. Bob Jordan had tradition going for him; he is well liked and a fine, witty speaker but going against him was a certain sense of dissatisfaction with USI, made abundantly clear when this year’s officer board report was voted against. His opponent, Colman Byrne, is an ambitious young man who enjoys a good dog fight. He ran a strong, highly efficient campaign, playing the need for change card heavily. No mean speaker himself, he delivered a well received speech on Thursday evening, the first of Congress. The reception was an indication that the election had swung his way. Nevertheless, when Frank Crumley entered to announce the outcome of the elections, the tension in Congress hall was palpable. The winner in the Presidential election was the last to be announced and when it was announced that Byrne had received 100 votes (the quota was 78), his supporters had heard all they needed. They cheered, champagne was uncorked and Byrne was held aloft.

Mr Jordan accepted defeat graciously, offering a handshake to a tearful My Byrne. Most of the DITSU delegation and various others who had supported the Byrne campaign, then repaired to the hotel bar to continue the celebrations, which went on long into the night.

Minutes earlier, Helen Ryan, who is presently Site President in DIT Kevin Street’s Students’ Union was elected USI Welfare Officer. She ran uncontested and so was virtually assured of election but still the moment her election was officially announced, and the massive cheer that went up, proved too much and she too wept. The pressure was off and she could relax for the weekend.

She said she was delighted with the overwhelming ‘yes’ vote. Her priorities for the year will include tackling the housing difficulties which face students each year. “The introduction of taxes for landlords means that they are going to reflect that in their rent increases so their may be a housing crisis. We’ll be for some sort of relief for people who rent to students.”

She says that USI will also be closely monitoring the operation of the students summer jobs scheme and will fight for the retention of the £200 extra available to students on the scheme whose parents are unemployed.

In the other contests, Ms Nodleen Hartigan, presently USI’s Welfare Officer, was elected Deputy President; Malcolm Byrne, UCD, was elected Education Officer and Dermot Quaine, Limerick RTC, was elected Union Development Officer. Kelly O’Dowd was elected Women’s Rights Officer at Women’s Congress.

Mr Byrne’s priorities for the coming year will be consolidation of current membership of USI - there were plenty of warnings at this year’s Congress that some people are unhappy - improvements to the grants system and the student summer jobs scheme, the legitimacy and effectiveness of which most students now seem to accept.

“We have to adopt what the students have said. Now we have to make it better, to improve it.”
The DIT Examiner
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e-mail: rjquinn@dit.ie

Here You Go Again

It is hard to believe that some students in the DIT are beginning their exams this week. Scary isn't it! Only yesterday it was September and the year stretched ahead with exams nowhere in sight for many of you. Suddenly, there they are, looming as only exams do. The next month will be rough, it's as simple and brutal as that. The pressure will be considerable, whether you are a first year or a final year student and, naturally, the exams are very important: you have worked hard to get to this point and it is understandable that you may think that everything hinges on how you perform over the next few weeks.

But, do not let them take over your life. Certainly, give it your best and commit yourself to but do not forget to take time out to relax for a moment; go for a walk, go for a drink, go to the cinema, do something. The exams will offer more than enough pressure without you fretting and worrying when you're not actually sitting one or studying for the next one.

The students' union is still around; the year isn't over yet. If there is anything bothering you and you don't know quite where to turn, drop in and simply ask that's what they're there for. There is little point in bottling things up, especially at this time of year. The solution may be simpler than you think.

The executive of DITSU and the DIT Examiner wish all of you the very best of luck in the coming weeks.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I found your recent front page articles concerning DIT Rag week more related to a propaganda machine rather than the newspaper of the 25,000 students of the DIT.

As a sabbatical officer and President of a site college and one who was not in favour of a DIT Rag week. I found that the views of students of DIT Aungier St. as indicated a recent class representative meeting were not being catered for - not to mention the views of other officers in other colleges. For example, what did the local Entertainment Officers think of it all? Our local magazine, Link, had the opposite effect of the recent editions of the "Examiner", however Link "is written primarily by the Student Union and the students of DIT Aungier St. and its readership is the students Aungier St. and no one else as expressed in our recent Editorial. What annoys me the most however is having had the foresight to see that the views expressed in the "Examiner" would be all one sided, I actually requested an interview and/or comments on the issue of the DIT rag week. A request which although agreed, was not adhered to. Some colleges do not have local magazines and therefore what is read in the DIT Examiner is often seen as gospel. Is it any wonder therefore that large amounts of editions are left unread in various colleges? Students are intelligent people, it's about time their representatives and employees treated them as such.

Yours Sincerely,

Dan Wade
Site President,
DIT Aungier St.

The Editor Replies

I do not accept that the front page articles referred to were propagandist, and I am not too sure what is meant by 'propaganda machine'. The DIT Examiner is designed as the newspaper of the DIT Students Union and therefore, naturally, part of its brief is to promote and advertise DITSU events, be they the DIT Sports Days, individual fashion shows or DIT Rag week.

The front page article in the January/February edition was largely concerned with the various events that were lined up for the impending rag week. Mr. Wade's reservations about rag week were not included in direct quote but reference was made in the article to such concerns. Furthermore, such concerns were also referred to in the editorial of that issue. No entertainments officer contacted the paper in relation to rag week.

The front page article in the post rag week issue was concerned simply with the events that occurred on the night of the rag ball. I am at a loss to discover anything of a propagandist nature in the piece.

Once again, reference was made in the editorial to the reticence of the part of some people to the idea of a DIT wide rag week. It also expressed the view that the rag week was an overall success and that the idea was a sound one. The DIT Examiner believes that this is the case, nothing more. Mr. Wade is of course entitled to disagree with this opinion; that is what opinions are for.

Yours Sincerely,

The Editor

Ditsu
RUN BY STUDENTS FOR STUDENTS
SO GET INVOLVED!
IT'S YOUR STUDENTS' UNION.

Clarifications

So apart from being the largest students' union in the country

What has Ditsu ever done for me?

Well we organise and provide:

+ FRESHERS/ARTS/WELFARE/RAG WEEKS
+ COMPREHENSIVE SUBSIDISED ENTS.
+ FREE WELFARE ADVICE
+ FREE FINANCIAL ADVICE
+ HELP WITH COURSE PROBLEMS
+ HELP WITH GRANT PROBLEMS
+ HELP AND RESOURCES FOR CLUBS AND SOCIETIES
+ FREE STUDENT NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES
+ REPRESENTATION WITHIN THE COLLEGE, WITHIN DIT GOVERNING BODY AND NATIONALLY
+ CAMPAIGNS ON ISSUES LIKE STUDENT HARDSHIP, ACCOMMODATION AND SAFETY, LIBRARY FACILITIES, CATERING
+ RAISES THOUSANDS FOR CHARITY THROUGH RAG WEEK
+ 2ND HAND BOOK SERVICE
+ PUBLISHES FREE YEARLY HANDBOOK AND WELFARE MANUAL
+ DETAILED ACCOMMODATION LIST AT START OF EVERY YEAR
+ INTEREST FREE WELFARE LOANS
+ USIT CARDS
+ CHEAP PHOTOCOPYING
+ SU SHOP WITH WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS AT COMPETITIVE PRICES
+ SECRETARIAL SERVICE, PAST EXAM PAPERS AND FAX SERVICE
+ POOL TABLES AND VIDEO GAMES
+ PAYPHONE IN SU OFFICE
+ CONDOM MACHINES IN TOILETS
+ FRESHERS, HALLOWEEN, CHRISTMAS, RAG, EASTER, LAST CHANCE BALLS
+ FASHION SHOW
+ BEER PROMOTIONS
+ CHEAP PASSPORT PHOTOS
+ FRESHERS WELCOME PACKS
+ POSTAL ADDRESS SERVICE
+ AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT US TO DO!

Ditsu

Byrne

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The Summer Job Scheme ’96

The Students Summer Jobs Scheme allows third level students (Not Final Year Students) to take up part-time work useful to their community during their Summer Holidays and to receive payment for this work.

The scheme operates from 1st June to 30th September 1996. The maximum number of hours a student is allowed to work is 200 over a 6-17 week period. The maximum hours worked per week cannot exceed 35. The rate of pay for students is £3 per hour up to a maximum of £600. This payment is not subject to income tax or PRSI. Students may also get another job to supplement their income for the Summer months.

To qualify for work under the scheme you must be currently in full-time third level education, be aged 18 or over on 1st June 1996 and satisfy a means test.

To apply, students must get written approval from the Department of Social Welfare before the work/project commences. A student will be given a Job Certificate. Working arrangements are a matter to be agreed between the student and the sponsor. Before starting work the student must give his/her job certificate to the sponsor.

Applications forms are available from Student Union Offices or from the Department. Under no circumstances will applications be accepted after the closing date on 31st May 1996. Allow for 21 days for processing of your application.

The Completed Application Form should be sent to:

Department of Social Welfare, P.O. Box 3988, Dublin 1.

Final Year students can sign on the day after their last exam. They should do this because you will only get backdated payment from the day you sign on. You need some form of ID, a birth certificate or a passport and a letter from the college to say you have finished your final year exams. You get this letter from the Administrations Office. You must continue to sign on each week.

If you have signed on before, your payment will come through quickly. If this is your first time signing on, a Welfare Officer will come out to visit your house or flat. If you live at home, you will be means tested on your parents’ income and you will need your parents’ P60 and possibly other proof of income and expenditure. You can expect to receive payment 6 weeks from the day you sign on. Again you may be lucky and be paid quicker.

If you want to claim Rent Allowance you must get in contact with your Local Community Welfare Officer in Local Health Centre.

Information on working abroad is available from USIT in Aston Quay. Always research the country you are travelling to - it is wise to know how to work legally and the do’s and don’ts.

Remember to take out insurance over the Summer months, in case of loss or theft of your belongings.

If you have any queries or problems on any of the above issues - drop into the Students’ Union for more information.

Mountjoy Square Goes Medieval

Grog, wenches, lascivious, immoral clergymen. several drunken knights, fair maidens, vast amounts of food and more grog. Chaucer would have loved it.

Such was the scene in the canteen in DIT Mountjoy Square for the high-light of their art and design week. The place had been cleverly and diligently decorated in a medieval manner, as had anyone who wished to attend the dinner to mark the end of the week’s activities.

The DIT Examiner (modern garb plus infernal soul stealing image creating machine) dropped in to record the moment.

If you want your soul back, contact the paper.

Martin Malone was the winner of the Bus Eireann Travel Vouchers Competition. He won £350 worth of USIT Travel Vouchers. Pictured (l to r) are: Karen O’Leary, (Bus Eireann), Victor Fyfe (Bus Eireann) Martin Malone and Jimmy Kane.

BUS EIREANN EUROINES

TO

BRITAIN & EUROPE

LONDON FROM £17*

*(Single fare not inclusive of Govt. tax - £2)

SAMPLE CONNECTIONS TO EUROPE FROM LONDON:

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[Off-peak, youth fares]

INFORMATION - DUBLIN, 8366111.
The Exam Appeals Procedure

Each year, the DIT's Exam Appeals Board received on average, 10 appeals from students regarding exams results. They are usually concerned with an upgrading of a result but not always. Occasionally, there is a request to sit a supplemental exam if the usual supplemental options have been exhausted.

There is an appeal procedure that should be followed and it should be available from both the library and the exams office in each DIT site. This is not always the case and so we will here outline the procedure as clearly as is possible. This procedure is there to be used if you feel you have a genuine case.

Tom Duff, the DIT's Academic Registrar, has pointed out that the exam appeals board, which is independent of individual colleges, cannot change results but can pass onto the exams board information that may not have been available at the time of the exam. This may then result in the exam board reconvening to consider the student's case.

1. First step is to get an Examination Appeals Form (Form A1). This should be available from the Administrative Section of the relevant college.

2. This form must be completed in block letters or typescript and lodged with the relevant director within two weeks of the publication of the Provisional Examination Results and accompanied by the appropriate fee (£37). The relevant director must then sign and date the appeal and he will then forward it to the Academic Registrar (Tom Duff). It must be accompanied by:

   A. Information as to whether

   (i) the appellant (student making the appeal) has made efforts to resolve, through the relevant Head of School/Department the difficulty which has given rise to the appeal

   (ii) a recheck has been requested and, if so, state the outcome if processed

   (iii) the Examination Board has been made aware of any special circumstances, including medical, affecting the appellant's case prior to determination of results

   (iv) the students in general and the prospective appellant in particular, have been informed of the appropriate course regulations

   Other information which must accompany the appeal is

   B. A written evaluation of the case from the relevant director, including comment on the allegations, if any, contained therein

   C. Medical certificates relevant to the case

   D. The appellant's academic record in previous years and a transcript of his/her current class group's examination results in respect of which the appeal is being sought

   E. Any other relevant information on the case.

Be sure to include any information that may be relevant, and if including any medical certificates, ensure that you list their inclusion on the appeals form in the appropriate section of the form.

Section 10 of the form asks the appellant to please specify the change you seek in your result as a consequence of this appeal. This section, according to Tom Duff, was introduced because there have been students who were requesting a further supplemental exam rather than an upgrading of a result. Don't be worried by the request. State honestly your feeling on the matter and why.

There is space provided on the appeals form (section 8) in which you may present your case in your own words. If you feel there is insufficient space provided on the form, you can continue on separate sheets of paper but make sure you include them with your appeal and indicate clearly their inclusion.

There is a facility for presenting your case to the board, either by yourself or with a willing lecturer/representative of the students' union. One of these could present the case for you or you can forego this option entirely. It will not prejudice your case.

Hopefully, you will not need recourse to this facility, but if you do, don't be afraid to make your case.
Killing for Convenience

Dead Man Walking takes on a great deal and unfortunately the weight of trying to cover every conceivable moral angle in the ongoing debate on the death penalty finally renders it less effective as a criticism of that policy than it could have been.

By remaining so detached as he can be writer/director Tim Robbins has endeavoured to grove in a measured, driving argument that the death penalty is wrong, that it solves nothing, is the preserve of cynical vote hunting politicians, and is finally, utterly inhuman. It's as if he sat down and decided that if he left anything out, those in favour of the death penalty would point an accusatory finger and shout "ah ha, but you didn't show this, what about that?" And so Robbins packs in as much as possible but in doing do he robs the film of intensity and anger. We are shown, for example, the brutal rape and murder of two teenagers by Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn), the crimes for which he is on death row. This is suggested at throughout the crimes for which he is on death row.

Matthew tal rape and murder of two teenagers by Susan Sarandon and Robbins packs in as much as possible didn't show this, what about but in doing do he robs the film of ing finger and shout he left anything out, those in favour of the death penalty would point an accusatory preserving of cynical vote hunting politicians, is wrong, that it solves nothing, is the effective as a criticism of that policy of trying to cover every conceivable angles or swooping camerawork (the recent Murder in the First was a terrible film, he employs an unfussy and direct style, wisely letting the actors do the work here pales next to his, in what is admittedly the more showy role. He is given the best lines and biggest scenes in the film and makes the most of the opportunities afforded him. His character is a preening, petulant and, now, impatiently angry murderer, falsely silly looking with a high pompadour hairstyle and half shaved goatee. Penn was his face, eyes flat and unblinking, small mouth in a naff sneer, and gets to it. His guilt is never in doubt and he remains an unpleasant individual throughout, though Robbins allows him occasional flashes of humanity to underline the fact that the State is about to take the life of a person. We are shown his family also (the director takes the weakest in the film. The mother's decision (Bill Clinton, who played the role) is admirably handled in the simple, matter of a fact way, eyes flat and unblinking, small mouth in a naff sneer, and gets to it. The mother's wailing is overdone and may even cause titters in the audience. Not, I imagine, the desired effect.

The film's climax is inevitable and is handled in the simple, matter of a fact style of the movie as a whole. It is here that its effectiveness stands out, there was a palpable, audible emotional reaction in the darkness even though the final scenes are intercut with the horrifying murders in the terrifying loneliness of a Louisiana forest. This is Robbins only real cinematic trick, and a pretty standard one it is. For the rest of the film, he employs an unflussy and direct style, wisely letting the actors do the work and not distracting with clever angles or swooping camerawork (the Recent Murder in the First was a terrible offender in this regard).

Dead Man Walking is a heartfelt film, well acted and one which is moving but because it attempts to make the definitive argument against the death penalty, albeit in a reasoned manner, its sense of drama and power as a cinematic work is dissipated.
DIT Mountjoy Square brought this year's series of DIT fashion shows to a sparkling, shimmering end with their very own high tech, high style event recently in Jury's Hotel. The models, by time slinky, silly and downright outrageous in dress and manner, did their thing with consummate ease and professionalism while Tara (herself not to be outdone in the high fashion and higher hair department) emceed with confidence. The audience lapped it up but one question remains unanswered: What in Heaven's name did Mark Lee do to this hair? Beg pardon, two questions. Why?

Selected scenes (some a little scary) from DIT Mountjoy Square's Fashion Show, Jury's Hotel, March 25th, 1996

"What do you think?"
"Dunno, they all look a bit crap to me."
Sports Day Disappoints in Dreary Weather

Was it the weather - grey, drizzly, relentlessly cold and unwelcoming? Perhaps it was the furious pace of the surrounding weeks with rag week, elections and preparations for annual congress. Maybe it had something to do with the somewhat rushed nature of the plans. It was probably all three but no matter how you look at it, this year's DIT Sports Day was a grave disappointment compared with the glowing success of its predecessor.

Swinging into the ALSAA grounds by the airport, it was immediately apparent that the numbers attending, whether taking part or simply observing, were significantly lower than last year's. The outdoor sports field were deserted save for one seven-a-side rugby match. On the all surface soccer and hockey pitches, blue legged and red eared sports men and women fought on bravely while their supporters kept moving to keep warm. The wind was merciless.

In the welcome warmth of the sports hall, basketball took centre stage - there always seemed to be a match taking place - while others played volleyball, badminton or took part in an aerobics. Upstairs, in the viewing area, those who had finished their games or who had simply had enough, supped on pints and looked down. Most who were there this year were participants and the whole event lacked the sense of fun that prevailed last year. It was all over by 3.30pm and everyone simply slipped away, though the hardier element head for a pre-organised event in McGraths later on.

Kudos are due to all those who took part in unpleasant conditions but a long look will be needed at this year's event. DIT sports day should be a priority from the beginning of the year and not a mad dash in the weeks leading up to it.
Eithne Fitzgerald, Minister for State at the Office of the Tanaiste, talks exclusively to the DIT Examiner about the intricacies of the proposed Freedom of Information Bill, due for publication next month, and what it will mean for Irish society.

"At present, the bizarrely anachronistic Irish system, based closely on the Westminster model, affords only minimum access to official information, and then almost grudgingly, even when that information is non-controversial material relating to the enquirer. As regards information pertaining to the operations of public bodies that the Government would rather not talk about, this is usually imparted through the use of parliamentary questions. The answers to these are often obfuscatory, wishy-washy affairs. What this sort of set up has led to is the embarrassment and revealing likes of the Beef tribunal, and the wishy-washy affairs. What this sort of set up has led to is the embarrassment and revealing likes of the Beef tribunal, and the wishy-washy affairs. An information commissioner was appointed by the House of the Oireachtas. The bill will pertain to public bodies and will apply immediately to the mainstream civil service and Government departments. It is envisaged that its remit will be extended when the process is operational and after any wrinkles, and there will be many, have been ironed out. When it is extended, it could prove very interesting for third level institutions which are notoriously, pathologically protective of students' records.

"We've looked at freedom of information in other jurisdictions around the world and we looked at the standard model, particularly honed in on the Westminster model. It's very similar to our own and a lot of lessons can be learned there. We looked closely at New Zealand, Canada and Australia. They've moved on to Westminister's model. It's very similar to our own, and a lot of lessons can be learned. We've seen that the Freedom of Information Bill is not only an amendment, but an extension, it could prove very interesting for third level institutions which are notoriously, pathologically protective of students' records.

"I have a wide definition of public bodies: basically, when someone benefits from public funds, they can be deemed public bodies. Voluntary hospitals, which are privately owned but are in receipt of public funds, will in come. There are civil servants, others who are not civil servants, they are not to be published in May. It will double-bless be heralded by the current Government as yet another shining example of the open and transparent manner in which the country is now being run. In the other corner, it will be described as a toothless piece of fluff that doesn't go far enough.

"The Minister puts the government positions succinctly, if predictably: "It's about openness and transparency and accountability in government." At least she has the good humour to smile when she says this as it has become a cliché to rank up there with mature wisdom. She has been steering a Freedom of Information Bill through our legislative loops and chicanes and the bill is due to be published in May. It will double-bless be heralded by the current Government as yet another shining example of the open and transparent manner in which the country is now being run. In the other corner, it will be described as a toothless piece of fluff that doesn't go far enough.

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this would be in or out of the final bill or whether we would be asked to do a separate piece of legislation but we got it in and were pleasantly surprised and we thought 'we'll do a bit more work on it before we go back to government on it'. But the basic principles is that if someone has suspected something there are three possibilities - they're right, wrong in genuine error or maliciously wrong. We have to allow for situations when you are dealing with that. There's no point if someone has a complaint and you give it to someone who can do nothing about it, so the list of people we have there are people who can actually do something about it. We may take out the Data Protection Commissioners.'

Ms Fitzgerald is anxious to point out that there have to be protections against allegations that are incorrect or deliberately malicious.

"So within those parameters we are going to develop this, again there are other countries that have done a lot more work.'

She admits that there are cases where a vigilent press and "genuinely independent media may actually be the best way of uncovering" but that they may also do damage to innocent people and so more work needs to be done in this area.

The new bill encoaches on territory currently guarded with rabid jealousy by the Official Secrets Act, introduced by Charles Haughey as Minister for Defence, in 1962. Note the following in relation to the passing on of information:

"A person shall not communicate any official information to any other person unless he is duly authorised to do so or does so in the course of and in accordance with his duties as the holder of a public office or when it is in the interests of the State to communicate it."

Given the great changes being proposed by the new bill, there is surely a very strong argument for abolition of this massively restrictive piece of legislation.

"I would personally repeal it in the morning if it was my job to do so but the programme for Government gave the job to the legislation and security committee of drawing up of recommendations for the Department of Justice, whose thing it is. What we have done basically gives a framework for the repeal of the Official Secrets Act. So our bill doesn't contain punitive sanctions for people who give unauthorised information. That is not in the public interest because basically the Official Secrets Act covers that but if you were simply to repeal the Official Secrets Act you would need some sanction for people who, say, leak exam papers, hack into security files or whatever.

"You do need some protection because there are some few matters when the public interest in secrecy outweighs the public interest in disclosure, but our philosophical view is that public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in secrecy and we are trying to do at some length in our bill is to spell out and so limit those areas."

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John Travolta, Christian Slater, bomber planes, missing nuclear warheads...... what more could you possibly ask for? Directed by John Woo and written by Graham Yost ("Speed"), "Broken Arrow" is packed with more action and square jaws, nay testosterones, than any big-budget thriller of this year so far! The title refers to the code-name given by the US Government to "a major nuclear weapon goes missing, which is obviously what the plot is centred around.

Major Vic Deakins (Travolta) and Capn. Riley Hale (Slater) are top US Navy pilots and best friends. They fly Stealth bombers, which, to those not raised on Tom Clancy novels, are planes which look like they have escaped from the set of a Batman movie, jet black shaped like Darth Vader's helmet and radar-resistant. On a test flight over Utah, the Stealth is loaded with two live nuclear warheads, in order to find out whether or not they can be traced by radar. While on this flight, we discover that Deakins is not the nice guy we thought he was. He wants to commandeer the plane and use the warheads to hold a major US city to ransom. Hale is ejected from the bomber and is left for dead in the desert, while Deakins also ejects, crashes $2 billion worth of military hardware, and meets up with his fellow criminals. Needless to say, Hale is far from dead, and Deakins is not exactly home and dry. From here on in, the two friends are pitted against each other in a battle for the two missing warheads.

Deakins wants them in order to make a wad of cash and Hale wants them back with the Government (out of harm's way?).

Okay, so "Broken Arrow" sounds like the archetypal, no holds barred/no expense spared action thriller, but there's much more to it than this. Directed by Hong Kong turned Hollywood-filmmaker, John Woo, this obviously struck with the if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it philosophy. That is also where the comparison with "Speed" ends, Christian Slater can actually act, and plays the sympathetic hero well, while Travolta is brilliant as the money-mad would-be terrorist. He also gets some of the best lines. Example- one of Deakins' baddies is shooting at Hale who is hiding behind out of the warheads. Deakins, using the same tone of voice as a put-upon head office says "Could I ask you not to shoot at the thermo-nuclear weapons, please?" Surprisingly, there is no obvi­ous love interest. There is only one female part in "Broken Arrow"; Samantha Mathis is the Park Ranger who finds Hale when he is ejected from his plane and who helps him against Deakins. Not once do they snog. What they do after the credits roll is left to the imagination, but this is essentially a Boys With Toys movie. Woo cleverly avoids any unnecessary love scenes, even when we really are expecting Hale and Terry to get it together on screen.

I must admit that I wasn't expecting much from "Broken Arrow", but I was pleasantly surprised. If it's depth, meaning and ground-breaking performances you're after, go to the latest Ken Loach offering. However, if it's Friday night and you can't face Gay Byrne or the Girty Show, then get the largest tub of popcorn, a couple of mates and head off to see "Broken Arrow". It is from the best movie I've seen this year, but it is a pleasant change from the action movies-by-numbers approach that usually takes over anything that involves the US Navy, big guns and even bigger budgets.

By Siobhan Weekes
DITSU Elections '96 - The Results

Position: Overall President
Joyce, Colin
yes: 2939
no: 831
Spoilt: 147
Joyce, Colin elected

DIT Aungier St

Position: Site President
Total Poll: 558
Spoilt Votes: 26
Total Valid Poll: 532
Quote: 267
Grogan, Des 207
Kavanagh, Susan 49
Pidgeon, Sinéad 276
Sinéad Pidgeon elected

Position: Deputy Site President
Total Poll: 562
Spoilt Votes: 17
Total Valid Poll: 545
Quote: 273
Colman, Maebh 278
Weekes, Siobhán 267
Colman, Maebh elected

Position: Public Relations Officer
Total Poll: 558
Spoilt Votes: 14
Total Valid Poll: 544
Ni Láoghaí, Sorcha
Yes: 397
No: 147
Ni Láoghaí, Sorcha elected

Position: Irish Language Officer
Total Poll: 560
Spoilt Votes: 12
Total Valid Poll: 548
De Barra, Maureen
Yes: 449
No: 99
De Barra, Maureen elected

Position: Equality Officer
Total Poll: 553
Spoilt Votes: 16
Total Valid Poll: 537
Nevin, Gráinne
Yes: 398
No: 139
Nevin, Gráinne elected

Position: Clubs and Socios Officer
Total Poll: 557
Spoilt Votes: 13
Total Valid Poll: 544
Grogan, Rachel
Yes: 545
No: 99

Grogan, Rachel elected

Position: Entertainments Officer
Total Poll: 563
Spoilt Votes: 25
Total Valid Poll: 538
Quota: 270
Farrelly, Leigh 271
Manning, Paul 267
Farrelly, Leigh elected

Position: Part time Students' Officer
Total Poll: 562
Spoilt Votes: 18
Total Valid Poll: 544
Purtill, Gavin
Yes: 423
No: 123
Purtill, Gavin elected

DIT Cathal Brugha Street

Position: Site President
Total Poll: 846
Spoilt Votes: 20
Total Valid Poll: 826
Quota: 414
McCartan, Shane 314
McCarthy, Tom 78
Moran, Patricia 328
Smith, Conor 106
McCarthy, Tom eliminated

Second Count:
McCartan, Shane 314 + 25 = 339
Moran, Patricia 328 + 28 = 356
Smith, Conor 106 + 17 = 123
10 votes non-transferable
Smith, Conor eliminated

Third Count:
McCartan, Shane 337 + 44 = 381
Moran, Patricia 356 + 60 = 416
19 non-transferable votes
Moran, Patricia elected after recounts

Position: Site Deputy President
Total Poll: 845
Spoilt Votes: 17
Total Valid Poll: 828
Quota: 415
Condon, Adrienne 57
Coughlan, Bob 202
McCarthy, Damien 147
Molloy, Mairead 79
O'Sullivan, Paula 198
Stapleton, Linda 145
Condon, Adrienne eliminated

Second Count:
Coughlan, Bob 202 + 26 = 228
McCarthy, Damien 147 + 9 = 156
Molloy, Mairead 79 + 5 = 84
O'Sullivan, Paula 198 + 5 = 203
Stapleton, Linda 145 + 4 = 149
8 non-transferable votes

McGrath, Niamh elected

Position: Employments Officer
Total Poll: 846
Spoilt Votes: 27
Total Valid Poll: 819
Tighe, Caroline
Yes: 709
No: 110
Caroline, Tighe elected

Position: Clubs and Societies Officer
Total Poll: 832
Spoilt Votes: 23
Total Valid Poll: 809
Hook, George
Yes: 721
No: 88
Hook, George elected

Position: Equality Officer
Total Poll: 839
Spoilt Votes: 28
Total Valid Poll: 811
Quota: 406
Byrne, Conor 383
Jennequin, Niamh 252
McGrath, Niamh 176

McGrath, Niamh eliminated

Second Count:
Byrne, Conor 383 + 49 = 432
Jennequin, Niamh 252 + 88 = 340
39 non-transferable votes

Byrne, Conor elected

DIT Bolton Street

Position: Site President
Total Poll: 1006
Spoilt Votes: 34
Total Valid Poll: 972
Quota: 487
Cortello, Colin 610
Mythen, Ethel 362
Castello, Colin elected

Position: Deputy Site President
Total Poll: 1003
Spoilt Votes: 17
Total Valid Poll: 986
Quota: 494
Colgan, Eamonn 245
Liddy, Michael 293
McGuire, Deirdre 448
Colgan, Michael eliminated

Second Count:
Liddy, Michael 293 + 38 = 331
McGuire, Deirdre 448 + 68 = 516
139 non-transferable votes

McGuire, Deirdre elected

Position: Irish Language Officer
Total Poll: 1005
Spoilt Votes: 28
Total Valid Poll: 977
O'Braian, Michael
Yes: 846
No: 131
O'Braian, Michael elected

Position: Public Relations Officer
Total Poll: 1002
Spoilt Votes: 40
Total Valid Poll: 962
McInerney, Mark
Yes: 809
No: 153
McInerney, Mark elected

Position: Entertainments Officer
Total Poll: 994
Spoilt Votes: 56
Total Valid Poll: 938
Quota: 470
Mitchell, Charles 513
Blair, Ruairí 425
Mitchell, Charles elected

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DITSU Elections '96 - The Results

Position: Clubs and Societies Officer
Total Poll: 993
Spoilt Votes: 59
Total Valid Poll: 934
Quota: 468

Jordan, Jason 403
O’Daly, Ross 531
O’Daly, Ross elected

DIT Kevin Street
Position: Site President
Total Poll: 605
Spoilt Votes: 5
Total Valid Poll: 600
Blake, Dermot
Yes: 544
No: 56
Blake, Dermot elected

Position: Clubs and Societies Officer
Total Poll: 609
Spoilt Votes: 28
Total Valid Poll: 572
Quota: 287
Kildlea, James 267
O’Conchubhair, Andoni 305
O’Conchubhair, Andoni elected

Position: Irish Language Officer
Total Poll: 601
Spoilt Votes: 12
Total Valid Poll: 589
MacDonnacha, Padraig
Yes: 501
No: 88
MacDonnacha, Padraig elected

DIT Mountjoy Square
Position: Site President
Total Poll: 942
Spoilt Votes: 16
Total Valid Poll: 926

Quota: 464
Byrne, George 280
Keane, Tom 317
Whelan, Robbie 329
Byrne George eliminated

Second Count
Keane, Tom 517 + 52 = 369
Whelan, Robbie 329 + 63 = 392
165 non-transferable votes
Whelan, Robbie elected without reaching quota after recounts

Position: Site Deputy President
Total Poll: 927
Spoilt Votes: 139
Total Valid Poll: 787
Quota: 399
Emmett, Rorlan 399
Kimella, Raymond 398
Emmett, Rorlan elected after recounts

Position: Part-time Students Officer
Total Poll: 922
Spoilt Votes: 47
Total Valid Poll: 875
Quota: 438
Buckley, Trevor 270
Burke, Channelle 605
Burke, Channelle elected

Position: Clubs and Societies Officer
Total Poll: 885
Spoilt Votes: 22
Total Valid Poll: 863
Spence, Richard
Yes: 754
No: 129
Spence, Richard elected

Position: Public Relations Officer
Total Poll: 917
Spoilt Votes: 41
Total Valid Poll: 876

Shannon, Michael
Yes: 799
No: 117
Shannon, Michael elected

Position: Irish Language Officer
Total Poll: 912
Spoilt Votes: 58
Total Valid Poll: 854
Quota: 428
Fox, Diarmuid 390
Maher, John 464
Maher, John elected

Position: Equality Officer
Total Poll: 912
Spoilt Votes: 51
Total Valid Poll: 861
Quota: 431
Daly, Rosemary 396
Smyth, Raymond 153
Townsend, Audrey 312
Smyth, Raymond elected

Position: Entertainments Officer
Total Poll: 926
Spoilt Votes: 63
Total Valid Poll: 863
Quota: 432
Crowe, Andrew 428
Timmons, Ciaran 435
Timmons, Ciaran elected

However, the Chief Returning Officer was notified that Ciaran Timmons did not attend and speak at the hustings and is therefore disqualified. Thus, the vote for this position is rendered null and void and it will be necessary to reopen nominations for this position and hold a by-election - date to be fixed

By-election Results: DIT Kevin St
Position: Public Relations Officer
Total Poll: 440
Spoilt Votes: 5
Total Valid Poll: 395
Quota: 198
1st Count
Mark Flavin 153
Justin Lawrence 30
Ger McEvoy 84
Sinead Redmond 128
Justin Lawrence eliminated

2nd Count
Mark Flavin 153 + 5 = 158
Ger McEvoy 84 + 3 = 87
Sinead Redmond: 128 + 1 = 129
Non transferable: 22
Ger McEvoy eliminated

3rd Count
Mark Flavin 157 + 15 = 172*
Sinead Redmond: 129 + 11 = 140
Non transferable: 61
Flavin, Mark elected without reaching the quota

Position: Entertainments Officer
Total Poll: 401 votes
Spoilt Votes: 03
Total Valid Poll: 398

Eimear Cummins
Yes: 337
No: 81
Cummins, Eimear elected

USI Elections '96 - The Results

Position: Deputy President/Welfare Officer
Total Poll: 402
Spoilt Votes: 08
Total Valid Poll: 394

Lloyd, Rosin Shaun 164
Maye, Derick 230
Maye, Derick elected

USI Elections '96 - The Results

Position: President
Total Poll: 157
Spoilt Votes: 2
Total Valid Poll: 155
Quota: 78

Harrigan, Noeleen 101
Lyons, Eugene 4
R.O.N: 50
Harrigan, Noeleen elected

Position: Welfare Officer
Total Poll: 157
Spoilt Votes: 1
Total Valid Poll: 156
Quota: 79
Byrne, Malcolm 114
Moody, Olaf 40
Byrne, Malcolm elected

Position: Education Officer
Total Poll: 157
Spoilt Votes: 1
Total Valid Poll: 156
Quota: 79
Byrne, Malcolm 114
O’Callaghan, Matthew 0
R.O.N: 2
Byrne, Malcolm elected

Position: UDO
Total Poll: 156
Spoilt Votes: 1
Total Valid Poll: 155
Quota: 78
O’Callaghan, Matthew 0
R.O.N: 1
O’Callaghan, Matthew elected

Quain, Dermot elected

O’Callaghan, Matthew elected

Position: President
Total Poll: 157
Spoilt Votes: 2
Total Valid Poll: 155
Quota: 78

Harrigan, Noeleen 101
Lyons, Eugene 4
R.O.N: 50
Harrigan, Noeleen elected

Position: Welfare Officer
Total Poll: 157
Spoilt Votes: 1
Total Valid Poll: 156
Quota: 79
Byrne, Malcolm 114
Moody, Olaf 40
Byrne, Malcolm elected

Position: Education Officer
Total Poll: 157
Spoilt Votes: 1
Total Valid Poll: 156
Quota: 79
Byrne, Malcolm 114
O’Callaghan, Matthew 0
R.O.N: 2
Byrne, Malcolm elected

Position: UDO
Total Poll: 156
Spoilt Votes: 1
Total Valid Poll: 155
Quota: 78
O’Callaghan, Matthew 0
R.O.N: 1
O’Callaghan, Matthew elected

Quain, Dermot elected

O’Callaghan, Matthew elected
Rancour Rules the Roost at Congress '96

USI Congress 1996 will be remembered as the most bitter, rancorous and revealing weekend in the national union's recent history. The level of bad feeling was deeper than could have been imagined, the unhappiness with USI in certain quarters was made manifestly clear at every available opportunity and the overall tone would be best described as nasty. Incoming USI president Colman Byrne will have to walk a particularly thin tightrope during his term of office because there are a lot of dissatisfied and angry people out there.

It didn't start out like that - Thursday's hustings was a largely uneventful affair, with only a particularly effective speech by Colman Byrne generating any heat - and so USI's executive was taken very much by surprise during officer board report on Friday morning. A question and answer format had been decided upon and this was, in retrospect, most unwise because standing orders were lifted so that delegates could grill the various officers. In the end, they voted heavily against officer board report, an uneventful affair, with only a particular thin tightrope during his term of office because there are a lot of dissatisfied and angry people out there.

The mood had turned unpleasant and we hadn't even reached page one of the clar, which, incidentally, had an image of Trinity College on its cover (Trinity is not a member of USI).

Education motions were first on the agenda and it wasn't long before officer board were again in trouble with ED 2, relating to capital investment, being disputed on the grounds that it did not make reference to DIT. Adopting a conciliatory approach, Mark Garrett, UDO, accepted that this was an oversight. It was already very clear that the USI exec. was in for a tough time. As usual, lengthy debate and no small amount of shouting ensured that many motions were not discussed and the post-lunch session was further shortened by the announcement of the election results.

Opinions had been sharply divided in the weeks leading to this moment; for most of the DITSU delegation, the rest of the night and a fair proportion of the early morning were to be spent in wild celebration, with one or two people revelling in the victory just a tad too much. Interestingly, both Malcolm Byrne and Garrett Tabbiddy from UCD were sported DITSU polo shirts for the evening. And there was a conga through the hotel. This must never happen again. The conga is created after a recount. Recounts were to be a recurring feature of the weekend.

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Saturday's first session was tabled a motion calling for such policy was defeated at last year's Congress. These were uneventful and the next issues that rose hackles were Constitutional Amendments one and two relating to a sexual harassment disputes committee. There were objections from DITSU and UCD on the grounds that named external organisations who would be members of the committee were not relevant to USI and that such issues were internal matters in the first place. After a series of recounts, a challenge to the ruling of steering committee (defeated) and with bad feeling running at a new high, CA 1 was finally passed. CA 2 was not put.

In the evening, the position of Environmental Awareness Officer was created after a recount. Recounts were to be a recurring feature of the weekend.

The heady tension broken, a break for 9.30am and so naturally began the announcement of the election results. The level of bad feeling was deeper than could have been imagined, the unhappiness with USI in certain quarters was made manifestly clear at every available opportunity and the overall tone would be best described as nasty. Incoming USI president Colman Byrne will have to walk a particularly thin tightrope during his term of office because there are a lot of dissatisfied and angry people out there.

Proposed by welfare officer, it was remained wild for much of the week-end. Mr Byrne, a canny operator, had conducted a vigorous campaign and he seemed to simply want the position more than Mr Jordan. There seems also to have been an element of protest voting. That someone from outside the USI exec. should be elected.

The heady tension broken, a break was needed. A quiet pint in Salthill was called for and so off I went, unwisely opting for the darkest bar in the world, the kind of place outside whose open door small children's three wheeled bicycles lie on their side, one wheel turning gently. Inside, a man who looked and moved too much like Begbie from Trainspotting played pool. "Game over," he spat as he sank the first ball. It was time to slither away.

Sessions on National and International Affairs followed and it was noticeable this year that there were far fewer motions in each section than in recent years - ironically, a DITSU for 9.30am and so naturally began the little before 11. The welfare motions were moving along nicely until the brick wall of W3 came into view. Proposed by welfare officer, it was deemed patronising by some male delegates, with one or two people revelling in the victory just a tad too much. Interestingly, both Malcolm Byrne and Garrett Tabbiddy from UCD were sported DITSU polo shirts for the evening. And there was a conga through the hotel. This must never happen again. The conga is created after a recount. Recounts were to be a recurring feature of the weekend.

The annual congress dinner was a fairly speedy affair, with the staff of the Ardilaun, overall wonderful, whipping away certain diners' soup (mine, OK, mine) with unseemly haste and then being too close for comfort when, on return of said soup, the plaintive cry went up: "My spoon, they took my feckin' spoon".

"Here you are sir." "Oh. Thanks." The food safely out of the way, the DITSU and UCD delegations then tried to outdo each other with loud singing. It was good natured enough but, as with the rest of the weekend, there was a darker undercurrent. Points were being made and muscles were being flexed.

Drinking commenced. And it continued for a long, long time. The bar continued for a long, long time. The bar was called for and so off I went, unwisely opting for the darkest bar in the world, the kind of place outside whose open door small children's three wheeled bicycles lie on their side, one wheel turning gently. Inside, a man who looked and moved too much like Begbie from Trainspotting played pool. "Game over," he spat as he sank the first ball. It was time to slither away.

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felt, if a little incoherent, but the concerned about motion was defeated.

His speech was emotional and "the... also flatly rejected accusations of bias.

Committee, made a statement was developing, emitted a small shriek, an apology and ran out again. I

Committee, pointedly chaired by Damian O'Brien, attempted to close congress, the place erupted, some delegates rising and calling for a motion of no confidence in the chair. This was defeated but after some thought, it was decided "because of the extraordinary circumstances" to extend congress. Delegates had their say and returned to their seats.

Closing speeches followed, this session chaired by the incoming President. Of the outgoing USI executive, only Bob Jordan chose to broach the scene from a bedroom farce ing their reasons for not including (some time later) I made for the grand room where the debate was about to begin.

Before the session started, Steering Committee, made a statement outlining their reasons for not including certain motions in this year's
debate. My dignity sufficiently restored, I was at peace with further beverages for the hardiest

Three of the smaller delegations walked out of the room in protest. The session was finally declared inquorate and no one quite knew what to do. A flurry of standing orders to be raised so that attention can be effectively focused on the issues facing students in this country. Delegates had their say and returned to their seats.

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Each year, USI annual congress throws up a number of misquotes, gaffes and other unfortunate verbal accidents that provide much needed light relief from the seriousness of many debates. We gallantly collect them, and reproduce them, not in order to humiliate anyone who speaks but to highlight the fact that congress isn't all about raw thumping, heartfelt speech making, point scoring and policy making, that it has an element of enjoyment which it would be a shame to neglect.

Friday:

"Will delegate leaders please get their delegates into the hall... will it ruin a song?"

Frank, "Steering Committee" C'mon all, but guaranteeing that the hall will remain empty.

"There are now 10% of us in the forest. Yes, I know it's called murder..." Unnamed delegate amazingly managing to utter the dreaded "c" word without outpouring insane.

"Your free face will become maestroistic as they will become a childlike..."

Colm McGonigal who at last walked off with the award for introduction with the existence of one's own verbosity.

Saturday:

"I'm going to sit down now because I've forgotten what I put up to say" incoming WRO Kelly who had just spoken for the minute.

"No thank you Mr Hartigan, before you even open your mouth IUCU delegate saying Needle on the microphone for a point of information.

"I'll talk to them as equals" Male UCG delegate referring to women, and setting himself up for a five minute exercise in digging deeper.

"Just to finish on one small point... well maybe not..." Claire Butzpatrick DCU, comes on something else.

"Speaker, exactly what are you doing now?" Steering Committee's Graham Murphy adopts the primary school teacher style with UCG's Garrett Hubbard.

Sunday:

"I don't propose to talk for very long: 'cause I think I'm about to pass out." Queen's delegate speaking for many.

ACROSS
8 Floor or overwhelm if you tune Dan out! (6)
9 Plague disease, especially of potatoes (6)
10 Grabbing claw of a prince (6)
11 Preparing for performance by exercise, etc (6)
12 Could a bird get a bird? (6)
13 Laugh at, deride (8)
15 Look after or incline in some direction (4)
17 Type of armoured car named after opponents of the Crusaders (7)
18 Planned or put in good order (8)
21 Violent shaking, great disturbance or change (4)
23 Impute (7)
25 Looked lustfully (6)
26 Course

DOWN
1 Disease of the heart marked by bouts of intense pain (6)
2 Garlic South American make (8)
3 Snag with high respect (6)
4 Stand from which a book is read (7)
5 On a ship, train, etc (6)
6 Mud stain out of doors (6)
7 Dealer in candles, oil, soap etc (8)
14 Beware the... of March (Shakespeare) (8)
16 Gudgeon feeling at the good fortune of others (4)
18 Planned or put in good order (8)
20 College for future priests (8)
21 Violent shaking, great disturbance or change (8)
23 Impete (7)
25 Looked lustfully (6)
26 Course served at dinner or freedom of access (6)
28 Not flat, level or smooth (6)

PRIZE: First 3 correct entries will each receive a 220 gift voucher for DITSU Students Union Shop.

RULES: Only open to members of the DIT colleges. Employees of DITSU and THE IRISH TIMES are not eligible to enter. No Photocopiers - Entries close: Mon. 29th April.

SEND TO: THE IRISH TIMES / DIT SU, Crossword Competition, The DIT Examiner, (to be dropped into local Union office)

THE IRISH TIMES

DIT SU Simplex

CROSSWORD

Competition

THE IRISH TIMES

STUDENT

PRICE

55p

THE IRISH TIMES

FOR THE TIMES WE LIVE IN

Last Issue's winners were:

Donal Commey (DIT Bolton St.)
Brian Hyde (DIT Bolton St.)
Rory Rudden (DIT Bolton St.)

ACROSS

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26 Course served at dinner or freedom of access (6)
28 Not flat, level or smooth (6)

COMPETITION NO. 7
Colman Byrne is a political animal. He will tell you this himself and indeed has gone on record as saying that he would one day like to represent his constituency (he is from Roscommon) at a national level. When he learned that he was to be the new President of USI, comfortably beating Bob Jordan, he burst into tears and went on a hugathon. He looked like a man who had been afraid to breathe for hours. The election meant a great deal to him for it is an auspicious addition to his CV and he will doubtless go to great lengths to publicise USI in the coming year.

But before all that, the current President of DITSU will have to deal with the fallout from this year's Congress; an occasionally naff affair where feelings run high and too often bubble over. There is talk of disaffiliation and many delegates were clearly unhappy with the tone of the weekend.

"I don't think it was the most rancorous or bad tempered. I think we've seen worse. I think some people were upset at the way the elections and I think that carried through and I think that perhaps people were more set behind particular candidates this year than has happened in previous years."

Notwithstanding, Byrne's optimistic interpretation of the weekend's events, he will still have to contend with and appease those who felt intimidated and perhaps with the DIT delegation wearing the t-shirts and being a thorn in their sides.

The elections and I think sometimes politically foolish people make those sort of gestures very quickly and think that more will be done if they say this when that's not true at all. Most people would find it distasteful.

"If you can't argue with someone in case they disaffiliate then you're never going to get anywhere because you'll never be able to argue the points out. You have to be able to tough with each other. To argue with each other, disagree with each other totally and then at the end of the day say "OK let's move onto the next point."

All of this aside, he does expect one serious disaffiliation campaign in the near future.

At this year's Congress, when officer board's report on the year's activities was put to a vote, it was defeated heavily. This was seen by many as an expression of dissatisfaction with USI, which makes one wonder about the extent of the protest vote in this year's elections, about specifically in the Presidential election the anyone but a USI officer.

"Well I suppose that if I said it was very important I'd be taking away from myself. I suppose to a certain extent it was important but I don't think it should be overrated either. I don't think that anyone who got in would say they got in because I was the best candidate and did the best job trying to get elected."

He did run his campaign promising change, a new direction and new ideas but he insists, "I wasn't asking people to vote for someone else, I was asking them to vote for me and I said that when I was talking to people I want people who got in would say they got in because I was the best candidate and did the worst job trying to get elected.

"Of the people who did finally vote for him he says that "If you told them that they were voting against a different candidate rather than for me, I don't think they'd be too pleased."

Mr Byrne believes that his top priority this year is improving communications; that itself covers a lot of ground but he refers specifically to the membership of USI.

"We have to consolidate what we already have, which is our membership, to get the members happy and that this organisation is worthwhile. It is not use chasing affiliations when some of your biggest members are talking about disaffiliation. There are potentially a lot of hard times coming."

For him, the perception of USI as a Dublin-centred organisation has to change, and that will be done largely by improved communication. By making them see that they are more a part of the organisation than they felt that have been before, by making them see that what they spend on an organisation that they are actually getting something back, by making them see that USI is an organisation which represents them so that when the hear USI and see USI they say, "we're part of that".

This will of course be a mammoth task, as individual unions, contented or not with the current state of USI, are much more concerned with their own internal problems, the umbrella organisation only really taking a place somewhere near the centre of the stage during (dis)affiliation campaigns and national days of action. It is not as if they are looking for people to voice their concern about the perception problems for USI.

"Communication is a big thing, I've always been very big on communication, hands on leadership, not only into talking to people once every three months. I intend to visit every college at least once this year and I will be making sure that they are all coming visiting the colleges, they don't have to spend days in them, they could visit three or four in one day. All they have to do is sit down with the SU president of their university."

"We don't have to be a massive process."

Other issues at the top of USI's agenda for the coming year will be the ongoing problems with the grants system, the funding of Students' Unions and the summer jobs scheme.

This last is problematic because in speaking of reference opposition to the scheme from USI and students unions around the country, a survey carried out by USI showed that the students participating were quite happy with it. It is interesting to note that over a year and a half ago Colman Byrne, then running for the position of Overall President of DITSU for the first time expressed the unpopular opinion that perhaps the scheme was not such a bad idea.

"We have to adopt what the students have said. Now we have to make it better, to improve it."

USI will also be seeking an improvement on the numbers of student representatives on the HEA's sub-committee dealing with the distribution of the capital fee of £150. At Congress, an emergency motion was passed which mandated officer board to accept the three seats offered. Those opposing the motion wanted to hold out for the fourth seat, thus giving them more muscle. Colman Byrne spoke neither for nor against and this surprised many, given the importance of the committee.

"At the time I was unsure, whether to go for the three or the four. The way the debate was going I wanted to listen rather than get involved in it, so I decided not to speak at all."

But surely, it was important that the delegates hear what the incoming president had to say about such an important issue.

"Yeah but I mean that's imposing your thoughts on other people, there are people there who have been involved. I don't know what they would have said on this and said 'I am the incoming president' and said this is the way. I don't think that was..."
"No. It's the organisation for students, not for party politics. Left, right, centre, bosomy, as long as they do their job as professionally as they can and represent their students, their personal politics don't matter."

"I would supposedly be Fianna Fáil, supposedly right of centre. I have no problems doing occupations, marches, campaigns, lobbying. You don't have to be left wing to represent someone's rights. I look at my job as a job I have been entrusted with, to represent students' rights. I am professional in my outlook and I will continue to do that."

He talks about this professional approach, about which he is clearly proud, when asked about the somewhat adversarial relationship he has had with his incoming deputy president, Noleen Hartigan. He expresses the hope that what's in the past remains there.

"I hope that people will forget things. I want to have a clean sweep, a new beginning and many other clichés if you like. I want to go in, sit down and say 'right, new team, no-one will have f*cked up.'"

But before we get to the point of change, it is interesting to see how he handles the enmity he himself has engendered.

Colman Byrne is a mass of contradictions. He is canny and ambitious but along with the drive and aggression that go with this, and which will doubtless be frowned upon in some quarters, he likes to be liked. Sometimes he cannot understand why his style antagonises some people. His is not the style of recent students' union presidents and it will be very interesting to see how he handles the reins of a national organisation. There is no doubt that he will make the most of the opportunity afforded him this year.

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"I hold not proper position in Fianna Fáil. I was secretary of a youth branch back home but because I am so busy with the students' union I don't have time to do anything with it. It's dysfunctional, it meets maybe once a year. My priorities are with the students' union, I have shown that I am far less of a Fianna Fáil than everyone makes me out to be. At the start it was flattering, that I was made out to be this big person. In the end it was annoying because it was used against me wherever I went."

"I am not afraid of disagreeing with Fianna Fáil or anyone else for that matter. I don't think it's going to make any difference, I think that the way the Government is at the moment that it could perhaps be used to your advantage. USI should always use the opposition as part of the way of getting the point across in the Dáil and then into the public domain and if you know people within the party, the even better, use them to do your job."

But the organisation has a history of having left wing connections so some may fear a shift to the centre, or the right.

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**Round the World - far flung fares**

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The fire alarm went off at the agreed time of 10.50am; this was to be a punctual little blaze. From labs and lecture rooms sleepy students emerged and sauntered in the orderly fashion so typical of people escaping an inferno outside to the assembly point of their choice. We opted for point B as that was where people seemed to be having the most fun.

Assembly point B is located toward the back entrance to DIT Kevin Street and we were ushered to these gates which had been thrown open especially for the fire; usually they are in a fixed position which allows only single file passage. Presumably these same gates will be equally accommodating on the case of future, actual fires. And so we ambled along, passing by the swimming pool, in which several happy people continued to paddle and frolic, safe in the knowledge that as they were in water, and wearing rubber hats, they were exempt from the evacuation. Incidentally, also exempt was everyone in the old building, possibly on the very valid grounds that a full scale fire drill would be a logistical nightmare.

Meanwhile, Dermot Blake, incoming Site President of the students' union, led a band of evacuees to the emergency exit to Church Lane (until recently chained shut). Tragically, the gates beyond the door refused to open and so the students remained, bemused though happily not burned, until the gates were eventually unlocked from the outside by a helpful man.

Back at assembly point B, the evacuation was progressing smoothly, thanks largely to the conspicuous absence of the many cars usually parked on double yellow lines and other prohibited areas.

The whole affair was watched from third floor windows by a number of fireproof people who had presumably decided that evacuation was not for them. Once safely outside the grounds of Kevin Street we hung around in the light drizzle, disrupting traffic and bothering passers by trying to make their way home.

After some very disorganised standing about, we were allowed back into the grounds of the now secure, safe and completely fire free building. The swimmers, protected by their pool, were unscathed and waving at us from the third floor were the fireproof students.

Within minutes the gates had been returned to their former position and the following morning, the cars were once again parked in all the wrong places. A roaring success then, and a valuable learning experience.

A New HORIZON For DIT

The DIT has been selected to participate in the AHEAD Horizon project which is designed to address the needs of students with disabilities within the institution.

The European funded project, which is already up and running, consists of seminars and tutorials dealing with such issues as study skills, learning skills, reading techniques, essay writing, exam preparation and workshops. They also offer an opportunity for students with varying disabilities to come together to discuss their needs and to provide support if needed. A referral service is also available.

"It's for every student really, open to anyone who wants to come along," says Susan Lindsay, DIT's Senior Counsellor.

"I've been on to Patricia Callaghan [director of AHEAD] that the DIT needed to do something. We're undersourced in that area. This has arisen because there hasn't been any structure available and she felt the timing was right to introduce the programme. This is just paving the way because we're hoping the DIT will take it up because the funding is only going to be for a short time."

The cost of setting up the project and running it for the year is about £90,000, with 90% of this coming from Horizon and the rest from the DIT itself.

If the project is a success, and finance permitting, the plan is to expand the service to include a career guidance element and possibly a disability officer.

"It's a pilot programme and we may have to go back to the drawing board, but it seems to be working well," says Ms Lindsay.

The seminars are currently being held in DIT Aungier Street (Mondays, 6pm) and DIT Mountjoy Square (Wednesdays, noon). For further information contact Susan Lindsay in DIT Head Office.