1994-10

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

DIT Students' Union

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DIT Plays Musical Chairs

The future of the Sackville Place annex to DIT Cathal Brugha Street has been the subject of intense speculation in recent weeks. Is it closing? Is it moving? Who is staying? Who is going? Just what is going on?

It was a situation that disrupted further the lives of students who were either entirely new to college life or were trying to settle down for another year. The uncertainty has meant that some students did not know whether to look for accommodation on the Northside or the Southside of the city because they simply did not know which building they were going to. Finally it appears that the situation has been resolved and annex is to remain.

The uncertainty has meant that some students were not alone, as the social school for students to get involved with the more social aspects of college life.

The students will be very happy in their new home in Rathmines, that amongst other features, they will have better drama facilities in Rathmines House and an art room in the old Rathmines building.

"I think they [the facilities] are better. Apart from the distance, that is if we could put the whole building on wheels and move it down to Cathal Brugha Street, it would be an ideal situation."

But the students' union in DIT Cathal Brugha Street is somewhat less pleased.

"We're extremely annoyed that there has been so much messing around with the students," said Colin Joyce, student union president in Cathal Brugha Street. "There are still students who have to find permanent accommodation. I know of one student who is sleeping on a floor in Ranelagh." He said that only a "very very small common room" has been provided. The room, on the first floor, is, according to Colin, "the size of a hot cupboard."

The extension he referred to is the forthcoming development at the site of the current Marlborough Street annex, a depressing looking building which is to be demolished in the very near future. Students who presently have most of their lectures in this building will be moved to Denmark Street, now devoid of the social school, or the main building. Because the social school is self contained, it was decided that it would be easier to move it than other courses in DIT Cathal Brugha Street.

Frank McMahon, acting director of DIT Cathal Brugha Street, believes that the students now based in Rathmines would have access to the doctor and nurse facilities in Aungier Street.

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There are currently three seats in the room.

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Back to the future

You made it. Whether you are a returning student already enlightened as to the obligations and opportunities of college life, or whether you are a first year for whom the whole business remains something of a mystery, the message is the same. You made it. You're here. Most returning students will have no difficulty in slipping back into first term insouciance mode, knowing what is expected of them and delivering, or trying, as the case may be. For first years, it’s very often a different and more unsettling experience; not necessarily unsettling in a ‘I think I’m being followed by someone who drools’ manner but at the very least it represents an abrupt uprooting and replacement in a thoroughly unfamiliar social and academic environment. It is, quite literally, unsettling. Do not let it get on top of you.

College life is certainly challenging on many levels and you will find yourself tested in several new ways: much of your development as a person will take place over the next two, three or four years and how you deal with the immediate future will surely have a significant bearing on your long term plans. There may be times when you will find the collegeocks a bit overwhelming and replacement in a thoroughly unfamiliar college life, or whether you are a returning student, the message is the same. You made it. Whether you are a returning student already enlightened as to the obligations and opportunities of college life, or whether you are a first year for whom the whole business remains something of a mystery, the message is the same. You made it. You're here. Most returning students will have no difficulty in slipping back into first term insouciance mode, knowing what is expected of them and delivering, or trying, as the case may be. For first years, it’s very often a different and more unsettling experience; not necessarily unsettling in a ‘I think I’m being followed by someone who drools’ manner but at the very least it represents an abrupt uprooting and replacement in a thoroughly unfamiliar social and academic environment. It is, quite literally, unsettling. Do not let it get on top of you.

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Making your mark in DITSU

As students in the DIT you are entitled to vote in the elections for the students' unions, both for the officers within your own college and for the overall president of the DIT students' union. Elections time is one of the liveliest, most revealing and, for some, most exasperating periods of the college year. Get involved and vote because the people elected will be running your students' union and the overall president will be representing DIT students on the DIT's Governing Body.

The following may seem like common sense at first and an insult to your intelligence at worst, but you'd be surprised at the numbers of people who, accidentally or otherwise spoil their votes. In the 1994 DITSU elections for President, Convenors and Deputy Convenors, two percent of votes were accidentally or otherwise spoiled. Also, for many of you, next year's students' unions' elections will present exasperating periods of the college year. Convenors, two percent of votes were deemed to vote in the elections for the students' union and the overall president. You're better off on your mark.

The Voting System

In Ireland and in DITSU, the voting system used is the proportional representation (Single Transferable Vote) system. This means that you vote for candidates in order of your preference by indicating 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. alongside the candidates' names. The figure '1' should be written clearly in the box beside the candidate who is your first preference, the figure '2' beside your second preference and so on. If you wish, you may stop voting after making your number '1' choice or you may continue to vote down as far as you want.

Your second preference will only be used in the counting if your first preference candidate has been eliminated or elected. Your third preference will only be used if your second preference doesn't need the vote. N.B. A further preference will not count against your higher preferences. You really only have one vote and this vote is transferred only if your earlier candidate does not need it.

A Spoilt Vote

A vote is deemed to be spoilt if:

(a) The returning officer's opinion, there is a mark on the paper that is intended to reveal the identity of the voter.
(b) In the returning officer's opinion, there is a mark on the paper that is intended to reveal the identity of the voter.
(c) A vote is spoiled because of any comments or pictures on the ballot paper.
(d) In the case of the referendum you simply place a cross or a tick in either the YES or NO box and not in both boxes. The other box should be left blank.

Frank Crummey

NOBODY OFFERS D.I.T. STUDENTS A BETTER COACH SERVICE FROM DUBLIN.

SAMPLE STUDENT MONTHLY RETURN FARES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Fare</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WATERFORD</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEXFORD</td>
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<td>GALWAY</td>
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<tr>
<td>BALLINA</td>
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<td>DUNGANVAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>BELFAST</td>
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<td>LIMERICK</td>
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<tr>
<td>DONEGAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENNIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>LETTERKENNY</td>
<td>$11.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORK</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fares correct at time of going to press.

Elections to DIT Governing Body

In order to comply fully with the strict nomenclature of the act of the Oireachtas establishing the legal status of the DIT and the Composition of its Governing Body and direct and indirect nominating bodies, it is necessary to fill the two student representative seats in the DIT Board of Governors. The act at present does not permit the custom and practice of a restricted elective community. The current student representatives, DITSU President Colman Byrne and DITSU Bolton Street Deputy Convenor Alison Flanagan, will stand for election to satisfy the terms and conditions of the act. This presents the student body with a perfect opportunity to reaffirm and further endorse the sitting student union representatives as the sole official and legitimate voice of DIT Students on DIT Governing Body.

If the election date has not been fixed as we go to press but it is expected to occur in October or November.

You’re better off on BUS ÉIREANN
Clubs and Societies

Your first few weeks in college are very likely to be strange, disorientating, nerve and exciting to one extent or another. You may find yourself feeling a little lonely or out of things, the new experiences a little more daunting than you expected. On the other hand, you might be itching to get involved in all aspects of college life, have all sorts of wild ideas for the year and are of the opinion that the day is simply not long enough. Whether you are the class shrinking violet or its hyperactive whirling dervish, the clubs and societies in the various colleges have an important role to play.

Dozens are set up every year, each designed firstly to further interest in and appreciation of the event, discipline, sport or group of interest you own chosen. Their other major function is to help people to get to know each other and to provide opportunities for them to socialise together. I don’t wish to labour the point, but some societies and clubs are more renowned than others for their proclivity for getting hammered at every available opportunity.

What follows is a list of the clubs and societies that existed last year and will almost certainly return this year. It is not complete and if you have an idea for one that is not on the list, give it a shot.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIT Keven Street</th>
<th>Societies</th>
<th>DIT Mountjoy Square</th>
<th>Societies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>AIESEC</td>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>An Cumann Gaelach</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board Sailing</td>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>Equestrian</td>
<td>Clan Bizarro (Roleplaying)</td>
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<td>Caving Club</td>
<td>Fencing</td>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>Debate</td>
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<td>Handball</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judo</td>
<td>Juggling</td>
<td>Karate</td>
<td>Drama</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karate</td>
<td>Ladies’ Rugby</td>
<td>Mountainmeering</td>
<td>European</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ladie’s Soccer</td>
<td>Men’s Soccer</td>
<td>Men’s Rugby</td>
<td>Expanding Head (video)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Hockey</td>
<td>Mountaineering</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>Film</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orienteering</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Gay and Lesbian</td>
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<td>Sailing</td>
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<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Human Nutrition</td>
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<td>Sailing</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Taekwan Do</td>
<td>K.A.T.S (Drama Society)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>Languages</td>
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<td>Table Tennis</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Women’s Group</td>
<td>Musicians</td>
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<td>Adventure Sports</td>
<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Canoeing</td>
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<td>Badminton</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
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<td>Ladies’ Rugby</td>
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<td>Mountaineering</td>
<td>Response</td>
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<td>Hockey</td>
<td>Men’s and Women’s Rugby</td>
<td>Roleplaying</td>
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<td>Handball</td>
<td>Mountainmeering</td>
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<td>Food and Beverage</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
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<td>Hurling</td>
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Because of the move from Rathmines to Aungier Street, and the logistical and organisational Hell this engenders, there are no certainties as to the clubs and societies for the coming year. As soon as the union is settled, the currently frazzled team will no doubt get things going. Enjoy.
Forrest Gump looks set to enter the American consciousness in a way that very few box office hits ever do; ET is the last film I can think of that had such an overwhelming effect on people but that wasn't a peculiarly American film; Gump is and is its eponymous hero seems to represent a readily identifiable stereotype, the young innocent who plays college football, is sent to fight in the Vietnam war, and history, it generally lacks the courage of its convictions. It is entertaining, lively, and uses its special effects in an unobtrusive way to further the story rather than for their own sake, which is a good thing, but to quote a well known rap combo: Don't believe the hype...  

Also Showing:...  

Speed  
Unexpected box office smash pits Keanu Reeves against mad bomber Dennis Hopper (couldn't they have found someone else to play a mad bomber? anyone else?) and a bus that will explode if its speed drops below a very crucial 50 miles per hour. That's the main section anyway, there's a gripping prelude in an elevator shaft and an unnecessary climax to the climax on a subway train.  
First time director Jan de Bent Lama makes few mistakes, asking nothing more of Reeves than to look manly and perform brave feats. The action is concentrated so tightly that the viewer's mind has nowhere else to go. Lean, highly entertaining and utterly preposterous thriller that is annoyingly low on the body count. Reeves still cannot act and moves like one of Jerry Anderson's puppets but the film will boost his career and that of Sandra Bullock, who gives a fine performance as the plucky driver.
Colman Byrne - Overall president of DITSU

"I believe in getting out and meeting people, sitting down to chat to first years in the canteen or wherever." He does not appear concerned that to some ears this would make him sound like a living, breathing relic or a politician on the make, or God forbid, both. Mr Byrne makes no bones about it; he would like very much to be a politician. But more of that later.

Colman Byrne took over from Deiric Ó Brain as president of DITSU on July 1st. He won the election in March by a significant margin, one that surprised him and everyone else. The turnout in his home college, DIT Mountjoy Square, offered the kind of boost that candidates only dream about. It was, he says, amazing.

"I'm not ashamed to say, and I don't think I'm being big headed to say, that my record there was watertight. I give the backing of the whole college. Everyone who was here voted. I think I lost about 25 votes, and I could probably name the people." He recalls the reporter he received at the hustings in Mountjoy Square and says that even if he had lost he would always remember that feeling. "They were fair to the other candidate, who they rated the 'top' when I finished speaking and it gave me a great feeling." A people person, you see. He likes to be liked but at the same time seems prepared to voice the unpopular opinion and he will need to be able to do this as President for he will be the one to make the final decisions and it is inevitable that these will not always meet with the approval of the convener in the constituent colleges. If they always did, it would be time to worry.

Students' Unions have been kicked off points for politicians in the past but more often than not, they have viewed the world from a perspective somewhere left of centre. Colman Byrne is a member of Fianna Fáil. He does not see any problem reconciling his party political affiliations with his position as President of a Students' Union.

"The vast majority of people who have been in students' unions were political but and look out for them. They're the things we do. People say we're a trade union but in essence we're not; we're concerned with our students." He goes on to say that at national level this may not be the situation but believes that students' unions have changed with the needs of the students, that whereas years ago there would have been students out demonstrating on a large scale for grants or improved grants, the situation now is that "we're inside our college looking for space, more facilities, longer library hours, proper heating. It's internal. We can't go to the Government and say we want another computer."

"Massive demonstrations are too there any more because people have become politicised with a small 'p'. Students are less politicised themselves. I would like them to become more politicised and then maybe each college could become a big 'P'." He is keen then to politicise students but wants to make it clear that his allegiances lie with the union first and Fianna Fail second.

"My party politics and my job do not conflict with each other. I'm asked to do a job and my party politics do not come into that. When something comes up, like picketing Fianna Fail headquarters, I can't say 'sorry I can't do that.' I'd be there as well."

It is clear that he has had to deal with this sort of questioning before, if only in his own mind, knowing that it would be asked at some point, and he is able to outline his position in a steady stream of words.

"I think that being in the organisation can have plusses rather than minuses, that as long as I stick to my guns, that I was elected because there is nothing that I would not support. I don't believe in blind allegiance."

And yet there is something strange, is there not, about the President of a students' union being a member of a party which is behind, for example, the not very popular Summer Work scheme which means that third level students do not automatically qualify for the dole during the summer months.

Mr Byrne has a problem with the scheme as it is run at the moment but he is also prepared to risk opprobrium for his overall stance on the issue.

"If it was worked properly, I think it could actually be good because it improves every locality." He accepts that this may not be the most popular utterance he has ever made and could be interpreted as an expression of support stemming from party allegiance.

He will need to be able to do this as wants to make it clear that his allegiances lie with his position in a steady stream of words. After students, we organise and we look after but that situation is not going to arise.
One morning during the summer, when Myles Dungan was presenting his radio show in Gay Byrne's hallowed slot, a voice familiar to everyone connected with the DIT Students' Union came quietly and confidently over the airwaves. Theresa Sheridan, former manager of the Students' Union shop in DIT Kevin Street, had, after eight years working in the shop, decided to leave for sunnier climes and she was on the show with her husband, explaining to the masses why they had decided to make a totally new start in their lives at a time when most people would be thoroughly settled. It was not a decision that had been taken lightly.

"We've been deliberating for almost a year now, wondering whether it was a good or a bad move," she told the *DIT Examiner*. The move took place in September, courtesy of those much coveted Green Cards. So that's it then: no more students pouring out of lectures and crowding into the shop, no more frenzied demands for photocopying cards as exams approach, no more stocking and restocking the shelves. Goodbye to all that. And more.

Theresa freely admitted that she was very sad to be leaving.

"It is a big break, I've given it a lot, felt my input was good. My consideration in a retail outlet was never always profits, but what do the students think, what are they looking for. If you give a service, profit is the natural result of that service. I always tried to consider each student as an individual."

With so much daily contact with students over the years, she could not have failed to notice general changes in attitude, outlook, manner, even dress sense among the ever changing student population.

"One of the things I noticed most was that when I came here students were radical, not all of them, but there was a radical element, getting into scrapes every other week. There was always something going on. Nowadays, there's nothing like that at all, they are more conservative, much into 'do what you have to do, do what's right'. They're studying from September on whereas before, they wouldn't even consider it. In first year, you wouldn't get any young people out of anyone."

She believes that if they are lacking energy these days, it is because all their energy is going into study. This is a pity "because student life is a golden opportunity to do lots of different things."

The memories of her time with the students' union she has taken to America will be good ones, beginning with the moment she found out she had the job.

"At my age to have been chosen to be a shop manageress for students, I really felt it was the most wonderful thing, at a time when a lot of people were saying that people couldn't get work over the age of 35, young people had chosen me which was fantastic."

After that, it was easy.

"I've enjoyed it immensely. I never ever felt that going to work was the pits. I got up in the morning and I was delighted to go to work, I love what I do, a day went by in 10 minutes it seemed."

She described the move to America as the beginning of a new phase of life, an opportunity she and her husband feel they have to take. But it won't be easy. Such upheavals never are, even in the context of the job one leaves behind.

"Over the years I have made a lot of friends and now the loyalty has come to the fore. People have been saying they're going to miss me. I'm upset too. But there is no growth without pain, that's the price I pay for the move."

It is hard to believe that the vastness and newness of America will be sufficiently daunting to make Theresa regret her decision. As she informed Myles Dungan, she already had a job lined up, as had her husband. The self-belief, organisation and confidence is typical of the woman.

The *DIT Examiner* and all in the students' union wish her the very best for the future.

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**DIT STUDENT SPECIALS**

- **6" Ham & Cheese + Regular Beverage**
- **6" Tuna + Regular Beverage**
- **6" Subway Club + Regular Beverage**
- **6" Irish Sausage + Regular Beverage**

£2.00

Offer only applies on production of DIT Student card
Beginners Luck

How well do I remember my first days in college? Let me count the ways; actually, better not. Frankly it depends on how much wry smiling. I wish to engage in at any given time, for there are few things to cause one to smile wryly and remember fondly as readily as the recollection of those first few baby steps taken in a third level institute.

It's a strange, fumbling time, when you take to walking the corridors of your new home with the most endearing tentativeness, unreasonably suspicious of what lurks around every corner (quick, bird-like peek before you take a step) and behind every door (rush of blood to the face, prickly feeling on the scalp as you realise that you have in fact ducked your shiny new person's head into the wrong room: by the way, the correct response on this occasion is 'so shagging what?').

Even signs pointing the way aren't trusted; you'll find yourself starting at them, seeking out the non-existent small print, looking away and suddenly flicking your eyes back, just to make sure that they haven't changed and are planning to lead you very much astray.

If you manage to escape recognition in the college, the place where you are most likely to affix upon yourself the label 'freshener' is the pub, whatever the local hostility happens to be. There the drinkers will be as many and varied as the products on offer, but often the fledgling first year does one of two things: either the pint (my, what a lot of liquid) is ordered with hearty and wholly unconvincing bohomie and subsequently sipped with the kind of suspicion usually reserved for the corridors, or and its several successors are ladled into the unsuspecting body with scant regard for liver, bladder or brain. Pretty soon the world becomes funny - chairs can't work, the ground is on wheels and sometimes even saint Bob, the Rwandan attendant expression of excruciating pain on the face of the wearer. But even if substantial amounts of cotton wool and a cortisone injection have been employed to remove the agonised visage, the sheer scrupling shinstness of this part of the student ensemble is enough of a pointer. You might as well simply carry a big sign and damn the rest of your group with you.

If you manage to escape recognition in the college, the place where you are next most likely to affix upon yourself the label 'freshener' is the pub, whatever the local hostility happens to be. There the drinkers will be as many and varied as the products on offer, but often the fledgling first year does one of two things: either the pint (my, what a lot of liquid) is ordered with hearty and wholly unconvincing bohomie and subsequently sipped with the kind of suspicion usually reserved for the corridors, or and its several successors are ladled into the unsuspecting body with scant regard for liver, bladder or brain. Pretty soon the world becomes funny - chairs can't work, the ground is on wheels and sometimes even saint Bob, the Rwandan attendant expression of excruciating pain on the face of the wearer. But even if substantial amounts of cotton wool and a cortisone injection have been employed to remove the agonised visage, the sheer scrupling shinstness of this part of the student ensemble is enough of a pointer. You might as well simply carry a big sign and damn the rest of your group with you.

In a display of determined and concentrated fundraising that would shame even saint Bob, the Rwandan Response Group, based in DIT Bolton Street, recently raised over a three day period the astonishing amount of £26,000.

A cheque for half the amount raised, £13,000 was presented by the group to Mary Sweeny, Trocaire's Emergency Officer in the social conscience of the college last week.

Kevin St Student Tops the Lot

A fourth year student in DIT Kevin Street has been awarded first prize in the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Younger Members Premium Awards, presented recently in London.

Kenneth Purcell (SEE 4(E)) submitted a technical paper at the IEE Student Technical Paper Evening in Trinity College last March. The paper was based on a project which he had designed as part of his studies at DIT Kevin Street. All entries were subsequently sent to the IEE in London and from these five finalists were selected from within the UK and Ireland. Kenneth was the first Irish competitor to be selected for the final stages of the event.
Mixed reaction to governing body gender quota move

New legislation introduced recently by the Minister for Education, Niamh Bréathnach, will amend the DIT Act to ensure that at least seven women are elected to the Governing Body of the DIT.

The Dublin Institute of Technology (Amendment) Bill, which is expected to become law by Christmas, will oblige the nominating bodies to comply with Government’s gender balance policy. Failure to implement the gender balance provisions will ultimately result in the Minister “appointing any body of persons as she sees fit.” It will be the responsibility of the VEC to ensure that at least seven female nominations are forwarded to the minister.

The new legislation will be in place in the next year. The legislation affects students’ unions in that one female and one male are elected to the Governing Body in as many years is obviously not so desirable. Governing bodies do take time to settle down and gel but we’ve been reasonably fortunate, in my time anyway, that governing bodies have been pulling together reasonably well. It is a pity to see it happening, starting again, but that’s the way life is.”

Students’ Unions, was less enthusiastic about this less than satisfactory situation. “What if an appointing body is told they have to appoint a male and then only for a year. The Governing Body was originally due to be appointed for five years. Dr Goldsmith is fantastic about this less than satisfactory situation.”

The fact that it’ll be our third governing body in as many years is obviously not so desirable. Governing bodies do take time to settle down and gel but we’ve been reasonably fortunate, in my time anyway, that governing bodies have been pulling together reasonably well. It is a pity to see it happening, starting again, but that’s the way life is.”

Niamh Breathnach, will amend the DIT Act to ensure that at least seven female nominations are forwarded to the minister. “It’s to be welcomed in the sense that there was a problem when the VEC selected other bodies, it had no control over their nominations.” He said that prior to the introduction of the legislation, the VECs were in the invidious position of being expected to deliver on the principle of gender balance without having the means to do so.”

The new legislation allows the VEC to reject or accept such nominations, thus ensuring the gender balance.

Pictured is Ethyl Mythen, who at a recent ceremony in the E.S.B. Head Office received a Bursary sponsored by the E.S.B. towards her studies on the Degree Programme in Engineering in D.I.T. Bolton Street, Dublin 1.

Ethyl was one of a number of students on the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) Project which promotes equal opportunities for Women to access places in third level for Engineering Technology. This initiative is co-funded through the European Social Fund and the College of Technology, Bolton Street.
Students' Union Election Season Gets an Early Start

Elections to executive positions in DITSU will take place on Wednesday, November 16th for the following positions:

DIT Mountjoy Square:
- Women's Rights Officer
- Anti-Discrimination Officer

DIT Bolton Street:
- Women's Rights Officer
- Entertainment Officer
- Public Relations Officer

DIT Cathal Brugha Street:
- Employment Officer
- Women's Rights Officer
- Public Relations Officer

DIT Kevin Street:
- Anti-Discrimination Officer

DIT Aungier Street:
- Women's Rights Officer
- Anti-Discrimination Officer

In this year's Graduate Designer Awards, three of the six category winners were from the Dublin Institute of Technology, and specifically from DIT Mountjoy Square.

Nominations will open on November 2nd and will close at 5.00pm sharp on November 9th. Also on November 16th, there will be a constitutional referendum, proposing substantial constitutional changes to the DITSU Constitution. Details of the exact text were not available at time of going to press.

Grainne McGarty and Lisa O'Farrell were commended in the Exhibition and Interior Design Category as was Michael McGuire in the Theatre, Film and TV Design Category.

The presentation of Certificates to the category winners and the announcement of the Graduate Designer of the Year will be made by the Patron of the Society of Designers of Ireland, President Mary Robinson, at a reception on Tuesday, 25 October, in DesignYard in Temple Bar.
November 17th

What’s it mean?
The times they are a changin’

Semesterisation, a system unfamiliar to most DIT students and a word most commonly associated with American television programmes set in high schools suffused with teenage trauma, is to be widened within the DIT in the coming years.

But a sweeping expansion is unlikely according to Dr Brendan Goldsmith, President of the DIT.

"I'm not saying that I'd like to see a majority of courses semesterised in the near future. Something has to be worked out in due course but there could be very good reasons not to semesterise a course. There's been a lot of debate about that and it has not been resolved yet."

The system, which entails a set of exams for students soon after they return to college from Christmas holidays and then another set at the end of the year, is still relatively new to the DIT and Dr Goldsmith admits that the institute is feeling its way along to a certain extent.

"It's a new thing and we need to try it and refine it." He points out that it was not a system that could be evaluated in the abstract. It operates in the traditional universities but as both students in those institutions and DIT students will tell you, the two are not the same.

Colman Byrne, President of DITSU, is very wary of the system as it exists. "I know everyone is saying that it's going to come in and that it's going to be an easy transition, but I don't think that it is a lot of teachers' organisations are going to fight against it; we're definitely going to fight against it as it is; the counsellors are not in favour of it; the chaplaincy, the people concerned with student life, aren't in favour of it. The way it is at the moment, it's not working, it's making life more stressful." Getting the heads down...So soon?

Another source of concern for students unions is that the system will radically alter student life with less contact between students and the unions. Specifically, there is some concern that all activities will have to be crammed into a three week period in February. As present the system is such that students have a three week break after their January exams.

Dr Goldsmith accepts that there will most likely be changes in this regard but points out that the system is as it is for a reason.

"Semesterisation that has been introduced at the moment has been done within the constraints of the existing academic year and that may not make the best of sense. If we had a completely free hand we probably wouldn't choose semesterisation to coincide with dates as they are. But the reality is that the academic year has to wrap up by June 20th. I personally this is nonsensical but it has to be done." He added that if the DIT was free from this constraint a bigger semesterisation, a system unfamiliar to most DIT students and a word most commonly associated with American television programmes set in high schools suffused with teenage trauma, is to be widened within the DIT in the coming years.

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