1994

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

DIT Students’ Union

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Still No Governing Body

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

Mr Joe Costello, TD, Chairman of City of Dublin VEC told the DIT Examiners that of the final list, two of its six nominees are women as are two of the five nominating bodies. "Two out of six is 33.3 per cent and two out of five is exactly 40 per cent," said Mr Costello.

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

Mr Costello expressed surprise at the Minister's stance.

"I would repeat that we have fulfilled the spirit and the letters of the 40 per cent requirements and we are happy that we have done so," he said. He pointed out that three out of six nominees would be 50 percent.

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

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

Mr Costello said that although there had been some reassurance that the Department of Education was being to rigid in its interpretation of the law, he had a lot of sympathy with the minister because she was a prisoner of legislation to an extent.

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

"We understand that this is acceptable," said Mr Costello.

The Minister said that she would be shortly making an announcement on the best way to proceed on the issue.

Students Take To The Streets Over Costs Row

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

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

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

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

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

Tony O'Brien, Chief Executive of the Irish Family Planning Association, described the action taken by SPUC as a "legal but it is inhuman".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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DIT Student Numbers Set To Increase

The number of full-time students within the Dublin Institute of Technology is set to increase by almost 15% over the next year and a half.

Projected figures from THAS (Teacher Hours Per Annum Per Student) show that by September of this year, the number of full-time students in the institute will increase by 945 and that by the same time next year, there will be an increase on that number of 555, giving an overall full-time student population of 10,759.

DITSU President Deiric O'Br6in has expressed the concern that unless there is a commensurate increase in central government funding, students will suffer as a result of this increase.

"It'll mean more students per class, less time per student, less time per student per lab, less access to computer facilities and an increase in the number of students in an already overburdened library system."

"Our institute, already the most underfunded in the state, is being forced to accept more students. While we welcome the prospect of more people being given access to third level education, we must question the viability of such schemes. There can be no doubt that the present students' education will suffer as a result of this increase."

Dr. Brendan Goldsmith

The President of the DIT, Dr Brendan Goldsmith, said that the Institute would have to consider taking in less students if the funding was not forthcoming.

"It has to be a possibility. We can only stretch things so far." But he pointed out that he did not yet know the DIT's future budget.

"It's not a problem, yet."
Autonomy Vote Defeated In Poor Turnout

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

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

Blame for the poor turnout has been placed on the timing of the referenda - it coincided with one college's rag campaign. Many students were not even aware of the proposed amendments to the DIT's constitution.

USI Women's Rights Officer Helen O'Sullivan expressed disappointment with the outcome.

"The groundwork just wasn't done and its very hard to get people out to vote. It's not the kind of thing that people get excited about," she said, "and feeling that anything was happening. At least there are 100 right thinking people in DIT!"

Anne Marie Mulholland, convener in DIT Cathal Brugha Street and a member of USI's Women's Affairs Committee told the DIT Examiner that people might not be ready for the idea of autonomy.

"But I think in the future that people will see that it is a positive thing."

She felt that even if a more vigorous campaign had been organized for the amendment, there would have been an equally vigorous "no" campaign.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The film opens with Schindler taking advantage of the German's conquering of Poland. His idea is to make a fortune, for as he tells his long suffering wife, the one thing that had always lacked in his business ventures, the one component that he needed to succeed, was love. Lili Nesson plays Schindler and he is ideal for the role. He has the looks, seductive charm and low, smooth, and he is ideal for the role. He has the looks, seductive charm and low, smooth, aplomb. It is the scenes in the ghetto, which Schindler observes from a hillside, that force his hand. He begins to take greater risks, relying on his accountant, Itzhak Stern (Ben Kingsley in a beautifully understated performance) to keep an eye on the money while he indulged the Nazis, including Goeth. He had set up his own sub camp for his workers, to protect them from Goeth, in whom it is hinted he sees himself as he could so easily have been.

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

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

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

There is a facet to the students' union in DIT Cathal Brugha Street, College of Catering, that makes it unique among the DIT Students' Unions. It is a position that has been a vital lifeline for students over many years, affording them practical experience in their field, perhaps opening doors but always providing that much needed cash at short notice. This seemingly most munificent of posts is that of Employments Officer.

At present the part-time position is held by Carmel Fagan, a 19-year-old hotel management student. A new office will take over in September.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The main rule is that if you don't turn up, if something happens that was your fault, then you are blacklisted. You won't have any more dealings with the union as far as employment is concerned, at least for the year."

Ms Fagan is quick to point out that there hasn't been any such incidences. "There'll always be people who don't turn up because they couldn't find the place or got the date or time wrong, or something. There are always going to be some small mishaps like that, but generally we don't have much bother."

Naturally, not everyone is suitable for every job; sometimes experience is required and so the employment officer has to be careful about who goes where. Not surprisingly, tact and diplomacy are at a premium and people are asked about their previous experience.

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

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

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

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Bolton Street

Bolton Street will hold its Arts week from the 14th-16th March. Among the highlights will undoubtably be a staging of "Ritual for Dolls". The Bolton Street Drama Society play which won three awards at the recent MAD Festival. The society will also be staging a play titled "God".

The week kicks off with a blues gig on Monday, Tuesday is carnival day featuring face painting, juggling and fire eating. Culture is the order of the day on Wednesday, with music from a string quartet. It is not the order of the day on Wednesday, when the venue is The Furnace and the occasion is the Arts/Paddy's Day Ball.

Exhibitions during the week include a photo exhibition with a special rag week section. The Architectural Students' Association will also be exhibiting work.

Other events include a cookery competition and a trathnóra Gaeilge, though which trathnóra was not known at time of going to press.

Mountjoy Square.

At the end of the month, the Marketing Communications, will be published. On the 25th, the annual COMAD dress dance will take place at Jury's Hotel. The event is, needless to say, formal.

This year's M.A.D. (music, arts and drama) festival was held in Sligo from February 16th-20th. It was the first time in recent history that there were entries from five of the DIT's constituent colleges. Hopes were high, as the DIT's usually dominate and it was generally felt that the plays were of good calibre.

We were not disappointed, as the DIT took five of a possible six awards. DIT Bolton Street came of age taking its first ever awards: Best Overall Play, Best Actor (Niki Cahill, a Second Year Student) and also in the Gleeson Hall, Kevin Duggan, Fifth Year part-time quantity surveyor). The Bolton Street play, 'A Ritual for Dolls' is a powerful drama revolving around four dolls who come to life and re-enact the lives of their owners. It tackles the difficult subjects of sexual abuse and incest.

DIT's Kevin Street and Mountjoy Square were the other winners, taking the Best Actor and Best Irish Play awards respectively. Kevin Street's play, "Home", focused on the dilemma of who should care for a recently orphaned child, while Mountjoy Square's offering, "The Walking of Godot", took a look at the sub-conscious dreams of a person in a drunken sleep.

DIT Cathal Brugha Street gave a good performance in their first ever entry, a comedy called "Teachers", and DIT Rathmines were unlucky not to come away with something for Borderlands, a drama set in the North. The plays will be staged in their respective colleges over the next month and also in the Gleeson Hall, Kevin Street, for DITSU Day, March 15th, 1994. Watch out in your college for further information.

William Duggan.

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It's not often that disappointment is expressed over the presence of unused money, cash sitting idle, just waiting to be used by some enterprising group of students. But, amazingly, that is the situation with DITSU's Central Social and Cultural Committee. The what? you may ask, and if you do, then you will have inadvertently stumbled over the reason for the ex- tinction of this relatively untouched store of dosh. Very few people seem to know that it exists; the people who dole it out know only too well about it and one or two societies have taken advantage of it but the majority of students and societies either don't know about the central social and cultural committee or have not availed of it for reasons unknown.

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

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

The committee is made up of the chair of each of the local councils and two student reps, one being the nominee of the president of DITSU (Colman Byrne is this year's nominee) and Dave Carmody is the other member. The money comes from the capitation fee and it is there for the taking. Very few applications have come in, the only two this year being for the recent MAD festival in Sligo and the DIT's Pink Initiative. That leaves a substantial amount of the fund, about four thousand pounds per year (1% of total capitation) untouched by student plans.

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

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

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

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Eoghan Marnell

Eoghan Marnell is wearing a pair of the shiniest, whitest runners this reporter has ever clapped eyes on. They are dazzling in their brightness and he has made no attempt to "christen" them. The footwear is appropriate for he is one of two Sports and Recreational Organisers recently appointed to the DIT, one in DIT Mountjoy Square, COMAD and the other, Mr Shiny Runners, in DIT Cathal Brugha Street, College of Catering.

His job, which he conducts at least in part from a small but functional office, is to do what his title suggests. "I organise all the sporting activities for the students in the college."

Mr Marnell, who is 21, falls into the "very sporty" category of human beings. He has completed a soccer coaching course, a basketball coaching course and has also coached rugby in Newpark, Blackrock and tennis occasionally. "I'm a bit of an all rounder."

He began the job on 2nd January and says sporting activities are "going great now". Not that there haven't been problems; there have, the biggest of which has been getting available pitches for matches. The less than helpful weather conditions have left many pitches waterlogged but Mr Marnell is not without initiative. "It's just a matter of who you know and getting around and hassling people."

Another unavoidable problem is the shortage of funds in the college. It has to be promoting DIT-wide activity."

This makes sense but what is a little strange is the lack of applications. "At the beginning we were concerned that it was very well known, there would soon be no money left, that everyone would stop applying locally, saying "oh, this is really a DIT activity" and they'd be refused at stage one and they'd then say 'where else can I get money?' For that reason we didn't actually go out of our way to show what was on offer." The result of such trepidation was that the money built up over two years and began to gather dust. Very few applications have come in, the only two this year being for the recent MAD festival in Sligo and the DIT's Pink Initiative. That leaves a substantial amount of the fund, about four thousand pounds per year (1% of total capitation) untouched by student plans.

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"Some people are in here until eight at night and after that they're wrecked, too tired to go to a gym."

"They have a great gym up there but the amount of people who go is incredibly small, so we have to get more up there."

Nevertheless, there has been some marked success. "Aerobics has taken off like a shot since Christmas. There were six people in the first class, 12 at the next, 20 then and now there are 40."
A Woman's Place

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

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

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

USI Women's Rights Officer, Helen O'Sullivan

are women. This doesn't quite square away with the fact that over half of third level students are women.

"When we look at our structures, our unions are completely dominated by men, women are totally under-represented and it's a situation that's replicated throughout society," says Helen O'Sullivan, Women's Rights Officer in USI.

That's the reality and it would be inviting attack to state categorically that this seemingly anomalous state of affairs persists. Is it, then, anyone's fault? "I really don't know. You can say that women elect representatives, as men do, but women don't go for election as much as men do." Ms O'Sullivan has no certain answers but feels "there is something wrong if women don't feel comfortable running, even within their own students' union." Within the DIT, the situation does not seem so bad, at least at first glance. There are 45 executive posts and 18 are held by women. This is in an institute of almost 22,000 full-time students, apprentices and part-time/evening time students, 67% of whom are male. Overall, 40% of the posts are held by women, quite a high proportion. The most interesting, and revealing, figure though is the number of women sabbaticals within the DIT. Only two, Anne-Marie Mulholland and Lorraine Ho, out of 11, are women.

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

This is not exactly the case; women do run for these positions, though generally in fewer numbers than their male counterparts. But they are not being elected, and this brings us to another conclusion; female students are not voting for women. This is not to suggest that they should vote for a woman candidate merely because there is one, but the available figures reveal something about voting patterns. DIT Bolton Street, with a female student population of only 17%, has never had a women president or convenor, while DIT Cathal Brugha Street, 72% of whose students are women, has had a women president or convenor in three of the last four years. In other DIT colleges, where there is more of a balance, the president has usually been a man.

"I don't believe that women should simply elect women candidates. I don't think they have a lot of choice." Traditionally then, students' unions have been male dominated and Ms O'Sullivan believes that this is part of the problem, that there is an image of the union "being the lads, that the boys will see us alright. It's very exclusive." She goes as far as saying that the unions can seem irrelevant to women.

"Questions have to be asked about internal democracy. There is obviously something drastically wrong because women aren't running or aren't winning. Basically they're not there.

Politics at any level requires self-confidence in large, sometimes irritating and distressing. If a woman is planning to enter a male dominated environment, then presumably this self-confidence level would have to be off the scale. Ms O'Sullivan agrees that the absence of such a quality has been a serious hindrance. I have been trying to do this year has been to organise training events, simply to build up women's confidence skills. Training events designed to achieve just that have been held and the upcoming women's congress will also address the problem. She hopes that in an all female environment, women will feel more comfortable about getting up in front of a crowd to make a speech or make a point.

"They'll feel more power and certainly more confident when it comes to annual congress, or when it comes to the next local rep meeting or general meeting. It's all about self-confidence. I think that when you have to deal with sexism and remarks and sexual harassment, you find that women have had a lot knocked out of them and it is quite difficult to get up. I mean it takes someone with a really thick skin to be able to do that."

Helen O'Sullivan is encouraged by the increase in the number of female TDs but is "very disappointed" that gender quotas are still not being applied in state and governing bodies. Ms O'Sullivan is unequivocal. She is completely in favour of gender quotas and does not believe that, with a confronting gender quota system, an unsuitable person could be chosen for a position.

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

So does this mean that we should turn around now and do the same for men? "We're talking about trying to readdress a balance here. It is a concession and I hope in an emergency measure until we are playing our full part."

Even in the short term, the idea of concessions tends to engender heated debate. Feeling tends to run high when it suggested that women should have concessions, often translated as special treatment.

"I think the first thing is women's autonomy or even better, that all students' unions should have a women's rights officer." At present, 15 of the 18 colleges affiliated to USI have a women's rights officer. (see results of referendum in DCU this week). The heated debates surrounding this issue are nothing compared to what ensures when the subject of women's autonomy is brought up. Ms O'Sullivan believes that women alone should have the power to elect their own representatives, readily accepting that it is a suggestion that raises hurdles and that it is not a flawless idea.

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

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

It is a subject upon which she gives no ground. Men, she says, have no criteria which would give them the right to elect a woman's rights officer.

"On what grounds does a man choose a women's representative? It doesn't make sense to me. I don't think its democratic."

And yet elections for DIT's women's rights officers in the past have not been restricted to women voters so is there an implication that different officers would have been chosen had the voting been restricted to women.

Helen O'Sullivan argues that is not a question of competence. "It is not to say that the women elected then are any less competent. What we are talking about is the empowerment of women." Men, she says, have no vested interest in electing a women's rights officer.

"It's more about women being able to elect them than stopping men from electing them."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anne-Marie Mulholland finishes her tenure as Convener this year but her political appetite has been whetted by being running for overall President of DITSU.

Nothing But The Same Old Story?

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

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

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

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

"When I saw that the people running for Convener and Clubs and Societies were new, I felt more comfortable. Out of four people who ran for Convener, only one was a woman. Ms Ho believes that more men run for office because women are intimidated. And this feeling of intimidation reaches a lot further than the world of student politics.

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

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

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

She does not believe that speaking louder, or roaring, would do any good. "If you want to say something and the only way you're going to be heard is if you roar, you'll either be roared down by a guy across the class or else everyone says 'will she ever take it easy?'."

This seems to tie in with the old chauvinist-aggression being seen as assertiveness in men but shyness or hysteria in women.

But isn't it a form of aggression, being able to make your point, part of policy? She nods. 'I suppose.'
Run Ragged

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

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

Sleeping rough on O'Connell Street

DIT Rathmines - a very casual pub crawl

Bouncy Boxing with DIT Cathal Brugha St.
- as ridiculous as it looks

McPeaks

Freshly Made Sandwiches & Rolls

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

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

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

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

Suzy McCormack, DIT Rathmines

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

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

---

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

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

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

1 The Moose
2 The Koala Bear
3 The Herring

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

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The DIT Examiner
DIT Students’ Union
DIT Kevin Street
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... of FASHION

Shashi Ramkissoon, DIT Kevin St.

Kevin Street Attitude

Behind the scenes, DIT Rathmines

... now fix hat firmly on head. Ridiculous look is complete.
Bob Jordan, DIT Kevin St.
Colman Byrne
Convener
DIT Mountjoy Square

Not all students' union presidents and conveners dress in jeans and a sweater or casual shirt. We just think they are three very different people but they have a similarity of viewpoint on certain issues pertaining to the DIT and its students' unions. Yet each would bring a particular style of leadership to the position. They speak about what they stand for, what they hope to achieve and what they would like to change.

out and see people. You have to have things that you have to do, it's essential to the working the union.

He would like work to continue on issues that have been raised in recent years, the battle for a creche, for DIT Housing and extra sports facilities.

"And the move over to Bishop Street. Everyone was saying there was a problem but phase one will solve everything. Now everyone knows it's not so and everyone's promising that phase two will solve them. Maybe when phase two comes along they'll say, we've more stu-

"I'm a big believer in image. A lot of people would slag me off. I'm probably the only subalternical officer in the whole of the country who wears a shirt and tie to work. People ask me why. When I'm talking to a tutor, lecturer, or administrator, it changes their whole perception of me. I'm not different, I'm just wearing different clothes."

He accepts, however, that his image can work against him to an extent, that he might be seen as a little too flashy, too far removed from the way most students look.

"I'm sure it does. It can do at the start. I want people to vote for me because I know and I will have convinced them that I will do the best job and that I am the best person for the job. I don't want sympathy votes and I don't want loyalty votes. I want people to see what I'm like and to vote for me on that basis."

Mr Byrne is a talker. He can go for ages, seemingly without taking a breath and seems to have an acute awareness of the importance of presenting flesh. He can talk the talk, dismissing, as do the other candidates, the idea that the job of overall president would add to the bureaucratic workload, thereby keeping him out of circulation.

"No. Prioritise and distinguish you priorities." (He has this on the board in his office) "You have to make time, get in the way. I don't know who my mother voted for, or my father, I think my grandfather voted for Fianna Fail. A Fianna Fail councillor told me that he did."

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

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Ann Marie Mulholland
Convenor
DIT Cathal Brugha St.

Anne Marie Mulholland is the only woman running for the position of overall President of DITSU in this week's elections. Since there are three people running overall, it's not a bad ratio. But if there is such a thing as a woman's vote she is not interested in it, per se. Nor does she feel as a disadvantage as a woman (she has spoken elsewhere in the paper on the position of women being seen by some as somehow less able to perform a duty such as converser).

"I'd like to think that people will vote for me, or would want me to be overall president, not because I'm a woman but because I can do the job."

Ms Mulholland has decided to run for overall president because "I like what I've been doing this year. I would like to continue what I'm doing. I have a few ideas that I think would be good for the DIT, ideas I'd like to put in place."

Top of her agenda, or at least what comes first to her mind, is greater integration within the DIT. This kind of development has been spoken of in the past by DIT President Dr Brendan Goldsmith and also DITSU President Eoin O'Brien. It is part of the reason that the position of an overall president was created.

"I think it's time the DIT became more integrated, became recognised as one institution. We have an overall president but I think more DIT based events, such as DITSU Day would be beneficial." She believes that if the various cumainn ghaelacha got together to hold a ceilí (for example) or the sports clubs combined to organise events, such events would help to integrate students more.

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

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

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

"What went wrong was that it was very quick, we were tied for time. There was no room to get it right. As well as that the people who were very anti the thing came out to vote before people who were one way or the other."

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

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

and the paper. People perceive that they are based over there and start thinking, 'oh, they're getting more than us'. Even the last issue of the Examiner, a lot of students felt, 'God, are we even in the DIT? It wasn't that bad, but that's how people feel. It's just an image people have."

She accepts that the centralisation of the three aspects she mentioned is a question of practicalities, but hopes that there is a lot more emphasis to the solution of the margins union, suggesting that when DIT Cathal Brugha Street is extended, that one of the offices mentioned is transferred downtown.

"The short term is another problem. "A lot of people think that the overall president is up there, on the southside, 'he's going to do this and that.' It was done in school and that's what people want. But we have to be ready to live in a bicultural society. Society changes, we have to change with it."

If nothing else, being the President of DITSU is about diplomacy and tact, knowing how to deal with people, even being able to step on their toes without them knowing it. Feelings are easily hurt an egos easily bruised. It is a tightrope act.

"The easiest way to deal with that is talking, meeting the conveners and deput conveners and debating with them and coming to the best decision for the institution in our view and the best decision for the union."

Ann Eanna Bradaigh
for now, it begs the question: is there a feeling that this approach has been absent over the past year?

Eanna Bradaigh, currently convenor in DIT Kevin Street, and, at 24, the oldest candidate running for overall president feels that some sacrifices had to be made.

"One of the things I've noticed about Deiric (6 Broin) as President of DITSU is that he is removed from the students, because of all the groundwork he had to do of DITSU.

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

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

But the most important issue of the year is the autonomy of women's within the unions. Ms Bradaigh believes that if women can become recognised as one institution, everything's going to be centralised else where. Maybe it's a bad moment at the moment that the President's office is here along with the company office but again it's all a question of space."

It certainly threatens to become a thorny issue because there is no solution at the moment. Mr 6 Bradaigh suggests that perhaps USI's new offices could be availed of. "I'm not saying having an office there but maybe some type of desk in the National Students' Centre where it'd be central as distinct from being located either side or the Northside."

"The easiest way to deal with that is talking, meeting the conveners and deput conveners and debating with them and coming to the best decision for the institution in our view and the best decision for the union."

Eanna Bradaigh clearly enjoys working in the students' union but beyond the position of overall president of DITSU, has any further political ambitions? He smiles at the question, whatever that means.

"Not at the moment. One step at a time."

Six Bradaigh became involved with the students' union through his connection with the Cumann Ghaidhach. A fluent Irish speaker, he is keen to promote the use of our first language within and without DIT. But he recognises that the Irish schools has left many people with an indelible mark to the language. Yet he is optimistic about the language.

"As far as I can see at the moment there's a very very large upswing in the use of the language in the country. It's obvious from the ads on TV and the hoardings on campus colleges. I'm not going to go around hammering it down people's faces. It's at my intention and I'd never dream of doing something like that. It was done in scho and that's what turned people against it. But we have to be ready to live in a bicultural society. Society changes, we have to change with it."

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"Not at the moment. One step at a time."

The DIT is undergoing great change, a time of transition for all aspects of its institution.

Ms Mulholland would like to like to the power of the six colleges consolidating over the next 12 months.

"They should be co-ordinating a more on what issues are affecting them on whole level, and campaigning against the because the greater the number of peo you have campaigning, the more effect you are going to be."
The controversial Student summer employment scheme is to be extended from 10 to 12 weeks this summer.

There was a good chance that it would be extended, according to the Minister for Social Welfare, Dr. Michael Woods. He said that the Department of Labour was not contradictory about the scheme and that it was not too late to extend it.

The scheme was introduced last year as part of the Social Welfare Bill. It prevented third level students from signing on for the dole during the summer and from receiving rent supplements.

Instead, they were offered €400 for 160 hours work to be undertaken over a period of 10 weeks. This part-time scheme breaks down to £2.50 per hour of work.

Mr. O’Brion said that the payments involved in the scheme were adequate for the type of work involved. “In the first year of operation we had substantiated reports of people picking rocks off pile and put courses in Cavan. £2.50 is hardly the rate for manual labour.”

The Minister has argued that students are free to work part time and still avail of the scheme because it works out at about 16 hours a week. But Mr. O’Brion pointed out that the problem was getting this part time work. “You have to remember that there are over 300,000 unemployed people in this country.”

Last year, the scheme, which was taken up by almost 4,500 students, cost the Department of Social Welfare more than £2 million but resulted in a saving of over £4 million on unemployment assistance to students. An estimated 12,000 students would normally have applied for the assistance and only students previously eligible for at least £15 in assistance could apply for the scheme.

The scheme has come in for harsh criticism from a number of organisations, including the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed, the National Youth Council, Labour Youth and Ogra Fianna Fail. Not surprisingly, one of its most vociferous opponents has been the Union of Students of Ireland.

USI Vice President Damien O’Brion has said that the scheme adversely affects the poorest 10% of the organisation’s membership, those students from lower income backgrounds who might have been eligible for the highest rate of unemployment assistance, £55 per week.

DITSU President Deiric O’Brion said that the union is “fully involved in the USI campaign to thwart this thinly veiled attack on students.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Looking After No. 1**

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

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

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

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

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

Because of its relative newness, many students are not aware of the existence of the scheme. This limits its usefulness. “We’ve informed all the colleges that if there is a death or a serious injury that they should contact the family and tell them about the scheme.”

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

**Competition Winner!**

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

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

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