1994

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

DIT: Students’ Union

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A Governing Body has finally been appointed for the Dublin Institute of Technology, four months late, but the honeymoon period could be shortest ever. The DIT Act provides for the election of two academic staff representatives to the Governing Body but it met for the first time last week without these two representatives, and also without the two student representatives also provided for in the act. It will meet again this week to discuss the institute's budgets for the next two years and representatives also provided for in the act.

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DIT Gets Governing Body

The DIT Examiner
The Newspaper of the Dublin Institute of Technology Students' Union
April '94

USI Defiant Despite Setback

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) has again said that it will not use union funds to pay the legal costs owed to the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC), this despite the recent decision by Trinity College to hand over £18,000 in capitation funds to the receiver appointed for SPUC.

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

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

The Student Support which is campaigning for donations to raise funds to clear the union's debts has so far raised about £10,000, leaving a shortfall of approximately £5,000. However, the matter will not as simply resolved as that.

Students protesting last month over costs row

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

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

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

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

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

The DIT Examiner attempted to contact the college secretary in Trinity College, Mr Michael Gleeson, but was told that he was "unavailable to talk about that item."
The Names That Matter

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

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

VEC nominations:
Mr Peter Burke, Cllr Mary Friel, Mr Michael O’Halloran, Cllr Vincent Jackson, Cllr Lucia O’Neill, Mr Tom Simpson.

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

Two staff representatives and two student representatives have yet to be appointed. It is usual that the incoming President of DITSU be named as one of the student representatives. This year that will be Colman Byrne, currently Convener of the Students’ Union in DIT Mountjoy Square.

Clarification

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

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

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

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

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

The article states that the price of tea and coffee was increased twice this year. This is not correct. In fact, the price of coffee rose on the commodities market. This is not correct. Increases were necessary to pay for the increase in staff wages due under the current PESP agreement.

The author suggests that such wage increases are not paid?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours Sincerely,
Brendan Woods, Secretary

The Editor replies

With regard to the results of the survey, Mr Woods writes that 78.5% of students regarded the food quality as adequate, very good or excellent. To lump together statistics in such a fashion is in itself misleading, for, by the same token, 68.0% of students regarded the food quality as adequate, not good or poor. It does not seem the most appropriate way to comment on the survey.

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

There is some confusion regarding the quote about the price increases. The Students’ Union maintains that the price of coffee has increased this year, as has the price of chips. These are the two increases referred to by Mr Crosbie. His quote suggests that the price of coffee increased twice this year; this is not the case and The DIT Examiner apologises for the misunderstanding it may have caused.

The DIT Examiner
DITSU, DIT Kevin Street, Kevin St., Dublin 8, Ph/Fax: 4783154

Governing Body

So to the Dublin Institute of Technology finally has a new Governing Body. This is to be welcomed but the delay in setting it up and the temporary nature of the new body reflects badly on the DIT, through no fault of its own, and the Minister for Education, Niamh Brieunach, whose intransigence on the matter of gender balance has succeeded only in antagonising the VEC and the TUI and presented the effective and democratic functioning of the DIT and the country’s 11 RTCs.

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

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

The administrative staff at the heart of a dispute in the Dublin Institute of Technology have voted to accept proposals from the Department of Education and will not now be going on strike this week. But Jim Behan, Chairman of the Administrative Staff Association in the DIT, warned that the fighting might not be over yet.

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

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

The Department of Education has been insisting that three principal officers, Finance, Building Services and Personnel, be required to have a third level qualification, this despite the fact that, in the past, employment in these positions did not stipulate such qualifications once the person had relevant experience. IMPACT, the union representing the administrative staff, was reasonably willing to concede the building services post.

"But we were digging in over finance and personal," said Ray Ryan of IMPACT. In the event the department held firm on the finance post also but was prepared to concede the personnel post and to give it a confined filling.

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

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

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

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

"We've all been doing extra work, the people in Ballsbridge are running two payrolls for example."

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

For now, trouble has been averted but the DIT may not be out of the woods yet. Staffing structures have been put in place, final proposals for staffing will be made at the end of May and these could cause problems.

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

Keeping Contact

The Alumni Office in DIT Kevin Street is currently establishing an Association of Graduates and Friends in an effort to maintain links between the college and those who have been associated with it down through the years.

It has a number of aims, including the creation of an international Alumni network of Kevin Street graduates and associates, the renewal of contact between former students, enhancing the links between the college and industry, compiling and publishing a directory of Kevin Street graduates and associates and providing further opportunities for placement of current graduates and undergraduates by working in liaison with established graduates and the Careers, Placement and Industrial Liaison Officers.

The association will be establishing branches, or chapters on a sectoral and geographical basis, the first of which is the Japan Chapter, to be based in Tokyo. Chapter closer to home include RTE and Telecom Eireann.

The Association is currently compiling entries for the first issue of the DIT Kevin Street Graduate Directory which will feature graduates, past and present, and their achievements. If you would like to feature in this or know of any graduates who should be included, you can get in touch at 4757541, ext 385 and the association will post out an application. Alternatively, you can write to the association care of the college, DIT Kevin Street Association of Graduates and Friends, Alumni Office, DIT Kevin Street, Dublin 8.

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

SAMPLE STUDENT MONTHLY RETURN FARES

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BUY YOUR TICKET IN THE COLLEGE

Tickets available in the D.I.T. Student Union Shops at Kevin Street, Bolton Street, Cathal Brugha Street, Mountjoy Square, and Grafton Street.

For group bookings and travel information call

Busaras (01) 8366111

Remember, you need an I.S.I.C. Card with Travelsave Stamp to avail of Student Fares.

Ask about reductions on other services with your I.S.I.C. Card.

Fares correct at time of going to press.
Striking the Right Note

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DIT Chatham Row

Dr. Eibhlin Farrell

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

She is, she says, a woman with "all sorts of ideas, too many" and one of them relates to the early training of students.

"In the past we’ve tended to send au-

Mc Peakes

Sandwiches & Rolls

Suppliers to all DIT Students’ Union Shops
Striking Distance is a dumb film, but that’s not its problem. There’s nothing wrong with dumb films. Gladiator was a dumb film. Road House is one of the dumbest films in recent years and yet both were enjoyable in their own charmingly thin way. The reason I mention those two films is that they were directed by the same man who directed Striking Distance, Rowdy Herrington.

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

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

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

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

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

(Opens May)

Bruce Willis and Sarah Jessica Parker star in a dumb movie.

Fearless opens with an utterly calm, disinterested man walking through a cornfield with a baby cradled in his arm.

There is something wrong with the scene and it is only when he emerges from the field do we see what that is. The camera pulls back and we get a panoramic view of the devastation and panic around this man. A plane has crashed into the field, there are bodies everywhere, emergency services doing their best, survivors frantically searching for family members and friends. But not this man. He calmly hands over the child to its mother and goes into a hotel where he showers and sleeps.

Max Klein (Jeff Bridges) boarded the plane a terrified passenger but, having been faced with what he assumed was the immediate danger, he lost all fear and was elevated to a state of enlightenment. It gave him a taste for life and a feeling of invulnerability which he tells his increasingly alienated wife (Isabella Rossellini) he will not give up, even at the expense of his marriage.

He further endangers his marriage by befriending a young woman (Rosie Perez) who lost her baby boy in the crash and, consumed by Catholic guilt, spends her days half catatonic. Max thinks he can rescue her and is both selfless and utterly selfish in his endeavours to do so. He has a new perspective on life but it has taken him away from the real world, from the smaller concerns that make us recognizably human.

Meanwhile the airline appointed therapist (John Turturro) struggles with the dilemma posed by Max, as does an opportunistic lawyer (Tom Hulce) who forges a fast settlement, if only his client will behave normally.

This is Peter Weir's fifth American film and it stands up well to his impressive previous work. The leading characters are as strong and interesting as they were in Witness, with Bridges, Oscar nominated Perez and a surprisingly tough Rossellini giving first class performances. The film needed an actor who wouldn't be afraid to appear a thoughtless sotine and at the same time have the ability to evoke our sympathy and by managing this, Bridges one again shows what a fine actor he is and probably also why he will never make the A league.

Fearless also manages for the most part to avoid the mawkishness that threatened to doom Dead Poets Society. Instead, it has a slightly eerie, otherworldly feel that fits beautifully with Max's maddening state of grace. As much as anything else, this is a film about perceptions of reality and Weir uses slow motion, close ups, and especially sound to illustrate this, exaggerating or decreasing it to suit the moment.

It probably won’t be huge crowd pleaser, because it is a rather unconventional movie, at least for Hollywood but it is an intelligent, accomplished and rewarding film that is well worth staying with.
In the weeks and days leading up to this year's annual USI Congress, worries were expressed by a number of delegates that this was to be a congress spectacular only for the boredom it was guaranteed to engender. The motions didn't look all the interesting, they said, there won't be much debate and all we can look forward to is getting heroically drunk. They were half right.

Congress '94, held once again in the comfortable surroundings of the Talbot Hotel in Wexford, was a spasmodically interesting affair during the day and a life-threateningly drunken one once darkness fell. Only occasionally did the debates spark into life, most notably during the debates on the prioritisation of the Irish language matter, the enforcement of gender quotas and the introduction of common academic calendar. The hall gradually filled up as slightly delirious students gave 

DIT delegates sniped at each other. This and gender balance, and the proposed version over the English in all for the colleges of the technological and overuse of vitriolic language cannot be condemned, they might have given the slightly sluggish atmosphere the stiff breeze it generally lacked.

Otherwise, there was an awful lot of common, a telling amount of speeches on rather than for or against various motions and the audible sound of back slapping. That was how it seemed.

Not surprisingly, not every motion on the congress timetable was debated, far from it in fact. On some subjects people were only too pleased to speak; on others it would have been easier to get people out of bed on Sunday morning than to get them onto the podium. Repetition naturally abounded. The election results are printed elsewhere but two things are worth mentioning. Mike Egan received a unanimous vote and a rapturous cheer. Is he really that nice? Should anyone have that burden? Secondly, when Helen O'Sullivan was announced the winner in the presidential election, the applause was genuine, as were the cheers, but there was in them sympathy and respect for the other candidate, Damian O'Brien. Helen spent the rest of the day bearing and Damian did not let defeat ruin his weekend. Both looked relieved. The drinking that night was prolonged and aimless but, in keeping with the general feel of the weekend, sombre, reserved even. Nonetheless, the effects were real enough, as the attendance the next morning testified.

The breakfast room was empty at 9.30. That was not such a surprise, given that some people were bumbling 'good morning' as they brailed their way up to their rooms. But by 10.45, sessions of congress were well under way and there were, as Paul McReedy from DIT Kevin Street, irately pointed out, only about 20 delegates in the hall. The turnout was, he said, disgraceful. The hall gradually filled up as slightly delicate people were hunted down (some has taken pot shots at non-university colleges. "Ladies and gentlemen and those out there who want to be universities," began one wag. The motion contained the following: Congress believes that this outdated system should be abolished and a common academic calendar introduced."

"It was passed to cheers, but the biggest cheer was reserved for the remarkable Nora Joyce from UCD whose breathless histories and worrying hypocrisy on the podium resulted in demands for an extension to her allotted yards from each other in a confined space. A scrap, a protest, a photographic coup! Actually, nothing happened and my humane side firmly believes that this was a good thing. Three young people, who simply did not look like they were enjoying their age, did slip into the back of the hall but, God love them, they couldn't have looked more out of place if they'd come in wearing slacks and v-necked jumpers. They were asked to leave by steering committee member Dave Carmody and quietly, quickly complied.

Saturday was also the day when the Common Academic Calendar was debated, giving UCD in particular the chance to take pot shots at non-university colleges. "Ladies and gentlemen and those out there, who want to be universities," began one wag. The motion contained the following: Congress believes that this outdated system should be abolished and a common academic calendar introduced." It was passed to cheers, but the biggest cheer was reserved for the remarkable Nora Joyce from UCD whose breathless histories and worrying hypocrisy on the podium resulted in demands for an extension to her allotted

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The Junction

40 Wexford Street
Recently Renovated

Consensus

Damian O'Brien makes his fluffy farewell speech

Helen O'Sullivan soon after her election

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The Junction

Estd. 1889

Freshly made
Home-made Soups
Sandwiches & Rolls
Teas & Coffees

Friday Nights
Squealin' Pigs
Upstairs

Housoin Country & Blues

Student Concession

Sky Sports

AllPremier
League Matches
Live

World Cup '94
Function Room
available

Consensus

Flying eagle, as they were enjoying their age, did slip into the back of the hall but, God love them, they couldn't have looked more out of place if they'd come in wearing slacks and v-necked jumpers. They were asked to leave by steering committee member Dave Carmody and quietly, quickly complied.

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The traditional dinner on the third day of Congress

Delegates at USI's Annual Congress

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**Congress Speak**

With so many people speaking so much (so much what it would be invidious to say) it was inevitable and natural that some, at some stage, while extemporizing on a subject dear to their hearts, would verbally stumble, fail their arms in desperation and then fall flat on their faces. A few had the good grace to remain, heads down, waiting for the moment to pass before they continued. Others ploughed on oblivious of their linguistic fumbles.

The remarks we have collected here are not designed to humiliate nor are they intended as a sneer, as it is patently obvious that public speaking is a daunting task at the best of times and only marginally preferable to root canal work at the worst. They are merely presented as the amusing, occasionally unintended but unavoidable aspect of Congress that they are. Some are anonymous but that doesn’t really matter.

**Friday:**

"I’d like to support the motion though I don’t entirely support it." - Female delegate speaking on an Irish language motion.

"I agree with the tenor of the motion behind the motion before us here today." - Mike Egan, USI Education Officer.

"It’s a lot of hassle at times ... bit of a hassle, it is a bit of a hassle" - Male UCG delegate.

"If people think it’s too whatever way they don’t like it." - Same guy, same speech.

"A house where people sit in." - Deputy President Damien O’Brien’s pithy description of the nature and function of the Seanad.

"I’d like to congratulate Helen and Colm and Mike, Noleen and Damian. Oh, Sorry Damian." - Steering Committee member Emmet Malone - on the outcome of the USI elections. Damian had just lost out to Helen in the election for President.

**Saturday:**

"I’m not proud that we believe in gender balance and I’m not proud that we need it ... but I’m personally against it." - Bolton Street Deputy Convenor Ronan Haughey.

"Sorry, I’ve lost my train of thought now." - Ronan, some minutes later.

"It exists. It works. Join it. It’s a giggle." DITSU President Deiric Ó Broin gives his considered opinion on Common Academic Calendar.

"A lot of people think that it only affects parents with children." UCD delegate Stephanie Leahy on childcare.

"It’s against the wishes of the normal students on the ground." - Colman Byrne, Convenor, COMAD on women’s autonomy, referring to recent referenda in DIT.

"I 1 L 1 ... I’m just so... so...I mean...I can’t, simply can’t, do not understand...just don’...can’t believe" - UCD delegate Nora Joyce on everything.

"It’s a mad drug, speed, isn’t it?" - Speaker after Nora.

"Are we saying that there’s some genital deformity - oh, genetic, genetic, deformity in women." - USI President Tom Duke summing up the motion on gender balance.

"I’m not going to get up here and be misspoken, misapplied, whatever that word was the Colman used a few minutes ago." - Ronan Haughey proves he’s not a misogynist speaking on WR4; women in education.

**Sunday:**

"Steps. Oh Jesus. Steps." - USI Women’s Rights Officer Helen O’Sullivan tries to negotiate some steps on Sunday while simultaneously regretting that last drink on Saturday night.

"It’s as effective as... it’s not very effective at all" - metaphors fail Colm Keaveney on UO 13, campaigning strategies.
Stressed Out

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

Susan Lindsay is a student counsellor in the DIT. At the moment she is counselling, on average, five students a day, and work is "hectic". There have been many requests for deferral.

Too much pressure. Unfair on the student. They can't be expected to compress all they've learned into three hours. We've seen them all before, but that doesn't mean they are not valid or accurate statements. But things are changing. These days the exams in many courses are divided, with all they've learned into three hours. We've seen first years to listen at a time when they are wallowing in the fresh newness of the system. "If you train particularly lecturers dealing with first year students, because you really need to nip things in the bud there, if you could even train them at a training seminar, in particular in learning techniques, they could pass on this information and help students to manage their time more effectively."

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

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

Ms Lindsay believes that prevention, preferable to cure, can begin a long time before the first signs of stress ever emerge: the back up support there; they'll obviously have to improve resources because there's only so much we can cope with. If they are going to change things like that, there is a fall out and there are consequences and they need to provide support. I don't think they really have done that.

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

Her final words of advice on the subject are simple and obvious and the very words every student should whisper before every paper: "Don't panic. They are worth remembering."
Last month saw the various DIT sites whipped into something of a frenzy, or in some places a fairly light froth, as the elections for the students' unions took place. Naturally, the most high profile campaign was that for overall president. While it was generally felt that Colman Byrne and Eanna Ó Bradaigh were the favourites, no-one was sure which way it would go. In the event, Colman won by a substantial margin, thanks in part to an impressive and highly successful campaign on his home turf. Elsewhere there were one or two surprises and, after the event, a little post election bitterness, expected of course, but never pleasant. All in all though, a quiet affair.

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

Results of the DIT Students' Unions elections

**Overall President of DITSU:**
- Total Poll: 3751, Spoiled Votes: 74, Total Valid Poll: 3677, Quota: 1839
- Byrne, Colman: 1745 (+245 in second count) = 1997
- Mullholland, Anne Marie: 700 (eliminated after first count)
- Ó Bradaigh, Eanna: 1225 (+209 in second count) = 1434
- NT: 246

Byrne, Colman elected.

**DIT Cathal Brugha Street:**
- Position: Convener
  - Total Poll: 608, Spoiled Votes: 3, Total Valid Poll: 605, Quota: 303
- Joyce, Colin: 291 (+49 in second count) = 346
- McCabe, Ciara: 99 (eliminated after first count)
- O'Neill, Alison: 215 (+34 in second count) = 249
- NT: 16

Joyce, Colin elected

- Position: Deputy Convener
  - Total Poll: 608, Spoiled Votes: 14, Total Valid Poll: 594, Quota: 298
- McNulty, Sinéad: 299
- O'Toole, Dermot: 295

McNulty, Sinéad elected

- Position: EnTS Officer
  - Boisse, Bertrand elected
  - Clubs and Societies Officer
    - Curran, Aidan elected
  - Employment Officer
    - Meehan, Adrienne elected

**DIT Bolton Street:**
- Position: Convener
  - Total Poll: 856, Spoiled Votes: 26, Total Valid Poll: 830, Quota: 416
- Haughey, Ronán: 495
- Reilly, Christopher: 161
- Smith, Marie: 174

Haughey, Ronán elected

- Position: Deputy Convener
  - Total Poll: 760, Spoiled Votes: 27, Total Valid Poll: 733, Quota: 367
- Barry, Mark: 82
- Flanagan, Alison: 651

Flanagan, Alison elected

- Position: Apprentice Officer
  - Dempsey, David elected
  - EnTS Officer
    - Hamrock, Ian elected
  - Clubs and Societies Officer
    - McArdle, Aoife elected

**DIT Rathmines:**
- Position: Convener
  - Total Poll: 741, Spoiled Votes: 9, Total Valid Poll: 732, Quota: 367
- Donehoo, Matt: 308
- Moran, Lar: 424

Moran, Lar elected

**DIT Kevin Street:**
- Position: Convener
  - Total Poll: 750, Spoiled Votes: 12, Total Valid Poll: 738, Quota: 370
- Crosbie, Clíarán: 436
- Jordan, Bob: 302

Crosbie, Clíarán elected

- Position: Deputy Convener
  - Total Poll: 743, Spoiled Votes: 21, Total Valid Poll: 722
- Ryan, Helen: Yes: 566
  - No: 166

Ryan, Helen elected

- Position: EnTS Officer
  - Gordon, Reg elected
  - Clubs and Societies Officer
    - Burke, Liam elected
  - Women's Rights Officer
    - Canney, Lisa elected
  - PRO
    - O'Driscoll, Cathal elected
  - Apprentice Officer
    - Hopkins, Clíarán elected

**DIT Mountjoy Square:**
- Position: Convener
  - Total Poll: 900, Spoiled Votes: 3, Total Valid Poll: 897, Quota: 449
- Gillooly, Felicia: 35
- Hughes, Greg: 618
- O'Neill, Eoghan: 244

Hughes, Greg elected

- Position: Deputy Convener
  - Total Poll: 897, Spoiled Votes: 19, Total Valid Poll: 878, Quota: 440
- Lee, Mark: 443
- McCauley, Mary: 435

Lee, Mark elected

- Position: Clubs and Socs Officer
  - Pedreschi, Damian elected
  - PRO
    - Whelan, Robbie elected
  - PTS hÉineacháin, Durach elected
  - EnTS Officer
    - Fitzpatrick, Joseph elected
This June, Helen O’Sullivan takes over from Tom Duke as President of the Union of Students in Ireland. She takes over at a time when USI has just moved into a modern and stylish new headquarters in Temple Bar, when it has recently had a reafiliation victory in UCG and is still basking in the afterglow of an extremely well received presentation at last year’s National Education Convention, the invitation to partake in which was a kudo in itself.

It is not however, all roses. The specter of the abortion debate has come back haunting to collect the outstanding which was a kudo in itself.

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

"One way or another SPUC are going to get their pound of flesh. That’s not to say that the money is going to come from affiliation fees because it won’t. That was a decision that was made a long time ago, but they are going to and we’re really going to have to look at fund raising."

Like all in USI she is concerned that SPUC will be awarded further costs from the European court case - some have speculated that these could amount to €100,000 - but remains committed to the stance the organisation has taken.

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

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

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

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

"Communication and Resourcing, they’re the two."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Yes she is,” She answers quietly.

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

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

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

Helen O’Sullivan seems to have no illusions about the year to come. There will be times when it may seem like a huge mistake and she admits to having “plenty of nerves” about her near future. But that is not necessarily a bad thing.
Aimee Mann, former singer and lyricist with "Ti" Tuesday, released her debut solo album, "Whatever", last year to universal critical acclaim and few sales. Her undemanding delivery and generally light sound disguise deeply personal, bared to the bone songwriting that is worth dwelling over. Clever, emotionally naked and intense, she plays the Gaiety Theatre on May 1 and should not be missed.

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

Tori Amos materialised onto the music scene a few short years ago with the deceptively catchy "Crucify" from her impressive "Little Earthquakes" album. The classically trained pianist with the decidedly impenetrable lyrics and a fairly high weirdness quotient has just released his big hairstyle? We shall see.

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

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

The Bank of Ireland RTE Proms starts on Friday, 27th May and runs until Friday, 3rd June. Don't forsworn it won't be made up of those Pomp and Circumstance scenes we're used to from the Last Night of the Proms on BBC. Among the highlights will undoubtedly be the Rodgers and Hammerstein Musical Extravaganza with the RTE Concert Orchestra, on Saturday, 28th May: Verd Requiem which will feature, amongst others, Bernadette Groevey and an Evening with Eleanor McVeoy, currently on the crest of a wave. There will be a Last Night of the Proms, beginning at 8pm on June 3rd. Appropriately enough, the theme is Going to America and will include music from George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein. An absolute treat.

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

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

Aminee Mann, former singer and lyricist with "Ti" Tuesday released her debut solo album, "Whatever", last year to universal critical acclaim and few sales. Her undemanding delivery and generally light sound disguise deeply personal, bared to the bone songwriting that is worth dwelling over. Clever, emotionally naked and intense, she plays the Gaiety Theatre on May 1 and should not be missed.

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Antipodean wonder band Crowded House take the stage at The Point on May 26th, despite the recent upset caused by their drummer's decision to leave the band. Discerning music fans have known of and appreciated the band for years but it is only recently that they have acquired more of a big band status. The albums "Woodface" and "Together Alone" are responsible for this. They also have a good sense of self-deprecating wit which has endeared them so audiences. Should be one of the gigs of the summer.

Jackson Browne has been quiet for a few years, unless you count the high profile collapse of his relationship with Daryll Hannah. But he's back now with a new album, 'I'm Alive', one of those bouncing back efforts which marks a move away from the politically flavoured "Under The Pink". Browne has a superb sense of self-depracating wit which has endeared them to audiences. Should be one of the gigs of the summer.

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

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