

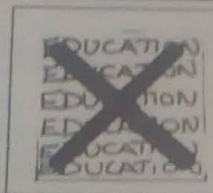
an Focal

University of Limerick Students' Union Newspaper

22nd Nov - Week 9, Autumn Semester, 1994



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Inside

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Dear Guidance Counsellor,

At this time of year you will be in the process of advising your sixth year students of what course and what college to pick. As a student of the University of Limerick I would like to point out some facts about U.L. that no-one is told about until they come here. I feel that your students have the right to know some important points that, had I and many other students here been aware of, would have caused a large number of us to opt for another university.

Firstly, unlike all the other universities in the country there is no formal repeat structure in U.L. This means that failing students have to repeat entire

years and many cannot afford to do so. There was a repeat structure operating for the last two years but that has been scrapped and the proposal to replace it guarantees no-one the chance to repeat but instead lowers the point at which students can progress to the next year. This, and the proposal to massage grades to deal with the problem, lowers the academic standing of our degrees.

Because of the discretionary nature of such a system, even those close to the mark may not be allowed to repeat. The lack of a safety net and the consequent dire implications of failing one or two exams adds to the

unreasonable level of stress that students here suffer from.

Another issue that should dissuade many of your students from coming here is the atrocious nature of our "library". It is the worst university library in the country and completely inadequate for university students. Students in the Humanities are particularly hardest hit so any of your sixth years interested in this area should think twice before opting for U.L.

Perhaps the most attractive thing about U.L. for many sixth years is the co-operative education program. However, those of your students that are

interested in becoming teachers should be aware of the fact that though they do indeed get work experience, unlike other students they are not paid for it. In addition they have to cover substantial expenditure while on "teaching practice". Over a four year degree program such students will end up about £4000 worse off than their fellow U.L. students.

These are some of the most profound problems that students here have to deal with. Of course they may not deter your pupils to opt for here but they do have a right to know about them. I thus ask you to inform your students of these

facts as well as showing them the glossy booklet the university provides for them. If you have any queries I will be delighted to answer them.

Matthew Hamilton,
President,
University of Limerick Students
Union

We shall send this out to all career guidance counsellors in the country at the end of week 11. If you would like to sign a letter to your old school we will arrange this for you. Pop down to the Students' Union.

IRISH PEACE INSTITUTE AWARD CEREMONY

Thursday, November 24th, 1994

Dr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, former President of Costa Rica and 1987 Nobel Laureate - who is visiting Europe this month - will be honoured by the Irish Peace Institute on November 24, at the University of Limerick.

Dr. Arias holds international stature as a spokesperson for the Third World. He has travelled the world spreading the message of peace and applying the lessons garnered from the Central American Peace Process to topics of current global debate. Dr. Arias assumed office at a time of great regional discord when he intensified his efforts to promote peace. His initiative culminated in the signing of the Arias Peace Plan by all the Central American Presidents in 1987 for which he was awarded Nobel Peace Prize.



The Irish Peace Institute award will be presented to Dr. Arias by Dr. Patrick Hillery (former President of Ireland) at

7.30pm. on 24 November. in the University's Jean Monnet.

Following Dr. Arias's acceptance speech there will be a short recital of music arranged by Professor Micháel O'Suilleabháin, Chair of Music at the University of Limerick and distinguished composer.

Dr. Arias is a member of the United Nations Planning Committee for the celebratory 50th year of the founding of the UN (1995), which, coincidentally, is also the 40th year of Ireland's membership of the UN.

The Irish Peace Institute is presently participating in a major multi-national research programme on UN peacekeeping. Over the years, Ireland has made significant contribution to UN peacekeeping worldwide and consequently, there is considerable public interest in the future peacekeeping role of the UN.

KILLMURRAY THEFT

As they add the finishing touches to the newest student village it seems not all is rosy in Killmurray, for on the night of Thursday the 3rd of November two households were entered and items were taken. This happened between 4 and 5 am. The two households were both shocked at how easily the burglars had entered the houses. A design flaw in the entrances made access to the houses very easy. There was a lack of any signs of forced entry into the houses and it was as if someone had used a key.

In one of the houses the fridge freezer was ransacked and a large quantity of food was taken as well as a jumper. Not content with just taking all the food in the house the burglars decided to leave their mark and upturned all the ashtrays in the living area.

In the other house the burglars got what some would see as a bigger prize. They took a CD player which had a rare Nirvana CD inside. They also made off with a lab coat. The disgruntled owner of the CD player seemed more annoyed with the lack of activity by the Gardai than with the actual theft of the player. It seems that

though he has contacted them on numerous occasions they have still yet to investigate either of the burglaries in Killmurray. On talking with the village manager Mr Gaynor he pointed out that the problem was being seen to that very day. He was also quite dismayed by the lack of action by the Gardai. He pointed out that in the house where the CD player was taken one of the keys went missing and that this only came to light afterwards. The fact that the warden had seen nothing, he said, was that the warden for Killmurray are also the warden for the whole campus and therefore only patrol Killmurray periodically during the night. He mentioned the fact that many people in Killmurray had not removed the housekeys from the keys. Then once lost the key will had the tag with the house number still on it, which defeated the whole purpose of having a lock on the door. He hoped now as a result of the burglaries people in Killmurray will be a bit more cautious with their keys and with the security of the houses during the night.

EDUCATION REFUSES TO LISTEN

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Last Wednesday's Education Faculty Board meeting was an utter disaster for students. The meeting overwhelmingly endorsed the Task Force on Student Progression report, despite the vehement opposition of the student representatives present and refused to support even in principal student proposals on teaching practice. The overall result of the meeting left the students present bitterly angry and seriously doubting the value of rational argument as a means to achieving political ends.

On repeats, the manner and scale of our defeat was devastating. Only Matthew Hamilton and Cormac Daly voted against the report despite the fact that the following inadequacies that they pointed out were left un-rebutted:

1) The report guarantees no-one access to a repeat. It is discretionary - even a final year student on a QCA of 1.8 may have to repeat the year.

2) Access to summer repeats would be abolished for second and third year students. Instead, such students with F grades or with QCA's of between 1.5 and 2 may be permitted into the next year of their programme. Again they may also be refused - it is discretionary.

3) If such discretion is applied loosely then the result would be allowing students through to fourth year who would find it well nigh impossible to graduate. If you don't interpret it loosely then you are forcing large numbers of students to repeat entire years. Students that would previously have had the chance to rectify their academic performance during the summer.

4) That academic standards would be seriously undermined if students as low as 1.5 were permitted to progress. Not allowing such students to progress would, however, take away the second chance they have had up to now.

Not only that, but the faculty seemed enthusiastic about Dr. John O'Brien's statement that a student's grade in a module could be changed by the Examination Board on the basis of his/her overall performance in all other exams. Such a mix and match attempt to allow students to progress is not just academically highly dubious, it also has serious implications for lecturers. If Examination Boards change grades without explicit permission from the lecturer then that totally undermines that lecturer's responsibility to assess that module. If grades can be changed with the lecture's say-so

then accusations of lecture bias will at some stage be made about a refusal to change a particular student's grade. It is conceivable that lecturers may end up being sued by such students. Something that is all the more likely when the result of a lecturer's decision will make the difference between progressing or repeating the year.

The fact that faculty still accepted the report without contradicting the arguments that were advanced so passionately by the two student reps was taken to be particularly insulting to students. We are not being taken seriously or being listened to. It has now reached the state that the sabbatical officers are no longer so keen to check the anger and militancy of many students on this issue. The lack of support that the faculty gave to our teaching practice proposals will also be greeted with anger by education students. Of all students on campus they are probably the most keen to abandon "jaw - jaw" for "war - war". Given the fact that the huge discrimination they receive is no nearer to being rectified, one can see why.



"Grin & Bear It ..."

III Boys

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photo o**

Say Testicles

Letter

AN FOCAL

15th November 1994

**"My name is Ozymandias king of kings
Look on my works ye mighty and despair.
Beside the remains of that colossel wreck,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."**

It seems funny , in a country where we are totally used to scandal and even outright lying from some of our politicians that when one - (possibly our most successful in recent times) makes a couple of very bad calls, that he is removed.

It is important to remember that the greatest tragedy that this island has had to overcome in the last twenty five years, was not unemployment, emigration or the national debt but the war in the North. With the cessation of violence in the North there will be an upturn in the economy. In yesterday's papers there were reports about the growth in the manufacturing industry in the North since the ceasefires. The same will happen in the South.

Albert Reynolds was a leading player in the peace process. Without his guidance it is unlikely that the two ceasefires would have been called.

Yes, Albert Reynolds misled the country, but others have done so and lasted a lot longer. It is probably only right that Albert resigned, but it shows the marked shift in public opinion on what our politicians can do and expect to get away with. It also shows the power that live television from the Dail can have on our opinions.

OAKLAWNS FENCE KNOCKED

Contrary to a report in last week's 'Limerick Post' it was a fence and not the wall adjoining Oaklawns and Elm Park which was knocked recently. The local resident, on whose property the fence lies, has no problem with students taking this route to Oaklawns provided a more permanent structure is put in place.

On his and other local residents informing the University of their grievances, a meeting was arranged between them and the university's Deputy Registrar, Fionnuala Sheehan, Caroline McGrath, the Students' Union Welfare Officer and

Seamus Ryan, Community Relations Officer of the S.U. The result of this meeting is that each of the above will put pressure on Limerick County Council to place an obligation on the Oaklawns Estate builder to complete the job. Their request is that a permanent wall be constructed with a sty to allow students to pass through and also a path at either side to alleviate the treacherous underfoot conditions. Mr. Ryan believes that this solution would be of benefit to both residents and student alike and would greatly reduce student interference with resident property in this area.

Welfare

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

UL Christmas Day will be on Wednesday 7th December when festive cheer begins with a traditional Christmas dinner while being serenaded by Christmas Carols and moves eventually to the stables area. Between now and then every class are asked to put together a hamper which we will give to the Vincent de Paul for distribution around Limerick. All food/toys/drink can be given to your class rep. For those classes who don't have a rep maybe a few friends will take on responsibility for getting the class hamper together. If you want to do that just call down at the welfare office at any time.

A word of warning please do not include anything that has a sell by date before Christmas. Thanks already to the residents of Parklodge who have decided to put a couple of quid each towards filling a hamper. If individual houses want to do that feel free.

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RESIDENTS Vs STUDENTS

The most powerful lesson to be learnt from previous successful attempts by other so called minorities, is that education is a most powerful path to equality. In a liberal and democratic society, institutions of higher education have the responsibility, the ways and the privilege of opening doors to ensure equality for all their students.

Patricia Callaghan Director Ahead

To a certain extent mixing students and residents is like mixing oil and water. Students aren't going to stop going out at night and celebrating 21sts or indeed just celebrating life in general and residents are not going to stop needing a good night's sleep before they get up for work the next day. In reality the very vast majority of residents accept that there will be a certain amount of noise etc. when there are so many students living around. What they do object to and who can blame them is aggressive and abusive shouting at night and ringing on doorbells etc. The Elm Park residents Association make the point that in that estate there are quite a number of pensioners living alone who are literally afraid at night.

During the summer when we hosted a meeting for all the residents in Castletroy a lady rang me to say she couldn't attend but wanted to say that she likes the students very much has always got on well with them etc....she was saying this even though she lives in Compostella and probably gets the brunt of the noise on a Thursday night.

She is even known to bring in fruit cake to nearby students. Well several weeks ago that woman's garden chairs were nicked.....

Then of course there is the famous "wall" between Oaklawns and Elm Park. I really don't know how the Limerick Post manages to get the wrong story every time with out fail. To those who saw the Limerick Post article and indeed anyone working in the Limerick Post there was no wall knocked down. What has been knocked is a fence belonging to a resident in Oaklawns.....let me explain. The short cut from Elm Park to Oaklawns takes you across a very high wall. In the past the wall has been knocked by students to get across this way but was rebuilt. Now someone has decided instead of crossing the wall to knock down the residents fence and take a short cut through his garden. I can only begin to imagine my mother's response if someone decided to knock the fence and take a short cut through the garden at home demolishing her prize tulips and shrubs on the way...it doesn't bear thinking

about. The amazing thing is how tolerant this particular resident is being giving that people are now walking through his garden and literally waving back as he points out the fact that it is private property. What's more he has and is again supporting the University and the S.U. in seeing that an "official" short cut be made between Elm Park and Oaklawns.

So what's the moral of the story. Well whatever about questions of what you do in your own house noise, parties, bins etc. students are way out of order when it comes to trespassing and stealing garden furniture, ringing doorbells, pulling up shrubs etc.

We are trying to work out something to get a permanent shortcut between Oaklawns and Elm Park. In the meantime please stop breaking fences in order to get home two minutes earlier. Also would whoever has the garden chairs belonging to 13 Compostella either return them to their owner, or let us know in the S.U. where they are so we can collect them. Obviously if you do that the matter will go no further.

Greetings Fellow Scholars,

I wish to respond to the outrageous article in Week 6's edition of 'An Focal', in which our 'beloved' ex-S.U. President Raymond Hurley took to contributing cheap-laugh literary tripe, in which he laid down his own cynical beliefs as to what lies behind the foundations of the new Debating Union. Now, in these hallowed halls of hopelessness, there are those who support the activity of debating ... and those who abhor it ... Ray it would seem is having trouble balancing on the fence though. I remember much different times however, before the awesome heights of office and megalomania set in, when Mammy Hurley's boy (as Auditor) enlisted the assistance of the old 'Literary Philosophical Debating Society' in his campaign for S.U. president.

And do you know what??? He got the position and occupied it for what turned out to be possibly one of the worst, most inefficient years of the Students' Union's history (OUR union!). He turned completely and became totally negative towards the progression of Clubs and in particular Societies on campus ... funny really, when you consider he has his own underground 'Network

Marketing Soc.' (sponsored by Amway) which it would appear he tended to so busily that he couldn't even make it to the many U.G.M.'s and E.G.M.'s we had in third term last year ... I'm not even going to begin on the can of worms that was/is Ray's election manifesto? Still, you've got to admit his article was funny in areas ... I quote his views on the new Debating Union ...

"'Instability' would be the label attached to such a conglomeration" Excusez-moi if I seem bitchy, but 'InStables' and 'Unstable' were two words which epitomised the behaviour of the aforementioned schmuck while he was 'in power'. Unsupported, unpopular and downright unwanted, Ray was ever asked to resign at one stage last term.

What Mr. Hurley ('Man Mouse?' as some posters probed in year!) wrote in Week 6's 'An Focal' was a pure, groundless effort to gather some support for his floundering career ... No longer a welcome ally of the Debating Union or any other societies in U.L., appealing to those of you out there who hate debating and all related to it ...

You have been warned!!!
Byton

Opinion

OESTROGEN LEVEL LOW ON ERASMUS

I was thrilled, dear friends, when asked to write a little something for 'an Focal' whilst immersing myself in the culture of a foreign land. It makes me feel rather like the Charlie Bird of U.L. the Lou Grant of European Studies, the Anne Doyle of

As I write I'm sitting on the terrace of a 5th floor apartment in Madrid. The weather has cooled somewhat to a trifling 24°C. The Spaniards refer to this type of day as 'fresh'. It makes one wonder how 'fresh' the day would be without one's Soft + Gentle.

It is not my first Co-op spent in Madrid. Last year I worked here for five months as an Au-pair. This time I'm on ERASMUS, and it's amazing how different one's perspective of a city is, without the projectile vomiting, whinging and bed-wetting of the Au-pairing world. In fact, everything would be perfect except for one small iota. It began with a swarthy, tanned, Iberian Airline's steward.....

He pranced, gyrated and teased his way lasciviously up and down the aisles, offering tea, coffee and excitement on a plate. A fine specimen of a male - But (I wince to think of it) - there was no response from me biologically. There you have it my friends - hormonal activity since I arrived is minus 14 on my personal Richter scale. Oestrogen dormant. It isn't for want of trying, mind you. I have biological battles with

my psyche - wrestled with my eyelashes in a futile attempt to bat them coquettishly - but to no avail. I reckon its the time difference or something, or could it be that I miss the Irish male? Hmmm - shiver. However, fear not, your intrepid heroine shall never give up the war of the wiggle.

One of the things which I have observed is the preoccupation of the Spaniards with Denim. A whirl of Levis; stonewashed, navy, black, red waves of Denim washes over the population. It leads one to believe that it is the Spaniard's birthright to greet this world on the end of a denim umbilical cord. Another fascinating thing about Madrid is the fact that all the girls sport longer hairstyles. Whether curled, highlighted, braided or straight - it never falls short of meeting their shoulder blades. Since I have a tendency to crop mine close to the ears - I have found myself the subject of sneaky glances and open stares. I suppose I must look like a refugee or epidemic victim of some sort. This isn't remedied by the fact that I am white - nay, white with blue tinges. Like a lone bottle of milk amidst shelves of Pepsi.

Food is a subject close to my heart, but even closer to my cellulite. I like food. However, I make it a rule to eat only things I can recognise. A normal trait, wouldn't you say? But it is for this reason that I launched myself into an embarrassing episode. Whilst in a restaurant

one evening, the waiter delivered to our table a steaming bowl of potatoes and chicken. "Hal" I mused, "chicken casserole is the same the world over", and smugly dived in. While chewing with gusto, I was informed that the chicken (on a one-way ticket to my intestines) was in fact, octopus tentacle. There was a quick return to original departure lounge for that 'chicken'. I must admit that I behaved like a social pariah. I gulped, spat and cursed vociferously. The waiter, incensed by my behaviour, began to shout. I'm sure he was casting aspersions on my parentage; even though there was a huge language abyss between us, we made ourselves understood. Some gestures are universal. In the end, my friends pretended I was Australian, so as not to pour shame on my own, dear, octopus-free land.

In short, I feel that my months here in Madrid will be an adventure, for instance - I have already met some of my professors. One of them was quite amiable until I mispronounced his name - roughly translating: "Hello, M Omelette-Penis".

At this stage I have begun to wonder if the ERASMUS would accept deportation as a valid excuse for failing complete Co-op.....

All the best,
Derena McDermott

ERASMUS- A SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRS

by Damian Maloney

Located on the the top floor of the White House and encompassing a shockingly meagre amount of floor space, lies the ERASMUS office. Here, the daylight struggles to gain entry through three not very judiciously placed windows. Unfortunately however, this lack of natural God-given illumination is far from being the chief worry of the occupants of P2-03. Alas!, a far greater crisis is all too omnipresent within these four walls.

The Erasmus office workforce is currently made up of three persons. Two of these are part-time administrators, responsible for the bulk of the workload and the running of the office, who work a forty hour week between them. They are assisted by a part-time secretary working a twenty-five hour week. We have then, a situation whereby there are effectively three part-time workers catering for the information, orientation, language preperation, liason with accomadation, admissions, student services, student personnel services and faculty payment of student mobility grants etc. for 7.5 % of the student population. Yes, phenomonal as it seems, that is the percentage of students involved with Erasmus in U.L. at any one time, and this figure is steadily increasing year by year.

To help them in their day to day struggles, these veritable Trojans of U.L. are aided by two computer terminals, one telephone, and a miniscule, wholly inadequate set of shelves. One telephone to maintain contact with one hundred and five universities dotted throughout our continent is indeed an alarming statistic by anyone's reasoning. As if such intolerable working conditions weren't enough, the organisation is at present negotiating yet another stumbling block. Eveline Van Ijssel, a founder member of Erasmus in U.L., and a highly regarded figure with the European organisation, departed from her post last Friday. Her departure is a blow to the college and, as such, questions arise which demand answers. We cannot allow events to passs idly by without some explanation.

Why has such an unacceptable situation been allowed to develop? The Erasmus opportunities in U.L. are arguably the best offered by any Irish university. No other college offers opportunities for students to study abroad in such a wide range of its courses. This very fact, has, in recent years, been one of the deciding factors for Leaving Cert. students as they ponder their futures. Realising the increased unemployment routes available in an integrated

Europe they have applied in great numbers to our university resulting in our rapidly growing stature as a towering bastion of education, not alone in our own country but on a global scale.

What of the Erasmus placements themselves? They offer exciting new possibilities for U.L. students to broaden their horizons and to become more rounded individuals.

Such increasing prestige and fostering of European integration can only be healthy for the university and to think that much of this is largely due to the work done in a poky little office hidden in a secluded room is preposterous.

Unfortunately it has taken the resignation of a valuable member of staff to highlight the plight of Erasmus. One can only hope that this desperate development will now prompt the powers that be to arise from their proverbial posteriors and swing into swift action to rectify the situation before time deals a foul blow. With the advent of Socrates (which will not do away with but rather expand the Erasmus idea to incorporate mobility of academics) now close at hand, time is of the essence and action must be taken.

NIGHT VISION

12.00pm Ed sits alone in his office, surrounded by piles of unsigned documents. He dreams of the future. His eyes grow misty as he thinks of the glories to come. My God, I wish someone would turn on the lights. 20-20 vision is not a scam. 20-20 vision is not a distraction. 20-20 vision is premature!!! In order for a dev. plan to work, you need to begin from a sound base, and build in this. At the moment, this university does not have this sound base. The following issues must be addressed:

1. Repeats

I have no intention of boring you with the gory details. What I want to know is, why do the university governing body not want a repeats system? Could it be that the message that they want to send to potential graduate employers is that this university only accepts the best, and that they only have room for winners? You can bet it is. The fact is that they see this university as being the European Harvard, at our expense, of course.

2. The Co-op Division

While in the past I have been critical of the co-op division. I realise now it's not their fault. The fact is that they have too much to do. On Friday, October 28th, I received the Career Bulletin for final year students. In it, I was informed that the closing date for applications for An Bord Trachtala's Graduate Internship programme was the 28th of October. While at first this might seem like a massive xxxx-up (use any four letter word you like), let us examine the red facts. The co-op offices main duties are to place students on co-ops which will prove useful to them, to monitor their progress and maintain expand their contacts with employers. However, as an ancillary duty, they are expected to arrange employment opportunities for final year students, as well as

suitable lecture venues which are currently not being used at all.

Not only should he deal with lecture resources, but he should also have the responsibility of dealing with the library facilities. Last year while taking the module LA428 (company law) I and my fellow classmates were faced with the ridiculous situation of there being only one copy of the primary textbook and six copies of the secondary textbook to be shared between the 700 people taking the module. To put it into statistics, every student would on average be entitled to one day in the term if the books were to be shared equally. To paraphrase a certain maths lecturer 'That's crazy, lads'.

4. Systems Management

In a lecture last year, a certain lecturer asked the class what was the official system within the university for getting a grade re-check. The class proceeded to volunteer several different answers, before the lecturer informed us that there is no system.

This university needs a system manager! At the moment, there is no official document which comprehensively outlines all the official procedures within U.L. (to the best of my knowledge). Therefore, there is no reason for systems to be put in place. There is no follow-up procedure to see if rule changes have been notified to and adhered to by lecturers. As an example, at the end of 1st team, 1st year I went to see my student advisor. Before he told me that he could not give me the information that the orientation guide said he could, I had to tell him that he was a student adviser, and that I was one of his assignees! The result of all this is the collective chaos known as Student Services.

5. Lecturer Assessment

Oops. I think I've just stood on a few toes here! At the moment, the university

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The university should create a graduate affairs division, which would deal with the 'Milk Round', graduate opportunities and the tracking studies of our graduates. This will leave the co-op office concentrate on what should be it's sole priority, the provision of worthwhile jobs for undergraduates on the co-op programme.

3. Resources

In support of the union, I also call on the governing body to create the position for a resources manager to monitor the facilities and resources within this university. Because the resources in this university are being underused, Wednesday half-day is being abolished. As a favour to Matt, I myself did a small bit of research (half an hour), and I came up with six

different before the lecturer informed us that there is no system manager! At the moment, there is no official document which comprehensively outlines all the official procedures within the university. There is no follow-up procedure to see if rule changes have been notified to and adhered to by lecturers. As an example, at the end of 1st year, 1st year I went to see my student advisor. Before he told me that he could not give me the information that the orientation guide said he could, I had to tell him that he was a student adviser, and that I was one of his assignees! The result of all this is the collective chaos known as Student Services.

5. Lecturer Assessment

Oops. I think I've just stood on a few toes here! At the moment, the university's idea of lecturer assessment involves handing out a form once every 12 months where we are asked to assess the lecturer who is just about to begin. These are done at random, and are absolutely ineffective. Firstly, all lecturers should be assessed on a regular basis e.g. once every 3 months. Secondly, all lecturers should undergo some form of retaining. While a lecturer may be knowledgeable in his/her subject, the most important thing to the student is that he can communicate this knowledge in such a way that it can be understood. Now, in my experience, the standard of lecturing in business is quite good, with the notable exception of some of the maths teachers. Are these the same people who are also part of the belligerent Eng. and Science faculty? Hmm!!

When all of these issues are sorted out, then this university will be ready for Vision 20-20.

Wolfman

Features

MATTHEW 'DOES IT' IN 53 MINUTES!!!

There was much excitement (and much money lost), over the weekend when U.L.S.U. president, Matthew 'Chariots of Fire' Hamilton ran the Plassey 10K road race in just under an hour.

That Matthew finished the race at all is indeed an achievement in itself, as the Students' Union offices have been filled in recent weeks with horror stories from the Hamilton training camp. Tales of woe surrounded the rigid Eastern bloc-style training regime which saw Matthew running barefoot through the estates of Castletroy at 5.30am each morning for three hours, rain, hail, or shine, and rumours abounded that Matthew was going to burn out well before the race itself.

The day of the race dawned, and Matthew, kitted out in shorts, (Whoagh!!!), a 'Limerick to Mostar' tee-shirt (donated by his coach, Otto von Stalin) and wearing a very fetching red ribbon in his hair, lined up with the rest of the athletes at the start of the race. Once Matthew had been turned around and pointed in the correct direction of the race route the race was able to get under way. Matthew's explanation later was, that he had naturally assumed he was at the head of the running pack and not as had materialised bringing up the rear before the race had even started.

Matthew's running partner during the race was a very sprightly 85 year old grandmother of 22, Mrs. Joseph Soap who in her own words "jogged" at Matthew's pace because I didn't want him to get

left behind all by himself". Mrs. Soap was also on hand to aid Matthew when he had the first of his many moments of drama at the one kilometre mark. Members of the ambulance crew rushed to the scene when Matthew complained of chest pains and a numb feeling in his left arm. The situation was brought under control when Matthew took the advice of the medical corps and left aside the alarm clock he was carrying under his left arm. Matthew's post-race explanation was that as he doesn't possess a watch, how else could he time himself?

Another potentially dangerous scenario occurred when the runners turned at the 5K mark and headed into a side-wind. As Matthew's 'luscious chestnut locks' (described for 'an Focal' by 15 year old Miss Jane Dough who had mistaken him for a member of 'Boyzone'), blew over to the right side of his head, it distorted the balance of his running, causing him to lean threateningly to one side. The situation was rectified when a member of the organising committee (within race regulations) volunteered to run alongside Matthew and direct a battery operated turbo hair-dryer at his head to counter the effects of the side-wind. Matthew was able to continue the race and spent the next two kilometres sporting a very chic mochican, complete with red ribbon trailing in the wind.

At the 8K mark, Matthew's run looked to be over when his shoelaces came undone. Luckily, a member of the crowd helped him out by re-tying them.

and Matthew was able to continue at what international athlete Hamish Coughlan later described as, "a snail doing a piss-take of a snail's pace".

At the end of the race, as Matthew dramatically fell across the line, (two and a half minutes before the first 'walker' finished), a Steward's Enquiry was called, and Matthew faced an agonising wait to see if his place was actually to be confirmed. The Steward's discussions concerned the incident of the 'shoelace tying affair' at the 8K mark, but after hearing testimonies from Matthew and Mr. Joe Soap of Elm Park, the Steward's accepted the explanation that Matthew had never learned to tie his own shoelaces due to his recurring eye to hand co-ordination problem. This verdict was later confirmed by a spokesperson for the organising committee who verified that this type of aid from a member of the viewing public was in fact well within race regulations.

A much relieved Matthew later told a press conference attended by a 'an Focal' journalist that he was "pleased with his run" but had yet to consider if "partaking in next year's Dublin city marathon is a viable option or not". He thanked the organising committee for their excellent work in ensuring the smooth running (no pun intended) of the whole event, and promised to do the whole thing again next year!

By, Mav Erick

Graduate

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In this weeks Graduate information section, we looked at ACT Banking systems. They are one of the world's leading suppliers of wholesale and retail banking software solutions. Their flagship products, **Bankmaster** and **Branchpower**, are established as the leading "open systems" software solution in the banking industry. Founded in Dublin in 1979, ACT Banking Systems employs 350 staff in Dublin, London, Bahrain and Singapore. They have become a thriving and profitable company with an international reputation. Their software products are licenced in 700 locations spanning 70 countries. Average growth over the last five years has exceeded 30% per annum. Their products are developed for UNIX and PC local area network environments using both traditional and relational data management systems. This technology has allowed the company to constantly enhance its product range and consolidate its position as a leading developer of Banking Software.

ACT Banking Systems is a division of ACT Group Plc, one of the world's leading Financial Software companies. Employing 1,700 people in the Financial Services sector, the Company's annual sales exceed STG£150m. ACT Banking Systems were awarded ISO 9000 certification in 1994. In their Dublin office all research and product development is carried out.

The graduates that ACT Banking Systems have recruited have played a significant part in the company's growth and success. The Company has been recruiting Irish Graduates since the mid-80's from Ireland's colleges for positions in sales consultancy, customer service training and product

Development. Graduates benefit from the companies structured training programmes on the Banking, technology and ACT Banking systems product range. Opportunities exist for graduates to undertake a variety of challenging careers opportunities within and across the different functional divisions of the company.

Graduates are recruited from a number of faculties. They recruit Accounting/Finance graduates from Business, Electronic graduates from Engineering, Computer Systems and Applied Maths from science Department. The Graduate recruitment process involves a presentation, First round and second round interview. The interview process involves a one on one interview and a panel interview. ACT Banking Systems are most interested in recruiting Graduates and Postgraduates. They look for individuals with energy and enthusiasm, an interest in foreign Travel, Initiative, aptitude for a career in Banking Software and Good communication skills.

Vanancies will be advertised through the careers service each Autumn.

Applications by C.V to your Careers Service or Directly to the Personnel Manager.

The AGCSI i.e. The Association of Graduate Careers Service in Ireland have produced a series of careers information booklets which have been written by Career advisors from Irish Universities. It is intended for Irish students to inform them of career options in Ireland after graduation. It is available in our Careers Office

1. Graduate Careers in Teaching and Education.

This booklet offers an overview of the teaching and education system in Ireland and the potential area for graduate Careers therein. It

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Grad Info

Graduate Information

THIS IS NOT A RECRUITMENT ARTICLE

BY CAITRIONA FOLEY & P.F

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gives a brief description of the educational structures existing and the qualifications required for teaching and vocational posts in the teaching profession.

The main teaching courses are outlined and the respective colleges are dealt with. A summary is also given on application for Teaching practice hours, National training, Montessori, career guidance, special education for children with specific needs and third level education. It also provides a summary of specialised areas in teaching.

2. Graduate careers in Radio and Television in Ireland

This booklet generally concentrates on the media prospects available from R.T.E. It gives a brief summary description on a list of jobs and training programs available to applicants, these include Television Producer/Director, Radio Production, Broadcasting Trainee, Camerapersons, Newsroom Operatives, Information Technology Post, Sports Commentators, Researching, Advertising and Media Services. This booklet also gives a detailed breakdown of employment in the broadcasting field in Ireland. A comprehensive set of addresses are also given for independent T.V., radio and production companies in Ireland And Northern Ireland.

3. Graduate careers in Computing and Information Technology.

This publication deals with the relatively new industry of Computing and Information Technology in Ireland. A breakdown

of careers as system analysts, programmers, data processing managers, consultants, education

and training and other operatives is provided.

A wide range of employers in the field are identified. These range from manufacturers to software houses. A description of current trends in the market, women and computing and further courses which are studied are also given.

4. Graduate Careers in Social Work

This covers the nature of social work in Ireland. It examines job opportunities in covering medical social work, Psychiatric, housing, welfare, probation and welfare officers and employment by voluntary agencies. The distribution of the profession, careers prospects and finding a job are also dealt with as well as a graduate profile of a social worker involved with mentally handicapped children in St. Michaels.

5. Graduate Careers in Accountancy

This booklet attempts to give an introduction to the field of Accountancy in Ireland. A

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Tues 22 Nov	6.3
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summary of entry requirements, career trends and graduate programmes in accounting. The salaries and fringe benefits which can be enjoyed by this profession are also documented. The individual accountancy bodies are briefly described and the training, examinations and exemptions available from certain courses. These are; The Institute of Chartered Accountants, The Chartered Association of Certified Accountants. (ACCA), The Chartered Institute of Management Accountants etc....

In addition a list of useful references and addresses are also provided.

6. Creating your Future with Arts.

The issues concerning Arts graduates and the employment trends are described in this booklet. The major career areas of Arts graduates are given. These include teaching, public service, the media, arts and cultural occupations to name but a few. A detailed breakdown of Arts and Social Sciences along with a list of useful references.

Career Notice Board

Tues 22 Nov	6.30	Bank of Ireland
Wed 23rd	2.50	Northern Telecom
Thurs 1st Dec	6.30	Pepsi Cola
Mon 5th Dec	6.30	Act Banking Systems
Tues 6th Dec	6.30	Anderson Consulting

Poetry

Must she wear a mask
to climb a spiral staircase?
With outstretched hands
she will find the way,
but cannot the truth
be her guide?
Golden clouds are her sandals
and dawn a treasured cloak.
But must she be capped by silence
on such a sunlit road?
Indeed she has hated habits
but don't we all?
Will we not be supported
by madman's mistakes,
for do not our sins
make us who we are?
Heaven be my haven,
but only if I can resist?
My sister died no angel
but she is good.
She did not whisper truths
whilst shouting lies.
No, her saviour is her honesty,
and that saint shall find a place.

Frost gathers on the steps
form my mind.
The path to your heart is cold
and I feel I shall slide
down hill of hope.
The starlight expresses
an S.O.S.
Calling to you to help me
climb the slope
into your poetry.

Mirror me
and capture my spirit.
Orbit, be the path
and end the infinite scream.
Oh moon, be my satellite-
Shine, but do not show my hatred.
Do not reveal that I am a wicked tormentor
of the self.
Cradle my soul in outstretched wings,
for I am a tainted angel.

O. Farrell

Clubs &

ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIETY

What Goes Around Comes Around

'We are accelerating our own demise' - this is the simple message that Maria Teresa Perez Martin presented to us on Tuesday night week 7. As a graduate of Environmental Law from the University of Strasbourg, Maria Teresa gave us a talk on 'Environmental Concerns and Regional Development', in association with The Environmental Society.

The talk outlined how humans are directly and indirectly killing themselves by 'poisoning the planet'. This is 'achieved' through negligence and plain ignorance.

An example of this can be seen by the everyday use of cars. The exhaust emissions of vehicles contain green house gases which in turn are responsible for global warming. This is resulting in significant climate changes which are endangering our delicate eco-system. We depend on the

eco-system. It is a vicious circle of which we are both the offender and victim. Does this not go against our basic instinct for survival?

In 1972 the International community came together in Stockholm, and for the first time

recognised the protection of the environment as a common interest. This was the foundation upon which later Environmental conferences were built.

In 1985 The Vienna Conference for the protection of the Ozone Layer prohibited the use of CFC's in aerosols.

Last year at The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the delegation established guidelines of what must be done concerning environmental issues on a global level. Practical means of achieving these goals were proposed by applying clean technologies to industry (eg. increasing utilisation of renewable energy sources, like solar energy). The summit dealt with individual countries, so as to tailor their guidelines to varying circumstances.

Although there have been great advances in environmental protection in the last decade, it is incomparable to the 200 years of mercenary plundering prompted by the industrial revolution.

We've had our fun and now it's **clean-up time.**

by Nancy Serrano &
Wallace, Enviro. Soc.

Board

Malicious Postering

In recent weeks a number of posters have gone up attacking the university, officers of the Students' Union and far more seriously members of faculty. While the first two are legitimate targets, the personalised attacks on lecturers, in one case highly vicious and libelous, is totally out of line. Those responsible for the posters have been very secretive about their identity. Yet, the activities of the student or students involved have been seriously damaging to the rest of the student body on two counts.

Firstly by illegally using the Students' Union stamp they have given the impression that such activity is condoned by the Students' Union. That in itself does the regard in which we are held a huge amount of damage. Much tighter control is now being exercised over the stamp but even that will not counter the damage done by similar, unstamped posters. Acting in such a malicious and illegal manner sends off all the wrong signals about students and damages the relationships between students and faculty.

The message has already gone out that the Students' Union has no sympathy for those responsible. If any similar attack on a faculty member occurs again then it will be the S.U. that will lead the call for punishing those guilty.