

STUDENTS' UNION



an Focal

University of Limerick Students' Union

THE DACHAU OF DUBLIN: UCD IS IRELAND'S FIRST RIOT PROOF CAMPUS

"IT MUST BE A MISTAKE!" SAYS PRESS OFFICE

By Eoghan O'Meara

U.C.D. authorities and R.T.E. have rushed to cover up an amazing cock-up which has left both parties with egg on their faces. The current series of ads for Campus Classics, which are running in O'Reilly Hall, Belfield, depict the campus of the University of Limerick. Both parties have rushed to deny that this is a slight on the appearance of the U.C.D. university campus.

Ruth Gallagher, of the

reflect that the concert series would be touring around the universities. However, this is not mentioned in the ad. When I put it to her that it would have made more sense to show some footage which U.C.D. students could identify with, she assured me that footage of U.C.D. had been used in the "earlier ad". The U.C.D. press office have no knowledge of this.

The normally vociferous U.C.D. Students' Union have

been noticeably quiet so far. Members of the union refused to comment, referring me to their President, Loughlin Deegan. Leading by admirable example, the afore-mentioned Mr. Deegan had not yet arrived at work at 11.30 a.m..

In a separate development, well known campus speaker and former presidential candidate, described the U.C.D. campus as being similar in design to "a Polish town". Notwithstanding the many

merits of Poland, this does not seem to have been intended to be a complimentary remark. Other people have described it as a modern day Dachau.

A snap survey of 50 U.L. students showed that an overwhelming majority of them felt that the Students' Union should demand an apology for this sorry debacle.

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Week 1
Semester 2 '96

Law
Exemptions

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Artsing
About

Accommodation
Special

Seamus
Heaney

By Eoghan
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Ruth Gallagher, of the U.C.D. Press Office, denied that a decision had been taken to deliberately avoid using footage of the U.C.D. campus. "R.T.E. are responsible for designing the ads, and I remember thinking to myself 'Oh god, what are they doing?' when I first saw the ads. I presume it was just a genuine mistake on their behalf." Furthermore, she denied that the Arts building was modelled on a French riot-proof design which was created at the time of student riots in France. She brushed this off as being a "modern folk myth".

However, when contacted, R.T.E. said the footage was chosen to emphasise that the concerts had moved "into" the campus. Claire Meehan, of R.T.E.'s music department said the ads were meant to

reflect that the concert would be touring around universities. However, not mentioned in the When I put it to her, she would have made more to show some footage U.C.D. students could with, she assured me footage of U.C.D. has used in the "earlier a U.C.D. press office knowledge of this.

The normally vocal U.C.D. Students' Union



REPEATS POLICY FORMALISED

by Duncan O'Toole

During the break when you were all re establishing your relationship with your respective GODS, (be it the conventional Catholic God, Budda, Krishna or Arthur G.) in the hope that they could have some influence on the grading of your exams something quite significant was happening in U.L. The final report of Academic Regulations was completed. The Regulations committee which consisted of the Deputy Registrar, deans or assistant Deans of each faculty, Student Services Officer, Student Counsellor and two S.U. representatives had agreed on a

policy of repeats. The policy agreed after much consultation and debate went to Academic Council on January 24th. At this meeting two points of the policy were rejected and returned for reconsideration to the regulations committee. Changes were made and on a special meeting of Academic Council on February 1st, the proposed policy was accepted, eventually after months of work Students have a fair repeats exam policy.

This marked the end of a long campaign from the Students' Union. The campaign for repeats involved a lot of commitment and hard work from the Students' Union but most of all support and

help from the students themselves. From the first General meeting through the referendum to another general meeting the support of students was the principle force on the momentum of

the campaign. For all those who helped, thanks very much. So what's the story with repeats as it stands now, well the main points for all you people out there who aren't too sure about the ole

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ULSU RAG WEEK '96

Week Nine is the date set for this years Rag Week, already plans have been put in place. New ideas for this year is to increase the Rag site by roughly a third more than years before and have a few pre Rag Week publicity stunts around the country in the lead up to the major event itself. The S.U. is still looking

for more ideas from individuals, classes, clubs and societies to make this Rag Week bigger and better than before. News on this years sponsor, the Rag Site and Pre week Publicity stunts will be available in next weeks An Focal.



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One noticeably irate student remarked:

"I'm disgusted. I feel betrayed by

the college authorities. How could they degrade my degree in such a way (by associating U.L. with the U.C.D. campus)."

Another student said that it was a

"hilarious state of affairs. It shows that U.C.D. are ashamed of their campus, and that they respect U.L. students."

Supreme Court Rejects Students' Union Case For Law Exemptions

During the holidays, there was another turn of affairs in the ongoing crisis for Law undergraduates in U.L. The Students' Union in U.L. formed an alliance with the Students' Unions in UCC, UCG and UCD. Trinity did not join the alliance - reasons for this is unknown however when the Trinity Students' Union Education Officer was approached on the subject he claimed it was not his brief. As a result of on going meetings before and during the holidays it was decided to raise money to take a supreme court action in the Appeal

against the decision which led to Law Undergraduates loosing their entrance exam exemptions. The appeal was been led by Queens University who were initially appealing on substantive issues and costs. Queens University it emerged at the last minute decided against appealing on the substantive issues. Whether this was a last minute decision or not is unknown as up to a few days before they had assured the Students' Union alliance that they intended appealing the substantive issues as well as costs. The Students'

Unions where represented by senior counsel on the day and had their application for leave to appeal turned down. The situation now seems that to appeal the decision will involve high court action which will prove costly. The University authorities here have already given a substantial financial commitment to back the S.U. in this case. A meeting is planned this week with the Students' Unions concerned. A decision as to what the next step will be, will be made at this meeting.

future after Monday - Tuesday (depending were you joined the queue!) are listed below: **Contd ... Page 1**

1. Repeat Exams for every year at the end of the summer
2. Some exams will be non-repeatable because their make up is such that a repeat exam can not be given e.g. compulsory safety requirements in some Labs based subjects may be impossible to assess in a repeat exam. N.B. These subjects will be in purely exceptional cases and will have to be listed in week one of the term if they have been deemed to be non-repeatable.
3. The maximum number of exams that can be repeated is four in a full academic year and two in a one semester academic year.
4. Repeat exams will be capped at a C.
5. No student may progress to another year if their QCA is less than two and/or they have an F.
6. If a person fails to progress in a year after availing of repeats or, if they did so badly that they could not avail of repeats, they will either have to, repeat the year or part of it (i.e. a few subjects or a term) or, they could be "terminated". No "terminated" doesn't mean shot dead it means kicked out, this will usually apply if some one has already repeated the year on one or more occasions. This decision will be made by exam boards after looking at each individual case.
7. Honours degrees will be awarded to students who finished the second part of their degree course (the part where their degree QCA starts) without repeating more than one year.
8. Every student can repeat exams except final year students who are already on a QCA that will enable them to graduate.
9. In the case were a student repeats an exam the higher of the two grades (the original and the repeat grade) will be awarded.

These are just the main points, however there are more ofcourse! If you have any queries please pop down to the Students' Union.

THE UNION - CONTINUITY & CHANGE?

By Andy Sherriff

El Presidenté Synnott recently declared an interest in formulating a five year plan for the Union. Stalinist presumptions may send many running for cover from the 'inevitable' tyranny and waste from such proposals, however, those doubters would do well to consider it more fully. The basic idea of a plan is a good one, plain and simple as that. "The problems with the Union and Students' Union in general is the total lack of any plan at all" - short-term plans are often based on unrealistic promises made in the heat, subterfuge and general melee called sabbatical elections. These short term 'plans', promises and pontifications are often usurped some time soon after the sabbaticals take up office, as the crushing reality, weight and shear effort of running the Union from day to day sweeps through them and their psyche. Just as sabbaticals get their handle on the job, presuming they haven't been institutionalised through physical and mental stress, they move on. While the Union is not a corporation or political party, this transience is like a company that changes its top management every year, or a party that clears out its executive after 12 months. "Continuity is lost, medium term and long term direction and goals remain a west dream of the Union manager".

Now I am not for a minute calling for longer sabbatical terms, one of the strengths of the Union is the fact that sabbaticals cannot stand for more than two years. However, some guiding plan formulated with wide consultation and sound business sense would make for a more effective Union. This plan could guard against certain aspects of

short-termism that have typified Union activity and sabbatical decision in the past. Some might say that the Union already has a guiding document that can be consulted for not all true and world knowledge on how to proceed - the Constitution. While this is a worthy document, it does not have goal based specific analysis, or dare I say it 'vision', for the future. While no sabbatical or executive is ever going to be prepared for the murky 'good ideas' or 'god' ideas that spew themselves onto the agenda from the University or elsewhere, an over-arching strategic plan would provide for the basics.

The formulations of plans ask important questions; such as, where are we now?, and where would we like to go? The Union has to ask the first question, before it can look to the future? However, that does not mean that proposals for the future cannot be entertained, or for that matter be entertaining. The student body as a whole should be actively encouraged to input, and not just those first years who will be around in three years time to hopefully sample the fruits.

In terms of proposals, I myself would start with creating another sabbatical as soon as funds permit. The sabbats this year look as if they've been guests of the South African Federal Police (circa 1978) sleep deprivation torture division. Seldom does a day go by when I don't look at either Brian, Lorna or Duncan and think, "can anyone look that tired for a whole year and live", in fact they've probably had less sleep this year than in the whole of their undergraduate careers! The new sabbatical would be created by splitting the remit of the Education and Communications Officer to an

Education Officer and Communications Officer. This wouldn't mean just more sleep for Duncan and his successors; as various duties, such as attending meetings, would be redistributed throughout the sabbaticals. I would also make Education Officer Deputy President as most of the issues relating to deputising are education related. Another way of doing it, which is really just playing with semantics would be to create; Vice-President: Welfare, Vice-President: Education, Vice-President: Communications.

In terms of personnel I wouldn't stop there either. "A full time President of postgraduate Students Association is another real necessity". There are a whole raft of issues relating to postgraduates that the union cannot handle alone. Many other universities around the globe have full time postgraduate officers, and it is already a significant need in UL. Extending on into the realms of fantasy, Research Officers would be nice. Research Officers are common in most UK unions. Their job is to research information for Sabbaticals and to brief them before meetings. They provide continuity, insight and specialist knowledge of Union, education and welfare issues, which would help the sabbaticals be more effective - rather than the haphazard 'learning on the job' that occurs now. Sabbaticals don't have the time to be experts in 'Access Policies', 'Library Funding', 'Grant System', and 'Methods of Student Progression' all in one morning! Oh yes, a new Student Complex with Club, Multiscreen Cinema, Committee Rooms, 250 Seater State of the Art Theatre, and Four Pubs would be nice, but I'll settle for the staff.....

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FAREWELL DEAR CLAIRE

Known to most students as friendly and efficient face of SU Graphics, Claire Collins has not just been a great and innovative employee but a poet, a person and a friend. Propping up the Student's Union services for three years, Claire has typed, transcribed, talked, and trailed her blonde tresses through the SU, and has generally been an absolute trooper! An Focal would have been barer (and less steamier!) without her creative contributions. Cel, we salute you! In short, we'll miss her poetry, her personality, and her friendship.

*Dearest Cel
Fare thee well
What can we say
Your off to Galway
Ah.'gis a bell!*

"Times" hat-trick as McElligott finally makes Final

For the third year in a row, UL Debating Union has a representative in the Irish Times Final. John McElligott, at the fourth attempt, broke the semi-final ceiling that had dogged him with a superb closing speech at Waterford RTC, which no doubt Christina Murphy recalled when describing "UL's fine Debating Union" in the following week's Education and Living. His partner, Mark Dowling, offered the pathetic excuse that he had "sacrificed himself" but was consoled by UL being named as runner-up team in the round to UCG, who have two teams and an individual. Padraic O'Halloran and Seamus Doran, despite two excellent performances in UCC were denied by Paul McDermott and Helen Boyle of King's Inns, and James McDermott of UCD, all three of which had made the last 32 teams at Worlds, so no shame there. Brian O'Farrell's attempt for a second appearance in the final hit the buffers in Trinity.

The most important event of the close season was Worlds. The final results have yet to be published, with McElligott and Dowling falling just short of the knock-out rounds with 27 points and 33rd place, but Flynn and O'Halloran must wait for the final results as one of their results was not counted in the preliminary scores. It was a

well-attended Worlds, 247 teams entering, and only UCD and King's Inns scored higher than UL with one team each in the octo-finals. While there were problems with rounds beginning late, UCC coped with an influx of about 700 speakers and judges, and 50 rooms being used for debates. The next Worlds will be at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa, and the 1998 Worlds has been awarded provisionally to Deree College in Greece.

Among the other competitions we entered was the Observer Mace, where Brian O'Farrell stepped in for an unavailable John McElligott, but this was not enough to stop himself and Mark Dowling losing out to TCD in the Irish semi-final. The Irish Mace winners were UCG, who go on to the International Final. New faces for the external circuit were Michael Hourigan and Treasa O'Shaughnessy, who acquitted themselves well in the tough "Hibernian Challenge" at TCD, UCG and UCC over four days. They had a sharp learning curve, meeting both Glasgow teams on the first day, including Derek Sloane and Nick McGrath, 5th team at the Worlds, who cleaned up in the Overall and won the TCD and UCG rounds as well as Allison Bell from Edinburgh who was

8th best individual at Worlds. Competing with them were Keith Pigott and Mark Dowling who despite coming close in most debates, were denied a finals place by Glasgow A in all three days.

It is good to see first-years on the circuit and hopefully it will be a good jump-off point for speaker development. Members should be aware that there are more intervarsities coming up in second term in Dublin, Maynooth and Waterford among others, so get along to meetings to find out how you can sign up. It is likely that some intervarsity places will be reserved for first years, as happened in the Hibernian.

This week sees our first debate. Sponsorship has been agreed with Utopia, Limerick Aids Alliance and others so there should be plenty of freebies. The motion is "This House believes in love at first night". The night starts at 7.30 with elections and reports on the previous term but this should be over by about 8pm so we would ask members to try and attend at 7.30 as we have a lot to tell you about. A report on next term will appear in next week's An Focal, with a run-down on next term's activities, for instance a 24 hour debate for Rag Week, a Parliamentary Debate and a debate for Science Week.