

An Focal

In Focus: Paying
the Price of
Education:
Third Level Fees p.14



Sport: Viking Retain National
Title: V is For Victory p.23

9 September 2008
Tuesday

Official Paper of the University of Limerick Students' Union

Volume XVII Issue 1
FREE



Student representatives at the Department of Education last month

NO TO FEES

Aoife Breen - Editor

Students' Union President Pa O'Brien has vowed that UL students "will not be silenced" on the issue of reintroducing third level fees that Minister for Education Batt O'Keeffe refuses to strike off the agenda as a solution to the funding crisis in third level education.

In an announcement to all students at the University, Mr O'Brien declared that Limerick students would unite to protest against the reintroduction of fees with a demonstration in Limerick city on Tuesday, 23 September.

"It's time we got out and showed the people of Limerick that students are a force. It's time we showed the politicians that we will not be silenced. But most of all, it's time we achieved justice for not only ourselves but for the students that follow us as well"

Speaking at the Orientation sessions for new students at the University, the SU President warned incoming freshers that the Minister's review will be done in 18 months and the outcome will "affect each and every one of you next year".

"We are looking at a situation where every student will have to pay at least €6,000 a year on tuition fees as well as accommodation and general living expenses.

"We want a society where education is a right for all citizens regardless of their income status. We want a society where education is provided in an equal and unprejudiced manner.

"It is the right of every student

who comes to college to protest. It just so happens that we are here at the right time to make a real difference on a real issue."

UL students will join with students from Mary Immaculate College, Limerick IT and Limerick School of Art and Design in two weeks to demonstrate "in a show of strength to send the loudest message to Minister O'Keeffe".

Limerick's students will congregate in the city centre to show their refusal to accept tuition fees as an appropriate solution to the funding crisis in third level education sector.

The demonstration will be followed by a post-protest party with acts to be confirmed. O'Brien commented that, "It's going to be a great evening followed by a great night. There's nothing like a post-protest party to get the blood flowing!"

At present, the state foots the annual €332 million bill in tuition fees under the Free Fees Initiative that was introduced in the 1995/96 academic year.

This represents just under 17 per cent of the €2 billion spent on third level education each year, a figure which is also set to decrease in the next budget and send third level institutes into further funding crises.

University head Professor Don Barry did not rule out fees as a possible solution to this crisis stating that, "Student fees continue to exist - as anybody unfortunate enough to have to repeat a year of their programme knows only too well.

"I believe that it is a matter for Government to decide on whose behalf the State can afford to pay university fees. We cannot dictate how the State sources funding for the vital role played by Irish universities."

However, Professor Barry reassured students that the University will aim to minimise the effects of the proposed cutbacks and will continue to argue for increased funding.

"We will, however, continue to make the case for funding that is appropriate if we are to deliver on the ambitious goals set by ourselves and expected of us by Government and the Irish people, so that we can sustain and develop our society and our prosperity into the future.

Following the local demonstration at the end of September, the Limerick institutions will join with other colleges from across Munster to step up the protest to a provincial level.

Students from the four Limerick colleges will join with Tipperary IT, Tralee IT, Waterford IT, Cork IT and UCC on Thursday 9 October to participate in a provincial demonstration in Cork against the reintroduction of fees. Students will march from the UCC campus to Cork city centre in a large-scale protest against fees.

The Minister for Education shocked students over the summer when he surfaced the possibility that fees would be brought back as potential way of addressing the funding problem.

Mr O'Brien reassured students that, "we will not stand back until fees are ruled out completely".

Green Light for campus President's Residence

Aoife Breen - Editor

University of Limerick presidents will be accommodated on the north campus following the successful application for planning permission to build a 457 metre-squared residence on the banks of the Shannon on the Clare-side of the University.

Clare County Council has granted permission for the construction of "a three storey dwelling house and associated ancillary works including a proprietary waste water treatment unit and associated percolation, driveway connecting to the existing Campus spine road and external

domestic store".

University head Professor Don Barry will be the first President to reside on campus in a specially-built residence that will include accommodation and facilities to support the public function of the office as well as accommodation for visitors to the campus, guest accommodation, a reception, and meeting space. The dining area of the house will seat up to 26 guests.

Figures have yet to be released regarding the estimated cost of the

project, although the University has stated that it will be built at no cost to the institution.

Pa O'Brien, Students' Union President, commented that "it is important to recognise that the construction of a President's residence on the University campus will require substantial funding. We would urge the University to comment on how much this will cost, particularly during this time of financial restraint".

A University spokesperson commented that, "As part of the role

of head of the University the President is regularly involved in meeting and receiving academic, industrial, Governmental and community leaders from both Ireland and abroad.

"This proposed new addition to the campus infrastructure will allow for a range of social and business functions to take place directly on Ireland's most beautiful campus at UL."

Mr O'Brien welcomed the development and "hope[s] that it emphasises a commitment from the

University to improving the overall campus experience which Professor Barry has consistently highlighted as one of his priorities for his term in office".

In a separate application, a one-storey private residence currently located on the site earmarked for the President's new home will have to be demolished. Planning permission for this demolition has already been granted.

The president's residence will consolidate further the University's presence on the north campus.

An Focal Digest

In Brief

SU condemns job cutbacks

A number of students were left without jobs in June after being let go by Plassey Campus Centre, the accommodation section of the University. Ten students were recruited to work in Cappavilla student village for the summer but their hours were substantially cut back having initially been promised full-time work. The University's staff trade union, UNITE, came out in support of the Students' Union's condemnation of PCC and demands for a resolution.

After negotiations, all students were accommodated on campus and were allocated an acceptable number of hours.

Sabbatical officers pass on the baton

At the official handover ceremony on 19 June, the sabbatical officers from 2007/08 passed on the baton to the new incoming team.

Former SU President St John Ó Donnabháin wished his successor, Pa O'Brien and his team best wishes for their term of office during 2008/09.

Mr O'Brien paid a tribute to the former officer and outlined what he hopes for the five officers over the coming year.

The HPSS graduate will lead Cairiona McGrattan (DP/Welfare Officer), Shane O'Callaghan (VP/Education Officer), Damien Cahill (VP/Campaigns & Services Officer) and Aoife Breen (VP/Publications & Publicity Officer) for the coming year.

Their positions will become vacant on the 30 June 2009 following the election of new officers next year.

New addition to SU Accounts

Sheila O'Driscoll joined the Accounts department of the Students' Union over the summer to replace Lorraine Barrett.

Ms Barrett worked with the SU for three years and has relocated to Dublin with a new job.

The Students' Union issued their thanks to Ms Barrett for her work and wished Ms O'Driscoll the best of luck for her employment at ULSU.



Sheila O'Driscoll joined the team

Sabbatical officers attend USI seminar

Students' Union officers attended the annual Union Organisational Seminar co-ordinated by the Union of Students in Ireland again this July.

Hosted by Athlone IT, three officers attended the full week of talks while the two remaining officers and the Postgraduate Students' Association President joined with them towards the latter end of the week.

Although ULSU has not been affiliated with USI since 1991, this is the third year in a row that sabbatical officers have attended the national weeklong training seminar. Officers have stated that the seminar assists them in networking with other student representatives and unions from across the country.

Red Cross Youths take over UL

Young Red Cross members from 16 national societies descended upon the University at the start of August for the International Youth Camp held in Limerick from the 9 until 17 August.

Under the theme of "Youth – are we the new frontier of the Federation?" participants were given the opportunity to engage in discussions about the International Federation of the Red Cross, the youth commission and the work being carried out by youth members across the globe. The members also took part in workshops debating the current issues and challenges for the Red Cross.

The camp also went on a trip to the UL Activity Centre in Killaloe and did other fun challenges including "Exploring Limerick".

During the closing ceremony, youth members presented their "10 Point Plan" on how to attract new young members, how to promote equality in the Red Cross and how to teach the seven fundamental principles to Red Cross Youth Members.

UL Graduation Ball

Over 1200 graduates attended the annual ULSU Graduation Ball in the South Court Hotel, Raheen on Friday, 29 August.

With their handbags and glad rags in a wide range of colours, the class of 2008 enjoyed their final student event at the Limerick hotel.

The black-tie ball is one of the most popular events every year giving final year students a last chance to bid farewell to their student lives before heading off into the world of employment.



Former SU President St. John Ó Donnabháin with the new President Pa O'Brien

In Words

This is a great result for the Irish women as Slovenia would be considered one of the power houses of Women's European Basketball.

Noreen O'Connell, UL Sports Department, on the victory of the Irish Senior Women's basketball team who overcame Slovenia 67-59 during a European qualifier at the Arena.

I feel it is essential to undertake a speedy review of the €2 billion in annual support the Government provides so that what is a very real funding shortfall can be identified and addressed as a matter of national priority.

UL Chancellor Peter Malone in his address to the graduating classes of 2008 outlines his grievances about the funding crisis in Irish third level education.

M.U.F.F. - Munster United Fighting Fees

The unofficial acronym used by the nine provincial institutions that have joined forces to resist the reintroduction of tuition fees at third level. The more official collective name is Munster Students Against Fees. It doesn't really have the same ring to it, though, does it?

[It] would be [the] largest society on campus. Imagine the C&S promo to freshers - no more kayakers, that's for sure.

Clubs & Societies Development Officer Paul Lee on the potential of a porn society at UL following the discovery of an outdated Cumann Gaelach link on the SU forum which now redirects to a porn site. (Before you look for it, it has been removed.)

Am I the only one who doesn't give a flying monkey about this manky cat?

An SU staff member on a barrage of emails to the Opinions mailing list regarding a cat that was found on the campus and subsequently managed to raise €400 for Limerick Animal Welfare from University staff members.



Fred played a free gig in the Stables during Orientation Week

In Figures

Free

The cost of tickets for orientation week gigs this year.

17

This year's volume of An Focal; yes, folks, it's been in print since 1992.

457m2

The size that the new President's residence on the north campus will be on completion.

€972

The registration fee required to attend UL this year.

2326

The number of graduates who received awards from UL this year.

€3420

The absolute maximum maintenance grant that a student can receive and a rate which is fixed until at least January 2009.

5000

The print run of the Students' Union wall planner this year. Have you got one yet?

Students Advised of Local Crime

An Focal Reporter

Students' Union President Pa O'Brien has advised students to take extra care of themselves and their personal property following an increase in crime in the area over recent months.

A number of break-ins and robberies have taken place in the locality during the past few weeks and the Students' Union is alerting students to take precautions, particularly at the start of the new academic year.

"It is a growing problem in the area. We don't want to alarm students

but we just want them to be aware. I would encourage students to ring the Gardaí if they see something unusual. Walk in pairs at night time and make sure to lock your doors before heading to the Lodge or to town," Pa O'Brien commented.

Welfare Officer Caitriona McGrattan advised students of the need to mind their valuables.

"The Students' Union recommends that all students take extra precautions in light of the recent rise in crime in the Castletroy area.

"For example do not leave

valuables in view; make sure all doors and windows are securely locked when going to bed or leaving your house, especially at the weekends"

Ms McGrattan also advised students to take out contents' insurance on their personal belongings as landlords are obliged only to take out buildings' insurance.

Student safety is a priority issue for the Students' Union this year. Safety cards with key phone numbers are being distributed from the

Students' Union in partnership with their safe-cab company, Plassey Cabs.

The Welfare Officer commented that if a student is confronted by an assailant, he or she should not attempt to take them on for fear that they may be carrying a weapon.

She advised students that should they be the victim of an attack or an attempted attack they should report the incident to herself or to the Gardaí.

"There is a wealth of support available in the University for those

affected by crime; both the medical centre and the counselling services offer facilities for students".

Students are advised to contact campus security on 061-202249 or the Gardaí in Henry Street on 061-414222 should an issue arise. For more information on the new safe-cab initiative, please call into the Students' Union. Students can register their details with the SU to ensure that they can be assured of having a safe way home.

Highly Sought-after UL Graduates Start on €28,000



Aoife Breen - Editor

"Major graduate employers deliberately target UL graduates because of their combination of intellectual abilities, personal qualities and relevant work experience," Professor Don Barry told the class of 2008 during the graduation ceremonies held in the University Concert Hall from Tuesday, 26 August until Friday, 29 August.

The University head said that, "Demand for UL graduates is at its highest in a number of years, with 74 per cent entering direct employment within a few months of graduation."

Professor Barry shared with the

attendees the positive statistics of a recent survey carried out on those who completed their full-time courses at UL last year.

UL graduates can expect to earn an average starting salary of €28,000 with more than a fifth of last year's class earning in excess of €33,000.

Over 2300 students completed the final stage of their UL careers during the last week of August when they received their awards from the University during the annual summer graduations.

Beginning with Business Studies class on Tuesday, 26 August, Professor Barry shook the hands of 2326 graduates over the course of eight conferring ceremonies in the

University Concert Hall.

Included in this number are 36 PhDs which were also awarded during the week.

Chancellor Peter Malone applauded Minister for Education, Batt O'Keeffe, to have taken the initiative to review the higher education sector but urged that it be completed in a shorter time period than the 18 months which has been proposed.

He commented on the serious funding crisis currently plaguing third level education in Ireland.

"There is a serious funding crisis at third level due to under-investment in recent times and world-class teaching and research standards cannot be attained unless additional

State financing is provided. I believe the universities give an excellent return on investment to the exchequer and I feel it is essential to undertake a speedy review of the €2 billion in annual support the Government provides so that what is a very real funding shortfall can be identified and addressed as a matter of national priority."

The Chancellor concluded his conferring address by advising graduates to "make the most of your talents and the knowledge you have gained here at UL. If you have a dream, go for it... if you use all the great learning, skills and experience you have received here in UL you will progress, prosper and succeed".

'Inadequate' Funding For University Sector - Barry

Aoife Breen - Editor

University head Professor Don Barry has claimed that the funding base received by Irish third level institutes is "inadequate".

"The financing of Higher Education has been the subject of much comment and debate in recent weeks. I agree fully with the widely-held view that the funding base for universities in Ireland is inadequate.

"We simply do not receive sufficient Government support to allow us to provide students with all the learning and research experiences, programmes, infrastructure and services that we

want to".

The President warned that these cutbacks signal a "difficult phase in the development of UL" which will undoubtedly have negative effects on students.

Professor Barry said, "It will be difficult to improve staff-student ratios and to enhance the quality of the student experience generally in the absence of improved levels of funding".

He continued to explain that the scale of the impending cutbacks have not yet been made clear and as a result "it could get worse before it gets better".

He reassured students that he is "committed to working with [his]



University Head has criticised third level funding

colleagues to ensure that the negative impact of these cutbacks during [their] time at UL will be minimised".

Benches Gone to New Homes

An Focal Reporter

Returning students may note that the wooden benches that were in front of the Students' Union building have now been removed and relocated.

The benches, made by members of the Environmental Society last year, had to be barricaded following the advice of the Buildings & Estates

department of the University which question the safety of the natural furniture.

The benches have now been moved to new locations. One of them has found a new home in Cappavilla student village while the other has been returned to its maker.

Pa O'Brien commented that, "It was sad to say goodbye to our benches but we had no option and we didn't want to see them destroyed.

The good news is that we have re-homed them so it's all good!"



SAY IT COMMUNICATIONS

The fear that is experienced prior to an interview or speaking in public can hold people back forever.

By being prepared and learning the tools of communication, this negative energy can be utilised and turned about, leading to a positive experience

ANNE DONEGAN
Communications Coach

- INTERVIEW SKILLS
- CV PREPARATION
- PRESENTATION SKILLS
- PUBLIC SPEAKING
- ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
- UCAS PERSONAL STATEMENTS

With over 20 years of experience in this field, Anne can give you the way forward to SAY IT!

Phone: 061 396 539
Mobile: 087 64 70 827
Email: anne_donegan@eircom.net

One-to-one or group situation. Courses tailor made.

Students' Union

Our Manifesto for 2008/09

Traditionally, ULSU have posted their individual manifestos as their aims for the year.

But we feel that as a Union and an organisation, with collective responsibility to the students who elected us, that we should be judged on what the Union achieves as a whole rather than any individual within it.

With that in mind we felt it would be better to have a Union plan with specific Union goals.

We are publishing our aims for the year so that we can show you, the students, what we are working on for you and with you.

By that token we will be asked to be judged on how we work toward achieving these goals as a Union.

We obviously have detailed plans about how we are to achieve these aims (we said we wouldn't bore you with everything!).

We have been working hard since June on what we want to achieve

this year. What we do need for all this is your support, but, like, what is more gratifying than kicking the University's arse (well maybe a few things)!

So what we need are your opinions throughout the year. We want pressure; we want to be kept on our toes and to be held accountable for our work.

So if you see any of us, please do not be afraid to challenge us and to ask us what we're doing on any issue that's important to you. We may even ask you to get involved! Even if you don't have anything to complain about come see us our doors are always open (before 11pm!).

Have a good year,

Pa, Bubbles, Shane, Damo and Breenie.

ULSU Sabbatical Officers 2008/09.



Students' Union Sabbatical Officer Team 2008-09



Here are the main aims we have set ourselves for the year

1. Re-branding and re-launch of the ULSU identity
2. Promotion of student health and welfare, especially in the areas of mental and sexual health and encouraging positive ways to look after your body and mind.
3. University wide progression on environmental issues
4. The beginning of an off campus accommodation data base which rewards quality landlords and accommodation, and exposes those who wish to exploit students
5. Campus wide information screens showing you every event that's happening on campus
6. Continue on a process of inclusion for all students of UL with the provision and funding of support structures which look out for those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.
7. Improvement of Class Representatives' system which offers better training, better incentives and more worthwhile meetings that will make class reps a force in campaigning for student rights.
8. We will push the University on Civic Engagement and the recognition of credits for extra curricular activities.
9. Anonymous marking...now!
10. Education rights - making students more aware of their entitlements with regards to repeats and 1-grades.
11. Ents - We all want a really banging year of ents, so we are working hard with Eightball (our ents partners) so that you get the performance from the Union that you deserve.
12. The official opening of the UL boathouse will happen this year
13. We will work to get UL back on FM radio for the whole semester and academic year - not just streaming during Rag Week.
14. Extended Nightlink routes which will take in Annacotty and Rhehogue
15. Campaigns - This year we intend to meet the challenge of fees head on. We cannot guarantee anything but the fact is we will not be quiet and we will not take a step back in our fight against fees. In other campaigns we will look the environment, men's health, positive mental health, sex...obviously, and how to enjoy that safely and pleasurably.
16. Financial re-integration of the Postgraduate Student Association
17. Continuation of the bike scheme
18. Reestablishment of International Society
19. Reestablishment of Mature Student Society
20. Kick the University's arse if they attempt to f**k over any student of UL. This we promise because we aren't interested in kissing arse or being quiet.

ULSU

Sabbatical Officers

Name: Pa O'Brien

Position: President

Course: History, Politics, Sociology and Social Studies graduate from Shannon.

What does he do all day? Pa is the overall voice of the students on campus! This means that if there's something bugging you stop him when you see him (he's very tall) and make sure you tell him. He represents you on a lot (and we mean a lot) of university committees and will do his best to make sure that the university gets a kick when it needs it. Contact: 086 043 5300 or president@ulsu.ie

Name: Caitriona McGrattan

Position: Deputy President/Welfare Officer

Course: History, Politics, Sociology and Social Studies graduate from Dublin.

What does she do all day? Caitriona (aka Bubbles) is here to give you advice if and when you need it. If you've a problem with your landlord or you're finding it hard to settle into college life or you just need a goddamn condom, call into her office. Everything is free (yes, even the condoms).

Contact: 086 043 5301 or welfare@ulsu.ie

Name: Shane O'Callaghan

Position: Education Officer

Course: on a sabbatical year from Business Studies; from Limerick city.



What does he do all day? When you're being screwed over by a lecturer who won't give you a module outline or keeps springing surprise exams on you, call into Shane. He'll sort them out. If you need more information about anything to do with your education drop into Shane. He also oversees class reps...they're the cool dudes who represent their classes and get lots of perks in return. Get a form in the SU! Contact: 086 043 5302 or education@ulsu.ie

Name: Damien Cahill

Position: Campaigns & Services Officer

Course: Business with French graduate from Co Limerick

What does he do all day? When he's done marvelling at his beauty, Damo works with our ents partners, Eightball, to bring you the la crème de la crème of bands, comedians, hypnotists, bouncing castles, marquees and all the rest to keep you busy during those rare moments that you're not studying. Ahem. He also looks after things like the free Nitelink bus shuttle service and the SU shop. Contact: 086 043 5303 or services@ulsu.ie

Name: Aoife Breen

Position: Publications & Publicity Officer

Course: History, Politics, Sociology and Social Studies graduate from Limerick city.

What does she do all day? Well, she could say that she does anything really, because she's the lady in control of the SU media! As the editor of this magnificent fortnightly student newspaper and the monthly magazine Pulse (this month's issue is yellow – have you picked one up yet?), she tries to ensure that you know what's going on around the campus.

Contact: 086 043 5304 or editor@ulsu.ie



Carpooling initiative begins in UL

Aoife Ní Raghallaigh

A new carpooling initiative will be launched in UL this semester. The scheme, which is aimed at staff, was developed in consultation with the Building and Estates Division, the Environmental Committee and the Staff Union.

At present seven car parks are available for staff and four spaces in each of these car parks will be reserved for carpooling vehicles. The spaces will be reserved from 8am to 10am, with the idea being that all staff will have arrived by this point.

If any of the allocated spaces are not occupied by 10am they will then revert back to normal spaces.

In order to avail of a carpooling bay a car must be displaying two valid parking permits rather than one with the idea being that the carpooling staff member will take the permit from their own car and display it in the other car.

Colin Fitzpatrick, Chair of the UL Environmental Committee, explained that the carpooling spaces will be treated like disabled bays.

"Security staff will check these every morning and any car found parked in violation of this policy will be clamped."

The spaces will be clearly marked so there will be no question regarding which spaces are designated carpool bays.

Although not aimed at students, the carpooling scheme will hopefully have an impact on students. Congestion is a serious problem on campus, especially between 4pm and 6pm.

By encouraging carpooling amongst all members of faculty and students it is hoped that congestion will be reduced.

The idea of carpooling can also benefit students as it reduces their costs and also means they will no longer have to compete for spaces in car parks that are already at full.

Recent figures released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) showed that transport was the fastest growing source of carbon dioxide emissions in Ireland with road transport answering for 97 per cent of that.

Mr Fitzpatrick pointed out that carpooling is not the best option for reducing carbon dioxide emissions but that walking, cycling, taking the bus or train and carpooling should be the priority, in that order.

The initiative will begin in September and will be reviewed after one semester.

ULSU specials

Owned and operated by
students for students

- Classic hot dog 99c
- Get a regular/breakfast roll and M&Ms 45g/Banana/Apple/Orange and River Rock 750ml for €5!
- Cuisine de France scones: two for 99c!
- Spar 1l Orange juice - buy one, get one free €1.59
- Goodfella Delicia pizza range - buy two for €5
- Sunsilk Shampoo & Conditioner - buy one, get one free €3.39

PHONE CREDIT

OPENING TIMES

Main Courtyard Shop:
Monday - Thursday 08:30 - 20:00
Friday 08:30 - 18:00
Saturday 11:00 - 17:00

Dromroe Shop:
Monday - Thursday 08:30 - 19:00
Friday 08:30 - 18:00

See Euro Crunch offers in store:

- Spar Orange Juice & orange 3 X 200ml...2 for €1
- Ham & Cheese sandwich...€1
- Fista Kitchen Towel...€1
- Volvic Water (still)...€1

Tarantino's Talents at UL

Mark Delaney - Drama Society

Following the successes in recent years of “After Juliet”, “The Talented Mr. Ripley”, “The Cuckoo Bomb”, and of course the highly successful “Variety Shows”, the student Drama Society will begin proceedings this year with a daring screenplay adaptation from one of the biggest cult movie names of the century.

Following the impressive translation to stage of “The Talented Mr. Ripley” which opened last year’s theatre season, UL Drama Soc will begin this year with another classic film adaptation: Quentin Tarantino’s “Reservoir Dogs”.

Under the management of ambitious first-time director Shane O’Callaghan, the drama society will present their adaptation of Tarantino’s

masterpiece in week five of this semester.

Though big names like Harvey Keitel and Steve Buscemi refused to take Shane’s calls, we are assured that UL Drama Soc’s finest will take to the stage in a tour de force promised to rival even the original screen performance.

As Shane O’Callaghan’s debut as a director it seems only appropriate that he has chosen Tarantino’s debut film. Unlike Tarantino, Shane has received neither the Icon of the Decade award at the Sundance Film Festival nor the Palme D’or award, the most prestigious commendation awarded by the Cannes Film Festival, but the ambition and gusto with which he vows to approach this epic

task promises to produce a healthy boost in his reputation, if not internationally, at least within UL.

Since its release in 1992 “Reservoir Dogs” has become a benchmark for independent film and a cult hit phenomena. Set in the aftermath of a bungled jewellery store heist, the play incorporates several of the themes and aesthetics that have become Tarantino’s hallmarks: violent crime, pop culture references, memorable dialogue with excessive profanity and a nonlinear storyline.

Drama Soc look forward to the production of a Tarantino classic which they hope will attract a wide UL audience.



Pride of Place

Mike Toomey

Actors, artists, dancers, the gay and fabulous of Limerick are banding together to say “I Love You” to the Treaty city.

Taking over the city from the 7th until 14th of September, Limerick Pride will bring a splash of colour to the streets of the city.

The theme of this year’s Limerick Gay Pride is “I Love Limerick”. “Gay culture has really contributed to the life of Limerick through art, music, dance and pure energy”, said Pride Chairperson Paddy Doyle. “Pride 2008 is a showcase of these talents. ‘I Love Limerick’ is not just a gay event, it is a chance for everyone in the city to celebrate diversity.”

Headlining this year’s festival at

La Boutique in Dolan’s is chart topping songstress and Limerick girl Leanne Moore.

“Limerick is a city that gets a lot of stick, for no good reason”, said Leanne.

“Events like Pride 2008 shine a true light on the city and show the positivity, and unique togetherness of Limerick and the people of Limerick. I love Limerick; it’s a part of me as I am a part of it. Limerick is home.”

The week kicks off at the Hunt Museum with a Garden Party and Art Auction with guest speaker Jan O’Sullivan.

After that there is a week of film and theatre. Alternative Miss Ireland

winner and reigning queen of Limerick, Sheila Fits Patrick treads the boards in an adaptation of Brian Merriman’s Midnight Court, and there is performance and comedy at Baker Place.

The glitzy Rainbow Ball, is followed by the Pride Parade, a street festival and then it is down to Dolan’s where Leanne Moore, Ireland’s Kylie Experience and the queen herself Sheila Fits Patrick will crown the weekend.

For a full timetable and more information check out www.ilovelimerick.com or Rainbow Support Services, Leamy House, Hartstonge Street, Limerick.

Childline in Limerick is looking for Volunteers

Aoife ní Raghallaigh

For over 100 years, the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) has been Ireland’s leading independent charity advocating for the rights, well-being and protection of children. Our mission is to end cruelty and injustice to children in all forms – ensuring every child is given the opportunity to experience love, happiness and equal opportunity.

The ISPCC run numerous direct services benefiting thousands of children; our largest and most renowned is Childline.

Childline is a national 24-hour

free phone active listening service for children and young people. Childline is non-judgemental and non-directive, which means that it is the children themselves who determine the kind of issues that Childline handles.

Childline is confidential and seeks to empower and support children. Childline believes in the right of children to be listened to and taken seriously and encourages many children currently suffering from abuse and neglect in silence to talk to someone who will facilitate them to talk through the issues and seek appropriate help. In 2005, Childline Online was launched after an

extensive nationwide consultation process with over 2,500 young people. This service provides an automated text support service, a Teen text service and a website where young people can access support.

In 2007, Childline answered 294,898 calls; the total number of calls the service received was 634,000. Childline is 20 years old in 2008 and to mark this we are embarking on an ambitious but necessary 5-year plan. Specifically, we aim to answer 100% of calls by 2011.

The ISPCC in Limerick also provide the Teenfocus service. This service provides a mentoring and

counselling service to young people aged between 13 – 18 who are at risk of misusing drugs and alcohol or are experiencing challenges at home, in school or finding it hard to cope.

Childline and Teenfocus could not exist without the hard work and dedication of all our volunteers. Our volunteers come from all walks of life. We have housewives, architects, students, childcare workers, business owners, the list goes on!

Each volunteer commits a minimum of 4 hours each week to the ISPCC. Before going on-line each volunteer is fully trained by the ISPCC. Volunteers commit to

the service for a minimum of two years, although, in the cork unit, we have been lucky enough to have people who have volunteered with us for over 9 years. Volunteers also actively take part in on-going training, dealing with issues such as child protection, child attachment and child centeredness, among others. We also train volunteers to be Team Mentors and Supervisors and these supervise and support other volunteers.

In order to fund these services, the ISPCC in Limerick has a very active fundraising team which holds many events throughout the year. We have been chosen as Centra

Supermarket’s Charity of the Year for three years. This summer everyone is encouraged to host a Centra Childline Big BBQ to raise funds for Childline, and enjoy the sunshine also!

If we are to reach our target of answering 100% of calls by 2011, we need to increase the number of volunteers we have. We are therefore currently recruiting people for our next training course which will begin in August.

If you are interested in volunteering with Childline or any of our services please contact Meadhbh Terry or Suzanne Slattery on 061 400077/88 or email sslattery@ispcc.ie

Concealing the Olympics

Aoife Ni Raghallaigh

Looking back at the 2008 Beijing Olympics will they be remembered for the medals won, the records broken and the sporting heroes or will we remember the controversy, the politics and the censorship? Almost every aspect of the games has been surrounded by controversy, particularly the treatment received by ethnic minorities and media personnel. Many promises made by the Beijing Olympic Committee have also apparently been broken and questions have been raised over a vast number of issues.

Much of the controversy surrounding the games centred on the Tibetan unrest. In March of this year the conflict began with a protest in memory of the 49th anniversary of the failed Tibetan uprising against Beijing. Initially the protests called for the release of a number Tibetan monks detained by China but they soon turned violent and an upsurge in looting and aggression occurred. As the protests took place so close to the start of the Olympic Games and the Torch Lighting ceremony they received much media attention from around the World, and in turn, received increased support Worldwide. In many cities along the Olympic Torch Relay protesters attempted to disrupt or extinguish the flame and in Paris security were forced to extinguish the flame a number of times.

The Chinese Government has



done its best to play down and censor the unrest by blocking certain websites and censoring journalists and protests in Beijing. Officially protests are permitted to take place at designated spots in Beijing but none of the proposed protests were given permission to go ahead. Some people who simply applied for protest permits have even been reported missing or detained. Ethnic minorities, including Tibetans, have been targeted by Chinese security in fear that they will start protests or cause trouble, while some Tibetans

have reportedly been banned from working in the Beijing area for the duration of the Olympics. Concerns have also been raised over the treatment of Christians in the country.

The media have also faced severe censorship at the Games, despite being promised freedom to report both inside and outside the Olympic venues. Websites that feature controversial information, such as Amnesty International or Free Tibet, have been blocked contrary to a promise made by Beijing Olympic

Committee. According to the International Federation of Journalists, media reporters have been repeatedly been shadowed by security officials and there have been many reports of unidentified individuals taking photographs of journalists' notes.

On 9 August, the day after the Olympic Games began, a relative of the American men's volleyball coach, Todd Bachman, was stabbed to death at a popular tourist spot. The attack was otherwise unrelated to the Olympics. According to the

New York Times, the story was initially featured on the Chinese state news channel and in the Chinese language press. The story was then removed from the channel and many websites and eventually only featured as a small paragraph on the English language newspaper. Subsequently Olympians were allowed comment on Mr Bachman's death via the Olympic News Channel, but the quotes by American team members were edited.

The Chinese government were determined to censor the coverage

of the Beijing Olympics and the Tibetan unrest and in response many teams threatened to boycott the Games. Rather than doing themselves a favour by censoring so many areas, the Beijing Olympic Committee have simply raised more questions through their suppression. As the cliché goes, 'action speaks louder than words', and after this summer's Olympics the World has been left wondering what China is so desperate to hide rather than ignoring and overlooking the dishonesty of the Chinese government.

Blurring the Russian Truth

Emma Kerins

Almost two weeks after hostilities broke out on the South Ossetian territory, the Russian army are beginning to withdraw its troops. The showdown between Russia and Georgia inspired a wave of media outrage at Russia's actions, claiming renewed aggression towards the international community, i.e. the West. The actions of the Moscow administration came under harsh scrutiny from the rest of the world, mainly because they're Russia and nobody likes them. The reality of what happened in South Ossetia, and the predicament of the South Ossetian people themselves was largely forgotten about, as western media got swept up in a tirade of anti-Communist, anti-Russian rhetoric, reminiscent of the Cold War era, rather than the year 2008, where we really should know better.

Russia have a lot to answer for; that is true. However, in our quest to hold Russia 'responsible' for the atrocities it has committed, the fact

“Russia have a lot to answer for; that is true”.

that it was indeed Georgia who first invaded South Ossetia is totally ignored. With no apparent justification, Georgian forces launched a massive

military offensive on the region. Unless of course you believe Tbilisi when they say it was in order to stamp out South Ossetian rebel separatists, when in fact, a ceasefire with said group had been reached hours earlier. As well as forgetting about the real nature of Georgia's actions, the nature of the South Ossetian question has been ignored by the masses.

South Ossetia has enjoyed relative autonomy and independence since the break up of the USSR, where the region broke away from Georgian control. However, Georgia has never really accepted their independent status and continues to exert its influence over the region. Obviously, because Georgia enjoys a close relationship with the US, nobody (apart from Russia) has really questioned such a move. Which is ironic given that less than six months ago, Kosovo proclaimed its independence, in more controversial and less legitimate circumstances, they received automatic international recognition. This was of course down to them being friends with the right people (Washington) and not so friendly with the 'wrong' people, (Moscow). International law and its enforcement is of course down to political strings being pulled and whether or not you associate with the right people. Even the most driven idealist will concede that.

But leaving the question of South Ossetian versus Kosovan legitimacy aside, one clear message comes through from events in the past month. In our mission to quash Russia's influence and growth as one of the Superpowers, we instead let ourselves be taken in by the propaganda campaign of another.

Rather than being concerned about the reality of the conflict, or indeed the welfare of those caught in the crossfire, ie the South Ossetian people, we allowed our vision to be clouded by the anti-Russian sentiment that

has become so prevalent.

The agenda of the US, despite everything that's gone on in the past few years, is not legitimately questioned by the rest of the international community. With Chirac's replacement by Sarkozy, even France – one of America's more vocal critics – has turned full circle and become one of their supporters.

The edges of reality have become blurred as the propaganda war between the US and Russia starts to gain momentum. It's just unfortunate that we in Europe, who should really be the objective voice, are allowing ourselves to get swept up in it.

“The edges of reality have become blurred, as the propaganda war between the US and Russia starts to gain momentum”.

The Tiger's Wake

Eric Doyle

The boom period for the Irish economy has had its day. Today the Celtic Tiger is all but history. The Irish economy is running at 5 per cent inflation, and growth is forecast to be 2.4 per cent for 2008 – a drop of 3.9 per cent on last year with estimates of below 1 per cent – or even zero growth – for 2009. The global slowdown has done much to contribute to the situation. Confidence in the credit industry has been shaken by the credit crunch, whilst the domestic housing market – a large proportion of GDP – has seen the overvaluation of property result in a crisis in demand. Rising energy costs are pushing up production costs and inflation. The over-confidence in our economy has turned to arrogance in the past few years and now we are seeing its wake.

The easy availability of credit, through 100 per cent and higher mortgages, has, over the past few years, expanded the pool of home owners. However, this increased the risk associated with lending and made housing an increasingly speculative endeavour. This was all well and good for those who had the equity to back up the mortgages, but for those such as first time buyers

it was very risky. While at the time all seemed fine, with a good well paying job there was no difficulty getting a mortgage. But what if the job wasn't that secure? At the end of the day the Irish economy is one of the most open in the world, hence it is acutely susceptible to macroeconomic shocks, like the oil crisis or the credit crunch.

Hence when the global credit crunch happened, the effect was suddenly to wipe off a considerable percentage of the value of investments, such as housing. All of a sudden people found that the houses they bought had devalued over night and they were in fact now in debt to the banks and financial institutions considerably more than they expected. Within a few months the banks have now become some of the largest landholders in the country as people have been forced simply to hand in the keys at the bank because they can no longer afford repayments on mortgages. In turn banks found all their money locked up in property it can't sell, reducing the pool of capital available for investment, increasing the price of finance.

Since the early nineties deregulation has been the political mantra by successive governments. The catch was that the lenders by

failing to pay attention to the ability of those they lent to, critically undermined the market. While it is impossible to know for sure whether a potential debtor will be able to pay off a loan, regulation offered an incentive to lenders to be more mindful of their debtors' ability to pay. However deregulation took this away and lenders were not prepared to maintain costly policies in the new market environment. Therefore a situation developed where banks and lenders were over-extended, with reduced levels of reserves in case of a sudden demand, which is what happened in Northern Rock in the UK and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the US and is in danger of happening for a lot of other banks.

Finance is vital to doing business and if it becomes more expensive, the growth of the economy slows as is happening now. This then makes Ireland an unattractive place to invest. If growth is slow then potential profits will be poor. There is no incentive for foreign investors to come to Ireland, which is a serious problem as some of Ireland's biggest investors are mainly foreign firms. Those that are here have to curtail the level of their investment to minimise production costs to maintain profit. The effect of that

is downsizing and rising unemployment, both of which add to inflation. With all of this happening on the markets, consumer confidence takes a tumble and spending falls off. Our complacency about our economic performance seems to have disregarded economic reality and we are now paying the price.

The Irish government has a large chunk of the blame here. The deregulation of finance left the country unprepared for the oil and credit shocks. Their spending plans over the past few years did not adequately fortify the national economy to deal with them. It over-committed in government spending and locked itself into commitments to the trade unions which it now cannot guarantee. The end result will be most probably be some very difficult decisions about cutbacks in the upcoming budget and inevitably political fallout, which Fianna Fail will surely bear the brunt of. Our focus now should be to rectify the regulatory weaknesses that led to our vulnerability to the credit crunch, take the opportunity to wean ourselves off our dependency on the construction sector, wake up to the energy crisis and above all else tidy up our public finances. It's time to stop waking the Tiger.

A failing contribution

Aoife ní Raghallaigh

Let me start by saying that without the grant system I would not be in college, but that is not to say it is without its faults. It is flawed in the way it is handed out; the way it is means tested and the amount given. The grant is supposed to cover the cost of accommodation, books and living expenses but it doesn't even begin to scrape the surface of these bills.

The grant is normally just over €3000 and is delivered in three instalments. The first instalment is received in late October or early November and with that we have an instant problem.

Many students stay on-campus or in purpose built student housing. Such places require rent and electricity to be paid at the end of August before the semester starts. Do the math. Rent has to be paid in August but the grant doesn't get paid until October, so how exactly is it supposed to be used to pay rent?

On top of that the first instalment will be about €1000 but rent for one semester – even in the cheapest place – is €1800 minimum.

Before it's even received the grant has been overspent by €800 and it still has to cover living costs. It's just impossible and it means many students have to take out loans and work part-time just to scrape by.

The means testing for the grant is also extremely flawed. In order to receive a full grant the student's parents must earn less than €38,675 per year.

Income is the sole way in which the grant is means tested. It does not take into consideration any loans which parents may have to pay, the cost of a mortgage, or their cost of living.

Just because a family has an income of €38,675 per year does not mean they have the disposable income to support a child through college.

In my case, my parents are divorced. As my mother has full custody, the grant was only means tested on her income. If my parents were still married and both my parents' incomes were tested, then I would not receive the grant at all. Yet, despite this, my parents would not jointly be able to afford to spend me to college.

While I cannot say how to perfect the grant system, I do believe that changes should be made.



In my opinion it should be portioned out monthly – rather than in three lump sums – and should be paid from September – rather than November.

By giving out small amounts regularly, it'll allow students to spend it better and more effectively.

Under the current system, students depend on the grant coming through and have it spent months in advance. The means test should include an evaluation of monthly spending on essentials such as loans repayments and food rather than income alone. All in all, the grant system is outdated and an overhaul is needed fast.

Paper, Paper Everywhere

Nicola Hogan

By now, most of you will already be aware of the paper saving campaign that started here on UL campus almost 21 months ago. In fact, results of recent surveys showed that a large percentage of staff and students have already participated in the project.

For those of you who may not yet be aware of the paper saving project, here's a brief summary.

Last year a post graduate researcher at the Centre for Environmental Research, Nicola Hogan, calculated that the University of Limerick consumed tens of million of sheets of A4 office paper and thousands of kilograms of different types of paper products such as glossy brochures, booklets, junk mail and magazines each year, much of those, wastefully.

After carrying out a number of waste audits, Nicola collated the audit findings and created a "Top 10 Tips to Save Paper" list which she circulated to all staff and students, via e mail, in an attempt to get everyone to think about how fewer sheets of paper could be consumed through clever paper saving ideas.



The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Local Authority Prevention Demonstration (LAPD) Programme sponsored the University's participation in the project. They requested that prevention of waste as oppose to its correct disposal be the University's primary focus and so the LAPD committee devised a series of paper saving techniques which were implemented in the Schumann Building on a trial basis.

Three paper saving trials ran continuously for 7 months in the Schumann Building and proved to be a great success, the final results of which indicated a 53 per cent reduction in waste paper produced.

However, the trials were not just to raise awareness in the reduction of paper use but to also trial the possibility of separating waste paper from mixed waste at source. Waste audits had shown that 85 per cent of total waste disposed to landfill was waste paper that should have been sent for recycling. It was predicted that correct disposal would save the university money and reduced its Ecological Footprint. To facilitate the change in waste disposal practice, a blue waste paper bin was placed in all Schumann offices and classrooms and an e mail was sent to all occupants of the Schumann building requesting that they firstly, reduce their consumption of paper and secondly, dispose of waste paper only into the newly assigned waste paper bins.

The trials were a success and demonstrated that through continuous awareness of paper use and provision of suitable waste receptacles, behavioural change in waste creation and its disposal was possible and subsequent reduction in the University's Ecological Footprint of its paper use would follow. What was proven to work in one building is now being rolled out across campus. In fact, you will see blue paper only recycling bins in classrooms and offices throughout the University, so please use them to dispose of your waste paper only.

Recent calculations have shown that A4 paper use on campus is down by 15 per cent since the project kicked off in November 2006. This may in part be due to the approval of a proposal by the Deans Council encouraging students to submit coursework double sided, so if your lecturers haven't already informed you of the changes, be sure to ask.

Total paper savings results will not be finalised until October 2008 but the LAPD committee are hopeful that final calculations will show that paper use on campus has reduced even further and the University's initial aim of a 20 per cent reduction in paper use will be achieved. While there is limited time left to achieve our aim, it can happen if everyone does their utmost to use as little paper as possible and dispose of it correctly.

Please visit the website www.ul.ie/~cer/paperuse for the "Top 10 Tips To Save Paper" and for more information about the project. We can all do our bit for the University and the environment if we just remember that if you print in haste you'll create more waste!

All the Time in the World

Aoife Breen - Editor

It's a rare day that passes now without someone commenting on the dismal summer we've had, with the constant heavy, low, grey cloud forming the backdrop to scenes of showers, downpours and even flooding.

Waking up every morning to a mournful ceiling of cloud cannot be helped. It's the weather, after all, and this is Ireland: the land of the unpredictable.

But predictions for the future of weather suggest things won't get better. The need to address the issue of climate change is becoming more than just a mantra of the long-haired, tree hugging hippies.

It's becoming necessary for all of us to acknowledge our overindulgence and the resulting consequences which are visibly happening around us.

But, this time, they're not just happening around us, but to us; to all of us; and they're getting worse every day. Population levels continue to soar while general health levels decline in a society governed by the principle of limitless expansion propelled by wants rather than needs.

There is no escape button on

climate change; there is no escape button on deforestation; there is no escape button from rising sea levels, increased temperatures, declining eco-systems, dying species; there is no way out of extinction.

Leonardo DiCaprio is probably better known for his role in Titanic, but as the producer of another environmentalist documentary, The 11th Hour, he has publicly leant his support to the movement for change.

No, not Barack Obama's election campaign; but rather the movement for change in how we live; how we live every second of every minute of every hour. Because this is the Earth's eleventh hour, and we are coming towards the dawn of a new era; one in which there will no longer be a human race.

It's easy to be rapt by messages of the fifty-odd interviewees in the documentary, each calling for individual responsibility and trying to impress the idea that one person really can make a difference.

Throw in a few powerful hard-hitting images of falling glaciers, Californian wildfires, flash floods, animal carcasses and lost children and you have yourself glued to the screen for its duration, with the weight of your environmental guilt

pushing you further down your seat while the memory of the un-recycled cereal box you threw out yesterday seeps into your mind like an oil spillage across the ocean's surface.

But everyone already knows the damage they're doing; everyone knows that carbon emissions are gone beyond sustainability; everyone knows that dependence on fossil fuels is suicidal; everyone knows something has to change: we're not sure what or how, but we know something has to be done.

But someone else will do it.

Someone else will pick up the tab.

Someone else will save the Earth.

Maybe Captain Planet will. He's our hero, afterall – he'll bring pollution down to zero.

The problem with this mentality, however, is the same one that got us in this situation in the first place. The 'it'll never happen to me' syndrome; the problem of living as an individual in an overly-consumerist society where there is no collective responsibility, where notions of self importance reign as the guiding principles of life.

We are the most intelligent species on the planet. We are the rulers on



this Earth. We are unconquerable, indestructible and we do not need anyone or anything else to survive.

This individualist mentality has landed us in a dismal mess on par with Irish summers. By subscribing to this belief system, we have distanced ourselves from the very source of our being. We have refused to acknowledge our fallibility; we have planted the seeds of our own destruction.

And while the eco-systems around us falter, wither, decline and die, these seeds thrive. They thrive on the finite fossil fuels of the modern

corporate global economy. They thrive on the greed of mankind for greater turnover; for greater profits.

Well, you know what, let's be greedy one more time. Let's not try to save the planet. You know why? It's simple, really.

At the end of the day, when the clock tick-tick-ticks its way through higher global temperatures and more severe weather extremes on a more frequent basis, it'll eventually hit the 59th second of the 59th minute of the 11th hour.

And then, the last of the most intelligent species this Earth has

ever seen from population of an incredible 6.4 billion will die out prematurely.

But the Earth will continue; just as it has done for billions of years before mankind and what it will do for billions of years to come.


Earth, quite literally, has all the time in the world. Mankind, however, has quite a lot less.

UL Arts Office in co-operation with the UL Environmental Committee will air a special screening of The 11th Hour on Monday of week 2, 15th September, in the Jonathan Swift theatre at 18:30.

PRODUCED & NARRATED BY LEONARDO DiCAPRIO

THE 11TH HOUR

TURN MANKIND'S DARKEST HOUR INTO ITS FINEST



**MONDAY
15 SEPTEMBER
6.30PM**

Jonathon Swift Theatre

**UL Arts Office
UL Environmental Committee**

**"Essential viewing.
An unnerving, surprisingly affecting documentary."**
— Manohla Dargis, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Columnists

Pete’s Pet Peeves

What *really* pi**es me off is the very strange right-wing alliance emerging in this city between local racists and racists from white “economic migrant” communities. The main targets of their aggression seem to be African immigrants/refugees/asylum seekers (particularly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria) who are attempting to make Limerick their home.

This strange alliance has been built on the sole premise that *some* locals and some of the more fascist elements of the economic migrant community don’t like people of colour very much - particularly Africans. If you were to walk from the Limerick Bus Station across the road and go left until you’ve passed the park, you’ll find a wall on the right-hand side. A wall full of racist posters - that routinely get removed and mysteriously replaced by the next evening; posters that attempt to push an agenda to keep Ireland “white.”

Now, in a very Machiavellian sense, I can understand *why* elements of the economic migrant community in Ireland could see making Africans the scapegoats as an opportunity for the economic migrant community to get onside with the locals in their adoptive country. It’s a very crude and simple racist argument on their behalf that simply says: ‘at least we’re not black’;a message that has found an obvious resonance with indigenous racists.

What this phenomenon also indicates is a culture of racism, which is infecting the Catholic Church in general. Most of the Congolese refugees/asylum seekers are indeed Catholic, as well as the vast majority of economic migrants from Poland. The fact that the Republic of Ireland is predominantly and homogenously Catholic tells us that this phenomenon is not sectarian but hits at an even deeper and ethno-sadistic level: *skin colour*.

This is, however, at the end of the day, an issue of class - and a general lack of awareness of class dynamics in the post-Celtic Tiger era.

These posters, and the racism that inspires them, are mainly featured in lower socio-economic areas of Limerick City. These are areas that, even before the large waves of economic migrants from Central and Eastern Europe, were underprivileged before and unaltered by the Celtic Tiger i.e. working class and/or impoverished areas of Limerick.

The economic migrants are themselves, and by definition, labourers. The alliance between groups operating in underprivileged areas of Limerick and racists from the economic migrant community are targeting their aggression, not at the ruling classes that facilitate social exclusion, but rather at those who are lower than themselves on the economic totem pole: refugees and asylum seekers, who happen to be people of colour.

Refugees and asylum seekers have largely come from socio-political situations that we cannot even begin to comprehend. They are not allowed work, and are given minimal living provisions from the Irish government.

The last time I checked, refugees and asylum seekers were given €19 per week in order to live on. Many of them live in hostels and housing provided from various groups.

Let us end this pointless bigotry and bickering between the subaltern classes in this city and country, and turn our attention in unison to the government and the ruling classes who have created and ignored these conditions.



Here at I Spy we like to take a scientific approach to what’s good for the student. As students ourselves, we know that you don’t have money to fulfil your thirst for all that’s good and tasty in this life.

That’s why here at I Spy, with our trained team of crack troops, we are looking for not just the best value, but the best all round bang for your buck in your University life.

Sometimes the best product won’t be the cheapest – sometimes it won’t even be edible – but we will stand by our opinions.

Once that I Spy seal of approval goes on, then you can be confident in your use of said product or service.

We plan to review lots of stuff during the year including, but not limited to: best pint of stout/beer in Castletroy area; nicest chips (very competitive category); .best post-pub eatery (town); best sandwich on campus; best non-alcohol activity to partake in Castletroy; Best for munchies (hungry students need food); best value place to get shopping.

This week we’ll start with the search for the most satisfying pint of the black stuff.

My search for the best pint of Guinness began in earnest. Armed with nothing but my knowledge of fine porter, super tuned taste buds and a fool for an assistant, I stepped through the door of the Hurlers.

A fine establishment you say, and it is.

Quite a comfortable atmosphere if a little empty (though it is Monday). Working from local legend, I ordered from the far right tap which is reputedly sweeter.

My accomplice and I, lets call him Toby Five-Bellies, got our pints and examined them.

We held them up against the light and examined the colours; well, black, mostly (red if you believe the ads), with a creamy top.

We both agreed that the Hurlers pint from said tap was quite good; delicious, even. It wasn’t too cold (a pet hate of mine) and it was quite smooth with no evident sourness or bite, which you might find in an underused or over long tap.

When said accomplice and I marked the pints, the Hurlers received an 8 out of 10 which is a very healthy

score from tough markers such as us. Coming in at €4.20, it’s also the most expensive pint in Castletroy. Dishonourable mention for the men’s toilets which you will have to visit after a few of these!

Our next adventure brought us to the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel bar. Not a very student centred bar, but very comfortable, so it would suit for a quiet pint. The pint itself is quite a classy affair. Coming in at €4, it’s a good 20c cheaper than the Hurlers. After rigorous testing and tasting, we decided to order another and a couple o’ bags o’ bacon fries (always a good sign). The pint itself is smooth and a great temperature, so after much debate my accomplice and I decided to award an 8.5 – only fair, we thought, given the value for money!

Now we come to that telling question (no, not biscuit or cake); the one that has divided punters for the past year: Stables or Scholars?

The Stables possess a mixed reputation regarding their porter pedigree. There are some who will tell you not to touch it; others believe it gives eternal youth (any excuse), but the more enlightened who have sampled in recent times have noted a big improvement in their Guinness quality.

I am one of these enlightened folk. The Stables is a very solid pint, and coming in a €3.75, it’s also cracking value.

So, while the pint may not quite hit the heights of the Kilmurry Lodge for smoothness, the atmosphere and price more than make up for it. After much adjudication (taking into account price, atmosphere and the very nice blonde who served it to us, we decided it deserved a tasty 7.5. Money well spent!

As my soon-to-be-inebriated cohort and I entered the Scholars, we had what can only be described as an insatiable thirst for the black stuff. Coming in at €3.85, the Scholars Club represents some great value as well.

Possessing the one of the shortest runs in Limerick (so we’re reliably informed), we had high expectations - and we were not disappointed.

The pint is smooth and tasty. Not a hint of bitter and a fine proud head; the kind of pint you’d be happy to give to a family member at a wedding

or wake; lovely stuff. After much to-ing and fro-ing we decided to award it an 8.5. A well deserved accolade methinks; we don’t give 9s but if we did we would have to give the Scholars’ entry some consideration.

So who wins you say; who gets the accolade of ‘Best Bang for your Buck’?

I’m going to have to give it to the on campus bars because they represent the best atmosphere and value. With the Stables you pay €3.75 for a nice pint and a good night with a good atmosphere. Likewise, in the Scholars, the quality is joined by the kind of atmosphere

and service you won’t get in the off-campus bars.

So it really depends what kind of evening you’re looking for. The Scholars, maybe, for those who regard themselves as connoisseurs, and the Stables for those who are more worried about skulling a few and hitting the dance floor.

It’s up to you!
I’d just like to say that no-one was seriously injured in the making of this article except for my wallet.

I Spy seal of approval goes to Stables and Scholars (oh how diplomatic of me), this fortnight’s best bang for your buck!



When you’ve been hanging around university as long as me, from time to time you get asked to do things - important things (rarely), prestigious things (never), and sometimes meaningless things (quite often) that have all the impact of the University’s Alcohol Policy.

To be asked to write a column as the watchdog of student politics at the University here is unquestionably an important job. But why, you might ask, is there a need for such a column?

What you must clearly understand is that the Student Union newspaper and all its publications are establishment publications and they should be approached with all the caution of any ‘governmental’ publication. SU politics may be full of well-meaning, earnest, hand-ringing liberal types or even tear-it-all-down and sell it for sandals, beans and tofu crusties, but this does not mean that the politics of a students’ union is all that different from any other type of politics.

Ok, the SU is not a government in the traditional sense, but it does have a large budget to spend which comes from students’ capitation fees and the important job of representing students’ interests at the University and national level. It is simply not reasonable to think that the elected (or unelected - but that’s another day’s article) SU members are going to report about stupid things the SU

has done, or failed to do through ineptitude or laziness.

This all should be made a little clearer. This paper is edited (fabulously) by Aoife Breen. Aoife Breen is an excellent journalist, editor *par excellence* (congrats on your elimination of any white spaces from the ends of articles) and generally a nice person to be around - most of the time.

That said, she is also a member of the Executive - the cabinet of the SU - as Publications and Publicity Officer. Think Goebbles. And here is the basic problem of having a member of the Executive as the editor of the student paper.

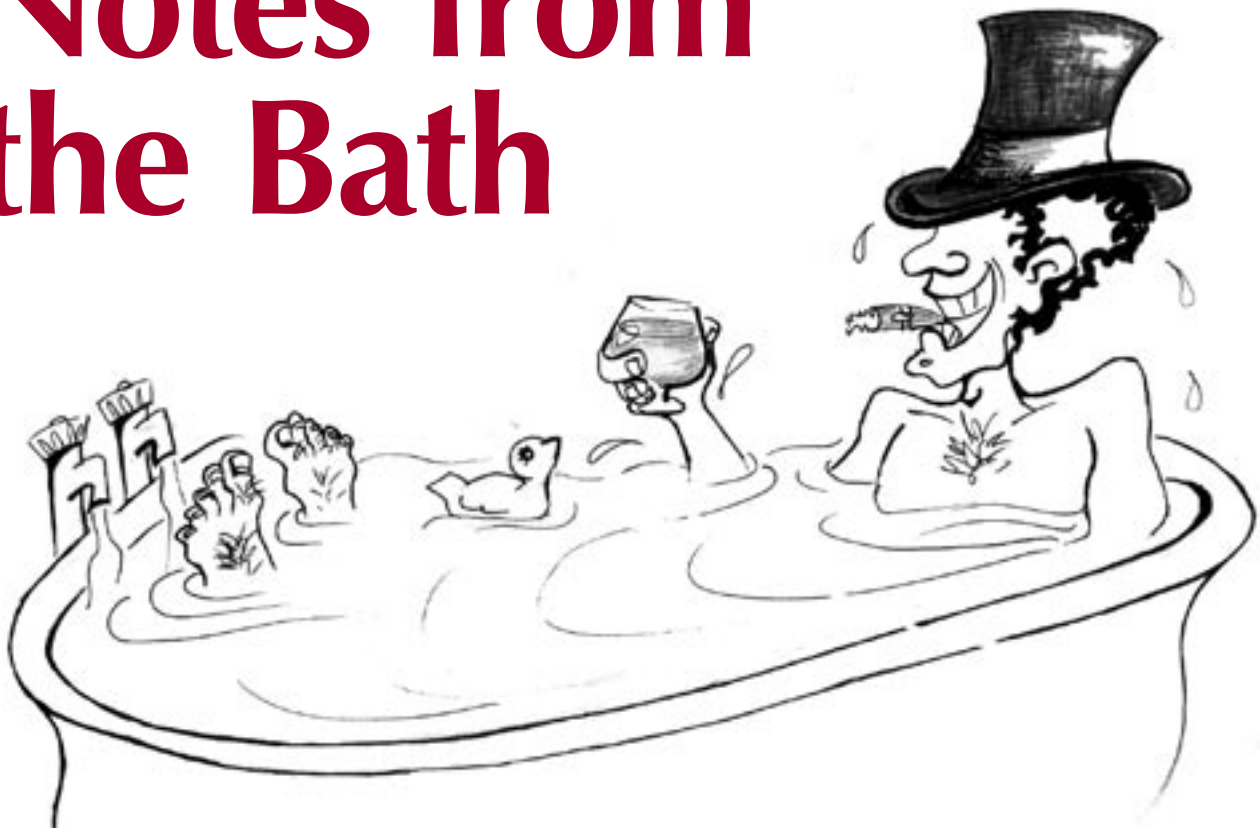
Picture the scene:
Damien - “It seems we’ve lost all our money.”

Pa - “Maybe that ‘Kitten and fluffy bunnies for all’ programme was a bad idea after all.”

Caitríona - ‘Aw, but everyone was so happy and full of love...’

And so the conversation would continue. Who is going to report this story of ineptitude and misplaced idealism? Aoife Breen - hard-hitting reporter? Or Aoife Breen - Editor of *An Focal*, Vice President and member of the Executive? It is foolish to think that anyone in this situation can maintain any sort of impartiality or independence. Even if someone else finds out about it - what’s stopping the Editor from not publishing it?

Notes from the Bath



Even the most committed and idealistic journalist is not going to publish a front-page article saying, “we got it all wrong”. Conversely, articles praising Executive members for their wisdom, sensitivity, good looks and good judgement smacks

of a word that begins with ‘p’ and ends in ‘anda’, and it’s not panda.

The solution is simple. Create a new job, funded by the SU, of editor of *An Focal* which UL students can apply for. Then, with the assistance of student writers, UL will have a

real media outlet and not the dubious, news-sheet it has now.

Of course this won’t happen, unless a particularly nasty Executive create the post at the end of their term for the next Executive to deal with. It wouldn’t be in their interests

to create a nuisance of an independent media. China doesn’t have one, Russia doesn’t have one - much, Venezuela doesn’t have one either. Why should we? Until we do, I’ll try my best to keep you informed. Watch this space.

From The Working World

The innermost thoughts of a co-op student

Finn McDuffie

There’s something about someone else’s diary. The forbidden entices. The written word brings you into another’s mind. A trail of thought emerges.

Because the whole exercise of diary writing is inherently self-indulgent, the reader of a diary is often judgemental. Curiously, the most judgemental reader is usually its writer. So a diary is usually never read to avoid embarrassment.

That makes the exercise of writing about as pointless as a big brother contestant taking a Mensa exam.

So I begin this diary. It’s designed to be read. Be as judgemental as you like. What follows is part of the life of a student on Co-op.

1st August 2008

I’m a law student. I work in a law firm; where files and folders are created at the same rate as global childbirth.

I have a confession. After some weeks of ‘document management’ (and whatever other euphemisms you might find for multiple paper cuts), my imagination is dwindling by a thread. An office is a wonderful environment if you find the colour grey exciting; if you get off on abbreviations. If you enjoy words like ‘work-sphere’ look no further! The grey carpet of cubicles and photocopiers is yours.

Consequently, when the time comes to escape the office, things look very colourful. I write this looking onto Grafton Street, Dublin. Women sell flowers nearby. Colourful street performers distract and amuse passing tourists. Frustrated office workers curse the tourists as they attempt to power-walk past. Pigeons bop along oblivious. Together, they blend into a symphony of endeavour.

‘Ohhh! Aaaaww!! F**kin’ disgusting!’ A teenager and his companions seem utterly horrified amid a reeling crowd. One of those street

performers has driven a nail into his head with a hammer. A little further down, a string quartet plays Pachelbel’s Canon.

5th August 2008

I’m starting to realise, Dublin’s a great first-time city. It’s small enough so that you can meet several totally unconnected friends and acquaintances at random daily intervals. This tackles the loneliness issue. Which makes the move to the city easier.

When I first moved here, loneliness was a ‘big issue’ (like the magazine but without the annoying sales pitch). But then I realised there were so many people living in really close proximity to me. The Romanians upstairs for example. If you could catch them at a moment they’re not having sex, I’m sure they’d be nice. Then again, they make the weirdest sex sounds.

Or perhaps the Czechs next door. Nice, but their guitar-playing is abysmal. And recently, their alpha male tried to steal my clothes off the line in our garden. I know he’s the alpha male because he’s big, tall and hairy. He approached me with thunderous decorum. He wore an expression of dull indifference. And after much grunting and sign languages, he begrudgingly returned my work shirt. What a bloody caveman.

Or maybe the old woman nearby who fleetingly appears from behind her curtain on occasion. Her white, boney fingers draw back the lace curtains slowly, carefully, and expose a wrinkly, wide-eyed, pale, gaunt and expressionless face. I bet she’s a laugh.

7th August 2008

I saw Dermott picking his nose by the photocopier today. He thought nobody saw. But I did. Just goes to show; a degree, two masters and a law society qualification later and he still hasn’t achieved any standard level of finesse. Maybe I should leave some Kleenex on top of the photocopier.

A Fresh Approach

Jason Kennedy

Diary of a First Year

My name is Jason Kennedy. I’m a post-leaving cert student from Borrisokane, Co. Tipperary and right now I’m in limbo; trapped somewhere between the familiar comfort of secondary school life and the new and exciting world of university.

At the time I’m writing this, it has been ten weeks since I finished my leaving certification examinations, where I thought the words ‘crash’ and ‘burn’ would be applicable. During the exams there were times when I left out vital answers, spent too much time on unimportant questions and left my rushed writing as disjointed as Heather Mills’ left leg. I pitied the examiner that would have to struggle through my papers.

Imagine my surprise when I opened my results envelope on Wednesday the 13th and found that the points I had gathered landed me a place in my first choice course; Journalism and New Media. This worked out brilliantly, as I also had a room in Cappavilla booked. Although it may seem like everything is well organised, I have no idea what to expect. I’ve only ever visited the UL Campus once, briefly. I didn’t even make it to the open day! The only information I have on the campus is what I read off the internet and what friends and relatives, who are students, have told me.

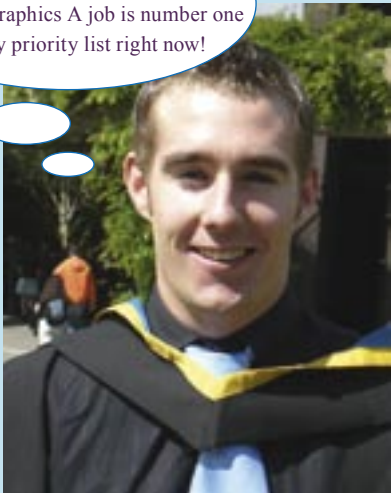
But still, I’ve learned a lot from the UL website, especially about the clubs and societies. Throughout my time in my alma mater, Borrisokane Community College, I’ve always had an active interest in such extra-curricular activities and I don’t intend to stop now. Societies, such as the drama, journalism and comedy society would particularly take my interest. As for the clubs, I’m willing to give windsurfing, sub-aqua and kayaking a go. Not the normal sports we have in the middle of Tipperary. These are the interesting details I was looking up when I should have been cramming for my leaving cert. Lately I’ve been looking up the entertainment that will be hitting the campus for orientation week. The prospect of bungee walks, dodgeball, live music and the likelihood of fountains of drink already have me excited.

So it’s only a matter of days until I discover what student life is really like. I’m already having images of beans on toast, sausage rolls, tonnes of tuna and of course the obligatory pyramid of beer cans on the windowsill. So I’m ready to make the leap from a familiar face in a small town to a little fish in a big pond and do you know what? I can’t wait.

Student Speak

They got the parchments, they got the letters after their names...so what are they going to do now? An Focal asks the class of 2008 what their plans are for the future.

Brendan O'Halloran,
BEng in Engineering and
Technical Graphics A job is number one
on my priority list right now!



Niamh Aylmer
BSc Physical Education
Up at 9 for class!



Aidan Keeshan,
Liam Keohane, Tony Barnett,
Patrick Murphy Metalwork teaching Aidan
- I'm going to win the Euromillions!
Liam - I'm teaching at 9 Tony - Haven't a
clue Patrick - Fuck this teaching shit...
Ah wait you can't put that in,
strike that out!




Karen Costigan and
Aoife Hennessy BSc in Physical
Education Karen - I'm teaching at 9!
Aoife - I've an extra five minutes -
I'm not in until five past!



Damien Cahill
BBS in Business and French
To find a real job someday.



Sue Redmond,
Marita Hennessy, Ellen Clancy,
Caroline Cashell MA Health Education
Sue - To enjoy it all from now on!
Marita - I'm never studying again.
Caroline - Ever again!



Anna Keogh
BSc in Physical Education
I'm starting teaching tomorrow
in Blackrock!



Jonathan Irwin and
Ronan Hobbs BEd in Materials and
Construction Jonathan - I'm teaching at 9. It's
a disaster having a graduation and then school
on a Friday! Ronan - I'm not in til
lunchtime!



John Donohoe and
Kenneth Lenihan, Grad Dip in
Education (Technology) Looking for
jobs, please!



Editorial

An Focal

University of Limerick

Students' Union

University of Limerick, Plassey, Co Limerick

Volume 17, Issue 1

Tuesday, 9 September 2008

Letters to the Editor may be sent to the Students' Union or alternatively may be emailed to editor@ulsu.ie. Please note that submission of a letter does not guarantee its publication. But you may be lucky.



The Shield of Fees

With the issue of fees lurking in every dark corner, the national media are only too glad to shine the torch on the controversial subject and stir up a student rebellion. What more would any newspaper or television crew want than rowdy middle class students getting hot and bothered about forking out a couple of grand every year?

Of course every media outlet will focus on protesting students staging marches and demonstrations and organising sit-ins. That's much more exciting than analysing the books and totting up figures.

Because the real truth behind the fees issue is something much more serious; and something from which Minister O'Keeffe has quite successfully pushed away the media spotlight.

The real burning concern at the bottom of this whole fiasco is not the reintroduction of fees, but more the funding crisis in third level education.

Of course, announcing that fees are not off the agenda is a wonderful diversionary tactic to get everyone sidetracked from the seriousness of the cutbacks in third level education.

This government wants a 'knowledge-based economy' yet it wants it without the investment.

Hats off to Batt for calling for a review of the sector, but the severe cuts he has announced will affect students to an even greater extent than fees ever would in the long run.

Tightening the belt on the funding for third level institutes will only bring about a reduction in the range and standards of services – particularly to those at undergraduate level.

Increasingly, undergrad students are being forced to pick up the bill which has been left unpaid by the state for their postgraduate counterparts.

The powers that be want world class teaching and research standards, yet they want this without any proper investment in the sector.

Professor Barry boasted at graduation ceremonies two weeks ago that 74 per cent of the class of 2007 found themselves in employment within a couple of months – a higher rate than the national average.

The corollary, however, is that that effectively means we have a much lower rate for fourth level education and research.

And now things are being squeezed even further as Minister O'Keeffe continues to lash out at higher education in Ireland.

It is time for him to step out and live up to the reality of his cutbacks and to stop cowering behind the shield of the fees argument.

A Place called Home

Having received the go-ahead from Clare County Council to build a three storey residence on the north campus for the University President, UL can now stand alongside many other international universities claiming a similar asset.

Becoming the home of the University head will surely be a positive move towards creating an enriched community ethos on campus.

Professor Barry has repeatedly argued that enhancing the student experience at UL is one of his primary aims for his term of office. Perhaps by living alongside and with the students he heads there will be a greater symbiotic relationship bridging the gap between the governing and the governed.

Although it is reported to be too early to estimate the bill for the construction and whether it will run to one or several million Euro, the University has stated that it will not cost anything to the institution to build.

“...enhancing the student experience at UL is one of his primary aims for his term of office”.

There is some comfort in that, given all the talk recently about funding problems and financial restraints. However, it does raise the questions as to where the money for this will actually come from and could this not be more effectively allocated elsewhere? Is this another instance where those at the top have tied the hands of those at the bottom?

Regardless, the benefits of such a structure would seem to outweigh the costs.

The Presidential home will become a place of welcome for local, national and even international guests. It will become a focal point for the campus community a place, perhaps, where everyone will eventually consider 'home'.

Pa's Times

Hey everyone!

I just want to give a big welcome to all the new ULers who've just arrived on campus. I know its quite nerve wracking at first but you'll feel right at home in a couple of weeks. Just introduce yourself to new people where you can and try to join a club or society, everybody just wants to have fun and meet new people. So get to know a few from your course or your house and you'll be flying in no time!

So I hope you all had a good summer, while you were lying on cold beaches, drinking cider in water logged beer gardens, wallowing in muddy festival fields and generally lazing around (go recession!), we've been working hard to make sure you all have the best time possible this year! We're pretty confident we've got some great events to keep you happy too. Check out our ents page for all the details!

Over the summer we had to say goodbye to our benches, which was not cool, but our hands were tied. When we were threatened with chainsaws (not us – the benches) we decided we had to save them so we are placing one in Cappavilla and one has returned to the man who made it, so don't worry they're safe and well.

This year is going to be really busy for us. Not only do we have our regular student issues but we

have to face the fees issue as well.

We really want to hit out against this, we want to show the government that we will be heard and will fight for our right to a fair and equal education. We need you for this. You are the people this will affect. You are the people who will feel the squeeze if this is passed. We are organising some really good events, protests and general mayhem to show that we are not happy bunnies. So get involved, do the student thing and let's have some fun doing it. Watch this space for details.

Other than that I'd just like to say I hope everyone has a great year. I would encourage you to call into us, stop us in the courtyard, even abuse us in the Lodge (within reason – I'm quite sensitive!). What I'm saying is we want to hear your issues. A Union is useless if it's not in touch with what people want. We are your organisation, we work for you and nobody else, you pay our (small!) wages to represent you and to give you the support that you deserve. We will help with anything, well not anything, but nearly anything!!

So that's all from me for now. I will keep you updated with what I'm working on and I hope you all have a great year,

Take it easy
Pa

...a Union is useless if it's not in touch with what people want. We are your organisation, we work for you and nobody else...



In Focus: Paying the Price of Education: Third Level Fees

Footling the Bill

Aoife Breen - Editor

As the shadow of an economic recession lingers gloomily on the horizon, the potential financial repercussions of any move to reintroduce fees at third level are blatantly obvious. In this time of an apparent credit crunch, rising unemployment and inflation rates and general economic malaise, the government's objective of creating a 'knowledge economy' grows increasingly more half-hearted as the belt is tightened around departmental spending.

Of course there is no such thing as a 'free education'. At the end of the day, somebody has to fork out the cash to pay the bill. But whether the person who collects the tab should be the government on behalf of the taxpayer or the individual students who choose to go on to third level education is a whole new area of controversy.

But who is in a better financial position sign the cheque for the €332 million that the government currently spends each year on sending the country's students to third level institutes all around the state? Are students really going to be able to cover not just their accommodation and living costs, but additional education fees as well? These could total anywhere in the region of €5,000 to €25,000 a year depending on the course of study. And where would they get this money? Savings? Parents? The tough decisions about third level education will no longer be on the eve of the CAO deadline: so many students will have it ruled out long before they even fill in an application form.

Diane Colfer, Senior Banking Manager with the campus branch of Ulster Bank, mentioned that students already come in to the branch each year seeking loans to fund their living expenses.

"At the moment a lot of students

come to us particularly looking for finance for living expenses and funds just to get them through the year. Many then work during the summer, pay back some or most of it and seek finance again the following year. Generally it's not accumulating debt; it's money needed to live for one year; after that year, some students pay off the loan over the summer and then come back in the following academic year."

But fees would be a different story. Fees would require serious financial support from someone here, whether that be from parents or a financial institution. The reality, however, is that most students still dependable on their parents would still not be in a position to foot the annual bill that fees would present. This then leaves students with few other options than to take a deep breath and plunge into the red while still in their teenage years.

But even securing a loan is not guaranteed. Colfer explained that each student would be assessed on a case by case basis, taking into account their employment prospects after graduation, the availability of a guarantor to secure the loan and academic progress.

"It wouldn't be possible at the moment for a bank to give a generic answer agreeing to loan €10,000, for example, to every student. If fees were reintroduced the first thing we would look at would be the student's current financial situation and what propensity the student has to earn a professional income at the end of their course."

"Someone who is studying medicine or law and is leaving college with a definitive career allows the bank to assess demand for such professions in the workplace and as a result the students potential to repay a large loan. Depending on the individual situation some students may also have to provide a suitable guarantor who would be in a position

to assist with loan repayments should the student in question find himself unable to do so."

Should fees be reintroduced, students will find themselves in incredibly different financial positions and with very different financial needs. At the moment, the maximum Ulster Bank pays out to first year students would be loans of between €2,000 and €2,500. That would have to change to accommodate larger requirements.

"It's really not ideal for a student to be starting out in first year with a €10,000 loan. It's not something we would be encouraging, but should fees be reintroduced, banks in general will have to take a view on potentially increased lending limits to some students and also review how student lending would be structured going forward."

"If loan amounts such as this were approved by Ulster Bank we would potentially structure the loan as an interest-only loan repayment during the academic year."

"Therefore if someone was working part-time they would just repay the interest over the academic year and then restructure the loan into interest and capital payments over the summer months or at the end of their course. Each student's individual situation would determine how the loan would be repaid."

So it looks like taking on a part-time job might help the situation. But, obviously, sharing study time with a job has its implications. Students with jobs outside their college work don't perform as well as those who can afford the luxury of being unemployed.

And then when it's noted that grades and academic performance will come into consideration for applying for loans to pay fees, the fatal cracks of any fee-based system become even more obvious.

"Once a student is passing their

exams and getting through each year we would take that into consideration each year when finance for fees was being requested. If someone came in this year looking for €10,000 and came back next year looking for another €10,000, one of the key things we as a bank would be looking for is proof that students are passing their exams and successfully securing a place in the next academic year."

"If a student doesn't pass a year or make it to 4th year, then they would still have the loan from previous years that they would have to repay on potentially a very basic salary which would be very difficult to manage due to the size of the loan incurred."

How is a student who wants to earn a professional salary going to do so if they can't afford the qualifications in the first place? And even if they convince a bank to lend them the money for four years, they may then have to struggle to keep on top of their education for fear of failing out because of that financial burden.

But even before any bank gives the seal of approval for anything in the region of €40,000 over four years, what about the people who would like to study at third level education but who have not got a suitable guarantor to sign off on the loans also?

Whether those wannabe-students are completely financially independent from their parents or come from a background that may not be in a position to prop up a €40,000 loan, there are numerous viable grounds on which any financial institution could block the way to further education.

But it's not the fault of Irish financial institutions in this scenario; they're only playing the game as it's ruled out in the world.

The problem is that the Minister for Education has failed thoroughly to think through the real repercussions of any move towards the reintroduction of fees. A decision like that would only block higher education and turn potential students away from the door before they even had a chance to knock.



To Fee or Not to Fee

Katie Harrington - Staff Writer

The re-introduction of fees is once again on the cards, and people are queuing up to tell newspapers what a good idea it is. It doesn't sound so bad when they talk about bringing fees back for "only for those who can afford it"; after all, there are systems in other parts of the world where it works. However, there are fundamental problems with Minister for Education Batt O'Keefe's logic in this situation.

The first problem with Minister O'Keefe's proposal is that if, as he maintains, fees will only be brought in for those in a high income bracket, it simply won't be enough money to cover the shortfall in funds from the government. Those whose parents make enough money to be classified as fee paying under this system should only be a fraction of the Irish student body. How will their contributions of €6,300 a year make up for cuts in government expenditure which will perhaps run into the millions? In the medium to long-term, this results in a net loss in the funding of education – the very thing we are supposedly trying to avoid.

O'Keefe – who has already ordered universities to cut their payroll by 3 per cent – is looking for ways to fund third level education in an increasingly precarious economic climate. But how will bringing back fees balance the budget? In times of economic uncertainty, it is natural for the government to introduce cut-backs, but, as is widely acknowledged, a well educated workforce is absolutely necessary in attracting foreign direct investment and sustaining the economy in years to come. Short term solutions to the funding crisis will not solve the problem in the long run.

Of course, contrary to the beliefs of the Department of Education, bringing back fees will affect the amount of students taking up places in third level education. It seems disingenuous to declare that it is food and living expenses that cause financial problems for college students when the cost of fees, if reintroduced, would be almost the same. Paying fees on top of the estimated €7,500 per annum it already costs to attend college means that an increasing number of students and their families will be

forced to reconsider their options.

It is absurd to claim that the abolition of fees did not open the possibility of going to college to more people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Figures from the Central Statistics Office show that in 1996, when fees were abolished, approximately 100,000 people were in full-time, third-level education. Less than ten years later in 2005, this figure had increased to 143,000; an increase of almost 50 per cent which has continued to grow since then.

Fees will force students to take on part-time jobs where in the past this was not necessary. Recent studies have shown that those who take on such jobs for 15 hours a week are only 62 per cent as likely to gain first class degrees as those who do not.

We are at risk of following in the footsteps of the United States where students are forced to take on jobs throughout their degrees and then graduate with debts of tens of thousands of dollars. We now live in a knowledge society, where education is considered a right rather than a privilege. As such, burdening undergraduates with such large debts before they have even had their first real jobs seems an immensely cruel way of encouraging further education.

One solution which has been debated is to establish a graduate tax – a means by which graduates would pay for their education having completed it, providing long term sustainability in the third level education system. This removes the pressure on students and parents during the college years. Instead, such a model requires that graduates pay the levy based on certain criteria such as reaching the age of 25, a number of years (3-5) after graduation or when a certain income threshold has been achieved. This system, already in place in Australia and parts of the UK, is one potential alternative way in which the funding crisis may be addressed.

It is likely, however, that the government which appears to be looking for short term solutions will not introduce a plan which will reap consistent benefits in the long run rather than an immediate short-term windfall.



The Numbers behind Fees

Fionn McDuffie - Staff Writer

What is it costing the state?

Education is the third biggest budget spender after health and social welfare. Last year, the overall and total provision to the third-level sector was €1.9 billion of which €1 billion was provided to the university sector. The Department of Education says the average unit cost for one full-time undergraduate student is approximately €30,780. The average costs to the state for undergraduate courses per student per year are: Arts €8,000, Science/Engineering €12,400, Medicine €25,000.

What's the trend?

Participation in higher level education has steadily increased in recent years with full-time enrolments increasing from 41,000 in 1980, to 135,000 in 2005/6. The Government is aiming for a 72 per cent increase by 2020 in order to meet future skills needs. This means a few thousand extra students and obviously indicates a need for expansion of resources to enable a consistent standard of teaching. But academics are concerned about the present quality. So improvements are a must and cut-backs can only aggravate this situation.

Is current university spending efficient?

Universities want more money. Fees aside, it has been argued that before demanding further funding from the government, heads of the seven Universities must deal with their own problem of wasting resources. At the sound of cut-backs, Universities have already reacted by threatening the cancellation of some courses. They claim that their spending is sound and justified. Further, they argue their research is driving Irish innovation forward and their courses are key to addressing the country's skill needs.

Those are some of the figures. And the press frenzy continues. All one needs to do is carry out a simple search online to see just how broad the argument has become. And so the argument continues. Let's hope it doesn't get too bloody.

Name: Emer O'Connell

Course: PE teaching

How did you pay for college? I got money from my parents and from a job

Did you have any loans? No



Name: Jonathan Linnane

Course: Construction teaching

How did you pay for college? My parents gave me money but I had a job as well

Did you have any loans? Just the €650 overdraft with Ulster Bank.



Name: Lorraine Mellerick

Course: PE teaching

How did you pay for college? I had a job and my parents helped me also

Did you have any loans? Only for additional things like holidays and that sort of stuff; not regular ones for college.



Name: Thomas Connolly

Course: PE teaching

How did you pay for college? I had a part time job and my parents helped out

Did you have any loans? No



The Advice Bureau

The UL Counselling Service

Look at the person to the right of you, and to the person to the left of you; do they look normal? Yes? Well chances are one or both of them may have attended the UL Counselling Service at some stage during their time here in UL. On average five hundred students use this support service every year. Look at the people on either side of you again; do they still look normal? Of course they do, nothing about your appearance will drastically change if you venture down the CM corridor to visit the counselling department; you may even come away feeling better about yourself and your situation after just one session.

The UL Counselling Service is as old, if not older, as the some of the students who use it, and they have plenty of experience to show for it. The counsellors who work here in UL are all mental health professionals in the real world too and over the years they have seen and heard it all! There is no problem, big or small, that the counsellors won't have dealt with before so embarrassment is one excuse you can't use for not availing of their services. Neither is finding the time; there is a daily drop-in service from 11am to 12noon and from 3pm to 4pm and if that doesn't suit you can call in anytime to make an appointment. Waiting lists are never any longer than a week or so. Likewise the cost shouldn't be an issue. "The UL Counselling Service is always free and always confidential" the words used to introduce the service. Well chosen words for student folk. "Free" and "confidential", these words will always attract the attention of students especially the former and the latter more so in times of crisis, when you are most likely to need this particular support!

As someone who has used the service I would definitely recommend it to a friend. Don't get me wrong it's not always easy going; some times they really do have to be cruel to be kind, but by the time you are ready to stop attending counselling, be it after two, twelve or twenty sessions, things will hopefully be back on track and you will be free to enjoy the good things in life again. The service is not without its limits; it is not a 24 hour support for students nor are there any plans to make it one. The Samaritans, however do operate a 24 hour service on 1850 60 90 90.

Healthy Living Week

Caitríona McGrattan
Welfare Officer

Week one is the prefect time for all of us, young and old, new students and veterans of the UL, to take a good look at our lifestyles and see what we're doing right and where we're going wrong.

Whether you're the gym-tastic guy who doesn't have enough fibre in his life or the couch potato who lives on celery sticks, this week, the beginning of a new academic year, is the ideal time to get up and get active and what better way to start than by walking to the shop to buy the ingredients for a healthy feed.

'Five-a-day' we've all heard it before but how many of us take any notice of the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables we eat each day. Set yourself the challenge this week to eat your recommended five portions of fresh fruit and veg everyday and see how much better you feel on Sunday.

To help you along there will be free fruit available at lunch time in the main canteen courtesy of the Students' Union. There will also be useful information on healthy eating and living available for you to take away and read at your leisure.

There are also a limited number of recipe books, 101 Square Meals, for sale too, with all money raised from the sale of these books going into future healthy living promotions.

This week, healthy living week, is a chance for all of us to start afresh. A healthy body is essential for a healthy mind, so hey ho lets go!



The Accommodation Review Taskforce

Are you sick of viewing dingy bed-sits in Elm Park? Or smelly single rooms in College Court? Tired of looking at kips in Curragh Birin? Or over-priced box rooms in Briarfield? If you are then join the Students' Union Accommodation Review Taskforce this year and help us get rid of the dives of Castletroy.

Year after year certain landlords continue to advertise properties that are completely unsuitable for students to live in; they are dank, dirty and overpriced. This year we hope to start the process of reviewing all properties leased to students in the Castletroy area with the aim of highlighting the quality properties and shaming the landlords of shabby accommodation into improving theirs. Houses will be rated on a scale of one to ten, one beginning similar to a landfill site and ten being the Hilton.

Here's where you come in; we need students and staff to help us review as many properties as we can. The more people in involved the sooner we can relief the students of UL of the scourge of damp and infested houses! Free tickets to ULSU Ents for those who help! If you are interested in getting involved please send an email to welfare@ulsu.ie or call in to the welfare officer.

The Male Condom

Description

A barrier method that a man can use to help prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Also called

Rubbers, Johnnies, Trojans

How it Works

A thin sheath (cover) is rolled onto an erect penis before coming into contact with any part of the partner's body. Always use a condom for vaginal or anal sex. A condom should also be used for oral sex to create a barrier between the mouth and the penis.



Advantages

- Condoms are 98% effective with careful use
- Condoms are available without prescription in most chemists, supermarkets and are free of charge from the Students' Union Welfare Office
- Can be used with other methods to practice safer sex e.g. glyde dams, dental dams, gloves
- Should be used with other methods of contraception to prevent pregnancy including, for example, the pill.
- No medical side effects
- Other than total sexual abstinence, only condoms currently provide significant protection against HIV and other STIs
- With the exception of vasectomy, condoms are the only method of birth control available to men.

Drawbacks

- Putting it on correctly requires practice
- Condoms can get damaged if handled roughly or an oil-based lubricant is used
- Must be used before expiry date
- Condoms should be stored in a cool, dry place (not in a wallet). The latex in the condom will start to break down after just two days if stored incorrectly leaving the condom less effective.

'Don't be silly, wrap your willy!'

Let's talk about sex baby!

An Focal sex columnist Annie Glyde-Dammes

Welcome, if not back, then just to, college. For those of you who aren't familiar with my column I make sarcastic (usually), witty (debateable) and off-the-wall comments about sex in college; the pros, the cons, the comparisons – of products rather than people. Although I could do that if there was enough interest...

Anyway...welcome. You've opened your (or somebody else's) orientation packs, you're playing with the freebies and you're marvelling at the wonders of all this freedom and rein-loosening, even if that's just after the horrors of a summer at home. But before you take your pants off and join the sexual revolution that is college it's important to remember a few things about this bold, bright, new world and protect yourself to the best of your ability.

Regardless of your sexual history and gender, college is a time when you can be hurt, both physically and emotionally, so watch out

1. Be aware that people lie and that they have different expectations to yours. When that ridiculously charming and hot person of the opposite sex comes up to you in the Lodge and leads you to believe that you are the person for them, chances are what they mean is that you are the person for them, that night, not really in the "for-the-rest-of-yours-and-their-life" kind of way. Often it has nothing to do with a relationship and it won't lead there. If you want no-strings attached sex too, then go for it. But if you crave something more or believe something else then pass it up.
2. People rarely hold up a sign saying "I have an STI". You can tell a lot by looking at someone. You can't tell if they have an STI. And please don't give me that "It won't happen to me!" response, everyone says that and obviously it happens to someone or the "She looked clean" response, of course she did, people rarely go out for a night looking dirty. So suck it up, get tested if you're having sex with multiple people and always use condoms.
3. Occasionally free lubricant burns – be wary and have water nearby.
4. Keep contact with your friends on a night out - if you're going home with somebody let your friends know, even if it's just a short text saying "Gone for a quickie in Milford Grange with the blonde I met at the bar"! Your friends aren't your babysitters but they're bound to be concerned if they can't find you at home time and if they're not concerned - They should be!
5. The Welfare Officer in the Students' Union gives out free condoms and other contraception. They're reputable, good quality and my personal favourite, FREE. The Student Medical Centre has a specific contraception clinic which is also free. Naturally you have to pay for the prescription but the consultation and doctor's time is free - save yourself €50 and go there!



The Advice Bureau

PSA

Hi All!

Welcome to the first edition of the year of An Focal! This page will be the place to find all information about Postgraduate life on campus for the coming year.

First of all let me introduce myself and the Association. I'm Emma and I am President of Postgraduate Students Association (PSA) for the second year running. My role is to act as a social and academic representative for the postgraduate students on campus. I deal with all of the issues relating to postgraduates from academic related issues such as exam queries and supervision problems to the non-academic related issues such as financial aid, childcare, sexual health, accommodation and general well being.

As a postgraduate student you are automatically a member of the PSA and the easiest way of keeping in touch with is to visit the website www.ul.ie/~psa. I will be posting the lists of all the events coming up throughout the year on the site and through the new Postgraduate

Newsletter which will be circulated to all postgrads by e-mail fortnightly. So keep an eye out!

Some of the main areas which I will be promoting this year is the election of class rep and particularly postgraduate class reps as well as involvement in the PSA. There are positions to be filled for all taught classes as class reps as well as for the research students in every department across all of the Colleges! So come into the PSA or the SU, get a nomination and run for class rep. We also have an officer board with five positions in the PSA. Elections for these positions will be held during our AGM in Week 6 but I will update you on this in the next edition.

My points of wisdom for the year would be:

- Attend as many events as possible
- Be a class rep...or elect a class rep
- Bang on my door if you're unsure of anything!!.....That's what we're here for!



- Get involved in the PSA

So feel free to pop into my office in the Postgraduate Centre which is located just off the Stables Courtyard, my door is always open and I'd be only delighted to help you out and point you in the right direction. We have just re-vamped the space and will hold fortnightly events in the Centre. The common area is open and there to be used! So pop in and use the facilities! Keep an eye out for the posters with the PSA logo for the details about up and coming postgraduate events throughout the year. Hopefully along with the guys in the Students' Union we will try and make this year as entertaining and memorable as possible for you.

I hope you have a fantastic year and I'll see you around campus!

Emma

So, what did you do...
...while you were at UL?

An Focal & Pulse
giving a voice to students

**Have you got
something
to say?**

contact aoife breen
editor@ulsu.ie

Gaisce the President's Award

CHALLENGE YOURSELF:

1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
2. PERSONAL SKILL
3. PHYSICAL RECREATION
4. ADVENTURE JOURNEY

INTERESTED?

For further information take a look at our website www.ul.ie/gaisce or email gaisce@ul.ie

Gnóthaí Mac Léinn
Student Affairs

Out & About - the fortnight ahead - Ents Listings

Week 1
Monday 8th
Back to School Party
Trinity Rooms
Buses from Stables 10pm onwards
Tickets 10 Euro from SU

Tuesday 9th
Delorentos
The Stables 8pm
Tickets 10 Euro from SU

Dublin-based 4-piece Delorentos released one of the most hotly anticipated Irish albums of 2007, In Love With Detail, on nascent Irish independent label Cottage. The anticipation turned to adulation as the album was gratefully received by both public and critics. They last played in UL in October 2007 and pretty much ripped the Stables up. With a new album on the way and an awe inspiring performance at Oxegen 2008 signs are that this visit is going to be every bit as good. Not a bad way to start the year.

Wednesday 10th
UL Comedy Society presents
Dot Comedy Club
Jean Monet Theatre 7.30pm
Line up TBC

Thursday 11th

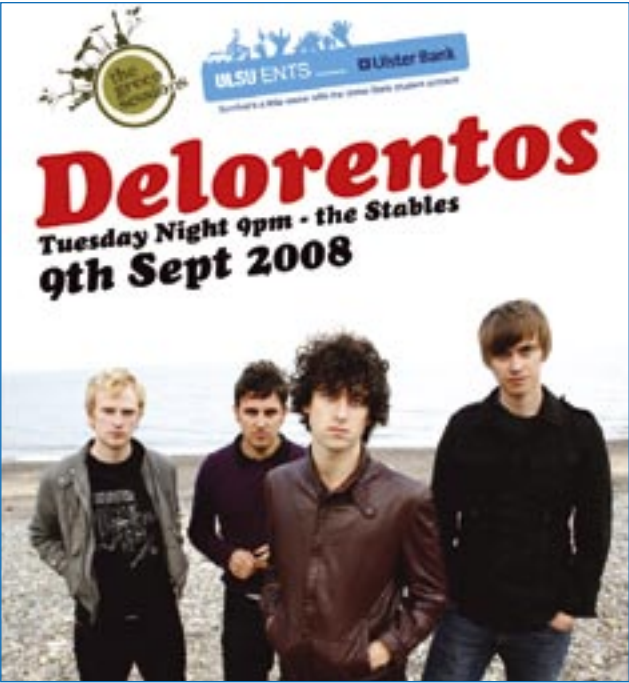
Mr Mystery Stage Hypnotist
Jean Monet Theatre 8pm
Tickets 10 Euro from SU

if it's infamy you seek then simply get hypnotized in your first week in college its a sure fire way of getting known by all and sundry. Alternatively you could just go and laugh at those who seek infamy... and there will always be a queue of people looking to look like a muppett. Its al fun and games.

Friday 12th
Beattorrent
Trinity Rooms
Late Gig

Something for the weekend, our nightclub of choice Trinity Rooms bring us the awesome talents of Beattorrent. Four times World DMC Team Champions C2C present The Beatorrent Tour featuring DJs Pfel & Atom. The Beattorrent show is an intense 90 minute journey through hip hop and electronica mixed with jaw dropping precision and skill, on 4 decks, by record breaking world champion DJs C2C's DJ Pfel and DJ Atom

Week 2
Tuesday 16th
The Venga Boys



The Stables 8pm
Tickets 12 Euros from SU

Yes its true ... The Venga Bus is indeed coming, so why not jump aboard. Whether you like it or not the Venga Boys are essential 90's listening and there going to bring the memories flooding back to the Stables as they belt out the hits and there are quite a few of them. We'll keep the 90's theme going throughout the night and onto the after party at Trinity Rooms.

Wednesday 17th
UL Comedy Society presents
Dot Comedy Club
Jean Monet Theatre 7.30pm
PJ Gallagher (To Be Confirmed)

Friday 19th
Justin Robertson
Trinity Rooms



A true legend of dance music Justin Robertson is back in town and if you're around for a weekend then you could do worse then choose to spend three hours in his company listening to what will be a kick ass set.

Saturday 20th
Japaneese Popstars
Trinity Rooms
They're not from Japan and they

ain't no Popstars but what they are is Ireland's Best Dance Music act and thats kind of official because thats the award they won at the Irish Dance Music Awards 2008. So if Friday ain't on then surely Saturday is more than a maybe.

Coming in Week 3
Ham Sandwich
Lisa Hannigan

Seemed like a good idea...



...here's a better one

€100 cash*

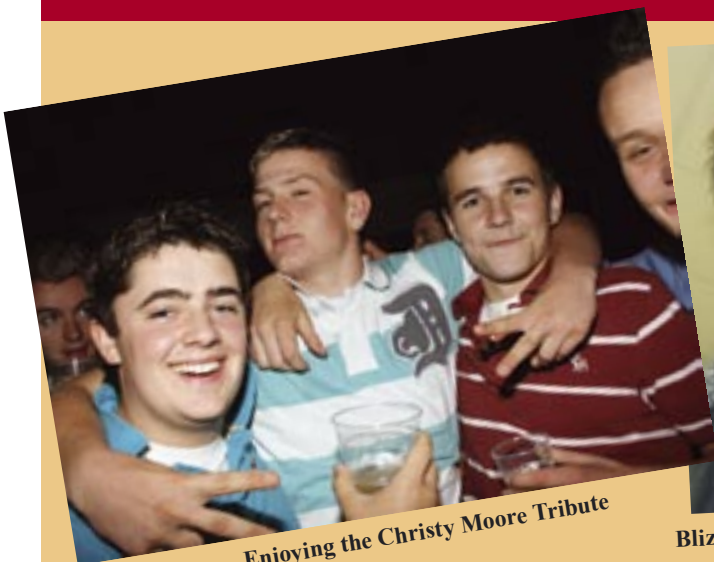
when you open and use your Student Account

Talk to Mike Moran, Sinead Barry or Pat Egan our Customer Advisors at Ulster Bank University of Limerick or call 061 216260 for more information.



*Ulster Bank will lodge €100 into new student accounts which meet the requirements set out in the terms and conditions. The first instalment of €10 will be paid not later than 30 November 2008 and the second instalment will be paid not later than 31 January 2009 provided the customer has continued to operate the account in accordance with the terms and conditions until that date. €100 offer ends 31 October 2008. Terms and conditions apply. Please see in branch brochure for full details. Ulster Bank Ireland Limited. A private company limited by shares, trading as Ulster Bank, Ulster Bank Group and Banc Uíladh. Registered in Republic of Ireland. Registered No. 25166. Registered Office: Ulster Bank Group Centre, George's Quay, Dublin 2. Member of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group. Ulster Bank Ireland Limited is regulated by the Financial Regulator. Calls may be recorded.

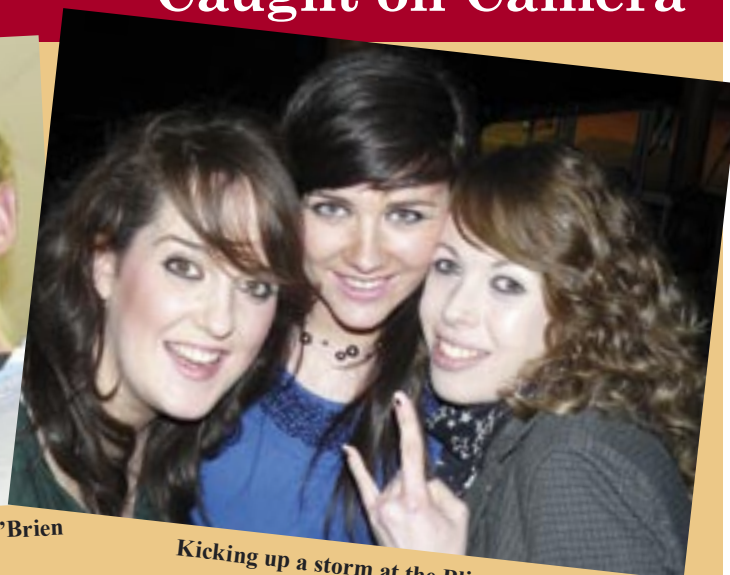
Caught on Camera



Enjoying the Christy Moore Tribute



Blizzards main man Niall Breslin with SU President Pa O'Brien



Kicking up a storm at the Blizzards



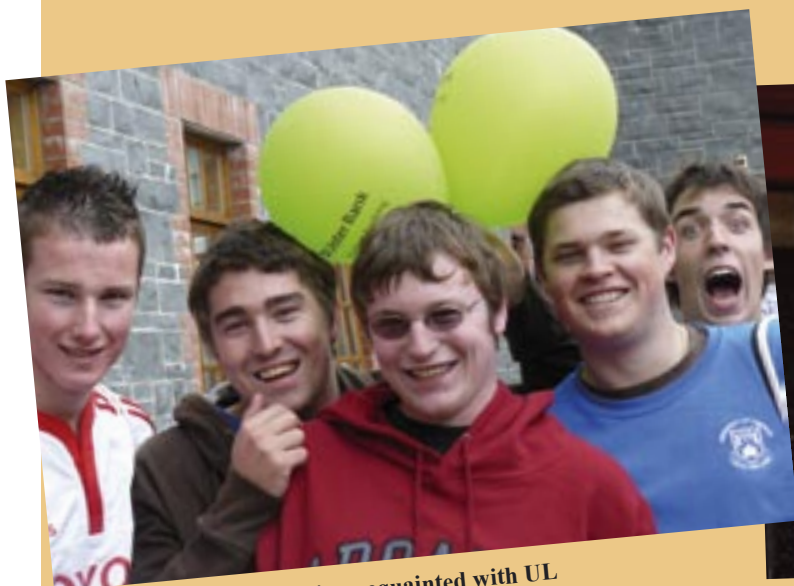
Singing along with the Christy Moore Tribute



Dressed up for the County Colours Ball



Fred on stage during Orientation week



Getting acquainted with UL



Christy himself (or his double, at least!)



Getting used to college life in the Stables



In training for the next season of Gladiators



Showing the love for Fred



Hearing about the SU during the orientation tour

Clubs & Socs Preview

Clubs & Socs Rocks!

So you've made it: either for the first time or back for another year. And how very welcome you are. College life is very much about getting a degree and doing some serious study. But what about those rare moments when you have time to pause, reflect and think about life and what you're going to do with it?

Well, you shouldn't have those moments if you're doing things correctly. With over sixty clubs and societies at UL how could you possibly have any free time? Between training sessions, workshops, talks and socials, the clubs and socs at UL will provide you with enough activities to keep you out of mischief and away from the books.

Head along to the Clubs and Socs Recruitment drive on Wednesday of Week 1 from 6 until 9 pm in the Arena and be prepared to be blown away by the choice. Have a sneak preview at some of the student-run organisations below and catch the rest of them tomorrow at the recruitment drive.

Ultimate Frisbee - Whats that?

Think Ultimate Frisbee is just about standing around throwing a frisbee? Wrong! Mostly wrong anyway...

Ultimate Frisbee or simply 'Ultimate' is a mixed gender team sport very common in the U.S. and Canada which is gradually spreading worldwide. Originally created by bored high school students in the U.S., it quickly spread to colleges and now even most Irish universities field a team. Played on pitch measuring 100m x 37m with 7 players on each side, the goal is complete a pass in the opposing team's endzone. The catch is that when you have possession of the frisbee (generally referred to as a disc) you can't move and must rely on your teammates to get free from their marker to receive your pass. Ultimate is non-contact but as in most non-contact sports, a certain amount of contact is expected when competing for a disc. The very nature of the sport encourages people to 'lay out' (dive) to catch the disc or make a block / interception which can make it exciting to watch and play. Ultimate can also be played 5 a-side indoors on area roughly the size of a basketball court which is pretty nice during the winter

months.

One of the more unique aspects of Ultimate is the 'spirit of the game' which encourages players to have fun and enjoy themselves without compromising competitiveness. Players call their own fouls and while you might think that unscrupulous players might take advantage of this, in reality this almost never happens. Not only are players responsible for calling fouls at the lower levels of competitive play, players are still responsible for calling their own fouls at the highest level of play – at the world championships. In keeping with the spirit of the game, most tournaments tend to have a strong social aspect to them where the competing teams gather together for a party thrown by the tournament hosts.

So if you're interested in enjoying yourself and trying something a little different come check out the UL Ninjas. Last year we attended 8 tournaments and a few friendly matches in places like Galway, Cork, Dublin and Amsterdam as well as a few beach ultimate tournaments during the summer months. We host our own tournament right here at UL in Spring called the Siege of Limerick. Two club members also

represented Ireland in the Beach Ultimate championships in France. This year we plan to go to all those places and more (Belfast!). Everyone is welcome whether they are male or female and you don't have to be athletic to play (although it doesn't hurt). It's a fun way to get in shape regardless. Find us at www.ulultimate.com or contact us at email@email.com. If you see someone throwing a disc around campus it's probably one of us so feel free to join in!

Trigger Happy with Photo Soc

The UL Photographic Society has been in existence for the past ten years. The Society works with all the Clubs and Societies on campus to help cover events and outings that take place over the academic year.

All you need to join the Photo Soc is time and a little money. Membership is just €5 for the year and this gives you access to the expertise and knowledge of the committee, the equipment of the club and the possibility to travel around Ireland and take shots of the amazing scenery and wildlife.

You don't have to own a digital camera 'cos there are ones available in the club, but it helps!

Every year the Photo Society is requested to cover sporting and social events, both for the clubs or societies involved in these events or for An Focal the college newspaper. Last year saw an increase in demand for photographers from the society to cover events. This gave our members the opportunity to develop their photographic skills, get their work published and enjoy the atmosphere of the function. There are also opportunities to cover events organised by the 'Ents'. So there are plenty of possibilities enabling our members to have their work published or just have an opportunity to develop their skills in a variety of situations from outdoor sporting events to a gig in the Stables or maybe a ball in one of the local hotels. We also provide weekly tutorials on common photographic topics.

Visit our website at www.photo.ul.ie or email us photo@ul.ie for more information.



It's cool to get

It's that time of year again! Welcome back to all returning students, and welcome to UL to all the new 1st year, erasmus and post-grad students!

Now that you have every club and society in UL after you to join them, it's hard to make the choice of which ones to join. It all depends on what you're after

If you're a bit of an adrenalin-junkie, feeling a bit adventurous, or just want to try something different then you should look into Skydive UL - UL's skydiving club. You don't need to have done it before – we can provide all the training you need to become a fully certified skydiver. And no, you don't have to jump tandem (strapped onto

someone) for your first jump, you can jump on your very own.

The club is one of the youngest in UL, we are just going into our second full year and already have a very strong member base, some of whom will be seen around campus recruiting new members in the first few weeks of the semester.

First jump courses are run every Saturday of the year at the Skydiving Centre (Skydive Ireland near Nenagh, just 20 minutes from UL), as well as limited number of courses that will be run mid-week.

People automatically assume that skydiving is an expensive sport, but thanks to funding from the Students' Union as well as group discounts from Skydive Ireland, becoming a

member of Skydive UL makes it easily affordable and very accessible..

In the past 12 months, we have visited a skydiving centre in Garvagh near Belfast, the windtunnel in London, Empuriabrava in the south of Spain, and Gap Tallard in the south of France. Not to mention all the weekly jumping just out the road near Nenagh and this year we intend on doing everything bigger!!

We also won The Best New or Improved Club Award at last year's Clubs and Societies Awards.. How could you not join with us??

Points of contact: Parachute Packing Classes - Monday's from 6.30pm / info@skydiveul.org / skydiveul.org Blue Skies!!

Clubs & Socs Preview

Outdoor Pursuits Club



Interested in climbing? This is the club to show you the ropes. Ever think to yourself “I’d like to go to mountains to put my life in the hands of someone holding a rope and some gear no bigger than a nut” then you’ll enjoy our mountaineering and climbing. If you don’t like getting high, why not try the opposite direction and go caving with us. Still not interested? Then you can always learn orienteering. This skill is handy when you spend a night out in Limerick, have a few drinks and then need to blindly find your way home again. Then there’s our most popular activity – hill walking. You get to see the corners of the country and the beauties of Ireland during the day and then get to know some great people over a pint that evening.

Last year the club went to Scotland where we climbed the UK’s highest peak Ben Nevis and got to play in the snow, Spain to get a nice tan

while sport climbing and we are just back from climbing the Alps in Switzerland.

We can bring up you the highest peak in Ireland, Carauntoohill and you can do some trad climbing in the Burren on our weekly trips. Being Ireland, we can’t depend on the weather so we have our very own indoor climbing wall which is free for members. Whether you’re Irish, on ERASMUS or Study Abroad, come join the OPC in making your years in college the best you can.

To find out more about the club and joining us to make your time in UL something a bit more insane check out <http://www.ulopc.com> or email info@ulopc.com or you can always come talk to us all down at the climbing wall in the old PEZZ building Mondays, Tuesdays or Thursdays from 7pm – 10pm during the semester, you can even do some climbing while you’re there.

Mountain Bike UL

Beginner cycles every Sunday
Leave from UL Boathouse at 11am
Bikes & helmets available
Book on forum at mbul.csn.ul.ie
All abilities welcome

e-mail: mtbclub@skynet.ie web: mbul.csn.ul.ie
phone: 086-3780983

Skynet rises up

First of all on behalf of all the committee I would like to welcome you back to another academic year. We plan to up the ante and run even more events, talks and competitions than last year or (hopefully) any of the previous years. As usual we will be present with a stall at the Clubs and Socs recruitment fair on Wednesday of week 1 so come on down and drop in!

UL Windsurfing Club

For those of you out there considering trying their hand at something new I couldn’t recommend more highly the sometimes fast, sometimes leisurely and always fun windsurfing.

On my first walk around the Sports Arena on the Wednesday of Clubs & Socs night I was attracted to the photos of people splashing around in waters ranging from the cool Rusheen Bay in Galway, the high octane waves of Belmullet and the balmy waters of the Dominican Republic.

Then of course there was the selling power of the members of the club. I was assured that my first day on the water would see me master the basics and they didn’t lie.

All of our beginners have fun on their introduction day to the sport and some even manage to start turning and getting their sea legs a short way into their first lesson. Here is a sport that can be approached as a nice relaxing way to take in the scenery or for the adrenaline junkies a lesson in how to go faster.

I’ve been a member for the past two years and while I’m not the most sporty of people I’ve progressed fairly well. Some of the people who joined at the same time are reaching an advanced level of the sport which goes to show that you make of it what you want.

There is a constant stream of new members, mostly beginners, and some who have tried the sport before, and as we are lucky enough to have

access to some fantastic instructors from both within the club and at some of the best centres in Ireland we are able to offer a great experience for our members.

Last year the club started its year with beginners’ trips to Rusheen Bay, Galway and an overnight trip there as an icebreaker. The social aspect of the club has benefited us in that we are a friendly crew and members are willing to pitch in with the running of the club and fundraising as they’re assured of a good night on the tiles.

Castlegregory, Kerry, is now the base of club activities and not only a brilliant location for windsurfing but also a beautiful area to visit. The club travelled to the island of Fuerteventura, Canary Islands, last

January for a ten day trip that proved to be worthwhile in that it was cheaper than staying for a similar trip in Ireland along with sunny weather and conditions that make it the home of the windsurfing world cup each summer. Our final trip last year was to Achill Island to windsurf with one of the top instructors in the country (and a dance off against NUIG’s surf club).

This is just a sample of what the club got up to last year and with more planned this year it’s sure to be fun and frantic. Come visit us at our stand (we’ll be the ones with the big sails) or alternatively contact us through the website at www.ul.ie/~winds

Mark Ryan and a big sail

Welcome Back from U.L TaeKwonDo Club

Welcome back to the University of Limerick for another academic year from the UL TaeKwonDo Club. The Club has had a quiet summer, for a change, the one exception being our association’s summer camp which was held in Orlando, Florida in June of this year. A full week of martial arts training across all the disciplines, which all the attendees (including some from the local Limerick clubs) agreed was one of the best summer schools they have yet attended.

For people interested in the club, the UL TaeKwonDo Club has been training on campus for over 15 years now. TaeKwonDo is a Korean martial art which has been around, in various incarnations, since the 4th century. It is probably one of the most all-encompassing martial arts in existence today: - covering aspects such as conditioning, traditional techniques, sparring, martial arts theory, kicking techniques, boxing, ground fighting and self-defence.

The club trains twice a week in the PESS Building here on campus. For more information on what’s coming up over the term or to enquire about any aspect of the club, training, etc visit <http://tkdo.ul.ie> or email ul.taekwondo@gmail.com.

For this coming term, it looks like another busy time for us. We’ll be on-hand at the Clubs & Socs recruitment drive Wednesday of Week 1 to welcome back existing members, enrol new members and answer any questions people might have.

We will be hosting the Munster Championships again this year after their success in 2007, a national competition which all are welcome to compete in. We’re hoping to organise two training trips this term as well: - one to NUIG’s Taekwondo Club to train in Galway over a weekend, and one to Glasgow, Scotland for a weekend class with Master Kirkwood, 6th degree black belt.



In addition to this, we’ll be organising a Halloween and Christmas party for our members, as well as social nights out throughout the term.

So, once again welcome back, here’s hoping this year is all you want it to be... and we’ll see you soon!

For those of you interested but can’t make it we also offer online subscription, see <http://www.skynet.ie/membership.php> for details.

After this and on every Wednesday night at 9pm we will be head to Java’s cafe for our weekly meet ups. In addition to this we also meet up for Lunch, also on Wednesdays at 1pm in the Stables. These are perfect chances not only to meet new people but also to put names to those ever elusive faces.

As for events we’ve got an action packed year planned. There is the return of the ever popular Wavehunt and The Skynet game, more talks a trip abroad and a couple of new additions that will be showcased soon.

A Wavehunt involves people equipped with anything that can pick up a wireless network (Laptops, Nintendo DS, PSP, the list is nearly endless) out all over the campus (I know the great outdoors!) trying to find a rogue Wireless Network in the hands of someone who definately does not want to be found! Its great craic and there are fun prizes to be won.

The Skynet Game is a week of hellish puzzles that are designed to truly

test your brain. For more info and all the old puzzles see <http://game.skynet.ie>

In addition to these 2 events we will also be hosting talks by some of the leading figures in their field. In previous years we’ve had representatives from Google, Intel, HEAnet, Redhat, Microsoft, Sun, Demonware, Debian, Ubuntu, Oracle, IBM and many many more.

Each year we also do at least one international trip. In previous years we’ve gone to such far off places as MIT in Boston, or to places closer to home like CeBit in Germany or LUGradioLive in Wolverhampton. And of course this year will be no different and we are already planning. More details will be posted soon so watch this space!

So as you can see this year will hopefully prove to be one to definitely remember.

For more info on anything seen here see <http://www.skynet.ie> in the Stables/Javas on Wednesdays or drop us a mail at events@skynet.ie.

--Skynet Committee

Clubs & Socs Preview

Krav Maga Club

Coming to the University of Limerick sometime in October is “Krav Maga” a Hebrew word meaning, close combat.

Krav Maga is not so much a martial art but more a system of defence; the Israelis originally developed it as a system of training men and women who had little or no close quarter/combat skills and have them battle ready in a very quick time and with a good standard of fitness/hand to hand fighting skills for their army.

The whole ideology of Krav Maga is to deal and end a life-threatening situation to ones self or others in the quickest most effective manner be it from single or multiple

attackers.

Practinors of Krav Maga do not therefore train for long drawn out fighting or competition, but instead take a scientific approach to learning defence skills to end conflict quickly.

Darren Simring who is a member of the International Krav Maga Academy will head up the new club coming to U L, Darren is a level four blue stripe in the system, Darren will be assisted in the club by other visiting Krav Maga instructors, one of which Richard Lyons a former Munster heavy weight boxing champ and holder of the silver medal in the Irish open ground fighting finals, along with the superb karate and

Krav Maga master Keith O'Donnell known to many on the combat Karate circuit.

Darren feels with the expert assistance from the lads in kicking, punching and ground fighting plus his own background that it should make for a successful and enjoyable Krav Maga club.

Darren and the lads look forward to seeing new students of all levels of ability and fitness and feel that there is definitely something in Krav Maga for everyone.

For further info on Krav Maga please contact Darren on 0872633990-0r simringdarren@hotmail.com

Go BALListic and bounce with UL Basketball Club

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the University of Limerick. University can be a daunting move so a great way to get involved in the college culture is to join a family – i.e. the Basketball Club !

Basketball is synonymous with UL and now is your chance to be part of that as a player, official, coach or administrator. Joining the club is not all about what goes on while on the court, there is a wide social element and the forming of life long friendships.

The Club comprises of both men's and women's basketball. The women have a great record in Varsities basketball, winning the title 13 times. However, they have missed out on the last two years and this year with your help, we would like to retain the title of Ireland's best.

The Men's team have reached the final twice. However, they were unsuccessful on both occasions, but who knows the link we've been missing could be reading this now.

For Fresher's there is a stand alone competition and this takes place in UL around mid November. this is definitely one to look out for while in the Club.

The facilities that the Basketball club have are world class training in the University Arena and having use of facilities such as the Fitness Centre, wwimming pool and one to one coaching..

The best time to join the club is on 10 September, in the University Arena at the Clubs and Socs recruitment night , we will have a stand there and you'll find us. If not, we'll find you!

Alternatively you can contact me and I will point you in the right direction. For our training times, log on to our website: www.skynet.ie/~basketball

DebU

Now in its 15th year, UL's Debating Union – or DebU – has strived to encourage not just freedom of speech but also an attitude towards life, where you never take anything for granted, but where you seek to question and challenge, through discussion and debate.

As well as our more philosophical aspirations, joining the DebU means that you the chance to party at college tournaments all over Ireland and Britain, from Galway to Glasgow, and Cork to Cambridge. Over the past 12 months, DebU members have competed at and attended international tournaments in Istanbul, Estonia, Thailand, Belgrade and Prague.

Competitive debating is just one

aspect of DebU though. The social side of DebU is really where it's at. From regular parties, to karaoke nights, paint-balling and the like, joining a debating society definitely is not just about nerdy conversations about how China are going to take over the world (though that does happen on occasion).

Whilst going to college is all about getting an education, that doesn't mean you can't have fun while you're doing it. That said, DebU aims to be an independent student voice on campus where you can discuss anything, from free fees to legalising weed, to justifying the existence of Israel.

This semester has many great evenings lined up. In week 7, we welcome RTE correspondent and Prime Time host Mark Little to address the society on the pending

American election. In week 9, DebU will also host a debate with local support group ADAPT, on the motion that pornography encourages violence against women.

The first meeting, however, will kick off on Tuesday of Week 2. In a joint collaboration with the Journalism Society, the house will discuss the realities of living in Limerick on the motion 'That This House Believes 'Stab City' is a Media Myth'. Guest speakers include Irish Times journalist Colm Keena and local FG councillor Diarmuid Scully.

So, if jet-setting around the globe, partying and of course debating all of life's big questions seems like something you're after, come find us in the Arena on Wednesday of Week 1.

UL Socialist Youth

Members of UL Socialist Youth are just back from the annual national SY Summer Festival, and we're ready for a very active year on campus. We'll kick-off by showing Michael Moore's first film, 'Roger & Me', about the impact of job cuts and recession on his home town of Flint, on Societies Day (Wednesday, Week 1), at 8pm, in UL-SU Room 3.

Joe Higgins, former TD and Socialist Party rep, will be down soon to speak about his recent travel around South America, making a documentary for TG4 about Che

Guevara. We'll also be hosting a meeting discussing how we can build a campaign to stop fees, with a number of different invited speakers. Hopefully an active campaign can be built on campus throughout the year.

Other highlights will be commemorations of the 90th anniversary of the Limerick Soviet, when the city was run by the workers. That'll include a tour of the sites, guided by local historian and expert on the subject. There will also be an International Conference in Belgium. Throughout the year we'll

be discussing things like the US elections, the economic crisis, how the profit system will destroy people's lives, climate change and workers struggles throughout the world. We'll also organize debates with other political groups.

We'll keep up our campaigning record which last year saw us going to protests in Rossport against Shell, campaigning against the Lisbon Treaty and holding an anti-racist rally on campus. We also have a great record nationally, having initiated the Campaign for Free Education in 2003 (that defeated that attempt to reinstate college fees) and Youth Against War.

UL Poker Society

Welcome back everyone and hello newbies! The UL Poker Society will be hosting weekly Texas Hold 'Em Poker Tournament in the Sports Bar. You can have your self a nice friendly game of cards or a mean one, whichever you think will get you enough to survive.

The Poker Society put on nice friendly games with a good atmosphere and a blind structure that only took us over two years to perfect. Along with the weekly tournaments, Liam Duffy takes over the presidency with a fresh face and

new ideas, some of the older members will be on hand Mike Coultry and Diarmuid Healy will pop there head in and I'll be around every now and again as well.

We are not just for the "pro's", there will be beginner classes in Texas Hold 'Em and we are also hoping to get classes in the other forms of poker going, from your bog standard 5 Card Draw to 7 Card Omaha High/Low Strange games. Along with the beginner classes we have information on every major poker site, how to access them from

your student accommodation, what offers are available to you and UL exclusive online games

Anyone interested in meeting new people, and having some extra-curricular should come along Monday nights. Or if you would like to change a few things in Poker Soc you should think of joining the committee. Why not try it out and if you don't want jump straight in there is always event organisers needed (you arrange the trip and go for free).

So pop down anytime you want and see for yourself. Marvel at our casino standard equipment and few (one) professional trained dealers.

Journo Soc

The UL Journalism Society is one of the newest and most interesting societies available on campus this year. Founded just last November, the society has been cutting its teeth by hosting events on-campus and attending events such as the National Journalism Conference in UCC. Last year saw UL graduate Barry Duggan of the Irish Independent give a talk on his life as a journalist, as well as a seminar on journalism and modern technology featuring guests from both the print and electronic media industry.

The Journalism Society is there to provide encouragement, support

and information for aspiring writers on campus. We will have close links to An Focal and Pulse, as well as hoping to publish our own magazine during the year. We hope to run informal workshops during the year to help improve your writing skills, knowledge of the journalism industry, portfolio building and other expertise so that writers have the best chance possible in getting started in journalism. For New Media and Journalism students, the society offers a relaxed environment in which to hone your skills.

If you're interested in getting involved, come and visit our stand

at the Clubs and Socs fair in Week 1 to get more information or sign up. Alternatively, come along to our first event in Week 2; a debate co-hosted with the UL Debating Union on media attitudes to Limerick city will see a number of guests with specialist knowledge give their view. The event will take place at 7:30pm on Wednesday, Week 2 in the Jonathon Swift lecture theatre.

If you're interested in getting even more involved, elections for positions on our Committee for the year will be held early this semester. If you want any more information, email uljournalism@gmail.com.

Max's BARBERS
 whitethorns, castletroy
 061-339855

professional stylists offering the best cut in Castletroy!

opening hours:
 mon-thurs: 09:30-18:00
 fri: 09:30 - 19:00
 sat: 09:00 - 17:30
 - haircuts - colour - products

Student Haircut Only €10!

present this coupon.
 Mon - Thurs only
 Valid until 31 October 2008

Student discount available Mon-Thurs with student ID

V is for Victory



adrian garvey celebrates his touchdown

They came, they saw and they conquered.

Sunday 10 August is a date etched into Viking history now – and not that of the Scandinavian warriors.

The campus American football club, UL Vikings, took their second national title in a row defeating Leinster rivals the Dublin Rebels at the CIT Stadium.

Facing the Dublin team in the Shamrock Bowl XXII, the Vikings stood hard and held out for victory in the end.

Going into the lead with game MVP Adrian Garvey’s touchdown from 23 yards out, the Vikes refused to allow any Dublin rebellion to rise up against the local side.

Boasting a 14-3 lead at half time, the Limerick team maintained a steady lead against their counterparts.

Darragh O’Callaghan added to the Viking score with his own touchdown later in the second quarter.

After the second half, there was a murmur of revenge seeping through the Rebels, emphasising the character that underpinned four-time champions this decade. Their strength held out to reward

them with a touchdown and narrow the gap to just 14-12.

The fourth quarter was dominated by defense in an intense nail-biting finish. And then it was over. The Vikings had done it; 14-12 on the scoreboard meant that they retained their title. National champions again.

Scorers:		
1st Quarter:	0-3	(Rebels) Paul Grogan 28 yard FG.
2nd Quarter:	6-3	(Vikings) Adrian Garvey 20 yard TD
14-3	(Vikings) Darragh O’Callaghan INT Return TD	(Seamus Feehan 2xpt from JP Nerbun).
3rd Quarter:	14-5	(Rebels) Safety
14-12	(Rebels) Paul Smyth TD from Andy Dennehy, (Paul Grogan 1xpt)	
4th Quarter:	No Scoring	



Club

Vikings Crush a weak Rebellion

Danny Smith

The UL Vikings arrived at Shamrock Bowl XXII looking to retain their national title that they had won a year before in Limerick. The newly built and modern CIT Stadium hosted a large crowd, with Limerick fans easily outnumbering their Dublin counterparts. The Vikings faced their rivals the Dublin Rebels and sought revenge for their regular season defeat at the hands of the Dublin outfit.

The game began with the Vikings kicking off to Dublin and Kevin Finnegan returned the ball into Limerick territory. Rebels Quarterback Andy Dennehy then proceeded to lead a well executed drive to get to the Limerick red zone. Finnegan was the main threat for Dublin from the Running Back position. The Vikings defense then stepped up their game and big tackles from Kieran Coen and Bill Parkinson helped stop the Dublin drive. Vikings QB JP Nerbun then took over but had trouble moving the ball initially against the tough Dublin defense.

A great punt by Danny Smith put Dublin under pressure but they continued to move the ball well and got back into Limerick territory. A fumble by the Vikings was recovered by the Rebels and they then opened the scoring with a 28 yard field goal by Paul Grogan which put them up 3-0. The Vikes then steeled their resolve and began to gain yards on offense. JP Nerbun completed passes to Tight End Glen Carr and Receiver Marc Ashworth, and game MVP Adrian Garvey made some big gains on the ground.

This pressure continued and the Rebels were powerless to stop the drive. Garvey punched in the first touchdown of the game from 23 yards out with a dazzling run combining great speed, elusive moves and crushing strength at the end to put him over the line. The blocking of Mark Thompson, Brendan Moroney, Jim Davis, Kieran Coen, Dave Moloney and Glen Carr was also crucial on the drive. The Vikings’ extra point was

unsuccessful.

The Rebels then took to the air in a bid to regain the lead. With Dennehy looking over the middle to find his favourite target, Tight End Paul Smyth, Vikings Linebacker Darragh O’Callaghan stepped in front of the Dublin Quarterback’s pass, juggled it for a moment and then secured possession. The Viking defense then turned to blockers and in what resembled a feeding frenzy, O’Callaghan found running room and took the ball all the way back for another Viking touchdown. The sizeable Limerick crowd went crazy after the play. On the 2 point conversion play, JP Nerbun threw a spectacular fade pass to Seamus Feehan who snagged the ball and kept his feet in bounds for the score to put the Vikings up 14-3 just before halftime. This score would prove crucial at the final whistle.

The third quarter saw the Rebels come back strongly and show what had made them champions four times this decade. They were



running back adrian garvey behind the viking’s defensive line; the victorious viking team

awarded 2 points for a safety for an illegal block on a punt. They then put together their first touchdown drive through great running from Ross McCooley and Kevin Finnegan which was capped by a touchdown pass to Tight End Paul Smyth. Paul Grogan kicked the extra point. This cut the Vikings lead to two points and set up an intense finish to the game.

The fourth quarter was dominated by both defenses and was a showcase of tense and entertaining football. Garvey continued to pound away on the ground getting the Vikings valuable first downs and keeping

the Rebels out of range of scoring. The Vikings defense made some huge stops this quarter with Danny Smith, Mark Gaffney, Cormac Ryan and Kieran Coen making important tackles. The Rebels still managed to move the ball into field goal range and attempted the kick to put them one point up with 3 minutes left. Kieran Coen and Glen Carr surged through the Rebels line and both got a fingertip to the ball as it sailed goalward. The ball was blocked and the kick was no good. The Vikes then drove the back up the pitch and took 2 minutes off the clock thanks to some great running from Garvey.

When the Rebels finally got the ball back there were less than two minutes on the clock and the atmosphere in the stadium was electric as every play in the drive was life or death.

Dennehy completed a number of passes and the Rebels were moving well until the Vikings Safety Liam Ryan made a diving interception in front of Paul Smyth to seal the game and secure the Vikings second National Championship. Adrian Garvey then picked up a first down to run out the clock and the Vikings celebrated their second national championship in two years.



shane lynch of the kayak club

Summer of fun for UL kayakers

Siobhan Hinchy

Summer 2008 was a fantastic one for UL’s kayakers with one of the clubs largest groups ever heading to the Alps for a fortnight weeks of whitewater kayaking, two teams competing in canoe polo competitions across the country and record water levels that put a grin from ear to ear on every whitewater kayaker in the country.

Late May saw 32 kayakers from beginners through to instructors head to France for a fortnight of whitewater kayaking. On arrival in France the rain fell in record levels. The campsites looked like paddy fields (not because they were full of Irish people!) and river access was closed to all recreational river users due to the record flood levels. After many a mud fight the group piled into the cars and vans and headed on to new pastures in search of sunnier weather and accessible rivers.

Although the group covered nearly 4,000 kilometres and 6 different campsites in the two weeks they weren’t left disappointed. They settled in Val Sessia, Italy for the final week where the sun shone through the clouds and the river levels were perfect. It was also home to a few other university kayak clubs from across the country so there was plenty of fun and games to be had.

It was an exciting week of kayaking with everything from grade 2 beginner runs, grade 3 intermediate and a few grade 4 drops thrown in for the thrill seekers. The freshers really styled it up showing some of the older crew how things really should be done! Eight of the group passed their level 4-advanced proficiency including two of the clubs newest members.

There wasn’t much rest to be gained either when the group returned home with canoe polo competitions held throughout July and August in Killaloe, Eniskillen and Kilcock. Two teams competed winning a place in nearly every competition.

The record rain and water levels throughout the summer also gave the kayakers plenty to smile about. Rivers that are normally dry during the summer months were at perfect water levels and with daylight until late in the evening many kayakers were hitting the rivers after their days work.

The summer ended with the official “back to college party” and a surf weekend in Easkey, Co. Sligo attended by college kayak clubs from across the country.

This year will see continued success for UL’s “best club 2008” with pool sessions starting in week 1 in the University Sports Arena pool on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:40pm - 22:40pm. Fresher’s night is due to take place in the sports bar on Wednesday 17th September, week 2. There is a surf trip to Lahinch in October and whitewater weekends in Kerry and Wicklow before Christmas.

“A dream come true”

Ciara Peelo talks to An Focal

Liam Togher

Friday 8 August 2008: the eyes of not just the sporting world, but the global population in general, are on Beijing. Seven years after being awarded hosting rights for the Olympic Games, the moment has arrived for the Chinese capital city to show its best face to the watching millions. Amid all the controversy over China’s political situation with Tibet that provoked

calls from some quarters to boycott the Games, the Opening Ceremony in the Bird’s Nest stadium is awash with colour and celebration. When it came to Ireland’s turn to walk into the arena, leading the way with the Tricolour in her hands was UL graduate Ciara Peelo.

Ciara was representing her country in the Olympics sailing competition last month and is a former member of the UL sailing club, for which she continues to

have much affection. “It’s a great club to be a part of,” she stated. “It was fantastic to be a member of such an active organisation. There was always something going on with them. I made some really great friends there and I will always look back with fondness at my time with the club.”

When Ciara came to talk about her experiences of the Beijing Olympics, the emotion in her voice can be heard most clearly. “It was

simply amazing, absolutely brilliant. Leading the Irish team into the stadium and carrying the national flag is a dream come true. It’s something I dreamed of when I was a child and it is an incredible feeling to fulfil this achievement.” Her euphoria at being the flag-bearer, though, is balanced out by the disappointment of not doing herself justice in competition. “I know I could and probably should have done better,” she rued, having

finished 20th in the radial laser event, which involved a total of 28 boats.

Ciara is not one to dwell on this letdown, however, and her focus is clearly in what lies ahead. “I’ll continue doing what I love. I’ll keep training and putting in the work and I’m hoping to compete at the Olympics again in 2012. I’m already looking ahead to London in four years’ time. I have no concrete plans right now but I definitely want to

be at the Olympic Games again when they come around. I feel that I have some unfinished business to take care of.” Like all of the best sporting competitors, she’s only thinking about the future. She’s had one or two bad days but that is not doing to discourage her any bit. Here’s hoping that we have not seen the last of Ciara Peelo at the Olympic Games.

UL Sports Round-Up

UL Shokotan Karate

Training for karate will be getting underway shortly. Times are as follows: Monday 7.30 - 8.30am Dance Studio Arena, Tuesday 6.15 - 8.00pm PESS Building Gym, Wednesday 7.30 - 8.30am Dance Studio Arena and Thursday 8.15 - 10.00pm PESS Building Gym.

Ladies Football

There have been plenty of UL Ladies footballers who have made their presence felt in this year’s TG4 Championship. Aoife Herbert of Mayo aswell as Brid Stack and Geraldine O’Flynn Cork have all reached the semi final stage and will be hoping to appear on All Ireland final day. Louise Brett also contributed 2 points for Sligo in their quarter final defeat against Monaghan.

UL Bohs

UL Bohemians start their season on October 12 with a home game against Galwegians. After playing several of their home ties in the UL Bowl last season Bohs are returning to Thomond Park this time around.

Soccer

Many of last year’s UL soccer squad are impressing in the Eircom League First Division with Limerick 37. James Hayes, Chimka Manjor and Brian Cleary have all made appearances for either the first team side or the A Championship team. Darren Harrington was also part of the squad before being released in August.

Fantasy Football

Anyone interested in joining the UL fantasy league on premierleague.com? The code is 312760-68704. Can you beat current table toppers Ragball Rovers? Only one way to find out!

New Writers Welcome!

If you are interested in writing for An Focal Sport we are always looking out for new signings to boost our squad. No experience required! The last couple of years have been very exciting in the sports department with plenty of craic to be had and this year will be no different. Send an email to liamt505@yahoo.ie or mossy.mccarthy@gmail.com

Contact Us!

Passionate about UL sport? Leave us your comments on our flashy bebo site www.bebo.com/anfocalsport or email the sports editor liamt505@yahoo.ie. All suggestions, comments and queries are welcome. Give it a lash!



UL Ladies Rugby Back In Action

Fiona Reidy

UL Ladies Rugby team is arguably one of the most successful teams in the University with a proud and distinguishable record in all of its competitions. Our success stems from the hard work and dedication of all members not just the experienced members, but our new members also.

New players are crucial to this team’s success and every year it is the influx of these new plays that helps initiate its success. We pride ourselves on our professional approach on the field and probably most important our ability to have fun as a team off the field also. Many players who began playing rugby for the first time in years gone by here in UL have gone onto play with Munster, Leinster, Connaught and even Ireland. This shows the vast and unlimited experience our members gain while playing with this team. We stress that absolutely no experience is required and new members are very welcome. So if you want to try a new, exciting and exuberating sport come along and give Ladies Rugby a go! You will be sure to like it. Strong friendships are formed amongst members and there is a great bond and rapport amongst everyone.

Our competitions begin this year

with a ten a side blitz in early October in Cork. The All Ireland League Campaign kicks off with two matches in November, while the remaining three league games take place in February. Our competitions really begin to hot up in March. The league finals take place during the first week of March with our main event of the year, The Intervarsities, taking place the following week. This is a two day event hosted by a different university every year. The first day consists of several pool games before the semi-final and finals on day two. It is an event which is eagerly awaited

by all members of the team. Last year UL chased an amazing ninth varsity title on the trot at NUI Maynooth. After defeating Cork IT in the semi final unfortunately our efforts came up short against the Garda College at the final hurdle.

Training will be on Monday evenings at 6pm starting from week two on Maguires Pitch. Call the numbers below to clarify times. So come along and give it a go! For more information contact ulladiesrugby@hotmail.com or contact Fiona Reidy 086-1023841/ Sarah Hogan 087-9003042.



Club

Heroes Just For One Day

Tomás McCarthy is looking forward to the new season

The great thing about the college sport season is its ability to produce the unpredictable. It provides a wonderful opportunity for the underdogs the unheralded to get their one moment in the sun.

Never was that more the case when the UL Junior hurlers claimed the All Ireland title last year. It's a harsh fact that this will be the high point for many of those players. For that one moment though when the final whistle blew it could have been Croke Park. Players like Niall Lynch, Danny Reid, Brian Phelan and Kevin Larkin may never grace the big days but colleges hurling has given the platform for them to show what they can do. It was certainly one of the sporting highlights last term. In true UL fashion the trophy was subsequently paraded around The Lodge that night. The game sure wasn't pretty but the result was all that mattered to Brendan Cawley's men.

College sport gives players an opportunity to play the game at all levels which makes it so unique.

A few weeks ago the UL Vikings started the season on a high powering their way to the Shamrock Bowl for a second year running. Many UL students would barely have a passing interest in American football so this is a remarkable achievement. Adrian Garvey, Seamus Hogan or Brendan Moroney wouldn't be as well known as maybe the soccer or gaelic players but that doesn't make their success any less important. It's certainly raised the bar for the rest of the clubs to reach. In fact some of the lesser lights in the UL club are certainly making their presence felt. The UL Skydive club is one which over the last couple of years has gone from strength to strength. There are so many different clubs like UL trampolining and wind surfing to name just one or two that people can take up and be successful at it.

You see this is what colleges sport is all about you never know what's going to happen. Who would have believed that the UL soccer club would have proven so successful with the Ladies emerging with the silverware after a dramatic penalty shoot out. Sometimes the best of games are just the normal ones. If stroll down to the pitch 1 or the nine acres fields on a busy afternoon you could find anything from intermediate camogie to ladies rugby. In fact a Ladies rugby game last year played between UL and NUIG provided great entertainment for the dozen or so fans that turned up.

College sport gives players an opportunity to play the game at all levels which makes it so unique. A name that you've never heard about suddenly makes an unexpected impact. So who are this year's college heroes going to be? Will UL finally bring back the Fitzgibbon? Can the Ladies rugby team claim back their varsities title? There are several tough questions to be answered but I'm sure many UL teams will have their moment in the sun. Enjoy it.



heroes just for one day

A name that you've never heard about suddenly makes an unexpected impact.



UL rowing club

Summer Success for UL Rowing Club

The University Rowing Club is proud to boast a successful summer season.

Between making an impact at London Metropolitan Regatta in June, winning its first women's senior title at Athlone Regatta, taking two national titles at the national championships in July and having former UL rower Cathal Moynihan compete in the Beijing Olympics, it is safe to say that this club is a force to be reckoned with.

The national championships is the pinnacle of Irish Rowing competitions. The event held at the National Rowing Centre, Iniscarra Lake in Cork on

11 and 12 July saw outgoing Club Captain, Andrew Hurley, take the title of National Champion for the Men's Novice Single Sculling event.

The Women's Novice crew (Megan White, Aileen Marron, Rachel Meehan, Alice O' Sullivan and Coxswain Cora Conneely) had an outstanding race, and with a 9.6 second lead over their nearest rivals UCD, took the Novice Coxed 4 title.

The club took second place in the Women's Intermediate Coxed 8, Men's Novice Coxed 4, Men's Senior Quadruple Scull, Men's Senior Pair (UL/Garda composite) and third place in Women's Intermediate 4 along

with admirable performances from the Men's Intermediate crews, Women's Senior Coxed 8 and all club Scullers.

New members are always welcome. The Boathouse (take first left off Concert Hall/Drumroe Village Roundabout) is open from Week 2 everyday (Monday – Thursday) from 5-7pm for new members and anyone interested in checking us out.

For more information see www.ulrowing.com or contact irow.ul@gmail.com.

Comments

Beijing 2008: bittersweet for Ireland

Liam Togher

The 29th modern Olympic Games have been and gone. The event in Beijing was preceded by controversy due to China’s political involvement with Tibet, with some parties calling on the public to boycott the Games, but thankfully that is no longer a talking point. This summer’s Games will be remembered for two particular competitors toying with the bounds of possibility, while Ireland had enough success stories to balance out the more forgettable moments.

“A man whose arm span is greater than his height, this formidable Olympian contested eight medal events in Beijing - and won gold in each and every one of them”.

The first week of the Games was all about unique American swimmer Michael Phelps. A man whose arm span is greater than his height, this formidable Olympian contested eight medal events in Beijing – and won gold in each and every one of them. This phenomenal success took his overall Olympic gold medal haul to 13, Phelps adding to the five he secured at Athens 2004. There have been many legendary Olympic competitors through the years, but none of them can boast as many gold medals as Phelps.

Once the American had written his name into sporting history, it was the turn of Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt to take over the back pages of every newspaper. Not only did he take several gold medals, he also proceeded to shatter a world record or two. It took him just 9.6 seconds to run 100 metres and the enduring image of this year’s Games will be his celebrations a full 15 metres before crossing the finish line in that race.

For Ireland, it was a bittersweet Olympics. Some of our participants at the Games will want to forget it in a hurry, in particular those involved in athletics. Derval O’Rourke, David Gillick and Alistair Cragg will not look back on Beijing 2008 with too much affection, although Paul Hession won many plaudits for his philosophical attitude in narrowly missing out on the 200 metres final. Our equestrian fraternity again caused a stir when Denis Lynch’s horse was found to have contained a banned substance while Derek Burnett made an undeservedly early exit from the shooting event.

However, it was a month to remember for Ireland’s Olympic boxing competitors. All five of our participants in the sport got to the last 16 of their categories, with three of them eventually winning medals. Both Darren Sutherland and Paddy Barnes left Beijing with bronze while Kenny Egan pocketed a silver medal and could easily have taken gold if it wasn’t for some contentious calls by the judging panel. These lads rescued an otherwise disappointing Games for Ireland and gained much good publicity for their sporting attitude, which is what the Olympics is meant to be all about in the first place.

Sports Quiz

Liam Togher

- Who was the top scorer at Euro 2008?
- Which two teams did the Irish rugby team play during their tour in June?
- True or False? Michael Phelps won gold medals in each category he contested at the Beijing Olympics.
- Where was the controversial Munster under-21 hurling final played?
- Who narrowly lost out to Padraig Harrington in the US PGA Open recently?
- Which team knocked Drogheda United out of the Champions League qualifiers?
- Who were the only provincial champions to feature in the semi-finals of this year’s All-Ireland football championship?
- What nationality is sprinter Usain Bolt, who had much success in the Olympics last month?
- Who scored three goals for Offaly in their surprise victory over Limerick in the hurling qualifiers in July?
- Luka Modric signed during the summer for which Premier League club?
- Who is the manager of Wexford’s footballers?
- Munster will play an English side in the 2008-09 Heineken Cup - is it Sale or Gloucester?



ULSU would like to congratulate former UL students

- Cathal Moynihan
- Colin Griffin
- Gearoid Towey
- Ciara Peelo

On their achievements at the Beijing Olympics this summer

Answers to Sports Quiz

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. David Villa | 2. New Zealand and Australia |
| 3. True | 4. Cusack Park, Ennis |
| 5. Sergio Garcia | 6. Dynamo Kiev |
| 7. Cork | 8. Jamaican |
| 9. Joe Bergin | 10. Tottenham |
| 11. Jason Ryan | 12. Sale |

The Magic Numbers

Liam Togher

- | | |
|--------|--|
| 2 | Major trophies won by Spain following their success at Euro 2008. Their only other international honour was in the same competition in 1964. |
| 2-13 | Joe Canning’s scoring haul when Galway faced Cork in the hurling qualifiers in July. And the teenager still ended up on the losing side. |
| 45 | Years since Waterford had reached an All-Ireland hurling final before the Deise finally overcame their semi-final taboo this August. |
| 0 | Signings by Everton manager David Moyes over the summer. Hence the presence of six teenagers on the subs’ bench against Blackburn on the opening day of the season. |
| 77 | Goals scored at Euro 2008 in just 31 matches. This equates to an average of 2.5 goals per game. |
| 3 | Padraig Harrington ended with a score of three over par at the British Open but it was still enough to win him his second Major title. |
| 18,000 | Attendance at the Leinster hurling final between Kilkenny and Wexford, reflecting the expectation of an uneven contest, which it definitely turned out to be. |
| 25 | Minutes played in the football qualifier between Kildare and Fermanagh before the Lilywhites finally opened the scoring. There will never be a better time to arrive late at a game. |

The Score

Tomás McCarthy

Lonely Luton

Desperate times for Luton Town as they scramble for survival in League 2. After starting the season on -30 points after financial difficulties Luton will need to be showing incredible form to even stay up this season and may need a few prayers from a certain Leeds player....

The Chosen One

Leeds United may have found their saviour. David Prutton’s hair has grown so long the Elland Road faithful have started chanting “Jesus, Jesus, Jesus”! Maybe Prutton can work a few miracles to gain promotion this season.

Wasting No Time

Paddy Power made history by paying out on Stoke’s relegation after their opening day defeat to Bolton. It was the first time a bookie has paid out on a season long bet after just one game. The pay out cost the company £30,000 with a representative of Paddy Power saying, “if you’re losing to the likes of Bolton there really isn’t much hope.” He has a point you know.

Schooldays Over

Everton’s squad in recent weeks has started to resemble a Thurles under 17 schoolboy team. Jose Baxter, Jack Rodwell and James Wallace would all fail miserably to get into the Lodge on a Thursday night.

Bossie Is Back

Mark Bosnich of Aston Villa and Man United fame has returned to football in the Australian League with Central Coast Mariners. It has been five years since Bosnich was sacked from Chelsea after testing positive for cocaine. I wonder will there be many Premier League clubs sniffing around him after his reappearance.

A Thankless Job

During pre-season friendlies, the job of a stadium announcer can get really difficult when the barrage of substitutes come on in the second half. Here’s how they dealt with it in Coleraine: “Macclesfield are taking off a few lads and replacing them with some different lads”.

connect

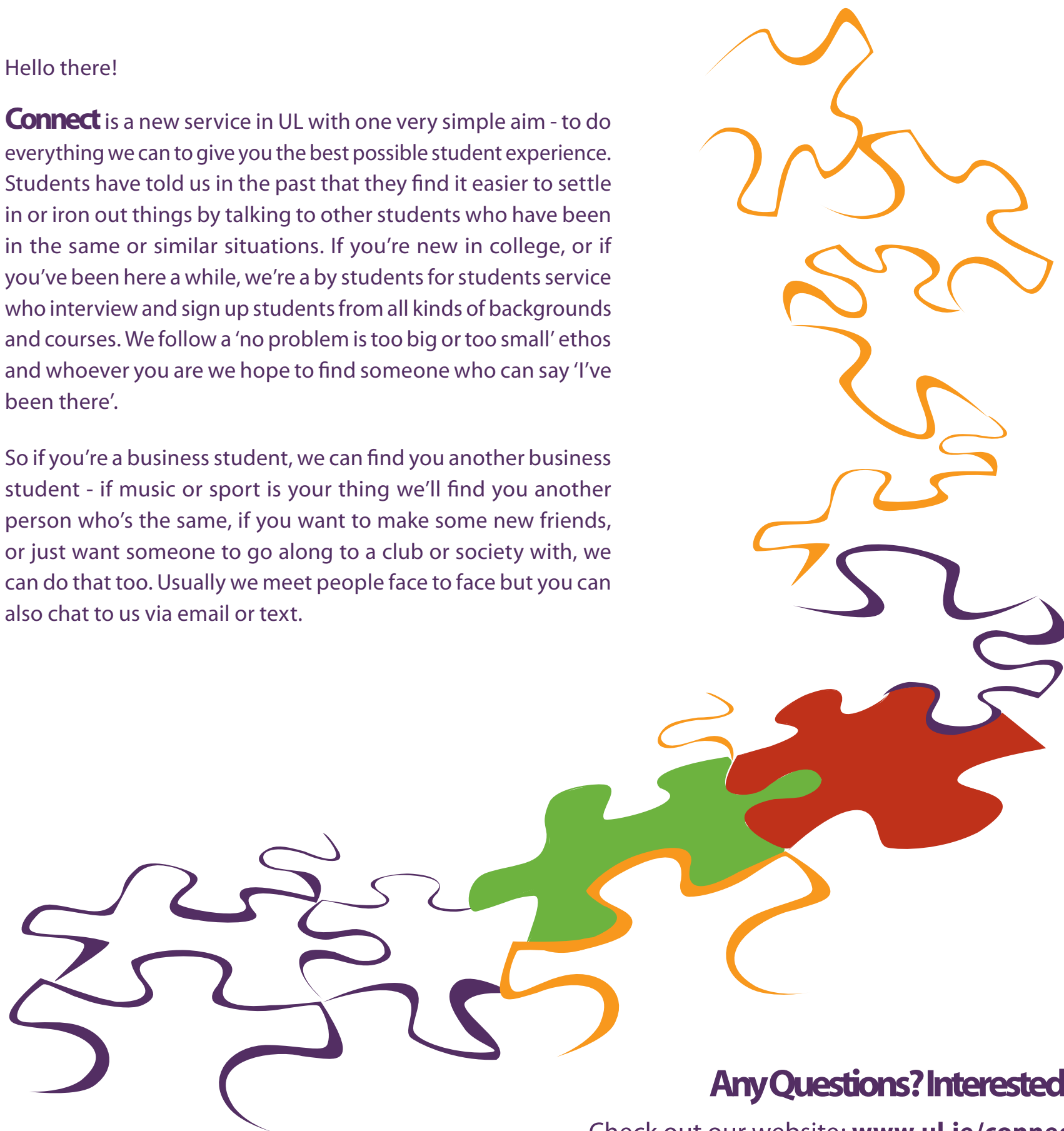
student network



Hello there!

Connect is a new service in UL with one very simple aim - to do everything we can to give you the best possible student experience. Students have told us in the past that they find it easier to settle in or iron out things by talking to other students who have been in the same or similar situations. If you're new in college, or if you've been here a while, we're a by students for students service who interview and sign up students from all kinds of backgrounds and courses. We follow a 'no problem is too big or too small' ethos and whoever you are we hope to find someone who can say 'I've been there'.

So if you're a business student, we can find you another business student - if music or sport is your thing we'll find you another person who's the same, if you want to make some new friends, or just want someone to go along to a club or society with, we can do that too. Usually we meet people face to face but you can also chat to us via email or text.



Any Questions? Interested?

Check out our website: www.ul.ie/connect

Or to contact us directly: just send an email to connect@ul.ie
or a text to **086 728 3131**