

# SU elections 2011



Candidates for SU presidency: Jay Downs, Jason O'Neill, Samantha Tan

LittleBigPlanet 2  
review inside

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## Who's in the running?

### President

Jay Downs  
Jason O'Neill  
Samantha Tan

### Vice President Community

Derek Crosby  
Ethan Loughrey  
Aidan Hughes

### Vice President Education

Joe Corina  
Nuala McAdams  
Louis O'Neill

### Vice President Clubs & Societies

Niall Bole  
Niall McShane

### Vice President Equality & Diversity

Damien Edgar  
Lucy Griffin  
Gemma Carson  
Treaasa Harkin

### Vice President Campaigns & Communications

Fiona Kidd  
(Running unopposed)

### Vice President President Welfare

Adam McGibbon  
(Running unopposed)

Cast your vote on Tuesday 1 March and Wednesday 2 March 2011

Follow The Gown SU election blog at [www.thegown.org.uk](http://www.thegown.org.uk)

Videos from the campaign can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheGownQUB>

## Rain nightclub's licence suspended and Mono seized

SEAN ASHFORD

Popular Belfast nightclub Rain had its entertainment licence suspended recently for a series of alleged health and safety breaches, whilst Mono was seized by the Serious Organised Crime Agency in relation to a drugs operation in Spain.

Nightclubs Rain and Mono have both been targeted by authorities in recent weeks in two completely separate incidents involving Belfast City Council and the Serious Organised Crime Agency respectively.

The drastic decision to suspend the entertainment licence

of Rain was taken by Belfast City Council in the wake of a number of inspections by building control staff. On repeated occasions Rain was found to have exceeded its maximum capacity allowed by health and safety regulations, with reports stating that on one of these occasions the nightclub was more than 300 people over the limit.

Following a meeting of BCC's Licensing Committee on Wednesday 16 February the incidents of overcrowding on 7 November, 30 January and 6 February were regarded as being sufficient grounds to take such action.

In a statement, Councillor Christopher Stalford, chairman of the Licensing Committee, said: "We take our responsibilities as a licensing and enforcing authority very seriously, particularly as these functions are exercised to ensure public safety in places of entertainment.

"Belfast has a burgeoning night time economy and this is something the Council encourages and is extremely supportive of; however, where there is the potential for the public's safety to be at risk and where there have been alleged breaches of any licence, the Council will take robust action when



Rain nightclub

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necessary.”  
 SU Director Andrew Dodge said in relation to the situation that: “Customer safety is paramount in the operation of any licensed venue. It is good news that the BCC took positive action to ensure adherence to licensing laws and that they have clearly demonstrated to all license holders that breaches will not be tolerated”

He added that: “Developments will be circulated by the VP Welfare, Adam McGibbon, to ensure that our members are up to date on issues”.

This is not the first time Rain has hit the headlines. Last year it was accused of discriminating against a Mr Ciaran McGrogan who was allegedly forbidden from entering the club due to his being in a wheelchair. A facebook campaign calling for a boycott of Rain later gained over 12,000 followers.

Mono was seized by the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) under the Proceeds of Crime Act on Friday 25 February following the seizure of 600kgs of cannabis by Spanish police. The drugs were seized on the Spanish-French border concealed within a shipment of wine in late August. A man from Larne was extradited to Spain following the seizure.

## Students' Union holds 'Your Queen's Experience Conference'

**KERRI-ANNE CAMPBELL**  
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The Space area at Queen's Students' Union played host to the 'Your Queen's Experience Conference' on Wednesday 23 February. In recent weeks Queen's has slipped further down the *Times Higher Education* rankings.

The conference was led by SU President, Gareth McGreevy and VP Education, Nathan Anderson. McGreevy stated the day was a great “opportunity for dialogue between the University and students”. McGreevy admitted that the University and Students' Union were often at logger heads over certain issues but claimed that the purpose of the conference was to form a partnership between the two so that they could work together to benefit students.

The Space was divided into a number of discussion groups which included undergraduate and postgraduate students and members of Queen's staff.

A number of student ambassadors were also employed to ensure the discussion was con-

ducted in an authentic manner throughout the day. Harry Davies, one such representative stated, “The conference will help establish a link between staff and students, which is not so strong at the moment.”

The main issues discussed throughout the day included tuition fees, feedback and assessment, learning resources, teaching, organisation and management on campus as well as personal development and employability.

VP Anderson said, “The

purpose of the conference is to get students and staff talking on a more informal basis and establishing and understanding the issues that students have that are not being dealt with at present.”

When asked if the conference would make a difference to the student experience, Anderson stated, “It is a good starting off process which will build towards mutual understanding between students and staff of QUB.”



'Your Queen's Experience Conference' in the Space area of QUBSU

## Queen's Online goes offline

**SEAN ASHFORD**

During recent maintenance of the Queen's Online (QOL) service a fault detected in the system transformed what had originally been intended as a simple one hour job into days of severe disturbance throughout the entire University.

The problem first arose on Thursday 17 February when maintenance was due to be carried out on the QOL system. Despite the success of initial cabling maintenance, the system failed to reboot properly causing the QOL system to become unavailable. Assistant Director for Information Services Jim Cunningham sent out a series of emails to students and staff detailing the problems encountered and stated that Queen's hoped to have the system up and running within 'several hours'.

The problems persisted, however, and despite having both the hardware and software suppliers on site the system was only available temporarily on the evening of Friday 18 February before crashing again just hours later.

By Monday of last week a limited version of QOL was made

available, though the key areas of online readings and module folders remained unavailable for a considerable time as the entire system of live databases needed to be reconstructed. These systems were only made available when the system was returned with an “at risk” status early last Tuesday morning, over four days behind schedule.

In a statement last week, Mr Cunningham said that fixing the system “is based on utilisation of entirely new hardware with fresh software builds which we are configuring on a phased process. Once this is finished and fully operational and stable our focus will change.

“At that point our attention will be to then do a full autopsy on the system which went faulty and we will be inspecting it at all levels from cabling and hardware to operating and application software build”.

A maintenance period took place between 8.00am and 1.00am on Saturday morning and the QOL system has since been made available for use. On resolving the problem Queen's apologised for any inconvenience caused.

## McGreevy demands QUB's submission to DEL draft budget

**KERRI-ANNE CAMPBELL**  
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After much delay Queen's Students' Union President, Gareth McGreevy finally received a copy of the University's submission to the Department of Education and Learning's draft budget in advance of submitting their consultation document. Queen's submission has proposed an increase in tuition fees to £5,750.

Having initially failed to produce the document, McGreevy emailed Vice Chancellor, Peter Gregson's office and stated that “Failure to do so will result in the Students' Union issuing a press statement expressing our disappointment in the University for working with the Students' Union on this issue as it shows the University's lack of willingness to engage with student stakeholders in the University campus.” Shortly after McGreevy's threat an embargoed copy of the University's submission was made available to the SU.

The recently reworked Student review has stated that the cap on fees must be lifted, and proposed they be increased up to £5,750.

As tuition fees in Northern Ireland are currently £3,290, Queen's and Stuart's proposal would represent a significant increase of 75% for Northern Ireland students and almost 300% for students from other parts of the UK. Also, the maximum grant available for students from low-income households will remain at £3,475. Graduates will be expected to begin repaying their loans when they begin to earn at least £21,000 a year.

McGreevy referred to DEL's draft budget as a “step backwards.” He stated that it will have a serious impact on Northern Ireland and that it will “put up barriers between students, their families and the pursuit of higher education in Northern Ireland.”

# SUTV holds inaugural meeting

KERRI-ANNE CAMPBELL  
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The first meeting of SUTV took place on Thursday 24 February, although VP Campaigns and Communications, Fiona Kidd has stated that it will not be officially launched until the new academic year. Those attending the meeting were given the opportunity to learn exactly what would be involved with the project and were offered a workshop and tour of the studio, located on the third floor of the Students' Union.

SUTV is aimed at helping student journalists gain broadcasting experience as well as offering clubs and societies the chance to advertise themselves in the SU. Last year's VP Campaigns and Communications, and this year's SU president Gareth McGreevy, spearheaded the project during the last academic year. Initially, a great deal of controversy surrounded the project as it was first estimated that the project would cost a total of £30,000 however, this figure was later reduced.

At present, SUTV is still within its budget of £24,000 - £20,000 of which was presented

by Queen's Annual Fund, however, Kidd admits that it is likely there will be further costs when it is officially up and running.

According to Kidd, the new studio, which cost approximately £13,200, was the reason for the long delay. She also revealed that around £3,000 was spent on software and computers. Also, two cameras cost a total of £300 and there are still six more to be purchased. Kidd stated that a number of cheap cameras are to be purchased so that anyone involved with SUTV can use them.

Kidd stated that she is currently working to "get the project off the ground and working" and has specified that her role in SUTV is to guide, advise and approve rather than become directly involved with filming and editing. According to Kidd, SUTV will be entirely student orientated but will also be used to convey the ideas of the Students' Union.

Advertising the QUBSU elections and the recently launched 'Cab now pay later' scheme will be among SUTV's first productions. Students from all disciplines at Queen's can become involved though only 18

members will be fully trained this semester to use the equipment available. There will also be internships offered for both full time and part time advisors. Students interested can apply to a three-day filming and editing course from the 23 to 25 March with media services

Membership and use of the equipment and studio will be free of charge in most cases, but there may be a fee for specific filming and editing. Fees for promotion and advertising are yet to be decided. Kidd has also stated that the booking of equipment will be based on a "first come first served basis."



SUTV logo

# Palestine Solidarity Society disrupts Law lecture

BEN FINCH

The Palestinian Solidarity Society today disrupted a lecture by Solon Solomon, former member of the Israeli Parliament's legal department, on Israel's right to self-defence. Entering the lecture, members of the society heckled the lecturer forcing it to be brought to a close after seven minutes. Members of the panel had to be removed from the room by security in the interests of their own safety to calls of "Cheerio, cheerio, cheerio." The PSS was apparently videoing the lecture without permission.

There followed a heated discussion between members of the society and Sally Wheeler, head

of the School of Law, who invited Solomon to speak. Much of this discussion centred around the legality of the Gaza Wall, but Wheeler pointed out that there was an opportunity for discussion with Solomon after the lecture when a civilised debate could take place. Wheeler left the room visibly upset.

As the PSS left the seminar room, members congregated around the security presence blocking entrance to the room where delegates were staying. They were asked to leave and told that "bullying" wouldn't work. Security then threatened to call the police. The PSS accused the security team of "intimidation" and supporting

fascism in Israel. There followed a debate on international law and freedom of information, carried out entirely by the PSS with security taking no part.

We have been told that disciplinary proceedings are a matter for the University authorities. Offences of misconduct include criminal damage, nuisance behaviour and disorderly behaviour. If an individual is found to have carried out an offence it could result in a £150 fine or expulsion from the University. There is no information yet on whether this matter has been passed to the University

For more on this story please visit The Gown website

# Mary McAleese to deliver 2011 MacDermott lecture at Whitla Hall

CONNOR DALY  
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Irish President Mary McAleese will deliver this year's annual MacDermott lecture, as organised by the School of Law at the University.

McAleese studied Law at Queen's and graduated in 1973. She was later to become the first woman Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University

The title of the lecture will

be 'Northern Ireland: the post-Agreement institutional architecture' and will take place at the Whitla Hall on Tuesday 15 March at 5.30pm. The annual MacDermott lecture is open to the public and all students are welcome to attend. All attendees must be seated by 5.15pm.

Last year's MacDermott lecture on equality was delivered by the Right Honourable Lady Hale of Richmond.



Irish President Mary McAleese

# "We have been on the receiving end of a smear campaign," says O'Neill

NIALL CROZIER

In a statement to The Gown on Saturday, Jason O'Neill, candidate for SU President, said "We have acted appropriately and within the rules at all times during the election. However, unfortunately we have been on the receiving end of a smear campaign. We will not be drawn into a dirty fight; instead we will focus on the positives of our 'Change for SU' campaign which will create a more supportive and responsive Union, bringing fresh and innovative ideas to the table."

"We will not be drawn into a dirty fight; instead we will focus on the positives of our 'Change for SU' campaign"

This week the Law ticket has come under fire from a number of areas and O'Neill has placed

the blame for this on "Certain other candidates and their supporters." Although Jason performed particularly well yesterday at the presidential debate when questioned about alleged issues with the Law Society's accounts, his ticket did receive an official caution from returning officer Dominic Doherty on Thursday for an unrelated matter.

The use of two Facebook sites called 'Change for QUBSU' run by Niall McKernan, who is acting as O'Neill's campaign manager, which previously had been used to promote certain - now defunct - Belfast venues, was called into question by Doherty.

For more on this story please visit The Gown website

THE HOOD

hood@thegown.org.uk

I'm losing faith in student politicians. I used to think I was the only one allowed to launch a smear campaign around here but unfortunately that's no longer the case. Maybe O'Neill's just making a meal of it. I'm going to continue anyway, just in case readers might miss me. Ah, you can't beat a good smear campaign.

Hood's loving the Downs bashing. I remember missing the Vengabus a while back and he wouldn't give me a lift. At the time I thought it was me he forgot about, but turns out it was the bus. I haven't seen it yet. Could you see him as president? Stephen Connolly can't, that's for sure, and if he can't then you're in big trouble. Five days at Queen's is shit enough already nevermind Downs' seven days experience.

There's no smear tactics with Sam Tan, she's just here to split the vote. Herself and Fiona could rule this place, you know. Fees will go up handy enough; we'll keep talking about SUTV meetings for a life time and we can fall out with the rest of the sabb office. Sounds like a plan.

O'Neill may be Tony Blair in disguise but McGrizzle is Bertie Ahern for sure. He's all smiles, and he's gettin' out when the going's good if you ask me, before the entire place takes a turn for the worst. There'll be no money coming into the Union from the Law lads, you can count on that. They'll be having a ball at Ollies, literally. Ol' Tony's a man for sound bites just like our Jason. Any more talk of red tape and I'll wrap it around someone's neck. It should be green tape anyway, do they know it's Paddy's time at all? Get that boat rockin' on Rugby already.

# Bobby Kerr of Dragons' Den to discuss business at SU

Queen's Business Club will greet Irish entrepreneur and Dragons' Den investor, Bobby Kerr to Queen's Students' Union on Wednesday 2 March at 2.00pm.

Mr Kerr is the Chairman of Insomnia Coffee and has a variety of business interests in food and hospitality, technology, hardware and exhibition. He is best known in Ireland as a 'Dragon' on the Irish TV version of *Dragons' Den*. He is also a popular public speaker and business mentor.

Mr Kerr will share his personal experiences in the world of business, his successful busi-

ness philosophy and discuss Irish entrepreneurship during time of recession.



Bobby Kerr

# Review: LittleBigPlanet 2

ANDREW SCOTT

The first *LittleBigPlanet* marked a huge turning point for the Playstation 3 – it was one of the most unique, critically acclaimed titles available on the market, and, alongside *Metal Gear Solid 4*, finally began to make Sony's then £300+ machine look like a worthy investment. *LittleBigPlanet 2* picks up where its predecessor left off, improving on it in almost every way to create a truly staggering game with almost unlimited possibilities.

At its core, the first *LittleBigPlanet* was a platformer, but with one very important twist – it gave you all the tools you needed to create your own levels and share them with the massive online community. While at first the community levels got off to a shaky start, soon the creations became incredible feats of digital engineering and logical mind-benders, such as the ludicrously complex system of pistons and switches that allowed one clever user to

create a fully functioning calculator. Ultimately, however, *LBP* mostly limited your creations to platforming and simple puzzles.

This is where *LittleBigPlanet 2* is a game changer, because the creation tools have been widely expanded to allow virtually every game type to be created. Already we have seen the community create side-scrolling arcade shooters, role-playing games, turn-based strategy, first and third-person shooters, racing games, short movies and cut scenes, point-and-click style homage's to games such as *Heavy Rain* and *Broken Sword*... Indeed, even this inexperienced creator has created a virtual game of *Blackjack*. The possibilities are endless. The create tools are now much easier to use, with the system of logic gates and microchips making it possible to create incredibly complex and detailed levels without being an Engineering student. New gadgets such as the grappling hook, grabinator and creatinator also add countless more gameplay possibilities, as well as return-

ing tweaks such as anti-gravity, water, and fire. Even better is the addition of Sackbots, fully programmable characters who can do, well, virtually anything you want them to. Nevertheless, the create mode will only give you back what you put in, and you do have to put in a decent number of hours to create a level that will be noticed in the community.

Speaking of the online community, it is the sheer volume of levels that is created – currently standing at nearly 4 million – and their increasingly consistent quality that makes *LBP2* an incredibly fun game to play, even if you don't have the patience or imagination to create your own levels. Every time you log in, there will be a new game waiting for you to check out, either on your own or with friends (both online and offline) – this sends the replayability factor of *LBP2* through the roof. Developers Media Molecule are also actively involved with the community, even giving their unique seal of approval to the



LittleBigPlanet 2

very best creations.

Of course, *LBP* also has a story mode of sorts, but it is incredibly short – only around 4-6 hours – and its main purpose is to give you an idea of what sort of levels can be created and you can also unlock new tools and materials for create mode.

Needless to say, if you don't have your PS3 connected to the internet, *LBP2* is not a worthwhile investment. The offline components are merely a taster of the full experience. The Z-axis movement – used to move your character between the three playable 2.5D planes –

remains imprecise and temperamental. It is only a small issue, but it can be a bit frustrating in tighter levels.

*LittleBigPlanet 2* is not just an evolution of the franchise, but a revolution. Such a detailed, complex set of creation tools has never been seen in any game before, and this is the closest you can get to being a game developer without actually being one. Moreover, the entire game is narrated by the incomparable Stephen Fry, adding to its undeniable charm and simplicity. Whether you want to play or create, it offers an unparalleled gaming experience.

## Reviews

Check out more reviews at [www.thegown.org.uk](http://www.thegown.org.uk)

Film  
*True Grit*

The Coen brothers have done it again with *True Grit* and with a small cast, who combine staunch acting with the deadpan comedy



typical of Coen films. The plot revolves around fourteen year-old Mattie Ross (Hailee Steinfeld), who hires a lawman to pursue her father's killer, Tom Chaney (Josh Brolin). Mattie is central to the film; she's barely off-screen and this is definitely her story.

Steinfeld is excellent as the tough farm girl with a strong sense of justice, and holds her own beside Jeff Bridges and Matt Damon. In fact, it is Damon who nearly steals the limelight from Bridges, wonderfully composed as the handsome and righteous LaBeouf. Bridges, as usual, is excellent. His Cogburn is a cancerous alcoholic, and is as bumbling as John Wayne's portrayal, but not as ham-fisted or warm.

Wayne won his only Oscar for the role, and Bridges will certainly be there at this year's awards. *True Grit* is very impressive, with beautiful, dry photography and will surely be mentioned frequently in the run up to the Academy Awards. SW

Film  
*Blue Valentine*

There are worse date movies but if you plan on seeing *Blue Valentine* with a significant other, you're: (a) Brave: no poxy film



can damage your bulletproof romance. (b) Cowardly: you want out of your dreary relationship, but can't bring yourself to say it. You're hoping this devastating emotional payload will do the job. (c) Misinformed: it's blue, but distinctly un-valentines-y. Unless your experiences of Valentine's Day are habitually blue. If so, there's a lot to entertain the hollowed-out misanthrope you've become.

Basically, the plot follows one unremarkable American couple's journey from love's young dream to a shouty, desiccated nightmare and it all rings painfully true.

Men with a family history of baldness may watch anxiously: the root of their problems could be Dean's receding hairline. Or maybe it's the suppressed career ambitions, fading affections, a thwarted abortion and a preventable canine road tragedy.

It's impeccably acted and tastefully shot. Michelle Williams is excellent as Cindy, while Ryan Gosling's performance easily transcends his character's unfortunate facial hair. LM

Film  
*Gnomeo and Juliet*  
*The King is Dead*

Despite looking ridiculous and clichéd in the trailers, *Gnomeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare like never seen before,



or again as garden gnomes become the warring parties. Shakespeare's a tried and tested formula when it comes to potentially block-busting films, and *Gnomeo & Juliet* is not the first of his plays to be animated. There is of course Disney's *The Lion King*, the family friendly version of Hamlet.

Emily Blunt and James McAvoy take the lead alongside Richard Wilson, Maggie Smith, Patrick Stewart and Michael Caine, and comedians Stephen Merchant and Matt Lucas make it fantastically funny and highly entertaining.

The dialogue is snappy and witty from start to finish, with the occasional Shakespearian quip thrown in to remind us that this is an adaptation. It's filled with allusions to its source material and other Shakespearian works, so if you're "in the know" it takes on a whole new level of humour.

This film is a must see and one of the best films of the year so far, it really does have something for everyone. HG

Album  
*The Boxer Rebellion*  
*The Cold Still*

In the midst of the harsh winter, there's perhaps no better time for The Boxer Rebellion to release *The Cold Still* which boasts a frosty ambience, sending a chill right to the bone.



This time the international four-piece have opted for a minimalist approach, momentarily hinted at on preceding album, *Union*. 'Step out of the Car' opens with loose, churning guitars, frozen in a rush of frostbitten hooks. Glorious centrepiece 'Caught by the Light' resounds with a shimmering church hall echo. Sadly, these moments of untainted beauty are few.

While their newfound minimalism is a bold stance, it's not wholly believable. At times they seem to be on autopilot and sound rather uninspired. Moments like 'Locked in the Basement' appear more grey-scale rather than a palette of gentler hues.

With *The Cold Still*, The Boxer Rebellion don't reach the benchmark achieved on *Union*. While displaying lush moments that prove worthy additions to their repertoire, its detached delivery leaves you in the cold. As such, the album's ascribed title is rather befitting. Best wrap up beforehand. CJ

Comedy-Standup  
Michael Redmond  
Mandela Hall

Compère Colin Murphy threw political correctness out the window with jokes which would have made Frankie Boyle proud, as general banter ensued with the "well-oiled" front row audience.

Sligo-born John Colleary gave a noteworthy performance. Particularly popular was his employment of a thick Belfast accent, his most fear-inspiring secret weapon in any drunken encounter.

Then, looking somewhere between a disgruntled bloodhound and Albert Einstein, Michael Redmond of *Father Ted* fame took to the stage. What was most remarkable about Redmond's set was not his material, but his banter with the rowdy crowd. Deftly deflecting heckles about his appearance (no, he could not pluck his eyebrows, for they are not eyebrows, but are in fact spare moustaches) he delivered a solid performance in his trademark deadpan style.

A joke about his grandfather's prosthetic leg and an unfortunate bungee jumping incident finished off a night that was a spirited sparring match between performer and crowd. WB



# TheGown. Election special

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## Students' Union election campaign nears an end

### GOWN NEWS STAFF

Seventeen candidates in total have come forward for Tuesday and Wednesday's SU sabbatical elections, two of whom it is confirmed will run unopposed, for VP Welfare and VP Campaigns and Communications respectively. Voting begins on Tuesday morning at 7.00am and closes on Wednesday afternoon at 5.00pm. The results of the election will be announced later on Wednesday evening.

Three main tickets will run for various posts. Five candidates will run under the ticket of current VP Community Jay Downs, and five others under Jason O'Neill's Law-GAA brand. Current VP Equality and Diversity Samantha Tan's ticket comprises just three candidates as she is running alongside VP Campaigns and Communications Fiona Kidd and SU Council Speaker Joe Corina. Derek Crosby for VP Community and Gemma Carson have over the past week began to campaign side by side. Two candidates in this week's elections will run as independents, these being Damien Edgar and Lucy Griffin, both of whom will run for VP Equality and Diversity against two other candidates.

Nominations closed at 5.00pm last Monday and most candidates took part in a live debate on Queen's Radio with their respective opponents on Wednesday afternoon. On Friday the three candidates for the SU presidency attended a debate in the Space area of the Students' Union, presented by both *The Gown* and Queen's Debating and Mooting Society. Over 200 Queen's students from across campus were polled by *The Gown* throughout last week.

No student opted to face current VP Welfare Adam McGibbon before nominations closed. Candidate for VP Campaigns and Communications Lorcan Mullen has since the closing date been forced to stand down due to academic standing and current VP Fiona Kidd will now run unopposed for this position.

The race for the SU presidency sees incumbent VPs Jay Downs and Samantha Tan respectively face final year Law and Politics student and

Law Society president Jason O'Neill. O'Neill and the rest of his ticket, none of whom are incumbents, have laid out a platform for change for the Students' Union, promising to continue the ongoing campaign against the proposed hike to tuition fees in Northern Ireland but at the same time to drastically improve the quality of teaching at the University and to install new procedures for clubs and societies within the SU.

Jay Downs is running alongside current VPs Niall Bole and Adam McGibbon with the addition of Queen's Radio sta-

tion manager Ethan Loughrey for the position of VP Equality and Diversity, and postgraduate student Nuala McAdams for VP Education. Bole and McGibbon face the electorate intending to build on the work which they have carried out over the past year with Loughrey and McAdams hoping to bring changes to their respective posts if elected.

Incumbents Samantha Tan and Fiona Kidd are running with Joe Corina who seeks to take on the post of VP Education. Current VP Education Nathan Anderson made it clear as soon as nominations opened

that he would not stand for re-election, and Corina will face Nuala McAdams and new addition to the Law-GAA ticket, Louis O'Neill. Tan's ticket has been keen to emphasize the experience its candidates have within the Students' Union and recognise what can and cannot be achieved at election time, pledging not to make "empty promises".

Polls carried out by *The Gown* suggest a slight lead for Samantha Tan ahead of Downs and O'Neill for the presidency role and unless a candidate can manage a significant swing

before voting closes it is likely that transfers may prove a decisive factor when students come to vote on Tuesday and Wednesday. *The Gown* poll has Tan on 19.10% and Downs and O'Neill on 15.80% respectively. Of students polled on the elections, 49.10% said they were unsure as to who they would vote for SU president.

According to the poll, VP Community looks set to be another tight contest with Derek Crosby ahead on 15.80%, Ethan Loughrey on 12.70% and Aidan Hughes on 11.50%. 60% of those polled said they did not know who they would vote for.

### How to vote

**Step 1.** Sign into your Queen's Online homepage as usual, and click on the "Online Voting" link in the bottom left hand corner of the screen, under the "My Services" section.

**Step 2.** The screen (below) will show the different student officer posts which you may vote for. On Tuesday - when voting opens - this screen will enable you to cast your vote.

**Step 3.** Select the SU post you wish to vote in, and click "Next".

**Step 4.** The screen (below) will now display the student candidates running for that SU position. Using the drop-down menus beside each candidate, select numbers 1, 2, 3, etc. in order of preference, with '1' being your first choice. Once you've made your selection click "Submit Vote".

**Step 5.** The next screen displays your choice. If you're not happy, click "Amend Vote" to make alterations. Otherwise, click "Confirm Vote". Once you click "Confirm Vote", your choice will be finalised and you will not be able to change it.

**Step 6.** Repeat for all other SU positions.

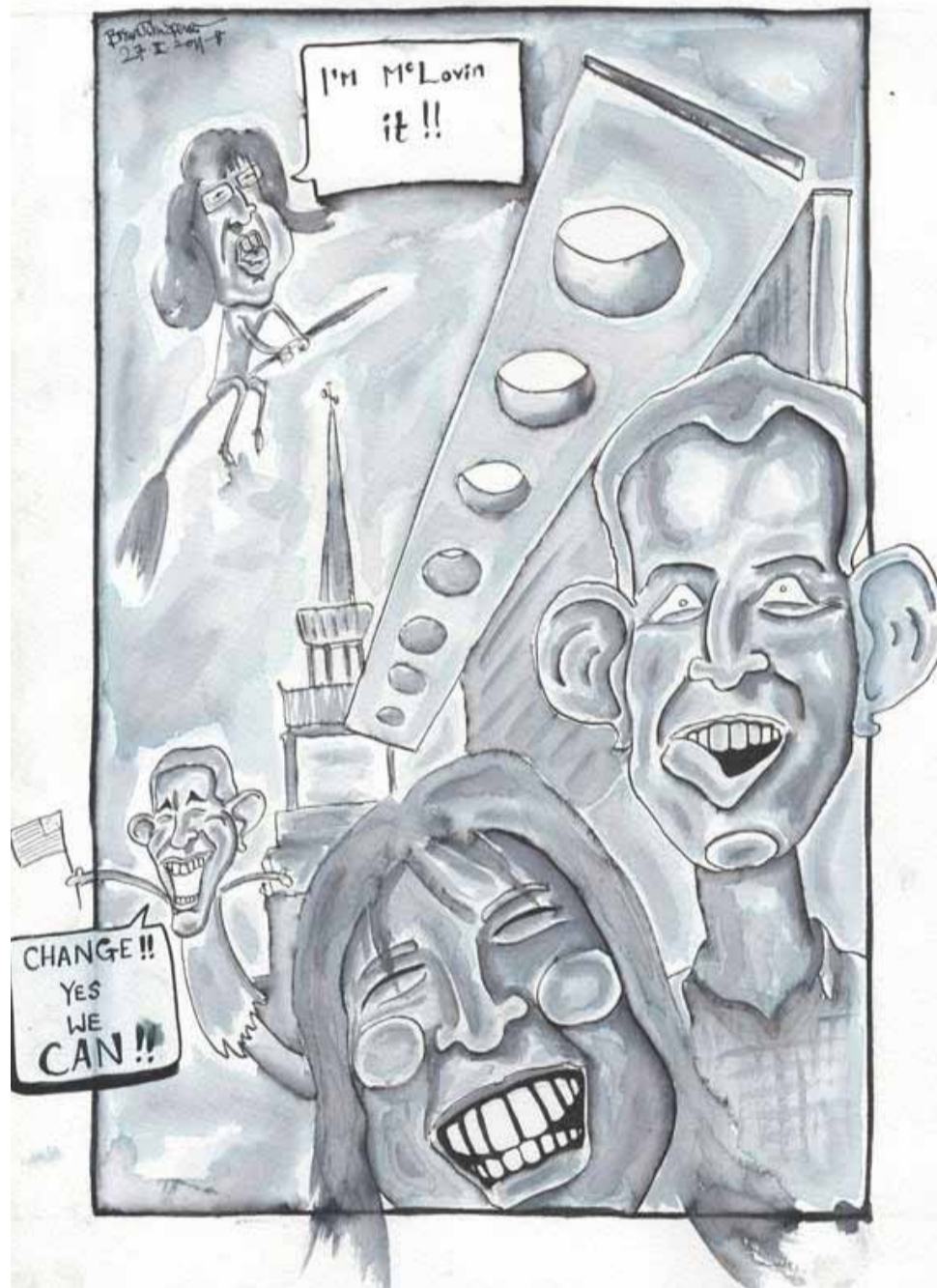


Illustration by Brian Spencer

# SU President

Law Society president Jason O'Neill has said his ticket will not be drawn into a "dirty fight" before polling on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Saturday O'Neill told *The Gown* he believed himself and his running mates have been on the receiving end of a smear campaign in recent days from "certain other candidates and supports". Concentrating on his own campaign, running for president O'Neill has pledged to set up focus groups and online opinion polls to ensure the Students' Union is much more receptive to issues and concerns across campus.

As well as aiming to be more receptive to the student population, among O'Neill's top priorities would be to work towards improving teaching at Queen's and feedback and to bring radi-

cal change to the finance and membership procedures of clubs and societies currently in place.

During last Friday's presidential debate at the Students' Union current VP Community Jay Downs came under fire for making "false promises" when running for office last year. Questioned on his failure to provide an SU bus and to hold events at Queen's every weekend, Downs has said that on running for president this time around his manifesto commitments are much less ambitious than when running for VP.

If elected president Downs has pledged not only to continue the campaign against the potential hike to tuition fees, but to work towards ensuring that inevitable cutbacks to the University's budget do not have

a negative impact upon frontline resources such as library hours which may have an adverse impact on students' ability to study.

Proposing a 'Give it a go' programme, this year's VP Equality and Diversity Samantha Tan has promised a more realistic series of weekend events at Queen's, allowing clubs and societies to rotate ownership of these to allow students to try something new every weekend during the academic year.

On whether or not the candidates believe a hike to tuition fees in Northern Ireland is inevitable, each candidate during Friday's debate provided a different response. Downs told the audience he believes the student movement in Northern Ireland is "winning this fight", whereas



O'Neill, Tan and Downs at Friday's presidential debate

Tan argued that, although the campaign has been encouraging, keeping the cap at just over £3,000 will require "an uphill struggle".

Throughout his campaign O'Neill has insisted that the

Students' Union needs to be "realistic" in its approach to keeping the cap of fees and must also maintain momentum towards abolishing tuition fees altogether.

**HOOD:** O'Neill wants to rock the boat and change the world but everyone knows he's talkin' Balls. Downs wants to be Ciarnan Helferty but even he's no Tony Blair or Derek Crosby. I don't even know who Samantha Tan is.

# VP Clubs and Societies

Niall McShane of the Law/GAA ticket goes head to head with current VP Clubs & Societies Niall Bole. McShane has previously been a part of the Finance Society, the Business and the Investment Society respectively, and has been the treasurer of Queen's Gaelic football club,

McShane has said, "I'm not here for a fun time, I'm here to do a job. If elected I want to do as much as possible this year."

Throughout the campaign McShane has pledged to implement a new system for clubs and societies to run their finances, pointing towards online banking. McShane says this would inform treasurers of their accounts and make running a club or society much easier and efficient.

McShane's also concerned about the current system of grant allocation to clubs and societies. He would like to make this transparent and fair and thinks it comes too late in the year. He would like clubs and societies at Queen's to know their allocation at the start of the year so that they could draw up a budget so they don't get into debt.

As the DUB is currently being redeveloped, McShane would like to get the views of those who use it and then decide what's best in the long term for students. He also thinks that at times the PEC is very busy and is getting run down.

On the campaign McShane says, "Obviously the pressure's on me, Niall's the [incumbent]

officer but I would like to think people would vote for me because of what I plan to do."

Current VP Niall Bole has decided to run for re-election, stating his belief that a year is not long enough to produce meaningful results at the Clubs and Societies portfolio. Bole says he intends to look into the option of student card readers as a method of signing up to clubs and societies at future Freshers' Bazaar events.

Bole insists that McShane's proposal to cut the bureaucratic "red tape" on clubs and societies is similar to the job that he is currently working on, and has stated his long term goal to move financial functions from the University to the Students' Union.



Niall McShane and Niall Bole during Queen's Radio debate

Looking back to last year's manifesto, Bole admits that his pledge to enforce cheaper admission fees to Queen's PEC may not have been "realistic" but has not entirely given up on this

objective. If re-elected, Bole has pledged to work for students who study during 'off peak' times to ensure that they pay 'off peak' prices even after the 'peak' time

**HOOD:** What's it to be: GAA or Dragonslayers? Let's just cut the red tape and go home.

# VP Community

The 2011 Community race looks on paper to be the one of the most tightly contested of the entire SU elections.

Eccentric Derek Crosby, running alongside Equality & Diversity candidate Gemma Carson, has offered to take a 10 per cent pay cut, and has put RAG at the top of his priorities, pushing it to raise over £50,000 next year for local charities.

Being heavily involved with RAG for almost three full years now, Crosby believes this has given him a better understanding of how the community in South Belfast thinks and thus how best to interact with them. Certain issues which community groups might raise with

him, however, such as relations within the Holylands, would certainly differ from the happy-go-lucky antics which RAG usually involve themselves in.

The Law Society's Mooting Officer Aidan Hughes is also running for the post. His focal policy has been on a plan for street representatives, where every street in a particular student area would have a representative who would attend meetings to bring forward any pressing concerns, and possibly work alongside the idea of creating an online Queen's community.

Hughes has experience running social events within the QUB Law Society and with

youth groups at his home town of Portstewart. His mooting events have been fairly well received this year, and he presents himself in a very approachable manner which is always helpful for Community.

Finally Ethan Loughrey of Queen's Radio is running on the Jay Downs ticket. Loughrey is promising better value for money for students through an expansion of the current number of stores linked with the NUS Extra Card. Loughrey believes this to be useful in providing better local deals for Queen's students.

As head of QR Loughrey may be the expected to be the most in tune with the ins and outs of SU



Hughes, Crosby and Loughrey before Queen's Radio debate

life. However, Loughrey could be criticised for not giving away much information as to how he

intends to work with the wider community in relation to his opponents.

**HOOD:** If Loughrey's relying on QR listeners to get out the vote then he'll be as popular as a Greek bailout. You'd think Mr RAG would be hard to beat but he's the only one here not on a ticket comprising more than two candidates. It's a toughie.

# VP Equality and Diversity

This year Equality and Diversity is the most popular post with four candidates contesting.

Mature student, Gemma Carson has student parents at the top of her list with plans for children's movie nights once a month for parents to meet each other and says that the crèche needs more provisions over the Christmas period when parents are studying in the library.

She believes her job as a marketing assistant in the Students' Union has helped her learn about where people believe improvements are needed and has made her add in the element of holding regular

focus groups to be able to successfully represent all students.

Damien Edgar's central policy is to introduce a buddy system for international students and says that as well as helping international students integrate in Northern Ireland, student volunteers will also gain a great deal from the Degree Plus programme at Queen's. Edgar admits to not being fully aware of what is feasible to do for those with disabilities but has been in contact with the Disability Services to learn more.

The only candidate on a ticket for this post is Treasa Harkin. If elected, she aims to implement the workshops of Steve Wessler,

where people can write down certain issues to be addressed. Harkin has also stated that she would like to hold a Queen's Pride week.

The final candidate for the post is Lucy Griffin, the only non-Northern Irish candidate among the four. Griffin wants to work closer with the schools and create a house system, similar to that which she has run within the School of History. Her knowledge of disability is on par with Gemma's; Lucy wants an initial point of contact made known for all autistic students.



Damien Edgar



Lucy Griffin



Gemma Carson



Treasa Harkin

**HOOD:** Most have Welfare ideas but all going for Equality. Damien Edgar is looking good, I just know he's a feminist at heart. Lucy Griffin isn't related to Nick, I checked. Her fancy dress Friday policy should be great craic. If Gemma Carson is 29, I'll have whatever she's having thanks. Harkin's on the Law ticket, good for her.

# VP Education

This post covers all aspects of a student's education at Queen's, such as the quality of teaching provision, appeals against examination results and fighting the students' corner in the various committees related to teaching and learning at Queen's. According to current VP Education Nathan Anderson, seventy per cent of the job is "firefighting", dealing with issues that arise on the day, like the recent difficulties with QOL. There are three candidates running for the role, Joe Corina, Nuala McAdams and Louis O'Neill.

Joe Corina's standing on Sam Tan's ticket and his policies are to build employability into the structure of a degree, fairer appeals against exam results and the need to receive better feedback from teaching staff.

He is also passionate about the services available for disabled students.

Nuala McAdams is on Jay Downs' ticket. Her policies are based mainly around exams, in that she aims to ensure that there is an early release of exam timetables to remove pressure from students. McAdams would also like to begin a risk management committee for QGIS to ensure all problems are rectified before students arrive and begin to enrol. She would also like to introduce a "rate my module" programme online so students' views on modules can be passed on to other students, rather than hearing the opinions of staff.

Louis O'Neill was until recently running as an independent but has moved onto the O'Neill ticket. His main policy is



Joe Corina



Nuala McAdams



Louis O'Neill

to work to prevent the removal of the cap on tuition fees in Northern Ireland. His manifesto talks about the Browne report rather than the Stuart report, and this doesn't exactly fall under the remit of VP Education. However, his other policies do, and these are to improve the

feedback given by the University on exam results and to improve issues with the library such as the number of work stations and reducing fines.

This has been an interesting campaign so far with Joe and Nuala going for a cuppa and getting on well, while lit-

tle has been seen of Louis due to work commitments. It is one of the more important positions and whoever is elected will have to work closely with the SU President and have the ability to fight for students in the wide ranging committees the University has to deal (or not) with issues.

**HOOD:** I've never been so bored. Two opposing candidates making friends while the other can't even be arsed turning up. What sort of fight is this? And Joe calls himself Liverpoolian. Maybe if Nuala supported Millwall it would be more interesting, I doubt it though. Students don't need nice politicians here, they need bastards willing to fight Gregson to the death, unlike crybaby Anderson. Maybe Louis is just what they need, but I can't really say. I've never even seen the lad.

# VP Campaigns and Communications

Fiona Kidd is to have a second term of office, barring any surprises at the ballot-box from R.O.N. following Lorcan Mullen's disqualification as the result of being in bad academic standing. Fiona offered her "condolences - if that's the right word," to Lorcan.

One of Kidd's policies is to

reinvigorate QSUM to allow the communications side of the job to tick over under the management of ordinary students rather than a sabbatical officer, while enabling Fiona herself to take the front-line role on the fees campaign.

When questioned about her desires to have a 'Media week'

- which looks suspiciously similar to 'Gown week', and to have an online SU publication with both a features and news element - a startlingly similar concept to The Gown website, Kidd was unequivocal. She said she intended 'Media week' to "Glorify all media outlets" including *The Gown*, and stated her

planned publication was "Definitely not a rival to the Gown website," despite her expectations of "Healthy competition."

Despite Kidd's genuine reassurances of having no desire to undermine *The Gown* in any way, an aggressive successor to her position could perhaps open up old rifts.



Lorcan Mullen and Fiona Kidd

**HOOD:** No Lorcan no cry. More of the same please.

# VP Welfare

VP Welfare Adam McGibbon. McGibbon has said he is "disappointed" that he has no opposition and will focus on his ticket. The central policy of his campaign is to bring forward an SU Lettings Agency similar to

that at Cardiff University. He has secured £1,5000 from NUS and believes that this will help all students as its aim is to raise the standard of student accommodation.

It would not be an estate

agents - the University would not own the property as some Universities do. The real sell for his lettings agency is the experience it would give students experience, as there would only be one full time member of staff

while the rest of the posts would be held by students. McGibbon's track record on policy leaves him in good standing, as we now have the promised 'Cab now pay later' and £30,000 for the Student Support Fund



Adam McGibbon

**HOOD:** It has long been the tradition of Queen's SU that Ron runs. He needs your support. He is the man who discovered the wheel and built the Eiffel Tower out of metal and brawn. That's what kind of man he is. Not too sure how to best put this, but Ron is a really big deal. He has many leather-bound books and his apartment smells of rich mahogany.

# CANDIDATES FOR 2011 ELECTIONS

SU

Students can vote on Tues 1st  
& Wed 2nd March by visiting QOL

## *SU President*



## *VP Clubs and Societies*



## *VP Community*



## *VP Equality & Diversity*



## *VP Education*



## *VP Campaigns & Communications*



## *VP Welfare*



All candidate manifestos can be viewed at  
[www.qubsu.org](http://www.qubsu.org)

# Pop will eat itself

BEN FINCH

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Driving home from work, listening to my weekly dose of radio, I managed to catch 'Born This Way' by Lady Gaga for the first time. It strikes me that something strange is happening and pop is finally actually eating itself. She's supposed to be interesting and different while simultaneously defining our times but this has all been heard before. Take the vocals off and this could be Boys Noize or Digitalism four years ago and the lyrics don't really say anything new, but maybe she's just preaching at America's deep-south. Or possibly, 'Born This Way' is the love child of Madonna's 'Express Yourself' with Michael Jackson's 'Black or White.'

The problem is that what seems to be happening is that music's self-referencing seems to be tending closer and closer to the present, which can only lead to hearing the same thing being pumped out of our speakers over and over again (some people may already argue this,

they're wrong at the minute).

At least when Oasis did it The Beatles had been gone for a quarter of a century. And it's not just pop that's going to cause a tear in the time-space continuum, Kanye West ripped on Daft Punk for 'Stronger' just six years after the original was released, while The Very Best do the same with Architecture in Helsinki's 'Heart it Races' on *Warm Heart of Africa*. These are samples, but it doesn't change the argument that almost everything heard on the radio today has been around in some shape or form over the past few years.

This isn't only limited to music. For the past few years foreign language films are suddenly getting Hollywood remakes almost as soon as they've been released. Just look at *The Ring* or *Infernal Affairs*, or Stieg Larsson's *Millennium Trilogy*, or *Let the Right One In*. At the same time franchises are being rebooted and remade almost as soon as the celluloid touches the projector.

It's not that there's a need to create original works of art,

this is inherently impossible. We are constantly referring back to what we've experienced, read, seen, listened to. What's worrying is that we are failing to generate new ideas and nothing seems to be happening to stop this. It's possibly because we have grown up in safe, complacent times, where everything has seemed to just get better

and better and then... There has been no incentive to change anything, we have been happy and comfortable.

The only hope seems to be that the failure of the governments on these islands to actually govern and to tear up those safety nets that everyone hates, until they need them, to fail to invest in those that are

the future of their nations can stir something up. If there is one positive that will hopefully come from the recession, and the increasingly likely double-dip we are being plunged into, it will be a creative reimagining that looks to the future and not back in on itself in ever decreasing timespans.



Michael Jackson, Lady Gaga, Madonna

## I don't feel like dancing either

PRIYA BIRING

These days it's getting difficult to keep up with all the new music out there. It's as if new a new band crawls out from some unknown settlement in the UK every second. We can't keep up, and to be frank, it all sounds the same. We were once enthusiastic about the endless possibilities that new music could bring you. Didn't care what genre it was, anything new was usually worth listening to. Is it the face of the music industry changing or if music executives are just getting desperate to make money?

After the immense success of the Arctic Monkeys it seems that if you're from the North of England and can play your own instruments, then you will be signed to a record label. Most of us are sick of indie bands now. It is depressing to hear what is passing for new music these days. Vondelapark's 'Jetlag' is a prime example of the utter drivel that is being promoted as great new music. Indie music is losing its momentum because there is too much competition in the field. This is why artists such as Jessie J and Tinie Tempah, whose music appeals to a wider audience, are well known and therefore being awarded with best British Breakthrough Acts. I do realise The Vaccines are an indie band who have been recognised and nominated

for awards, however their single 'post break up sex' just seemed awkward and unoriginal.

Even finding new music is a challenge. Granted, new music isn't supposed to be mainstream, but you'd think it was at least accessible. We're bombarded with so many indie and pop rock bands that it's hard to know where to start. Radio 1's *In New Music We Trust* show promotes new artists; however it is at the radio DJ's digression. Alternatively, the NME magazine (New Music Express) provides a hot list for 2011, which may be of some interest. Of

course some new music is good and we can't just stick to our Arcade Fire's and Kings of Leon. There are many crazy sounding artists that, as music lovers, we may be interested in. The NME nominees for Best New Band are, former Oasis, Liam Gallagher's new band; Beady Eye, Everything Everything, Hurts, The Drums and Two Door Cinema Club. I'm not sure who'll win, but apparently it is down to the public, which is you. I've actually only heard of three of these bands but if their due to win an award, surely I should be hearing the rest of them soon.



NME: New Musical Express

## Book lovers' big giveaway

EMMA GALLEN

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That feeling of wanting everyone to read your favourite book has just become easier for all ardent book worms. World Book Night has 20,000 book lovers across the UK giving out their favourite to those in the community on 5 March.

Each Book Giver, as is the official title, is to receive a box of 48 special edition books to share with their local community. These books range from Pulitzer Prize winner's such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, to chick lit of Marian Keyes, with her much loved *Rachel's Holiday*. It is not just novels on offer either with Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife* and Queen's own Seamus Heaney's *New Selected Poems* to be given away for free.

VP Equality and Diversity, and possible SU President, Samantha Tan will be giving out *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid while I myself will be hoping everyone else will fall in love with David Nicholls's *One Day*. Be warned, you will need a box of tissues. And don't read it on a bus, being the crying girl on the bus is not a good plan.

The event has a huge wealth of writers involved from around

the world but that doesn't stop the *Guardian* from writing it off as something David Cameron would like for his "Big Society." The terribly middle class pretentious element of giving away books on a Saturday does lend itself nicely to something the ConDem coalition would support but that may be adding too much of a political element to the event. The most obvious reason for it not being particularly political is the launch night party which will be hosted by Graham Norton. Yes he is good friends with a Lord, but Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber isn't exactly a political heavy weight.

The *Guardian's* other issue with the event is that it may hinder independent bookstores who already struggle to sell at a profit and that it could make people think they should have access to free books. The flaw in this argument is that the 20,000 volunteers are passionate about books, and support the independents. As has been discovered with poetry lovers, even though entire collections and archives can be found online, those who love the work will go out and buy the book. This event will hopefully encourage people to go out and buy other novels by the same authors or books that were given away but not in their area.

# Queen's Sigerson team slump to shock defeat

SEAN ASHFORD

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Queen's Gaelic football team were eliminated from the Ulster Bank Sigerson Cup on Thursday 17 February following a shock 0-11 to 0-9 defeat to NUI Maynooth.

Maynooth surprised pundits last year by reaching the semi-finals of the competition, and this year it was Queen's who fell at the hands of the perennial giant killers. The more fancied Queen's team was simply out-muscled by their southern counterparts who defended bravely to keep out waves of QUB attacks.

Despite taking an early

lead through points by Charlie and James Kielt, Queen's found themselves two points down at the interval with Maynooth leading 0-8 to 0-6 thanks largely to their dominance across midfield. Queen's could not get a foothold in the game and added to their own downfall by giving the ball away cheaply in advanced areas.

The second half began much better with Queen's levelling the tie with points from James Kielt and Ryan Jones. However, for the remainder of the game Queen's could only add one extra point thanks to an impressive defensive display by NUIM. Again Queen's contributed to their own defeat by chasing goals at

an early stage whenever points may have sufficed, and this lack of composure was ultimately the final nail in the coffin.

Queen's Fresher's B team reached the all Ireland semi-final last Wednesday, beating DIT at the DUB. They will face UUJ tomorrow at the DUB at 2.00pm.

## Get involved

Would you like to be a part of The Gown's Sport team?

Contact us  
[sport@thegown.org.uk](mailto:sport@thegown.org.uk)



NUI Maynooth defeated Queen's by two points

# A wave of success for QUB Surf Club

CLAIRE STEPHENS

This month's Irish Student National Surf Championship echoes the success that Queen's Surf Club has enjoyed over the last year.

Aaron Dees was pivotal in securing Queens' third place ranking at the Student National Surf Championships. This result was a huge achievement, especially considering that the first and second positions were won by universities based in surfing towns Sligo and Coleraine.

There were several individual achievements at the competition including: 2nd Women's Open (Claire Stephens), 3rd Men's Open (Aaron Dees), 3rd Men's Longboard (Brian Cox), 3rd Women's Novice (Maria Hall), and 3rd Men's Novice (Colin Burgess).

Founded in 2009, the club now boasts over 300 members from varied backgrounds. This growth could not have come at a better time, with Ireland now emerging as a competitive force

on the big wave surfing circuit as well as a highly desirable location for the world's top surfers, shown by the recent announcement that the European Championships are to be held in Bundoran, Co. Donegal in October this year. Amy-May Garvey and Aaron Dees are two of the club's most successful members, competing both nationally and internationally as part of the Irish Surf Team.

The club has also been successful in raising their profile outside of surfing, last year hosting a 'Surf Club Beach Party' event at Mandela Hall, an event the club has pledged to organise annually.

The event raised hundreds of pounds for RAG as well as providing funds for more modern equipment. The club are committed to involving as many people as possible, attracting people of all ages and backgrounds, and the club welcomes any new members to come and try out surfing with lessons and equipment are provided for all beginners.



QUB Surf Club now boasts over 300 members

# QUB hurlers defeated by Trinity

SEAN ASHFORD

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Queen's hurlers fell at the quarter final stage of the H.E. Ryan Cup after a defeat at the hands of Trinity College Dublin, going down by 0-9 to 0-13 at home.

The Queen's players entered into this match on the back of a string of impressive performances, and confidence was high that they could turn over the efficient Trinity team. The teams had played each other earlier in the season with the Dubliners scraping the win by 3-8 to 0-16. However with home advantage the level of expectation in the Queen's ranks was high.

Despite the blustery conditions the game began at a high tempo with both teams creating a number of scoring chances. However the wide tally for Queen's soon began to mount which led to the more clinical Trinity team taking the lead. The situation was compounded by a number of needless fouls

committed in dangerous areas which gave the Dubliners the opportunity to extend their lead.

The match itself was intense and extremely physical, with both teams giving committed performances in defence. Despite this the number of opportunities spurned by Queen's ultimately proved to be

their undoing, with the Trinity team gaining a lead which they never surrendered, winning the game by four points.

The match proved to be an unfortunate end to what has been an impressive season by Queen's hurlers, with a number of impressive victories to their name.



Trinity beat QUB hurlers 0-9 to 0-13

## The Gown.

### Editorial team 2011 - 2012

The current Gown management and editorial team welcome applications from students wishing to put themselves forward for the following positions:

Editor - News Editor - Arts Editor  
Features Editor  
Sport Editor  
Design Editor  
Business Manager

For more information  
email your interest to  
[info@thegown.org.uk](mailto:info@thegown.org.uk)  
with 'Team 2011-2012'  
in the subject box

## Letters to the Editor

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## Smear campaigns and broken promises

As we edge towards the end of this year's SU sabbatical election campaign empty promises may come back to haunt certain incumbents on the one hand whereas a lack of composure on the other is evident. Adam McGibbon is running unopposed as VP Welfare this year and VP Clubs and Societies Niall Bole has by far been the most popular of all SU officers according to The Gown polls, but, heading their ticket, SU presidential candidate, Jay Downs has come under much criticism throughout the campaign. As VP Community this year Downs has succeeded in some important areas, in his workings with residential groups to improve the reputation of Queen's students and also in helping to integrate new members to the local community. It is on his main manifesto commitments, however, such as his pledge to hold events at the University every weekend and to provide an SU bus, which Downs has failed to deliver and this may work against him come the time of polling.

Jason O'Neill has claimed that his Law/GAA ticket has been on the receiving end of a smear campaign from certain opponents and their supporters over the past week or so. Comments on The Gown website and arising questions concerning the Law Society's finances and enquiries as to how that society is run have come to the fore. None of this should not necessarily be interpreted in such a way as to relate to either O'Neill's ability nor the ability of any of his running mates to provide only the best service to students at Queen's. When challenged on this at last week's presidential debate O'Neill's positive response rightfully received a round of applause. To speak out against a perceived "smear" campaign so close to voting, however, seems to reveal a lack of composure perhaps just when O'Neill had proved strong enough to stand shoulder to shoulder with two incumbent sabbaticals.

Samantha Tan has thus far seemed to have run a somewhat modest campaign for president, on a small ticket consisting of only two other candidates, VP Fiona Kidd and Council Speaker Joe Corina. According to The Gown's poll, however, Tan appears slightly ahead of her two male opponents. Although polls can never be taken at face value it would nevertheless seem that the way this year's election has developed and divided camps, under the single transferable vote electoral system Tan may look set to reap the benefits from transfers from her two opponents. Tan's campaign appears to be one of realism, particularly on the question of tuition fees, ensuring a backup plan is in place should a hike be passed into law by the local Assembly at Stormont. At the same time, however, Tan has revealed very little about her strategy to tackle fees and what stance she would take if elected SU president.

A realistic manifesto is key this election time, and all three candidates for the presidency have on several occasions sought to persuade their electorate of the viability of their objectives, though not all have succeeded in doing so.

I think Jason O'Neill for the job. A new change is what the SU requires, Sam is a great VP but she is not President material, and I won't waste my time talking about Jay "I do nothing" Downs! Niall Bole thinks he has it in the bag, but I can see the dark horse beating him at the final hurdle, come on McShane my son, hit her high, let us see you fly!

Dave Reilly

Jason O'Neill is a great candidate for this job and he's a gentleman who will put his heart into the job. Having been law society president he has experienced some of the shortfalls of the union at QUB.

From my point of view clubs and societies is a mess at the moment. Currently it's a nightmare organising anything as a QUB club/society, at least that's been my experience of it this year. The bureaucracy at the start of the year was a joke, waiting months for payments to companies and charities is a disgrace and being forced to

use certain "QUB approved suppliers" is just a way for QUB to get more money out of students. The Bole-Bradley combo just hasn't cut it for me or for other societies this year. I think something needs to change and Jason knows what and how to do it.

Best of luck to all candidates, Jason gets my vote for president.

Ben Loughrey

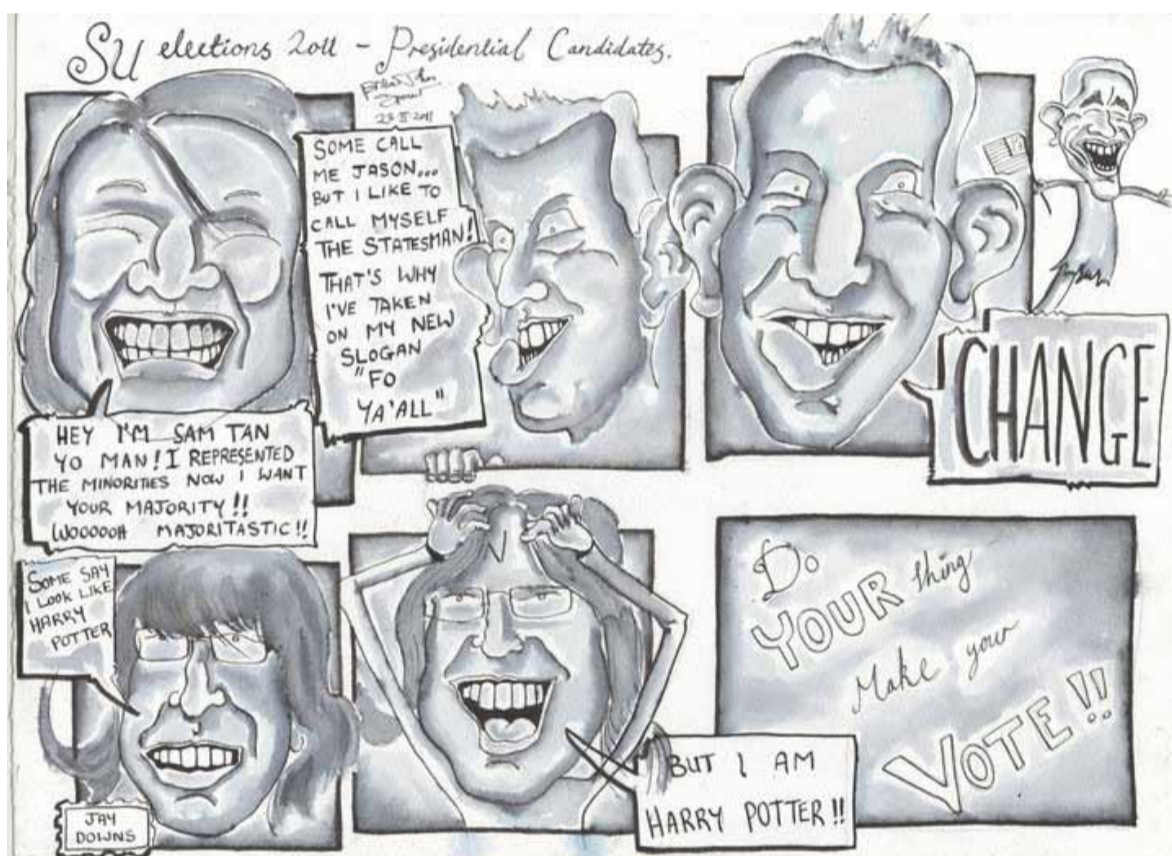


Illustration by Brian Spencer

I find it astounding that people are criticising the current sabbatical officers for being in their offices. They're doing their jobs, surely? There's a distinct difference between getting out there and finding out people's views and having a booze-up in the Bot. Unless the sabbatical office

is "party central", I doubt the officers are there doing much else but their jobs which is only a good thing?

They have always been welcoming and open, and have never turned issues away. They each have individual emails - if there's an issue, get in touch,

don't hang around a bar waiting for them to come to you.

If it's such a problem, make a fuss why don't you, because otherwise they've got to be getting on with their jobs hence they're "cooped up" in their offices. Unlike previous years, they've taken the roles seriously.

Baffled

## THIS MONTH... LEAKED GOVERNMENT REPORT: FREEZE FEES, RAISE GRANTS, Monday 15 February 2010

A confidential government document seen by The Gown has revealed the interim findings of the government-commissioned review into fees and student support in Northern Ireland. The government review, chaired by Joanne Stuart, head of the Institute of Directors in Northern

Ireland, has reached a series of conclusions that spell rare good news for the average students in this torrid economic situation.

Student union leaders in Belfast, Northern Ireland and across the UK are, according to sources, delighted with the interim proposals, deem-

ing them the best possible in the current economic climate. A similar view in England and Wales led by Lord Browne is currently gathering evidence in advance of its own report.

The review was designed to offer a neutral examination of the evidence and submit a rea-

soned factual basis for the coming political debate on the future of higher education in Northern Ireland.

After painstaking examination of statistical and anecdotal evidence provided by the universities, unions (led by the NUS-USI), and other concerned

parties, Stuart's review recommended that fees should not rise, and that access to grants should be widened to encompass more students from middle-income homes.

# QUEEN'S

**STUDENTS' UNION** ENTERTAINMENT



**GOGOL BORDELLO**  
ST PATRICK'S EVE SPECIAL  
Wednesday 16th March  
Rescheduled show from November,  
all tickets remain valid  
Mandela Hall, Doors 7pm



**THE VACCINES**  
Saturday 26th March  
Speakeasy, Doors 7pm



*The View*  
Tuesday 12th April  
Mandela Hall, Doors 7pm



**PETER DOHERTY**  
Sunday 29th May  
Bank Holiday Weekend  
Mandela Hall, Doors 7pm

Radar Presents

# CARA DILLON

Mandela Hall  
Sat 12th March



RADAR / RED ROOF PRESENTS

# ESBEN AND THE WITCH

SATURDAY 9TH APRIL  
SPEAKEASY




**QUEENS COMEDY CLUB**


Upcoming Dates:  
**WED 23RD MARCH**  
**WED 6TH APRIL**  
[www.queenscomedyclub.com](http://www.queenscomedyclub.com)  
See website for line-ups

RADAR PRESENTS

# JOSH RITTER

AND THE ROYAL CITY BAND

WED 13TH APRIL  
MANDELA HALL



radar presents

# boyce avenue

mandela hall  
thursday 19th may

14+ SHOW



QUEENS SURF CLUB presents

# the Original BEACH Party!

Mandela Hall  
Tuesday 15th March, 9pm

MECHANICAL SURF RIDER  
DRINK & COCKTAIL PROMOTIONS  
PRIZES FOR THE BEST DRESSED BEACH GOER  
BEACH GAMES ALL NIGHT

TICKETS £5  
£4 PRESALE  
FROM QUEEN'S  
STUDENTS' UNION  
& SURF CLUB

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