

**VOTE**  
**EMILY KEAVENEY #1**  
**FOR USI EQUALITY OFFICER**



My name is Emily. I am in my final year at the DIT studying Forensic and Environmental Analysis

This past year (09/10) I have worked as the Disability Rights Officer and I am now running for the position of Equality Officer so that I can continue and build on the work done by the equality campaign this year. The work this year built a strong foundation for this campaign but there are a few areas I would like to work on to improve the campaign further.

Working on the equality working group has left me with a great deal of experience in how this campaign is run. This experience and the passion I have for equality issues means that I am the best person for the job

### **Gender Equality Campaign**

This year has seen a rise in the issue of rogue crisis pregnancy agencies. This is a real problem for students as when they go looking for help and information they are terrorised and pressured into making a decision that may not be the best one for them. This year we campaigned against these agencies and still there is still no legislation banning these organisations from setting up shop anywhere in the country. Next year I want to continue to lobby the government to shut these rogue organisations down.

Violence in the home is a major issue for men as well as women. Many students are trapped in abusive relationships and don't know how to get out. This is an issue that most people want to keep under wraps because they truly want to make the relationships work. I want to launch a campaign against domestic violence aimed at both men and women to try and combat this issue. This issue is so widespread that a focused national campaign is needed to help students to speak out and help themselves.

### **Mature Students Campaign**

In order to help the mature student's campaign progress I would like to work with individual CO's to determine the best way to make third level a more secure option for mature students. I would like to work with each sabbatical team to try and make students aware of their entitlements and to work to make mature students feel welcome at college. All students should be aware that they have a right to the same level of education as everyone else. Mature students often feel at a disadvantage due to the fact that they have not come straight from college. Life experience should be an asset and it's unfair that issues that should be easily resolved detract from that.

There is an issue that older students do not necessarily want to go out for 'drinking sessions' that many CO social events are. I would like to encourage CO's to organise 'drink free' or 'drink light' events that will appeal to all students to try and encourage more inclusiveness.

### **Disability Campaign**

This year the biggest issue for students with Disabilities is still communication. It is a massive issue because we can't help these students unless we can get in touch with them. I want to work with every, established organisations like AHEAD and student organisations to try and set up a communications network for students with disabilities. This network will help us to tackle issues like discrimination and the general fear that students with disabilities have with disclosing their disability.

I would also like to try and educate CO's on lesser known disabilities. It is something that I myself became more aware of this year and I think it is not pushed enough. Students are at a disadvantage if the people who are elected to help them don't know that they have entitlements. This type of education would also help to raise awareness among individual CO's.

## **International Students**

Coming to Ireland to study is a big move and it can be hard when you get here and can't fit in. I would like to work with CO's to try and organise events aimed at international students and helping them to integrate with life in Ireland. It should include safety information, finance information and accommodation information all aimed at international students. This needs to be done on a CO by CO basis as each area will have different issues for students to be aware of.

I would also like to work closely with organisations like ICOS to try and organise a way to contact students who do not come to Ireland through the International offices in CO's. There are some students who are not registered with their disabilities office and therefore are not made aware of their rights. This needs to change and it something I plan to work on for the next year.

## **LGBT**

Once again, a year has passed and civil marriage is still the only option available to the LGBT community. I will to continue to lobby to legalise gay marriage next year because I think that would be a major step in fully recognising the equal status of the LGBT community.

The LGBT campaign is extremely active across the country and yet there are still incidents of homophobic bullying. I believe this is something that needs to be dealt with on a campus by campus basis. So I would like to work with LGBT societies on individual campuses to help them combat homophobic bullying through information campaigns and events. In conjunction I would like to run a campaign to help victims of homophobic bullying to deal with such incidents. Many colleges have a zero tolerance policy for bullying which is not enforced because people don't report it. Students need to know that reporting incidents of bullying and abuse will result in action.

## **Why elect me?**

The work I have put in this year as DRO has shown me that I am not yet ready to step away from equality issues because there is so much more for me to do. My four years activity in the DIT SU shows that I am dedicated. I have held positions where I have to deal with groups of people in high stress environments and I have acquitted myself well every time. I am determined to use all of my passion and experience to bring the equality campaign up to the position of one of the strongest campaigns as it deserves to be and I know that I am the best person to do that