

# SEANAD CAMPAIGN 2007

[www.ivanabacik.com](http://www.ivanabacik.com)

E: [ivana@ivanabacik.com](mailto:ivana@ivanabacik.com)  
T: +353 1 817 2932



Welcome to the Summer 2007 Newsletter from Ivana Bacik, candidate for the Dublin University (Trinity College) panel in the Seanad elections. As you are a Dublin University graduate and Irish citizen, you are eligible to vote in this election. You will be sent a ballot form in the post on 19th June 2007, which must be returned by 24th July 2007.

I am asking for your No. 1 vote or highest possible preference in this election.

## IVANA BACIK – THE CANDIDATE

I will be contesting the 2007 Seanad election as an independent candidate. I graduated with an LL.B. from Trinity in 1989 and was President of the Students' Union from 1989-90. I am now lecturing in the Law School and practising as a barrister.

I was the Honorary Secretary of the Law Alumni Association for several years (1996-2003). During that time, colleagues and I pioneered the Law School Scholarships Scheme, a ground-breaking scheme providing funded places for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study Law.

I have been a College Tutor for several years and was elected a Fellow of the College in 2005. In 2006 I was presented with a Provost's Teaching Award. I am also Registrar of the Law School. Apart from my work in Trinity, I have a long track record of campaigning on human rights and on civil liberties, for social justice and equality for women; for gay rights,

for people with disabilities, for the environment ; against the war in Iraq; and for social justice. I have published widely on human rights law, criminal law and criminology, and equality issues.

Recently, I wrote *Kicking and Screaming: Dragging Ireland into the Twenty-First Century* (O'Brien Press, 2004), in which I set forward an agenda for progressive change in Ireland. I believe that the Seanad provides a vital platform for making that change.

You will see further details about my work to date, and my election campaign, at [www.ivanabacik.com](http://www.ivanabacik.com).

I would really welcome any views or comments you have in the lead into the election. Please contact me by phone or email.

Regards,



Ivana receives a Provost's Teaching Award from Provost Prof. John Hegarty, May 2006.

## MAKE SURE YOU VOTE

This year the election of three senators to represent Trinity College will be one of the most competitive in recent times: every vote will count.

Details of the election are as follows:

1st June is the closing date for nominations - the full list of candidates will be known then.

Ballot papers will be sent out by post on Tuesday 19th June.

Ballots have to be returned by 11am on Tuesday 24th July.

Counting of votes will take place on 24th/25th July.

The new 2007 electoral register, published on 1st June next, will be used for the election, so the good news is that the 742 graduates who were omitted from the 2006 register will have their franchise restored, and will be eligible to vote.

Turnout in the Seanad elections is traditionally low. At the last election in 2002 only one third of those on the Dublin University register cast their votes. So every vote will count - it is going to be a very tightly contested election.

If you have changed address recently, then you can email your change of address to: [alumni@tcd.ie](mailto:alumni@tcd.ie) or [proctor@tcd.ie](mailto:proctor@tcd.ie) or send the change of address by post to the Alumni / Proctor's / Seanad Electoral Office at the following address:

House No.5  
Front Square  
Trinity College  
Dublin 2.  
Tel: +353 1 896 1448 / 896 1218 / 896 2744  
Fax: +353 1 671 6476

If you have any questions or comments about the election or about my campaign, drop me an email to: [ivana@ivanabacik.com](mailto:ivana@ivanabacik.com)

# NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TRINITY

SEE MY VIDEO CLIP ON [WWW.IVANABACIK.COM](http://WWW.IVANABACIK.COM)

There have been extensive changes on the Trinity campus in the last few years, with an expansion in student numbers and a massive building programme. Not only that, but the Buttery bar has closed down, and the space is now all being used as a canteen. This has meant serious over-crowding in the Pav, especially on sunny summer evenings!

If you are interested in checking out some of the new developments on the campus, see my video clip which is for view on [www.ivanabacik.com](http://www.ivanabacik.com)

We would welcome any feedback or questions you have about the changes to the campus - to [ivana@ivanabacik.com](mailto:ivana@ivanabacik.com)



Ivana and Father Paddy Gleeson launch Trinity Health Week, April 2007

## ACTING DEGREE COURSE SUSPENDED!

One of the first casualties of the Trinity re-structuring programme may well be the world renowned undergraduate degree course in acting studies.

Trinity was the only institution offering a degree level acting course in Ireland and there is a real fear that young acting talent may now be forced to study abroad.

The course has been in existence for over a decade and graduates include Ruth Negga, Derbhle Crotty, Pauline Hutton and Jason Barry.

The announcement that the degree course will cease next Autumn has caused dismay in Trinity and beyond, with the Arts Council and the director of the Abbey Theatre among those

expressing their concern at the news. I sincerely hope that this myopic decision will be reversed. Trinity authorities state that the decision to close the course was made on financial grounds. However the School of Drama, Film and Music cannot necessarily be expected to attract outside investment like other Schools in the College.

The fate of every course in Trinity cannot be decided by a narrow 'balance-sheet' approach to education. The graduates of the Degree in Acting Studies have contributed enormously to Irish theatre and culture. I wonder where that achievement is accounted for in the decision to end the course?



Ivana speaking at a British Council debate on Britain and Ireland with John Bowman and Liz O'Donnell, TD, September 2006.

## COLLEGE RE-STRUCTURING

Trinity has re-structured! You might find it hard to recognise your old college now – all academic departments have been replaced by 'Schools' and 'Vice-Deaneries'. After two years of intensive wrangling, there are 22 new Schools and two 'Vice-Deaneries'. Ten Schools have formed from two or more disciplines (eg the School of Drama, Film and Music), and twelve are from one discipline only (eg the Law School).

These 24 academic units will now be divided up again into three new faculties;

- (1) Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences;
- (2) Engineering and Science; and
- (3) Health Sciences.

Re-structuring has been highly controversial. It comes at a time when the emphasis within third-level institutions is increasingly upon greater efficiency. While some of this change is justified, the danger is that Universities should not embrace managerialism at the expense of academic freedom.

I have been active in resisting unwelcome aspects of the new structures and will continue to campaign for maintenance of high academic standards in Trinity.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

After years of delays, the new Trinity Sports Centre has finally opened (April 2007) – with a climbing wall, massage rooms and a 25 metre swimming pool! Membership is open to graduates – contact [sport@tcd.ie](mailto:sport@tcd.ie)

In December 2006, Trinity awarded Honorary Degrees to film director Neil Jordan and also to Jean O'Hara, known to many graduates as the Administrator of the Alumni and Seanad Electoral Office for many years. Jean has officially retired, so very best wishes to her.

A pioneering interdisciplinary degree in Irish Studies was launched by Trinity, also in December 2006.

The Times Higher Education Supplement has recently ranked Trinity 78th overall in the world university ranking, and Trinity Arts and Humanities came 39th in the international scale. This gives Trinity the highest-ever Irish ranking position in this league – a great achievement.

Dublin University graduates from the DIT will be interested to know that plans are at an advanced stage to move all the DIT colleges – currently spread over 30 different sites – onto a new 65 acre campus at Grangegorman.

Finally, a tribute to Peter Fitzgerald, who sadly passed away in Nov 2006. Peter graduated from Trinity in 1991, was President of the Students' Union (1991-92) and my Election Agent in previous Seanad campaigns. Greatly missed by us all.



Dick Sping gives Ivana some campaigning tips.

## CLIMATE CHANGE BILL 2007

CLIMATE CHANGE SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ISSUE IN EVERY ELECTION. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT MAN-MADE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ARE THE MAIN CAUSE OF GLOBAL WARMING, AND THAT LEGAL DUTIES MUST BE IMPOSED ON GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE CARBON EMISSIONS ARE REDUCED.

In April 2007, as a Board member of Friends of the Earth (Ireland), I drafted a Climate Change Bill 2007. The Bill provides for the reduction of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions by setting annual and long-term targets. The Bill sets a statutory goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 3% per year from 2010 onwards, as well as providing for long-term goals of reducing emissions by at least 20% in 2020 and 60% in 2050, from the baseline emissions figure measured in 1990. It places duties upon the Minister

for the Environment to ensure those targets are achieved, and specifies sanctions if targets are not met – including a Dail vote of no confidence in the Minister!

The evidence is clear that unregulated greenhouse gas emissions will have a catastrophic effect internationally. This is an issue I feel passionate about, and I will work tirelessly in the Seanad if elected to ensure that real action is taken to tackle climate change.

## HYPOCRISY OF RESPONSE TO THE MISS D CASE

On 9th May 2007, The High Court Gave An Important Ruling In A Highly Controversial Case. The Court Ruled That A 17-year Old Girl (Miss D), Pregnant With An Anencephalic Child Unable To Survive Outside The Womb, Could Travel To The Uk For An Abortion.

The girl is in the care of the Health Services Executive which had tried to prevent her from having the abortion. The Judge criticised the HSE, stating that the 1992 Constitutional amendment providing for freedom of travel prohibits any barriers being placed on the exercise of the right to travel by a girl seeking abortion abroad.

The judgment marks an important statement of children's rights; and of the right to travel. It includes useful guidance on the powers of the HSE in respect of children in care. However, it sidesteps the core question as to whether Miss D should be entitled to have an abortion here in Ireland. While the decision allowing her to travel is very welcome, it is utterly hypocritical of us not to permit Miss D to have the abortion and other necessary medical treatment here in Ireland. For years I have campaigned to end the hypocrisy about abortion, and if elected will continue to do so.



No stranger to election campaigns, Ivana campaigning in the European Parliament election June 2004.

# WHAT I STAND FOR



Ivana speaks at a Mayday Rally.

## SEANAD REFORM

Many of the Dublin University Senators have traditionally used the Seanad as a forum for the expression of progressive and radical views.

The role of an upper chamber can be an important one within the legislative process, but to be more effective, reform of the Seanad is needed. Among the main reforms I propose are:

- Abolition of the Taoiseach's power to nominate Senators without election.
- Expansion of the electorate for the University panels to include other third-level institutions.
- Reform of the Seanad electoral process to remove party political patronage and give citizens a real voice.

## RADICALISING SOCIAL POLICY

Real change is needed in environmental, employment, housing, and transport policies to bring about meaningful improvement in people's lives. Among my priorities are:

- A major social housing programme for the 60,000 families awaiting Council housing and affordable housing for first-time buyers.
- Legal rights and protections for the 150,000 tenants in private rented accommodation and a commitment to abolish homelessness.
- Investment in better public transport, policies discouraging the use of SUVs and a commitment to bicycle-friendly transport systems.
- Enhanced provision for workplace leave, including extended paid parental leave and paid paternity leave.

## RETHINKING CRIMINAL JUSTICE:TACKLING THE REAL CAUSES OF CRIME

As a practising criminal lawyer, I believe passionately in the need for a radical overhaul of the criminal justice system. I believe that public policy on crime should not be based on quick-fix 'solutions'. Instead, the real economic and social causes of crime must be tackled, through an effective and coherent long-term policy that does not trample on our hard-won civil liberties. I will work for the following changes:

- A coherent sentencing policy based on the principles of rehabilitation of offenders and reparation/restorative justice for victims with less reliance on prison.
- Better resourcing of the probation service and of community based sanctions.
- Greater development of the Drugs Court project for rehabilitation of heroin addicts.

## QUALITY AND CHOICE IN EDUCATION

I have campaigned within IFUT (the Irish Federation of University Teachers) for improved quality in education, by opposing the increasing use by many colleges and schools of temporary and short-term contracts for teaching staff. I will also continue to argue for:

- Better resourcing of the primary sector in particular.
- The provision of greater choice in education, through an educational system which caters for those of all religions and of none.
- Furthering diversity among the student body through the development and strengthening of affirmative action programmes for college entry.

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Although much has been done to improve women's position in Irish society, women are still not full and equal participants at all levels. I have a long track record of campaigning as a feminist to ensure greater gender equality. I will work for:

- Provision of decent, affordable and well-regulated childcare facilities with State support.
- Greater access to, choice in and availability of contraceptive services.
- Legalisation of abortion as part of a comprehensive policy to provide full reproductive health services to all women and men

## YOUR VIEWS ARE WELCOME!

Contact Ivana on:

Tel: +353 1 817 2932  
 ivana@ivanabacik.com  
 www.ivanabacik.com



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