UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

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UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

1. Chronology

1980: Founding of UCC GaySoc

1 July 1980:	Cathal Kerrigan begins term as General Secretary of Students Union.
7 Nov.1980:	Cathal attends inaugural Grad's Ball accompanied by his lover Mairtín.
29 Nov. 1980:	Philosoph Debate: "*That this house supports the Establishment of a College Gaysoc by the Students Union*" - GaySoc founded immediately after debate.
January 1981:	Joint Board rejects application for recognition of GaySoc.

1989: Recognition of Lesbian & Gay Support Group

February 1988:	SU President & Rights Officer help revive the GaySoc.
October 1988:	Re-convened GaySoc decides to campaign for recognition.
February 1989:	Clubs & Societies Guild vote 9-1 in favour of recognition.
March 1989:	Students Union Executive votes unanimously to support application.
16 Mar 1989:	Joint Board votes 4-2 in favour of recognition.
14 April 1989:	Academic Council votes 27-7 in favour of recognition.
25 April 1989:	Governing Body of UCC votes 13-7 in favour of recognition!

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2 1981: Founding of GaySoc

Cathal Kerrigan writes:

2.1 Philosoph Debate 29 Nov. 1980

How the idea for the Debate came about
In July 1980 I took up the position of General Secretary [now called President] of UCC Students Union. One of the ideas I had was to split the usual SU Student's Guide into two publications – a Welfare Booklet and a Handbook in diary format. ***Denis O'Donoghue***, Deputy General Secretary, took responsibility for editing the Welfare Booklet. I asked one of my supports, ***Denis Lyons***, to help put together the Handbook / Diary *[Archive item 1.2; 1.7d]*

In order to be able to fill the diary dates with events we contacted all the college societies, clubs, administration offices, etc. for details for events. The Philosoph – the debating society, properly The Philosophical Society – was one of these and the Auditor for 1980/81 was ***Dónal Godfrey***, a law student.

On 17 November 1979 the Philosoph had held a debate ***'that this house supports gay rights'*** with Dónal in the chair as Auditor. The motion was passed. ***David Norris*** spoke in favour and during his contribution he *called for the establishment of a gaysoc in UCC. [Archive item 1.7b]*

I knew Dónal from SU council and when he dropped by my office in early August he brought a draft list of debates for the first term. I agreed to participate in a debate on 14 Nov. "*that this house has confidence in the Students Union*". He had a '*Gay*' debate pencilled in for a fortnight later. When he asked me to also participate in this I said I'd only do so if the motion was 'for real' and not the usual liberal wishy/washy '*we think gays are nice cuddly people etc.'.*

Dónal asked me to give an example of a 'real' motion and I said: "*that this house supports the establishment of a GaySoc*". Dónal said I was on – this would be the motion and I'd have to help get ***David Norris*** - who had a national profile & a reputation as a sparkling debater - to return and propose it with me.

What happened before the debate took place 1 – The Welfare Booklet
When Denis started to compile the Welfare Booklet he asked me to write the lesbian / gay section – which I did opening with:

> "*Homosexuality is not a problem – it doesn't do you any harm and can be lots of fun. Despite this, homosexuality is taboo in women and in men and is believed variously to be sad, odd or kinky. This is where the problem starts and finishes – in the prevailing attitude about what is* 'normal' *sexuality.*"

The *Welfare Booklet* contained much that was daring for the time – practical diagrammatic explanations of human sexuality and contraceptive methods, where to get contraceptives in Cork – as well as guides to eating well, worker's rights, drugs (legal & illegal), etc. *[Archive item 1.3]*

In early October the 1,000 copies we proposed to sell of the *Welfare Booklet* arrived. That same morning Denis attended a meeting with the Dean of Student Affairs, Prof.

Seán Teegan. At lunch hour Denis arrived into my office to say Teegan had seen a copy of the publication and forbade its sale. I immediately asked where the booklets were; when Denis said in his office, I told him that if we couldn't *sell* them then we'd give them away free! And that's what we did that afternoon on the Quad – much to the chagrin of the administration.

What happened before the debate took place 2 – The Grad Ball
Another innovation I wanted to introduce was a Grad Ball. Having persuaded the SU executive it was worth the financial risk we went ahead. It was held on Friday 7 Nov in Jury's Hotel. I attended as both SU Gen Sec and as a graduate myself – having received my BA that summer. As my guest I took my lover ***Máirtín Mac an Ghoill***. It was a great night – the only photograph I have shows Máirtín clearly but I am to his left and my head is cut off – however, the SU Gen Sec's chain of office is clearly visible on my stomach! *[Archive item 1.5]*

At the SU executive meeting the following Tuesday I faced a vote of no confidence for "*having brought the SU into disrepute*". When this was debated it appeared that my behaviour at the Grad Ball was the issue. Luckily some of the executive were not phased by the prejudice of the movers of the motion and queried what exactly they were talking about. What it my orientation? Of course it couldn't be – didn't we have a pro-gay policy? Was it my dancing with my lover – was this lascivious? Of course not – it differed from others on the dance floor only in that my partner was another male. Then one of the advocates of the motion exploded: "*but he was wearing the chain of office!!*" At this point we collapsed into laughter and the motion fell.

What happened before the debate took place 3 – The Catering Dispute
On 4 Nov I'd called a meeting of students to look at the catering on campus – prices had been increased and services cutback. It was decided to have a boycott of college catering and a week later we occupied the Kampus Kitchen and ran our own alternative catering. *[Archive item 4.10]*

It was against this background that the Philosoph Debate of 15 November 1980 took place. The motion was: "*that this house has confidence in the Students Union*" and I had persuaded ***Brendan Dorris***, then President of Bolton St. SU and a Maoist, to propose the motion. It was suggested that the Philosoph should adjourn its debate to the Kampus Kitchen – when this motion failed Brendan and I led a walkout. We then had a serious political discussion with those who followed us in the occupied Kampus Kitchen. *[Archive item 1.7g]*

The Debate
A fortnight later and I was back at the Philosoph to debate "*that this house supports the establishment of a GaySoc by the Students Union*". I spoke to move the motion. The opposers were ***Denis Staunton*** – who put forward a coherent intellectual argument based on not privileging minority interests – and ***Pat McCarthy*** who argued against from the religious perspective. ***David Norris*** was the final speaker – a sparkling performer he had the audience eating out of his hand.

The motion was passed overwhelmingly. I immediately stood up to say that anyone interested in acting on the motion and founding a GaySoc there & then, should follow me to my office. About twenty people did so – which I now feel sure must have been much to my surprise – and the GaySoc was set up there and then. *[Archive item 1.7h]*

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2.2 Joint Board refusal of recognition Jan 1981

The GaySoc begins campaigning

Of the twenty or so people who formed the GaySoc, the majority were heterosexual. Straight people became involved because they were friends of myself or some of the other gays, because they were already involved in supporting women's rights and saw thia as part of the same broad agenda for changing Irish society, or because they were idealistic with a social conscience (social science students mostly!).

One of those who was openly gay from the start was ***Donnacha McCarthy***. He was in third Med and his involvement in the GaySoc was his first move towards dealing with being gay. So – as is the way of things – we elected him as chair. We decided we would have to look for recognition for the society but knew we had a tough fight on our hands.

I advocated a confrontational approach – well, I would wouldn't I? The others however felt we should make links with the other societies – running joint events, etc. – and then try and get liberal support for recognition from as wide a base as possible.

At the word '*liberal*' I bristled – hating them as half-hearted wimps. Throughout the year there would be a certain tension between myself and the rest of the GaySoc – Donnacha in particular. As the highest profile member and the SU leader I needed to take notice and act in line with the democratic decisions taken about how to proceed – but this was not always easy when my own proposals were rejected.

Recognition proposed & rejected

During the next three months the GaySoc was active and very visible on campus. As we already had SU support for recognition of the society it was decided that we should put it on the agenda of the Joint Board – it would not be possible to get a motion onto the Governing Body without the Joint Board's approving the proposal to recognise the society.

This was the final item on the agenda for the Joint Board meeting in January 1981. ***Denis O'Donoghue*** wrote a report on this meeting for the SU magazine **Sage** [3rd Issue / Febuaree..'81] and it captures the atmosphere perfectly:

> "***DISJOINTED BOARD: Joint Board – Farce or Faction?***
>
> *The Joint Board is comprised of four members of the Administration/Academic Staff of UCC and three student members, nominated by the Students' Union. The January meeting, which was chaired by the College Registrar, Professor M. Mortell, furthers the view of many of the incidental presence of students on Campus.*
>
> *Having passed the minutes (tempus bugit), the second item on the agenda was consideration of a list of newspapers and periodicals to be added to the Common Room supply. The students of the Committee were in favour of adding several new titles to broaden the somewhat provincial selection currently available. Those specified were: The Times, Belfast Telegraph, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, Private Eye, Gay News, Left Perspectives, Morning Star and Spare Rib. (The Sage?!).*
>
> *It quickly became evident that a clash of philosophies existed: one arguing for a comprehensive range of titles to cover the deficiencies of the*

regular press, the other negating that role for a University but using predominantly the argument of financial constraint, suggesting that if students wanted such publications they could purchase them themselves.

*Finally it was agreed to give priority to the addition of the Belfast Telegraph, followed by The Times, then The Guardian and The Telegraph, all contingent on the approval of the Finance Office ("..*fumble in a greasy till and add the half pence to the pence*?"). Each of the other titles was vetoed, 4 – 3.*

...[The next two paragraphs deal with budget allocations and the issue of safety.]

Next was a proposal of the Students' Union, that of granting provisional recognition to a Gay society in UCC. A copy of the proposed constitution and a further elaboration of its principles was distributed to all the committee members. This stressed the openness of that Society to persons of all sexual persuasions, also its object as being the promotion and/or support of the political, social and legal well being of gay people in UCC and society at large.

*The chairperson said he felt the issue had been sufficiently dealt with under item 2, the publication list, the logic of which was questioned by the now entrenched "*3*". Speeches in favour of the Gay Society were presented by the student members, including the Societies Officer* [Tommy Barker], *and there was none against. A vote was taken and the proposal was rejected, 4 – 3.*

Released shortly after into the fresh air of the Quad, I noticed a small terrier on the grass running around and around in circles, around and around." [Archive item 1.4a]

Despite the Joint Board's vote against recognition I put it on the agenda for the next Governing Body meeting – I was a member as SU Gen Sec. The then President, Prof. Tadgh Carey tried not to let the motion before the GB get on the floor - daring anyone to propose and second my motion. I can remember him saying things like "*I'm not going to be responsible for spending taxpayers' money and providing space in College for promoting a criminal element among the students*".

I proposed the motion and there was a long silence. Then ***Professor Brendan O'Mahony*** of the Philosophy Department elected as a member by the academic staff, seconded the motion and I saw Carey going apoplectic in the Chair because now this filthy thing would have to be discussed by bishops and County Councillors – who proceeded to vote against the motion.

After the Rejection

The GaySoc continued its activities right up to the end of the academic year but like everything else in student life it fell under the shadow of exams and future life once Easter had passed. *[Archive item 1.4b]*

Immediately after news of the Joint Board decision came out I was contacted by a journalist from the **Sunday Tribune** who wanted to do a story about it. She came to my office with a photographer and ten members of the GaySoc agreed to be in the picture with me. It was published together with a piece headed *Gays accuse UCC* on 15 Feb 1981. *[Archive items 1.1; 1.7i]*

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> "*UCC College authorities have been accused of discrimination and prejudice following the refusal of the Joint Board to recognise a newly established Gay Society in the college……*
>
> *There has been speedy reaction from students to the controversial refusal. Many societies within the college have passed motions of censure on the joint board, while the students' union association and executive has offered financial support and the use of facilities to the gays.*
>
> *Charles Kerrigan, General Secretary of the Students' Union and himself a gay, feels that it is very important that the society be recognised in College.* 'You would imagine that in a third level institution of education there would be a high level of tolerance towards gay people and an awareness of the need of gay students but this is not so. The fear of being labelled gay is great and while there may be some level of tolerance the concept is still unacceptable.'
>
> *A spokesman for college authorities said that they do not always give recognition to applicants* [sic] *from societies, and the joint board did not consider it necessary to grant the application at this time."*

In December 1980 I was involved in setting up Students Against H-Block / Armagh. Around the same time Mairtín and I founded Gays Against H-Block / Armagh. Within USI I was aligned with a broad coalition of large & small colleges with differing political outlooks who succeeded in breaking the hold of Sinn Féin The Workers Party ["Stickies"] supporters on the student movement. At the AGM in January 1981 our candidates won a complete sweep of the officer positions.

[Archive items 1.4c; 1.4d; 1.6.2]

On the 21 February 1981 while I was absent at a meeting in Dublin Mairtín and my flat was raided by the Special Branch (political police). They arrested Maitín on an absurd charge and held him for over four hours during which time he was physically assaulted. Regrettably this was typical of the sort of harassment of political activists of the time. In May Mairtín and I attended the funeral of Bobby Sands – on my return I was once again the object of another failed motion of censure at SU executive. *[Archive item 1.6.3a-e]*

A year later I was living in Dublin but kept in touch on my visits back to Cork. In spring 1982 I met up with a couple of the women who'd appeared in the **Sunday Tribune** photo and they berated me for not warning them for what they were letting themselves in for. They said that the reality of such a photo being seen by their extended family, neighbours, etc. had only hit home over time. No one would believe their declaration of their heterosexuality; even a year later they were being subjected to anti-gay abuse in college and outside.

Looking back a quarter of a century later, recalling that conversation only serves for me to bring home forcefully how much courage all those involved in founding the GaySoc displayed.

2.3 Background: Growing up gay in Cork 1971-81 - Cathal Kerrigan's Story

"*And I swear now that freedom is here…*
…those of us who have nothing to fear
We're going to make damn sure it was worth it!"
George Michael "***My Mother Had a Brother***"

Growing up in Cork in the 50s and 60s was joyful – a safe, secure though controlling society. All that changed in 1971 when at the age of sixteen I put a name on the growing awareness that I was different to my (school) friends: homosexual.

While I was a bookworm and came from a very politically aware and progressive background – my father was a Labour Party local councillor, senator and, later, TD – I could see no life possible for myself. The only association the word had for me was with a bad taste joke in a TV comedy of the time called "*Are You Being Served*?"

So in the autumn of 1973 I insisted my GP arrange for me to see a psychiatrist; for ten weeks I was an out-patient at Sarsfields Court. My father was Lord Mayor that year and was horrified where I was going (though not why – I just said I was 'depressed'). Luckily there was a progressive regime there – I was not given drugs but counselled. I left with the conviction that there was nothing wrong with me but rather with society.

In 1974 I had a job as a clerk with the Southern Health Board. That summer the ***SundayWorld*** was launched as a taboo-breaking paper and it covered the founding of the *Irish Gay Rights Movement [IGRM]* in Dublin. By this time I still had not met another gay person and this news electrified me! I immediately made contact and through them was put in touch with local gays.

The scene at the time was very limited. Most people lived with their parents; those with their own place were the nucleus of a party scene. There was a tiny surreptitious bar scene; most sexual contacts were made in the public toilets – relationships were rare. In an effort to be helpful to a novice a couple of the guys decided to 'show me the ropes'. We came out of the Imperial Hotel Bar and walked up together to the public toilet located at the junction with Grand Parade; then I watched as they cruised and had sex in a cubicle. I was shocked and repelled; I determined this not for me – I was going to create a better life than this for myself.

Meanwhile I had become aware of the international *Gay Liberation Movement* – I subscribed to *Gay News*, *Gay Sunshine* and *Fag Rag*; I read Denis Altman's "*Homosexual Oppression & Liberation*" in ecstasy. Many of my new gay friends found me 'too political'; they warned that things 'are bad now but would become much worse if we become visible'.

As my confidence grew I decided to tell my family about being gay. Unfortunately, my enthusiasm ran away with me and when the whole family – myself as eldest together with my two sisters and brother - sat down to dinner one evening I literally

said: "I have something to tell you – I'm gay". Needless to say this caused consternation and tension. I decided to move out of home and took a bedsit in Sunday's Well.

In 1975 Sean Connolly came down from Dublin to help set up a branch of *IGRM* in Cork; at a meeting in the Imperial Hotel a committee was formed. And at the age of twenty, I went back to see the book collection of one of the more suave members of the committee and – finally! – lost my virginity.

After some fitful stops and starts – trying to meet in pubs, holding cheese 'n' wine dos in bedsits – we were able to open a disco/club at 4 McCurtain Street. We invited the Garda in from the station across the road to reassure them there were no drugs or fornication on the premises! But once word spread that the place wouldn't be raided by the guards or burned down by an angry mob, it was a roaring success and began the transformation of gay life in Cork.

In 1977 the proverbial split took place in IGRM. I found myself in a minority of one on the committee and so resigned. I moved back home and concentrated instead on my education – re-sitting the Leaving Cert and going on to study Arts at UCC. There I had my first major relationship with a fellow English Lit student. He was welcomed into the family home and stayed over occasionally; it meant a lot to me to get this acceptance and endorsement from my family.

In July 1979 my father died of cancer at fifty-one. Back at college that autumn I helped form a social gay group. We met in the house of a lecturer I was having an affair with at the time. Our second or third get together there was great excitement as an openly gay man had started working in the restaurant and he was coming along. Laurie Steele was a tall blond blue-eyed tanned Australian in his mid-twenties who looked like he's stepped off the set of "Neighbours".

He brought his lover – Arthur Leahy - with him; Arthur was slightly older and had the intense air of a cult leader. He shook up the cosy atmosphere by declaring half-way through the night that the Cork gay scene deserved more from college than "a knitting circle"! He went on to propose a radical activist group.

While this was too much for most of the others, it was music to my ears. A fortnight later Arthur, Laurie, Kieran Rose, Tony, and myself set up the *Cork Gay Collective*. One of our first actions was to lobby the *ICTU Annual Conference* by distributing leaflets calling for trade union support for gay rights to delegates as they entered City Hall. In 1981 we organized the first ever *National Gay Conference* which was held in Connolly Hall; the papers from the workshops at this conference basically set out the agenda for gay activism for the next two decades.

In 1980 I was elected President of the *Students Union* at UCC. I initiated the *Graduate's Ball* which was first held that September; I attended with my then lover, Mairtín Mac an Ghoill. This led to an attempt by some members of the executive to censure me for 'disgracing' the union – however, I defeated this challenge.

That autumn the college debating society had a motion in support of founding a gaysoc in UCC; David Norris and I were invited to speak in favour. We won

overwhelmingly and the first *UCC Gay Society* was set up there and then. While we had the support of our fellow students, the college authorities refused outright to recognize the *GaySoc* and our campaigns for recognition failed. A few years later the *GaySoc* folded but in the late 1980's a new *GaySoc* was formed and gained immediate recognition; it still thrives to this day!

When my term of office finished in June 1981, Mairtín and I moved to Dublin where – well, sin scéal eile!

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3 Recognition - 25 April 1989

3.1 The Interim Years: 1981 – 1988

Mick Hannigan succeeded me as SU Gen Sec in July 1981 and was very supportive of the GaySoc. But several of the members from the previous year had moved on. ***Donnacha*** had dropped out of college to pursue his dream of being a ballet dancer and became a member of the Irish National Ballet troupe then based in Cork. I'd moved to Dublin. Those still involved found there was a backlash of reaction in tune with the social conservatism gaining hold nationally.

Some time in the mid-80's there was a referendum on the SU support for the GaySoc. ***Kieran Rose*** came to speak at a Philosoph debate in support of the GaySoc. When he was subjected to virulent anti-gay abuse he appealed to the Auditor to prevent the debate being used as a platform for homophobia. When the Auditor refused Kieran led a walkout.

By 1987/88 a new resurgence of student progressives was taking place nationally in the struggle against SPUC / Family Solidarity imposed censorship. In UCC ***Deirdre Mortell*** was elected as SU Rights Officer and began immediately to organise across a wide range of issues – including lesbian & gay rights. *[Archive items 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 2.4]*

In November 1987 she helped revive the GaySoc by starting the UCC Lesbian & Gay Support Group – "*formed with the aim of combating the isolation that most people feel gay or lesbian in UCC.*" [**Gazette** 28 April 1988 p.3] *[Archive items 2.5a; 2.6a-d; 2.7]*

In an article reviewing the position of college gaysocs in 1988 it stated:

> "*This year's Rights Officer, Deirdre Mortell, decided to form a gay group without even attempting to seek recognition from the authorities.* 'I decided there was a need for a gay group in UCC, which is quite an antigay college. I felt there was a lot of people out there feeling very isolated.'
>
> *Five people now attend the weekly meetings. Two of the members, including Deirdre and a friend, are straight. The other three want anonymity and are not prepared to even put up a poster in college.*
>
> *'*This kind of fear reflects on the rest of the student population' *says Deirdre who claims that Cork is '*the most backward of universities.'"
>
> [**Hot Press** March 1988] *[Archive item 2.12]*

On 13 April 1988 the UCC Lesbian & Gay Support Group organised a public meeting. It was addressed by ***Geraldine McCarthy*** (Cork Lesbian Line), ***Deirdre Walsh*** and ***John Calnan***. The report on the meeting goes on:

> "*Since first meeting last December we have grown steadily in number, strengthened our links with the lesbian and gay groups in the city and in other colleges, and generally attracted a lot of support within college.*
>
> *Next year we hope to be even more active with the help of the new Rights Officer, **Sandra Buckley**, and the new President, who was himself Rights Officer last year, **John Kelleher**.*
>
> *Thanks are due to many people for their help and encouragement throughout the year especially those who attended the open meeting. I would like to add a personal note of thanks to the individuals who make up the group, all of whom join me in paying tribute to **Deirdre Mortell**, this year's Rights Officer. She went beyond the call of duty in offering her help, precious time, a willing ear and good humour to make this a very successful year for UCC's Lesbian & Gay Support Group.*
>
> – ***Anne O'Donnell*** [**Gazette** 28 April 1988 p.14] *[Archive item 2.5b]*

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3.2 The campaign for recognition – GCN Article Feb 1990

> **"Cork Pulls It Off!" –** was the headline on an article published in **Gay Community News** in February 1990 (and written by ***Josephine O'Halloran*** & ***Dónal Sheehan***?). The article describes the campaign for recognition from the inside……*[Archive items 3.8.10; 3.8.11]*

When in April 1989 the Governing Body of UCC voted by thirteen to seven to recognise the College's "*Lesbian and gay Support* Group", it became the first constituent college of the National University of Ireland to accept a lesbian and gay group as a legitimate student society. It ought to be incredible that a University would deny freedom of association and discussion to its lesbian and gay students, but the fact is that the first meeting of the group (in October '88) agreed that there would be no point in even applying for recognition from UCC!

It had been eight years since the last application for recognition had been rejected and, although lesbian and gay groups had existed since then in various forms, none had sought official recognition. During the academic year '87/88 a lesbian and gay group had met regularly but its existence was not widely known in the college; a public meeting in April '88 attended by about twenty people was the high point of its activities. The group did however develop links with lesbian and gay groups in Cork and in Dublin and had a good working relationship with the Students' Union, particularly with the Welfare [sic] Officer, ***Deirdre Mortell***, who had a serious commitment to the USI policy supporting Lesbian and Gay Student organizations.

In October 1988 a number of new members generated a much more assertive approach when the group re-convened after the summer break. It was decided to take a higher profile, advertise meetings widely and even (it seemed a radical step at the time) hold social events! The group's meetings were advertised – omitting the venue from the poster. This meant that students had to enquire at the Students' Union to find out where the meetings would be held. The danger that people would be harassed going into or leaving the meeting had to be balanced against the ordeal of asking a total stranger at the Students' Union for the venue. Hundreds of flyers advertising the meetings were distributed in October and November but new members were slow to appear.

[Archive items 3.2a; 3.2b]

In early December an information stall was run outside the College Restaurant and on the 15th [December] a public meeting was held. The idea of looking for official recognition took shape around this time. Two prominent liberal academics took the initiative of approaching the group to offer their support for a recognition campaign. Both felt that there was a realistic prospect of success and appreciated the importance of the fundamental issues at stake for the College.

The group responded enthusiastically to the prospect of a recognition campaign. An application with the requisite 50 names and fee of £50 was lodged with the clubs and Societies Officer in early February. A representative of the group was allowed to address the Clubs and Societies Guild meeting which voted 9 – 1 in favour of the application with abstentions. The staff representatives played safe by either voting against or abstaining.

Their arguments were along the lines: '*of course we sympathise with the plight of lesbian and gay students, admire your courage in making this application and support what you*

are trying to do ***but****…the proposed society would only make matters worse. Young people could find their lives ruined by a rash involvement with the group. The interests of students will be best served by leaving this problem to be handled by the college's existing welfare services.'* Contemptible as this sort of behaviour was it was also encouraging since it showed up the intellectual incoherence of the opposition.

In early March the Student Union executive voted unanimously to support the application. This was not a part of the formal process but was an important step in mobilising support for the campaign.

The next step in the process was the "Joint Board". This has four student and four staff representatives (one of the staff places was vacant) and it was at this stage that the last application was defeated in 1981. A written submission arguing the case for the society was drafted by ***Josephine O'Halloran*** and edited by ***Professor Garrett Barden*** (a prominent college figure who actively supported the campaign) into a form he thought would be most effective. This was sent with a covering letter seeking their support to all the existing Clubs and Societies. *[Archive items 3.3.1a; 3.3.2; 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.4.3]*

Josephine also sought a personal meeting with each of the staff representatives and sent them the submission. One was in favour of the application, one refused to see her and the third, ***Michael Kelleher***, the Finance Officer, was against. He was worried about AIDS, of the danger that naïve students might be induced to join the society, that the campaign was just '*attention seeking*'; he felt that problems like homosexuality (he compared it to deafness!) were best handled by the college chaplains and the welfare service; besides, think of the effect on the good name of the college! The vote went 4 – 2 in favour. Two staff voted against and one student rep. was absent.

[Archive items 3.5.1; 3.5.2; 3.5.3a; 3.5.3b; 3.5.3c]

During this period notices were posted and fliers distributed around college to keep people abreast of how the campaign was developing. A "*Lesbian and Gay awareness Week*" was held in April. The reaction of people around the college was generally supportive and tolerant. Minor incidents of abuse did occur but no serious opposition emerged. *[Archive items 3.6.1]*

The next step in the recognition process was a vote of the Academic Council, a 70 member body. If the proposal got the support of the AC the group felt they would have won the argument within college. The final vote, at the Governing Body, would include Bishops, County Councillors and other representatives outside College. It seemed unlikely that such a group would support the proposal.

All 70 members of Academic Council were sent a submission and also received a letter from ***Garrett Barden***, who could not attend the meeting himself, arguing the case for recognition. Thirty potential supporters were lobbied personally by him, ***Prof. John Maguire*** and ***John Kelleher***, President of the SU. *[Archive items 3.6.3; 3.6.5]*

In 1981 the argument that it could be illegal for the College to support a gay society because male homosexual acts were illegal had been persuasive for many of those who voted against the proposal. To diffuse this argument ***Garrett Barden*** got legal opinion on the existing state of the law in the wake of the Norris Verdict. Josephine also spoke to ***John O'Connor***, the influential Dean of the Law faculty, who did not feel the legal situation was altogether clear but supported the recognition proposal.

[Archive item 4.5]

The discussion of the proposal occupied over an hour of the AC meeting. Of the speakers not previously committed to supporting the group, the greatest impact was made by ***John A. Murphy***'s speech in favour of the motion. The vote was 27 – 7 in favour. The President abstained the Vice-President voted in favour. ***John A. Murphy*** made a useful tactical contribution by asking that the members voting on each side be recorded, rather than just the outcome of the vote. *[Archive items 3.6.7]*

At this stage the group felt that a major victory had been won. The final step to full recognition, the vote of the Governing body, would be the most difficult.
[Archive items 3.7.1]

Again the submission was sent to all members and lobbying was concentrated on academic staff and the accessible councillors. ***John Kelleher*** of the Students' Union was the main advocate of recognition at the meeting strongly supported by ***John A. Murphy***.

The discussion was prolonged occupying most of the meeting. Many worries and questions were raised about the proposal but the only fixed opposition came from one councillor whose bizarre contributions served only to discredit the opposition case. The vote went 13 – 7 in favour. Eight members of the Governing Body were absent and the President voted in favour. *[Archive items 3.72; 3.7.3; 3.7.4; 3.7.5]*

The jubilation that followed the vote is understandable. No publicity had been sought for the campaign outside College because it might have served only to stimulate opposition. Now it was finally possible to blow the trumpet for an important step forward for lesbian and gay students and for personal freedom generally in our universities.
[Archive items 3.8.1; 3.8.6; 3.8.7; 3.8.8; 3.8.9]

Why the campaign in UCC should have succeeded where others have failed requires some analysis. Getting the issue on the agenda in the first place reflects the energy that went into the group during the first term when the idea of seeking official recognition had not yet arisen. ***Mick Quinlan***'s arrival as a mature student certainly sparked off much of this activity.

The support group began to take a vigorous public profile within college, forcing people to think seriously about the issues and demonstrating to potential supporters within the college that a politically aware group did exist on which a recognition campaign could be based.

The work that had been done in previous years by the Students' Union and USI provided the groundwork for this mini-explosion of action. Building close links with experienced college politicians like ***Garrett Barden*** was the next key step. The campaign could not have succeeded without the tactical skill to identify and lobby effectively the potential support that existed within the College.

The absence of any coherent opposition was the least predictable element in the mix. The fact that several of the main college offices were vacant at the time may have contributed to this. Nothing comparable to the current high profile campaign against the Students' Union policy on abortion information happened in reaction to the Support Group's campaign. Even the clerics and other conservatives entrenched in the College's administrative and academic staff did not lobby against recognition; if they did, they were entirely ineffective.

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

4 Who's Who

Barden, Dr. Garrett
Dean of Arts in 1989 and a key supporter and strategist in the campaign for recognition.
[Archive items 1.7b, 3.6.3; 3.6.4a;3.6.4b 3.8.9a; 3.8.10; 3.8.11]

Beamish, Sylvia
Arts student 1980/81 – a feminist who was one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo.
[Archive item 1.1]

Buckley, Sandra
SU Rights Officer 1988/89 – continued the work of her predecessor in actively supporting those organising the recognition campaign.
[Archive items 2.10d; 3.2a;3.3.1b; 3.5.3a; 4.1b]

Calnan, John
Cork gay activist – spoke at the public meeting organised by the Lesbian & Gay Supporters Group 13 April 1988
[Archive item 2.5b; 2.6d]

Daly, Dominick
Science student 1980/81 and gay activist - was one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo.
[Archive item 1.1]

Flynn, Emmet
Social Science student 1988/89 – one of the organisers of the recognition campaign.
[Archive items 3.4.; 3.5.3a;]

Godfrey, Dónal
Law student 1980/81 – Auditor of the Philosophical Society 1979-80 who organised the debate on 29 November 1980. *[Archive item 1.7b; 1.7d]*

Hannigan, Mick
General Secretary UCCSU 1981/82 – a socialist who continued the Students' Union's strong support of the fledgling GaySoc.

Kelleher, John
President UCCSU 1988/89 – actively supported the recognition campaign and played a key role in lobbying his fellow governors on the Governing body.
[Archive items 3.2a; 3.2b; 3.8.10; 3.8.11]

Kerrigan, Cathal [aka Charles Kerrigan / Cathal Ó'Ciarragáin]
General Secretary UCCSU 1980/81 – a socialist republican and gay activist who proposed founding the GaySoc and led the unsuccessful effort to gain its recognition.
[Archive items 1.1; 1.2; 1.5; 1.6.1a-b; 1.6.2; 1.6.3a-e; 1.6.4; 1.6.5;1.7d; 1.7g; 1.7h; 1.7i; 2.12; 3.8.3; 4.10]

Leahy, Arthur
Cork gay activist – involved centrally in much of Cork gay political and social life since 1979 – was a key supporter of any efforts by lesbian & gay students to organise.
[Archive item 2.12; 3.8.9]

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

Mac an Ghoill, Mairtín
Political activist and socialist republican – attended the 1980 Grad Ball as partner of Cathal Kerrigan and was supportive of all attempts to organise a GaySoc.
[Archive items 1.5; 1.6.3b; 1.6.3c;]

Maguire, Dr. John
Lecturer in Sociology in 1988/89 – played a key role in lobbying his fellow academics on the Academic Council to vote in favour of recognition.
[Archive item 3.8.10; 3.8.11]

McCarthy, Donnacha
Medical student 1980/81 - one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo. As an openly gay Chairperson gave leadership and visibility to the GaySoc's fight to exist and be recognised.
[Archive item 1.;, 1.7i]

McCarthy, Geraldine
Cork lesbian activist and member of Cork Lesbian Line – spoke at the public meeting organised by the Lesbian & Gay Supporters Group 13 April 1988
[Archive item 2.5b; 2.6d]

Mortell, Prof. Michael
As College Registrar in 1980/81 chaired the Joint Board meeting which voted down recognition of the GaySoc. As President 1988/89 chaired Academic Council and Governing Body meetings which recognised the society.
[Archive item 1.4a; 3.6.4a; 3.6.7; 3.8.10; 3.8.11]

Mortell, Deirdre
Rights Officer UCCSU 1987/88 – helped set up the Lesbian & Gay Supporters Group in November 1987 and organise the public meeting 13 April 1988.
[Archive item 2.1; 2.2; 2.5a; 2.5b; 2.8a; 2.8b; 2.9; 2.12; 3.8.10; 3.8.11]

Murphy, Prof. John A.
History lecturer and member Seannad Éireann 1988/89 – his speeches at Academic Council and on Governing Body were vital in swaying his fellow academics to support recognition.
[Archive items3.8.10; 3.8.11]

Norris, David
Gay activist & lecturer in English in TCD 1980/81 – was keynote speaker at Philosoph debate 29 Nov 1988 who's eloquence ensured a large majority in favour of founding a GaySoc.
[Archive items 1.1; 1.7b; 1.7h; 2.8a; 2.8b; 4.5]

O'Callaghan, Frank
Arts student 1980/81 - was one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo.
[Archive items 1.1; 1.4c; 1.4d]

O'Connor, William
Social Science student 1988/89 - one of the organisers of the recognition campaign.
[Archive items 3.1; 3.8.9c; 3.8.9d]

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

O'Donnell, Anne
Student 1988/89 - helped set up the Lesbian & Gay Supporters Group in November 1987 and organise the public meeting 13 April 1988.

[Archive item 2.5b]

O'Donoghue, Denis
Deputy General Secretary UCCSU 1980/81 – edited *UCC Welfare Booklet 1980/81* - one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo.

[Archive items 1.1; 1.3; 1.4c; 1.6.4; 1.7g]

O'Halloran, Josephine
Law student 1988/89 – as PRO of Lesbian / Gay Society was leading figure in the fight for recognition.

[Archive items 3.1; 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.5.3a; 3.6.4a-b; 3.6.6; 3.7.3; 3.7.4; 3.7.5; 3.8.1; 3.8.2; 3.8.3; 3.8.4; 3.8.6; 3.8.7; 3.8.8; 3.8.9a; 3.8.9b; 3.8.10; 3.8.11; 4.2; 4.3; 4.4]

O'Meara, Louise
Social Science student 1980/81 – anarchist and feminist - one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo.

[Archive item 1.1]

Quinlan, Mick
Social Science student 1988/89 – socialist republican and gay activist – helped initiate campaign for recognition.

[Archive items 3.1; 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.5.3a; 3.8.10; 3.8.11]

Rose, Kieran
Gay activist – socialist - mid-1980's spoke at Philosoph debate on SU GaySoc referendum – led walk out in protest at tolerance of homophobic tone of debate.

Shanahan, Cyril
Arts student 1980/81 - one of the founders of the GaySoc in 1980 and appeared in the 1981 **Sunday Tribune** photo.

[Archive item 1.1]

Sheehan, Dónal
Cork gay activist 1988/89 – provided vital tactical advice for recognition campaign and helped draft much of publicity material.

[Archive items 2.6d; 3.8.10; 3.8.11; 4.2]

Staunton, Denis
Actor and debater 1980 – was one of the two speakers against founding of GaySoc in Philosoph debate 29 November 1980. *[Archive item 1.7h]*

Steele, Laurie
Gay activist and socialist – mid-1980's was student in UCC – attempted to keep GaySoc alive through the dark years.

Walsh, Deirdre
Cork lesbian activist – spoke at the public meeting organised by the Lesbian & Gay Supporters Group 13 April 1988

[Archive item 2.5b]

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

5 LGBT Archive – a descriptive listing

1. 1980/1981: Founding of GaySoc

1.1. *"UCC GaySoc Accuses College"* **Sunday Tribune** 15 Feb. 1981 p.2
A4 Photocopy of original – headline missing – photograph accompanies article: "*Members of the UCC Gay Society photographed at the Students Union office*" – keyed identification added by CK

1.2. *UCC Students Handbook Diary 1980-81 – a students union production*
Eds. Denis Lyons BA & Charles Kerrigan BA; A5 106p
P.31 - Diary entry @ Sat 29 Nov reads: "*Philosophical Society – 'That this house supports the Establishment of a College Gaysoc by the Students Union"*

1.3. *UCC Welfare Booklet 1980-81 – a students union production*
Ed. Denis O'Donoghue, Deputy General Secretary; A5 81p
P.36-38 "*Homosexuality"* & p.38-39 "*The Lesbian Movement"* written by Cathal Kerrigan

1.4. a) "*Disjointed Board – joint board: farce or faction"*
b) "*Clubs & Societies News: Gay Soc"*
c) "*USI Annual Congress 1981 - UCC the Kingmakers*"
The Sage – A Students O(U)nion Publication 3rd Issue Febuaree..'81
Ten A4 pages – photocopies of pages (unnumbered) from issue – a) is on fourth page; b) is on seventh page & c) on the second and lists ten members of delegation.

b) reads in part:
"*What is the function of the UCC Gay Society?*
Many do not realise that gay organisations exist, while some of those who do are apprehensive about going to them, perhaps for fear of being 'labelled' *and thus further isolated from society. Basically, the aim of the UCC Gay Society, is to promote the social, political and legal well-being of gay people in UCC and in society at large.*
The societyis open to everyone – gay or non-gay. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE GAY TO JOIN.
Meetings are held every Thursday at lunchtime in the Committee in the Students' Union Offices at 4, Carrigside, College Road."

d) **Photograph** of UCC/SU delegation to 23rd USI Annual Congress

1.5. Photograph from S.U. Graduation Dinner Dance [Grads Ball]
Held on Friday 7 November 1980 – see Item 1.2, page 25
On left hand side of photo can be seen Mairtín Mac an Ghoill; further to his left can be seen the Cathal Kerrigan's chest with the Students Union's General Secretary's chain of office.

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

1.6. Various photocopies related to Charles Kerrigan [aka Cathal Ó'Ciarragáin, Cathal Kerrigan]

1.6.1. a) **UCC Record 1980** page 80 "*Classics Society"*
"Secretary: Charles Kerrigan"
b) "*School urged to teach the classics*" **Cork Examiner** (?) Feb. 1980
One page A4 photocopy of both

1.6.2. **"***Congress Report – 23rd Annual Congress White's Hotel, Wexford 15-18th January '81*" **USI News** January 1981 pages 4 & 5
One A3 page - photocopies of original.
Page 4 contains photo of Denis O'Donoghue & two photos of Charles Kerrigan (one mislabelled 'Brendan Smith UCG'!)

1.6.3. a) Press Release dated 12 February 1981 from UCC Students Union
b) "*Students Condemn Harassment*" **Cork Examiner** 7 Mar 1981
c) Press Release dated 23rd February 1981 from UCC Students Union
d) Press Release dated 25th February 1981 from UCD Students Union
e) UCD Students Union Compliment slip with greeting from Marguerite Ahern, President of UCD SU to 'Charles'
Three A3 pages - photocopies of originals
All relate to arrest of Mairtín Mac an Ghoill on 21st Feb. 1981. Part of greeting on compliment slip reads: "*I'll come to see you in jail if I've not been lifted myself by then!"*

1.6.4. Various press cuttings
One A3 sheet with three press cuttings:
Sunday Independent 4 May 1980
"*I hear that a son of the late Cork labour TD…….*"
Sunday Independent 11 May 1980
"*Charles Kerrigan, son of former labour T.D. Pat Kerrigan, claimed his first electoral victory recently when he topped the poll for the position of general secretary of the students' union in UCC*"
Evening Echo 4 March 1978
"*Drama by Robert O'Donoghue: Granary Experiment…among people involved in the forthcoming double bill are Charles Kerrigan, Denis Donoghue, Theo Dorgan, Tony Galvin…*"

1.6.5. "*Cathal O'Ciarragain"* **Munster Queer (G)CN** May 1992 p.1
One A3 page – photocopy of original
Profile of Cathal written by Dónal Sheehan. **Munster GCN** was a four page pull-out supplement to **Gay Community News**

1.7 ***The Philosophical Society [Philosoph]*** *Minutes 1979 – 1986* – Extracts.
Stapled photocopies of pages 1, 2, 22-24, 38, 64-5, 71, 72, 86-90 and 126.

The 500 page Collins Minute Book was handed into the Boole Library in April 2006 and deposited by Cathal Kerrigan in the College Archives. The bound volume has mottled edging and has a name index at the front.

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

Photographs, newspaper cuttings, flyers, etc. are pasted into the book throughout. At the back printed texts of Dónal Godfrey's inaugural speech and his published article detailing the history of the society are pasted in; this is followed by a list of Auditors 1850/51 – 1985/6 (with gaps: 1851/52 – 1902/03; 1908/09 – 1920/21; 1953/54 – 1955/56).

1.7a **P. 1 & 2** Contain details of the Society officers for 1979-80

1.7b **P. 22-24** Minutes of the 6th meeting of the 130th
Reads in part:

"*The meeting was held in G19 on Saturday November 17th before an audience of over 300…The main debate of the night was on the motion '**that this house supports gay rights'**.*

Dr. Garret Barden, proposing, posed the question should everything that is sinful be prohibited by law. He pointed out that we were talking of interpersonal relationships and that the view held by the majority of the people as embodied in the stance of the catholic church need not be the correct one.

Patrick McCarthy opposing said that divine and secular law could not be separated. He said that the laws governing any subject should set certain minimum standards and the application of such laws should be feasible. He concluded that the law as it presently stands does pass muster and called on the house to reject the motion.

Cleona Duggan proposing said that gays were real people and that the pejorative terms employed by the masses to describe gays were an erosion of this reality. She deplored the so-called magnanimity of a government which said that although the laws did exist they were rarely used.

David Norris proposing called for the establishment of a gaysoc in UCC. He gave numerous examples of the activities of the international gay organisations in the hotspots of the world and promised a little surprise for the supreme soviet before the end of the year. He said that the liberation of gay people would call into question stereotyped attitudes to male and female roles.

Denis Staunton, in ironic opposition, described the typical gay, whom everyone could recognise on sight, as having tight silky trousers, an effeminate air, long hair, much jewellery, and possessing a high squeaky voice. He said that homosexuals were not real men. He criticised the Nanny State which pandered to the weak, the oppressed and the disabled.

The motion was subsequently carried and the meeting adjourned to the bar."

1.7c **P. 38** Group photograph of Society officers for 1979-80

1.7d **P. 64-65** Minutes of the 19th meeting of the 130th session.

Reads in part:

"*The meeting was held before a small (15) but interesting audience in G10 of the Civil Engineering building on Tuesday April 23rd 1980 with Mr. Dónal Godfrey in the chair. It was the occasion of the* ***General – Secretary Debate****…*

The main debate then began before the microscopic but gaelic audience. Mr. Charles Kerrigan spoke first..He proposed an effective administration, reforms and leadership. He was not a fascist although the day was the occasion of his 25th birthday.

Mr. Padraig Carroll …suggested open seminars..plans to improve the dreadful conditions which existed in the library. He warned of the nuclear reactor in the Science building…

In the ensuing discussion questions were asked on abortion, the possible formation of a gay soc at UCC…and Mr. John O'Sullivan asked what expenditure each candidate had incurred. Mr. Kerrigan said he had spent about £81 and Mr. Carroll said £40. …..

[Addendum: The next day Mr. Kerrigan was elected General Secretary.]

1.7e **P. 71** Contains details of the Society officers for 1980-81

1.7f **P. 72** Contains a pasted in flyer used by the society at registration October 1980

1.7g **P. 86-88** Minutes of the 5th meeting [of the 131st session]
Reads in part:

"*The meeting was called to order in G19 before a packed house…Mr. Buckley suggested that the meeting be held in the Kampus Kitchen. Mr. Plant was in agreement with the stand and action of the Union, but proposed the amendment '****that we do not move****'. A heated exchange followed….*

Mr. Kerrigan [Gen. Sec. SU (Cork)] stated that he could not stay for the debate while asking students to go to the K.K. A vote was held and the motion was defeated. …

A most bitter debate followed, during which another guest speaker Mr. Brendan Dorris said he would go with Mr. Kerrigan. .. Following further discussion, Mr. Kerrigan said he felt that democracy had been done an injustice and he left the chamber. Mr. Dorris followed.

*The main debate "****that we have confidence in Students Unions****" began…. The debate was put to the floor and the audience, which still almost filled the room subsequently passed the motion.*

The meeting was adjourned, but boycotted the College Bar."

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

1.7h **P. 89-90** Minutes of the 6th meeting of the 131st session of the Society

Reads in part:

"By far the largest audience of the session packed G19 when the meeting opened with Mr. S. O'Mahony in the chair….

*The speakers had arrived for the main debate "**that this house would support the establishment of a Gay Society in UCC**"..*

Mr. Charles Kerrigan was first to propose the motion. He described the mechanism for setting up a society in the College and previous attempts to set up a Gay Soc. He said that the attitude of society and the students of UCC reflects a very reticent and hypocritical approach to gay people. He said that all gay people should be allowed to seek fulfilment and that a step towards this would be the establishment of a Gay Society by which members could protect themselves from oppression.

Mr. Patrick McCarthy (BCL) opposed firstly by saying that the Union should not become involved in political issues. He claimed that since it is a widely held view that homosexuality is against nature it is a matter of public morality and, therefore, should be restricted.

Mr. David Norris (Gay Rights Movement) criticised the opposition and the attitude of the professions. He was appalled at the arguments use din the past, which are still used by the government today. He said that people feel threatened by homosexuality and act to the detriment of gay people. He advocated the establishment of a gay society - but quoted a threat of execution which he received. Mr. Norris said that freedom is for everyone and that he would pursue his case to Strasbourg.

Mr. Denis Staunton (RTE Players) first quoted Isaiah [?Irish?] and proceeded to criticise the gay scene in Dublin. He was also opposed to gay culture and propaganda – which he claimed created a ghetto mentality.

The house then engaged in a very constructive discussion, raising many points of interest, and subsequently carried the motion. The meeting was adjourned at the late hour of 10:45p.m."

1.7i **P. 104** Contains a pasted in press cutting from Cork Examiner 10 Feb. 1981, page 3

"*Gay Society refused recognition by UCC*"

"A newly established Gay Society in UCC has been refused recognition by the college.

An application the the college's joit board, the body which governs relations between the students' union and the

college authorities, turned down the application for recognition by four votes to three.

The Gay Society was set up a few weeks before Christmas following a debate at the UCC Philosophical Society at which David Norris, chairman of the National Gay Federation, participated.

*This debate was attended by over 350 people who voted overwhelmingly in favour of the motion: "**That this house supports the establishment of a college Gay Society by the students union".***

Mr. Charles Kerrigan, general secretary of the students union who spoke in favour of the motion at the debate, said that the Gay Society was founded shortly afterwards and had attracted over 30 members.

"The aims of the society are to promote and or support socially, politically and legally the well-being of gay people in the student community and in the community at large".

A statement issued by Gay Society auditor Donnacha McCarthy said they deeply regretted the decision of the joint board as they felt it reflected the ignorance and lack of understanding of the problems gay people face in an institution like UCC.

It also exhibited an undeniable discrimination in that this was one of the first societies in the university to be refused recognition.

"In fact", said Mr. Kerrigan, "it is the first I know of".

The refusal of recognition means that the society won't get any grant from the Clubs and Societies Fund in the college. The society will not be able to hire out rooms in the college in its own name."

1.7j **P. 126** Is a listing of the main debates of the 131st session marked '*carried*' or '*defeated*'.

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

2. 1981/1988: Interim Years

2.1. "*Working Group on Gay + Lesbian Rights* – 1 Nov. 1987 USI"
One sheet A4 notepad handwritten minutes of meeting on both sides.
Attendance includes *Deirdre Mortell – UCC* and concludes:
"*If no one comes to UCC Group, meet in Quay Co-op!*"

2.2. "*Sexuality Conference: to be held on 6th and 7th February 1988*"
One sheet A4 paper
Contains *Preliminary Agenda* with handwritten notes [by Deirdre Mortell?]

2.3. "*Agenda 24/2/88*"
One sheet A4 notepad handwritten on one side only.
Reads in part:
"*1) Where are we going? Aims + priorities*
6) Possible research into our history"

2.4. Letter from *Dublin University Gay Society* to *UCC Gay Society Secretary* dated 28th April 1988
One sheet A4 headed paper.
An invitation to a 60's party.

2.5. a) "*To UCC Lesbian and Gay Group"* **The Gazette** 28 April 1988 page 3
A4 page torn from original publication; printed both sides.
Letter from Dermot Kelly complaining about an article in the same publication [Vol. 3, Issue 17 – 18th Feb. 1988] announcing the founding of a gay society. Followed immediately by a letter from Deirdre Mortell headed *Rights Officier Replies*

b) "*Lesbian and Gay Group"* **The Gazette** 28 April 1988 page 14
A4 page torn from original publication; printed both sides.
Piece written by Anne O'Donnell reporting on a public meeting held by the GaySoc on 13th April 1988

2.6. Various flyers
Three stapled A4 sheets with two smaller cut-up flyers attached to top sheet.
Flyers publicising:
a) "*Lesbian & gay Support Group Meeting every Tuesday 6pm – 7pm*
b) "*Videos 1-2 Tue. 14 mar. 'Before Stonewall'*"
c) "*UCC Lesbian \ Gay Support group + WRAC + Women's Group – 'The right to love' – public meeting Wed. 30th Nov. W5*"
d) "*UCC Lesbian \ Gay Support group + WRAC + Women's Group – public meeting on 'Sexuality' – Speakers: Donal Sheehan('Unite for Change Group), John Calnan (Cork Gay Collective), Geraldine McCarthy (Cork Lesbian Collective) Wed. 30th Nov. W5*"

2.7. "*First A.G.M. of UCC Lesbian and Gay Support Group"*
One sheet A4 notepad handwritten on both sides. Not dated

Consists of a listing of possible agenda items / ideas – includes towards end: "*Put articles in The Gazette – excerpts from 'Out for Ourselves'*""

2.8. a) "*David Norris*"

Two stapled sheets A4 notepad handwritten on both sides first sheet.
Not dated.
Notes taken of a talk given by David Norris.

b) 14 notecards [2"x 11/2" approx] from same talk.
Handwritten in red ink.
Includes notes such as:

"*1980 GaySoc proposed 4-3 against JB*"
"*Norris: Sean Teegan banned Law Soc homosexuality meeting*"
"*UCD Gay Soc denied recognition / Line > Quay Co-op*"

2.9. "*Gay group in UCC would like to extend an invitation to any gay or lesbian student who would like to meet others in the strictest confidence – Contact Rights Officer c/o Student Union Building, College Road."*

Fragment of notepad paper. Not dated. Handwritten draft text.

2.10. USI related texts?

Four stapled A4 type-written sheets. Not dated.

a) "*Sexual Rights Group*"
b) "*Lesbian and Gay Rights and Students Unions*"
c) "*Lesbians & Gay Men*"
d) Address list of college Rights Officers – includes Sandra Buckley, UCC.

2.11. "*Proposal – Gay Society*"

One sheet A4 notepad handwritten on both sides. [18th Nov. 1986?]. Written as send up? Signed '*proposed president Alex (UCC Gay Society)*'.

2.12. Collette Sheridan "*Campus Crusade*" **Hot Press** March 1988 page 7

A3 photocopy of original article.
Article reviews history and then state of college gaysocs including UCC. Includes quotes from Charles Kerrigan, Deirdre Mortell and Arthur Leahy. Includes statement that "*five people now attend the weekly meetings. Two of the members, including Deirdre and a friend, are straight.*"

UCC LGBT [GaySoc] – History 1980 - 1990

3. 1988/1989: Recognition

3.1. "*Lesbian + Gay Support Society members*"

Two A4 sheets and five ruled foolscap pages of signatures.

First A4 sheet contains: *Mick Quinlan Arts / DSW 2*
Second A4 sheet contains: *Josephine O'Halloran LLM 2* and *William O'Connor Soc Sc 2*
Second foolscap sheet headed:
"*You do not have to be lesbian or gay to join. This is our first year. We fought very hard to beat descrimination* [sic]. *Support us to continue.*"

3.2. Various flyers

Two stapled A4 sheets with two smaller cut-up flyers attached to top sheet.
Flyers publicising:

a) "*UCC Lesbian/Gay Support Group - 'There is more to love than boy meets girl' – we meet every Thursday at 1p.m – confidential for further information – ring Gay Information … Lesbian Line ../ or Contact John Kelleher 276871 Ext. 2367 / Sandra Buckley c/o Student Union building*"

b) "*UCC Lesbian and Gay <u>Support</u> Group – Meeting Thursday at 1p.m. – Venue: contact John Kelleher (SU President) or ring Gay Information (Cork)…*

a appears to be draft for final version b

3.3. Launch of campaign

3.3.1. Copy of **Gazette** Vol. 4, Issue 19 March 19th 1989

a) Page 4 is full page boxed advert reading in part:

"*The Lesbian and Gay Support Group*
has embarked on a campaign to get
recognition as a society in UCC
Both the Societys [sic] *Guild and the*
Students Union have granted our request.
We now face three other hurdles:
1. *The Joint Board*
2. *The Academic Council*
3. *The UCC Governing Body*

The Joint Board will meet on Thursday
16th March to reach a decision
As a lead upto that meeting we intend to:
Contact all the Clubs/Societies and Heads of Departments
to write to the Government [sic] *Body and support our request*
……
Some weeks ago the Academic Council in UCD in their wisdom (?)
turned down a similar request ..by 23 votes to 20

b) Page 11 under heading **Rights Officer** contains:

"*Sandra Buckley 2nd Arts, who is running for re-election, has helped in getting the gay and lesbian group on the next Joint Board adjenda* [sic] *in its attempt to get society recognition*"

3.3.2. Eight copies of same A4 flyer stapled together on pink/rose paper
Photocopy of 3.3.1.a

3.4. Various leaflets

3.4.1. "*Why we need a Lesbian and Gay Support Group in UCC*"
Five stapled copies of same A4 leaflet. Dated: February 1989
Contains three names at end of text:
Josephine O'Halloran LLM1 Mick Quinlan DSW1 Emmet Flynn Soc. Sci. 1

3.4.2. "*Why we need a Lesbian and Gay Support Group in UCC*"
Two stapled typed A4 sheets.
Original draft of 3.4.1

3.4.3. "*The Lesbian and gay Group exist* [sic] *to provide a setting for Students/Staff who consider themselves Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.*"
One typed A4 sheet. Undated.
Five short paragraphs – draft for aims / purpose?

3.5. Joint Board

3.5.1. Flyer
On blue paper Undated.
Advertising support meeting opening reads:
"*In 1981 the college authorities refused to recognise a Lesbian/Gay Society in UCC. Joint Board will again be voting on this issue on Thursday February 9th.*"

3.5.2. Flyer
Same as 3.5.1
Advertising support meeting opening reads:
"*In 1981 the college authorities refused to recognise a Lesbian/Gay Society in UCC. Joint Board will again be voting on this issue on Thursday [February 9th* – crossed out by blue marker]."

3.5.3. Clubs & Societies petitions

a) Letter dated "*Feb/89*"
One A4 sheet
Reads in part:
"*We feel that now is the time, especially in the light of the Norris Decision to …seek[ing] recognition. We hope that this letter and petition will be presented to the committee meeting and that your club/society will support us with as many members as possible signing it.*"
There are four names at end of letter:
Josephine O'Halloran, Sandra Buckley, Emmet Flynn & Mick Quinlan

b) "*This is a petition supporting the Official Recognition of the Lesbian/Gay Support Group as a Society*"
Four copies of A4 blank petition sheets.

c) "*This is a petition supporting the Official Recognition of the Lesbian/Gay Support Group as a Society*"
Thirteen copies of A4 signed petition sheets.
One each from: *Law Society, Earthwatch Society, Classics Society, UCC Macra na Feirme, Historical Society, German, Fianna Fáil, Medieval and Renaissance Society.*
Five from: *Free Legal Aid Society (F.L.A.C.)*

3.5.3 a-c all stapled together.

3.6. Academic Council

3.6.1. Flyer
Two stapled copies of A5 flyer. Undated.
Adopted from 3.3.1a. Reads in part:
"*..is continuing its campaign for recognition…On March 16th the Joint Board voted 4 – 2 in favour of our request. We now face two other hurdles: 1) The Academic Council; 2) The UCC Governing Body*"

3.6.2. Draft Text
A4 typed sheet. Undated.
Original drafting for 3.6.1

3.6.3. Letter template
Three stapled A4 typed sheets. Undated.
Opening paragraph reads:
"*As you will have seen from your Agenda for Friday's Academic Council, the Joint Board has recommended the provisional recognition of a Gay and Lesbian Support Group in UCC. Since I am unlikely to be able to attend the meeting and since I have been closely with the students making the request I am writing to ask you to vote in favour of the Joint Board's recommendation.*"
Salutation: *Yours sincerely, Garrett Barden*

3.6.4. **a**) Handwritten Letter dated 8 February 1989
From: Dr. Garrett Barden, Dean of Arts
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads:
"*This is not perfect but better I think than the other. (I am only a beginner in the TEX programme which was used to print this* [3.6.4a is stapled to the letter].*) let me know if you want corrections made. Sincerely, Garrett.*
p.s. I think you should go out of your way to see the President as I am hopeful that he will support you. If I get a chance I shall speak to him. Garrett."

b) Letter template.
One A4 typed sheet stapled to 3.6.4 which it accompanied.
Reads:
"*Students Union, 4, Carrigside, College road, Cork.*
Dear [Blank]
On behalf of the Lesbian and Gay Support Group we would hope that you would agree to a meeting with two of our members to discuss our application for official recognition. We believe that such a meeting would be of benefit as it would allow us to clarify our position and answer any questions you may have.
Yours sincerely, Josephine O'Halloran (LLM1)"

3.6.5. "*In addition to the submission enclosed…*"
Two stapled A4 copies of same text. Photocopies of poor quality. Undated.
First paragraph deals with AIDS, second with Norris case. Addendum to lost submission to Academic Council?

3.6.6. Letter dated 23 February 1989
From: Dr. S. Condon (Acting Head), Department of Food Microbiology
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads:
"*I acknowledge receipt of your recent document re Lesbian and Gay Support Group in UCC. I expect that this item will be debated at the next meeting of the Joint Board. As your position is detailed in the document, a meeting to clarify issues is not necessary at this time. If however, the debate at the Joint Board meeting indicates that I need further clarification, I will get in contact with you.*"

3.6.7. "*Academic Council – April 14th 27 – 7*"
Two stapled A4 sheets.
Photocopy of list of Academic Council membership (from College Calendar?).
Second sheet has department affiliation handwritten beside names; under 'President' Dr. T. Ó Ciardha is struck through and 'Mortell' written below.
Top sheet is photocopy of second and has 'April 14th 27 – 7' in large handwriting across the top.

3.6.8. "*Meetings*"
Eleven stapled A4 sheets. Photocopies (from College Calendar?) detailing college meetings and staff by department.

3.7. Governing Body

3.7.1. Flyer
One copy of A5 flyer. Undated.
Adopted from 3.3.1a. Reads in part:

"*.has reached the final stage in its campaign for official recognition…Every representative body in UCC has supported us.*
The Students Union Executive 9 – 1 in favour.
The Clubs and Societies Guild 9 – 2 in favour.
Joint Board 4 – 2 in favour
Academic Council 27 – 7 in favour.
The UCC Governing Body will finally decide the issue on Tuesday 25th April.
With the exception of Trinity College, Dublin, no other University has recognised Lesbian and Gay Society. Recognition has been consistently refused. We hope UCC will be the first College to recognise the Rights of Lesbian and Gay Students. "

3.7.2. "*University College Cork – Governing Body, 1/2/ 1989 – 31/1/ 1992*"
Three A4 sheets. Photocopies of Governing Body membership list.

First sheet has some names inked out; '*can't attend*' written against two names; seven names highlighted in yellow; and a tick opposite ten names. Written large in blue at end: "*28 members – 2 def. Can't attend – 26 votes max. – 10 def. Votes?*"

Second sheet is identical original to first. This has no names inked out; '*can't attend*' written against two names; no names highlighted in yellow; and each name has either a tick an 'x' or an 'o' opposite it. Written large in red at end: "*14 No – 10 Yes – 3 not attending*".

3.7.3. Handwritten Letter dated 20 April 1989
From: Rt. Rev. R.A. Warke, Bishop of Cork Cloyne and Ross
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads:
"*I write to confirm receipt of your letter and enclosure of 18th April. Unfortunately I will be away for the meeting of the Governing Body on 25th April but I have read your supporting document with interest."*

3.7.4. Letter dated 24 April 1989
From: Fr. Aidan O'Driscoll, Assistant Diocesan Secretary
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads:
"I write on behalf of His Lordship, Bishop Murphy, to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 18th inst., for which he thanks you. The Bishop regrets that he will be unable to attend the Governing Body Meeting on the 25th of April, as he is on the Confirmations circuit."

3.7.5. Handwritten Letter dated 20 April 1989
From: Prof. S. Doonan, Dept. of Biochemistry
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads in part:
"I am in favour of recognition of the Group by College and expressed this view in the vote at Academic Council.

Unfortunately I will not be present at the Governing Body on 25th April where I would certainly again have voted in favour."

3.7.6. Handwritten Letter undated
From: Ian Spillane (Secretary) & Members of the Sociological Society
To: unstated
Reads in part:
"We recall the previous decisions of UCD and Maynooth as petty attempts to cling to a Catholic censorship. As students we deplore any forms of censorship.."

3.8. Celebration

3.8.1. "*University College Cork officially recognises lesbian / gay society*"
Press release dated 25.4.89. Two stapled A4 typed pages.
Reads in part:

"*Jubilant at the success of their long campaign for recognition members of the group today called on other NUI colleges to follow the example of UCC.*"

3.8.2. Handwritten Letter dated 26 April 1989
From: Tom Cooney (Chairperson ICCL) c/o Faculty of Law UCD
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads in part:

"*I am writing to express my delight…The ICCL would like to write to UCD…I'd be glad of any advice your group could provide us with regarding contents…*"

3.8.3. Handwritten Letter dated 26 April 1989
From: Cathal Ó'Ciarragáin [aka Charles Kerrigan]
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads in part:

"*Congratulations! A GREAT VICTORY!! …I enclose a copy of a letter I've sent to the newspapers…p.s. Ye're great!*"
Stapled to letter is two page photocopy of hand printed letter sent to national newspapers (but never published). Reads in part:

"*In 1980 I was told by some among the UCC college authorities that the <u>only</u> reason they could not support the recognition motion was because* 'all the NUI colleges would have to act simultaneously to recognise GaySocs.' *I feel sure that the same excuse has been used recently in UCG, UCD and Maynooth. Now that UCC has led the way there can be no further camouflage for these colleges to hide their homophobic prejudice.*"

3.8.4. Letter dated 28 April 1989
From: Gay Switchboard Dublin
To: Ms. Josephine O'Halloran.
Reads in part:

"*We see this as being a very significant step forward for gay people in Cork and hopefully through the Lesbian and Gay Support Group many more lesbians and gay men will be able to* 'come out'. *Congratulations!*"

3.8.5. Greeting card - undated
From: Cork AIDS Alliance
To: UCC Lesbian and Gay Support Group.
Invitation to Celebrity Charity Auction attached.

3.8.6. **Gazette** Vol. 4, Issue 20 Thursday April 27th 1989
Top of cover reads:
"*NEWSFLASH: UCC has become the first NUI College to officially recognise the* 'Lesbian and Gay Society'. *The Governing Body vote last Tuesday was 13:7.*"

Page two contains start of letter to editor from K.B. Reads in part:
"*Well here we are in the third term…the best time or the safest time to sneak in anything controversial such as a* 'gay/lesbian soc'*…Gay/Lesbian people are generally unacceptable and are not encouraged outside of college so I don't see why UCC should be different…*"
Letter continues on page 22 where a reply from Josephine O'Halloran follows. Reads in part:
"W*e decided in January to apply for official recognition as a society. …At every stage we circulated flyers in the library, Common Room and the restaurants…We hhad motions put before the Law Society and Philosoph, both of which were supported…We encountered very little opposition but met with a lot of support…what is unacceptable is ignorance and prejudice which is something this group aims to confront..*"

3.8.7. "*Gay group get UCC recognition"* **Cork Examiner** 26 April 1989 page one.
Blown up photocopy of original on A3 blue coloured paper. Reads in part:
"*We are often told how conservative and intolerant Irish people are on issues like this*, Ms. O'Halloran said. *The experience of this campaign suggests that, whatever fears and prejudices may have been instilled into us, Irish people are fundamentally tolerant and respectful of individual rights when they are faced with real people rather than abstractions.*"

3.8.8. "*April 26th 1989*"
Collage on buff coloured A3 paper of three press cuttings and one photograph.
Press cuttings are without source or date:
"*College recognises gays group*" **Irish Independent** 26/4/89
"*Gays win official status at UCC*" **Irish Press** 26/4/89
"*Sex – who cares: Micheline McCormack Column*"

Sunday World (21/4/89?)

Photograph is of two people unfolding a large scroll in the beer garden of Loafers Bar. Scroll has lesbian & gay symbols, ends with '*Soc 25 Apr 1989*' and is covered with individual signatures in red marker.

3.8.9. Photos

Five colour photographs from Victory Party – held 25 April 1989?

a) Josephine O'Halloran & Dr. Garrett Barden
b) John Calnan, Josephine O'Halloran, Arthur Leahy and A.N. Other – scroll is seen hanging from ceiling in background.
c) William O'Connor
d) William O'Connor and A.N. Other
e) Unidentified couple

3.8.10. "*Cork Pulls It Off!*" **Gay Community News** February Issue 1990 pages 3 & 5

Article describing the campaign for recognition. Reads in part:

"*..the first meeting of the group (in October 1988) agreed that there would be no point in even applying for recognition from UCC!… on the 15th [December] a public meet ing was held. The idea for official recognition took shape around this time. Two prominent liberal academics took the initiative of approaching the group to offer their support…*

All 70 members of Academic Council were sent a submission and also received a letter from Garrett Barden…thirty potential supporters were lobbied personally by him, Prof. John Maguire and John Kelleher, President of the SU…

The discussion of the proposal occupied over an hour…the greatest impact was made by John A. Murphy's speech in favour… the vote was 27 – 7 in favour. The President abstained…

..Governing Body..discussion was prolonged occupying most of the meeting. The vote went 13 – 7 in favour …the President voted in favour…Mick Quinlan's arrival as a mature student certainly sparked off much of this activity…"

3.8.11. "*L & G Support Group*"

Two A4 typed sheets stapled together. Undated.

A draft of 3.8.10. Slight variations. Main difference is absence of last two sentences of the published article; the final sentence reads:

"*One could scarcely imagine a lesbian or gay group being recognised by the College under the previous President, Tadhg Carey.*"

On back of second page is handwritten note which reads:

"*Joe + Brendan –*

This needs to be put in paragraphs etc. I spoke to Josephine & she will need to see the final draft before printing. Arthur was

suggesting it might be held over for a 'student edition*' in the autumn. I don't mind how you choose to publish it.*"

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4. Miscellaneous

4.1. a) Greeting card - undated

From: Cork AIDS Alliance
To: UCC Lesbian and Gay Support Group.
Reads in part:
"*Many thanks for the very welcome bank notes we received from you before Christmas.*"

b) Letter dated 26 October 1988

From: Cork AIDS Alliance
To: Ms. Sandra Buckley
Reads in part:
"*We're delighted that you are interested in the possibility of setting up an Aids* [sic] *group in UCC.*"

4.2. Handwritten note – undated - on back of 3.4.1

Reads:
"*Josephine – The file is in the bookshop upstairs for collection – Dónal Wed. 1:30p.m.*"

4.3. Letter dated 20 July 1989

From: Alasdair Paterson, Acting Librarian, Boole Library, UCC
To: Mr. M. McGrath, President, Students' Union, UCC
A4 sheet. Reads in part:
"*Thank you for your letter regarding the alleged misbehaviour of Security Staffin the Library towards a student* [sc. Josephine O'Halloran]."
Stapled to the letter is a single sheet a photocopy of a policy statement on Sexual Harrassment from University of California.

4.4. UCC Photo ID of Josephine O'Halloran as 2nd Law student 1986/87

4.5. Tom O'Malley "*Norris v Ireland – an Opportunity for Law Reform*"
Irish Law Times December 1988 pages 279 – 284
Photocopy of article

4.6. Letter dated 14 June 1985

From: Bill Foley, Gay/Lesbian Pride Week Group, Dublin
To: Circular letter seeking support for march on 29th June.

4.7. Letter undated

From: Edmund Lynch & Maurice McCafferkey, Out Editorial Board
To: Circular letter seeking financial support – 'donation form' at end of page torn off – indicating contribution made?

4.8. "*Homosexuality is not a disease*" **The Sunday Tribune** [28 January 1989?]
Press cutting torn from newspaper containing Letters to the Editor regarding gay law reform.

4.9. NGF News August / September 1985

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4.10. **The Sage – Christmas Issue** Issue 2 December 1980
Twenty A4 stapled sheets first 15 are of the original magazine; 16th page is copy of insert apologizing for increase in cover price; 17 – 20 are copies of leaflets distributed in connection with catering campaign.

4.11. "*The Student Union in UCC 1972 – 1981*"
Eight A4 sheets - Photocopy of typed piece
– dated at end: 23rd February 1981, Cork

4.12 **Gays Against Imperialism –** Minutes: 12 Dec 1981 – 4 Mar 1982
8 typed carbon copy pages
Includes setting up of Gay Defence Campaign around Charles Self murder investigation.

4.13 Interview with Charles Kerrigan by Marge Schneider on **Fresh Fruit Show**, Minneapolis/St. Paul USA – Oct 1983
Cassette tape of radio interview.

4.14 *"Ireland: Gay Liberation and National Liberation"* **Rites** June 1984 pages 14 - 15
Interview with Charles Kerrigan by Gary Kinsman

4.15 *"LGBT society celebrates 25 years in UCC"* **UCC Express** 30 Nov 2005 page 05