

Hon President's Report 2007/2008

When I became president 12 months ago I felt that there were a number of key issues that required significant attention. These issues included the furthering of the integration process, the development of our championships and improving the quality of the athletic experience for students among many others. However I believe that change and development can only be accepted and achieved when based on solid foundations with positive intentions and fully thought out plans. With this in mind it has been our priority to ensure that our championships, each of which is a cornerstone for the organisations existence, were executed as smoothly as possible and that the general operations of the executive could be progressed with as little interference from negative outside sources as possible; and to a large extent I feel this has been achieved.

A long term goal of the IUAA was realised last year when the Cross country championships were held in conjunction with the ISAA championships. This objective has been prevented on previous occasions due to many reasons and again this year problems occurred due to the location of the schools event. The decision to move to this venue was a risk as the facilities did not live up to the usual standards that we strive to achieve, and on the day the lack of proper shower & changing facilities was punished with rain and a very muddy course. However this risk has come to fruition, the ISAA have agreed to go to an IUAA venue this year, and this will give us an excellent opportunity to show what the IUAA can offer the schools. I believe that this will be a great opportunity for us and I hope that this co-operation will continue for a long time to come.

This year saw the introduction of AAI's awards and a welcome inclusion was the University of the Year Award. This award recognises the institution that has performed best over the year's competitions and it is a sign of the continued co-operation between the IUAA and AAI that it was included. Special thanks must go to Mary & Eric Brady for devising the award and donating the trophy. Also of note at the awards were that the majority of the athletes that were nominated for the Athlete of the Year Award were strong IUAA competitor's in the recent past

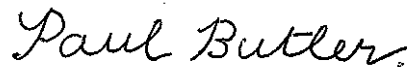
The numbers of athletes competing in the championships has been a concern over the past no of years and the past year has been no exception. While the numbers competing in both the Road Relays and the cross country were up on the previous year they are not yet back to the high numbers we had in the early half of this decade. The indoor T&F event is one that has always had some debate regarding the dates that it has been held on, the traditional date of December not really being indoor season and dates not always available in Nenagh in February. Although it has been tried in the past we are again going to move the competition dates to February in the coming year in an effort to boost numbers. The tiered championship is also in full swing at the indoor and outdoor T&F and I would like to encourage all members to send all the athletes that they can to these events as there is a trophy there to be won. The Celtic Cross-country this year was hosted in Scotland, and was again considered to be a success. The inclusion of an International event in the Associations calendar is welcome as it offers a further opportunity for our athletes to compete and develop; we look forward to Wales next year!!

At this year's AGM several motions will be put forward that will affect the operation of the IUAA in a very significant manner. The process of integration has been moving for some time and if some of these motions are passed then a very large step will be taken towards full integration. It must be noted however that these motions are not a final solution to Integration or any of our other issues but will allow the association to operate within the AAI rather than as a separate entity, allowing the future representatives of the IUAA to strive for the best for the IUAA to the best of their ability.

Once again I feel that it is important to point out that the IUAA executive is a small body of volunteers throughout the year they are aided by a small number of outside volunteers who aid in the running of the championships. All these exceptional people generally get little in return for their efforts and what thanks they get is usually overshadowed by the negative comments of a vocal minority. I would like to say that I sincerely appreciate all their efforts and I know that the membership do as well. The Host colleges again did well this year with their duties and continued in the upward development of the quality of the events themselves. Well done and Thanks to NUI Galway NUI Maynooth and University College Dublin. Thanks also to Brian Foley who as always has kept the Web Systems operational throughout the year.

I would like to finish by saying a big "Thank You" to everyone who has contributed in the past year and encourage them to continue in their efforts over the coming term and to encourage more to aid us where possible.

Yours in Sport

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Butler".

Paul Butler
Hon President IUAA 2007-2009