

Chairs Report 2010/2011:

When I was elected Chair twelve months ago I essentially returned to a position that I vacated two years previously, and what has repeatedly occurred to me since is the old phrase “the more things change, the more they stay the same”, and I feel that in general that’s a good thing as we are getting the change that some people crave but we are not losing who we are as an organization. During my time being involved on this committee the IUAA has integrated with A.A.I., our constitution has changed, our committee structure has changed, we are represented on the board of AAI, the student population has turned-over (several times!) and multiple “issues” have been tackled and overcome. And yet the championships that are the cornerstone of this association are as familiar as they were when I was new to college myself. They still have that friendly-welcoming atmosphere, a form of competition that allows ordinary athletes to compete against those recognized as “High Performance”, and that edgy team rivalry that evolves into camaraderie by the end of the T&F ball. There is a uniqueness to these championships that ensures that they are well supported and loved by the athletes.

Some of the issues we encounter are still the same as well however, the need for more officials at championships, the need for an international T&F each summer, issues with guesting, financial support and so on. The committee and the hosting institutions have tackled all these obstacles and more this year, and I expect that this is work will continue as with many issues there is no single “final” solution. It is with this in mind that we are proposing a motion to return the committee to 10 members; this will increase the workload that the committee can handle and give more opportunities for people to contribute and feel involved. We also may start co-opting people on to the committee to fulfill specific roles.

I have tried to assess the past year and I would have to say that the aims of hosting the championships and promoting university level athletics have been achieved, some more development work next year on international level competitions will be a bonus. Domestically the four main championship’s passed without serious incident and the hosting was exemplar, however as we have covered in the competitions report the number of competitors dropped slightly, this has been noted and we will try to rectify that this coming year. The one-day indoors was again popular with the attending athletes, however I am again voicing concern over the work load on officials on the day as some officials are putting in a 12 hour shift plus travel to and from the event to make this happen. While it may be better for the athletes it simply is not sustainable at a high quality level without colleges providing officials (not students).

Internationally, a team was sent to the Home Countries International X-Country, and represented us proudly and a total of eight athletes represented Ireland at the World University games. The World University games is an event that has caused us some concern in the past, however this time both AAI and the IUAA consulted with CUSAI at most stages of the process. However it is still important to note that it is still an event that is the responsibility of CUSAI and that the IUAA can only exert influence and not make changes. Next year we will have the World University cross country and we are trying to get an International T&F meet to occur, in the current economic situation this will be difficult, however we are determined to give it a go!

Development has been slow this year, partially due to the fact that the systems in place and the championships are of a high standard, this means that any further development will likely have a high cost to the association. However it is also due to the current structure of the committee. Where before the “Hon President” would dedicate a large section of time to development work on the most relevant issues, now the “Chair” puts this time into the AAI board position leaving little time for development work. This is something that the incoming committee will need to review and devise a solution going forward.

This year we made a presentation to Cyril Smyth at the Cross Country thanking him for all of his efforts within the IUAA, this was long overdue and well deserved. Cyril has assured me that he intends to continue to support IUAA events, and for that I am also grateful.

Over the coming year the Cross country and the Track and Field will visit two new venues. Waterford I.T. will host its first IUAA championship when the Cross country occurs there in March, and Athlone I.T. will host the Track & Field on its relatively new Track. This is the first time that both of these events will be hosted by Institutes of Technology in the same year, and is a sign of how healthy athletics is outside of the bigger cities.

I would like to finish by thanking all the people that have assisted in the running of the IUAA championships this year, without this volunteer help our championships simply would not occur. Special thanks to the organizing committee’s of the X-Country from DIT and the Track and Field from QUB and Maynooth for the Road Relays. I would also like to thank the outgoing committee members for all of their efforts throughout the year, Cyril for his constant presence, and the mysterious Brian Foley who is never seen but whose work is appreciated by all.

Yours in Sport,

Paul Butler.

Chair, Universities Committee of AAI, 2010-2012