

Hello. My name is Steve Strand and I spent two months at CIT as a guest-lecturer in February and March. I teach accounting and business internship at a small college in Maine, which is located in the northeast corner of the United States. Many of my students share the same qualities as CIT students: most work as well as go to college, many are actively seeking degrees for a better standard of living, most are very adept at juggling busy schedules, many are paying for their education expenses themselves, and most do not have the luxury of living in a dormitory with a lot of free time. These characteristics are the backbone of my students in Maine and my observation is that CIT students share many of the same characteristics.

So, what does that mean? To me, it means that college education needs to be practical. It needs to get to the point. It needs to be relevant to today's students. I have seen, time and time again, students who thrive with the proper encouragement and guidance that they may not have been fortunate enough to have received previously. Based on my observations and interactions with CIT students and faculty during my stay in Cork, I am very confident about the future of CIT!

While at CIT, I participated as a judge during Innovation Week. What amazingly positive energy I witnessed from students, faculty and staff! It was inspiring to be a part of the week. So much so that I am bringing (some might say "stealing"! ) the idea of encouraging entrepreneurship among students and student-teams back to my college in Maine. The CIT students I spoke with were well informed, excited, professional and proud of their accomplishments. What more could you ask for?! It was a terrific experience for me and an honor to be a small part of its success.

As far as the Irish go, I have so many stories of kindness extended to me that there is simply not enough space to detail it all here. From random bus drivers offering to steer me correctly, to the bartenders and patrons who went way out of their way to make this American feel at home, to people stopping by to help a bewildered tourist, to the folks patiently explaining the scoring in rugby and hurling, to my many Airbnb hosts who went above and beyond, and, of course, to the many, many folks at CIT who made me feel so welcomed (a special shout-out to my fellow Friday pick-up soccer (your "football") players who were nice enough to let me play and didn't even laugh at my lack of skills.....or, at least they didn't laugh out loud!).

Education is so very important in today's world and CIT understands that. I believe that CIT students understand that too, even if it can be overwhelming at times. There is no better path to success than when people are pulling together; CIT's students, faculty and staff are indeed pulling in the same direction. Congratulations to you all!

Special thanks to Pio, Breda, Helen, Lish, Joe, Jamie, Jon, Javier, Louise, and all the many, many others in the CIT community that made my experience so enriching.

Éire go brách

Professor Steve Strand, USA