



**Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile
Irish Federation of University Teachers**

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

‘WILL MARKETISATION DESTROY THE UNIVERITY IDEAL?’

Saturday, 31 October 2009

The Gresham Hotel, O’Connell Street, Dublin 1.

SPEAKERS & THEMES

Jens Vraa-Jensen is a Consultant to the President of DM, the Higher Education Union in Denmark, where he has worked for twenty years. Much of his work is dedicated to international trade union collaboration. He has been a member of the Higher Education and Research Standing Committee of Education International in Europe for the last fifteen years and has served as Chair of the Committee for the last two and a half years. Jens has also represented DM or EI at meetings and conferences on higher education and research topics arranged by UNESCO, OECD, WTO etc and has been a delegate to EI World Congresses and Pan-European General Assemblies since the mid-1990s.

Jens will argue if the OECD, the EU and others wish to argue the case for universities being only advanced service providers for private enterprises, then they should stop calling them ‘universities’. A university is an institution where one of the main obligations is the free, critical and independent development of thought and new ideas which in many cases will challenge the dominant truth. And therefore they should not be expected to deliver measurable outcome on a daily (or yearly) basis. Dissemination of these activities through independent publishing are the result of research and the teaching and intellectual development of students is of similar importance. Teaching-based research and research-based teaching are the best ways of securing the quality of both research and teaching. All of this must be protected by academic freedom and full-time permanent positions. Jens will also point out that those of us who are concerned about these issues are not alone – we have many potential allies of influence.

David Robinson is the Associate Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) representing more than 65,000 academic and general staff at 121 universities and colleges. He is responsible for the Association's research and advocacy work. David is also a Consultant to Education International, the Global Federation of Teachers' Unions, on international trade and higher education matters, representing EI at various WTO, UNESCO and OECD events. Prior to joining CAUT, he was the Senior Economist with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canada's leading progressive think tank and worked as a Lecturer at Simon Fraser University and Carleton University.

David's talk will focus on the emerging international market in higher education and the attempt to include cross-border education in commercial trade agreements, like the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). The presentation will focus on developments in the global market outlook for higher education and the 'barriers' to trade in education from the perspective of a for profit private provider. It will be argued that, like the financial services markets, the new education 'market' is characterised by a lack of regulatory oversight, irrational exuberance concerning potential demand and profit, and the prevalence of shadowy and dubious players. Strategies for how staff and students can campaign to reclaim public higher education will be discussed.

Mike Jennings has been General Secretary of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) since April 2007. Prior to that, he was for many years a Senior Official in Ireland's largest general Trade Union, SIPTU.

Mike is IFUT's representative on the British & Irish Group of Teacher Unions (BIGTU), the Higher Education & Research Standing Committee (HERSC) of Education International, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee of the OECD (Education, Training & Employment Policy Group). He has recently been invited to participate as an expert in an ILO Inter-Regional Workshop on Human Resources Best Practice for the Teaching Profession.

Mike's short address will welcome delegates and speakers, will set the topic in its national context and will demonstrate why the theme of the conference is an essential topic of debate for all those interested in academic freedom and the preservation of the unique quality of university education.