



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

MEDIA RELEASE

Major boost for academic freedom

16 February 2012

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has welcomed a new report recommending all third-level colleges in Scotland to “adopt and incorporate the definition of Academic Freedom which is contained in Ireland’s Universities Act, 1997”.

The Report, a high-level Review of Governance in Higher Education in Scotland, was commissioned by the Scottish Government and was published on 16 January last. The Group was chaired by Professor Ferdinand von Prondzynski, former President of Dublin City University.

Welcoming the Report as a major boost to the cause of academic freedom, IFUT General Secretary, Mike Jennings, said that credit is due primarily to the work of Irish academics.

The core recommendation in the Report is based on work done by academics in Ireland on this topic. The relevant section of the report reads, *“In implementing the Irish provision, Trinity College Dublin adopted a ‘Policy on Academic Freedom’ in December 2010, which was the result of an initiative of the College’s Academic Staff Association, IFUT, and which was developed in a Special Working Group established by the College”* (page 7, paragraph 2.4).

The report goes on to recommend that the TCD/IFUT Policy Statement should be treated by the Scottish Funding Council as a pre-condition for the award of university financial support, *“or, in the case of the establishment of a new university, as a condition to be satisfied before university status is granted”* (page 8).

Mike Jennings said: “It should be a source of pride for all Irish citizens and, in particular those who care about the quality of our universities, that a provision in Irish legislation is being held up internationally as a model to be emulated.

“We in IFUT, the primary representative organisation of Irish academics, are enormously proud of our colleagues in our TCD Branch, who produced a document which is not only going to be applied in every university in Scotland, but is, we are aware, being discussed and praised in Higher Education Institutions right across the world”, Mike Jennings said.

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