

## **Third level students should view lecturers as partners in education, says IFUT**

*Wed. Aug. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013*

Leaving Cert graduates entering third-level education should view it as a partnership between lecturers and students, in which a combination of teaching, tutorials and exchange of ideas produces the graduates to power our economy and society, Mike Jennings, General Secretary of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) said in response to the issuing of Leaving Cert results today (Wed. Aug 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

“While students will now anxiously await the issuing of CAO points requirements next Monday, just as fundamental to their future success will be an ability to change from the discipline of secondary school learning to what is effectively the ‘adult’ world of third-level study and research.

“Developing contacts with their lecturers and tutors and realising that academic staff are partners in their journey through college is an essential component for success, the importance of which is often not grasped quickly enough by many students entering college,” he said.

This commitment by lecturers to maintain an ‘open door’ approach to their students remains as strong as ever, despite drastic cuts in staff numbers and a surge in the number of students enrolling in third-level. It is one of the enduring strengths of Irish third-level education, Mike Jennings said.

HEA figures show that lecturer numbers have declined by at least 15% as a result of government policy, at a time when enrolment in third-level has increased by at least the same amount. Funding per student at third-level has also fallen below that for second-level for the first time and has decreased by at least 14% in real terms over the past decade, according to CSO stats.

“The Minister for Education must act to ensure that the fabric of third-level education is defended. Our society and economy require highly educated young people to help overcome the current recession and rebuild our communities. Third-level education is inherently more costly due to higher equipment needs, laboratory costs and other specialised and high technology requirements,” Mike Jennings said.

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