

# **The Charter to Defend the Irish University:**

## **A view from the Irish Federation of University Teachers**

**Issued by Rose Malone, President of IFUT**

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The movement to “Defend the Irish University” is calling for the reversal of certain trends which we see as inimical to the spirit of the traditional university as a place of learning, of knowledge creation, of care for students and of service to the community.

These trends include managerialism, the growth of hierarchical structures, and a view of students as customers and consumers.

Our struggle against these trends does not imply a wish to return to some mythical “golden age” when all was perfect. Rather, we are opposing the setting of limits to future development of the university and of higher education in general, by reliance on a single model – the business model.

We are not opposed to the prudent management of finances or to the commercialization of certain kinds of knowledge. We reject, however, the notion of profit as a guiding principle in the management of a university’s affairs. We see the growth of casualisation of teaching and research as undermining the very idea of a university.

We are calling for open debate on a multiplicity of models based on a small number of core principles such as the importance of academic freedom in research and teaching; the idea of higher education as a public good and the responsibility of universities to the communities and citizens which they serve.

We are confident that the launch of the Charter will represent an important contribution to the opening up of that debate and thereby opening up possibilities for the future development of the Irish university.

ENDS

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