

## **Greater co-ordination needed to ensure university gender equality, says IFUT**

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Following the recent gender discrimination award to a lecturer in NUIG, Joan Donegan, deputy general secretary of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for co-ordinated action by all universities to ensure equality for women at senior lecturer and professorial level.

Ms Donegan said that there were now a number of initiatives in place, but it was necessary that there be coordination and adoption of an overall 'good practice' approach in all university institutions, to ensure that the underrepresentation of women is finally brought to an end.

"The latest staff statistics for 2013 reveal that between 69 – 81% of Professorship grades in our six universities are held by a man; while between 61 – 70% of senior lectureships are also male. The proportion of women and men at lecturer grade is virtually identical. We need to ensure that the obstacles to women's progression is addressed and dealt with more vigorously," Joan Donegan said

The pathways to progress are there, she said. "The Charter of the Athena SWAN initiative, which recognises excellence in women's employment in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine (STEMM) in higher education, was officially announced in November 2014."

"It operates an awards scheme, which recognises good practice in universities and their STEMM departments. Individual STEMM departments in universities may apply for Bronze, Silver or Gold awards."

"In addition UCC is one of seven European universities undertaking the GENOVATE FP7 project which seeks to ensure equal opportunities for women and men by encouraging a more gender-responsive management in research, innovation and scientific decision-making bodies."

"Also Trinity College, Dublin is currently involved in INTEGER programme which runs until 2016. The college's Physics Department has been awarded Juno Practitioner status by the Institute of Physics (IOP) for taking action to address gender inequities across its student and staff body."

"We need to see greater co-operation between universities on gender equality issues to ensure real progress is achieved. It is clear that the Trade Union movement can play a positive role by working with all of the Universities to consolidate and strengthen good practice in this area" Joan Donegan said.

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