

Independent review of gender discrimination in NUIG needed, says IFUT

Thurs. Jan 29th, 2015

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) supports calls for an independent external review of gender equality in NUI Galway, in advance of a meeting of the Board of NUIG (Friday, January 30th, 2015).

This request was made by Joan Donegan, Deputy General Secretary of IFUT, following the recent Sheehy-Skeffington and Dempsey Equality Tribunal rulings and the findings of the HEA survey on gender balance.

She was speaking in advance of a meeting with IFUT members in NUIG on Friday (January 30th), to discuss ways to ensure that gender equality issues are highlighted in collective bargaining and industrial relations talks and initiatives generally.

The meeting is the first of a series of such events being held by IFUT nationally.

“It is clear that gender discrimination exists in NUIG and must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The pathways to progress are equally clear,” Joan Donegan said.

“For example, 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, will be officially launched on 5th February 2015.

“It operates an awards scheme, promoting good practice in universities and their STEMM departments. Individual university departments in universities may receive Gold, Silver or Bronze status depending on compliance and implementation,” Joan Donegan said.

“NUIG’s proposal to establish a Task Force on the matter is welcome, but Task Force membership should be agreed jointly with staff unions and engage directly with staff, to ensure full confidence in, and maximum effectiveness of the process.

“The Board of NUIG should set clear time deadlines for completion, which should be agreed at the beginning of the investigation.

“The equality agenda must be re-inserted into the realm of collective bargaining, onto the agenda of university bodies and actively worked for by trade unions.

“The Minister and Department of Education also have an obligation to ensure that gender equality issues in higher education are addressed effectively, both in NUIG and throughout third-level education,” Joan Donegan said.

ENDS

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