

New figures show gender discrimination against women in universities continuing, says IFUT

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The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for intensified efforts to address gender discrimination against women academics in third-level education, following new data for 2014 which shows just 29% of senior academics are women.

Joan Donegan, Deputy General Secretary of IFUT, said that while there was full gender balance at lecturer levels, with 51% female participation, women are simply being denied promotion.

HEA figures to the end of 2014 show just 35% of senior lecturers, 26% of Assistant Professors and 19% of Professor grades are occupied by women," she said.

She said that "the academic promotion figures for NUI Galway, as we approach the first anniversary on Nov. 13th of Dr. Micheline Sheehy Skeffington's landmark case against her former employer at that college, are even more stark.

"While 53% of NUI Galway lecturers are female, just 30% of senior lecturers, 10% of Assistant Professors and 14% of Professors are female, the worst statistics of any university in all three grades," she said.

The lamentable record of NUI Galway in its treatment of women academics continues. Depressingly, that university, rather than learning from its mistakes appears to have hunkered down and is currently, we understand, gearing up to take a very hard, legalistic and confrontational attitude to other women employees who have decided to act against discrimination."

Most other universities now accept that gender equality is an 'institutional' not a 'women's' issue and are implementing measures including:

- The 'Glass Ceiling' initiative and the Genovate Programme in UCC
- The Integer Project at Trinity College Dublin
- The Festa Project at University of Limerick.

"TCD and UL have become the first Irish higher education institutions to receive awards for gender equality under a new accreditation scheme, Athena Swan," she said.

These initiatives adhere to the spirit of the HEA's recent appointment of Máire Geoghegan-Quinn to chair a National Review of Gender Equality in higher education

"A report by this independent and expert group will be completed in June 2016 and will address gender equality and the reasons for continuing gender inequality across all grades of staff, including administrative staff

"Simply launching initiatives, however, will not be sufficient and is not evidence that all the

issues have been resolved. The existence of so many initiatives proves there is a huge and complex problem requiring multiple measures and initiatives on an ongoing basis,” Joan Donegan said.

ENDS

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