

Government must allocate resources to support measures in report of Expert Group on Equality in universities, says IFUT

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The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has welcomed the Report of the Expert Group on Equality in Universities, chaired by Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, but said dedicated resources are required to facilitate its implementation.

Ms Joan Donegan, Deputy General Secretary of IFUT, said the clear targets being set to bring about gender equality in three years phases, which will be linked to future state funding, are a major step forward.

“The proposal to involve all stakeholders and to extend the Report’s recommendations to cover all academic grades and non full-time staff is also highly welcome.

“The Report, however, does not address the issue of current staff who have been discriminated against or those engaged in various legal and Labour Court initiatives to address past discrimination.

“The spirit of this Report’s findings, and indeed the recent belated initiative regarding gender quotas by NUI Galway, should be brought to bear to immediately resolve these long-outstanding disputes.”

Ms Donegan said that many issues other than direct discrimination prevent women’s progression in academia, as in other sections of society. “The absence of adequate childcare policies and options continues to be a major factor in blocking women’s participation and progression in the workforce.

“In addition, bodies such as the Labour Court and Workplace Relations Commission may require additional resources to deal with issues arising from this report. Sufficiently robust monitoring and implementation procedures must be put in place to ensure that potential foot dragging on what is a very positive set of measures to finally address gender discrimination in universities is finally and successfully addressed,” Joan Donegan said.

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For further information on this media release please contact:

John Gallagher, John Gallagher Consulting. Tel. 087 9369888

Joan Donegan, Dep. Gen. Sec, IFUT. Tel. 087 1315960