

## **Call for government commitment to increased university funding following second damning ratings report on our top colleges**

*Wed Sept 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016*

*Embargoed to 9pm, Sept 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016*

Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton should publicly commit to increase funding for Irish universities in advance of next month's Budget, Mike Jennings, General Secretary of the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has said, following the release of new ratings figures showing there is now no Irish university in the Top 200 internationally.

Figures published by *Times Higher Education* show that both UCD and TCD have both been pushed out of the Top 200 colleges internationally, requiring immediate and decisive government action to reverse the scandalous neglect of third-level education, Mike Jennings said.

“The toxic combination of financial cutbacks and staffing cuts enforced on universities by consecutive government over the past decade, despite rapidly increasing student numbers, is the root cause of the current malaise.

“ Between 2007 and 2014, state funding for our seven universities was slashed by 28%, from €722.8m in 2007 to €522.2m, while full-time student enrolment surged by 18%, from 78,577 in 2008 to 93,023 in 2014.

“The fact that two consecutive ratings reports within a month have revealed the same analysis of our universities leaves no doubt or wriggle room for Minister Bruton, he must act now if Ireland's international reputation for high education standards is not to be seriously undermined.

“Even with the terms of Minister's Bruton's recent Action Plan for Education, the target of attracting additional international students as a source of funding becomes laughable if universities in other countries are now increasingly attractive

“The forthcoming Budget must provide adequate funds to enable universities to recover from a decade of what now seems like deliberate neglect and downgrading of third-level education,” Mike Jennings said.

ENDS

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