

Transparency issues in universities date back a decade, says IFUT

Sun July 16th, 2017

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for measures at government level to deliver full transparency from Irish universities relating to costs of legal, HR and secret payments and policies, aimed at depriving staff of entitlements and driving a culture of casualisation and precarious employment among staff.

In response to issues highlighted at the Public Accounts Committee last week, Mike Jennings, General Secretary of IFUT, said that Irish universities have engaged in sharp practice for at least the past decade and are unlikely to cease unless clear guidelines are put in place.

- In February 2010 IFUT revealed payments of almost €900,000 made by the seven universities to IBEC for HR advice, on top of their own very extensive internal HR spending.
- In 2008 alone UCC spent €900,000 on legal fees, much of it related to opposing staff claims seeking employment rights, despite the fact that the State, through the Labour Relations Commission and the Labour Court, provided free services for the resolution of disputes between employers and employees.
- In 2008 IFUT exposed secret pay arrangements for small numbers of senior personnel in all seven universities through Freedom of Information requests. The HEA revealed only the names of those involved, but despite their massive salaries being paid from public funds, stubbornly refusing to reveal the amounts involved.

Mike Jennings said that “at the time IFUT said ‘this level of secrecy is unacceptable and is a direct attack on the principles of openness and transparency.’ The same remains true today.

“We need a top class university system and related structures, which is adequately funded and resourced.

“This must, however, be matched by full accountability and transparency regarding the use of public and taxpayer monies.

“The appointment in the new government of a dedicated Minister for Higher Education provides the opportunity to finally address issues of accountability and transparency in our universities,” Mike Jennings said.

ENDS

For further information on this media release please contact:

John Gallagher - John Gallagher Consulting - Tel 087 9369888

Mike Jennings, General Secretary - IFUT - Tel. 087 6776747

: