

## **Overall plan not piecemeal policies needed for education, says IFUT**

### *Key issues of Cassells Report must be addressed*

*January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018*

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for the issuing of a comprehensive plan for development of third-level education by government instead of piecemeal announcements that perpetuate uncertainty and underfunding.

The announcement by Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, of financial penalties for misconduct, filing late accounts or giving misleading reports of governance issues do not constitute reform to higher-education funding. These are very specific measures that, appropriate or otherwise in themselves, do nothing to address the funding crisis that dominates the entire third level education sector, IFUT General Secretary, Joan Donegan said.

“Increased funding for science and technology courses is proposed, but it is unclear if this will involve diversion from other areas of funding. The Minister has not announced details of additional overall funding or how much will be available.

“We must not allow a ‘robbing Peter to pay Paul’ approach for the patchwork announcements emanating on a regular basis recently,” she said.

“The government must face up to the need to comprehensively address the issues identified by the Cassells Report published 18 months ago and explain why the Report on the Oireachtas Committee on education remains unpublished.

“The continued emphasis on more competitive funding for higher education and stronger links with the needs of industry will accentuate the imbalance that has been developing in third level education and overemphasises a ‘training’ attitude to the role of universities,” Joan Donegan said.

In a submission to the Working Group on Funding in Higher Education, IFUT previously proposed that a set percentage of Corporation Tax be ringfenced for the sector.

A portion of the large amount of monies to be paid by Apple, which are due to commence over the coming months, offer the opportunity to deliver realistic funding benefits for our universities and young people.

A working group comprising Revenue, the Department of Finance and all those involved in the third-level sector should immediately be established to address implementation of such a policy.

“Real funding decisions, not piecemeal announcements are required urgently,” Joan Donegan said.

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