

**IFUT calls for abandonment of legal recourse policy by universities following progress of NUI Galway gender discrimination case**

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The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has called for all issues related to gender and age discrimination to be resolved by negotiation or through normal labour law procedures, not recourse to expensive legal cases.

Welcoming developments in the case of four female lecturers in NUI Galway who have been in a protracted dispute regarding gender discrimination on promotion in the college, IFUT General Secretary, Joan Donegan, said that progress on this issue forms part of a general recognition that discussion and negotiation is both more appropriate and effective way forward.

“The legal costs of this NUI Galway case are clearly very high. There has been evidence over the years that universities have spent exorbitant amounts of taxpayers and student fees money on barristers and legal fees in similar cases.

“Until recently Ireland ranked last after Malta for its glass ceiling index on the proportion of senior female academics.

“Universities generally are seeking to address this but progress is still unacceptably slow. There are still cases where tight resources are squandered on costly legal fees tactics, to avoid accepting Workplace Relations Commission decisions.

“The ongoing NUI Galway dispute has, among others, served to damage the reputation of Irish universities. I look forward to the forthcoming report from the Task Group established by Minister for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell-O’Connor on gender discrimination and to a more positive approach to gender equality in higher education generally,” Joan Donegan said.

ENDS

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