

## **20 New Reserved Professorial Positions for Women Welcome, says IFUT**

*Tuesday Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has welcomed confirmation by Minister for Higher Education, Mary Mitchell-O'Connor, TD, that 20 additional professorial positions will be created this year for women to assist gender balance in higher education institutions.

The appointments follow on from recommendations in the government's 'Gender Action Plan 2018 - 2020'.

IFUT General Secretary, Joan Donegan, said that the creation of 20 senior academic posts reserved for women is "a necessary step to address the persistent lack of promotion of women to this level in our universities."

"Over half of academics are women but less than a quarter of University Professors are women. This is despite the long-term existence of detailed equality legislation, initiatives through the Athena Swan Charter, and regular highlighting of the issue in the media."

"The proposal should be seen as a gender equality not a specifically women's issue. There is increasing evidence internationally that measures such as this are required to break the logjam of both conscious and unconscious discrimination against women," she said.

"These developments should be accompanied by a new approach of seeking to resolve higher education gender and age discrimination issues through discourse and normal industrial relations channels. This would help to avoid often highly costly legal cases, which in the past have involved unjustifiable diversion of taxpayers' money and student fees by university management," Joan Donegan said.

ENDS

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