

**Irish Federation of University Teachers**

**PROCEEDINGS**

**OF**

**ANNUAL DELEGATE**

**CONFERENCE**

**2015**

**Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile**

# PROCEEDINGS OF 2015 ADC

## 1 OPENING

The President Dr Rose Malone, Maynooth University, opened the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Irish Federation of University Teachers at 11:00am on Saturday 9 May 2015 in the Gresham Hotel, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1. She welcomed all delegates, observers and guests.

The General Secretary then welcomed our Fraternal Delegates: Ms Rosena Jordan, Vice President, Irish National Teachers' Organisation; Ms Annette Dolan and Dr Aidan Kenny from the Teachers' Union of Ireland; Ms Esther Lynch representing the General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions; Ms Louise O'Prey, Senior Vice President of the NAS/UWT. He also said we would be joined later by Mr Pat King, General Secretary of the Association of Secondary Teachers' Ireland.

The President then read messages of greeting and solidarity which had been received from: Mr David Robinson on behalf of the Canadian Association of University Teachers; Ms Christine Blower on behalf of the National Union of Teachers in the UK; and Mr Martin Romer on behalf of ETUCE/the European Region of Education International.

## 2 STANDING ORDERS REPORT

The report of the Standing Orders Committee was presented to the conference. Its adoption was proposed by Michael Delargey, UCC - Incoming President and Joe Brady, UCD and agreed unanimously. The General Secretary advised the delegates that Michael Delargey would be the representative of Standing Orders during the course of the conference and any questions or queries with regard to these should be addressed to him in the first instance.

The President then asked the General Secretary to explain to the conference with regard to the refusal of the Minister for Education and Skills to address us as planned. The General Secretary stated that he had to admit to not only being very disappointed at the Minister's behaviour but genuinely quite angry. The situation was that the Minister had made contact with him to express her concern with regard to proposed industrial action by IFUT and SIPTU in UCC in pursuit of our claim with regard to the Tyndall Institute. He had given her an absolute assurance that this industrial action would not be allowed to affect students doing examinations in any way. He had explained that not only would the examinations themselves not be affected but that also all ancillary services such as canteens etc would be untouched so that the ambiance and atmosphere for students doing examinations would be

unaffected. He had also assured her that we had engaged in discussions with the UCC Students' Union and they had had no objection whatsoever to our planned action and appreciated our concern for their members.

Considering all of the above he was genuinely shocked to have received notification by e-mail from the Minister last evening of her decision not to attend. Incredibly she had quoted the prospect of industrial action as a justification for this non-attendance. It occurred to him that it was doubly strange for a Minister from the Irish Labour Party to refuse to attend a trade union annual conference on the basis that the trade union was in contemplation of taking legitimate and approved industrial action.

### **3 ELECTION OF TELLERS**

Hugh Gibbons, TCD; Joe Brady, UCD and Edward Lahiff, UCC were nominated and agreed.

### **4 PROCEEDINGS OF 2014 ADC**

The proceedings of the previous Annual Delegate Conference were tabled for approval and on the proposal of Michael Delargey, Incoming President, seconded by Alastair McKinstry, NUIG they were agreed nem con.

### **5 ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**

The President then invited the General Secretary, Mike Jennings to present the Annual Report for 2014/2015. The text of the General Secretary's Speech introducing the Report is attached as Appendix III. The General Secretary was followed by the Deputy General Secretary, Joan Donegan who gave a detailed exposition of the casework conducted by the union over the period of the previous twelve months.

The President then invited speakers to address the report.

Anthony Harvey, RIA (Central Branch) said that he wished to express just how much he and his colleagues appreciated the work that is done every single day by Head Office, in his case he wished to refer particularly to the work done on behalf of members in RIA and their longstanding claim for a promotion system. Michael O'Keeffe, SPD said that he felt that the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary had been far too modest in their report. From his perspective he appreciated the huge amount of work that was required with regard to the Central Negotiating Committee for the Incorporation Process involving SPD, Mater Dei, CICE and DCU.

The President then put the adoption of the report to the ADC. It was proposed by David Murphy, UCC and by Hugh Gibbons, TCD and agreed unanimously.

## **6 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

The Presidential Address was delivered by Dr Rose Malone of Maynooth University (see Appendix II). Rose explained that it had been her intention to address her remarks to the Minister for Education and it was a source of huge disappointment and regret that the Minister had refused to attend. She asked that a seat be placed in front of the podium so that she could symbolically address the absent Minister.

### **Following the President's Address the ADC Adjourned for lunch.**

## **7 FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Financial Report was debated in Private Session. It was presented to the ADC by the Vice President-Finance Dr Anthony Harvey. Anthony explained to the ADC that the Trustees and he had had a very satisfactory meeting with the Auditors where they had had an opportunity to query each item of the Financial Report. Therefore he was quite confident that the Financial Report represented the true situation within the union.

The President then called for comments on the Financial Report. Joe Brady, UCD said that he did not disagree with anything that Anthony had said nor did he have any particular objections with regard to the report but that his approach would be more cautious. He would worry about expenditure coming into line with contributions. There are, he said, three ways that we can have more healthy finances. (1) We can recruit more members and this is being attended to. (2) We can spend less, we spend our money very well and we have just seen the fantastic work done at Head Office. (3) We can increase the amount of members' subscriptions. This would not be an easy option but we need to give it some thought. He said he would wish to see the union have a two million surplus. Although we can be happy with the report we should not rest on our laurels.

The Financial Report was then put to the ADC and on the proposal of Joe Brady, UCD and seconded by Breandán Ó Cochláin, NUIG it was unanimously agreed.

## **8 APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

The General Secretary advised the ADC that the Trustees had decided to reappoint MAZARS as our Auditors for the coming year.

## **9 ELECTION OF TRUSTEES**

The General Secretary stated that he wished to note the passing of our colleague Donal Fitzsimons, UCD who had served with distinction as one of our Trustees.

With regard to the coming year he reported that Gerard Jennings, NUIG was ineligible to go forward due to the limitations on periods of office. As General Secretary he wished to pay particular tribute to the extremely conscientious manner in which Gerard had always approached his role as Trustee. He stated that he was pleased to note that Maureen Killeavy, UCD and Gerard Enright, MICL had been re-nominated as Trustees. This meant that there was one remaining vacancy. Aidan Seery of TCD said that he would like to propose Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin of TCD and this was seconded by Bridget Kane, TCD and agreed.

## **10 MOTIONS ON POLICY**

### **1 Defending the Public Service**

*This ADC declares that it is honourable and patriotic for people to devote their working lives to public service.*

*We reject the cynical, self-serving narrative which depicts public servants in a negative light. The reality, especially in higher education, is that we public servants work longer hours at less pay than almost all other comparable professionals in the Private, for profit, Sector.*

*As servants of the public good we are expected to, and are pleased to, accept the obligation to respond to the demands of society as decided upon through the democratic structures of our society. This, we believe, is in stark contrast to the egotism and self-interest of so many of our critics.*

*This ADC therefore mandates the IFUT Executive and our National Officers to defend the concept of public service at every opportunity available to them.*

*Proposer: Executive*

The motion was proposed by the President, Dr Rose Malone. She said that we all need to confront the ongoing vilification of the public service which is now almost commonplace. We need to restate clearly that it is both honourable and patriotic to spend one's working life in the service of our fellow citizens through public service. We are proud that higher education is part of the Public Sector, that it is provided for people for their benefit and not for private profit. In recent years Higher Education Institutions had been forced to turn more and more to measures of raising finances which had the potential to undermine academic freedom and

the public good. As a union we need to actively reject the commercialisation and commodification of education. We have to demand adequate funding from the State for this public benefit.

The motion was seconded by Michael Delargey, UCC.

Joe Brady, UCD said he wished to support the motion. He said that the virtue and benefit of public service was almost self-evident but yet needs to be proclaimed explicitly. In recent times vitriol had been taken down and dusted off and released upon us. There should be a recognition of the money that had been taken out of the Sector and the money that has been taken off us as employees within the Sector. We are very proud of what we do. We do a very good job. He was happy to totally commend the motion to the ADC.

The motion was then put to the floor and endorsed unanimously.

## **2 Restoration following Austerity**

*This ADC notes that every single Public Sector employee without exception suffered pay cuts and income levies which were uniquely targeted at them simply because they work for the public good.*

*In the Private Sector most employees had to endure pay freezes but only a minority had pay cuts imposed upon them. Although the plight of those who actually lost their jobs or lived in fear of doing so cannot be ignored, nevertheless it is a fact that only in the Public Sector were 100% of employees forced to pay for the greed and recklessness of those who destroyed Ireland's economy.*

*In preparation for the "Restoration Talks" scheduled to commence shortly IFUT declares that:*

- *The abolition of the so-called "Pension Levy" (which had absolutely nothing to do with pensions but was, in fact, designed for the sole purpose of penalising Public Sector employees exclusively) must be our first priority.*
- *All outstanding unpaid awards arising from Labour Court Recommendations and Pay Reviews must be honoured and implemented.*
- *The agreement with the Government should be of no more than 2 years' duration so that Public Sector employees can negotiate further redress in an appropriate and timely timeframe.*
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*Proposer: Executive*

The General Secretary proposed this motion on behalf of the Executive. He set out and elaborated upon the demands contained in the motion which IFUT will be putting on the table in the forthcoming talks. He also said that we would be absolutely adamantly opposed to the concession of any additional productivity. He recalled that in the previous agreement the idea of asking academics and university professionals to work additional hours every year implied very strongly that the authorities believed that we worked less than 39 hours per week since this was the limit over which people were not expected to do additional hours. He was confident that IFUT had a very strong input to make in these talks and we had distinguished ourselves in the past. We would go into the negotiations as team players but very mindful of our obligation to speak on behalf of the specific needs of our Sector. Breandán Ó Cochláin, NUIG said that we were lucky in the representatives that we had available to us to engage in these talks. Anthony Harvey, RIA (Central Branch) recalled that the Executive had previously recommended a 'No' vote for the Haddington Road Agreement. We also need to be very conscious of the fact that the pay cuts were brought about by FEMPI the Financial Emergency Measures in the Public Interest Act. Hugh Gibbons, TCD said he would support the motion but felt that it wasn't strong enough. We had lost 30% of our earnings. We should be looking for 50% to make amends. We should also concentrate on issues such as FEC and PMDS and need to keep an emphasis on restoration/maintenance of conditions of employment. Joe Brady, UCD said it was nice to be reminded of these acronyms once again. The general Secretary needs and deserves our full support in these talks. He is also right to talk about the need for "realism". However, he [Joe] would be worried about our expectations being too low. There had been talk about a sum of €800 per annum being returned to public servants. He said "sorry, I have lost €20,000 per year! €800 is not enough". Michael Delargey, UCC said we must insist on a bona fides offer from the other side. David Murphy, UCC said he wished to endorse all that had already been said. The Anti-Public Sector Campaign has already started. It is important to stress that we are not seeking "pay rises", what we are seeking is "pay restoration".

Margaret Robson, SPD also agreed with the previous speakers. She stated that there is a perception out there that we only work 38 weeks per year. We need to counteract that. We need to emphasise the work we do in writing, researching, preparing, evaluating, correcting etc. Cormac Ó Cuilleaináin, TCD stated that the propaganda was put about that every time you pay a public servant it means more people on trolleys. Yet these same people pretend that every time they get generous tax cuts it doesn't have a similar effect.

The motion was then put to the conference and agreed unanimously.

**At this stage the President called upon Therese O’Keeffe and Aline Courtois of Third-Level Workplace Watch to address the ADC on the subject of Precarious Work in the Sector. Their Address is provided at Appendix IV.**

Following this Address the General Secretary expressed his thanks to the Speakers for the contribution. Referring to our colleagues on precarious and insecure employment he said that as trade unionists we have to be prepared to defend the most vulnerable. Although there was an element of altruism in this it was also in our own self-interests as bitter experience has shown us that if Management get away with treating people badly in any area they will make such bad treatment universal right across the Sector. Therefore we pledge ourselves to continue to emphasise the extraordinary prevalence of precarious insecure employment in our Sector.

## **RESUMED DEBATE ON MOTIONS**

### **3 Pension Levy**

*This AGM affirms that the ‘Pension Levy’ is, and always has been, an unfair imposition on Public Sector workers who were not responsible for an economic collapse caused by unchecked private financial speculation and governmental abdication of responsibility for the regulation of banking. It calls upon IFUT and ICTU to press for the removal of this levy to be given priority as the promised “unwinding” of the emergency legislation that imposed it proceeds.*

*Proposer: MU Branch*

The motion was proposed by Peter Murray, MU and seconded by Cathy Swift, MICL.

Cathy pointed out that the motion was totally consistent with Motion No. 1 so if somebody supported Motion No. 1 it would be evidence of confusion if they didn’t support this motion. Gerard Enright, MICL said he wouldn’t oppose the motion but nor was he enthusiastic about it. He believed that the motion would not benefit Public Sector pensioners. He wished to make the point that retired members of the union should not be forgotten.

The motion was put to the floor and carried with one abstention.

### **4 Protection of Public Service Pensioners**

*This AGM calls on IFUT and the ICTU of which it forms part to ensure that public sector pensioners are not placed in a position that is any respect disadvantaged relative to that of*



*public sector employees as the emergency legislation that targeted both current and former public sector workers is “unwound”.*

*Proposer: MU Branch*

Peter Murray, MU proposed the motion. He said that it had been intended that Jeneen Naji, MU would propose it but that she was indisposed due to illness. He said that if Jeneen was proposing the motion it would be evidence of intergenerational altruism, but for him to propose it, it was probably closer to naked self-interest! Public Sector pensioners are being targeted because they are articulate and they are organised. Therefore, they have to be shot down. We need to keep our negotiations very focused.

The motion was seconded by Cathy Swift, MICL and carried unanimously.

## **5 Precarious Employment in Higher Education**

*This ADC notes with extreme concern the alarming growth in the numbers of higher education professional staff who are employed on Fixed-Term and/Part-time Contracts.*

*We believe that this undermining of the profession is not only financially and psychologically punishing for those directly affected but it is also corrosive of the good standing of the higher education system itself. This arises from, inter alia, the erosion of Academic Freedom, the rapidly diminishing attractiveness of the profession and a weakening of higher education’s capacity to provide clear guidance and leadership to the people and society it serves.*

*We note that there are currently two Expert Working Groups working on this general topic whose reports will be made available in the coming months.*

*This ADC therefore calls upon the Minister for Education and Skills to make a clear and detailed public pronouncement on this issue before the end of 2015. This should be in the form of a clear declaration of policy and intent with regard to this issue. Such a statement will allow those who work in higher education to see clearly whether any amelioration can be expected or indeed if there is a genuine appreciation of the extent of the crisis.*

*Proposer: Executive*

Cathy Swift, MICL proposed this motion on behalf of the Executive. She said that education is all about our future. The early career in academia and research is a period of energy and enthusiasm full of potential. That is the ideal. Now you are lucky if you have a 12-month contract. Precariousness throws up real issues which are of specific concern to female

academics. We now live in the age of a Walmart version of higher education. An elite is cynically driving this system.

The President, Rose Malone seconded the motion. Addressing the empty chair reserved for the Minister she said she wished to emphasise that a core part of the motion is addressed to the Minister who must take political responsibility for the current situation and show political leadership in addressing it.

The motion was put to the floor and carried unanimously.

**6 Rights and Privileges of Workers Who Have Achieved Permanent Status** This ADC believes that colleagues who have achieved permanent status through the provision of the Fixed Term Workers Act should be accorded the same rights and privileges as other permanent colleagues with the same duties.

*Proposer: NUIG Branch*

This motion was proposed by Alastair McKinstry, NUIG. He stated that under the 2003 Act there were only two forms of employment, fixed-term and permanent. However, in NUIG the Management was trying to create a third category of employee, a “CID employee”. They wished to behave as if a CID was different to permanent employment. We should emphasise that it is not. NUIG had even coined the oxymoron of a Fixed-Term CID. He urged all delegates to support the motion.

The motion was seconded by Aidan Seery, TCD and carried unanimously.

## **7 Equality**

*The ADC notes that in March of this year the European Commission adopted a Recommendation asking Member States to improve pay transparency for women and men in a bid to help close the gender pay gap. The European Commission has estimated that, at the current rate of progress, it would be another 70 years before equal pay is achieved. The gender pay gap in Ireland was 14.4% in 2012. It had risen from 12.6% in 2009. Member States including Ireland have to report to the European Commission by the end of this year on the actions they have taken on foot of this recommendation.*

*The ADC therefore calls on the Minister for Education and Skills to make a clear and detailed public statement on this issue before the closing date of end of year.*

*Proposer: Executive*

The Deputy General Secretary, Joan Donegan proposed the motion. In her address she said:

I think you will agree that I couldn't begin addressing this motion without congratulating Dr. Micheline Sheehy- Skeffington on her fantastic achievement at the Equality Tribunal!

Her success in her case has certainly raised the profile of the equality question and NUIG is a topic of conversation at all of the Universities and Colleges that I visit.

I also want to acknowledge Dr. Sheehy Skeffington's generosity (by giving her €70,000 award from her case to five other colleagues in NUIG in pursuit of their claims) and for her continued support - and I wish them all well in that difficult task.

I also want to wish Dr. Mary Dempsey well in her pursuit for justice. She was successful in her equality case at the Equality Tribunal and disappointingly management at NUIG is now appealing this decision. I wish her well.

What is so important about Dr. Sheehy-Skeffington's case?

- 1) Her decision to take this case.
- 2) Her success

Dr. Sheehy-Skeffington has said that as she was due to retire from NUIG she believes it was easier for her to take a case at the end of her career - it is a much more difficult decision for other women to do so mid-career.

With regard to her own success in this case she attributes some of this to her own engagement with a huge amount of preparatory work and analysis of the facts for the case.

The reality for many other women is that – (according to the Equality Tribunal Annual Report 2011) - grounds for referral under Equal Status in 2010 and 2011; **saw 154 cases referred**

### Equal Status

#### Grounds for referral (ES) 2010 and 2011

Breakdown By Ground	2010	2011	
Age	3	6	+100%
Disability	25	36	+44%
Family Status	2	4	+100%
Gender	5	6	+20%

Marital Status	0	3	+300%
<b>Race</b>	24	26	+8%
Religion	0	4	+400%
Sexual Orientation	2	3	+50%
<b>Traveller Community</b>	22	31	+41%
Multiple Grounds*	22	32	+45%
No Grounds Listed	2	3	+50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>+31%</b>

- ***Disability, Traveller Community and Race were the most frequently cited grounds – 36 cases and 26 cases respectively***
- ***Gender – 6 cases!***

Such statistics fail to show the significant discrimination against women in employment, as there has been fewer and fewer cases lodged in relation to equal pay in recent years.

There are high levels of underreporting of discrimination generally - and this is part of the problem.

It is particularly difficult to bring forward equal pay cases and there is a challenge to strengthen the position of complainants in these cases. This has been recognized by the European Commission in a 2014 Recommendation to Member States in relation to equal pay.

The recommendation stated that discrimination in relation to equal pay is “less likely to be the subject of a court case not only because potential victims are probably not aware of it but also because it is more difficult for victims of pay discrimination to effectively enforce the principle of equal pay.”

The former Equality Authority recommended reform of the provisions of the Employment Equality Act to further enable people to bring forward equal pay cases in particular by ensuring their access to necessary information from their employer.

However no action was taken.

The European Commission Recommendation should stimulate some political action if not appetite. It seeks action from the Member States to make pay more transparent. It proposes a set of actions that member states can choose from to;

- Put in place measures to ensure that employees can request information on pay levels, broken down by gender, for categories of employees doing the same work or work of equal value.
- Put in place measures to ensure that employers in companies with at least 50 employees inform employees, workers' representatives and social partners of the average remuneration by category of employee or position, broken down by gender.
- Take measures to ensure that pay audits are conducted in companies with at least 250 employees.
- Ensure that the issue of equal pay including pay audits is discussed at the appropriate level of collective bargaining.

Member states including Ireland have to report to the European Commission by the end of this year on the actions they have taken on foot of this recommendation.

Will the government step up to the challenge?

The ADC calls on the Minister for Education and Skills to make a clear and detailed public statement on this issue before the closing date of end of year.

The motion was seconded by Alastair McKinstry, NUIG and carried unanimously.

## **8 Equality Act**

*This ADC joins Union brothers and sisters in the INTO in regarding the exemption of Section 37.1 of the Equality Act as unnecessary and inappropriate. We call on our representatives to remove this provision from the legislation.*

*Proposer: NUIG Branch*

The motion was proposed by Alastair McKinstry of NUIG. He said that Section 37.1 of the Equality Act was unnecessary and inappropriate and he referred to the campaign by the INTO for its removal. This Section allows bodies/employers to discriminate against

employees “to protect the ethos of the institution”. We ask for it to be removed. He asked for a clear declaration of support for the motion.

The motion was seconded by Áine O’Neill, CICE and carried by the ADC with one abstention.

## **9 Age Discrimination**

*This ADC commits IFUT to assess and tackle age discrimination, with particular regard to promotions, in the Colleges in which it has representation rights.*

*Proposer: IFUT Executive*

This motion was proposed by Russell Higgs, UCD on behalf of the Executive. He stated that the statistics with regard to the chances of success in promotion competitions were as follows: for those in the age range 30 to 39, 70% chance of success; 40 to 49, 52%; 50 to 59, 48%; 60 to 65, 0%. For Associate Professor the figures are: 30 to 39, no applicants; 39 to 49, 45%; 50 to 59, 22%; 60 to 65, 14%. For Professor 40 to 49, 44%; 50 to 59, 27%; 60 to 65, 29%. The figures speak for themselves. There is also much anecdotal evidence of discrimination. The above statistics are from UCD. We need to get similar statistics from other Branches. He urged IFUT not to neglect the issue of discrimination based on age.

The motion was seconded by Thomas Unger, UCD.

Tina Hickey, UCD said that in some areas the figures were even worse than set out. The President said she would request each Branch, if possible, to carry out similar research. Maureen Killeavy, UCD also said that IFUT should take this issue further.

The motion was put to the ADC and carried unanimously.

## **10 Referendum on Equal Marriage**

*This ADC supports the aspirations of all its members who wish to marry irrespective of their gender, and calls on IFUT to support the upcoming referendum on equal marriage.*

*Proposer: NUIG Branch*

On a point of information Paddy O’Flynn, UCD inquired as to whether the Standing Orders Committee had given consideration to the issue of the admissibility of this motion or whether it falls outside the terms of reference for the agenda of the ADC. The General Secretary said that this matter had been considered and that in view of the decision reached at the 2010 ADC it was clear that this issue had already been adjudicated upon. Marie Clarke, UCD said that personal circumstances impinge on one’s professional interests. Margaret Robson, SPD

stated that one's employment can be contingent on the enjoyment or rights such as these. Joe Brady, UCD said that Standing Orders had already decided the issue.

Alastair McKinstry, NUIG proposed the motion. He read the motion and the text of the proposal going forward for referendum. He stated that it is a matter of equality and does indeed affect members in their daily lives.

The motion was seconded by Edward Lahiff, UCC.

Maurice O'Reilly, SPD said that an e-mail had been issued from SPD HR at 4:00pm the previous day to the effect that "all staff are required not to canvass for the referendum on campus". He said that dictate was unacceptable. This is an equality issue. He said that he would oppose any such instructions. He also said that he upheld the right of people to speak from a different position. However, he said, I will resist any attempts to stifle free speech. Breandán Ó Cochláin, NUIG said that he would vote against the motion. As far as he was concerned marriage is matrimony between man and woman. Laurence Davis, UCC said he was impressed hugely by the reality of the slogan that "an injury to one is an injury to all". Because of this we had taken a position on precarious employment, on age discrimination and on gender discrimination. Therefore he supported the motion.

The motion was then put to a vote and was carried with one vote against and two abstentions.

## **11 Fundamental Research**

*The OECD has defined fundamental research as 'that undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundations of phenomena without regard for a particular application' (OECD, 2002, p. 30) and the history of this type of research has repeatedly shown the contributions made by it to the solution of human problems, the development of society and economic growth.*

*This conference holds with the widely held view within the academic community that any successful applied research culture stands on the foundation of strong and vibrant fundamental research and calls on the government and its agencies to promote fundamental research in Ireland by means of dedicated funding, attractive career paths for researchers and the active construction of supporting infrastructure and cultures in the institutes of higher education.*

*Proposer: Executive*

The motion was proposed on behalf of the Executive by Aidan Seery, TCD. He said that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are central to most people's view of a

university. We should all support the pursuit of truth wherever it leads us. There are fundamental pursuits which have nothing to do with commercialisation. We stand where we have always stood on the side of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake as well as for any applied purpose.

The motion was seconded by Hugh Gibbons, TCD.

Anita Wilcox, UCC said “I am an Educator and a Librarian. Research is not just carrying out research, we are researching when we are preparing. Teaching therefore **is** research”. Cathy Swift, MICL said the world is changing, the ability to access knowledge is changing, and we are right at the edge of change. John O’Flynn, SPD said he fully supported the motion. More and more we are being asked to concentrate on applied research. Russell Higgs, UCD said that if you can’t get funding for your research you can’t get promoted.

The motion was put to the floor and carried.

**The President then asked if there were any further comments on the Annual Report.**

Michael Delargey, UCC referred to the fact that IFUT members sit on Trades Councils in Cork, Galway and Dublin and he encouraged Maynooth University to get involved with the Kildare Trades Council.

### **MOTIONS TO AMEND RULES**

The President, Dr Rose Malone said we would now move to the Motion to Amend the Rules as appears in Appendix 5. The motion is proposed in the name of IFUT Council. She called upon Joe Brady, UCD to propose the motion. Joe Brady, UCD explained the background to the motion. At last year’s ADC there had been some unease about rule changes being proposed which probably required more time and attention. The purpose of this motion is to ensure that, whereas people are free to change the rules there is more time given for the consideration of any such proposals. There had been a consensus that we needed a longer period of consultation and that is in essence what these new rules provide for.



The rule change proposal was seconded by Paddy O'Flynn, UCD.

Anthony Harvey, RIA (Central Branch) said that a lot of good solid work had gone into this proposal. Aidan Seery, TCD said he wished to thank all of those responsible for the trojan work which had been done, for the time had been spent and indeed for the linguistic dexterity displayed in the wording.

The President put the motion to the floor reminding delegates that it required a two-thirds majority to be carried. In the event the rule change was endorsed unanimously.

## **12 CLOSING OF CONFERENCE**

The General Secretary said that he wished to thank several people for their particular contribution to IFUT over the previous years. John Gallagher who assists us with our PR and related matter and Sean Couch who acts as a Pension Adviser and Johanna Treacy who has acted as our safety valve in assisting us with Industrial Relations work. All of these had provided invaluable service to the organisation. Also, he could not speak highly enough of the incredible work rate displayed by the Deputy General Secretary, Joan Donegan and the Secretary/Office Manager Phyllis Russell. He was proud that we had such a dedicated team working in Head Office. A presentation was then made to Phyllis Russell and to the President to mark their respective contributions to the organisation.

In her closing remarks Rose Malone said that it had been very easy to work with Head Office and she appreciated all of the support she had received during her term of office. It was disappointing that we had to finish on a sour note but she had to say that she was disgusted by the Minister's behaviour. Nevertheless, in a very real way we did not miss her today. We have many positives we can celebrate; our membership has increased every month and every year for the last 8 years or so; our union is well respected and our members are well represented. She wished to thank all those in attendance today for their contribution to making this year's ADC such a success once again and she wished everyone well.

## Appendix I

### DELEGATES AND OBSERVERS AT 2015 ADC

(As recorded at Conference)

#### TCD

Dónall MacDónaill	<i>Ceimic</i>
Hugh Gibbons	<i>Computer Science</i>
Bridget Kane	<i>Computer Science</i>
Aidan Seery	<i>Education</i>
John Walsh	<i>Education</i>
Liam Dowling	<i>Electron&amp;Elect. Eng.</i>
Cormac Ó Cullleanáin	<i>Italian</i>
Colm Ó Dúnlainig	<i>Mathematics</i>

#### UCD

John Dunnion	<i>Computer Science</i>
Gordon Cooke	<i>Conway Institute</i>
Marie Clarke	<i>Education</i>
Maureen Killeavy	<i>Education</i>
Joe Brady	<i>Geography</i>
Kelly Fitzgerald	<i>Irish, Celtic Studies</i>
Russell Higgs	<i>Mathematical Science</i>
Thomas Unger	<i>Mathematical Science</i>
Regina Joye	<i>Nursing &amp; Midwifery</i>
Tina Hickey	<i>Psychology</i>
Paddy O'Flynn	<i>Student Consultative Forum</i>

#### UCC

David Murphy	<i>Computer Science</i>
Michael Delargey ( <i>Incoming Pres</i> )	<i>Education</i>
Laurence Davis	<i>Government</i>
Edward Lahiff	<i>Food, Business &amp; Development</i>
Anita Wilcox	<i>Library</i>
Eoin Sheehan	<i>Tyndall Institute</i>

#### NUIG

Alastair McKinstry	<i>ICHEC</i>
Seán Tobin	<i>Mathematics</i>
Breandán Ó Cochláin	<i>Physical Chemistry</i>

#### MU

Michael Kenny	<i>Adult Education</i>
Rose Malone ( <i>Pres</i> )	<i>Education</i>
Maeve Martin	<i>Education</i>
Saranne Magennis	<i>HEPU</i>
Peter Murray	<i>Sociology</i>

#### RCSI

Paul J Murphy	<i>Library</i>
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#### MICL

Aislinn O'Donnell	<i>Education</i>
Gerard Enright	<i>Maths&amp;Computer St.</i>
Catherine Swift	<i>Irish Studies</i>

#### SPD

Andrew O'Shea	<i>Education</i>
Eugene McNulty	<i>English</i>
Margaret Robson	<i>English</i>
Orla Nic Aodha	<i>Library</i>
Maurice O'Reilly	<i>Mathematics</i>
John O'Flynn	<i>Music</i>
Michael O'Keefe	<i>Special Education</i>

#### CICE

David McKeon	<i>Education</i>
Geraldine O'Connor	<i>Social Environment &amp; Scientific Education</i>
Áine O'Neill	<i>Special Education</i>

#### CB

Anthony Harvey	<i>DMLCS, RIA</i>
Larry White	<i>Dictionary, Irish Biography, RIA</i>
Joan Byrne	<i>Microbiology, HRB</i>

#### APOLOGIES

#### SPD

Colum Ó Cléirigh	<i>Music</i>
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**OBSERVERS**

Caitríona Nic Philbin, TCD  
Clíona Ní Shúilleabháin, TCD  
Gabrielle Pieratoni, TCD  
Yvonne Scallahn, TCD  
Virginia Segura, TCD  
Anne Sheridan, UCD  
Liam Dwyer, SPD  
Seán Couch, Insurance Broker

**FRATERNAL DELGATES**

Rosena Jordan, Vice-Pres, INTO  
Aidan Kenny, Asst. General Secretary, TUI  
Annette Dolan, Deputy General Secretary, TUI  
Louise Prey, Senior Vice Principal, NASUWT



## Appendix II

### IFUT PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Dr Rose Malone

9 May 2015

This year, like every year, is a year of historic anniversaries: the centenary of Gallipoli, the centenary of the sinking of the Lusitania, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day and the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. There are also literary anniversaries. It is the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of WB Yeats. Although he was certainly no friend of the trade union movement his poetry is so evocative that I have sought out quotations to illustrate the points of this speech, as an antidote and counterpoint to economic and statistical discourse.

The title of my presentation today is “Myths and Legends”. I have taken this title from a book I loved as a child. My father, who was largely self-educated, was addicted to second-hand books which he treated with great reverence. Every so often he would take out books and read them to us children. One of our favourites was called “Myths and Legends of the Celtic Race” and consisted of illustrated stories of Cuchulainn and Fionn Mac Cumhail and the Fianna. I want to apply the idea of myths and legends to an analysis of Irish Higher Education. I am using the word “myth” in two senses: in its more colloquial sense of something that is not true [only a myth] and in a slightly more technical sense as meaning a “big idea” or informing concept. Legends are the stories that illustrate the myths. I am going to start with some myths that are pervasive but demonstrably false.

*Myth 1: Higher Education is a luxury and only for an elite*

In 1960 one could argue that there was some truth in this assertion. Only 5% of the age cohort made the transition to Higher Education. By 1980, the figure had increased to 20% and by 2010, 65% of the age cohort continued to Higher

Education. In 1960, the Council of Education report questioned the value of making secondary education universally available as “only a minority could benefit from it”. It could be convincingly argued that third level education plays the same role in Irish society today secondary education did in the 1960s. Our expectations for our young people have expanded beyond the most mythical aspirations of the 1960s.

But these overall figures conceal a different reality. When we consider transition to Higher Education by social class grouping, stark inequalities are revealed. While 100% of young people in households headed by a higher professional and 89% of those from farming families make that transition, the figure drops to 50% for skilled manual households, 33% for semi or unskilled and just 27% for non-manual. It could be argued that as Higher Education has become the norm, those excluded from it are at a greater relative disadvantage than was the case when very few progressed. At the same time, participation in higher Education by older adults (25-64) is, at 7%, the second-lowest in the EU.

The Hunt Report (2011) predicted that, by 2025, the numbers entering HE would have increased by over 50%, from 42,500 to 65,000. The bulk of the increase would come from adult and international students.

These changes have taken and are taking place against a background of mandated austerity (another kind of myth that I will deal with shortly). The Hunt Report notes that 85% of the funding of Irish HE is public funding and that this has declined as a result of the cuts. The OECD (2009) notes that investment per student has declined. This was at a time when participation rates are increasing. This has serious implications for the reduction of inequality. We learn very clearly from experience at primary and secondary levels that equity demands greater spend per student to enable real participation by non-traditional groups. Achieving participation in HE for their children should not require families to

... add halfpence to the pence

And prayer to shivering prayer, until

You have dried the marrow from the bone.

IFUT sees the funding of the universities as a fundamental issue of social justice and educational equity.

[insert response to Minister who will probably refer to equality]

Myth 2: *“as things have been they remain”*

When a film-maker or television producer wants to portray a university, there is a set of iconic images to which they resort – a tiered lecture theatre, ancient buildings framing quiet lawns, students writing quietly in libraries. Academics appear in a swirl of gowns, deliver high-flown words, retreat to book-lined studies, perhaps even to sip sherry. This is the legend that supports the myth of unchanging, timeless universities. These images reflect the reality of neither students’ nor academics’ lives in the electronic, hyper-connected world. The legendary form of the university had very limited existence, if any and we are not seeking a return to some mythical golden age. This mythical institution was both elitist and patriarchal,

Both the student experience and the work of academics have been irretrievably altered by internet, email and the open-ended nature of the engagement that results. The threefold mission of the universities (teaching, research and civic engagement) is in danger of drowning in the rising tide of administration and proof of compliance.

The most gratuitously offensive proposal in the Haddington Road talks was the one that required an extra 70 hours per year from academics. We are indebted to our mathematicians who point out that an indeterminate number plus 70 is still an indeterminate number.

It is ironic that the Hunt Report should call for greater flexibility from academics – engaged in what is arguably one of the most flexible and open-ended forms of work in existence – while at the same time suggesting that:

In Ireland, the transparency and content of academic contracts needs to be addressed to ensure that productivity is optimized.

The Budapest/Vienna Ministerial Declaration (2010) on the European Higher Education Area acknowledges that a more supportive environment for academics would be necessary to ensure the full implementation of the Bologna process, which enshrines the values of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and social equity. Research carried out by our former president, Dr. Marie Clarke, across nine

European countries supports the need for a supportive environment. This excellent report, shortly to be released, makes a major contribution as has been recognised throughout the European Higher Education Area.

To return to Yeats:

Labour is blossoming or dancing where  
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul  
Nor beauty born out of its own despair  
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.

Myth 3: the inevitability of austerity

I now want to broaden the discourse from an exclusive focus on HE to a consideration of the effects of economic policies on Irish civil society more generally. Austerity politics are characterised by a range of measures which I will discuss further below, but the discourse around austerity has the capacity to alter our thinking in subtle and insidious ways. Austerity is a truly hegemonic concept. Not alone is it powerful but it presents itself as inevitable, even in a perverse way, attractive or at least virtuous. [irresponsibly responsible]

The fascination of what's difficult  
Has dried the sap out of my bones, and rent  
Spontaneous joy and natural content  
Out of my heart.

The sense of inevitability leads us to believe that “there is no alternative”, and to forget that austerity is a choice, albeit a constrained one. We may have no choice but to reduce State spending and indebtedness but we have some say in how that is to be done. The response of the ICTU to economic collapse was to look for an appropriate balance between taxation and spending in addressing the very real crisis which was not of our making as trade union members. The balance appeared to tilt very strongly towards spending, salary and pension cuts, apart from the regressive USC and pension levy.



Austerity talk is an example of neo-liberal discourse in its purest form. One of the dystopian effects of austerity and neo-liberalism, over and above the real and practical impact on people's lives, is their distorting effect on language. "Reform" used to mean making things better, not destroying the public sphere. Many things done in the name of "rationalisation" have little rationality outside of a narrow economic one [sometimes not even that].

Academics, as public intellectuals can play an important role in combatting austerity and neo-liberalism by providing the detailed analytical critique in a form accessible to public argument.

### **The myths we want to be true**

I now turn to a different form of myth – the foundational myths which underpin our idea of Higher Education. These are the "big ideas" which are at the heart of our practice and our struggle.

#### Myth 4: The centrality of Academic Freedom

The first of these is the myth of **Academic Freedom**. Arguably, there is no more fundamental idea in Higher Education. It is guaranteed by the Universities' Act and we will campaign vigorously to ensure that it is included in any new amended form of the Act. We believe that the importance of academic freedom is not restricted to research (where it is of course essential) but also to teaching and to public engagement. But there is a need for more than legislation to ensure that academic freedom has a real meaning in practice. The first and most important guarantor of academic freedom is security of employment. Academic staff who are constantly looking over their shoulders in fear of non-renewal of contracts or redundancy. The single biggest threat to academic freedom is casualization. Casualisation serves neither the academics concerned nor the students nor academic freedom. However, once it becomes the norm it is a really difficult idea to undermine and reverse. The fight against casualization has become one of the most dominant aspects of IFUT's work because we see security as fundamental both to the conditions of our members and to the foundational concept of academic freedom.

Academic freedom encompasses more than freedom to speak out in unpopular ways. It also refers to the kind of research in which academics engage. We endorse calls for the recognition of the essential importance of Basic research, as well as applied research. Related to that is the need to guarantee security of employment to researchers. We would expect that the universities would here be ad idem with us in seeking to use the Fixed Term Workers' Act (2003) to establish Contracts of Indefinite Duration as quickly as possible and guarantee the continuity of research. Instead we find the scandalous squandering of public money in paying for legal advice to thwart the application of the Act, using the most convoluted arguments to find "objective grounds" to deny researchers their rights.

It is vital that research be as fearless as Yeats' squirrel, described thus

Nor the tame will, nor timid brain  
Nor heavy knitting of the brow  
Bred that fierce tooth and cleanly limb  
And threw him up to laugh on the bough;  
No government appointed him.

#### Myth 5: The importance of public service

Paradoxically, we value and defend to the utmost the concept of public service. I am proud (and lucky) to have been a public servant for 37 Of the 41 years of my working life. The other four were spent as a researcher for an education union, defending public sector education. An insidious part of neo-liberal (and especially austerity) discourse, is the vilification of the public service and its portrayal as a drag upon a thrusting, profit-driven, "modern" state. Images are powerful. The image of public servants as grey men in decaying 20<sup>th</sup> century office blocks, who "but live where motley is worn" is as much a caricature as the golden image of the old university. Public funding for universities is essential to guarantee freedom from "for profit" approaches to teaching and research. Public sector "reform" should not mean public sector destruction.

Location in the public sector is just one aspect of public service. We see this as simply the most effective way of guaranteeing the concept of “Higher Education as a Public Good”.

#### Myth 6: Institutional autonomy

Here we have another paradox. Universities are in the public sector, in the public sphere and yet at the same time we argue for their autonomy and independence. Such a demand, however, is based on the idea of a university as a community of scholars, not as a hierarchical, managerialist, corporate organisation. We do not believe that university autonomy should imply a disregard for employment law or equality law.

If the universities behave *simply* as corporate, commercial organisations, there is no reason for IFUT as a trade union to engage with them in any but an adversarial way.

Combining these foundational myths and their inherent contradictions is a challenging task but one that is essential for the promotion of the idea of the HE as a public good., based on academic freedom, the centrality of teaching and care for students, the promotion of basic and applied research and engagement with communities at local and national levels.

Finally we say to you Minister that we have been very patient. We have set our own interests aside, perhaps to too great a degree. The time has now come for restoration.

Minister, “too great a sacrifice can make a stone out of the heart”.



## **Appendix III**

**Speech by Mike Jennings, General Secretary, IFUT.**

**ANNUAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE**

**9 MAY 2015**

Colleagues, Delegates, Invited Guests and Friends,

I'm very pleased to come to this podium to formally propose the adoption of the 2014/2015 IFUT Annual Report.

My colleague, the Deputy General Secretary, Joan Donegan will take the conference through the report in greater detail. I will make a more general statement.

This format of presentation reminds me to some degree of the unfair system of pass and honours papers in the Leaving Certificate when I was in School.

Take History for example; if you sat the Pass Exam you were expected to be precise, to remember the dates of battles, the names of Kings and Popes and such like. On the other hand, if you sat the Honours Paper you were assumed to know all of these basics and so you had the scope to be more discursive, more analytical, take a broader view etc.

So now, Joan has to deal with the precise and concrete items in our report whereas I get to indulge myself in some more general ruminations.

I do not say this is fair.

But it does suit me.

So what are my general observations on the occasion of this annual look-back at IFUT's year?

Let me share some general thoughts about the state of our profession as academics and professionals in the Irish Higher Education system in 2015.

When I took up the position as General Secretary of IFUT in 2007 I benefitted from some humorous but perceptive and useful advice from Dr Daire Keogh who was then a leading member of the IFUT Executive and still a member of ours in good standing. Daire advised me that fitting in in IFUT would be easier if I bore two things in mind; Gaeilge and Newman.

Well, no problem for me to use the cúpla focal frequently. I love the Irish language.

Regarding the second item, Newman; To be honest I do not think of John Henry Cardinal Newman very much and I speak about him less often. But I do think a lot about "**The Idea of a University**". When I say this I do not necessarily think just of Newman's idea of a university. I think of my idea of a university, of other people's ideas of a university, of the ideas of Philosophers and Politicians of a university.

In a short address such as this I do not propose to compare and contrast these various ideas and concepts. That is not my purpose today at all.

I have been tempted to refer today to the idea of a university because, depressingly, the people and the agencies which have more and more control and influence over us and what we strive to do have literally **no idea of a university**.

Going back again to when I was in secondary school, one of my favourite publications was Mad Magazine. The mascot for this crazy, bizarre, surreal world was the instantly recognisable Alfred E. Neuman.

So, with calculated disrespect I am going to refer to some of the worst and most enervating “policies” (for want of a better term) which are imposed upon us as **“Neuman’s Idea of a University”**.

Neuman’s idea of a university is a training school run by IBEC and the Small Firms Association. Students and Academics are expected to think small. Short-term targets are best, medium-term ones, a bit risky but long-term thinking is completely out. And, as for new horizons or blue skies thinking, they are not even understood.

Neuman’s idea of a university is to stick to what we know. We know the kind of jobs that will be available next year so why would we bother to consider that the nature of work and employment itself will change radically over the coming years just as it did over the past decades. Why should we care? What did posterity ever do for us?

And as for research and the discovery of new knowledge; “why bother?” Neuman asks. “Sure it might all be a waste of time”.

Neuman likes measuring things and hates things that can’t be easily measured. For Neuman teaching is not a process or an engagement or an act of inspiring thought and learning in others. No, teaching is a product and is defined by inputs and outputs.

Neuman loves citations, especially in a narrower and narrower range of “high impact publications”. Neuman would prefer ten citations of a routine nature than one major game-changing big discovery.

You see, the problem with big, historic ideas or discoveries is that they take too long. And anyway, how can you be sure that the academics are doing any work during all these lead-up years?

He would rather have us doing useless and soul-destroying work, like filling in endless forms, rather than spend his nights worrying that we might all be dossers.

Neuman wonders why we bring all these students to a university campus when we could e-mail the lectures to them at home. Just think of the savings!

But I am perhaps labouring the point, so let me just summarise the main points of Neuman’s **Idea of a University**.

- Neuman doesn’t understand academics so naturally he is suspicious of them.
- Neuman believes that without constant measurement and surveillance none of us will do a fair day’s work.
- Neuman thinks that students need more training and less education.
- Neuman fears all that he does not instantly comprehend and can render simple and he especially fears the unknown and the unexplained.

Of course Neuman is a mere figment of my imagination.

Or is he?



Whether or not my Neuman is an accurate personification of those who, in reality, now run our universities, it is a fact that the competition between different ideas of a university (and the more fundamental contest between those with varying ideas and those with **no** idea at all of a university) throws up for our examination and scrutiny the concept of “**institutional autonomy**”.

Academic Freedom and institutional autonomy have been for many, many years the twin essential characteristics of genuine (as opposed to nominal) universities.

Academic Freedom, though it is sometimes misunderstood is, of the two, the easier to defend and extol. Institutional autonomy can so easily be misrepresented as elitist and anti-democratic. “How dare you accept public funds and not accept public control?” is a tough question to deal with, especially for those of us who put serving all the people of our nation at the heart of our political philosophy.

Of course, we accept the requirement of democratic accountability – the piper and the tune and so on. But how is this accountability to be exercised? Is “accountability” to be synonymous with “control”? Who should do the job of overseeing our work and contribution? Is there not an obligation on those who are chosen to perform this task (or, more commonly, those who abrogate this role on to themselves) to understand what it is that we do and to have some notion not only of our historic mission but also the humility to recognise that for hundreds of years we have put our unique traditions and modus operandi to the good benefit of society?

For instance, universities insisted on peer review for many decades before the term quality control was even invented. We practised collegial governance when the norms of the wider societies we worked in were of a much less democratic character. If we were an “ivory tower” it was because every top and beneficial position in

society, from the enjoyment of good health and housing, to education, to the right to enjoy interesting work rather than mere drudgery, was preserved for the few and paid for by the many.

You may or may not believe that we have all become fully the victims of Neuman's Idea of a University, but you cannot deny we are certainly going in that direction. Perhaps this impending reality will challenge us not only to assert more vigorously the traditional demand for institutional autonomy but to work hard to find mechanisms whereby this autonomy can be in harmony with, and not antithetical to, the common good and the principles of democratic accountability.

The past 7-8 years of austerity have hit our members very hard financially. But we must not lose sight of the huge damage which was done in the same period to independence and freedom of decision-making in the University Sector. Much of this damage was self-inflicted, for instance by TCD's disgraceful treatment of its own staff to the extent where even the Government was shocked and forced to act. UCC and other universities abuse the little institutional autonomy they have left by wasting many thousands of euro every year paying Europe's most expensive lawyers to wage war on their own employees.

I could go on.

What we need is a coming together of all of those who believe in the core values – in the **idea of a university** – to work together to reverse the damage that has been done. To do this we need to endorse democratic accountability and to distinguish this from external micro-management bordering on control freakery.

As the leading voice of academics in Ireland, IFUT has an important role to play in this campaign. The record of our work and achievements as set out in our report today proves our capacity in this regard.

I commend the report to you for adoption.

-end-

## Appendix IV

### ADDRESS TO IFUT ADC

9 MAY 2015

THERESE O'KEEFE and ALINE COURTOIS

### THIRD-LEVEL WORKPLACE WATCH

#### **Casualisation: a disease that must be eradicated**

Address to the Irish Federation of University Teachers, Annual Delegate Conference 2015.

Dear Delegates:

Thank you for the invitation to address you today. We are delighted to speak on casualisation in Irish higher education.

The higher education sector in Ireland has undergone many attacks in recent years. These attacks have changed the nature of work in our universities and colleges in a manner best described as malignant.

Casualisation of academic work is but one manifestation yet we believe it constitutes

the most significant threat to higher education today. This phenomenon affects not

only those immediately engaged in precarious work; it has serious implications for

students and permanent staff too. Casualisation is a disease, as President Rose Malone described it in her address to you last year, and it is a disease that jeopardizes

the very mission of higher education. As such, it must be eradicated with urgency.

The extent of casualisation has been documented in other countries. In the UK, higher

education is the sector most likely to use zero-hour contracts. In Australia, 60% of

contact hours are delivered by 'adjuncts'. In the US, 70% of academic staff are adjuncts. In these countries and others, such issues have been highlighted and efforts

made to organise precarious workers.

In Ireland, there has been relative silence on the subject yet casualisation and its effects are widely apparent here. There has been a sharp decline in the number of

permanent positions advertised. New types of contracts have emerged: 9-month, or

12-week contracts are now common where 12-month positions were once the norm.

Hourly paid work has also proliferated and core modules are now taught on this basis.

While these are changes that most of us would have noticed in our workplaces, the extent of casualisation in Ireland is not known precisely. Unlike other countries, no

comprehensive figures are available. But we have reasons to believe the phenomenon

is just as widespread and no less disastrous than elsewhere.

We [names] launched an online questionnaire last year in order to document the extent and effect of casualisation as well as to reach out to our precarious colleagues.

The questionnaire was addressed explicitly to those identifying as precarious workers

and it received 270 responses. The format we chose allowed us to collect very detailed and personal accounts of the lived experience of precarity. From our research

we wish to share eight conclusions.

To begin,

### **1) Casualised academic work takes many forms.**

Casualised academic work takes many forms and is difficult to map.

We are all perhaps most familiar with one or multi-year contracts as traditionally

these posts were springboards into permanent academic posts. The most insidious

types of casualised work come in the form of shorter term contracts, hourly paid work

and JobBridge internships.

Conditions vary within departments and institutions and across them. Often institutions do not have standardised rates of pay for new, temporary contracts and so

in some cases there are large discrepancies between the salaries for equivalent work.

Much work is hourly paid or paid per course while preparation, corrections and student consultation may not be paid at all depending on department or institution.

Hourly rates of pay for both lecturers and graduate workers ('teaching assistants' or

'tutors') vary greatly across institutions as well.

### **2) Poverty and lack of protection**

Poverty and the increasingly permanent nature of precarity have emerged as the most discernable features of casualised work.

Our research indicates 66% of casual workers earn significantly less than the average

industrial wage at less than 25,000 per year.

Of those workers 46% report salaries below €10,000 per year, below the poverty threshold in Ireland.

The percentage rises for hourly paid workers. Nearly 4 out of 5 of those doing hourly

paid work earn less than 10,000 a year and are officially living in poverty.

These are

fully qualified lecturers with years of experience. They could be teaching as many as

4 full modules, an entire teaching load for most full-time staff.

A number of respondents report juggling hourly paid work between several institutions and often float in and out of employment, drawing social welfare or relying on the support of others. Graduate workers also report living in poverty as

many of them receive in effect negative wages from the universities where they work

once fees are deducted.

Hourly paid workers have little recourse under the law, as a recent Labour Court decision has shown, and are denied basic rights and entitlements. Unfair dismissals

are moot because universities can simply choose not to offer any subsequent work the

following term. Women who are pregnant are particularly vulnerable.

Furthermore, hourly paid work offers no paid leave, no sick pay, no maternity pay,

and payment is typically below minimum wage. A fair day's wage for a fair day's

work it is not! Hourly paid work, short-term contracts and programmes that require

free labour like JobBridge contradict the victories unions have fought hard to win.

### **3) Hamster wheel of precarity**

Casual work has become so systemic and endemic that many are now trapped in a

hamster wheel of precarity. Precarity is now a permanent position in and of itself.

Many of our respondents had worked over 10 years in higher education and continue to do so on a casual basis. Thus, time spent in the sector does not result in an improvement of conditions – in fact for many, conditions deteriorate over time and workers remain trapped in precarious, low-paid employment. As permanent staff are under increasing pressure, the teaching burden of departments is gradually passed onto casual staff. Casual workers rarely have the opportunity to teach the same course year after year; instead they are forced to prepare new material, often for free, while having little time to strengthen their expertise in modules related to their research interests. This work offers no scope to develop a research profile. Precarious workers are often excluded from applying to research funding. Professional memberships and conferences are out of pocket with no institutional support. Thus dissemination of research and networking, essential CV-building exercises, are in fact hampered by employment status. This creates a situation whereby temporary workers are caught in a cyclical process, trapped in precarity, with diminishing exit points into secure academic work.

#### **4) Reclassification of work**

Casualisation reclassifies our academic work. It devalues scholarly research. Casual academic workers are no longer expected to do research as paid work. Universities teach research and demand increased research productivity from staff. Yet, for casual workers, research is increasingly defined by institutions as extraneous unpaid work conducted outside the confines of contracts. In effect, these workers are engaged in research and intellectual work full-time, but the institution only sees fit to pay them for classroom activities. Any publications produced through this free labour are often solicited for inclusion in the university's yearly productivity reports.

This reveals a deep contempt for the very nature of academic work. Teaching and research inform each other as we all know. Their compartmentalisation undermines knowledge work as a whole and feeds into the assumption that our work as academics is seasonal. Despite what is suggested in some quarters, we know our work does not end when students leave campus for the summer. The increasing segmentation of academic labour marginalises these workers in their departments, where many do not have an office and are invisible in spite of their vital contribution. This poses a serious threat to collegiality as well as our ability to protect our sector collectively.

### **5) Increased workload for permanent staff**

A small number of permanent staff responded to our questionnaire and an overall theme of workplace discontent and dissatisfaction emerged. The reforms within higher education mean that the work of permanent staff is increasing. This is very much connected to casualisation – as permanent positions are no longer replaced and part-time posts are used to cover full-time work. Permanent staff are having to pick up the slack in research, teaching, administration, and student support. Attempts to make academic jobs seasonal neglect the year-round cycle of academic work and shifts work onto the shoulders of those in more secure posts.

### **6) Learning Conditions**

The quality of education students receive is under threat as our working conditions are students' learning conditions. Fees are increasing alongside staff-student ratios. Proper consultation and feedback is often now unpaid work in many universities. Precarious academics are discouraged from teaching to their fullest potential and providing students the full range of supports they need throughout their education.

### **7) Equality**

Casualisation is also a threat to equality in the workplace. The issue of gender inequality within academic employment has come to our



attention most recently because of the investigation at NUI Galway.

Casualisation

exacerbates gender inequality as women are concentrated in some of the worst forms

of precarious academic work, particularly hourly paid and pro-rata work, and many

are caught there for longer than their male counterparts.

If we are to adequately address gender inequality in the academic workplace casualisation must be tackled.

### **8) The University as a public good**

Casualisation undermines the university as a public good.

Academic freedom cannot be guaranteed for casual workers. Casual workers, due to

lack of security, have no protection should they wish to explore contentious or critical

research. Teaching staff on temporary contracts are often prohibited from continuing

work started on previous contracts so as to prevent any claims to permanency under

the law.

How can the foundational principles of higher education, like academic freedom and

intellectual integrity remain intact under a system that denies a large portion of its

workers the protection offered to permanent staff regarding their work?

Academic freedom comes with tenure and its denial to a large number of scholars

chisels away at the very foundation of the university as a public good. As public monies are withdrawn from the staffing of permanent positions how can we ensure

that free and independent thinking survive? These values are at the core of the university and the erosion of tenure threatens our ability to protect and nurture them.

### **Call to action**

What is to be done?

Though we have painted a grim picture there are ways to resist and revoke this casualisation that affects all those connected to the university. Ending casualisation

requires a concerted effort. We call on you today to prioritise the fight against casualisation in your workplaces. We propose the following 5 first steps to commence this fight:

1) Document the extent of casualisation. Data is difficult to get and university management is not forthcoming on revealing the number of workers not

employed on a permanent basis. You can start by documenting the permanent/non-permanent staff ratio, and sending that information to us or your branch chair.

2) Abolish the use of hourly paid work for regular teaching.

3) Resist the erosion of academic work into seasonal employment. One year contracts should be a minimum starting point.

4) Fight the use of JobBridge. Work must pay.

5) Make the union a more hospitable place for casual workers. Make it easier for

casual workers to join IFUT- including more flexible memberships. Organise separate meetings to allow casual staff to discuss their grievances free from the fear of recrimination.

Casualisation attacks the core of what the university stands for with its threats to academic freedom, equality and education. It is antithetical to the very idea of a university itself. To conclude, we will leave you with a poignant quote from

Toni

Morrison.

“If the university does not take seriously and rigourously its role as a guardian of

wider civic freedoms, as interrogator of more and more complex ethical problems, as

a servant and preserver of deeper democratic practices, then some other regime or

menage of regimes will do it for us, in spite of us, without us.”

Thank you.

## Appendix V

### MOTIONS TO AMEND RULES

**Delete the Current Rule No. 17 and Rule No. 18 and replace with the following:**

#### Rule 17

##### CONFERENCES AND MOTIONS

REQUIREMENT	(a)	There shall be an Annual Delegate Conference of the Federation on a date fixed by the President in consultation with the Executive.
INFORMATION	(b)	
Notice of Conference		(i) Notice of an Annual or Special Delegate Conference ('the meeting') shall be sent to all members not less than forty-two days before the meeting, together with a preliminary agenda and an invitation to submit motions for debate at the Annual or Special Delegate Conference concerned.
Motions on Policy		(ii) Motions on policy shall be received by the General Secretary not less than twenty-eight days before the date of the meeting. Motions may be submitted by individual members. Motions may also be submitted by the Executive or Council or by the committee of a Branch or of a Division and shall be signed by the President or Chairperson thereof as appropriate.
		(iii) The Executive, acting as the Standing Orders Committee, shall consider all such motions on policy received and determine whether or not they are in order – i.e. in conformity with the Law and the Rules.
Notice of Motions on Policy		(iv) Notice of all motions on policy deemed to be in order shall be circulated to members not less than fourteen days before the meeting.
Advance Amendments		(v) Proposed amendments to motions may be submitted to the General Secretary at any time prior to the start of the debate on the motion to which they refer. They may be submitted by individual members or by the Executive or Council or by the committee of a Branch or of a Division. All such proposed amendments shall be in writing and, in the case of amendments proposed by individual members, they shall be signed by any two such persons.

Amendments on Day		(vi) Proposed amendments to a motion may be suggested by any participant during the course of the debate on a motion. It shall be for the Chair of the meeting to decide whether to accept such a proposed amendment for debate subject to any provisions of the Standing Orders Report.
Objects and Motions		(vii) All motions and all proposed amendments to motions shall refer to matters which come within the scope of the objects of the Federation as laid down in Rule 2 Section (a).
Accounts		(viii) A financial statement, approved by the auditors, shall be circulated to the members prior to the Annual Delegate Conference.  (ix) Nominations for the positions of the three Trustees to be elected at the Annual Delegate Conference shall also be requested in the notice of an ADC and any such nominations must be notified to the General Secretary seven days in advance of the Annual Delegate Conference.
SPECIAL	(c)	(i) A Special Delegate Conference may be called at any time by Council.  (ii) A Special Delegate Conference may also be requisitioned by one-tenth of the membership of IFUT. Such a meeting shall be called within thirty days of receipt by the General Secretary of such a requisition. At such a meeting, only such business shall be discussed as the Council shall decide, in addition to the business for which the meeting was requisitioned.
VOTES	(d)	Any motion on policy shall be passed by a simple majority of the delegates present and voting at an Annual or Special Delegate Conference.
QUORUM	(e)	The quorum for an Annual or Special Delegate Conference shall be one-third of the delegates notified to Head Office in advance of the meeting.
MOTIONS & CCL+EXECUTIVE	(f)	Motions passed at the Annual Delegate Conference, which request action by the Council or the Executive, shall be placed on the agenda of the Council meeting, or the Executive meeting as appropriate, immediately following that Conference. It shall be the duty of the officers of the Federation to report back on such motions to the next Annual Delegate Conference of the Federation.
DELEGATES	(g)	Delegates to the Annual or Special Delegate Conference shall be appointed by the Branches in accordance with their rules and Rule 6 (c) above, using the criterion of twice the

number of delegates they are entitled to send to Council. The names and addresses of delegates shall be notified to the General Secretary not less than twenty-eight days before the Conference concerned. The General Secretary and Executive members shall be ex officio delegates.

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|-----------------|-----|--|
| OBSERVERS       | (h) | Members of the Federation, other than delegates, may attend and speak, but may not vote at Annual or Special Delegate Conferences.   |
| STANDING ORDERS | (i) | In relation to Annual or Special Delegate Conferences, the Executive shall prepare a Standing Orders Report dealing with the times of sessions, motions and amendments which are in order, delegates' credentials, duration of speeches, and procedure generally. This shall be presented as the first item of business at an Annual or Special Delegate Conference, as the case may be, for acceptance, rejection or amendment. |
| CONSULTATIVE    | (j) | Consultative Delegate Conferences may also be convened according to provisions and for purposes specially laid down for them, subject to the Rules of the Federation.  |

### **Rule 18**

#### **CHANGES TO RULES AND SCHEDULE**

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|-----------------------------|-----|---|
| RULES                       | (a) | No change to the rules shall be made, other than Rule 2, except at an Annual or Special Delegate Conference ('the meeting') and after due notice has been given of a motion to amend under the procedures set out below.  |
|                             | (b) | A motion to change the rules, appropriate to the meeting concerned, shall be passed by a two-thirds majority of those delegates present and voting.   |
| MOTIONS TO CHANGE THE RULES | (c) | Motions to change the rules shall be received by the General Secretary not less than twelve weeks before the date of the meeting. Motions to change the rules may be submitted by individual members. Such motions may also be submitted by the Executive or Council or by the committee of a Branch or of a Division and shall be signed by the President or Chairperson thereof as appropriate. |
|                             | (d) | The Executive, acting as the Standing Orders Committee, shall consider all such motions to change the rules which have been received and determine whether or not they are in order – that is, in conformity with the Law and would not,  |

if approved, lead to inconsistency with other sections of the rules.

- (e) Motions to change the rules and that are in order shall be communicated to members no later than eight weeks before the date of the meeting.
- (f) If a motion to change the rules is deemed to be out of order, this shall be communicated to the proposers no later than eight weeks before the date of the meeting. The reasons for deeming a motion to change the rules out of order shall form part of the Standing Orders Report at the meeting.

#### AMENDMENTS

- (g) Amendments to proposed rule changes, which have been deemed to be in order, may be submitted to the General Secretary no later than twenty-eight days before the meeting.
- (h) Save for minor textual changes, no amendments may be proposed to motions to change the rules later than twenty-eight days before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting shall have absolute discretion in determining if a proposed amendment is of a minor textual nature.

#### SCHEDULE

The provisions of the Schedule may be amended, varied or repealed by the Council, provided that a motion so amending, varying or repealing any of the provisions of the Schedule has been passed by a two-thirds majority of those members of the Council present and voting. Notice of such a motion must be given to the Branches at least twenty-one days before the meeting of the Council when the motion is to be moved.

#### REGISTRAR

Any changes to the rules or the Schedule pertaining thereto shall be notified to the Registrar of Friendly Societies forthwith.

*Proposer: IFUT Council*