

MOTIONS FOR ADC 2018

MOTIONS ON POLICY

1 Collective Bargaining Rights in DCU

That the ADC calls on IFUT to immediately notify DCU Management of the conclusion of the ICTU Disputes Committee Appeal Process and thus the termination of the Interim Agreement. Furthermore, we call on IFUT to establish a process immediately on reaching agreement providing for Collective-Bargaining between IFUT and DCU.

Proposer: DCU Branch Committee

Seconder: Maurice O'Reilly DCU Branch

2 Permanent Academic Posts left Vacant in DCU

This ADC calls upon DCU Management to honour the headcount of permanent staff in all disciplines that joined the university as a result of Incorporation, through consistent and transparent processes in the replacement of retired and other vacated posts.

Proposer: DCU Branch Committee

Seconder: Maurice O'Reilly DCU Branch

3 Higher Education Funding

Conference notes the extraordinary reduction in public funding of higher education between 2008 and 2016 when:

- State investment in higher education declined by 38%, even as student numbers increased by 34,000.
- Total income per student (incorporating all core income such as public funding and student fees) declined by 22% over a seven year period.

Conference further notes the devastating consequences of this cut in public funding, including a deterioration in the third level staff student ratio from 16:1 to 20:1 between 2009 and 2015 and a severe shortfall in replacement of equipment and facilities.

The HEA report on system performance in 2016 identified 'major sustainability problems facing the sector,' noting that:

- 11 HEIs were in deficit in 2014-15 and at least five were considered vulnerable in terms of short-term financial solvency.
- Irish HEIs provided 25% less physical space per student than international norms.

Conference believes that higher education has been systematically neglected since the early 2000s despite much political rhetoric about the knowledge based economy and that the quality of higher education is being seriously compromised by underfunding. Moreover, valuable resources have been wasted on state sponsored reviews and consultancy reports on various elements of the activity of universities and colleges of education since the Hunt report in 2011, while the core functions of teaching and research have been inadequately resourced.

Conference calls upon the Government:

- prioritise public investment in higher education and implement option one of the Cassells report involving a long-term commitment to public funding
- explore new funding mechanisms such as the ringfencing of a proportion of the tax take from corporation tax for investment in higher education at all levels, as advocated by both employers and trade unions.

Proposer: Trinity Branch

4 Equal Pay for Teachers

That this ADC calls on IFUT to support the “Equal pay for equal work” campaign currently being conducted by members of the teaching profession.

Proposer: UCD Branch

5 Metricisation of the HE Sector

That this ADC calls on IFUT to fight the metricisation of the HE Sector in Ireland and to lobby to ensure that the practice of measuring academic performance through simple metrics/performance indicators is not allowed to become embedded in the management practices of Irish universities.

Proposer: UCD Branch

6 Age discrimination

In light of the WRC finding (DEC-E2018-009) of age discrimination against Dr. Anne Cleary, a member of IFUT UCD branch, this ADC congratulates IFUT Officers and Executive for effectively highlighting the issue of age discrimination in UCD with regard to promotion and calls on IFUT to continue to make strenuous efforts to ensure that UCD’s promotion system is operated without discrimination on age or gender grounds.

Proposer: UCD Branch

7 Poor documentation by Irish Universities criticised by WRC

The Equality/Adjudicating Officer of the WRC [DEC-E2018-009] strongly criticised UCD for its failure to furnish notes and grading schemes from the UCAAPT decision-making process on promotions. Similar criticisms have been made in recent years regarding the lack of documentation to clarify how promotion decisions were made in St. Pat's/DCU and other Irish HEI. This ADC calls on IFUT Executive and Council to take whatever steps are necessary to lobby for increased transparency and accountability in promotions processes in Irish universities.

Proposer: UCD Branch

8 Inequalities in expenditure in legal disputes in Irish universities

Irish universities have been criticised in a ruling regarding UL in 2017 for extremely high expenditure on legal fees in disputing cases taken by employees with limited means, without due recognition for the inequality that results. This ADC calls on IFUT to use whatever means are at its disposal, such as FoI, to shed greater light on the extent of the expenditure of Irish universities in recent years in contesting cases brought by members of staff.

Proposer: UCD Branch

9 Repeal of 8th Amendment

That Conference affiliates itself with the "Together for Yes" Campaign and the Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment, while recognising that it is a matter for individual IFUT members as a matter of conscience to vote in the upcoming referendum as they see fit.

Most of IFUT's female members are in their childbearing years. Without access to reproductive autonomy, women are denied full workplace equality. With a crisis pregnancy, time is crucial. For our female members, taking leave at short notice may be difficult and raise awkward questions. The extra time needed for travel abroad for an abortion adds to these difficulties. Anything that impedes full workplace equality does not safeguard and advance the terms and conditions of employment of our members. Recognising that this is a potentially divisive issue about which individual members may hold strong personal beliefs, it is also important to acknowledge that it is a matter for individual IFUT members as a matter of conscience to vote in the upcoming referendum as they see fit.

Proposer: Heather Laird, UCC

Secunder: Orla Murphy, UCC

10 Strike on Pensions in Queens University Belfast and other UK Universities

That this ADC calls on IFUT to take action in support of strikes called by the University and College Union (UCU) in Northern Ireland and Great Britain, aimed at protesting proposed changes in their pension system from defined benefits to defined contributions schemes. These changes have a direct impact on wellbeing of many of our colleagues in GB and in the North of this island. If passed, these would set a dangerous and worrying precedent for universities in the Republic of Ireland. Given that many colleagues educated in the Republic also work in the UK higher education, in GB and NI, IFUT members must show solidarity with our UK colleagues, in defence of their, and possibly our pensions. This motion proposes that an open letter of support for their action and against pension changes be sent to UCU presidents in both Northern Ireland universities for distribution to their members. Our colleagues in Northern Ireland universities Queens University, Belfast (QUB) and the Ulster University (UU) have seen a number of unkind steps from their management over the past years, and showing solidarity with their situation would support many of the demoralised colleagues in the sector there. This letter should be published in the principal newspapers of the province, and in the Republic, in order to draw attention to the strike action and to explain why the proposed changes in pensions should not be countenanced under any circumstances in either jurisdiction. Further to this, we should encourage private messages of support to be sent to the union leaders in the province, offering assistance, including financial if necessary, in their struggle to maintain their defined benefits pension scheme.

Proposer: MU Branch

11 Precarious Nature of Researcher Careers

That this ADC notes the precarious nature of research careers in Ireland, in particular the use of the pretence that Post-Doctoral Researchers are treated as students to avoid employment law. Conference calls on IFUT to campaign to secure employment rights and a real career framework for Researchers in Ireland.

Proposer: NUIG Branch

12 Researchers

That IFUT produce a statement condemning those Irish Universities that designate postdoctoral researchers as trainees, which de-professionalises their role and is being used to circumvent employment rights like CIDs.

Proposer: Mark Jessop, UCC

Seconded: Gordon Dalton and Rosarii Griffin, UCC

13 Researchers/Changes to Designation

That IFUT to lobby HEA, University Presidents, and funding bodies for changes to this designation.

Proposer: Mark Jessop, UCC

Seconded: Gordon Dalton and Rosarii Griffin, UCC

14 Creation of Irish Researcher Career Framework

That IFUT should lobby for the urgent commencement of the process of creating a Irish Researcher Career Framework . The creation of the framework should have all stakeholders participation: Universities, IUA HEA, IFUT, Researchers.

Proposer: Mark Jessop, UCC

Seconded: Gordon Dalton and Rosarii Griffin, UCC

15 Researchers

Conference notes that postdoctoral researchers continue to be employed on short, fixed-term contracts which, by their very nature, result in precarious working conditions with the added liabilities of insecurity in both professional and personal life. Employment contracts of this nature can continue for over 10 years. These highly qualified public sector employees are continuously burdened with inferior rights and conditions compared to other public sector employees. Their exclusion from consideration in the Cush Report is an additional erosion of rights and indicates a lack of Government empathy with their undesirable situation. This negative employment policy implemented by all HEIs is driven by ongoing Government policy. The Department of Education and the Government need to address these many issues.

Conference further notes that a different employment model successfully works in the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts and in many of the top tier research institutes globally. Professional Staff Scientists have a career track and the skill-set & time to develop complex research programs. Since 2011 staff scientists led 36% of all federal grants awarded to the Broad Institute.

Conference calls upon the Government to develop a feasible strategy for postdoctoral research careers which will serve to encourage talented researchers to remain in their career of choice. Currently, many researchers ultimately change career to work in a non-research environment or emigrate which squanders the funding required to train the researchers and deprives Ireland of the expertise which they had developed.

Conference further notes with concern the recently proposed SFI Centres for Research Training (CRT). As the Government has not undertaken any longitudinal studies of researchers' career trajectories post-PhD, we are very concerned that this drive to generate more PhD qualified researchers will exacerbate the current precarious employment conditions.

Conference calls for a well-considered and attractive career structure for current and future researchers post-PhD. If the Government really wants to create an Innovation Economy they need to consider the researchers working on the breakthroughs of the future – the postdoctoral employees.

Proposer: Trinity Branch

16 Teaching Fellows

Conference notes the increasing number of term-time academic staff employed as Teaching Fellows with contracts of indefinite duration on a part-time or full-time basis.

Conference calls for further investigation and gathering of data by IFUT in relation to the three-month lay-off period of the summer time during which these employees may still be asked to perform administrative and academic tasks (such as student duties and/or research and planning in preparation for the new academic year), without receiving any formal compensation.

Proposer: Trinity Branch

17 Temporary/Rolling Contracts

That the University Sector stop with immediate effect the practice of hiring staff on temporary (yet rolling) contracts and that every attempt should be made to make staff secure in their posts at University through CIDs or permanency.

Proposer: Mark Jessop, UCC

Secunder: Gordon Dalton and Rosarii Griffin, UCC

18 Appointments to University/College Committees

That this ADC calls on IFUT to engage with universities to determine how internal appointments to University/College committees (both for ordinary membership and in particular for the roles of Chair or other officer positions) are made. This action aims to measure how open and transparent such processes are and provide a forum for encouraging universities to ensure that all such appointments are made in an equitable fashion.

Proposer: UCD Branch

19 One Movement and Housing Campaign

That this ADC notes the growing success of the One Movement, in Cork and Galway, and calls on IFUT to support its campaigns on the Housing Crisis and Precarity of employment, both of which are of concern to IFUT members.

Proposer: NUIG Branch

20 Housing Situation in Ireland

The housing situation in Ireland poses a national problem which the government has yet failed to address with the vigour and resources that are needed. The impact of this on staff (many of whom are on temporary contracts) and students is seriously detrimental to their studies and their working lives. The response of third-level colleges and the state has been to allow the expansion of private sector, privately funded investor-led provision of student accommodation which has seen properties bought up, developed and renovated and then rented out at exorbitant rates. The recent increase of 27% at DCU's privately controlled accommodation is a disgrace: not only is the accommodation expensive, but the provision of student housing for those able (though often with great difficulty) to afford it makes for further problems in the housing sector and society more widely.

We call upon IFUT to work together with Student Unions, City Councils and Third-Level Institutions to formulate an imaginative response to this egregious issue.

Proposer: Margaret Robson, DCU

Seconder: Rhona Clarke, DCU