

ifut '99

Annual Conference, Dublin, 19 June 1999
(Main extracts of proceedings.)

[Annual Report 1998/99](#)

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IRISH FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

11 Merrion Square, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Telephone: (Internat.) (353) (Ø1) 661.0910 [also ans. mach.] 661.0909 [also fax]

E-mail: ifut@tinet.ie

Internet: www.ifut.ie

General Secretary: *Daltún Ó Ceallaigh*. Office Secretary: *Phyllis Russell*.

Office Hours: 09.45 - 13.00 & 13.30 - 17.00

CÓNAIDHM ÉIREANNACH NA MÚINTEOIRÍ OLLSCOILE

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I. EDUCATION & RESEARCH

1. Follow-through to Universities Act 1997

A Private Bill is still proceeding slowly through the Oireachtas in respect of Trinity College Dublin and it is not clear at the moment when it will be completed. The following exchange of correspondence sums up the interactions between IFUT and TCD in the matter.

IFUT to TCD 26/2/99: "The Council of the Irish Federation of University Teachers would request that on page 7 of the above [the Bill], at section 4, line 29, the word "chosen" should be changed to 'elected' [re. the Provost] which can be a consistent translation of "eligitur" in the preceding part of the Bill.

"We would be grateful if you would advise us of your position in this matter."

IFUT to TCD 26/4/99: "We have just received from our TCD Branch the following requests for changes:

'1. The selection of the Provost of Trinity College is referred to on a number of occasions, viz. the Preamble (line 32) and Section 4 (line 29 in the English translation; cf. line 25 in the Latin). The word 'elect' rather than 'select' must be used in these cases to eliminate any ambiguity which may arise now or at a later date.

'2. Section 2 widens the Body Corporate to include members of the Board of the College. We call on this section to be amended so as to widen the Body Corporate to include all those members of College who are eligible to vote in elections for the Provost. This would include various non-academic staff members and student representatives, albeit in a small proportion relative to academic staff'.

"You will note that point (1) buttresses the position which we have already put to you."

TCD to IFUT 10/5/99: "The two points you raise in the most recent letter, of 26/4/99 were the subject of some consideration when the Bill was drafted.

"One the issue of appointment to Provostship, the word select was deliberately used, on the grounds that College may in its wisdom at some time in the future wish to explore alternative means of provostial appointment to that of election: selection does not rule out election whereas election may rule out any other form of selection.

"The issue of the electorate in Provost elections is very import: I believe that, since the Provost is Head of the whole College community and not just its academic element, there should, indeed be a proportion of the vote from the non-academic community. However, this, I think does not need to be reflected in the legislation - it requires a change to our Statutes.

"You will be aware that, for example, student observers at Board have a vote in the election for Provost under our present arrangements even though they are not members of the Body Corporate, so membership of the Body Corporate is not, I believe, a prerequisite to being one of the electorate."

IFUT to TCD 3/6/99: "We have consulted the TCD Branch of IFUT about your last communication in this matter and the response is as in the attachment to this communication.

"We should be grateful if you would give us your reaction to same as soon as possible."
[Attachment as follows.]

'IFUT sees no justification whatever for the use of the word 'select' rather than 'elect' in reference to the manner in which the Provost is chosen. The view offered that 'College may in its wisdom at some time in the future wish to explore alternative means of provostial appointment' cannot be supported within any democratic conception of the operation of the university. Mr Gleeson's reply quite rightly states that 'election may rule out any other form of selection' - and IFUT is strongly of the view that any other form of selection should be definitively ruled out by legislation. IFUT reiterates its call to substitute the word 'elect' rather than 'select' in the legislation.

'There may be a misunderstanding in the reply concerning the relationship between the electorate in Provost elections and the constitution of the Body Corporate. IFUT was not requesting that membership in the Body Corporate be a prerequisite for voting in elections for the Provost. On the contrary, IFUT reiterates its position that the Body Corporate should be defined in the Private Bill in terms similar to the electorate of the Provost elections, viz. *'all full-time members of the academic staff who hold the position of Fellow, Professor, Associate Professor or Senior Lecturer, together with such Lecturers who have held continuously a full-time academic post in the College for at least one year, together with such other persons as are members of the Board or Council or who are in regular attendance at meetings of the Board and Council as elected representatives, provided that no person shall be included in the Body Corporate who has been appointed to an academic post for a stated period of less than five years.'*

During the year, the Universities Act was discussed under various headings and it was decided to be alert about any developments or proposed developments in regard to casualisation, quality assurance, contracts, and promotions.

Moreover, there was concern about any new University Statutes in general and the issue of tenure in particular. In order to facilitate engagement with these matters, it was decided to write to the Branches asking them to press their Administrations to produce a Consolidated set of existing University Statutes.

Towards the end of the session, the first set of Draft Statutes pursuant to the Universities Act was received from NUI, Maynooth. These have been the subject of deliberation at Council and Executive and a consultation with the union solicitor. The Branch has been urged to make representations in regard to the drafting concerning tenure especially, which is not considered satisfactory as it stands. This point will be kept under close review as it has implications throughout the university spectrum.

IFUT is still awaiting drafts of contracts following on the legislation, upon receipt of which it will convene the intended Working Group to deal with them.

Likewise, if there are any significant developments in regard to quality assurance pursuant to the Act, the intended Working Group there will be convened as well.

Developments in regard to Academic Councils were kept under review as well during the session.

During the year, IFUT inquired of the Minister for Education and Science as to his position on the appointment of Visitors pursuant to the Universities Act. At the end of October 1998, he replied that: "No Visitor has been appointed under the Universities Act, 1997 since its commencement the Government has no plans to do so at present."

In a related area and taking account of the foregoing, Council decided to set up a Working Group to consider the possibility of an Ombudsman for the Universities. This has been operating under the Convenorship of Paddy O'Flynn of UCD and the other participants have been Joe Brady of the same College and Colum Ó Cléirigh of St Patrick's, Drumcondra. A report of the Working Group is expected in the near future and Council will deliberate on same accordingly. The issue of an Ombudsman was raised with the Minister at the meeting with him on 2/6/99 and he referred to the fact that the general legislation concerning the Ombudsman was under review and IFUT representations should be made to him before that was complete. The Union has since been informed that it will have until the Autumn in order to respond accordingly.

2. UNESCO & Higher Education

IFUT has been pressing the Government to state what actions and policies it will be pursuing following on the adoption by UNESCO of a Recommendation on Higher Education Teaching Personnel. This matter was raised directly with the Minister for Education and Science at a meeting with him on 2 June 1999 and is being followed through in the light of the UNESCO General Conference due 26 October 1999 and before which reports are expected from the Governments of Member States concerning the Recommendation.

The President and General Secretary attended the UNESCO World Congress on Higher Education from 5 to 9 October 1998. Subsequent to this, a draft was finalised of a *World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century: Vision & Action*, and this is being reproduced in the Summer 1999 edition of *IFUT News*.

3. National Council for Curriculum & Assessment

The PRIMARY COURSE COMMITTEES in which IFUT were involved, completed their work during the year. The following persons represented IFUT on them.

PRIMARY COURSE COMMITTEES:

Arts Education - Colum Ó Cléirigh, SPD ^[1] & Noel Kelly, MICL.

English - Frank Flanagan, MICL & Pat Burke, SPD.

Irish - Pat Wall, TCD.

Mathematics - Wyn Bryan, MICL & Olivia Bree, SPD

Physical Education - Des Broderick, SPD.

Social, Personal, and Health Education - Des Broderick, SPD.

Social, Environmental & Scientific Studies -

Siobhán Hurley, MICL & Jim Hourihane, SPD.

The *STEERING COMMITTEE FOR INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES* on which IFUT is represented by Maureen Killeavy, Education, UCD, is dormant at present.

However, IFUT involvement in the following NCCA committees continued through the year as follows:

COUNCIL:

Eugene Wall, MICL.

PRIMARY CURRICULUM CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE:

Eugene Wall, MICL

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Brendan Spelman, UCD.

A number of items of documentation were received from the NCCA during the year. In relation to the *Draft Syllabus for Leaving Certificate History*, IFUT requested Susan Parkes of the Education Department in TCD to draft a submission. This she kindly consented to do and Council considered and endorsed it and then forwarded it to the NCCA. The submission was reproduced in the Winter 1998/99 edition of *IFUT News*.

4. Teachers' Council

Pursuant to the Technical Working Group in connection with the project to set up a Teachers' Council, on which Maureen Killeavy was represented, arrangements were put in train during the year to set up the actual Council itself. IFUT has sought representation on this as well, but so far without success. The matter was raised with the Minister at the meeting on 2/6/99 and will be looked at further. The issue is how far there is representation as such from organisations like IFUT as distinct from IFUT members being involved otherwise.

5. Education Review Bodies

Two of these were established during the year, namely the Primary and Secondary Teacher Level Review Bodies. IFUT requested representation on these and was initially refused. However, after it

was indicated to the Minister that, should this attitude persist, IFUT would advise its members not to co-operate with the Bodies, membership was conceded. Eugene Wall of MICL is the IFUT representative on the Primary Body and Maureen Killeavy serves on the Secondary Body.

6. ETUCE Seminar on Research in Europe

Seán Tobin of NUI,G represented IFUT at a further convention of this from 10 to 12 February 1999. The agenda was as follows: Research and the 5th Framework Programme; The Importance of Research and Innovation for Employment in Europe; The ETUCE Research Policy; Evaluation of the Situation by a Representative of the European Rector's Conference

7. Teacher Education

Maureen Killeavy participated in a conference on *The Evaluation of Teacher Education* under the auspices of Comité National d'Evaluation des Etablissements Publics à Caractère Scientifique, Culturel et Professionnel (CNE) from 4 to 5 September 1998. The agenda was as follows: Teacher Education in Europe: A Synthetic Presentation; Evaluating Practical Training; Information Technology in Teacher Education; External Requirements/internal Goals and Expectations; Pre-service, Induction and In-Service Teacher Education; The Scientific Basis of Teacher Education and its Evaluation; The Specificity of Teacher Education and its Evaluation.

8. Quality in Education

Pat Burke of St Patrick's College, Drumcondra represented IFUT at an ETUCE Conference on *The Evaluation of Quality in Education* from 5 to 6 November 1998. The agenda was as follows: The Pilot Project 'Evaluation of Quality in Education'; Experience of the Pilot Project; Evaluation of the Pilot Project.

9. NPADC

A National Policy Advisory Development Committee was set up during the year by the Minister for Education and Science concerning Information Technology in Education. IFUT was requested to make a nomination to this and as a result Maureen Killeavy is now serving on this committee. As part of this, she has been co-ordinating a submission, along with assistance from a number of other people in IFUT, on information technology in schools. The people on the IFUT Working Group concerned are: Donal Fitzsimons and Conor Galvin, Education, UCD; Hugh Gibbons, Computer Science, Elizabeth Oldham and Anne Fitzgibbon, Education, TCD; Aidan Mulkeen, Education, NUI,M; Mary Magee and Mary Anne O'Carroll, Home Economics, St Catherine's.

10. Adult Education

In connection with the Green Paper on Adult Education, IFUT set up a Working Group during the year which is to produce a submission in this connection. It is composed of Brenna Clarke, English, and Cora Cregan, Careers, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra; Kevin Hurley, Adult Education, UCD; Sylvia O'Sullivan, Physical Education, MICL; Anne Clune (retired), English, TCD; and Máirtín Ó Fathaigh, Adult Education, UCC who is also Convenor.

11. Equality and Gender

The Higher Education Equality Unit held a conference on Equality in Higher Education on 16 and 17 November 1998 on the theme *Equality in Higher Education - Challenges and Opportunities* and this was attended by Joan Byrne of the HRB.

An ICTU seminar on *Economic and Monetary Union - A Gender Perspective* on 26 June 1998 was attended by Gillian Wylie of the Irish School of Ecumenics.

12. Partnership in Education

In the context of P2000, a number of events have been held under the heading of the new Partnership concept. On 18 June 1998 Maureen Killeavy of UCD and Anne Fitzgibbon of TCD attended an Education and Training Partnership Forum under the auspices of the HEA and Forfás.

On 16 October 1998, the General Secretary attended a meeting with the Department of Education

on the theme *ICTU - P2000 and Education Initiatives Meeting*.

Local initiatives, centrally recorded, were participated in as follows: under the auspices of the HEA and the theme *Partnership 2000 - Seminar and Consultation on Partnership Structures*: on 21 January 1999 Diarmuid Ó hAirt, RIA; and John Dunnion, UCD

13. Unit Costing in Universities

The following memorandum, prepared by Seán Tobin of NUI,G, was presented to the Minister for Education at the meeting with him on 2 June 1999.

"The introduction of unit costing nine years ago was heralded by the HEA Chairman of the day as a method of getting better funding for universities; it is now apparent that the original objection of IFUT, namely that it could in fact be used as a lever to reduce funds, was well grounded. In fact the system was introduced and has been developed as a 'costing' model, focussing on the comparability of cost inputs. The idea of such a model is to identify areas where efficiencies may be achieved, not to force costs towards 'the average'; it should recognise significant structural differences in cost base and allow for these in cost reduction exercises. An equitable *funding* model would not rely on 'average costs' only, but would allow for factors such as:

- Fixed as well as variable costs,
- Legitimate differences in cost base (e.g. age and service differences),
- Income generated from private sources.

"The present unit cost system makes allowances for these factors, and as a funding model it introduces huge inequities within the system.

"It seems that there is at present no proper model to which reference can be made; the present mode of calculating unit costs is in many respects ad hoc and is being changed from one year to the next. It is desirable that adjustments be made in the light of experience, but in the meantime the existing model should not be applied inflexibly as a funding system.

"The universities involved are quite diverse in size, as in many other respects, and the methods used to establish an 'average' over such a small sample (seven institutions) gives rise to substantial swings from one year to another. For instance, NUI,G was 'fined' £250,000 because it showed an 'excess' cost in 1995/96 of £1.6 million above 'average', and subsequently fined £500,000 when that excess jumped to £3.2 million in 1996/97 outturn. Galway had been £244,000 below 'average' in 1994/95, yet there had been no significant changes in policies or accounting procedures in NUI,G during the period 1994-1997.

"This points to an inherent instability in the model, and indeed the Comptroller and Auditor General in his Education Sector report of 1997 remarked that *'The HEA and the universities consider that additional work may need to be done to fully validate the unit costing mechanisms'*. He added that analysis may be required to isolate and understand the effect of the following factors on the outturns reported:

- the relative sizes of the institutions and the small pool of universities;
- the sensitivity of the model to short-term changes in student numbers;
- the age of the institutions;
- the differences in reported contact hours for academic staff across the subject groupings and universities.

"His report concludes by remarking *'... the model will provide a basis for informing judgements on the relative cost of university courses.'*

"Note the use of the word *inform*, not *form*. It is our contention that the present model is being used by the HEA without adequate allowance for its serious flaws."

14. USI and Student Finance

Pursuant to a letter from USI of 5 May 1999, it was decided to express approval of the establishment of a Student Financial Support Expert Group. Although, so far this has not actually involved any action by IFUT.

The terms of reference are:

"1. The Expert Group will carry out a review of the present system of student financial support in post-secondary education and make recommendations to the Minister for Education and Science within six months. The Group will have particular regard to:

"(a) Current and optimum levels of support:

- "(b) Alternative means of providing support;
- "(c) Proportion of students receiving support;
- "(d) Categories of students receiving support;
- "(e) Initiatives to address problems in relation to disadvantaged students;
- "(f) International comparisons.

"2. The Group will draw up an implementation strategy for all recommendations which will include details of the cost, timing and other practical considerations.

"3. The Group will consult widely in its review of the present system."

15. General

The following information of interest was received during the year: from the International Education Board of Ireland, a report entitled *International Students in Irish Higher Education - A Report on the International Context, Scope and Economic Impact*; from the Education Information Network of the European Union, a report concerning *Measures taken by the Member States of the EU to Assist Young People who have left the Education System without Qualifications*; from the OECD, a *Study on Student Performance*.

II. REMUNERATION

1. General Wage Rounds

Under Partnership 2000 (P2000), a general increase occurred during the year of 2.25% w.e.f. 1 July 1998. Remaining general increases under P2000 will be due at the rate of 1.5% on 1/7/99 and 1% on 1/4/00.

2. Special 1% & Exam Payments

With regard to the 1% special increase w.e.f. 1 April 1994 and exam payments, this was cleared up during the year in the case of UCC. However, difficulty was still being experienced in getting clarity from NUI,G and the LRC is involved in trying to sort this out. It is hoped that this can finally be put to bed before the Summer recess.

3. P2000 & Exam Payments

This refers to the application of 2.5% to exam payments w.e.f. 1 July 1997. This was sorted out during the year in the case of NUI,G and TCD, but clarification is still to be received from UCC. Again, it is hoped that the matter can be tidied up before the Summer recess and the LRC is assisting to this end.

4. EO/HEO Relativity & Exam Payments

A claim has been put in for the adjustment of exam payments arising from the five percentage adjustments following on the EO/HEO relativity between 1/6/95 and 1/1/99, which are dealt with in the next section. This is being processed at the moment and should be brought to fruition in the coming session.

5. EO/HEO and AP/PO Relativities

These finally reached a conclusion during the year and subsequent to a ballot of IFUT members. In regard to the general range of UCD Assistant Lecturer to Associate Professor and equivalent, this meant increases as follows: 1/6/95 - 0.75%, 1/6/96 - 0.75%, 1/6/97 - 0.5%, 1/1/98 - 1%, and 1/1/99 - 1.5%. In the course of negotiations, IFUT secured improved dates for the latter two phases shifting the month back from June to January in the years concerned. The ballot of the members regarding the five-phase flat-rate increase, as opposed to an LSI approach, was overwhelmingly in favour of the former whichever way it was computed. Salary figures reflecting the position as of 1/1/99, both here and elsewhere were given in the last edition of *IFUT News*. In settling the EO/HEO relativity in particular in the case of NUI,G, an additional increment was secured on the scale of Junior Lecturer on the basis of freezing examination payments for a year.

During the year, there was considerable discussion at the Public Services Committee of ICTU about

what came to be called 'earlier settlers'. This refers to the settlements reached by the Civil Service grades to which IFUT members are related in the EO/HEO and AP/PO areas whereby the budgetary increases for salaries did not exceed 5.5%, whereas settlements in the case of the Gardaí, Prison Officers etc., went up to and above 8.5%. Talks are currently taking place between the Civil Service unions concerned and the Government about a compensatory payment in this regard and members will be kept informed about this and any follow-through in the year ahead.

In a number of institutions, complaints had to be made to administrations about paying out the five-phase increase and the time that it was taking to do this in the case of a number of grades. Pleas were made that the operation was a somewhat complex one, although the union found it difficult to comprehend how it was all that challenging in such a computerised age.

6. A S Relativity

Regarding the grade of Professor (and in the case of NUI,G Associate Professor), the Assistant Secretary (A S Relativity) was brought to fruition during the year with an increase of 6% w.e.f. 1 April 1997.

7. P2000 2% Special

The P2000 Agreement allows for a 2% increase in salary w.e.f. 1 July 1999, i.e. on top of the general 1.5% increase on the same date. This is to be associated with a Partnership Agreement in each institution concerned. IFUT has claimed this amount and is awaiting proposals from the various institutions in which it organises about the agreements in question. Information has been received that the monies have been allocated for the payments and all that is required is to settle the text of the agreements. This should take place in the next few months.

8. UCC College Lecturer Max

In November 1998, the General Secretary reported that proposals had been made to eliminate the anomaly between the UCC College Lecturer Max and that obtaining at a rate of approximately £1,200 higher elsewhere in the 'NUI' spectrum. But this had been linked to a commitment to introduce lump sum examination payments, which was unacceptable. There was also a linkage to the harmonisation of scales for College Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor within the same spectrum which would make them slightly less advantageous than at present, although this could only obtain in relation to new recruits. Eventually, the College backed off about a commitment in lump sum examination payments and settled for a commitment from the union only to discuss the possibility of same.

There had been the further point about the retrospection date of 1/7/98, although there were budgetary restrictions within the framework of the PCW which the College said prevented it from offering a earlier date. The matter was finally settled on the basis of the harmonisation mentioned, providing that the College could subsequently demonstrate from its books that a date of no earlier than 1/7/98 was feasible. Documentation was later received which purported to fulfil this condition and was supplied to the Branch accordingly. The campaign of non-co-operation in various respects, which was undertaken by the members vis-à-vis the College, was instrumental in achieving the ultimate resolution of this longstanding issue.

9. New Academic Scales in TCD

Another success during the session, was the rescission of the Lecturer I/II structure of scales in TCD which had been unilaterally introduced and affected a small number of people. This was as a result of a threat of LRC action. The varied scales for Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor were also withdrawn, although they had not come actually to affect anybody.

10. Vets in UCD

The issues reported on last year were taken further during the year and, finally, a Conciliation Conference was necessary at the LRC on 7 May 1999. This was adjourned until 16 July 1999 in order to allow for further work involving the College and the members to take place locally with the assistance of Head Office. It is hoped, however, with or without the further intervention of the LRC/Labour Court, the question of clinical commitments in and out of working hours and how they should be both compensated for and accommodated will be brought to a conclusion in the months

should be both compensated for and accommodated will be brought to a conclusion in the months ahead. Details will then be published in *IFUT News*.

11. SEO Members in TCD

In the case of Senior Experimental Officers in TCD and the possibility of regrading, there were further interactions with the College during the session and then a Conciliation Conference at the LRC. The matter has been referred to a Hearing of the Labour Court which should take place in the next few months. Again, details arising from such proceedings will be published in *IFUT News*.

12. Chief Technician I in TCD

In the context of negotiations about the MLS Relativity (see following section), it was agreed that the bar on the Chief Technician I scale should be transformed into one of purely individual merit and not be constrained by size of Department etc.

Following a Conciliation Conference at the LRC, the same grade also had its leave increased from 21 to 24 days per annum, it had been seeking 29, in the context of comparisons within the College, and this figure will be addressed further in the light of a reassessment of the grade's position overall. Actions towards the latter end will be taken in the next few months.

13. MLS Relativity

This relativity (Medical Laboratory Scientists) covers both Senior Experimental Officers and Chief Technicians in TCD. It was conceded and implemented during the year within increases from 5.5% to 10.5% w.e.f. 1 April 1997.

14. Salaries in RIA

Appropriate remuneration for different grades and persons in the Royal Irish Academy continued to be the subject of examination during the session. However, as noted in last year's Annual Report, difficulties were being experienced in the absence of agreed procedures for processing business between the union and the management. As a result, time was taken during the year to demand and have put together a Negotiation Agreement which would establish an appropriate framework in order to advance the interests of the members. That has been successfully done and substantive issues are now being pursued accordingly.

15. Assistant Librarians in UCC

During the year, a new grade was finally introduced into the Administrative area and it had for sometime been the intention to take advantage of this for Assistant Librarians as well. Representations were made to that end, but the College was initially reluctant either to definitely concede the grade or a job evaluation mechanism whereby it or some alternative grade would be made available to the Library. The matter was therefore referred to the LRC and, eventually, the College conceded the Administrative II scale as demanded.

It also agreed that there should be an appropriate mechanism and appropriate criteria to determine the use of the grade in the Library area. The College is taking the position that the Job Evaluation Scheme for the Administrative area is sufficient for the Library as well and the union, in interaction with its members, is assessing how far that Scheme might be productively made use of or how far it ought to be amended or changed in the light of research which has already been carried out into a Job Evaluation Scheme for the Library by union members.

16. AMC Relativity

This refers to the relativity which our Dental Consultant members have with Academic Medical Consultants. Positive developments occurred during the year in the hospital and general university area and IFUT put in the necessary claims in order to follow them through for its members. A number of meetings have occurred and agreement has been reached in principle concerning the relativity being applied, but details remain to be cleared up in the coming month or so. The relativity entails four special increases between 1/4/94 and 1/1/98 ranging from just over 2.9% to around 6.3% from the first to the last dates. Yet again, full details will be given in due course in *IFUT News*.

17. LRC

At last year's conference, it had to be reported that, unusually, serious delays were being experienced with getting the LRC to handle various matters of salaries, conditions of employment, and personal cases. In fact, in several instances, numerous items of correspondence had not even been acknowledged. Representations were made at various levels and, eventually, it was regrettably felt necessary to state that an approach might have to be made to the entire Board of the LRC about the situation. As a consequence, an official of the LRC was appointed specially to deal with co-ordinating IFUT business and allocating it to various Industrial Relations Officers. At a meeting with him, an apology was issued for the situation and it was explained that there had been a "systems failure". In the past twelve months, therefore, a special effort has been made by the LRC to compensate for the earlier deficiencies and to have IFUT affairs adequately attended to. Indeed, the progress which was made on various during the year underlines the effectiveness of LRC intervention, or even just the threat of same, in getting institutions to act meaningfully on union business.

III. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

1. Health & Safety

Michael McKillen of TCD continued to represent IFUT on the ICTU Health & Safety Committee. He has reported as follows.

"I have attended most of the ICTU Health and Safety Advisory Group meetings.

"Most of the broad-sweep H & S issues eventually get raised at these meetings - legislation reviews, workings/failings of HSA^[2], impending directives from the EU Commission, accident statistics, etc. I have attended a few conferences and workshops ... No IFUT member has referred any problems to me during past year.

"On legislation front the HSA has an advert ... announcing a review of all our legislation (Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act, 1989 plus all SI's^[3]) and its effectiveness over past 10 years. Submissions are invited by 30/9/99.

"I have just been nominated by ICTU to sit on the Board of the new National Institute for Safety and Health. This body is supposed to oversee research effort into health and safety matters but it has not been promised any government or HSA funding so I do not see how it can be effective.

"On the Colleges' front it seems to me that we still lag behind the UK in the provision of proper safety management teams in the Safety Offices of our institutions. Management's response to appoint a single safety officer is entirely inadequate. Safety management needs a team of specialists to deliver an effective and credible service on the campuses. IFUT could lobby the HEA and locally to this end."

2. Ex-Carysfort members

As a result of the intervention of the Ombudsman, it was finally clarified during the year that persons who were absorbed into the UCD staff and promoted to a level above College Lecturer would also be absorbed into the UCD Pension Scheme and this has in fact been done in a number of instances.

This pension consideration has been used by the authorities in NUI,M as a reason for not opening up promotional possibilities to the staff in question on the grounds that it would be too costly for the College. The settlement of the issue just reported on in connection with UCD was quoted as a precedent for dealing with this feature in Maynooth. However, as the College Authorities still refuse to move on it, the matter was referred to the Labour Relations Commission. The College then asked that a Conciliation Conference be put on hold, because it said it was attempting to meaningfully address the issue along with the HEA and that meetings were due to take place in mid-June 1999. It is hoped that some information will have arisen from these in time for reporting to the 1999 ADC of IFUT.

The College has also been citing a clause from the terms of secondment about there being no deterioration in conditions of employment arising from redeployment in a quite inaccurate way so as to suggest that this also means that there is a block on promotion! However, if the pension issue is got out of the way, and the College were to try and make that the sole impediment to promotional opportunities, the union is confident is that it could secure a ruling against Maynooth. The position on promotions in a similar context in TCD is also being looked into.

As regards the Colleges of Education Pension Scheme of which most ex-Carysfort staff are still members there are still a number of points of concern to be cleared up. These were raised explicitly

members, there are still a number of points of concern to be cleared up. These were raised explicitly with the Minister for Education at a meeting on 2/6/99. In fact, the following memorandum, prepared by Joe Brady of UCD, was presented to him.

"The revised pension scheme was first produced in draft in 1984 with a revision in 1988. The final version has yet to be agreed though progress has been made in recent times.

"One of the main issues remaining relates to the Spouses' and Children's scheme and whether or not it accommodates the assignment of a survivor's pension to partners and not just legal spouses. Life in Ireland in the late 1990s is such that it requires recognition by pension schemes that marriage is but one form of long-term relationship."

During the year, the advancement of the various issues of interest to ex-Carysfort staff was assisted by the formation of a special Working Group with Séamus MacGabhann of NUI,M as Convenor and Joe Brady and Maureen Killeavy of UCD as participants.

3. Contract Workers

In regard to the denial of second fixed-term contracts to persons at TCD in order to avoid the effect of the Unfair Dismissals (Amendment) Act 1993, this was the subject of further correspondence with the College during the year. There was a lengthy meeting with the College on 21 April 1999 on the subject, but no resolution was found. However, as the union indicated that it intended to campaign vigorously at all levels, publicly, politically and otherwise, the College representatives under-took to take the matter back to the appropriate authorities with the IFUT demand that the policy in question be rescinded. There were meetings due to have taken place around the time of writing this report to determine the final College position and some advice may be received shortly in that regard. At the meeting with the Minister for Education on 2 June 1999 the situation was outlined to him and he expressed his incredulity that the College would behave in the manner described. Indeed, he made the point himself that it would not always make sense in terms of securing the best talent on the staff. He has subsequently been supplied with full details of the situation and has been requested to take whatever action is possible in regard to it. The matter was also pursued through the LRC and, a Conciliation Conference is due on 22/6/99 if the matter is not solved before then.

The following letter was sent to TCD on 11/6/99 and sums up the position.

"This is further to our meeting on 21 April 1999 concerning the above and to request from you a definitive statement as to your current position in the matter which, we understand from you, was to be considered at meetings in TCD which should have taken place by now.

"We also have to advise you that we advised the Minister for Education and Science of the position at a meeting with him on 2 June 1999 and he expressed his incredulity, among other things, that the College would be behaving in the manner described to him. He has been supplied with full details of the situation with a request that whatever steps can be taken in relation to the state of affairs will be.

"When we receive a response to this letter, we shall then be able to determine whether or not we have to engage in the necessary campaign to have the policy rescinded at all levels of TCD, in the Oireachtas and in the public arena."

On contract workers generally, it was decided during the session to establish a Working Group to look into the current situation. The Convenor of this is Anne Clune, formerly of TCD, and the other members are: Gillian Wylie, ISE; Eugene Wall, MICL; Pauric Dempsey, RIA; Máire Leane, UCC; and Liz Kiely, UCC.

4. IFUT & Equality

The IFUT representatives on the Executive of the National Women's Council are Maureen Killeavy, UCD and Anne Clune, formerly of TCD. The IFUT representatives on the National Women's Council Panels for the year were: *Health* - Cliona Buckley, RCSI; *Social Affairs* - Anne Clune, formally of TCD; Grace Neville, French, UCC; *Education* - Maureen Killeavy, UCD; and Noreen O'Carroll, MITP; *Work* - Jane Conroy, NUI,G.

Maureen Killeavy and Anne Clune represented IFUT at the National Women's Council of Ireland Annual General Meeting on 3 October 1998. They also represented IFUT at the National Women's Council of Ireland Conference - *Women Mapping the New Millennium* on 16 and 17 October 1998.

Vice President, Colum Ó Cléirigh, represented IFUT at the EIE Equal Opportunities Committee meeting on 22 and 23 October 1998. The agenda was as follows: Final Recommendations and Proposals on Ageism, Ageing of the Teaching Profession, Part-time Work and Parental Leave, European Women's Lobby, Casualisation of Employment, Implications of Casualisation in the

Education Sector, and Single Sex Schools.

Maureen Killeavy also represented IFUT on the new EIE Equal Opportunities Committee and attended a meeting of it on 17 and 18 May 1999. The agenda included the following: Casualisation of Employment, Learning Styles of Boys and Girls, Situation of Women in Kosovo and in Afghanistan, Revision of ILO Convention 103 and Recommendation 95 Position of EU and European Governments, 44th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women: The Optional Protocol to CEDAW Women and Health, The Girl Child - Preparation of EI input to Beijing plus 5, and World March for Women.

Joan Byrne, HRB, and Noreen O'Carroll, MITP, represented IFUT on the ICTU Women's Committee during 1998/99.

5. College Lecturer Concerns

Following on a resolution of last year's ADC, the Executive and Council gave this area some attention during the year. As a consequence, it was decided to establish a Working Group to look into the subject under the Convenorship of Donal Nunan, formerly of UCC, and the other members of this are John Meagher, Accounting, Finance & Information Systems, UCC; and Richard Powell, Microbiology, NUI,G. There are vacancies for members from UCD and NUI,M.

6. Permanency in St Catherine's

During the year, the union secured confirmation of permanency in respect of the three full-time persons concerned. The situation of a part-time person is still being pursued.

7. Semesterisation

Some focus to this was given during the year through the attendance at a USI Conference on the subject on 9 December 1998 by Seán Tobin of NUI,G. The agenda for the conference was as follows: What is Semesterisation?; Three Experiences of Semesterisation, Impact of Semesterisation on Students, Impact of Semesterisation on Staff, Models of Semesterisation, Impact on College Support Services, and The UK Experience.

It has been decided that there should be a special Afternoon Session of Council on the subject in the near future.

8. Freedom of Information Act

The extension of this Act to the universities was considered during the year by Council and consultations took place with the union solicitor. The following memorandum was drawn up for Council by Joe Brady of UCD.

"1. A Working Group was appointed by Council to investigate the issues involved in an extension of the Freedom of Information Act to the University Sector. As a first step in this process, I and the General Secretary sought a briefing from our solicitors on the Act. The discussion is summarised below.

"2. The Act is very clear in what it provides. Section 6(1) states 'Subject to the provisions of this Act every person has a right to and shall, on request, therefore, be offered access to any record held by public body' while 6(2) states 'It shall be the duty of a public body to give reasonable assistance to a person who is seeking a record'.

"This means that, *prima facie*, *all* records are public information. There *are* exclusions and circumstances in which records can be denied but the reasons for a denial must be argued and are subject to an appeals process. This process, could lead ultimately to a decision on access being made by the Information commissioner, a kind of ombudsman.

"3. For the authorities of the universities, the greatest impact would be that all of their records would be available for public scrutiny. One could not engage in random trawls and simply ask for all records, however. It is necessary to specific in requests.

"The university would have to supply these records, in a specified time frame, unless they could argue they fell into one or more of the categories where access could be denied. For example, Section 21(1) provides that a record could be denied if its release would have 'significant, adverse effect on the performance by the body of any of its functions relating to management'. But they could not simply refuse and end the matter there. Refusals are subject to appeals and the College would have to act

reasonably in their interpretation of the Act.

"It is not possible to specify what, if any, the areas where access might be denied since it would be for the universities to state a case for denial rather than for the individual to stage a case for their availability. Potentially, however, all records could be requested. This could include the deliberations of Governing Bodies and their committees, the deliberations of Faculties and their committees, even records kept by individual departments.

"4. It is important to remember, though, that the Act does not put any burden on organisations or individuals to keep records, rather it relates to the disclosure of records that *are* kept. This has important implications for staff.

"5. There might be particular benefits for staff of the universities in having this Act. All records, reports, evaluations, references including a personnel file would be available to individual staff members. Obviously, they could get access *only* to their own files. For example, promotional processes would have to be opened up. Moreover, there are no time-limits on the material that can be accessed where it is believed that something prejudicial is held about an individual. But it is important to reiterate that access is possible only to information that has been recorded.

"6. Students would also benefit under the Act and this would have implications for staff members. Students could reasonably ask for access to all marks, assessments, comments made about them. They could ask for the deliberations of examination boards and they could seek to know the bases for any decisions made about them. The requests would be subject to the exclusions mentioned above.

"Once again, it is important to remember that this Act places no additional obligation on staff members to keep records. However staff members could find themselves in an exposed position having been asked to provide the basis for a decision and finding themselves unable to do it because they cannot remember, or worse still, there are several versions held by different of an examination board. It is probably inevitable that record keeping would become more detailed and comprehensive if the Act was in place.

"7. The Solicitors offered an interesting gloss on these concerns. Our attention was drawn to the fact that there exists in law a concept of 'fair procedures' where a citizen is entitled to such fair procedures in dealings with agencies such as a university. Students might use this law in the future to challenge decisions made about them and this could require the keeping of detailed records to ensure that fair procedures had been followed. So, it is not just the Freedom of Information Act that might affect the keeping of records. This concept in law has apparently not yet been widely applied but we are all aware that Irish Society is becoming more litigious.

"8. I believe that it is inevitable that students will be given detailed access to the marks and assessments that we make about them and that, increasingly, we will have to justify, or at least explain, the bases of our judgements. This will happen because of Quality Assurance, Appeals Procedures and a general tendency towards openness. Therefore the Freedom of Information Act may do no more than speed up this process and impose no greater burdens than will inevitably come. The access which the Act will give to the workings of the universities and, particularly, to personal information, seems to me to be worth the additional burdens.

"9. As a final point, it is important to remember that the Act is complex; it runs to 63 pages and 48 sections. What has been offered above is no more than a superficial overview. The full import of the Act would not become clear until it was applied to the universities and people began to work it. This is certainly the experience of the Civil Service where its application has produced some interesting anomalies and applications. We cannot be clear on what will be available and what will be denied until we are in a position to ask for things."

As a result, Council confirmed that the extension of the Act should be sought to the universities. This position was put to the Minister at the meeting on 2/6/99 and, while he expressed some caution about the burdensome implications of such an action, he undertook to look into it further.

[For latest on this, click here.](#)

9. Consultancy Fees

As a result of representations from some members, the following letter was sent to the Minister for Education on 24 May 1999:

"The guidelines for rates concerning Consult-ants' fees, which were last set in 1994, discriminate heavily against academics.

"We understand that the rate for an academic is £150 for an 8-hour day, if he or she is willing to accept such a low return. That contrasts with £400 to £1,000 for a person "up to senior partner of firm". If the latter type of person is overseas, the rate can rise to £1,200.

"We would hold that, apart from the consideration of the appropriate levels of rates, there should be no distinction in principle between the first and second categories set out above. Moreover, we believe that the single domestic range then concerned should be reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure that it is realistic and in accord with market parameters.

"While we appreciate that the actual determination of rates would fall within the purview of the Department of Finance, we would urge you to take up a position on this matter in respect of academics and as outlined, and to press this position with the Minister for Finance."

10. Conditions in Drumcondra

In preparation for the meeting with the Minister for Education on 2 June 1999, and at the request of the Branch in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, the following letter was despatched to the Minister.

"(1) Of immediate urgency is the issue of the lack of physical resources and the critical need for recruitment. Student numbers have risen to 1,300.

"Submissions have been made to the HEA, which appears willing to meet these requests. Unfortunately, the Department of Education has blocked recruitment pending the publication of the findings of the Curriculum Review Body.

"The Branch requests that this block be lifted and that the necessary appointments be made immediately.

"(2) In addition, the Branch is concerned at the implications of the current practice of seconding teachers to the College without any apparent policy. The Branch welcomes the appointment of second-ed teachers on a rolling basis, but is utterly opposed to the practice of seconding teachers to fill positions that ought to be filled by permanent, suitably qualified academic staff."

11. Gender & Promotions

The delegation of IFUT to the Minister for Education on 2 June 1999 went into the above issue at some length and stressed the need to follow through the Universities Act in particular in this regard. The union will be seeking to monitor and advance the situation further in the coming session.

12. Other Conditions and Benefits

During the year, information was supplied to Branches about the Parental Leave Act and Employee Assistance Programmes being developed in some institutions in which IFUT organised. Various items of information and documentation on Academic Freedom were also received and scrutinised during the session.

A new financial service was arranged for members during the year with Equity Bank which provides the following facilities: Borrowings from £1,000 to £15,000 at a typical fixed APR of just 9.9% and for loans over £10,000 the typical APR is 9.4%. In addition to this there is a 2-month repayment holiday from the date of loan application and loan repayments may be spread over a period from 1-5 years to suit requirements. An Equity Care payment protection plan looks after repayments in the event of accident or sickness, disability or involuntary unemployment.

At its meeting on 22 May 1999, Council approved new schemes to be offered to members by the Hospital & Medical Care Association, viz. £10,000 Valuable Term Life Protection and Critical Illness Plan.

13. Academics Conditions of Employment in Europe

From 15 to 17 April 1999, the President and General Secretary attended a conference on the above subject. The President in fact presented a detailed paper on the situation in Ireland and the General Secretary was asked to supplement this in certain respects. There were also representatives at this event from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Britain.

14. Personal Cases

Twelve cases were finalised during the year in the areas of regrading, shared commitment, salaries,

alleged harassment, permanency and pension-ability, other pension arrangements, grade and scale placement, and contract.

Twenty-seven cases are ongoing in the areas of salary scale, upgrading, leave entitlement, termination of appointment, job description, technical services, reporting, pensions, promotion, early retirement proposals, relations with Head of Department, loss and damage of books and effects, alleged harassment, Head of Department appointment, and general responsibilities.

IV. GENERAL CONTACTS

1. General ICTU Committees

Listed below are the general Congress committees not reported on elsewhere and representatives on same.

Public Services Committee - Daltún Ó Ceallaigh, General Secretary.

Third World - Séamus Ó Síocháin, Anthropology, NUI,M, and Iain Atack of ISE.

On 21 November 1998, Séamus Ó Síocháin of NUI,M attended the related Solidarity Committee Conference '*Linking Irish Unions with Developing World Trade Unions*.'

2. Trades Councils Representatives

These were as follows for 1998/99:

Cork – Alf O'Brien, UCC.

Dublin - none.

Galway – William Carroll, NUI,G

Kildare - Mícheál MacGréil, NUI,M

Limerick - Seosamh MacÉinrí, MICL.

3. Inter-Union Committees

These exist formally in a number of colleges and institutions, but the regularity of meetings tends to vary. In other instances, there is a less formal set up with occasional liaison taking place among unions as need be.

4. Teacher Union & Other Congresses

IFUT was represented at these in 1999 as follows: Maureen Killeavy, UCD, at ASTI; Ciarán Sugrue, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, at INTO; Colum Ó Cléirigh, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, at TUI; Pat Burke, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, at Ulster Teachers' Union.

5. HERSC

The Higher Education Research Standing Committee (HERSC) of the Education International Europe (EIE) met on 29 and 30 September 1998 with Paddy O'Flynn, UCD, in attendance. The agenda included the following: Reports from EI Washington Congress; Recent Developments in the field of Higher Education and Research; UNESCO Conference on Higher Education; EI Second World Higher Education Conference 1999; Survey on Funding; Casualisation; Mobility and Mutual Recognition of Qualifications; Diversification of Higher Education; Data Base related to Pay and Working Conditions; Professional Development: Regional Seminars; Socrates; Leonardo; Tempus; Relations with University Rectors and Students' Organisations; Research: 5th Framework Programme; Quality in Higher Education - Input to Colloquium.

The General Secretary also attended a meeting of the Committee from 9 to 11 March 1999. The agenda included the following: Comparability/Mob-ility and European Qualifications; the Sorbonne Agreement; Pay and Conditions Database; EI World Conference on Higher Education; UNESCO Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel - European Regional Input; UNESCO - Global Conferences; WTO and the Challenges to Public Education; Research; EI (Europe) Strategy for Higher Education and Research 1999-2001; Quality - ETUCE Work; Professional Development - ETUCE Seminar; Casualisation; Research - ETUCE Seminar, and Other Work; Relations with Rectors and Students' Organisations

6. British & Irish Group of Teacher Unions

The General Secretary and President, attended a meeting of this Group (BIGTU) on 16 and 17 November 1998 and a further meeting on 10 and 11 May 1999 was attended by the General Secretary. The agendas included the following: Funding; Violence in Schools; Quality; Health Education; Preparation for EI (Europe) Conference and ETUCE General Assembly 1999; Development Co-operation Issues; Report of World Executive of EI; Review of EI Structures; European Regional Conference 1999; Elections; Action Programme; Tripartite Group; ETUCE General Assembly 1999; Kosovo Crisis; World Teacher's Day; MacPherson Report into the Murder of Stephen Lawrence; Future Arrangements for Group Secretariat.

Pursuant to the May 1999 meeting, the following letter was sent by BIGTU to the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and his British equivalent on 18 May 1999 and was endorsed by Council.

"I am writing as the Secretary of the British and Irish Group of Teacher Unions, representing all the major teachers' unions of Ireland and the United Kingdom. The Group's members are affiliated to the world-wide teachers' trade secretariat, Education International. As you probably are aware, Education International has been warning of the evolving crisis in Kosovo for a number of years. As teachers' organisations, we are all conscious that among the earliest steps taken by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in destroying the autonomy of the province of Kosovo in the early 1990's, were attacks on the education, language and culture of Kosovo Albanians. In the latest tragic escalation of the crisis, teachers and intellectuals have been particularly targeted for attacks by Serbian forces.

"Education International strongly supported the 1996 Education Agreement which at the time seemed an important foundation for an ongoing peaceful resolution of the relations between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. Through Educational International, the members of the Group have important links with UNESCO and International Labour Organisation, and we believe that the United Nations and its institutions must be involved in the achievement of a satisfactory, negotiated and lasting settlement.

"Education International is working closely with its Kosovo affiliate, the Union of Education, Science and Culture of Kosova (SBASHK), first to trace and give immediate material support and solidarity to its members, and then to rebuild the key role of teachers in holding communities together and combating trauma and alienation. Educational International is also working with its affiliates in Macedonia and Albania to assist them in providing for the refugees. Education International has developed a Five-point plan which is already being put into effect on the ground in Albania and Macedonia. Members of the Group have committed themselves to work through Education International, to assist in providing urgent, effective humanitarian aid to the displaced populations in the region, particularly directed towards young people and teachers. However, we also believe that a long term negotiated, and fair solution can only be based on the recognition of the cultural identity of the Kosovo Albanians, and that education has a key part to play in building this lasting peace. Albanian-language education is also vital in enabling the Kosovo Albanians in the immediate future to retain their identity and heritage, and to counter the traumas that the young people in particular have suffered.

"Therefore we believe that it is of enormous importance to ensure that all Kosovo Albanian young people, whether in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, in Ireland, the United Kingdom or other countries, or in Kosovo itself, have the opportunity and encouragement to continue their education. We would urge you to work with your colleagues in Government and in the relevant international community, that refugees have the same rights to education as citizens of the host countries, and we hope that the British and Irish Governments can make this a reality.

"We recognise that the current crisis has deep roots, and identifying and building solution will also require a long commitment. Education is fundamental to rebuilding shattered communities and re-establishing hope for the future. We would urge you to give education a high priority in the process of reconstruction. For our part, we are willing to work in partnership with our national Governments, and with our wider trade union structures including particularly Educational International, to build a lasting future for the peoples of the region."

7. IFUT-AUT Co-operation

An IFUT-AUT Cross Border Conference took place in Dublin on 19 and 20 June 1998. The agenda was as follows: Universities Legislation: Experiences and Prospects, North and South; Impact of Legislation on Higher Education; Overview of Legislation and Possible Ways Ahead for IFUT and AUT; A Trade Union View of Legislation and UNESCO Recommendation of Higher Education Teaching Personnel.

The following letter of support was sent on 24 May 1999 to the AUT in relation to its one-day strike as the start of a campaign of industrial action to secure an acceptable pay rise from their employers:

"This is to express the full support and solidarity of IFUT in the action being taken on Tuesday 25 May 1999 in connection with your campaign for an acceptable pay rise."

8. Education International

The Education International World Congress took place from 25 to 29 July 1998 and was attended by the General Secretary and the President. The agenda was as follows: Election of Congress Committees; Progress Report; Elections of the Executive Board; Amendments to the Constitution; Education: Building the 21st Century (Round Table Discussions); Financial Reports; Resolutions; and Membership.

At this conference, it was decided to wind up the EI's Sectoral Committees including that on Higher Education and to provide for more task-orientated groups for future activities. It will be recalled that, while the HE Sectoral Committee was in existence, IFUT was privileged to be represented upon this global body by former President, Eugene Wall of MICL.

A joint statement issued by the General Secretaries of the four Irish Teacher Unions was issued to mark World Teachers' Day on 5 October 1998 a copy of which was reproduced in the last edition of *IFUT News*.

Pursuant to a request from EI, IFUT sent the following letter to the Minister for Education and Science on 10 June 1999.

"We have been contacted by the Education International, to which we are affiliated, with a request that we should make representations to the Government in connection with Kosovan Refugees in neighbouring countries.

"The Education International has taken up the position that Governments should seek to give whatever assistance is possible to such refugees and we would be particularly conscious of the educational aspects. Therefore, anything which the Irish Government could do in this situation would be much valued."

9. ICUTO

During the year, more unions in the university sector joined the Education International whereby there is now only one participant in the International Conference of University Teachers Organisations (ICUTO) which is outside EI, viz. SNESup (The National Union of Higher Education in France). In the light of the World Conferences on Higher Education and other activities related to this sector being undertaken by EI and EIE, it is not envisaged at present that ICUTO will reconvene. However, should the attention of EI flag in regard to the H E sector, it is always possible to revive ICUTO accordingly.

10. Research Funding in Australian Universities

A letter of 30 November 1998 from the National Tertiary Education Union in relation to *Research Funding in Australian Universities* was considered by Council at its meeting 12 December 1998, and it was agreed to send a message of support for the NTEU position to the Australian Minister for Education as follows.

"This is to confirm that the National Council of the Irish Federation of University Teachers supports the National Tertiary Education Union in its campaign against the Proposed Introduction of Radical Changes to the Funding of University Research in Australia. The proposals being suggested, in a global market for research and research training services, have the ability to affect Australia's international research standing, and, we note that no other country with a developed research capacity is considering abandoning an independent competitive grant

with a developed research capacity is considering abandoning an independent competitive grant allocation system."

The following reply of 12 February 1999 was received from the Assistant Secretary, Research Branch, Higher Education Division.

"Due to erroneous newspaper reporting, misinformation is circulating about changes to the funding of university research. The Government, in consultation with the higher education and training industry, is currently exploring ways in which it can further promote excellence in research and research training so that Australia realises maximum benefit from its investment. This is part of an ongoing process of ensuring Australia maintains its competitive standing internationally.

"To address these issues, the Minister is developing a discussion paper on research and research training, which continues to support international peer review as key component of the assessment process for competitive grants considered by the Australian Research Council. The Minister proposes to release this discussion paper shortly, at which time there will be ample opportunity for the higher education sector and industry to provide comment before any final policy decisions are made."

The reply was forwarded to the NTEU.

11. Assassination of Columbian Trade Unionist

In response to a letter of 3 November from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Council agreed that the following letter of protest supplied by ICTU should be sent to the Columbian Authorities and Public Prosecutor.

"The Irish Federation of University Teachers, on behalf of its 1,400 members in Ireland and together with its sister organisations affiliated to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, protests in the strongest possible terms against the assassination on 20 October 1998 of our colleague Jorge Ortega, Vice President of CUT.

"As has been widely reported, Jorge Ortega received several death threats in the last weeks which were closely related to the strike of public services employees.

"The Irish Federation of University Teachers considers that the murder of this latest national trade union leader brings the final confirmation of your government's total incapacity to guarantee even minimal standards of personal security to its citizens.

"We demand that the Colombian government investigate the assassination of Jorge Ortega and ensure that those responsible for his murder are brought to justice. We further call on the government to ensure the safety of all trade unionists and remind you of your commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3, "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

V. ORGANISATION & COMMUNICATIONS

1. Membership

The total membership of IFUT is 1,458 compared to 1,397 in 1998. The breakdown of this is as follows ('98 figures in brackets): 1,232 (1,221) on higher rate of subscription, 66 (44) on lower, 14 (14) on leave of absence and 146 (118) retired.

2. Executive and Trustees

The Council (see Appendix B) elected the following Vice Presidents for 1998/99: Joe Brady, UCD; Paddy O'Flynn, UCD; Hugh Gibbons, TCD, Seán Tobin, NUI,G; Patrick Bourke, UCC; and Colum Ó Cléirigh, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra. Joe Brady was also elected by the Executive as Vice President-Finance. The Executive met seven times during the session.

3. Council

Council met six times during the year. At the first meeting on 4 July 1998, the following persons were co-opted: Anne Clune (retired). TCD; Patrick Bourke. UCC; Seán Tobin (retired). NUIG:

Seán O'Sullivan [retired], HRB.

4. Communications

Apart from non-IFUT items referred to above, communications to all members included the following: *IFUT 1998* and the Winter 1998/9 edition of *IFUT News*.

An important development during the year was the development of the IFUT Web Page which is now located at www.ifut.ie. While there will be no diminution in the IFUT printed publishing programme, the best way of keeping up to date as quickly as possible with IFUT information is to consult the Web Page.

5. History of IFUT

As this IFUT year draws to a close, the final touches are being put to the History of IFUT and publication will occur early in the new session.

*Daltún Ó Ceallaigh,
General Secretary.*

19 June 1999

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT AT 1999 ADC

**Maureen Killeavy,
Education, University College Dublin (NUI,D)**

The aims of the Irish Federation of University Teachers are the advancement of higher education and research; the promotion and protection of academic freedom; the protection of the terms and conditions of employment of its members; and the safeguarding of their professional interests. It is difficult, if not impossible to think of these aims separately as they seem to form a series of interlocking links in a chain which must all be strong if this chain is to hold and maintain those educational values which inform and underpin our endeavours.

This 1999 delegate conference which is the last ADC not only of this century but of the millennium must be a time for the Federation to consider how successful we have been in pursuit of these aims, to reflect on the progress made since its foundation in 1963 and to preview our hopes, our aspirations and our expectations for the new century.

The Federation's Role in the Development of University Education in Ireland: the Early Years

During the last academic year there were over 100,000 full-time students enrolled in third level colleges in Ireland and the Higher Education Authority projections indicate that in 2000/1 there will be over 62,000 and in 2007/8 over 67,000 students in the university sector alone. These student numbers would have seemed quite extraordinary in the early 1960's when IFUT was founded. The picture of third level education in that decade painted by two major research studies *Investment in Education* (1966) and *The Report of the Commission on Higher Education* (1967) is one of a system bereft of coherent policies for development, one which served only a small section of the nation, a system characterised by a lack of planning, low standards of entry, and inadequate accommodation, resources and research facilities. While the number of students attending university had begun to increase in the 1960's, a fact the Commission noted with concern, *Investment in Education* reported that only 4% of students progressed from post-primary school to university at this time.

Quite apart from the low percentage of the population who had access to university education there was an extremely low representation of the less well off groups in society in university, with over 85%

of students coming from the top three occupational groups in the population. The range and scope of the courses of studies available in the 1960's had a rather narrow and traditional academic focus. In 1964, just thirty-five years ago, over 78.2% of students in third level education were attending university, 9.5% were in teacher training institutions and a further 10.6% were being educated in non-aided religious institutions.

The impetus for the formation of a body to represent university teachers was the Commission on Higher Education (1960 - 1967) which was the first major initiative in higher education planning and policy formation in Ireland. Because of the major changes and developments under consideration at this time university teachers felt that their views should be represented on the Commission. As a result the idea of IFUT was born at a meeting held at UCG in 1963. Thus, a climate of consultation between successive Ministers of Education, the proximate policy makers and the Irish Federation of University Teachers in their role as a professional organisation began and has continued to serve the interests of university education ever since. It is of interest that the first council Meeting of IFUT took place on 19 June 1965 in Trinity College, Dublin exactly thirty-four years ago today.

During the following thirty years major policy initiatives in higher education brought about expansion and fundamental changes in the system. Throughout this period members of IFUT individually, and the Federation as a body, acted in various consultative roles and representative capacities with the policy makers of the day. The Federation's concern during all of this time was the advancement of higher education and research and the maintenance of quality within the expansion of the third level education system which was taking place.

Current Developments in Irish Education

Today the picture of higher education is very different. The 1990's have been a decade of dialogue, development and proposed innovation in Irish education. This has been particularly marked in the area of teacher education, and while this represents only a small part of the business of universities, it is of fundamental importance to all aspects of the university sector. Our greatest wealth and indeed our future is our students and our efforts must always take cognisance of this fundamental fact. The quality of education provided in the first and second level schools in this country is an important determinant of the quality of university education and of the ultimate cultural, social and economic well being of the State. IFUT has always been aware of the importance of teacher education within the overall structure of university education and the Federation has played a major role in policy formation and development in this area. For these reasons and although teacher education may not appear to be immediately relevant to the generality of members of the Federation, I would like us to reflect briefly on some of these major developments, particularly in view of the representative and consultative role which is currently being played by IFUT in this regard.

Far reaching proposals for developments in teacher education in Ireland, many of which were heralded in the Report of the National Convention on Education (1994) and Charting Our Education Future (1995) and other studies, are currently being translated into practical measures within governmental policy initiatives and legislation. Most of these initiatives evolved from investigations of existing educational practices and provisions. For the most part such investigations are undertaken by bodies of relevant stakeholders set up by Ministerial decree and the ensuing legislation, statutory bodies and regulations derive largely from the recommendations of the bodies in question. These developments include the Teaching Council, the Expert Advisory Review Groups on Teacher Education at First and at Second level, the Points Commission, The National Policy and Advisory Development Committee, and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment which is soon to be granted statutory authority. While all of these developments carry major implications for the future of teacher education they are also of fundamental importance for university education.

The Irish Federation of University Teachers has played a significant role both in the preparation and presentation of consultative documentation relating to teacher education and we believe that we should continue to play an important role in bodies set up to implement the educational policies which emerges.

Tenure, the Rights of University Teachers and the Protection of Academic Freedom

One of the most important ethical functions of the university is to ensure independent, informed comment and analysis on all major aspects of life. This can only be possible in a society in which academics, safeguarded by the tenured nature of their employment within autonomous institutions are

tree to exercise this right. Tenure is at times misunderstood. What it means is a fixed term contract on appointment as an academic extending to retirement age with dismissal only being possible on grounds of incompetence, disability or outrageous conduct. The 1997 Universities Act provides an explicit legislative guarantee of tenure and it requires that there must be a statute of the university which shall provide for tenure.

Now, in the period immediately after the enactment of our university legislation these requirements of the Act are being formalised in the statutes of the various institutions we must be concerned that the interests of not only our present members but also our future members are protected. We must be mindful too of members who are not protected by tenure because they are employed on a part-time or temporary short-term contract basis. In recent years there has been a marked increase in the numbers of academics who have been employed in such non-permanent positions. While such staff are protected to a certain extent by unfair dismissal legislation, the transient nature of their employment is an insecure foundation to establishing an academic career and it is a very insecure basis for the maintenance of academic freedom and the quality in university education.

The *World Declaration on Higher Education* suggests that higher education institutions have the intellectual capacity and moral prestige to set and defend universally accepted values, based on the analysis of emergent social, economic and political trends. This most important ethical function of universities can only be exercised by academics, protected by tenure within autonomous institutions.

Gender Balance in Academic Appointments

The promotional profile of female academics in Irish universities has been a cause of grave concern in recent years. There are indications of some improvements in this area but much remains to be done. While women have been appointed to junior academic and non-permanent positions in much greater numbers than in the past, their career progress has been stunted in comparison to that of their male colleagues. Further, the vast majority of female academics tend to remain at the recruitment grade within their institution. While there are slight differences between the various universities in this regard, HEA data relating to the seven Irish universities including the two larger colleges of education suggests that the general trend is depressingly similar. While 95% of full professors and 90% of all senior academics are male, on the other hand 42% of university teachers holding non-promotional posts and 52% of all junior lecturers are female.

Certainly, some improvements designed to correct the imbalance have been put in place. In response to the requirements of the universities legislation of 1997 an equal opportunities policy document has recently been adopted by the Governing Authority of University College Dublin. This document emphasises the pledge of the university to uphold the principle of equality by promoting the continued development of academic employment and other policies, procedures and practices which do not discriminate on grounds of gender, marital status, age, disability, race colour, religious belief, ethnic origin or sexual orientation. The policy document goes on to state that the university will work to eliminate unfair discrimination, redress imbalances, foster an ethos of equality and will continue to develop guidelines and codes of practice which will underline its commitment to the principle of equality. This measure is of considerable importance in paving the way for progress in the area of equal employment opportunities in higher education. The Federation will be taking careful note of the implementation of this, and similar policy initiatives taking place in other institutions, to ensure that both the spirit and the stated intentions of the Universities Act are adhered to.

Promotional Structures in Universities

While the elimination of discriminatory practices in the employment of university teachers is of major importance IFUT must be ever mindful of an underlying and insidious problem which undermines the fabric of academic life - the lack of promotional opportunities for all staff. Currently, over sixty-six percent of academics in Irish universities are employed at a junior level as lecturers or assistant lecturers while thirty four per cent hold senior appointments at professorial or senior lecturer grade. The ratio of junior to senior staff has been a matter of disagreement between college authorities and staff associations for a considerable number of years. In 1985 a claim by IFUT for an increased allocation of senior positions was countered by the claim of one college that 60/40 was an appropriate ratio of junior to senior staff. I would point out that this claim is completely at variance with the recommendation of the Labour Court in 1987 (LCR 11000) which suggested regarding "the present adverse promotional prospects of a large number of staff at the top of the college lecturer scale ... that the College abandon the pursuit of any fixed ratio of junior to senior staff."

International Perspective

Countries and their education systems are becoming increasingly aware of the global context of their existence and of the major influences, constraints and responsibilities that this involves. In *Charting Our Education Future* an assurance was given that Ireland would continue to contribute fully to education initiatives within the European Union. A further commitment was made to continue Ireland's active involvement in international educational developments, and to participate actively in the work of a variety of other international bodies which have an educational remit, such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and UNESCO.

While wishing to continue our service in these areas we must be vigilant. Such international organisations and bodies are not always the most far-seeing, altruistic or indeed informed. The World Bank, for instance, increasingly acknowledges the importance of education. However, too often this concern takes the form of suggestions that teachers' salaries represent too high a proportion of spending on education and proposals that higher staff-student ratios are a means of educational reform. We do share the hope that Ireland's involvement in international organisations will serve as a method of informing policy formulation, educational practice and curriculum development and will serve to create an awareness of environmental, third-world and global issues.

Maintaining Standards: Student Staff Ratios

A major problem encountered by IFUT during recent years is a sustained rate of increase in the numbers of students attending university both on a full-time and a part-time basis without a corresponding increase in the number of teaching staff in the institutions. According to the HEA the number of full-time university students increased from 51,645 in 1994 to 58,466 in 1998, an increase of almost ten per cent while the increase of 1,929 in part-time students during the same period represents an increase of 27.5%. These increases were not matched by the increases in staff numbers and the staff student ratios are marked by a gradual disimprovement over these four years.

This is in broad agreement with the data presented by the OECD in *Education at a Glance* (1998). This report indicates that in 1996 the ratio of students to teaching staff in Irish universities was 21.6 a figure which is far less favourable than the 12.2 ratio of students to teaching staff in the non-university third level sector. Lest there be any doubt that this situation in Irish universities is very serious, an examination of the international figures confirms the extent of the problem. The student staff ratio in Irish universities is the third highest of the twenty-nine countries listed by the OECD and this ratio is 5.1 points higher than the average for these twenty-nine countries. The Federation once again calls for a more manageable student staff ratio of 14:1 as a means of ensuring that the quality of our university education is maintained.

This state of affairs which is the direct result of the underfunding leading to understaffing in the university sector should not be allowed to continue. Neither should spurious arguments which erroneously suggest that the three major sectors in the education system are competitors for scarce resources be tolerated. Our State has never been so prosperous which is in no small measure attributable to generations of Irish educators. We must ensure that this prosperity serves the education of our students and that in this way it contributes to the continuing cultural, social and economic wealth of Irish society.

RESOLUTIONS OF 1999 ADC

(1) EX-CARYSFORT STAFF PROBLEMS

Conference notes the recent efforts by various bodies to resolve the long-standing problems arising from the closure of Carysfort College and the subsequent redeployment of its staff. It calls on IFUT to ensure that these efforts are brought to a prompt and just resolution.

(2) LIBRARIANS & EXPENSES TAX ALLOWANCE

This Annual Delegate Conference calls on IFUT to negotiate, on behalf of professional librarians employed in university libraries, with the Revenue Commissioners an expenses tax allowance, similar to that available to academic staff and other professionals, employed in the educational sector.

(3) CONTRACTS TO TEMPORARY STAFF IN NUI UNIVERSITIES

This Annual Delegate Conference calls on IFUT to undertake a legal review of contracts issued to temporary staff in NUI and other universities and colleges in order to examine their compliance with labour law and to clarify the legal rights of members who have three or more years unbroken temporary full-time service.

(4) TEMPORARY FULL-TIME ACADEMIC STAFF & REMUNERATION

This Annual Delegate Conference calls on IFUT to negotiate, as a matter of urgency, with NUI, Cork, and other universities and colleges as appropriate, to ensure that those existing temporary full-time academic staff, who are currently remunerated at a rate below the lowest point on the lowest standard academic scale, are placed on a point within that scale, and furthermore, to ensure that all future appointees to temporary full-time academic posts are remunerated at a level on the standard academic scales.

(5) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

In the light of the decision of IFUT Council to seek the extension of the Freedom of Information Act to the University sector, this ADC calls on the union to ensure that considerations of confidentiality, pastoral care and academic freedom must be fully safeguarded in the application of the Act to the work done by academic staff. Further-more, IFUT calls on University authorities to provide the administrative support necessary to enable staff to comply with the provisions of the Act.

(6) TENURE AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

In the light of the requirement under the Universities Act for College authorities to draft a statute dealing with suspension or dismissal of its employees [Section 25(6)], Conference calls on IFUT to employ all the resources at its disposal to ensure that tenure and academic freedom are safeguarded in any such statute.

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