## **Irish Federation of University Teachers**

*IFUT*2012

Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile

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CÓNAIDHM ÉIREANNACH NA MÚINTEOIRÍ OLLSCOILE

## **IFUT 2012**

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## **IFUT ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

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## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

I have the honour for the 6th time to present my Annual Report to the IFUT Annual Delegate Conference.

First off I would like to acknowledge what a major benefit it has been to have had, since May last year, the contribution of Joan Donegan as our Assistant General Secretary. Already in the space of less than one year Joan has made a real and positive difference to the effectiveness and reputation of our union and I am enormously grateful to her for her hard work and dedication to the job. Of course neither Joan nor I could function without the amazing amount of hard work put in by Phyllis Russell our Office Manager every single day. After five years in this job I am still in awe at the extent of Phyllis's indispensability. My sense of gratitude to her is enhanced by my awareness of the esteem and fondness felt towards her throughout the length and breadth of the organisation.

A review of the past year raises some decidedly mixed feelings. On the one hand there is the plight of IFUT members as the effects of pay cuts and pension levies (imposed we were told "in the national interest") still cause financial hardship. At the same time our job gets harder and harder as we struggle to teach more and more students with less staff and dwindling resources. And, as if all of this were not bad enough, we have had to endure repeated bouts of purile and ill-informed criticism which, as much as it lacks a factual or analytical basis, seems designed simply and gratuitously to undermine the reputation and integrity of educators at third-level. On the other hand, it has been another very successful year for IFUT as an organisation. Not only have our membership numbers increased for the fifth year in succession, but we have scored some very notable successes in negotiations on behalf of our members and our public image and reputation has been enhanced accordingly.

The agreement reached on a Memorandum of Understanding between IFUT and the Irish Research Staff Association is truly historic and represents the culmination of years of effort and activity in this area.

If you were to choose just four words to summarise IFUT's past year, those words would surely be "Fixed-Term 'Croke Park'". This combination of words reflects the enormous amount of work carried out in (a) defending rights given under the 2003 and (b) dealing with the all pervasive influence and reach of the Public Services Agreement. But also their juxtaposition gives a sense of precariousness to the 'Croke Park' Agreement which is perhaps appropriate given that, at the time of writing, the Labour Court has yet to rule on whether TCD's enforcement of compulsory redundancies against those who had been repeatedly assured they were secure and permanent, amounts to a breach of the Agreement.

I would like to thank all of our members and representatives for their patience and forbearance in working with us to face all the challenges we have faced and, in so doing, to have built IFUT up to be the most effective and most influential trade union in our Sector.

#### I. REMUNERATION/PAY AGREEMENTS

## 1. Public Service Agreement/'Croke Park'

Once again the 'Croke Park' Agreement was the main and most pervasive item occupying our time and attention.

In my Report to the 2011 ADC I stated that IFUT was about to enter into recentralised discussions on 'Croke Park' at the invitation of the Department of Education. A debate and a vote at the ADC gave us an explicit mandate to do so.

The talks were conducted in a constructive manner and our well expressed reservations were treated with respect. This meant that significant progress was recorded on highly contentious issues such as Academic Freedom and Tenure. Also, in several other areas reassurances were secured which allayed fears regarding extremist interpretations of what might actually end up being sought from our members under the clauses concerned.

The Executive therefore was able to recommend acceptance of a Clarification Document by reference to which the original 'Croke Park' Deal would be read, interpreted and implemented. The result of the ensuing ballot was as follows:

No. of Ballot Papers Issued	2,071
No. of Ballot Papers Returned	872 (42%)
No. of Spoiled Votes	4
Total Valid Votes	868
No. of 'Yes' Votes	725 (83.5%)
No. of 'No' Votes	143 (16.5%

This very emphatic endorsement of our negotiations vindicated the Executive's strategy and allowed IFUT to end its status of being the sole Congress Union outside of 'Croke Park'.

At local level the implementation process proceeded in a fairly uneventful manner. The biggest difficulty arose (and continues to arise) from the question of whether or not amendments to the Academic Contract as specified as a requirement of 'Croke Park' mean that a 'normal' collective agreement should be entered into by the union on behalf of all of its members in the institution, or do they mean that each individual's actual job contract is being altered? We have reasons to be hopeful that our preferred option (collective agreement) will prevail. It is also the common sense option. But the issue has stalled due to our decision to suspend further implementation of 'Croke Park' due to its being broken by TCD (see below).

The actual 'Croke Park' document itself refers only to universities (and Institutes of Technology where the TUI is the relevant union). The Department of Education appears to have

overlooked the fact that there are other Higher Education Institutions in the Third-Level Sector. This led to a situation whereby there was no movement whatever regarding 'Croke Park' in these HEIs until very recently. These talks are now just getting underway and it is too early to report on outcomes.

#### Breach of 'Croke Park'

As far as IFUT is concerned one of the core commitments given by the Government to trade unions in return for 'Croke Park' i.e. the commitment that there would be no compulsory redundancies, has been reneged on by TCD (with the full knowledge of all on the Official Side) when they made three of our members redundant.

Our efforts to secure redress and rectification have taken a frustratingly long time. However, the dispute was investigated by the Labour Court in March and a Recommendation is awaited at the time of writing.

#### 2. Mater Dei Institute

For some time the Official Side has been seeking acceptance by our members in MDIE of the pay cuts imposed across the Public Sector in 2010. We have always said that we could only accept such cuts if we were treated like public servants in all other respects, for instance in the matter of Public Sector pension cover and job security. Despite numerous meetings this log-jam was never broken. However, Mater Dei has now threatened a unilateral compulsory pay cut in July 2012 and we have referred the dispute to the LRC in the first instance.

#### **II. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

## 1. Cases under the Fixed-Term Workers' Act

Over the past few years IFUT has practically made this Act its "house speciality" and there is no doubt that more than any other trade union we have been active and successful in using the Act to vindicate the rights which it was intended by the EU it would confer on employees.

Many of the specific cases reported on below featured in last year's report as 'Works in Progress'. This illustrates just how long employers will try to drag out the process, thus ignoring the precept that 'justice delayed is justice denied'.

### 1.1 UCC-Two Claims for Enhanced Redundancy

When we won these claims at Rights Commissioner level (see last year's report) UCC appealed to the Labour Court. The Labour Court found that one claimant had no locus standi as a Fixed-Term Employee because she also had a

part-time job which was permanent. We are now pursuing this case but are utilising a different Act to circumvent this technicality.

The Labour Court upheld our claim in the other case, but UCC – in a stunning decision representing a wanton waste of public funds – decided to appeal the (binding) Determination to the High Court.

This behaviour (about which we complained very loudly and widely, including to the Minister) represented a real financial challenge to a very small union with limited resources. But the Executive took the correct and brave decision to meet the challenge head-on and we opted to defend the legal case despite this threat of crippling costs. The Labour Court does not defend its own Determinations precisely because of the cost involved and also because the standard ethos in Irish industrial relations is that the Labour Court is the final arbiter in such cases, an ethos to which Ministers and Governments regularly pay lip service but which UCC decided to ignore.

We were gratified to receive pledges of financial backing from several other trade unions, but in the event we did not need this as UCC's case was unceremoniously dismissed and we were awarded our costs.

By this time IFUT had processed two other identical cases in UCC and UCC gave us a written undertaking to apply the settlement to them. We are still awaiting delivery of this promise.

#### 1.2 MICL – Claim for Enhanced Redundancy

A Rights Commissioner upheld our claim but MICL has appealed it to the Labour Court. However, as the grounds of appeal are identical to the UCC case above, we have asked MICL not to waste time and funds by proceeding with a doomed argument. We await their reply.

### 1.3 NIBRT Claim for Enhanced Redundancy

This claim is still at Rights Commissioner level.

#### 1.4 UCD Case re CID

This claim is still at Rights Commissioner level.

## 1.5 UCC - Claim for a CID and Redundancy

After an unusually lengthy process the Labour Court found that this member was indeed entitled to a CID. But he had already been made redundant based on his (now invalid) fixed-term status. Incredibly, the Labour Court did not order the expected remedy of reinstatement, but gave him a financial settlement instead. This settlement would have been generous if the employee also got enhanced redundancy compensation (which we were led to believe he would). However, a different division of the Labour Court ruled that the settlement covered all of UCC's liabilities. This was

a sad case of institutional inconsistency which had very costly implications for an employee.

#### 1.6 TCD - Three Cases re CIDs

These are the cases which we have referred to above as constituting a breach of 'Croke Park'. Briefly, one of the members achieved a CID when IFUT won her case at Rights Commissioner and again at Labour Court level. The other two claimants had already been given nominal CIDs, but when TCD issued compulsory redundancy notice to all three we argued that in the latter two cases the concession of the CIDs was spurious. These two cases, as well as being dealt with as a breach of 'Croke Park' along with the other case, are also in process under the provisions regarding CIDs as set down in the 2003 Act. One case has already been dealt with by the Labour Court. The Labour Court said that the member concerned lacks locus standi because she is not a Fixed-Term Employee. This supports our case that 'Croke Park' therefore disallows her redundancy.

#### 1.7 UCC - Case re CID

Rights Commissioner recommended entitlement to a CID for one member.

#### 1.8 UCC - Case re CID

This claim is still at Rights Commissioner level.

#### 1.9 UCD - Claim for a CID and Reinstatement

This member left UCD for other employment as a direct consequence of being wrongly denied a CID. A Rights Commissioner ruled that as a result of her resignation she had forfeited locus standi. On appeal the Labour Court accepted IFUT's position and ordered reinstatement without loss of pay and UCD has since complied.

#### 1.10 TCD - Claim for a CID on a Full-Time Basis

TCD conceded a CID to this member but only on the basis of half of her job (and salary). Both the Rights Commissioner and the Labour Court (following TCD's unsuccessful appeal) ordered reinstatement to a Full-time Post.

## 1.11 NUIG – Two Claims for Enhanced Redundancy

These claims are still at Rights Commissioner level.

#### 1.12 UCD - Claim for a CID

This claim succeeded at a Rights Commissioner level but UCD appealed to the Labour Court and a Determination is awaited.

#### 1.13 NUIG - Claim for a CID

This claim is still at Rights Commissioner level.

1.14 NUIM - Claim for a CID

This claim is still at Rights Commissioner level.

#### 1.15 UCC - Claim for a CID

UCC conceded this claim without the requirement to go to a Rights Commissioner.

## 2. Denial of Progression/Promotions

- **2.1** Three separate cases in TCD, CICE and UCC were successfully resolved at varying stages of procedure.
- **2.2** One case regarding an upgrade in DIAS was referred to the Rights Commissioner. The Rights Commissioner has recommended a job evaluation to be completed by beginning of May 2012.
- **2.3** Two separate cases in TCD were referred to a Visitor's Hearing. We achieved some success in one case where recommendations for changes to procedures were endorsed. The recommendation recognised that the case raised "caused some concern" but "did not reach the threshold of unfairness" needed to annul the decision of the Promotions Committee.
- **2.4** One case regarding an upgrade in St Patrick's College, Drumcondra has been referred to the Labour Relations Commission.
- **2.5** A joint case by IFUT and SIPTU was referred to a full Hearing of the Labour Court for 76 members employed at the Tyndall Institute, University College Cork, for pay parity with their colleagues in the University. A recommendation is awaited.
- 2.6 Two Cases- UCD In the first of these cases the Labour Court rejected our appeal against the denial of promotion and the second case is delayed pending our reappraisal arising from the above decision. It does appear that the Labour Court has an erroneous idea of the Promotions Agreement between IFUT and UCD which triggered the original negative Recommendation.

#### 3. Unfair Dismissals RCSI

One case which at the time of our last report was awaiting an Employment Appeals Tribunal Hearing was resolved on the basis of a very satisfactory financial settlement which was secured "on the steps of the Court".

In another case where we alleged constructive dismissal we secured a very high financial settlement which was readily accepted by our member.

## 4. Changes to Pension Scheme

- **4.1 RCSI** The Defined Benefit Scheme in RCSI was in severe financial difficulties and Management sought amendments including a hybrid scheme with enhanced Management contribution. The final proposals were accepted by a large majority in a secret ballot.
- 4.2 Erosion of "Added Years" Provisions for Pensions Under new rules, the calculation of

added years is one-third of actual UCC & NUIG service (to a maximum of 10 added years). Any added years calculated are now reduced by the retained benefits (in UCC & NUIG service-year equivalents) of service from previous employments that have been or could have been transferred to UCC & NUIG.

IFUT has written to the HEA and met with HEA Chief Executive Tom Boland and received a negative response from both agents to this issue. IFUT has referred this case to the LRC.

**4.3 Equality Claim in TCD** An Equality Claim in TCD, which seeks a pension in a Civil Partnership, has been referred to the Equality Tribunal.

#### 5. Non-Payment of Exam Fees, UCC

Despite the fact that UCC conceded this claim over a year ago, we have spent all of the intervening period seeking implementation.

## 6. NUIG - Claim re Incorrect Salary Deductions in respect of November 2009 One-Day Strike

Incredibly, the Labour Court Hearing in this case was not held until March 2012. The Labour Court has now rejected our claim in this regard.

## 7. Age Discrimination Case – St Patrick's College

This long-running claim which arises from the 2007 Round of Promotions is still in process.

#### 8. Ex-Carvsfort Staff NUIM & TCD

These cases are still trundling their way through legal procedures.

#### 9 Transfer of Undetakings - ICHEC/NUIG

IFUT referred this case to the Labour Relations Commission. Management and the new employer have agreed to meet IFUT. Further meetings to take place.

## 10. Bullying & Harrassment Cases

Two cases have been resolved to our members' satisfaction. Two are ongoing.

## 11. TCD Claim regarding Entitlement of a Parttime Employee to return to Full-time Employment

This claim is currently deferred as we have reason to believe it will be conceded in due course.

#### 12. TCD Library

Extensive negotiations have taken place regarding changes to rosters and other changes.

#### 13. Cregan Professors

This claim was deferred because the chances of success under 'Croke Park' are remote.

#### **14. DIAS**

A long-running internal dispute was resolved through Mediation.

#### 15. Other Cases

Numerous other cases involving individual members were dealt with during the year.

#### **III. GENERAL CONTACTS**

#### 1. Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Despite the fact the Ulster Teachers Union which had previously provided a significant number of our votes, decided to contest Executive Council Elections themselves, the General Secretary still managed to secure sufficient alternative votes to achieve re-election to the Congress Executive.

#### 2. Teacher Unions

Work in building closer co-operation between ASTI, IFUT, INTO and TUI continued productively throughout the year. Relations between the unions, in particular at General Secretary level, remain excellent.

## 3. Trades Councils

Our representatives on Trades Councils are as follows:

**Dublin Council of Trade Unions:** Hugh Gibbons, Outgoing President.

**Cork Council of Trade Unions:** Michael Delargey, UCC.

**Galway Council of Trade Unions:** Liam Carroll, NUIG.

*Kildare Council of Trade Unions:* Rose Malone, NUIM.

**Limerick Council of Trade Unions:** Tony Bonfield, MICL.

## 6. International Work

- **4.1 EQAR** During the year Daire Keogh, Vice President-Finance was re-nominated by Education International as their representative on the European Quality Assurance Register.
- **4.2 BIGTU** The British and Irish Group of Teacher Unions holds two meetings per year, one for General Secretaries and the other General Secretaries and Presidents. IFUT has always played an active role in this Group.
- 4.3 Education International Europe There will be an election to the Bureau (Executive) of this body in November 2012. The General Secretary has received the unanimous backing of all of the Irish and UK Teacher Unions in this election and so stands a very good chance of being elected as Treasurer.

- **4.4 TUAC** The General Secretary represented IFUT at two meetings of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) of the OECD.
- **4.5** EU Sectoral Dialogue in Higher Education The Assistant General Secretary and the General Secretary each in turn represented Irish Higher Education Trade Unions at two meetings of this body. The costs of each meeting are borne by the EU Commission.
- **4.6 Education International World Conference Capetown, South Africa** IFUT was represented at the conference by Hugh Gibbons, TCD and the General Secretary. The General Secretary addressed the conference on two occasions and the delegates from the Irish Teacher Unions also arranged a meeting with the Niall Mellon Township Trust
- **4.7** *56*<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women 2012 Rose Malone represented IFUT at this conference.
- **4.8 Other International Work** Most invitations to conferences, seminars etc have to be declined due to a lack of funds. However, the General Secretary's expenses were paid by host organisations in Scotland, Italy and Denmark to address their conferences regarding the Current Economic Situation.
- **4.9 Bologna Follow-up Committee** The General Secretary represents IFUT on the National Bologna Follow-up Committee.

#### 5. SCOTENS

Dr Marie Clarke, President is the nominee of IFUT on this body.

#### 6. ICTU Women's Conference

Dr Ann Louise Gilligan, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra represented IFUT at this conference. The Assistant General Secretary is currently engaged in a process to revive IFUT's work programme on equality issues.

## 7. National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

The Minister for Education requested nominations from IFUT and we have nominated Dr Marie Clarke, President and Dr Daire Keogh, Vice President-Finance. In addition, the ICTU re-nominated Dr Rose Malone, NUIM.

## 8. Teaching Council

IFUT secured a nomination from the ICTU on to the Teaching Council and we hope to be represented on this body by Dr Marie Clarke, President.

#### **IV. EDUCATION & RESEARCH**

#### 1. Irish Research Staff Association (IRSA)

IFUT and the IRSA have agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding governing the relationship between the 2 bodies. This is a very welcome development which we hope will lead to a significant improvement in the working conditions of Researchers arising from their enhanced participation in our union.

## 2. Review of Nursing & Midwifery Degree **Programme**

Thanks in no small part to the excellent cooperation extended to us by the INMO, IFUT is playing a major role in this review.

#### 3. Higher Education Review Body

The President, Marie Clarke was appointed to this body by the Minister for Education.

## 4. "Literacy and Numeracy"

Over the past few years a major controversy has been generated regarding standards of Literacy and Numeracy in Irish Schools. In response to these concerns significant changes were proposed regarding the curriculum in the Colleges of Education. These changes were rushed into implementation with minimal consultation and they have generated concerns regarding the future areas. This is an issue that IFUT will have to keep

career prospects of Academic Staff in the affected

under close review.

## V. ORGANISATION & COMMUNICATIONS

#### 1. Membership

The total membership of IFUT is 2,093 compared to 2,060 last year. The breakdown of this is as follows (last year's figures are in brackets): 1,436 (1,489) on higher rate of subscription, 174 (124) on lower, 39 (27) on leave of absence and 444 (420) retired. Details of Branches are given in Appendix A.

## 2. Executive and Trustees

The Executive met 10 times during the course of the year.

The Members of the Executive are: Marie Clarke, UCD (President); Hugh Gibbons, TCD (Outgoing President); Aidan Seery, TCD; Joe Brady, UCD; David Murphy, UCC; Breandán Ó Cochláin, NUIG; Rose Malone, NUIM; Daire Keogh, SPD (Vice President-Finance); Deirdre McMahon, MICL; Anthony Harvey, RIA and Ruby Morrow, CICE.

At a meeting of the Executive held on 7 June 2011 Dr Daire Keogh of SPD was unanimously reelected as Vice President-Finance.

The Executive also agreed to continue the a specific of allocating area responsibility to each member and the portfolios allocated were as follows:

IFUT Website: David Murphy, UCC

Cursaí Gaeilge: Breandán Ó Cochláin, NUIG Tenure & Related Matters: Joe Brady, UCD

Equality: Colmán Etchingham, NUIM (later

replaced by Rose Malone, NUIM)

International Issues: Daire Keogh, SPD **Recruitment**: Shared Executive Portfolio

Administration & Finance: Hugh Gibbons, TCD **Publications**: Anthony Harvey, RIA, Deirdre

McMahon, MICL and David Murphy, UCC Services to Members: Joe Brady, UCD Bologna Process: Deirdre McMahon, MICL

The following Trustees were re-elected at the 2011 ADC: Gerard Jennings, NUIG; Colum Ó Cléirigh, SPD. Donal Fitzsimons, UCD.

#### 3. Council

The Council met three times during the year.

## 4. Appointment of an Assistant General Secretary

The appointment of Ms Joan Donegan to the position in May 2011 has made a major impact on the performance of IFUT across the entire range of our activities. Indeed such is Joan's contribution that it is hard to imagine how we managed without

Mike Jennings. General Secretary.

16 April 2012

#### **IFUT Initials**

AH All Hallows College
CB Central Branch

CICE Church of Ireland College of Education, Rathmines, Dublin

CITC Church of Ireland Theological College

**DDH** Dublin Dental Hospital

**DIAS** Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

FROEBEL Froebel College of Education

**HRB** Health Research Board

MDIE Mater Dei Institute of Education

MICL Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

MITP Milltown Institute of Theology & Philosophy

NERI Nevin Economic Research Institute

**NUIG** National University of Ireland, Galway

**NUIM** National University of Ireland, Maynooth

**RCSI** Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

RIA Royal Irish Academy

ST C St Catherine's College of Home Economics, Sion Hill, Dublin

SPD St Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin

**SPM** St Patrick's College, Maynooth (Pontifical)

TCD Trinity College Dublin

**UCC** University College Cork

**UCD** University College Dublin

#### **APPENDIX A**

#### BRANCHES, BRANCH SECRETARIES & CENTRAL BRANCH CONVENORS 2011/12

(First figure in brackets, current membership; second figure, last year's.)

1 Trinity College Dublin (393/380) & Dublin Dental Hospital (15/15)

Secretary – Aidan Seery, Education
Library Convenor – Seán Hughes, Berkeley Library
DDH Contact - Frank Houston, Restorative Dentistry

2 University College Dublin (403/394)

Secretary - Russell Higgs, Mathematics

3 University College Cork (459/452)

Secretary - Angela Flynn, Nursing & Midwifery

4 National University of Ireland, Galway (123/107)

Secretary - Kevin Davison, Education

5 National University of Ireland, Maynooth (240/240)

Secretary - Tony O'Farrell, Mathematics

6 Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (67/69)

Secretary - Celeste Golden, Admissions Office

7 St Patrick's College, Drumcondra (149/150)

Secretary - Orla Nic Aodha, Library

8 Church of Ireland College of Education (18/16)

CICE Convenor - Éamonn McCauley, Special Education Needs

8 Mary Immaculate College, Limerick (144/150)

Secretary - Michael Finneran, Education

9 Central (82/87)

ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE (1/1)

Convenor - Bernadette Flanagan, Spirituality

CHURCH OF IRELAND THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE (1/1)

Convenor – Patrick Comerford, Spiritual Formation

FROBEL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (1/1)

Convenor - Gearard Ó Floinn, Religious Education & Studies

HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD (3/3)

Convenor - Joan Byrne, Microbiology

DUBLIN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES (13/14)

Convenor (Senior Professors/Registrar Group) - Fergus Kelly, Celtic Studies

Convenor (Non-Sen. Prof. Staff Group) - No Convenor

MATER DEI INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (32/28)

Convenor - Noel Jackson, IT Services

NEVIN ECONOMIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE (1/0)

Convenor - Mícheál Collins, Senior Research Officer

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY (16/20)

Convenor - Anthony Harvey, Dictionary of Medieval Latin from Celtic Sources

MILLTOWN INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY - c/o Head Office (3/9)

ST CATHERINE'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HOME ECONOMICS - c/o Head Office (10/10)

EX-CARYSFORT - c/o Head Office (1/1)

#### **APPENDIX B**

#### **COUNCIL & EXECUTIVE 2011/12**

\*(Executive: President and 10 Members)

**BRANCH ENTITLEMENT** DEPARTMENT

TCD 8/9 + Outgoing Pres

Dónall A. MacDónaill Chemistry

Computer Science \*Hugh Gibbons (Outgoing Pres)

\*Aidan Seerv Education Pat Wall Education

Liam Dowling Electronic & Electrical Engineering

**Darryl Jones** English Mícheál O'Siochrú History Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin Italian

Gobnait Byrne Nursing & Midwifery

UCD 9/9 + Pres

Paddy O'Flynn Chemical Engineering Computer Science John Dunnion

\*Marie Clarke (Pres) Education Maureen Killeavy Education Phyllis Gaffney French \*Joe Brady Geography Russell Higgs Mathematics

Regina Joye Nursing & Midwifery Rita Collins Nursing & Midwifery

Philosophy **Gerard Casey** 

**UCC 9/10** 

Mike Murphy Applied Psychology Aoife Foley Civil Engineering \*David Murphy Computer Science

Michael Delargev Education

Kevin Scally Management & Marketing Nursing & Midwifery Tom Andrews Nursing & Midwifery Angela Flynn

Bridget McAdam-O'Connell Sociology Eoin Sheehan Tyndall

**NUIG 6/6** 

\*Breandán Ó Cochláin Chemistry Kevin F Davison Education Catherine Emerson French Seán Tobin Mathematics

Agnes Tully Nursing

Tony Wheatley Physiology/Medicine

**NUIM 7/7** 

\*Rose Malone Education Mary Gilmartin Geography **Andrew Sliney** Library Tony O'Farrell Mathematics

Aileen O'Carroll NIRSA

**Quality Promotions** Saranne Magennis

Peter Murray Sociology

#### **RCSI 0/4**

None

#### **MICL 5/6**

Michael Finneran Education
Aislinn O'Donnell Education
\*Deirdre McMahon History
Cathy Swift Irish

Patrick Connolly Theology & Religious Studies

## SPD 6/6 + Vice Pres-Fin

Pat Burke
Celia Keenan
English
Eugene McNulty
English
\*Daire Keogh (Vice Pres-Fin)
Orla Nic Aodha
Library
Colum Ó Cléirigh (Trustee)

English
History
History
Music

Cora O'Farrell Religious Studies

#### **CICE 2/2**

\*Ruby Morrow Special Education

Keith O'Sullivan English

#### **CENTRAL 2/5**

\*Anthony Harvey DMLCS, RIA

Joan Byrne Microbiology, HRB-TCD

## NOTE:

In addition to the President ex officio, there were entitlements to 64 representative places, of which 54 were filled. Therefore, there were 54 people on Council out of a potential 64.

## **APPENDIX C**

## **IFUT COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS 2011/12**

## Standing Committee

**EQUALITY** 

Joan Donegan (Convenor) Assistant General Secretary
Marie Clarke Education, UCD

Marie Clarke Education, UCD
Maureen Killeavy Education, UCD
Rose Malone Education, NUIM

Ann Louise Gilligan Religious Studies, SPD

#### **APPENDIX D**

## **IFUT AFFILIATIONS, MEMBERSHIPS & ASSOCIATIONS 2011/12**

British and Irish Group of Teacher Unions (BIGTU)

Education International (EI)

European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) & its Higher Education & Research Standing Committee (HERSC)

Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI)

IFUT-NIAC Liaison – (Nth Ireland Advisory Committee/University & College Union)

Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

& its Councils of Trade Unions in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Kildare

Irish Labour History Society (ILHS)

National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCI)

Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI)

Network for Education and Academic Rights (NEAR)

People's College (ICTU)

Standing Conference on Teacher Education North and South (SCoTENS)

Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)

## B. Presidential Address, 21 April 2012

#### Dr Marie Clarke, Education, UCD

"Educate that you may be free", Thomas Davis (1846) *Influences of Education Literary and Historical Essays*. Davis recognised the importance of education during our worst national tragedy, the Great Famine.

Newman, among others, has enumerated the aims of education and among the most important ones in the current economic situation are to enable and to serve. Education enables the individual to focus and to work with the mind, to have a broader view, to expand life possibilities. Education habituates a community to the rule of law. It facilitates good governance and a stable political system. It enables commercial enterprise and wealth creation. Education prepares individuals to serve others, work for the common good, educate the next generations, cure disease, relieve suffering, elevate living standards and create opportunity. We can point to many achievements in the Irish education system of which we can be justifiably proud. In these challenging economic times, education must not stay in neutral. It is imperative for us working together that we create, through education, communities of practice that are vital, collaborative and connective.

As university teachers, we are obligated to prepare and enable our students to be caring, engaged citizens; thinking, feeling individuals capable of recognising and discovering their own emotions and reactions to the world around them and physically and mentally healthy people who live full lives as Irish, European and world citizens.

A dramatic culture shift has occurred over the past two decades. It used to be more or less taken for granted that higher education was a public good. That consensus has diminished. Education is a key public service for all citizens and only a highly and widely educated nation will be successful in world markets (Aho, 2006). Education is nation-building and it should be retained in the hands of educators.

#### Creating opportunity deficit

The cost and price of higher education are matters of great importance. Not only is the payment of the registration fees a significant burden but, even more so, are the costs that relate to accommodation, food and other expenses for families who are coping with unemployment, mortgage arrears and surviving on a day-to-day basis. For those who come from the most disadvantaged backgrounds it is even more difficult. It is also very important that students from our immigrant communities are given the proper supports to facilitate their progression to and within higher education.

Recently, Government Ministers have referred to the fact that about 40% of our undergraduate students are in receipt of grant support. In some cases, however, the eligibility criteria of social welfare support programmes have the potential to preclude students from getting financial support in higher education, particularly mature students who, having lost their jobs, wish to up-skill and return to the workforce.

What is required is a thorough examination of all Government support schemes in both the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Education and Skills to ensure that those who deserve support get it and are facilitated in their progression or return to higher education. This should be a priority for Ministers. In seeking and promoting change, addressing the micro issues of effective administration is equally as important as focusing on issues on a grander scale.

Our education system must be planned for in a unified way. Many students are unaware of or misinformed about the rules and regulations that govern grant support when applying for higher education courses. Some students are unclear about the regulations surrounding the financial implications of changing courses if they find that they have not made the right choice. Others have lost out due to a lack of clarity on their part about courses that qualify for State support.

Cuts to guidance and counselling services at second level make worse an already difficult situation. Students rely on guidance and counselling services in relation to their decision making about their higher education options and it is disadvantaged students who most require that support.

The Minister for Education and Skills has quite rightly sought greater collaboration between universities and the second level education system with reference to enhanced curricular alignment. The NCCA/HEA Conference on *Entry into Higher Education in Ireland in the 21*<sup>st</sup> *Century*, held during September 2011, marked a new beginning in this regard. While conferences promote thinking and provide new directions, there is a further requirement for ongoing and meaningful engagement between schools and universities. That can only be achieved when there are people to engage in that process. It is a contradiction, therefore, to cut guidance and counselling teachers in second level on the one hand while seeking greater collaboration between schools and universities on the other.

In the international context, rising costs and reductions in state support have forced many public universities to cut their investment in research, reduce faculty strength, increase class size, trim academic programs, defer the maintenance and renewal of research and teaching facilities and reduce library collections.

While investment in higher education in Ireland increased from the mid 1990s onwards, *per capita* expenditure has remained modest by international standards and has decreased significantly since 2009. In his Exchequer Budget speech, (December 2011), the Minister for Education and Skills referred to a 2% real funding reduction for the higher education sector, comprising a 5% reduction in State funding and a parallel €250 increase in Student Contribution from 2012/13. The Minister signalled a further 2% funding

reduction in 2013 and 1% in each year 2014 and 2015. These kinds of cuts to an already over stretched system put us in danger of creating deficit of opportunity.

Individuals who receive higher education benefit from it. A well-educated citizenry offers collective benefits to our community and to our nation. Irish universities are under resourced and it is important that proposed funding models protect our higher education system without damaging its ethos or adversely affecting participation levels. In the context of these discussions some commentators focus on academic staff and their levels of productivity.

# So what we do we do as academics? Are we "dossers" as has been suggested in some sections of the media?

It has been stated that 'it is clear that many people think university lecturers are dossers' (*Irish Times*, Louise Holden, 12-May-2009: 18). There has been much discussion about teaching hours in third-level institutions. The matter was raised at the meeting between university presidents and the Dáil's Public Accounts Committee in 2010, which heard that some academics could work for as few as fifteen hours per week.

It was also suggested that IFUT 'needs to acknowledge the need for getting more value out of excessively paid university lecturers' adding that 'these people present the same material to students for years over the course of too short a year' (*Irish Times* Florence Craven 10 Jan 2011: 1).

It is important to address these concerns, but to do so from a research base rather than relying on the anecdotal reminisces of individuals. A forthcoming book - *Work Situation, Views and Activities of the Academic Professions: Findings of a Survey in Twelve European Countries* - provides some interesting data in relation to these issues which allows comparisons to be made between European and Irish academics. This study was funded by ESF/EURCORES. The countries surveyed were Austria, Switzerland, Croatia, Ireland, Poland, Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Italy, Norway, Portugal and the UK. A separate Irish report funded by the IRCHSS will be published before the start of the next academic year. The Irish sample consisted of more than 1,200 respondents who were employed full time; 826 academics in universities and 347 in the IoTs; 16 in private colleges and 31 in other colleges. It also included 60 interviews with academics across a range of disciplines, grades and higher education institutions. The experiences of senior and junior academics were analysed. The data from the survey presented here focuses exclusively on the university sector.

To get an overview of the amount time academics spend on different activities, respondents were asked to estimate the average number of hours for teaching, research, service, administration and other academic activities, both for the periods when classes are in session and when classes are not in session.

Across the 12 European countries in the study, senior academics on average work 48 hours a week, which is one fifth more than the typical work schedule of full-time employed persons. In Ireland, senior academics work on average 50 hours per week. Junior academics in universities across Europe work on average 42 hours per week. Irish junior academics have a longer working week than their European colleagues, reporting 47 hours per week on average.

#### So what do academics do during those hours?

#### Senior Academics

When classes are in session, senior academics in European countries spend on average 18 hours per week on teaching activities. Academics spend on average between two and three hours on teaching-related activities per teaching hour. During the entire year, the average time spent on teaching activities by senior academics in Europe is 14 hours per week, corresponding to 30% of their overall work time. Senior academics in Ireland spend 16 hours per week on teaching activities when classes are in session. Over the entire year, senior academics spend 12 hours per week on teaching related activities, representing 24% of their working time.

In Europe, senior academics devote more time to research, on average 18 hours per week, representing 38% of their work time. Senior academics in Ireland spend 19 hours a week on research for the entire year, representing 38% of their time.

Senior academics in Europe spend eight hours per week on administration, which represents 17% of their time. In Ireland, senior academics spend 11 hours per week on administration, representing 22% of their work time.

In Europe, senior academics devote on average four hours per week on service to the community, representing 7% of their time. Senior academics in Ireland spend three hours per week on service to the community, which represents 6% of their time. In the study, senior academics included other non-specified tasks indicating that they spent four hours per week on such tasks, representing 8% of their time. Senior academics in Ireland indicated that they spent five hours per week on unspecified work-related activities representing 10% of their work time.

#### Junior Academics

Junior academics in Europe spend 15 hours of their time per week on teaching- related activities when classes are in session. Over the entire year, junior academics spend on average I2 hours weekly on teaching activities, which represents 28% of their work time. In Ireland, junior academics spend 18 hours per week on teaching related activities when classes are in session and over the entire year spend 14 hours per week on teaching related activities, which represents 30% of their work time.

European junior academics spend 20 hours on average per week on research related activities, which represents 49% of their work time. In Ireland, junior academics spend 18 hours per week on research related activities, which represents 38% of their work time.

With reference to other activities, junior academics in Ireland spend nine hours per week on administration, which represents 19% of their work time. They devote two hours per week to service to the community, which represents 4% of their time. They spend four hours per week on other unspecified work-related activities, which represents 9% of their time.

#### So what patterns emerge from this data? Well we are not "dossers".

Irish academics compare very well to their European counterparts in all aspects of their work. Irish junior academics spend more time on teaching than their counterparts in Europe. This is a matter of concern as junior academics starting their careers require support in developing the research side of their role and they cannot do this if they are spending time teaching and completing administrative tasks.

The data also reveals that both senior and junior academics in Ireland are spending too much time on administration. Our senior academics spend 22% of their time on administration, almost as much as the 24% that they devote to teaching. Our junior academics spend 19% of their time on administration and this is also excessive. It represents an imbalance in relation to duties within the Irish university sector and is a poor use of staff time and qualifications. It has occurred as a result of an intensified audit culture.

Academics in Europe and in Ireland, at both senior and junior levels, are spending more time on research than on teaching. This requires reconsideration. The excellence of Irish research is recognised on the international stage. Irish academics both at senior and junior levels, in common with their European counterparts, are engaged in the preparation of research projects; participate in international research collaboration; publish academic papers; act as peer reviewers for international journals and serve as members of international scientific committees (Drennan *et al.*, 2012). This activity will be affected by cuts in the allocation of resources. It has been suggested that academics, particularly those in Education Departments and Schools in our universities, are underperforming as researchers in relation to educational issues (*Irish Times*, Teacher's Pet, 17-April-2012). Such commentary is misinformed. *Irish Educational Studies* (IES), the journal of the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) is an excellent starting point from which to explore current research in Irish education. The publications profile of academics in the field of education in Ireland highlights their standing as international experts in their chosen specialisms and the diversity of their research interests. A lack of awareness about the working hours of Irish academics underpins the debate on salary levels in the sector.

#### **Salaries**

In these discussions, it is the higher salaries of the few that are always taken as the average. Less frequently are the salaries at the lower end of the scales referred to and little reference is made to the length of time that it takes to get started on an academic career, or to progress within the academic career structure, particularly in the absence of promotional opportunities.

### A willingness to engage in change?

There is an absence of trust in Irish higher education. Trusting educational professionals is a natural consequence of a generally well-functioning civil society. The culture of trust simply means that education authorities and political leaders believe that university academics, together with education professionals in schools, with parents and their communities, know how to provide the best possible education for their children and young people.

Higher education across the world has witnessed increased enrolments, greater diversity in student intake and the development of new relationships with governments and the corporate world. This is coupled with an expansion in knowledge across all disciplines, both traditional and emerging. Linked to this is the need for higher education to provide curricula that will enable society to confront the complex social and economic problems that present.

Many commentators suggest that higher education should be reformed and that there is inertia on the part of academics in universities. The Minister for Education and Skills suggested, during an interview on Morning Ireland [Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012], that universities don't like change because they are cautious. There are many reasons to be cautious about changes in education.

Educational change efforts regularly fail because they are ineptly implemented and the frenetic pace of change often exceeds the flow of resources that can support it (Hargreaves, 2009). Curricular reform in higher education on a wide-scale implies more than making changes to curriculum, which academics engage in regularly as a result of research and experimentation with new teaching methods. Curricular change is also influenced by the availability of existing resources, shared vision and appropriate organisational infrastructure (Innes, 2004).

Irish academics have facilitated immense change in a short space of time, in work practices and in curricular innovation across all disciplines and areas. We are not afraid of change. In fact, we have led change in our institutions. We have done so while seeing a rise in staff-student ratios, which were close to international norms, but have now worsened. In 2008-9, the staff student ratio was 1:18.7, by 2010-11 it was 1:24 (HEA, 2012).

Examples of the change led by academics include: the facilitation of student transfer, flexibility and mobility; the introduction of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); and modularisation and semesterisation. In line with the Bologna process, modules, courses and programmes in Irish higher education institutions

have been rewritten with a greater emphasis on learning outcomes. Elective modules have been provided and student choice has been broadened.

In some commentary, credit for changes in Irish universities is given to the presidents of those institutions. Ed Walsh maintained that 'managing a university has been likened to herding cats at a crossroads' [Walsh, *Irish Times*, 31 Oct 2006: 28). This was a particularly insulting remark about frontline academic staff coming from a former university president.

It has been suggested that Irish academics are unwilling to embrace change in their teaching practice. This view is not based in evidence. Changes have been implemented to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning for students including: the increased use of educational technologies; a shift from the traditional lecturing modes to more active teaching and learning methodologies and the adoption of innovative approaches to assessment.

Senior and junior academics in Ireland, like their European counterparts, promote practice-based approaches in their teaching. Irish academics place more emphasis on international content in their teaching than their European colleagues. Academics in Irish universities believe that research reinforces their teaching and they consider that the experience gained from their service to the community impacts positively on their teaching approaches (Teichler & Höhle, 2012).

While there have been many changes in Irish universities, some issues continue to be a major source of concern, particularly those related to gender discrimination and the treatment of early-career researchers.

#### Gender

In Europe, the proportion of women among junior academics is about one and a half times as high as among senior academics. In Europe, female academics spend more time on teaching-related activities when classes are in session than their male counterparts. This pattern is replicated in the Irish context among junior academics, where women spend 44% of their time on teaching-related activities, whereas men spend 36% of their time (Teichler & Höhle, 2012). It remains the case that women in Irish universities are not replaced when they take maternity leave or adoptive leave and this is a totally unacceptable situation.

## **Early-Career Researchers**

The treatment of our early-career researchers/academics has been disgraceful. The experiences of early-career researchers impact upon the formation of their professional identity (Clarke *et al.*, 2012). In Ireland, many young academics at the beginning of their careers are moving from position to position, which results in fragmented experiences. There is little by way of support for these early-career people within university structures. Legislation, that was introduced as protection, has led to a situation where they are

disadvantaged time and time again. We have a paradoxical situation in many universities. They increasingly prioritise research yet many researchers have poor employment conditions and job security. Securing fair treatment for researchers should be a major priority for all who are involved in higher education.

#### **University Autonomy and Regulation**

The mantra that we must do more with less is a persistent theme. Regrettably, the history of Irish higher education, since the publication of the first report on the sector in 1959: *Commission on Accommodation Needs of the NUI Colleges*, (Hyland and Milne, 1992), is that Irish academics have always been doing more with less. The reality is that universities are expected to implement change, reform and quality processes within a zero-cost environment (Duffy, O'Mara and Duggan, 2007).

Autonomy, along with academic freedom, is intrinsic to the nature of the university and a precondition if a university is to best fulfil its role and its responsibilities toward society (Thorens, 1993). Higher education systems need to set a regulatory framework in which their universities can act. There must be a balance between autonomy and accountability. However, the prevailing view of both government and education authorities is that regulation and control needs to be tighter. The most recent examples of this include the Revised Employment Control Framework (2011) the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011) and Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape (2012).

#### Revised Employment Control Framework

The Revised Employment Control Framework is a strait jacket. It is an example of intrusive micro management in higher education institutions. It provides a clear example of how the Government is undermining its own policies. The Assistant Secretary at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation has argued that the framework will penalise research activity (*Irish Times* 18 Mar 2011). It will also destroy the employment prospects of future researchers.

The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* marked a missed opportunity to really consider the role of higher education and its future direction in any significant way. Instead it focuses on the governance and coordination of the system in general without exploring in-depth the issues that confront the sector.

#### Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape

In the recent document, *Towards a Future Higher Education Landscape*, the HEA has indicated that from 2013 onwards it will enter into a process of regular dialogue with higher education institutions about their performance and their mission within the agreed configuration for the system. The document also

indicates that a menu of Key Performance Indicators is being developed collaboratively between the HEA and representatives of the institutions which will be used to monitor performance against agreed objectives and may also be used to inform performance-funding allocations.

However, when the CEO of the HEA was asked to appear on a Prime Time programme on the subject of value for money in State agencies, he declined to do so and was reported as stating that the functions of the HEA were too 'complex and would be difficult to communicate effectively . . . in a short time' (Flynn, *Irish Times* 9-May-2009: 17). If the functions are so complex that they cannot be explained in a short period of time, then they require re-examination.

Any cursory reading of the research literature from higher education clearly underlines the view that national systems are blunt instruments for reform and obsessive managerialism is ineffective (Hyde *et al.*, 2012).

University autonomy means that universities must be free from pressure of external interests of different kinds, be it economic, political, social or cultural. It is imperative that academics are vigilant in guarding against efforts to decrease autonomy and it is important that this core concept is strengthened and protected in a spirit of collegiality. This ensures that universities, free from political and financial interest group pressure, can best serve both learning and the society of which they are an integral part.

Of course, management in universities and the Department of Education and Skills have questions to answer. In the last number of years, a series of legal actions have been taken by some universities to try to circumvent equal treatment legislation. During 2008, UCC spent €900,000 on legal fees in relation to industrial relations matters, TCD spent €480,000 in that year, and DCU spent €476,500 in 2007 (*Irish Times*, Sean Flynn, 5-February-2010: 3). This was a dreadful waste of public money since each university has highly resourced HR departments. All of these cases, IFUT understands, have been initiated or supported by the Department of Education and Skills and all have been rejected by the courts. The recent High Court decision regarding redundancy payments for fixed-term workers in universities is very welcome, and IFUT awaits its implementation. Bullying and harassment cases in third-level institutions have also consumed vast amounts of taxpayers' money. Why is this type of expenditure not questioned? When awards are made to academic staff, after going through the proper industrial relations processes, the Department of Education and Skills has shown great reluctance to sanction these awards. This should not be happening.

#### Conclusion

IFUT is very proud of its tradition and the contribution that it has made to higher education and to the wider trade union movement. As a national organisation, it serves as a blueprint for volunteerism and working in a spirit of collegiality. Without the support of colleagues in local branches, many academics would feel

very isolated when difficult and distressing work related issues emerge. Through supporting one another, we have the confidence to speak with one voice. Our council meetings and our ADC provide us with the opportunity to promote and develop ideas about the type of higher education system that we want. This ongoing work is extremely important and must be sustained.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our General Secretary, Mr Mike Jennings, who has since his appointment worked tirelessly and with total commitment in the interests of this organisation and its members both in national and international contexts. I also want to thank our Assistant General Secretary, Ms Joan Donegan, who since her recent appointment has shown tremendous dedication and hard work. I want to thank Ms Phyllis Russell who provides, and has provided over a long number of years, excellent administrative support in every aspect of the organisation.

The issues that face higher education in this country are very serious. Irish academics have performed miracles in higher education, despite the lack of funding and resources. We compare very favourably to our European colleagues in all aspects of our work. However, there are still major issues that must be addressed such as the continued discrimination against women in academia, the appalling treatment of our early-career researchers and the persistent encroachment on university autonomy. We are always available to discuss with the Minister the challenges that exist in the higher education sector, and we look forward to much more engagement on these matters so that we can start rebuilding this Nation again through education.

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#### C. Address by Professor George L. Huxley, 21 April 2012.

#### ARISTOTLE AND THE OLIGARCHS:

#### THE PLIGHT OF CONTEMPLATIVE SCHOLARSHIP IN MARKET-DRIVEN UNIVERSITIES

It is an honour to have been invited to address members of the Federation gathered here today. I welcome, with gratitude, the opportunity to speak to you about what universities should be and do — in short, about the idea of a university. But I intend also to show how much damage has already been inflicted upon universities in Europe and elsewhere, and to beg the Federation to be resolute in fighting against imminent damage from dirigisme here in Ireland. This country has a strong tradition of respect for learning for its own sake. It was a land of Saints and Scholars. The sanctity is less manifest these days, but who knows what the religious future may hold? We can all strive to ensure that Ireland remains a land of scholars and scientists, devoted to autonomous study, to the preservation and increase of knowledge, and to the increase of understanding in our pupils and successors. Recently, in a profound discourse at University College Dublin, President Michael D. Higgins insisted that the crisis confronting Ireland is not only economic but also intellectual. At the centre of the intellectual crisis is the idea of a university, now often misunderstood to be principally an instrument of social engineering or an agent for the increase of gross national product. My task today is, with the help of Aristotle, to enquire into the nature of the polity in which we live and the effects of unfettered markets upon the life of the mind. I shall show that the true vision of what a university should be is being obscured or lost, with the consequence that much damage has been done to the quality of civil society. My lecture is a plea for a return to the notion of the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

In thinking about universities and their purposes it is proper to pay attention to John Henry Newman. In the fifth discourse of *The Idea of a University* Newman contemplates knowledge for its own sake and insists that "in many matters, to think correctly is to think like Aristotle; and we are his disciples whether we will or no, though we may not know it" (V.5, p. 83; ed. Svaglic). Guided by Aristotle, whose distinction between useful and liberal knowledge forms the basis of the discourse, Newman insists that "there is a Knowledge which is desirable, though nothing come of it, as being of itself a treasure, and a sufficient remuneration of years of labour" (V.6, p. 86). We are very close here in Newman to the Aristotelian *theōria* of science and scholarship, the contemplative life of the thinker such as leads to the happiness that is in accordance with wisdom. Conversely, we are very far here from the crassly quantitative world of contemporary universities, with their research excellence frameworks, and their teaching quality assessments, and our rulers' monotonous and repetitive calls for value for money from practitioners of subjects beyond price and beyond the constricted perceptions of the idolators of Mammon. It is, alas, no longer invariably true that, in Newman's words in Discourse VI.8 (p. 109), "a University is, according to the usual designation, an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill".

How has it come to be that, within two generations, universities have tended more and more to resemble treadmills? In Britain in 1963 the Robbins Report emphasized the influence of universities upon the

spiritual well-being of nations, and asked that their interests be represented in the highest counsels of government. Now, however, universities in England have been placed under the direction of a Department of Business, and are increasingly subjected to *dirigiste* demands for economic growth and global competitiveness. It is a sign of the times that the University of Leeds recently advertised for a "Director of Exploitation and Commercialisation".

After Robbins, unreasonable expectations were declared by British politicians hoping for palliatives of manifest industrial decline. Mr Harold Wilson, I recall, spoke about the "white heat of a technological revolution"; but academics alone could not provide a panacea for industrial decay, nor should anyone have supposed that they could. Rapid inflation led to the abolition of the University Grants Committee, a body composed of enlightened and responsible scientists and scholars; it had become impossible amidst rising costs to plan more than one year ahead, let alone quinquennially. The replacement bodies became increasingly intrusive; no longer was the UGC there to provide a buffer against political direction and, in accordance with the spirit of the times, commercial interests dominated education policy. Meanwhile the idea of thrift became attenuated: I recall that in the 1970s there was a credit card here in Ireland with the slogan "Access takes the Waiting out of Wanting". From instant gratification of individuals to Weimar-like quantitative easing, institutional credit swaps, and subprime 100% mortgages two and three decades later was not a long step. Emphasis upon the market — a concept venerated but never clearly defined in the epoch of Friedmanite economics — was often explained by invocation of the name Adam Smith.

Smith's name was repeatedly uttered by spokespersons in think-tanks to whom the notion of public enterprise and shared responsibility, Aristotelian *koinōnia*, was utterly alien. We may now wonder, however, how many pages of the Scot's voluminous writings the economic dogmatists and their political patrons such as Sir Keith Joseph had read. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* Smith emphasizes that to elevate self-interest at the expense of other human qualities is not wise. Again and again he insists upon the merits of qualities beneficial to others; prudence is most useful to the individual, but others will benefit from the individual's generosity, kindness, and public-spiritedness. As Amartya Sen has pointed out, Smith saw that unrestrained greed could not bring about the essential civility of a decent society; he condemned the "prodigals and projectors" who took excessive risks in the pursuit of profit, a projector being defined in his time as "a promoter of bubble companies, a speculator, a cheat". Smith concedes that "Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation". Smith says that such a society may subsist; he does not say that it will flourish or prosper or be happy or be virtuous.

We can now turn to an examination of the city-state in Aristotle's *Politics* and its pertinence to our present predicaments. The *Politics* continues the argument of the *Ethics*, morality and political conduct being inseparable in his mind as they should be in ours. (In speaking of morality I claim no moral high ground. I

am no better and no wiser than I was when projected into adult life as a conscript of seventeen and a half some sixty-two years ago. However, like Solon, who was wise, I grow old learning many things. Perhaps therefore I have had plenty of opportunities for seeing where things may have gone wrong.) Two possible objections to the application of Aristotle's doctrines concerning the *polis* to the vast polities of the modern world have to be acknowledged. First, it may be asserted that the very size of modern societies renders discussion of the Greek city-states irrelevant to contemporary political analysis. Aristotle recognized the problem of size: it was one of communication, not of numbers. He asked: "Who can be a general in an excessively populous state? And who can give it orders, unless he has Stentor's voice?" (Stentor in Homer shouted as loudly as fifty men together.) Nowadays communication is much easier — indeed too easy, if one may judge from addiction to mobile telephones in public places and even at the dinner table. Rulers and leaders can speak to us, their subjects, anywhere and everywhere. The problem of communication has, all too intrusively, been solved; but our rulers' power to address us and to intercept our conversations is now in essence oligarchic, not democratic.

A second objection concerns slavery. Aristotle's treatment of slavery is far from satisfactory. He sees that a person free by nature cannot be a natural slave; the individual may for example be a captive in war. But the doctrine of natural slavery cannot but be flawed. He tries to think that slavery must in some instances at least be natural because it was widespread in Greek and ancient society in general; yet he recognizes that nobody should be a slave who does not deserve to be a slave. But by what moral authority can a person be declared to deserve to be a slave? However, let us not be critical of Aristotle in the matter of slavery; instead, let us look at ourselves. We may not speak of slavery much nowadays, but most of us benefit from industrial organizations profiting from servitude. Here, for example, are excerpts from a description of a factory on the Mexican side of the border close to El Paso, Texas:

"A new presence was on the border now; it had gone corporate in a big way. Like magnets, huge *maquilladora* factories lined the border, 'finishing' American products and evading American pollution and labor laws. They attracted young workers, mostly women, from all over Mexico, who moved to the border and lived in sprawling cardboard *colonias* without sanitation, water, or adequate transportation. The turnover was 100 per cent, but central Mexico had wave on wave of workers to send north ... the women worked the factories. ... In 2001, one worker, aged 20, was four minutes late for work at an assembly plant and got shut out. She tried to return home but never made it. She joined the 450 women murdered in Juarez since 1983. ... The indigenous women were modest in the extreme, but to work in the modern culture, they assumed their function was to appear sexy ... there were few models for independent working women who weren't hyperfeminine."

In questions of slavery, let us not point the finger at Aristotle.

When he classifies polities Aristotle thinks of "correct" constitutions. They are three in number: Monarchy, Aristocracy (which he thinks distinct from nobility of birth), and moderated Democracy (also called by him *Politeia*). There are also three deviations: from Monarchy, Tyranny; from Aristocracy, Oligarchy; from

Politeia, radical Democracy. The difference is greatest between Monarchy and its deviation Tyranny. Smaller is the difference between Aristocracy and Oligarchy. Still smaller is the difference of Politeia from Democracy. In a true aristocracy persons of moral and political merit have the most power, because they possess aretē "moral goodness". In a politeia middling citizens bring political stability because they can intercede between rich and poor. In a radical democracy the poor have most power. In an oligarchy power belongs to the rich. A second analysis, one much heeded by Marxists, opposes the rich to the poor. If the constitution favours the rich, then it is an oligarchy. Exponents of the class struggle, however, tend to pay less attention to Aristotle's recommendations concerning the stability maintained by the middling element in a polis.

If we now turn to contemporary political arrangements we see that there are elections; but that does not make them, in Aristotelian terms, democratic or even moderately democratic. Turnouts tend to be low; and the huge cost of being elected, for example to the Presidency of the United States, is a distinctly oligarchic feature: rich individuals and corporate donations contribute, often decisively, to the outcome of electoral campaigns. One consequence is the shifting of power away from elected representatives to persons of economic power. In Europe generally the growth of oligarchy (that is, for Aristotle, the exercise of sectional power by the rich) is now conspicuous. Here are examples, some well known, others less so. We are aware that large bonuses are being paid to bankers whose banks have been bailed out by the taxpayer. Politicians of all parties have shown themselves incapable of stopping the abuse. Again, directors of a British not-for-dividend company — limited by guarantee but reputedly in the private sector, though its shareholders are politically nominated — paid themselves large bonuses at the expense of the taxpayer. Pleas to the magnates of the company from a Secretary of State (himself a very rich man) for "sensitivity" were ignored. Sensitivity has been rare also in the Irish polity: by the end of 2005 the then Taoiseach had received five increases of pay in six months. Again in Ireland, three months before the St Patrick's Day massacre of 2008 a consultant brought in by Anglo-Irish Bank reported upon the composition of the bank's directorate. A few changes were recommended, but the overall estimate was highly favourable. The board was deemed "good to great" and, it was said, "consisted of high-calibre individuals providing effective leadership". At the time the bank was known to be in difficulties, and its collapse led to the insolvency of the Irish Republic. Who was the consultant so firmly established in the arrangements? The answer is the wife of the present British Foreign Secretary. Other examples of the oligarchic linkage of politics and capital can be cited. Distrust of the Blair government began early, with concessions over tobacco advertising made to the opulent — and New Labour-supporting — Bernard Ecclestone. Distrust increased, in the antecedents to the second Iraq war, over nuclear cake from Niger, over the alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction and of their ballistic capability, over the legality of the war itself, over the refusal to hold a coroner's enquiry into the strange death of Dr David Kelly. Distrust grew into contempt by the time of the scandal over MPs' expenses. It is not surprising that Lord Mandelson had asserted, crudely and oxymoronically, "we are intensely relaxed about people being filthy rich". Not even Charles Haughey at his most arrogant would have dared to utter such words in public. His Lordship can truthfully be said to be acting still according to oligarchic form: he has, I understand, been helping to secure rights to mine bauxite from the autocrat of Guinea-Bissau. One may compare the rapid transformation of Mr Blair's sofa government at 10 Downing Street into Tony Blair Associates at Eaton Square, where activities are helpfully supported by a £2 million-per-annum retainer from J.P. Morgan; the number of visits by Mr Blair to Colonel Gaddafi is not known, but it was more than five. There was an attempt to fix an aluminium deal on behalf of the Russian oligarch Mr Oleg Deripaska. No wonder Lord Mandelson is interested in bauxite. Oil is not likely to have been excluded from the agenda, since negotiations by an Irish international oligarch, Mr Peter Sutherland, with the Colonel about concessions for BP were ongoing at the time. Mr Sutherland was responsible for academic honours being given to a son of the Colonel at the London School of Economics. Thus academic institutions are not only required nowadays to do obeisance to the oligarchs of the market: they are, if need be, required to be humiliated by them. Meanwhile Goldman Sachs International — of which Mr Sutherland has been Chairman — has, not without lavish hospitality, persuaded a head of the British Revenue to let the firm off a large sum of overdue interest. Oligarchs assuredly look after their colleagues within the nexus of the political class. Yet ministers have barely begun to wring their hands.

The mention of British Petroleum takes us to Lord Browne, at one time a high functionary of the company. In October 2010 his Lordship — who is, alas, a Cambridge graduate — and his colleagues produced a review entitled Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education. ("Sustainable", we may note, is a buzz word now almost devoid of meaning.) Members of the seven-person committee included not one individual engaged in teaching at a university. (Here in Ireland, by the way, the dearth of university teachers in the Higher Education Authority is conspicuous.) Much protest has been directed against the Browne committee's proposal to cut almost all public funding of teaching and also block-grants, so that universities will have to replace lost income by charging higher fees. The House of Commons on 9th December 2010 voted to remove public funding from teaching and to triple undergraduate fees. It is typical of the oligarchic character of contemporary Britain that no party had included an increase in fees in its election manifesto. When students are "consumers" then they can demand value for their money. If they are not awarded degrees they think they deserve, they can complain — and to whom will they complain if not to the political class? The new system is clearly designed to bring the universities into subjection. What they teach and how they teach it will be at the command of Westminster and Whitehall, and of the Treasury in particular. Consider the following exchange between the novelist Mr Salman Rushdie and the present Prime Minister:

**Rushdie**: "The deep and disproportionately large cuts in the teaching budgets of the arts and humanities departments of British universities have been described by many commentators as evidence of this government's philistinism. Are you not concerned that you are crippling university education in the United Kingdom?"

**Cameron**: "I completely disagree. What we're doing is making sure that universities will be properly funded. What's going to happen is the success of universities, and different courses will depend on the choices that students make. Once students are paying the bills, they will be keener on really good courses, really good lecturers, really good materials. So universities will have to respond to that demand, and we'll see a strengthening of our university sector."

Mr Cameron does not answer the question. The response is diversionary and illogical. There is no mention of Arts and Humanities, and students are to decide what they should be taught because, as payers, they know better than their instructor what is good for themselves. The Prime Minister's words may be worthy of a former member of Carlton Communications, but what kind of morality can have been expounded to him by the philosophy dons in Brasenose College, Oxford? And does Mr Cameron know how many students who chose Business Studies are now stacking shelves for Tesco?

The damage to science and scholarship in treadmill universities will be, and in some places long has been, permanent. There will be no *theōria*. The treadmills have been installed, and the managers of the mills have taken over. Having seen what was coming — little wisdom was needed — I retired myself from the United Kingdom's university system twenty-eight years ago. In future, access to funds will be determined in advance by what is called impact. "Impact" is not explained, but the contexts in which it is now used show the concept to be totally alien to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding in the humanities and sciences. If economic or social usefulness is meant, then let us remember that the spillage from a BP oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico had a disastrously negative economic and social impact.

It is not always appreciated how much damage has already been done to Higher Education in Britain and how much can be done here, notably by economic dogmatism in the Higher Education Authority. Consider one institution in the Russell Group. As a member of the group the university is proudly claiming to be a leading British university in what is advertised, with increasing stridency, to be a globally outstanding system. Under three successive Vice-Chancellors the following subjects have been eliminated, thus ensuring that the institution can no longer be seriously regarded as a university in any traditional meaning of the word: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Italian, Russian, History of Art; a fine department of Geology has also been suppressed. The chief perpetrators of these offences against the Muses have all been knighted — such is the power of Philistia, and so great is the contempt of the British establishment for the principles of civility. The annual salaries of the perpetrators are more than a quarter of a million pounds, not counting perguisites. (One has to ask, however, at a time when Scottish nationalism threatens dismemberment of the United Kingdom, why so many rational citizens are still eager to be horseless knights of the Order of a long vanished British Empire.) Managers in the university have boasted of getting rid of activities no longer deemed useful or cost-effective; but all the subjects named are less expensive than other, favoured courses. As for courses in management, they are aimed at training swivel-eyed, sharply suited individuals to utter the buzz words of business dogmatists. Such downsizers (to use a typical instance of euphemistic jargon) would learn what a Faustian bargain is — if there were a German department still; or they might be aware of what the Muses did to Thamyris — if there were still Hellenists to expound the Iliad. Attempts to quantify the Humanities betray a lack of educated civility, what Aristotle called paideia. It is, says Aristotle in the Nicomachean Ethics, necessary to look for accuracy in each subject to the appropriate degree that the nature of the matter allows. Probable reasoning is no more acceptable from a mathematician than logical proofs are to be demanded from an orator. Each individual judges well that which he knows, and is a good judge of those things. In British government from top to bottom, and not only in Britain, attempts at quantification, grading, testing prevail, because they are seen as techniques of control. One deplorable consequence is that researchers are no longer trusted to search for knowledge; the research councils instead direct them into subjects suited to policies prescribed from above. The consequences for original thought in both the Sciences and what is left of the Humanities are debilitating. Top-down prescriptions may seem attractively neat to bureaucrats, such as functionaries in the Irish HEA, but they can paralyse originality and insight, Aristotelian *theōria*. It is clear that Science Foundation Ireland has no respect for *theōria*; it lately put a stop to all funding of research in pure mathematics.

Amidst all the talk of value for money, it is comforting to look at examples of *theōria* such as would be recognizable by Aristotle. At the beginning of the *Metaphysics* he shows how humans desire to know, and are driven by the beauties of nature to wonder at the world. So, recognizing their ignorance, they search for knowledge. Explanation comes first from myth making, and in some senses, Aristotle says, the lover of myth is a philosopher, a lover of wisdom (982b18). Physical explanations began with the search for primary entities (and so they continue at CERN and elsewhere), Thales having been the first of physicists in his supposing water to be primary (983b21). Aristotle himself had the sense of wonder when, for example, he studied sea-urchins in the lagoon at Pyrrha in Lesbos. His patron at the time was Hermias the ruler of Atarneus. Hermias, being a person of civility, made no attempt to engage in beancounting of work in Lesbos, or indeed to impose teaching assessments in the lecture room in Skepsis. Aristotle and his friends were trusted to study topics for their own sake. Likewise in our own time should scholars and scientists be trusted.

I thought of Aristotle at Pyrrha in the course of reading a marvellous book by Richard Fortey, *Survivors: The Animals and Plants that Time has Left Behind* (London, 2011). This is a beautifully written study of living creatures who have endured with little change from remote geological time. The earliest horseshoe crabs (*Limulus Polyphemus*) were contemporary with the trilobites, and the trilobites became extinct some 260 million years ago. Fortey, guided by American colleagues, went to the coast of Delaware late one May to witness the swarming of the crabs. In an inspired passage Fortey describes what he saw and thought in the darkness of the Bay:

"Limulus and its relatives take us back to the far, far distant days when the land surface was barren of larger organisms. In the darkness along Delaware Bay the scratching percussion of the crabs provides an unmusical accompaniment of an imaginary journey backwards in time: to an era ... when the land was stark and life was cradled in the sea; a time when a myriad trilobites scuttled in the mud alongside the forebears of the horseshoe crabs. The trundling, heaving, inelegant not-so-crabs along Delaware Bay are messengers from deep geological time."

Here indeed is Aristotelian wonder. Study of the crabs may bring environmental guidance to the fishing industry of Delaware Bay, but that was not the purpose of Fortey's *theōria*.

Wonder has also been present in the mathematical physics of recent times. It is a striking instance of *theōria* when by means of equations a natural philosopher is able to suggest or to predict the existence of elementary entities. Such a discovery was P.A.M. Dirac's mathematical revelation in 1927 of the existence of anti-matter during his search for an equation describing the electron. The equation, once found, entailed the existence of a particle with the same mass and opposite charge. The existence was demonstrated five years later in the United States by Carl Anderson, who discovered the positron.

The sense of wonder is significant in education. We are in danger of driving it out by constant testing and grading from nursery school onwards. (It is said that performances in nursery sandpits are now subject to assessment.) Wonder is also present in the Humanities, though again the Aristotelian joy in knowledge (*epistēmē*) for its own sake is likewise being diminished by the power-hungry operators of treadmills. There are no Nobel prizes for stratigraphical interpretation, ceramic typology, historical explanation, philosophical analysis, chronological synchronisms, textual criticism, literary judgement. But the intellectual pleasure of sitting down to work, such as Aristotle described in his *Protrepticus*, is as lively in the Humanities as it is in the Sciences. Rarely do the Muses smile; but when they do, the delight can be intense.

Consider the extraordinary problems presented by early Irish texts. The study of them deters all but the intellectually stalwart. Yet such scholarship must be fostered because it is vital to the historical perceptions of Irishness. The erosion of Early Irish studies in language and literature is deplorable: it should be a cause of national lamentation. In Greek or Latin textual criticism, analogously, there is no mathematical guidance and we lack literary autographs of Classical authors. Admission of doubt, the *ars nesciendi*, must always be present to the mind, but where a text is corrupt there is no merit in printing it as though it were sound. It is foolish to be opposed to all conjectural criticism on principle. Conjectures may be refuted, but they can enhance understanding of disputed passages. Such understanding adds nothing to GNP, but it is essential to the life of the mind in its searching for facts (it was, I think, Maynard Keynes who remarked that comment is free but facts are sacred). A minute fact may be an addition to civility, to the life of Aristotelian *paideia*, but there is no connexion with "impact", or national solvency, or competitiveness. Those who strive to live the theoretic life have other things to think about. On the other hand, those academicians in the Humanities who have fostered the delusion that their activities bring, first and foremost, quantifiable economic benefits have betrayed their calling, even if they have gathered political honours on the way. They have yielded to what in some European universities is now called *productivisme et arrivisme*.

Aristotle's God contemplates himself, but it is not possible for us continuously to engage in *theōria*. When, however, we devote ourselves to *theōria*, says Aristotle, our activity expresses what is god-like in us; to my mind such contemplation, for example in a library or a Museum or a laboratory — that is to say, in a shrine of the Muses — is not far distant from prayer. It must be, in some degree, a godly activity, and it brings the purest happiness, as Aristotle says in the *Ethics* (NE 1177a17). There is too little room allowed to religious contemplation in the life of the mind these days; the increasing exclusion of divinity from the syllabus at all

levels of education is intensely worrying. There has been, as Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in *The Great Partnership* has pointed out, "an alarming erosion of religious liberties in recent years. The Attorney General of Massachusetts forced the Catholic Charities of Boston to close their adoption services because of their principled objection to same-sex adoptions." The Rabbi laments:

"In Britain, also, an airport worker was forbidden to wear a crucifix in public, a teacher was dismissed for talking to a sick pupil about prayer, and an officer of the Royal Society was forced to resign for suggesting that teachers, if asked, should be prepared to discuss the idea of creation."

It is clear that the Royal Society should bear in mind the words — quoted by the Rabbi — of a Fellow of the Society, Abdus Salam, spoken when he received in 1979 a Nobel Prize for his part in devising the Standard Model of particle physics:

"The Holy Prophet of Islam emphasized that the quest for knowledge and sciences is obligatory upon every Muslim, man and woman. He enjoined his followers to seek knowledge even if they had to travel to China in its search. Here clearly he had scientific rather than religious knowledge in mind, as well as an emphasis on the internationalism of the scientific quest."

We are not far in these words from the spirit of Anaxagoras, who is quoted with approval by Aristotle in the *Eudemian Ethics*: in reply to the question for what reason one should choose to be rather than not to be, he replied "to contemplate the heaven and the order inherent in the whole world". When we contemplate the sum of things, *tade panta*, we have also to ask how they came to be. So it was that Kepler wrote to a friend that through his effort God was being celebrated in astronomy. So also was Newton impelled to add the Scholium Generale to the second edition of the *Principia*. So again may we think about the discovery of the microwave background by Robert Wilson and Arno Penzias at Bell Laboratories in 1964; is it not wondrous that we have been enabled to sense in the microwaves an electrical resonance of the Big Bang? And we may take delight in complementing, not contradicting, evolutionary biology in the study of mathematical beauty in things animate and inanimate. Consider the arms of the marvellous Cartwheel galaxy revealed by photographs taken by means of the Hubble Space Telescope. Or consider the mathematical beauty of the Nautilus shells, the spiral dwelling places of creatures whose pedigree can be traced back to the top of the Cambrian some five hundred million years ago. No great power of intellect is required to contemplate the thought: since mathematical concepts partake of the eternal, is not the Creator also a Geometer? Here I am reminded of words uttered by Dirac in his early sixties:

"It seems to be one of the fundamental features of nature that the fundamental physical laws are described in terms of a mathematical theory of great beauty and power, needing quite a high standard of mathematics for one to understand it. You may wonder: Why is nature constructed along these lines? One can only answer that our present knowledge seems to show that nature is so constructed. We simply have to accept it. One could perhaps describe the situation by saying that God is a mathematician of a very high order, and He used very advanced mathematics in constructing the universe. Our feeble attempts at mathematics

enable us to understand a bit of the universe, and as we proceed to develop higher and higher mathematics we can hope to understand the universe better."

In many universities the most brutal attacks have been directed against small departments. Yet the British Prime Minister presumes to assert that students are being given greater choice. In the distorting logic of managerialism, "small" entails worthless, because not cost-effective. But worth is not cost, and the merit of a subject cannot be estimated according to the number of persons studying it or to the number of items appearing in annual bibliographies. In a letter to Alexander, Aristotle urged the king to be a benefactor of cities both large and small: "the gods are equal for both large and small and so, since the Graces are goddesses, their gratitude towards you will be equal on behalf of cities both great and small" (F.656 Rose). In the market economy of capital and management, and their dependants in Kildare Street and on the North Wall, grace is not the most obvious quality to be discerned. A British cabinet minister, educated at Cambridge, spoke with contempt of medieval studies; but would not, for example, learning about the coexistence (the convivencia) of the three Abrahamic religions in medieval Iberia be helpful in the search for easing of religious tensions in contemporary European cities? The same minister asked a student of Turkic central Asian philology why he was not doing something useful. Given the strong sense of historical tradition among Kazaks, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Kirghyz, the question was not only graceless but also stupid. We have come a long way downhill from Newman's remark in his eighth discourse (10): "... it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain". In the ideology of unregulated competitiveness there are always losers; and many of the losers suffer pain, material and mental. The banker at Barclays who declared that the time for remorse was over was doubly mistaken, first because he had yet to show remorse and secondly because he was content to perpetuate the scandal of huge bonuses.

What then is the future of universities? Agents of government such as the HEA in Ireland will persist in the misconception that universities are semi-state entities. The institutions that are well capitalized will survive, though in diminished capacity. Standards will be hard to maintain. At Oxford recently a college at the top of the Norrington tables reported that more than half its candidates in Finals were awarded first-class honours. That is a proportion inconceivable half a century ago. I have been told, in explanation, that undergraduates work harder now. My principal memory of my ablest contemporaries was of their working very hard; I tried to work hard, but the thought remains that I was fortunate to obtain the class I was given. Nor is Oxford unique: at St Andrews in 1970 one quarter of students received Firsts and Upper Seconds. In 2010, 82 per cent of students did. It cannot be that, in two generations, evolution has caused all students to be more than twice as intelligent. It is significant that visiting examiners from Britain have sometimes asserted that Irish examiners are too severe (long live Irish severity, say I).

Some universities, because they will lose their block-grants, will be bankrupted, and the unwillingness of potential students to become debtors through increased fees will hasten the process (the possibility of closing some British universities had been considered, not without relish, by Sir Keith Joseph three

decades ago). Some former polytechnics will become polytechnics again, an honourable state from which they should not have departed; let us bear their fate in mind when debating the future of Irish Institutes of Technology. It is a strange feature of modern governance that changing the name is assumed to change the quality of something. After the nuclear accident in 1957 in Cumberland, Windscale suddenly became Sellafield — and the pollution and radiation at the site rapidly became a non-event (though not for Ireland). Similarly, there is constant managerial talk of excellence in universities and in industry — in England, Research Assessment Exercises have become Research Excellence Frameworks — but to boast is not to be excellent; and those scholars and scientists who, lacking tenure, nowadays are easy targets for downsizing know that all

too often repetition of the word "excellence" is deceitful, but they dare not say so. I beg the Federation to fight hard to save tenure in all Irish universities.

What then are the prospects for *theōria*? Top-down prescription of targets and subjects will not be a guarantee of originality and insight. In an enduring recession it will become increasingly difficult to pay for scientific research. Long before the collapse of the markets in 2008 there were warnings about costs of fundamental research. A striking example is to be seen at Waxahachie in Texas. There, seventeen holes in the ground are air shafts leading to fourteen miles of abandoned tunnel — all that is left of Desertron, a superconducting supercollider from which the United States Congress withdrew funds in October 1993 after \$2 billion had already been spent. The estimated total cost of the rival to the Large Hadron Collider at CERN was deemed to be excessive. In these islands competition for funds has already done much to weaken the friendships that should exist between colleagues engaged in the quest for truth. Demands for research papers may weaken yet more the quality of lecturing. Some of the best new ideas I have heard in lectures were not put into print until years afterwards; but oral publication is beyond the comprehension of the quantifying assessors. Socrates would not be given a post in a European university these days.

Yet there is hope. Newton's fundamental thoughts about gravitation came to him when he was at Woolsthorpe, away from Cambridge in the plague year. Mendel found numerical principles of genetics when studying beans in his Moravian monastery. When Einstein published the Special Theory he was working in the patent office at Bern. Ramanujan took a lowly paid job in Madras port because it gave him leisure to pursue pure mathematics; his leisure was Aristotelian *scholē*. When Michael Ventris found Greek in Linear B he was not working in a university. Darwin, after his travels, contemplated and wrote at Downe. Our own William Rowan Hamilton had his insight into quaternions when walking from Dunsink, near Broombridge. Let us hope then that *theōria* will be able to escape from the tyranny of managerialism.

For leisure to engage in contemplation, individuals and institutions need what Aristotle called *autarkeia*, self-sufficiency. Institutions of learning, in order to escape *dirigisme*, have to be adequately capitalized. Finding moneys for general purposes by securing capital and income is, however, a most difficult task for the searcher after benefactions, especially in an era of economic turmoil. But generosity there is: it is part of the friendly *koinōnia* that holds society together. Consider the magnanimity of Chuck Feeney, for example. In an Aristotelian perspective we may compare the ancient *koinōnia* of *phratriai* and *thiasoi*;

Aristotle saw such gatherings as essential components of a serenely functioning polis. The most significant component, however, was the communal friendship of husband, wife, and the other members of the household. Most modern households differ from the patriarchal, slave-owning households of the ancients, but the familial household remains an essential part of a serene society. Since the 'sixties our political arrangements have emphasized individualism, and much happiness has been brought about by greater personal freedoms. But, Aristotle points out, the individual is azvx; he or she resembles a loose piece on a draughts board. In recent years it has been more difficult, as family and matrimonial or domestic ties become weaker, to maintain a society that is both stable and serene. These are problems for which there has been a failure to find palliatives. Mr David Cameron, or his speech writers, praised an ill-defined "Big" Society; but after last summer's riots he was impelled to talk about a "broken" or "sick" society. An Aristotelian student of the familial household could well ask how many of the young rioters came from orderly households. Aristotle rightly noted that in the reproductive arrangements of Plato's Republic love of children would become watery because there were no determinate fathers and mothers. I am reminded of an expression used in the United States, "divorce orphans"; it is applied to children shuttling, often over long distances, between two households, and recognizing that neither is a home. Rootless children can become disturbed children. They may then be tempted into communal violence; into what Aristotle calls tarachē, a tumult to be distinguished from stasis because it is not necessarily motivated by political aims. We may see more *tarachē* in future, and more barely teachable undergraduates. The non-violent campers of the Occupy movement outside St Paul's Cathedral in London had no clearly stated aims, but it was obvious that they disliked the excesses of deregulated capitalism. With greater disruption, the prospects for contemplative science and scholarship will not be good. The chief hope of contemplators and teachers will be the fostering of philia in our private study and in our sharing of ideas with colleagues and pupils and in our responsibilities as citizens.

There is too little time for contemplation in our world of instant profit and loss, instant communication, instant command and control, instant rebuttal, instant sound-bites. Let us heed Dante who in *Inferno* (4.131) saw the master of those who know seated in the midst of the philosophical family. In *Il convivio* the poet compares the Aristotelian practical and contemplative lives with the story of Martha and Mary in St Luke (10:38–42). Martha was cumbered about with much serving. She asked Jesus to bid Mary her sister, who was sitting at his feet, to help her; but Jesus in answer said "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Our universities used to allow students and scholars and scientists always to choose the good part; but the times for contemplation are rarer now. It may become necessary to reinvent traditional universities; the task will be long and costly, but the blessings — moral, mental, spiritual — will be beyond price.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Linda Grant Niemann, Railroad Noir: The American West at the End of the Twentieth Century (Bloomington, 2010), pp. 53–54.

#### **D. RESOLUTIONS 2012**

## 1 "Rationalisation" of Higher Education

This ADC notes that in the aftermath of the Hunt Report there is much talk about "rationalising" higher education.

IFUT asserts that, as the pre-eminent representative body of academic staff in the Universities and Colleges of Education, we have a right to be fully and genuinely engaged in the design of any such rationalisation plans.

Furthermore, we declare that rationalisation must not be based on considerations of mere administrative or bureaucratic convenience, but must be grounded on the premise of enhancing education while facilitating and supporting the learning environment for students and staff.

## 2 Teacher Union Unity

This ADC congratulates the General Secretaries of ASTI, IFUT, INTO and TUI for the close working relationship which has been developed between the unions in the past few years.

In emphasising the positive potential of the goodwill which currently exists between us, this ADC urges the four unions to explore practical benefits which could be grown out of this goodwill, e.g. benefit packages for members, pooling of resources, sharing of information and research etc.

#### 3 Academic Freedom

This ADC deplores the specific threat posed to academic freedom by short-term employment contracts in universities and colleges. While the limited use of short-term contracts for specific purposes is not, in itself, necessarily problematic for academic freedom, any attempts to eliminate secure tenure as the basic form of academic contract do represent a threat to the principle of freedom of intellectual enquiry and expression.

At the level of the institution, imposed constraints on the ability to offer contracts which include security of tenure also threaten the capacity of the university to provide an environment which is conducive to academic freedom.

#### 4 Investment in Higher Education

IFUT believes that while it is a source of pride that we have higher than ever participation levels in higher education it is also a source of concern that the underfunding of the Sector must inevitably threaten the quality of the education that these students experience.

A lack of political will to find the financial resources necessary to fund our Higher Education Sector adequately will lead inexorably not just to an undermining of standards but also will restrict participation rates including at second-chance and adult education levels.

This ADC therefore calls upon the Minister for Education to fight harder to get his Government colleagues and the Troika to recognise higher education as an investment and to finance it accordingly.

#### 5 Representation on Governing Bodies

In the light of a review of university governance being undertaken by the Minster for Education and also of the request by the Minister to the IUA to comment on this matter by the end of March 2012, the ADC directs the union to engage with the Minister to ensure that IFUT is centrally involved in this review with the aim, inter alia, of ensuring no dilution of staff representation on governing bodies. This representation was hard won and has proved its worth in the 15 or so years since the Universities Act.

#### 6 Equality

This conference commits to ensuring that equality is a core value and key focus of IFUT's response to the economic crisis. IFUT should consider how the growth of "atypical work" impacts on our members and specifically on women. Arguments that there is no financial or political room for assistance to address this issue must be rejected by IFUT.

#### 7 Fixed-Term & Permanent Staff Contracts

That IFUT should look in depth at the details of Fixed-Term and Permanent Staff Contracts, and take action to ensure new appointees are not unfairly and unknowingly disadvantaged in comparison with existing IFUT members.

## 8 Changes to Contracts

IFUT deplores the fact that, in the past, the terms of Contracts issued to new staff have incorporated significant changes, by comparison with those of existing staff, without notice of that fact. It demands that our employers exercise their duty of care and advise staff to seek IFUT's advice on such changes before accepting a contract.

## 9 Breach of 'Croke Park' Agreement

This ADC notes that TCD has enforced compulsory redundancies against three members of IFUT. This constitutes a very major rowing back on the Government's commitment against such redundancies in return for which IFUT members have given significant productivity and other concessions under the Public Service Agreement.

We note that this issue is now with the Labour Court for adjudication. We compliment the General Secretary and the IFUT Executive for their handling of this issue to date.

This ADC mandates the Executive and the General Secretary to continue to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the promises given to us under the 'Croke Park' Agreement are honoured.

If the Labour Court process does not deliver an acceptable solution to this issue we mandate the Executive to engage in a widespread consultation process to decide if members should be balloted on the question of remaining within the 'Croke Park' Agreement.

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