

Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile

Irish Federation of University Teachers

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“MINISTER’S ACTION CAUSED 15 MONTHS OF NEEDLESS HARDSHIP TO FIXED-TERM STAFF”

In an important ruling, the Labour Court has determined that two Fixed-Term Contract Lecturers, who lost their jobs when the Department of Education closed St Catherine’s College of Education for Home Economics, must be paid the same ex-gratia redundancy as their permanent colleagues.

The Labour Court also awarded additional compensation of €2500 each to the two women.

The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT), which fought the case on behalf of their members, has warmly welcomed the ruling.

“One notable aspect of this case”, said Mike Jennings, General Secretary of IFUT, “is that I personally made direct pleas to the then Minister, Mary Hanafin, not to embark on this illegal discrimination. Regrettably, the Minister each time rebuffed our representations”.

The Labour Court has formally noted that the Barrister who represented the Department of Education at the Labour Court Hearing “rightly conceded that the stated position of the Minister is unsustainable in law”.

“While we are naturally delighted that the position taken by IFUT on behalf of our members has been fully vindicated in law, nevertheless it is disgraceful that Minister Hanafin’s unsustainable decisions should have caused over 15 months of needless hardship to two hard-working Lecturers”, said Mr Jennings.

“It is not as if the Minister did not know what she was doing. I personally wrote to her on several occasions and each time I gave chapter and verse as

to why what she was proposing amounted to illegal discrimination”, said Mr Jennings.

“By way of adding insult to injury, the Department compounded this injustice by engaging a large team of expensive lawyers to fight this case and to drag it out for as long as humanly possible”.

“It is said that ‘all’s well that ends well’”, said Mr Jennings, “but it is also true that ‘justice delayed is justice denied’”.

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Note:

The full text of this Labour Court Determination is available from IFUT (e-mail: ifut@eircom.net) and is available on the IFUT Website, www.ifut.ie.

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