

Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile/Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

Irish Federation of University Teachers/Union of Students in Ireland

PRESS STATEMENT

9 OCTOBER 2009

USI and IFUT Condemn Government's Third-Level Recruitment Embargo

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) have condemned the Government's recruitment embargo in third-level institutes.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) demanded that, this year, all Higher Education institutes cut employment by 3 per cent below 2008 levels. Since then, USI and IFUT have been inundated by a litany of reports from colleges that staff moratoriums have directly adversely affected their students and teachers.

The ban has affected the academic quality, as well as administrative efficiency, of colleges throughout the country. The quality of frontline services in Higher Education institutes has also suffered because of the embargo.

We are now calling on the Department of Finance to lift the third-level recruitment restrictions to prevent the quality of education provided to the students of Ireland being damaged any further.

USI President, Peter Mannion, said:

“These cuts are devastating students' experiences at college. Given the fact that some of these staffing cutbacks are in the student services sector, our members feel the affects acutely.

“Despite paying a large registration fee for student services, these services have been cut back. Students are not getting any value for money, and when considering the huge increase in the registration fee this year, this is grossly unfair.

“We call on the Department of Finance to lift the moratorium in colleges due to its devastating affect on students, lecturers, staff and the institutions.”

Mike Jennings, IFUT's General Secretary, said:

“The Irish Federation of University Teachers shares completely the frustration expressed by USI: In colleges up and down the country IFUT members can see all too plainly the damage that is already being done to the very fabric of our Higher Education system.

“The Minister for Education, I am sad to say, does not even know the damage he is doing.

“This is evidenced by his crass PR stunt over the summer when he announced not just one but two new initiatives to provide college places for unemployed people, while simultaneously withdrawing from colleges the capacity to appoint the very staff who should teach such students.

“My members are finding it doubly hard to cope. Not only are they vilified daily in the media as overpaid public servants while struggling to provide an education to students with vastly limited resources, but, to add insult to injury, the man who is supposed to be their political champion demonstrates almost daily his cluelessness of what is happening in his name on the ground.”

For further comment or clarification, please contact:

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