



**Cónaidhm Éireannach na Múinteoirí Ollscoile
Irish Federation of University Teachers**

PRESS RELEASE

**HEA candour welcome but misplaced,
says IFUT**

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The Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT) has welcomed the candour of the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority, who has warned higher education staff of plans to make fundamental changes to their contracts, to close courses in colleges and extend the academic year radically.

IFUT General Secretary, Mike Jennings, however, warned that the HEA's rôle should instead be to seek to expand education access at a time of increasing demand and to assist in plans for economic recovery.

"A less candid man would not have been so open about cutback threats at a time when academics are voting on the 'Croke Park Proposals' which, if accepted, would give the Government a blank cheque to impose all of these things without any meaningful regard for the rights of staff," Mike Jennings said.

"These proposals are appalling (and appallingly unthought out) but at least now it is a case of 'forewarned is forearmed'. I am sure that all IFUT members will now understand more than ever the necessity to reject the 'Croke Park Proposals'", said Mr Jennings.

Turning to the actual HEA proposal, Mr Jennings warned that the analysis was "more sensational than thorough".

"How can you possibly say that our education system lacks critical mass at a time when we have historically high numbers of students in the system?

"How can you possibly argue, just when the points race is beginning to start up again because of the imbalance between student places

and demand, that now is the time to start shutting down courses and colleges?

“It would be much more consistent with the rôle of the HEA were it to lobby hard for more funds for our seriously under-funded higher education system, rather than attacking that system and asking it to shrink itself,” said Mr Jennings.

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