

Invitation to a One-Day Conference

Higher Education Funding in Ireland: Drawing on the International Experience

Renehan Hall, Maynooth University, September 30, 2015

In 2014, the Minister for Education established an Expert Group on Future Funding for Higher Education in response to serious concerns about the adequacy of current funding levels and demographic trends that indicate that funding demands on the exchequer are likely to increase in the coming years. The faculty of Social Science at Maynooth University – and its constituent departments of Economics, Sociology and Education – has convened a one-day conference to help inform the debate on how higher education should be funded. As well as general concerns about funding adequacy, we have a particular interest in the interaction between funding mechanisms and differential access to higher education along socioeconomic lines. Each of the international speakers has conducted extensive research on the consequences of alternative higher education funding schemes and we hope to learn from their research, as well as that of the local speakers and discussants.

Registration is free, but please email Aedin.Doris@nuim.ie if you plan to attend

The conference organisers are grateful for the funding provided by Maynooth University's Faculty of Social Science, with assistance from the departments of Economics, Finance & Accounting, Education and Sociology

Speaker Biographies

Delma Byrne is Lecturer in Maynooth University with joint appointments to the Departments of Sociology and Education. Her research interests focus on social stratification in education and the market. Much of this research has focused on issues of higher education, with regard to access policy, student experiences and persistence. She is particularly interested in the role of education policy in reducing inequalities along the lines of social class, gender, migration and disability. As well as publishing widely in both Sociology and Education journals, she has written several policy reports for institutions such as the Department of Education and Skills and the Higher Education Authority.

Bruce Chapman is a Professor of Economics at the Australian National University. He is a labour and education economist, having published over a hundred articles in the areas of training, wage determination, higher education financing, unemployment, labour market program evaluation, the economics of crime and schooling. He has had extensive direct policy experience, including the motivation and design of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 1988, as a senior economic adviser to Prime Minister Paul Keating from 1994-1996, and as a consultant to the OECD, the World Bank, and the governments of around 10 countries, mostly in the area of university financing.

Claire Crawford is a Research Fellow of the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Assistant Professor of Economics at the University of Warwick. Her research interests focus on the determinants of educational attainment and HE participation; she is particularly interested in how education policy can be used to improve the outcomes of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and has played a leading role in the evaluations of a number of education programmes aiming to do just that, including on behalf of the Department of Education. She has written several detailed analyses of the UK funding system, both as it currently operates and of forthcoming changes to it.

Sara Goldrick-Rab is Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In over a dozen projects, she has examined the efficacy and distributional implications of financial aid policies, welfare reform, transfer practices, and a range of interventions aimed at increasing college attainment among marginalized populations. She also provides extensive service to local, state, and national communities, working directly with governors, state legislators, non-profit organizations and Congressional staff and has testified about her work on college affordability before the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Rory O'Donnell is Director of the National Economic and Social Council of Ireland (NESC) and was previously Jean Monet Professor of Business at the Smurfit Business School, University College Dublin. In his work as Economist and later Director at NESC he has prepared the analysis that underpins Ireland's social partnership approach to economic and social policy and has written extensively on partnership. He has worked with the Expert Group on Future Funding Options for Higher Education, contributing to its Consultation Papers.

Conference Schedule

9-9.15 Introduction: Philip Nolan, President, Maynooth University

Morning Session: Research Papers

9.15-10: Claire Crawford, University of Warwick and Institute for Fiscal Studies

Higher Education Funding in England: Implications for Students, Universities and the Government

10-10.15: Discussant: Olive Sweetman, Maynooth University

10.15-11: Sara Goldrick-Rab, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Making College Both Affordable and Accessible: Lessons from the United States

11-11.15: Discussant: Emer Smyth, Economic and Social Research Institute

11.15-11.30: Coffee break

11.30-12.15: Bruce Chapman, Australian National University

Conceptual Issues in an Understanding of Student Loans

12.15-12.30: Discussant: Kevin Denny, University College Dublin

12.30-1.30: Lunch

Afternoon Session: Policy Issues

1.30-1.50: Rory O'Donnell, National Economic and Social Council

The Approach Adopted by the Current Expert Group on the Future Funding of Higher Education

1.50-2.15: Delma Byrne, Maynooth University

The Policy Framework for Higher Education and Implications for Access

2.15-3: Bruce Chapman, ANU

The International Experience of Student Loans: Lessons for Ireland

3-3.30: Open Discussion

