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## IRISH FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN Report for the QWGA-AGM January 2017

This has been an exceptionally busy year for the IrFUW. On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2016 the IrFUW held its International Day at the Kildare St and University Club in Dublin. We were privileged to have in attendance the Graduate Women International (GWI) President, Catherine Bell. Catherine spoke of the vision she had for the GWI, of her rebranding and modernising it and taking it forward to a position where its profile has been strengthened and it is in a position to attract corporate sponsorship for its projects. The GWI board had voted to reinvigorate the GWI and to spend the money in its reserves by significantly increasing advocacy, to make GWI a 'global voice'. The name of the International Federation of University Women was changed to Graduate Women International. While the GWI is not a business, it is considered that it needs to be run as such, and to produce annual reports, brochures, business cards etc. She emphasised the importance of projects. Five projects were embarked upon by GWI including Teachers for Rural futures. The QWGA has raised £1,200 for this project during the year. Members expressed concern over the resolution at the forthcoming Triennial Conference in South Africa to double the GWI annual fees. However the view was expressed that due to the work carried out in GWI over the past three years that there should be fundraising rather than an increase in subscriptions to achieve this.

Following Catherine Bell's presentation the Triennial Meeting took place. Mary Morrissey, past President of DUWGA became President of the

IrFUW for the triennium 2016-2019. She received the chain office from the outgoing president Marion Gibson.

### **Council Meetings**

A meeting of the IrFUW Council was held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Under discussion was the format of the May Triennial meeting, the IrFUW rota of office bearers and the finance required to meet IrFUW increased and subsequent costs. As there was no clear agreement regarding the proposed increase of 35 Swiss francs for the subscription fees by the GWI, views of the different regional associations committees were requested. On 23<sup>rd</sup> July Dr Marion Gibson, Angela Kelly and Oonagh Ferrity attended at the standing Committee in Dublin. The external resolutions for the GWI conference in South Africa were discussed with a view to informing our voting delegates. It was recommended by the members that the proposal to double the subscription fees to GWI was unanimously to vote no. The decision to change the name of IrFUW was deferred to a later date. The draft amendments to the IrFUW handbook were discussed and members to forward their ideas.

On 27<sup>th</sup> November 2017 the Standing committee met in Dublin. Amendments to the IrFUW handbook were discussed. The financial position in relation to IrFUW finances and the increase in the GWI subscriptions was discussed. The opinion of the the IrFUW members from UCD and Trinity was that for the first year the increase would be paid out of the association's reserves. QWGA will look into the possibility of the QGA paying the increased amount for 2017 provided the members vote for the increase. Galway do not have any reserves and they will discuss with their members how to fund the increase. All IrFUW council members will put before their members the resolution of GWI subscription increase at their AGMs. The IrFUW has proposed a joint project for an Irish version of Hegg Hoffett – Advocacy and mentoring support for provision of education for migrant graduates and children. QUB is to spearhead this project.

### **Public Speaking Competition**

The final, organized by Margaret O'Dowd of the Galway Association and hosted by the UCD Association, took place on Saturday 12 March in the Quinn Building. The winning team who won the Poppy Corbett Perpetual

Trophy, was St Leo's College, Carlow, for UCD. The runner up team who received the Ann Budd Memorial plate was Cola Isle Eide, from Salthill for the Galway Association. The best speaker, who was awarded the Joyce Craig cup was from Friends School Lisburn for the Queens Association. The adjudicators were Senator Marie Louise O'Donnell and Helen O'Colmain. In 2017 the coordinators will be Queens – Anne Hunter and TWG will host the final. The date of the final will be 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

### **Conferences**

The Annual IrFUW conference was hosted by University College Dublin at Buswell's Hotel, Dublin on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2016. The theme was "How Far Can She Go: Class, Glass and Culture". It was well attended by members from all the Associations. The Irish Federation was honoured by the presence of Sabina Higgins who delivered the opening address, and Senator Marie-Louise O'Donnell who was the speaker at the conference dinner. Delegates enjoyed presentations by eminent speakers from the areas of education, research and developing-world aid, and an interesting panel discussion took place where the speakers were joined by representatives from the UCD staff, and students' union.

### **New Associations**

This year two new associations were launched at Dublin Institute of Technology (DTI) and Ulster University (UU). Both new member associations will seek to recruit a minimum of twenty members and establish their partnerships with IrFUW.

### **Website**

The IrFUW website has gone from strength to strength providing an excellent channel of communication for members. It has an enlightening entertaining and informative newsletter which is produced five times throughout the year. All members of QWGA can access the special password protected area reserved for members only by contacting any member of the QWGA committee. This contains reports of meetings, papers, photographs and details of events and conferences. Throughout the year the QWGA committee members have contributed to articles for the newsletter.

## **Events**

Galway Women Graduates Association Annual Lunch at Ardilaun Hotel on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Trinity Women Graduates annual lunch on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2016 took place in the Royal St George's Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire. QWGA annual dinner took place at the Great hall QUB on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016.