



# Research career paths must be developed

**There are serious issues facing the sustainability of the Government's Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation's plan to double the number of researchers in the absence of real research career paths. This was stated at an international workshop on the funding of high-innovation, high-risk research in Europe held in Trinity College late last month.**

"It is impossible to build a knowledge economy on short-term contracts. There is a need to improve the recognition, remuneration, conditions of employment and career-development opportunities for Ireland's thousands of contract researchers," said Dr. Alison Donnelly, Chairperson of the Trinity Research Staff Association (TRSA).

"Ireland's challenge will be to attract a large number of researchers from abroad and will therefore need to develop an attractive

research career structure," said Dr. Conor O'Carroll, Head of Research Office, Irish Universities Association (IUA). "We do have the opportunity to put into place a sustainable system and the IUA plans to do this through interaction with key stakeholders and leverage funding from the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund".

The workshop was part of an EU Framework Programme 6 project called NEST-PROMISE (Promoting Research and Optimal Methodology and Impacts Supported by Experience)

and brought together targeted audiences willing to exchange experiences and pursue the type of activities that can be categorised under 'New and Emerging Science and Technology' (NEST).

Prof. Patrick Prendergast, Director of the Trinity Centre for Bioengineering, who co-ordinated the workshop said "NEST-PROMISE aims to establish a pan-European Network of existing national and international NEST-like research programmes and contacts. It also aims to encourage the introduction of NEST elements into

National Research Programmes through raising awareness and exchanging experiences drawing on best practices of national success stories for the scope of contact, information and resource sharing. This is the purpose of the Dublin workshop, which is part of a series of three regional workshops being held in Europe. The first of these was held in Pisa, Italy in September 2006, and the final one will be in Warsaw, Poland in April 2007."