The Centre for Women in Science & Engineering Research
Trinity College Dublin

‘Tinkering, tailoring and transforming’ an academic organisation

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Structural Change in universities and research institutions means making them more gender aware, thereby modernising the organisational culture.

Important implications for:
1. Equal opportunities
2. Full use of talent
3. The appeal of scientific careers
4. Quality of scientific research

Implies systemic, integrated, long term approaches rather than piecemeal short term measures
Essential Elements to Structural Change

Knowing your institution
Securing top-level support
Generating effective management practices

What Trinity College did initially (2005)
- Data collection
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Analysis of previous reports
- Internet survey
Problems faced by Research Institutions

- Opaqueness in decision-making processes
- Institutional practices inhibiting career opportunities
- Employment policy and practices
- Unconscious bias in assessing excellence
- Wasted opportunities and cognitive errors in knowledge, technology & innovation

Source: EC Structural Change in Research Institutions (2010)
Women and men students and academics in typical TCD academic careers 2007-2010
Know your Institution:
Trinity College Dublin

- Lack of clear career path and progression
- Caring Responsibilities
- Lack of role models
- Career Insecurity
- Non-linear careers
- Lack of confidence
- Balance of teaching, research & administration
- Unconscious bias
- Isolation
  - Knowledge
  - Minority
  - Location
  - Position

Areas of concern

Source: Qualitative study WiSER, 2005 & 2010
• Awarded **SFI Institutional Development Award**
• Launched in November 2006
• Objectives
  – To promote and increase the visibility of women in science & engineering research in TCD and Ireland
  – To raise awareness of the differing career obstacles male and female researchers face at all stages in their careers in Science & Engineering
  – Monitor and report annually on the position of men and women researchers in SET disciplines
  – Stimulate institutional and cultural change in order to create a more gender-balanced, and ultimately a more productive environment
Models of Equality Opportunities

- **LEGISLATION** Establishes formal equality between the sexes with a focus on legislation, rules and procedures in order to ensure that men and women are treated equally. Aims to remove discrimination which would lead to unequal treatment.

- **POSITIVE ACTION** Recognises that differences exist between women and men, which are due to a complex range of cultural, historical and socio-economic reasons and have led to unequal choices of and access to careers. Attempts to ensure a “level-playing field” in the competition for jobs, promotions & career-advancement.

- **GENDER MAINSTREAMING** Acknowledges that existing structures and institutions are not gender-neutral but favour one sex, usually men, often in invisible ways. Embraces the differences between men and women as bringing added value to the academic environment.

• Removing unconscious bias from institutional practices

• Promoting Excellence through Diversity

• Improving Research by integrating a gender perspective

• Modernising Human Resource Management & the working environment

Source: EC Structural Change in Research Institutions (2010)
Elements of WiSER

- University Act 1997
- Trinity Policies

- Springboard, personal & professional development programme
- Mentoring programme
- Career development workshops
- Academic writing groups
- Resource and information provider
- Postdoctoral awards

- **FP7 INTEGRER Project**
  - Gender disaggregated statistics, reporting annually
  - Audit of good practice in University Schools
  - Gender awareness training
  - Policy & procedure review in context of gender
Transforming our Institution through INTEGER

**Aim**
Create SUSTAINABLE CHANGES in institutions to IMPROVE the career progression of WOMEN scientific researchers

**How**
Develop and implement GENDER ACTION PLANS in TCD, CNRS, and SU
### Themes

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<th>Themes</th>
<th>Areas of Analysis across the themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Engagement of Decision Makers</td>
<td>• Collecting gender data and including targets for improvement</td>
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<td>• Recruitment, promotion and retention policies, processes and procedures</td>
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<td>• Developing ‘future leaders’ pipeline</td>
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<td>• Updated management approaches, appraisals and policy development</td>
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<td>2. Organisational Structures</td>
<td>• Research assessments, including research active profiles</td>
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<td>3. Career Progression, development and support</td>
<td>• Workplace culture to include working styles, environment, language and behaviour</td>
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<td>4. Work Life Balance</td>
<td>• Returning schemes after career breaks</td>
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<td>• Dual career couples</td>
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Number of Women faculty in the School of Science (1963-2006) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Hopkins 2006)
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