

Engaging University Leadership for Gender Equality in STEM

Presenter – Associate Professor Mary Hunt

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Institution – Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin), Ireland



Connection between Valparaíso and Ireland

Valparaíso

Tháinig long ó Valparaíso,
Scaoileadh téad a seol sa chuan,
Chuir a hainm dom i gcuimhne
Ríocht na Gréine, Tír na mBua.

The Ship

A ship arrived from Valparaíso,
Dropped its anchor in the bay,
Her name reminded me of kingdoms,
Sunlit countries far away.

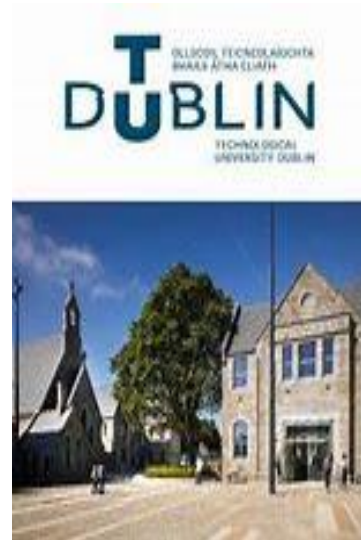


***Poem by Oliver St John Gogarty, translated into the Irish language
by Pádraig de Brún in 1918***

The poem was part of the Irish second level curriculum

**Oliver St John Gogarty
(1878-1957)**

Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) – Ireland's First Technological University Formed on 1st January 2019



History and Heritage

Three partner Institutes
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown,
Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
Institute of Technology Tallaght

Over 130 year history in technological
higher education

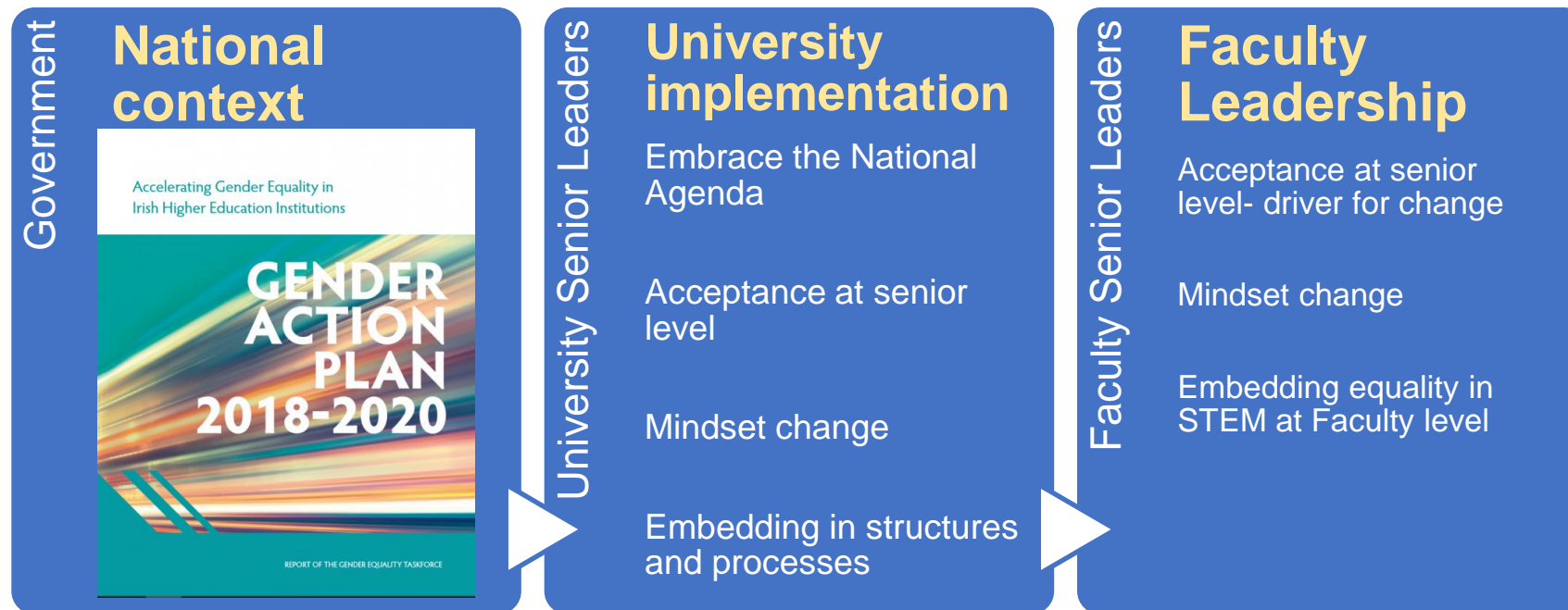
Journey in addressing Gender Equality

Outline

- ❖ How National Agenda influenced change
- ❖ Steps taken within the University and Faculty
- ❖ Reflections on Engaging the Leaders of the University
- ❖ Key messages

Driving Gender Equality initiatives - from National to University context

2016 - “Gender inequality exists within the higher education sector in Ireland, not because of a lack of talent or ambition, but because systematic barriers in the organisation and culture of higher education institutions mean that talent alone is not always enough to guarantee success” (HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions (2016))



Cascade from National Agenda to University Implementation – needs to be embraced by University Leaders

Following changes in the National Agenda, how did gender equality issues become a priority for the University?



The progression along this journey requires that academic leaders invest time in recognising the weaknesses within their organisation and address issues structurally and culturally.

Government Investment - Senior Academic Leadership initiative (SALi)



Mary Mitchell O'Connor, Minister for Higher Education (2017-2020)



SALi: New and additional senior academic leadership posts

- Areas of significant gender under-representation;
- Where this appointment will have significant impact within the faculty/department/functional unit and the HEI;
- Where they would be a proportionate and effective means to achieve accelerated and sustainable change within an institution.
- Total 45 senior academic leadership initiative posts over 3 years.

TU Dublin success

STEM - Permanent Professor of Inclusive Computer Science Education for TU Dublin

Permanent Professor of Public Trust in the Media, Arts and Technology

Research and Gender Equality



Athena Swan Charter



March 31 2022

TU Dublin awarded Athena Swan Bronze Award

We are thrilled to announce that TU Dublin has been awarded the prestigious Athena Swan Bronze Award, in recognition of its commitment to advancing gender equality and the University's plans to address systemic inequality

National Research funding Bodies

- ❖ Irish Research Council (IRC) – National funder of research across all disciplines
- ❖ Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) – Supports basic and applied research in STEM
- ❖ Health Research Board (HRB) – Lead funding agency for Health Research

Irish Research Council, SFI and the Health Research Board will require research bodies to have attained a bronze institutional Athena SWAN award by the end of 2019 to be eligible for research-funding.





Implementation at University level

In the appointment process for a new president, a requirement of appointment will be **demonstrable experience of leadership in advancing gender equality**.

Deans and Heads of School - Evidence of **leadership in advancing gender equality**



2018 – TU Dublin was the first Higher Education Institution in Ireland to appoint a Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)
Professor Yvonne Galligan
[Equality and Diversity | TU Dublin](#)

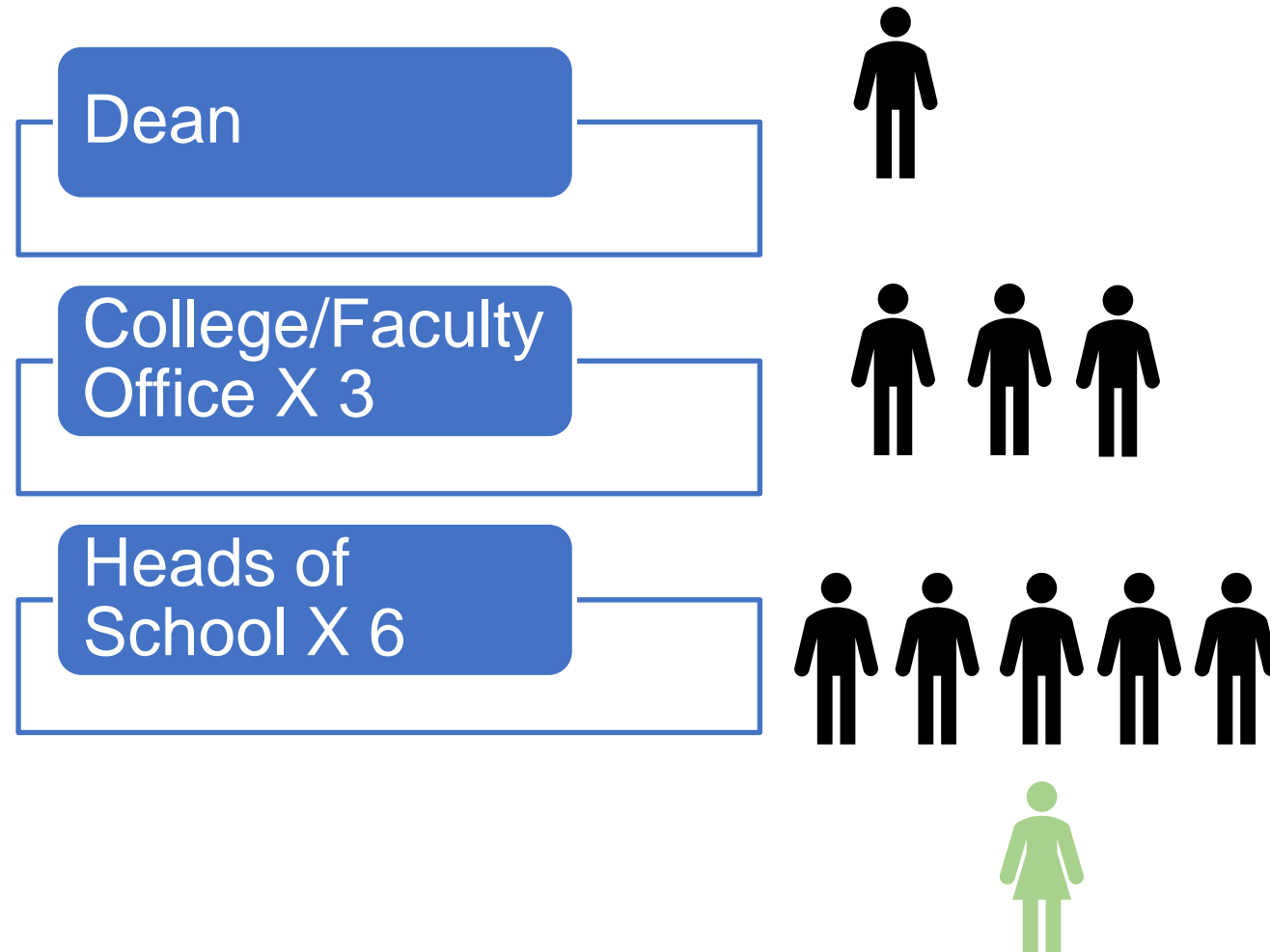


University Leadership and Gender Equality – Faculty/College



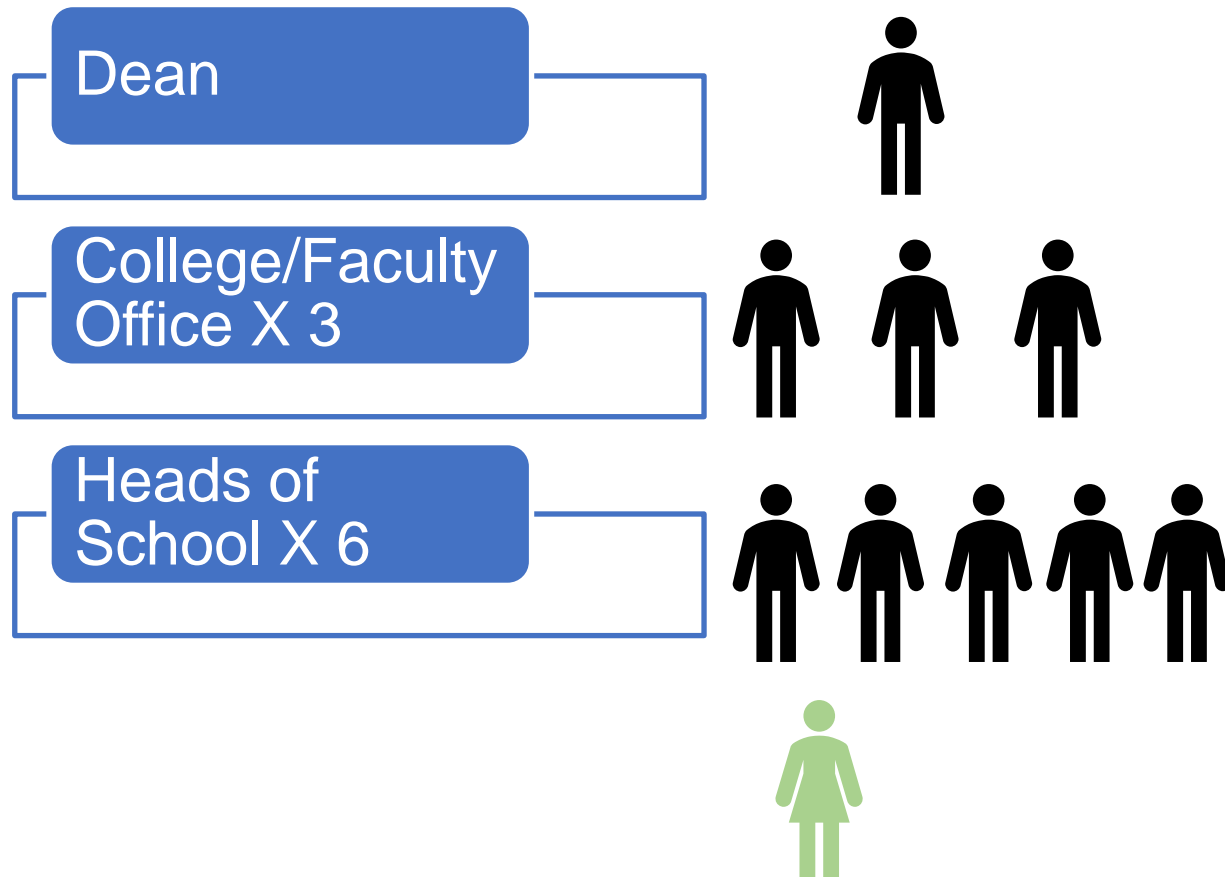
***Professor Michael Devereux
W-Stem Colombia***

- New College of Sciences and Health – newly appointed Dean in 2009
- Best team on pitch
- Engagement with all staff - recognised women not putting themselves forward
- Change of leadership within 1 faculty – 2 female Heads of School
- First female Head of School of Computing in Ireland

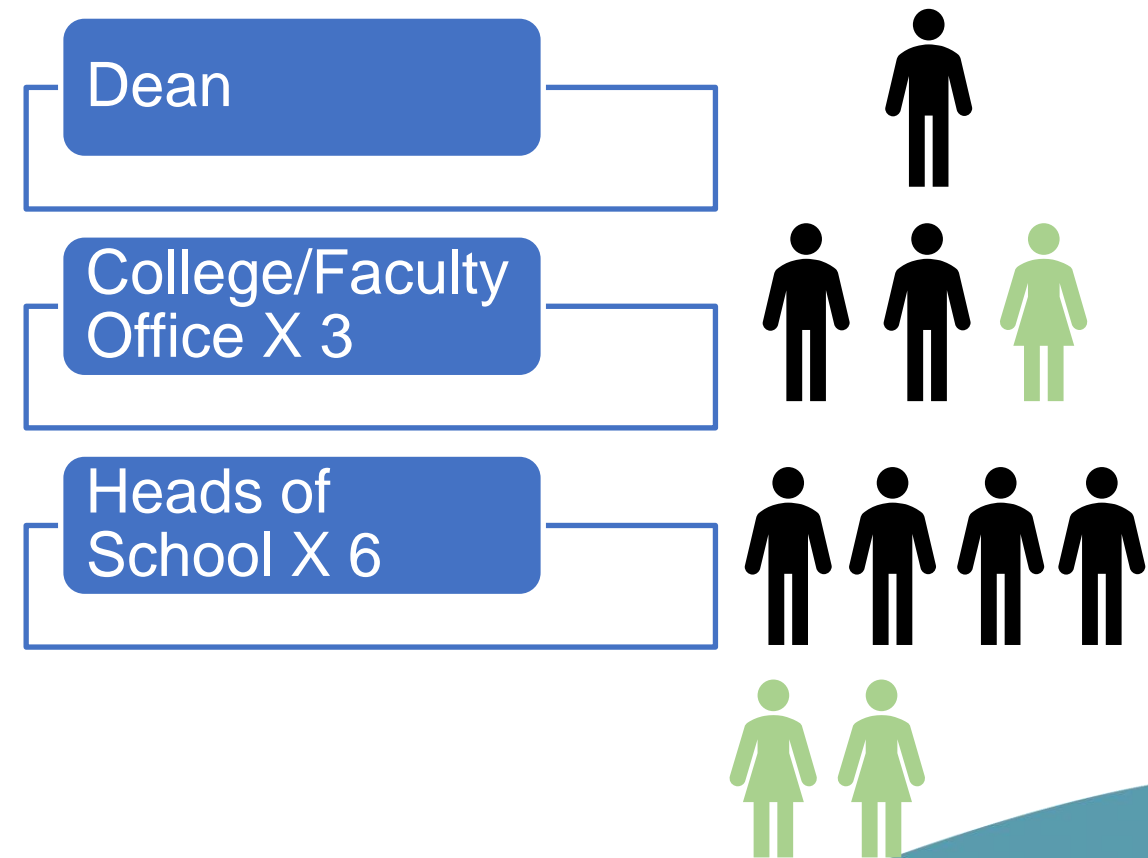


How leadership changed the gender balance in the Faculty of Sciences and Health

2013 (90/10%)



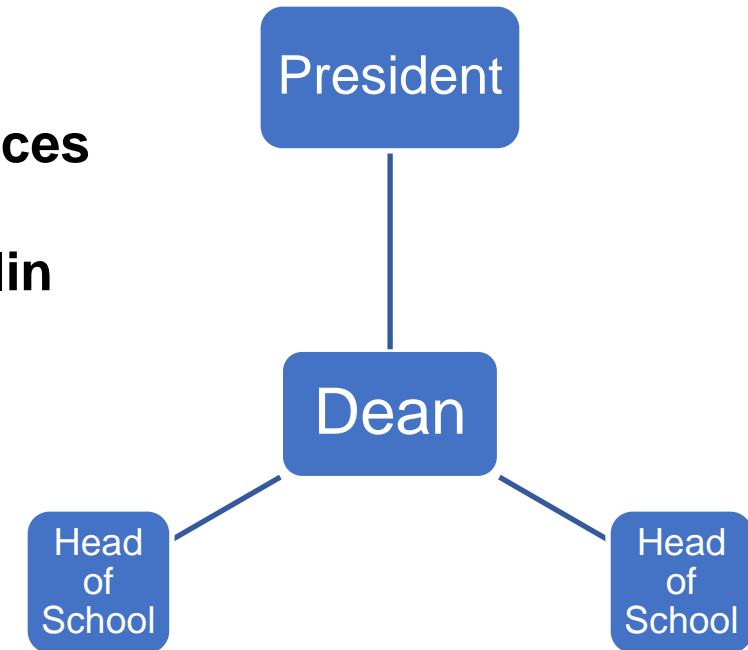
2021 (70/30%)



Own experience - engaging University Leadership for Gender Equality in STEM

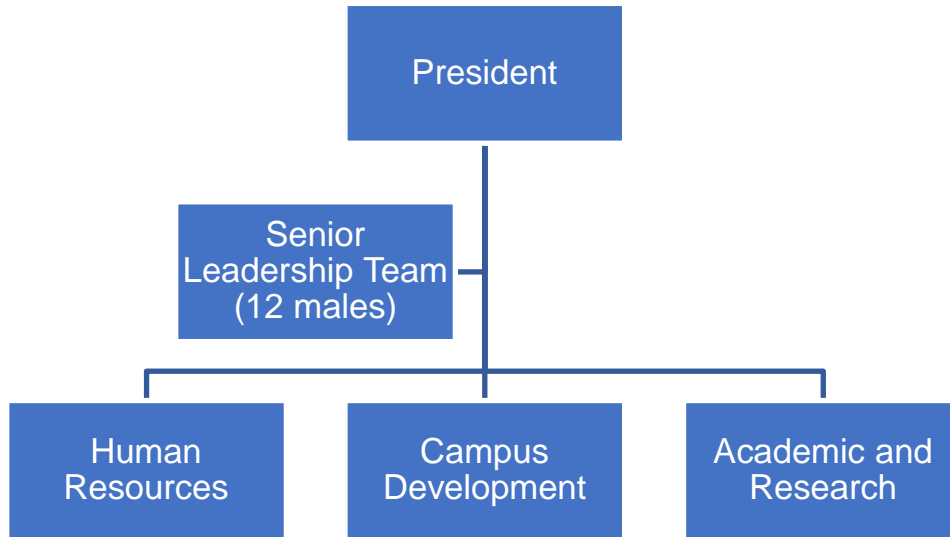
Own career in TU Dublin - STEM

- **2010 Joined TU Dublin (Assistant Head of School)**
- **2013 - Appointed Head of School of Biological and Health Sciences**
- **School with over 700 students and 47 staff**
- **Senior Academic Manager within Technological University Dublin**

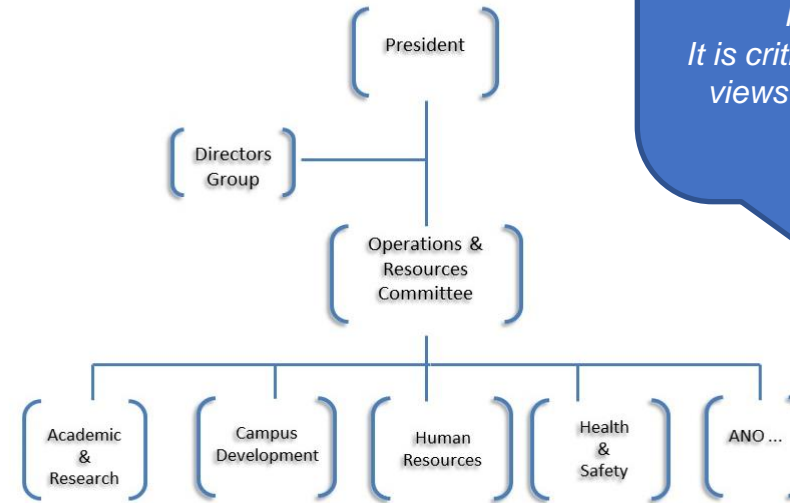


Gender Equality in Decision Making

'Addressing Gender Balance on Decision-Making Bodies'



Up to 2018



From 2018 - 2020

You have been selected as a potential candidate to be co-opted for membership onto the new Operations and Resources Committee, the top decision-making committee in the Institute going forward. It is critical that we have a diversity of views and insights in our decision-making.....

Organisations and Resources Committee (ORC) was set up in 2018

- Gender balance – training
- Gender Equality a strategic priority for the University
- Personal journey - influencing top decision-making Committee in the University, areas of strategic importance, University risk management
- ORC understood what supports were needed as a Manager in Faculties and Schools
- Positive action measure – diverse views and inputs plus leadership development for managers.

Gender equality was being embraced by the President and other University Leaders – but how would this be embedded in the University and influence our culture?

Structural and cultural changes to promote gender equality

Structural changes

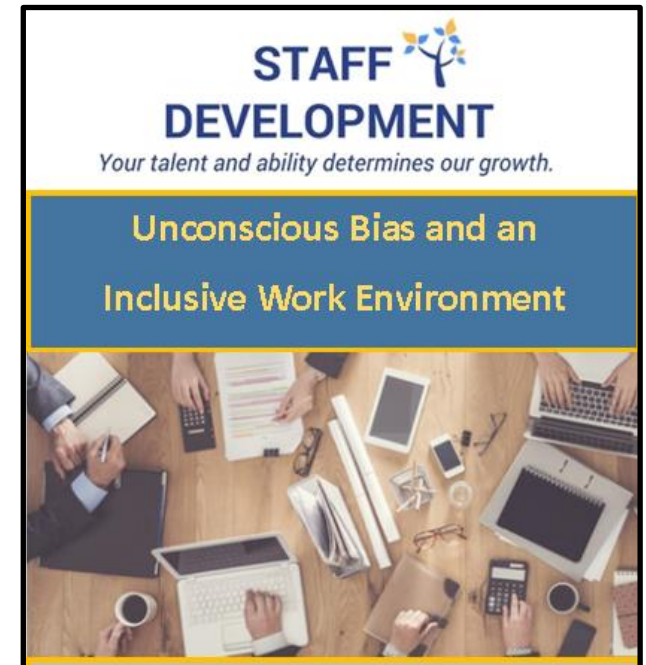
- External review of HR policies and procedures
- Changes to HR policies and practices
- Gender balance on all interview selection panels
- Gender balance on all Operational and Resourcing Committees

Cultural changes

- Unconscious bias training for all University staff
- Gender balance became the norm

Networking and mentoring

- Establishment of the Women Leaders in Higher Education



The importance of Networking

2016 - Set up as a network by Women Leaders to support each other in their professional careers
Women Leaders in Higher Education (WLHE)

An inclusive Network of women in academic, administration, research and technical roles at all levels and stages across TU Dublin.

Network thematic areas:

- Professional Enrichment, Career Advancement and Promotion
- Developing your Professional Supportive Network
- Being ready for Opportunities
- Leadership in Higher Education: Where are the Women?
- Transformation - The Power of You
- Conscious Leadership - Focus on the 'We' and not the 'Me'
- Making the Leap - Challenging the Status Quo



University recognition for the Women Leaders network was evident by funding structure put in place – President agreed to fund the network.

Key messages

Leadership and support from the top

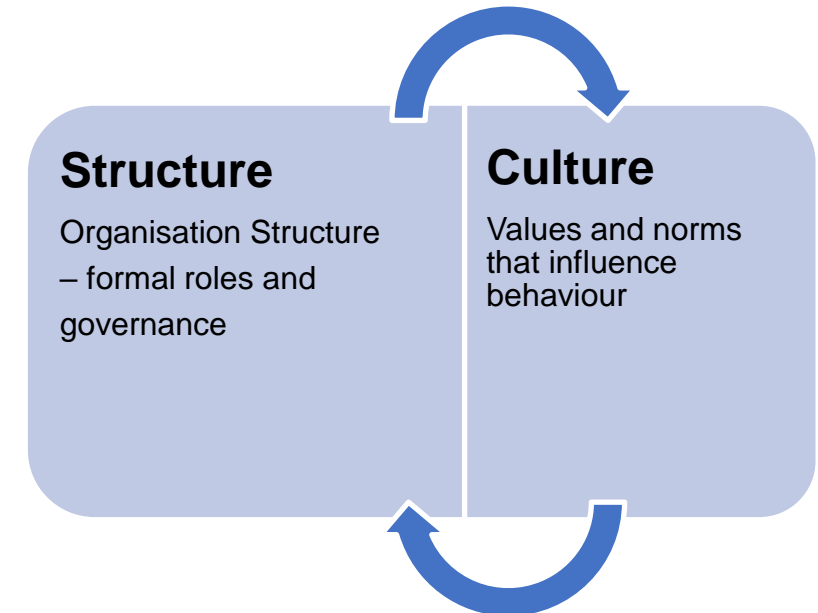
- National agenda at Government level
- University President, EDI Director, Faculty Dean
- First University in Ireland to appoint a Director of EDI
- Leaders of the University moved on the Gender Action Plan quickly
- Key deliverables (KPIs) for achievement/targets

Value of blending culture with structural change

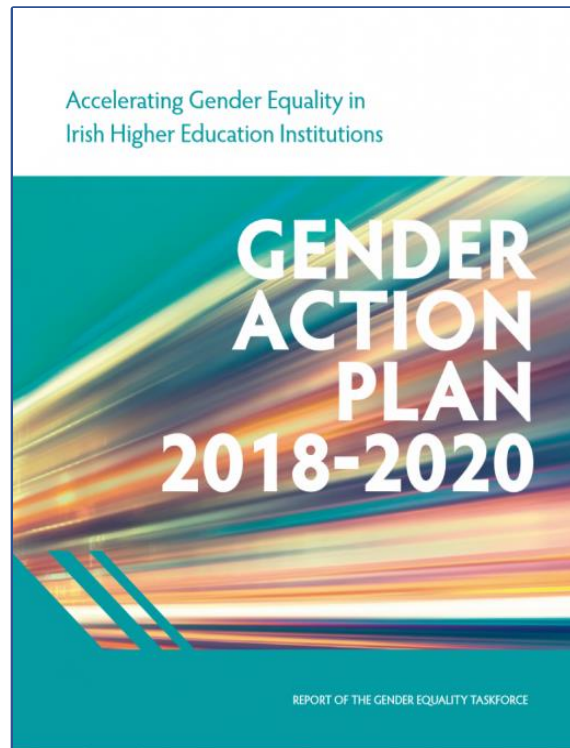
- Strong, focussed leadership from the management throughout the University is an important part of achieving cultural change
- Were we getting the best people? – were we missing out on the best by not having gender balance
- Changes to policies and procedures

Impact

- Awareness cascades to student body – encouraging students in STEM. ESTeEM (Dr Susan McKeever)
- Engaging university leadership has a natural impact – cascade down to staff and students



By 2026 Ireland will be a world-leading country for Gender Equality in Higher Education



We are on the path to success but the work continues...

Engaging University Leadership for Gender Equality in STEM

Reflections on Selected Gender Equality in STEM Initiatives in an Irish University

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Elizabeth Heffernan



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Thank you for listening

Questions?

Disclaimer

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