Achieving Excellence through Gender Equality in Academia: Experience from Ireland

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www.tcd.ie/wiser

ETUCE and EFEE Meeting
Brussels 8 February 2013

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Background

- Challenges EU Research
- Trinity based Research
  - Focus Groups
  - INTEGER survey 2012
- Institutional Structures for promoting Women and Gender Equality
  - Women in Science and Engineering Research (WiSER) 2005-
  - INTEGER – 2011-2015

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Demand for Career Researchers in EU

EU – Innovation Commissioner on Europe's Innovation capacity:

- "Talk to any business leaders and they will tell you that the quality of the research base is a major factor in their investment decisions" (17/7/2012)

- "Women make up more that half the EU's student population and 45% of all doctorates but they account for only one-third of career researchers" (21/6/2012)
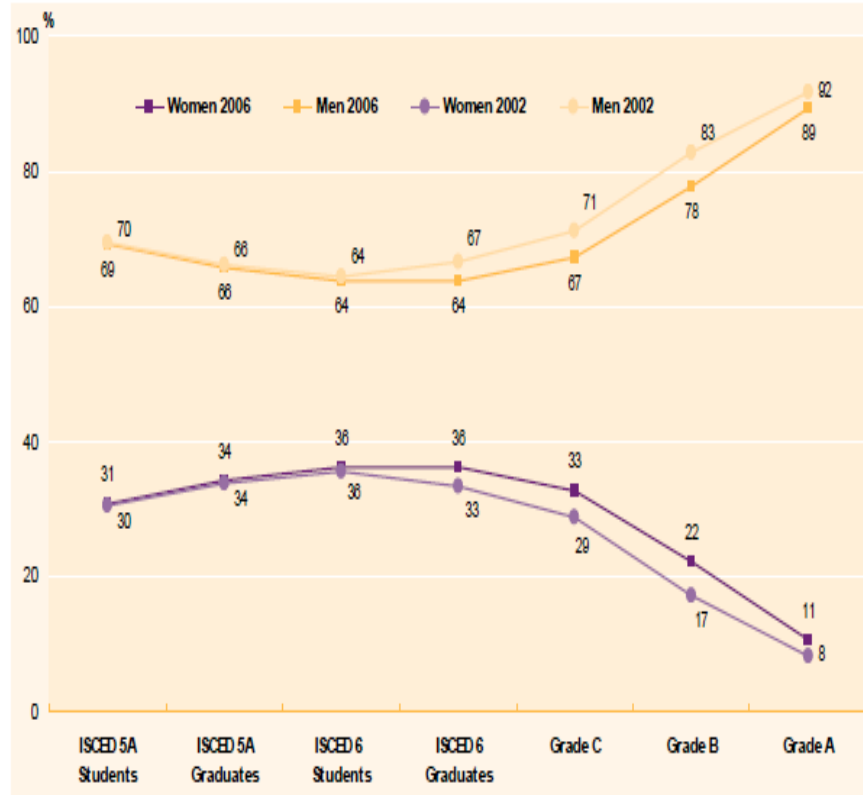
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Gendered Academic Careers in Europe

All Disciplines
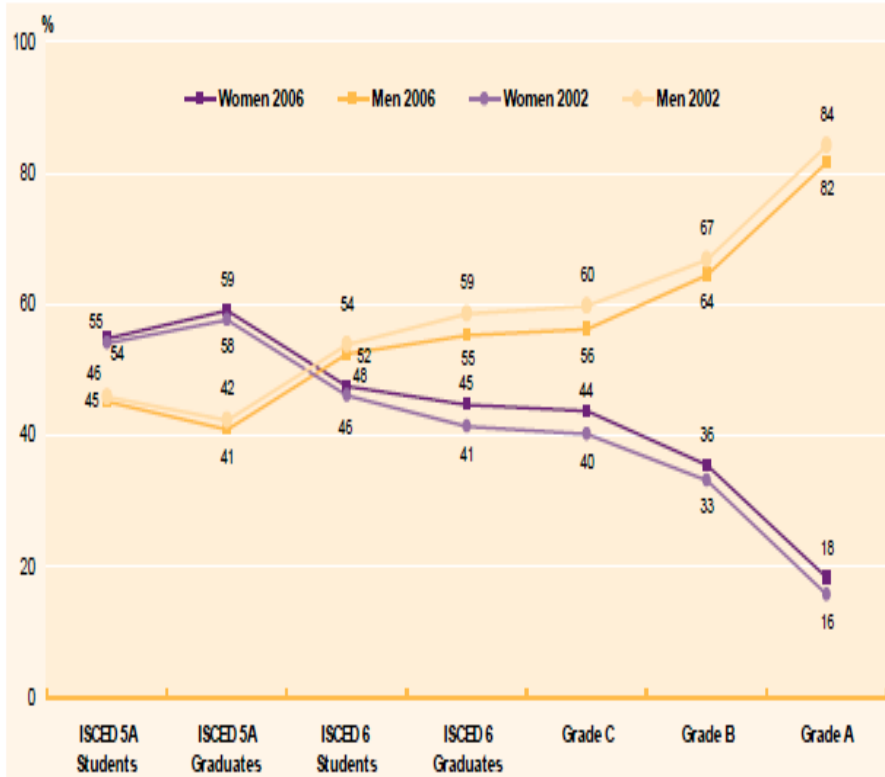
Science & Engineering

Women and Men Students and in typical academic careers, EU-27, 2002-2006

Diversity for Research Excellence

- *Diversity* is **essential** for creativity and innovation, fundamental to achieving excellence

- Research can **benefit** from the richness and varied perspectives and expertise which individuals from different ethnicity, culture and gender can bring to problem-solving

- Promoting diversity in the academic workforce provides **greater access to talent** by increasing the pool of qualified and skilled professionals

Why the Brain Drain in Academe?

- **Some disciplines viewed as stereotypically 'male', so fewer women choose them in the first place**

- **Isolation & lack of role models for the women who enter HEIs**

- **Less access to networks and information which can aid career advancement**

- **Fast-paced research environment which makes it difficult for anyone who takes time out – this typically affects women more (maternity leave, etc)**

- **Bias in academic environment – research shows women can be viewed as less competent even when doing same work**

- **Gender Schemas – what does a man do, what does a woman do?**

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Becoming Men and Women
Different societal expectations……..

- Who cares?

- Breadwinners?

- Workplace vs Home

- Maternal wall

- Job or career?

- Are men and women judged the same?

- Unconscious Bias
  - where we apply our attitudes, thoughts and values, without realising, to the decision-making process. The challenge is making everyone aware of this and the potential impacts

Mountains are molehills, piled one on top of the other
Virginia Valian, Why so Few 1998

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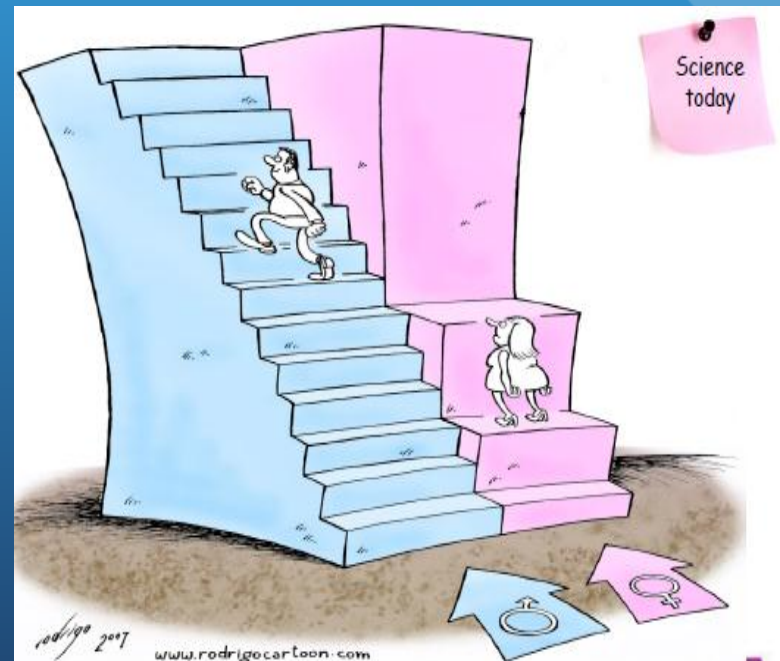
Irish Perspectives – Case of Trinity College Dublin

- Women in Science and Engineering Research (WiSER)
  - WiSER activities – **focus on Women**
    - Mentoring Programme
    - Academic Writing Groups
    - Springboard Personal & Professional Development
    - Buddy Programme
    - Making Wednesdays WiSER etc.

- Institutional Transformation for Effecting Gender Equality in Research (INTEGER)
  - FP7 – **focus on institutional change**
    - Gender Action Plans and their implementation

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Evidence for Transformational Gender Action Plans (T GAPs)

- Limitations of Tinkering/Tailoring
  - International Literature
  - Best Practice
    - NSF Advance
    - Athena Swan

- Survey of Academic Staff in Trinity College

- Focus Groups Conducted in Schools of:
  - Chemistry
  - Natural Science

- Baseline Monitoring Data

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INTEGER T GAPS Process

- Institutional 'buy-in' through Partnership Group Meetings
  - CNRS, France
  - Trinity College Dublin, Ireland
  - Šiauliai University, Lithuania

- Exchange of Experience Seminars – partners/experts (US, EU)

- Review and Monitoring of available data
  - Internal
  - External

- Establishment of T GAP Implementation Teams
  - 2 Schools: Chemistry and Natural Science Teams
  - Institutional Team

- Timeframe (5 years) for Implementation
  - INTEGER Project up to June 2015
  - Post INTEGER 2015-2018

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INTEGER
INstitutional Transformation for
Effecting Gender Equality in Research
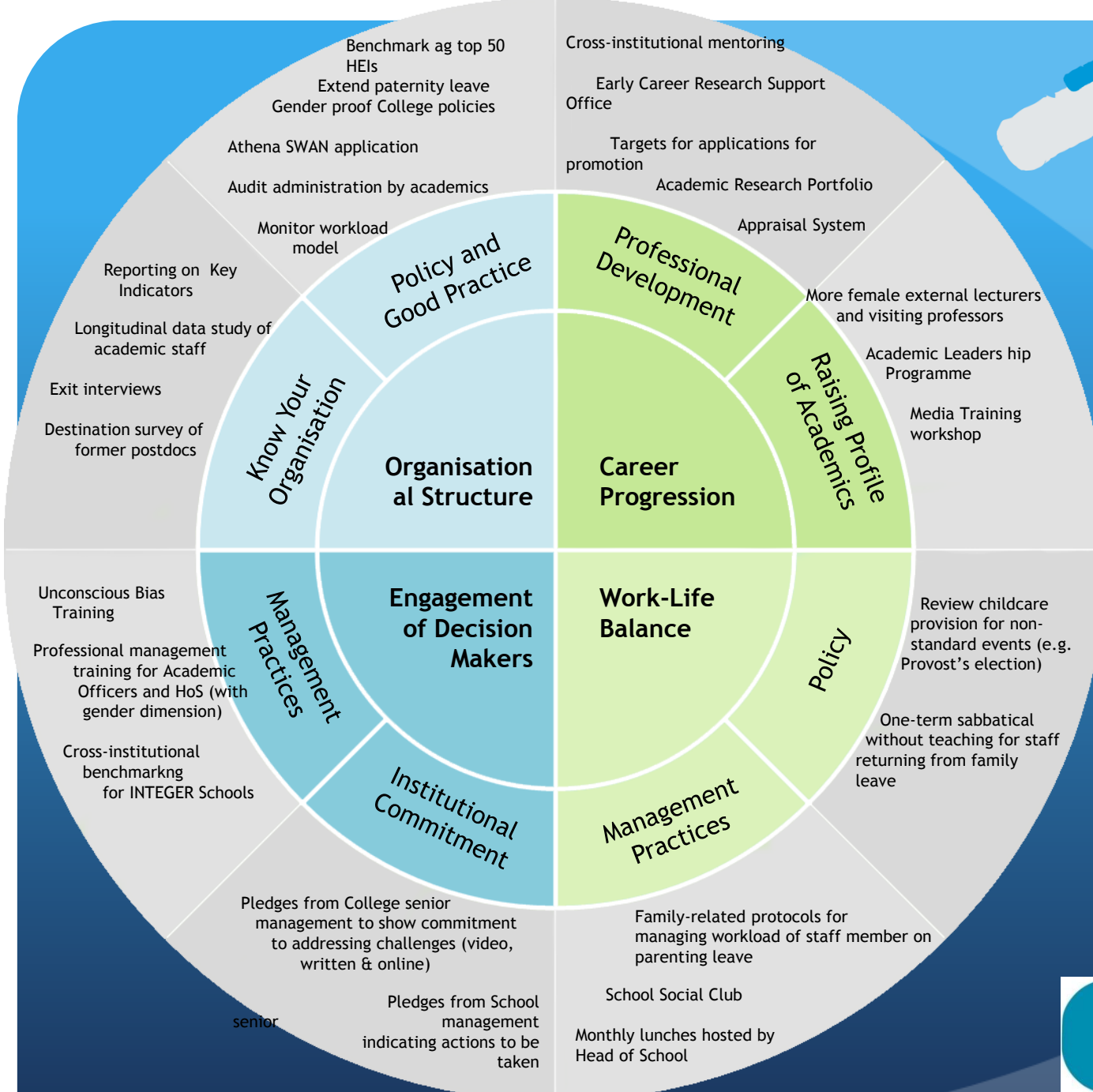
Transformational Gender Action Plan Framework

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Policy and Good Practice
- Benchmark ag top 50 HEIs
- Extend paternity leave
- Gender proof College policies
- Athena SWAN application
- Audit administration by academics
- Monitor workload model

Professional Development
- Cross-institutional mentoring
- Early Career Research Support Office
- Targets for applications for promotion
- Academic Research Portfolio
- Appraisal System

Raising Profile of Academics
- More female external lecturers and visiting professors
- Academic Leaders hip Programme
- Media Training workshop

Know Your Organisation
- Reporting on Key Indicators
- Longitudinal data study of academic staff
- Exit interviews
- Destination survey of former postdocs

Management Practices
- Unconscious Bias Training
- Professional management training for Academic Officers and HoS (with gender dimension)
- Cross-institutional benchmarkng for INTEGER Schools

Institutional Commitment
- Pledges from College senior management to show commitment to addressing challenges (video, written & online)
- senior
- Pledges from School management indicating actions to be taken

Policy
- Review childcare provision for non-standard events (e.g. Provost's election)
- One-term sabbatical without teaching for staff returning from family leave

Management Practices
- Family-related protocols for managing workload of staff member on parenting leave
- School Social Club
- Monthly lunches hosted by Head of School

Organisational Structure

Career Progression

Engagement of Decision Makers

Work-Life Balance

Sample Strategies from INTEGER Project 2012-

Mentoring/ Supportive Champions & Research Environment

Leadership Development

Parenting Leave Provision

Review Workloads

Recognition of Role/Inputs

Post Doc Training & Support

Work-Life Balance

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