Equality and Inclusion are Practices, not End Goals

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Ireland’s approach to EDI

• Started with focus on gender equality (GE):
  2015 – HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish HEIs
  2017 – Gender Equality Taskforce

• Continued with focus on Consent – Framework for Consent in HEIs (2019)

• Establishment of National Intersectionality Working Group
Lessons from the approach to GE

• Common terminology

• Data and analysis:
  - Career progression pipeline by gender
  - Governance & Management structures
  - Stakeholder consultation
  - Public online survey
  - Current practice vs Good practice

• Monitoring/modelling rate of change

• Developing a National Action Plan with time-bound targets and goals
Organisational and Cultural Change

• Systematic barriers in HEI organisation and culture mean that *talent alone is not always enough to guarantee success*

• The reason that women are not found in the most senior positions in the same proportion as men is…

  *that women face barriers to progression which are not experienced to the same degree by their male colleagues*
What’s really going on?

Judging excellence: e.g. bibliometrics: are they gender-neutral?

• Wenneras and Wold landmark *NATURE* study ‘*Women really do have to be at least twice as good as men to succeed*’
• Favour sciences in which women are traditionally under-represented: discipline not gender
• Numbers of papers published is a time-bound metric that disadvantages anyone who has taken time out from an academic career

• As first authors, women receive fewer citations than men
• Women tend to publish more multi-author papers
• Men get greater credit for multi-author publications than women

Other metrics: grant €; amount of space; workload allocation – share of T&L, service roles; Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*: Double-blind experiment only changing the name on CV
Confidence in the system

Myth: Ambition – we need to fix the women

“Blame is attached to women’s lack of career planning, low self-esteem, lack of career ambition, poor political skills, poor ability to market themselves and lifestyle choices.”
Source: Pat O’Connor (2014) Management and Gender in Higher Education

Research: Fix the environment

Women are as ambitious as men to reach the top within their organisations, but women are significantly less confident than men that they would succeed. Note: Confidence was defined “as a perception of one’s chances of success in the current environment, rather than confidence in one’s own qualifications.”
Leading by Example

- Culture is led from the top
- Expert Group recommendations directed at the Presidents, VP EDI, Deans, HoD and further endorsed and built on by Taskforce Actions
- Senior appointments required to demonstrate leadership in gender equality
- Every HEI required to have an institutional Gender Action Plan and to report their progress annually to the HEA
- Core grant funding is at risk if progress is not made – HEA Strategic Dialogue Process
Role of Research Funders

• Three largest research funding agencies in Ireland (SFI, IRC, HRB) have fully embraced the Expert Group recommendations and Taskforce Actions

• All have organisational Gender Action Policies/Plans

• Publish their data by gender and require assessors to do bias awareness training

• Require consideration of the gender dimension in research content (see *Gendered Innovations* )

• Have linked eligibility to Athena SWAN institutional certification
Athena SWAN

- Introduced into Ireland in 2015 and subsequently in Australia, USA and Canada
- HEIs and departments are advised to take at least one year to prepare application
- Comprehensive, critical, self-assessment, honest, evidence-based reflection on the results, and identification of time-bound actions or targets to address any issues highlighted
- Tailored approach to organisational and cultural change championed by the institution
Vision:

By 2026 Ireland will be a world-leading country for Gender Equality in Higher Education
How are we doing?

- European Commission (2019) SHE Figures for 2018 report that women lead only 22% of Europe’s HEIs and hold only 24% of Professor A posts.

- Ireland identified as the fastest riser from 2005 to 2017 among EU states (now placed 7th, *Gender Equality Index, 2019*).

- But… we’ve never had a female President of a University, and only 26% of our Professors in 2018 were female.

- And… Ireland’s Glass Ceiling Index continues to be higher (2.16) than EU level of 1.64.
Change over time

Universities - % female academic staff

Source: HEA Higher-Education-Institutional-Staff-Profiles-by-Gender
Estimated rate of future change

Source: Gender-Equality-Taskforce-Action-Plan-2018-2020
Targeted Positive Action

• Centre of Excellence for Gender Equality established in the HEA
  • Centralised support for the institutions, sharing of good practice, and funding for innovative organisational and cultural change initiatives nationally

• Senior Academic Leadership (SAL) Initiative launched in 2019
  • Compliments wider organisational & cultural initiatives
  • Targeted positive initiative at top end of career pipeline
  • 45 new & additional posts over 3 years
  • Same high standard required of applicants as any other Professor or Senior Lecturer level 3 post
  • To be funded in areas where there is a clear under-representation of senior women
  • Based on similar initiatives in the Netherlands and Germany
EDI is everyone’s responsibility

• A collaborative national approach is needed so that everyone can be empowered to engage, embrace diversity, and adopt equal and inclusive practices…

  *it can’t be left only to the people experiencing EDI issues – it is everyone’s responsibility*

• Recognising one’s biases, unfortunately, does not make them go away…

  *equality and inclusion should therefore be considered practices, not end goals*
Thank you

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