

**Draft Report**

**Achieving  
Academic Gender Equality  
in the  
Institute of Technology  
sector**

**Dr Joe MacDonagh**

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I would like to thank those TUI members who took the time to survey the members of their branches throughout the country and to then respond in a comprehensive fashion about how this area has an impact upon their research and academic work. The recommendations herein are much richer for their inputs.

Finally, I would like to thank those educators, researchers and lecturers in Ireland and in Britain who kindly agreed to discuss their research and their own particular experience of the area of equality and diversity in the private as well as the public sector and in sectors additional to education, which is the main focus in this report. As can be seen in the main body of this report, some best practice initiatives are being created not just in education and in areas outside of the public sector so I looked beyond public sector education for ways to further greater gender equality.

To all the above people I would like to express my gratitude and I hope that their own hopes as well as mine are fulfilled by the recommendations of this report being implemented as soon as possible in order to achieve workplaces in which promotion and progression are achieved based on ability to do the job well.

**Dr Joe MacDonagh**

**March 2016**

## **Terms of Reference**

This report was commissioned by the Teacher's Union of Ireland arising from a TUI Congress motion in 2015. Motion 219 stated that:

“Congress instructs the Executive to research the gender inequality amongst senior academic grades in the Institutes of Technology and to put in place strategies to address this imbalance where it exists”

Arising from this, the TUI Executive decided that research should be carried out on the area of academic gender inequality in the Institutes of Technology (IoT) educational sector. It was then decided to ask Dr J. MacDonagh, Chartered Psychologist and former President of the Psychological Society of Ireland, to carry out this research and to report back to the TUI in time for the report to be presented to the 2016 TUI Congress.

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## Executive Summary

### Chapter 2- The scale of the problem

#### Conclusions

- The current statistics on gender inequality from the HEA, and thus from the IoTs, are incomplete and out of date. Each properly functioning HR department has easy access to these figures and they should be made available on each Institute's web site and to the HEA on at least an annual basis.
- The statistics for each IoT need to be more up to date and accurate in order to inform the process of achieving greater gender equality.

#### Recommendations

- The gender equality statistics need to be more up to date and the requirement to report these figures in an accurate and timely fashion should be placed on a statutory basis. This would then provide for the linking of an IoT's achievement of specified gender equality targets to its funding.
- The statistics for male and female academics are not, at present, detailed enough. For each IoT they should be broken down by department and then by overall disciplinary area, e.g. department of accounting and then school/college/faculty of business.<sup>1</sup> They should also include figures by gender for those who are employed as: researchers (typically involving "post docs"); part-time lecturers (those who are paid by the hour); postgraduate students (who are technically employees of each IoT and who often work as Demonstrators and Tutors) and those who are on Contracts of Indefinite Duration (CIDs). Since much research suggests that women are disproportionately represented in non-permanent and contract/time de-limited positions, any future figures should be disaggregated to show the gender representation in these non-permanent positions.
- Where colleges have merged under the government's proposed merger scheme leading to technological university status the IoT should be required to state the above figures for each constituent college separately so as to show what progress is being made on each campus.

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<sup>1</sup> These titles are often used interchangeably, and differ, across different IoTs.

- Institute presidents and senior management teams should be asked to explain what initiatives they have taken annually to improve gender equality. If these are not fulfilled in a satisfactory manner then those colleges should be given a warning and then, if they do not either present meaningful initiatives and/or they do not achieve the gender equality goals they have agreed with the relevant government department they should receive a sanction from that government department. This is important in emphasising the importance and urgency of this area.
- Institute presidents and senior management teams should be required to set targets for gender equality and these should be at least proportionate to the representation of a particular gender in a disciplinary group, e.g. engineering and nursing have, respectively, male and female majorities in their staff numbers. It is also important that such skewed gender distributions as these be factored in when an overall average is calculated in a particular IoT.
- HR sections in IoTs should collect data on the demographic profile of applicants according to the groups listed in the employment equality acts and compare that with those of successful candidates to see if any patterns emerge which suggest that certain groups are doing proportionately better or worse relative to their representation in the workforce. Similarly, this data should be collected for all promotions and this too should be reported annually to the relevant statutory reporting body. This will help identify if there are areas which need improvement in terms of advertising (to relevant groups and the content of the advertisements), recruitment (are the means of applying user friendly and are they easily accessible to all groups?) and selection (is there a bottleneck for some groups once they are short-listed, but then get no further?)

### **Chapter 3: Positive Discrimination-**

#### **Equality of opportunity vs equality of outcome**

#### **Conclusions**

- Many have strong views against any type of positive discrimination as they believe it may favour some who have not met the same criteria as those who were recruited or promoted on mainstream criteria. Those from this perspective feel that if there is a level playing field then any inequalities will, in time, be dissipated.

- The hiring and promotion practices used by the IoTs to date have not ensured that there is an equal amount of gender representation in the IoT academic management sector.
- The State will have to take the lead in the process of gender equality change. It can do this by embracing change in principle, in its statements and, most importantly, in its own actions and in the actions of those it funds; the IoTs. Tackling gender inequality will incur expenditure for the State but such outlays are necessary to achieve academic gender equality.

### **Recommendations**

- Instead of a blanket system of positive discrimination where all women are favoured over all men for promotion to academic management positions, the State and the IoTs should consider a targeted, time de-limited initiative whereby additional posts from SL1T to SL3 level are made available to women only, providing they meet the necessary criteria for promotion. These criteria would be exactly the same as the normal criteria for these positions.
- IoTs should provide additional positions for women at SL2 and SL3 level which would be “without portfolio” and which would allow them to attend middle and senior management meetings. This would give female managers experience of collective planning and decision-making and thus would help their further promotion thereafter.

## **Chapter 4: Human Resource systems- recruitment, selection & promotion**

### **Conclusions**

- Unconscious bias, or prejudice, before selection interviews may exist not just between genders but on any of the grounds of the Employment Equality Act. Such bias and prejudice can impede the selection or promotion of properly qualified and suitable job applicants.
- The present recruitment and selection system may facilitate cliques who favour each other and these can be male employees.
- There needs to be greater transparency about how selection interview panels are chosen and how much training they have received to do so, especially on modern competency-based interviews.
- The present data set only tells us the amount of men and women in each category as employees but does not tell us how many men and women applied for each position.

- Not enough time, resources or management time is being spent on HRD to develop those working as academics in the IoT sector.
- Female academics often do not get enough experience sitting on important internal and external committees, which mitigates against them when they apply for senior academic management positions.
- The criteria for recruitment, selection and promotion for academic and academic management grades in the IoTs are unclear, non-transparent and open to abuse.
- Criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer grades need to be clarified to include the range of experience required by modern academics in pedagogically sophisticated and research active higher education environments.

### **Recommendations**

- The State and its representatives should ensure that all those on interview boards for State jobs, including all academic and academic management positions, complete certified training in selection interviewing, to include modules on equality, unconscious bias and prejudice.
- All interview panels where there is a mixed cohort of applicants should have a gender balanced interview panel. All such members of interview boards should declare any conflict of interest before they participate on such a panel.
- A redacted copy of each of the interview notes should be made available to all of those interviewed for a particular academic position.
- Interview panels should be clear as to which job criteria will be marked before the interview, e.g. a PhD would be marked under “academic qualifications” towards the highest part of the scale. Other areas, such as the quality of published research, can be discussed in depth at interview.
- The scoring system used at most IoT interviews is weak and is not fit for purpose. The general nature of the categories used, with few guidance notes, leads to the possibility that there may be a large disparity between the marks awarded by different interviewers at the same interview about the same applicant. This type of variation is evidence of subjectivity and needs to be removed from all interviews for academic jobs.
- The job requirements for each academic position should be more attuned to the needs of modern academic practice; academic managers should possess at least a master’s degree and/or advanced professional qualifications, e.g. Chartered status of a professional body.

- HR functions should be required to collect, and report on to the HEA, data on the amount of people applying, successfully and unsuccessfully, for all of the categories under the Employment Equality Act. This data should be reported at least annually and should include an explanation of why there may be low applications from particular groups, should this be the case, and a disparity between the numbers applying and being successful from particular groups, should this be the case.
- The HR function of each IoT should be required to produce a report, at least annually, on how it is putting in place plans to rectify any gender inequality as may exist and how it has made progress since the previous year's report.
- Senior management in the IoTs need to put significantly greater resources into HRD for all staff, particularly to provide coaching, mentoring and networking opportunities for women. HRD programmes should also include: modern blended and non blended teaching pedagogies; effective ways to present at targeted academic conferences; planning towards high impact publications; how best to develop academic networks; developing research clusters; meaningful participation in professional and scholarly organisations, and identifying important outlets for publishing research.
- IoTs should appoint more women to decision-making committees, particularly when they are not academic managers, so that they can gain experience of competencies relevant to management practice. The work of such committees should also be scheduled in a family friendly manner, i.e. within the normal working day.
- The criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer/SL grades in the IoTs should be re-considered to give appropriate weighting to teaching, research and community (internal and external IoT) activities. The criteria should also allow applicants to present a set amount of examples of the applicant's best work within a particular period of time rather than simply valuing high quantities of work such as large numbers of research publications, which may discriminate against women who have taken time out due to family commitments.

## **Chapter 5- Training and mentoring for women**

### **Conclusions**

- Many women feel that they do not want to apply for IoT management positions due to what they perceive as aggressive, confrontational or oppositional management styles by those currently *in situ*.

- Legitimate complaints about bullying, harassment and other employment-related issues are often not taken seriously enough and are often not investigated and resolved quickly enough. This can often create a toxic work environment which dissuades women from applying for management positions.
- The IoT presidents must buy into the principle of gender equality and must stand full-square behind the measures that will ensure it comes about.
- The IoTs need to develop their capabilities as knowledge organisations, to develop training strategies which answer the CPD and personal developmental needs of their workers.
- All academic workers will benefit from properly resourced HRD. However, the IoTs have been chronically under-funded for a significant amount of time and this may well have been a contributory factor to the low level of female representation in academic management positions.

### **Recommendations**

- IoT presidents need to move away from “command and control” management styles in their colleges by selecting for academic management positions those who are more inclusive and consensual in their management style. This can be discerned by using psychometric and assessment centre methodologies in the selection process, in addition to selection interviews.
- While the IoTs are required by law to have grievance procedures in place to investigate bullying, harassment and employment-related complaints and while these need to be dealt with sensitively by all sides concerned, they need to be resolved much more quickly and, in fact, need to be prevented from happening by managers having greater training in the early identification and resolution of such matters.
- The HEA should ask the IoT presidents to express their explicit support for the principle of gender equality and ask them to state how they mean to achieve it.
- The IoTs need to develop tailored PMDS and CPD systems for their workers. These can be developed regionally, in line with the Technological Universities of which they may be a member, with universities in their region or nationally, or perhaps by holding national events to facilitate academic mentoring or networking for female academics.
- The IoT Presidents need to voice their concern about the chronic under-funding of the IoT sector and request that funding be made available, *inter alia*, for HRD.

## **Chapter 6- IoT Culture and Supports- from exclusive to inclusive**

### **Conclusions**

- IoT senior management in each college needs to provide greater supports for male and female academics who have child and family commitments.
- The IoTs need to have more work-life balance policies to dispel the belief that advancement within the organisation will be based on an open-ended workload commitment to the IoTs.

### **Recommendations**

- There needs to be more supports for academics returning from leave, particularly maternity leave, and the IoTs should consider a reduced workload for the first six months in which a woman returns to work so that she may “get up to speed” again on her research and her modules taught.
- IoT senior management needs to schedule more work within the working day and to use more efficient ways of working within the working day, so as to facilitate child and family commitments.

## **Chapter 7: How the State can promote gender equality**

### **Conclusions**

- The Irish State needs to be the primary change agent in bringing about academic gender equality as it will be merely aspirational otherwise and the IoTs will not have to implement any of the reforms outlined in this report or otherwise. This will require an ongoing financial commitment by the State.

### **Recommendations**

- The State needs to encourage the IoTs to provide supports to female academics, such as crèches, child care facilities and an adjustment to their workload to reflect their child and family commitments.
- The State needs to set academic gender equality targets for the IoTs and to link funding to the achievement of these targets.
- The State should require that each IoT sign up to the Athena Swan charter for STEMM and AHSSBL academic areas and achieve one of the Athena Swan awards, to demonstrate academic gender equality.
- The State should provide for the appointment of an equality manager, at senior management level, in each IoT or, in exceptional cases, a senior manager should be given direct and explicit reporting responsibility for gender equality.

- The State needs to provide greater funding to industrial relations resolution bodies such as the Workplace Relations Commission in order to resolve workplace grievance- particularly in those IoTs with a poor industrial relations records- so they do not fester and perpetuate weak organisational cultures.
- Where there is a poor organisational culture, which is not conducive to academic gender equality, the HEA needs to ask IoT management to report on how it is going to change this.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction- Background and Methodology

**“Being aware of a problem is the first step to correcting it.” (Sandberg, 2015, p.81)**

This present research is not meant to be an academic treatise on gender equality. There are very many academic monographs and journal articles which examine gender equality in depth and which also set it in the context of a larger debate about gender and diversity. Thus this present research does not aim to provide a detailed explication of the theories and nature of equality and its absence. Instead, there is a basic treatment of the current status quo in the Institutes of Technology (IoT) sector currently and then a strong focus on strategies to improve this situation. One of the key reasons for this is the simultaneous research by a Higher Education Authority (HEA) expert group, led by former European Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, into gender inequality in the Irish third level sector as a whole.

The HEA expert group research included qualitative, meetings with stakeholders, and quantitative, involving an online survey, approaches. The expert group will be reporting later in 2016 and so will have had more time to survey a larger sample of stakeholders in the educational sphere. Like the HEA data from late 2014 which showed the large disparity in female representation at management and senior management level in the third level sector, which will be discussed later in this present report, the HEA expert group will have had both the time and the scope to produce data on the extent of the gender inequality in all aspects of Ireland’s third level educational system and what academics and non-academics in that sector think of that.

In this report for the TUI it will be taken that gender inequality is a problem that needs rectifying and that the primary focus is to present strategies which can be quickly operationalised to address this problem. Thus the present report is strongly outcomes focussed. It is for others to consider the nature of theory in this field. The author of this report has drawn upon the perspectives of the interviewees in this research plus best practice Human Resource (HR) initiatives from both the public and private sector world-wide. This has produced, as we shall see throughout this report, proposals which will challenge current IoT management to admit both the scale of the problem and then to implement significant HR policies and management to make sure that the IoT sector is one which has greater equality of opportunity and equality of outcome.

Before we examine the scale of the problem and then move to examine the possible solutions we will briefly examine the research methodologies used herein.

### **Methodology**

The initial desk-based research examined the nature of equality and inequality in general and in the third-level educational sector in Ireland in particular. This review also involved a reading of HR best-practice and a discussion with experts in the field, as much of the problems with the lack of equal representation at middle and senior grades are to do, as we shall see later, with selection procedures. Throughout the report there will be some mention of previous research in this area but, as mentioned earlier, this is not meant to be an academic monograph on equality but rather a solutions-focussed report and so there will be a modicum of research references included.

The primary data collection involved academics and non-academics, primarily from the third-level and civil service sector, in Ireland and in Britain. The latter were included as Britain is a large ethnically and racially diverse society that has a much larger third level educational sector than Ireland and, as such, has had to develop solutions to the area of inequality for a number of years to date.

The primary data collection was qualitative in nature, involving in-depth interviews. Each person was interviewed on the condition of anonymity, though many said that they did not mind being quoted on their views. Some did not wish to be quoted as, in my estimation, they did not believe that their organisational culture respected their views and that there may be repercussions to the stating of their views. Thus the ideas, strategies and solutions later in this report are, in many respects, based on the sophisticated and closely-argued perspectives of those who were interviewed.

### **Brief outline of chapter contents**

Chapter two will briefly look into the scale of the problem of gender inequality in the IoT sector, which was brought into sharp focus by HEA data in December 2014. This chapter will state the seriousness of what must be addressed and will set the scene for the subsequent chapters which will propose strategies for addressing the problem.

Chapter three will examine the issue of Positive Discrimination/Action as this has been used in different jurisdictions where there has been an imbalance in representations by different groups. This chapter will thus examine the, at times contentious, dichotomy between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome.

Chapter four will analyse the role played by Human Resource functions and systems, particularly those of recruitment, selection and promotion, within the IoTs. A corollary of this is the area of Human Resource Development (HRD), as it is often those who have been mentored and who have been supported in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) who are in a more advantageous position when it comes to promotion. This chapter will look at potential unconscious bias within the recruitment, selection and promotion systems at play within the IoT sector to see if the systems are discriminatory against women. An important correlate here is the assessment criteria used for progression within the IoT sector and whether they mitigate against women. In exploring this there will be an examination of the assessment model used in Irish universities and what could form the basis of a fit for purpose model across the third level sector in the Republic of Ireland<sup>2</sup>.

Chapter five is an extension of some of the ideas in chapter four relating to HRD. Namely, if there were ways to ensure, by coaching, mentoring and training, that women were in a better position to be considered for promotion to senior management positions, what would these entail? This chapter will also include some critical perspectives which suggest that such training courses must not be about changing women's behaviour so that it falls in line with a prevailing masculine centred culture but rather must be about changing culture to embrace equally masculinities and femininities and the consequent management and people styles.

Chapter six will look at non-HRD IoT institutional supports which may be available or which IoT senior management may like to consider in order to facilitate women in overcoming obstacles in their advancement into IoT senior management. These include the provision of child-minding facilities, family friendly policies, and recognition of and support for academics before and after maternity and paternity leave. As such areas do implicate the State and its laws they are dealt with separately in chapter seven.

Chapter seven briefly examines the role of the State in the problem of gender inequality in the IoT sector and the State's role in finding a way out of the current shortcomings. Firstly, the supports provided for those with parental and family responsibilities will be examined to see how they might be extended.

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this research only the Republic of Ireland will be analysed, as the third level educational system in Northern Ireland is governed by British legislation and makes use of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) to evaluate where funding should be allocated. Furthermore, the British approach to gender equality is, in some respects, more advanced than in the Republic of Ireland, with initiatives such as the Athena Swan awards. The usefulness of the Athena Swan initiative will be evaluated within this report as there are sufficient similarities between the two systems that there would be considerable benefits to its adoption.

Secondly, awards schemes such as the Athena Swan award and other measures of equality have gained great acclaim in other countries and the usefulness and potential efficacy of these in an Irish setting will be examined. Finally, since the State, through various government departments, controls IoT budgets it is in a powerful position to link improved gender equality in the IoTs to state subventions those colleges receive; funding for teaching, research and staff numbers. How the State might do this will thus be examined in this chapter.

Chapter eight will bring together the antecedent themes and suggest overall conclusions and recommendations. The theme of this chapter will be an action-oriented analysis of the strategies and process by which the IoTs can achieve gender equality.

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## Chapter 2- The scale of the problem

**“The Irish context has been characterized by a lack of available data and, as a result, until recently, limited political attention to the issue.” (O Grada, A., Ní Laoire, C., Linehan, C., Boylan, G. & Connolly, L., 2015, p.359)**

The HEA published figures in December 2014, included in Appendix 1, which show how wide is the gap in male and female management representation at management and senior management levels in the IoT and university sectors. Since the Geoghegan-Quinn group will be examining the university sector and since the remit of this present report is to examine the IoT sector I will comment only on the gender representation disparities in the IoT sector so as to establish how much work needs to be done on this area.

At the time of writing, the latest figures for different gender representation are those contained in Appendix 1. Before looking at these, a brief explanation of each job grade in the IoT sector is in order as it will help understanding of the career progression path for academics therein. It should be said that many of the IoTs, including DIT which has a different legislative foundation to the Institutes of Technology, have engaged in organisational re-structuring and so names for the same grade or position may be different in different colleges. However, the names are still substantively the same and so this report will seek to use those terms which are most commonly used in most colleges.

### **Senior Lecturer grades**

The SL3, or Senior Lecturer 3, position tends to refer to those workers who are Heads of School (HoS) and those in a HoS position tend to sit on the Institute senior management team (SMT)<sup>3</sup>. Those in a HoS position often say that they do not deal with day-to-day staff or student problems and that they are more strategic in their orientation, planning for the future needs of the Institute. On the SMT with them are non-academic managers, who have responsibilities for areas such as, for example, the physical infrastructure of the college and for the overall financial and academic functioning of the Institute. These non-academic managers may have started off as academics or lecturers but decided to seek promotion away from positions with an academic contract, such as a HoS position, which requires the post holder in most instances to lecture for a small amount of hours but allows them to avail of the IoT holidays<sup>4</sup>. Most SL3 holders

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<sup>3</sup> This often has different names in different colleges

<sup>4</sup> This usually extends from June 20<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>

will have come from the pre-existing ranks of academic management. Thus holding a lower, SL1 or SL2, position has an important “gatekeeping” function as having been in such a position may be viewed favourably, due to the post holder being viewed as having gained important experience to make them more likely to be able to fulfil the duties of a more senior SL position. Finally, for some an SL3 position is seen as a valuable stepping stone to an Institute President position, whether in the person’s current college or in another.

Those in an SL2 position are typically Heads of Department (HoD) and they manage the day to day running of their department, involving as that does a large amount of interaction with staff, students and other heads of department. For many HoDs it is a busy and difficult job. Like those in a HoS position, HoDs are generally required to lecture a small amount of hours and they receive the IoT holiday provision like all those with an academic contract. Those in an SL2 position will usually have begun as an academic and may have been an SL1T<sup>5</sup> before being promoted, though this is not a requirement for promotion to an SL2 position. It would seem that most SL2, like SL3, positions are filled from within a particular Institute though there is little formal data on this even though the positions are advertised nationally. If they are temporary/acting positions they are advertised and filled internally. In turn, those who have filled SL2 or SL3 positions on an acting/temporary basis are more likely to fill such positions when they become available on a permanent basis, though there is little formal data on this. This points to the importance of treating the recruitment and selection of such temporary and acting positions as seriously as for positions advertised on a permanent basis. Positions may be filled on a temporary or acting basis for years on end, which re-inforces this point.

SL1T positions holders are usually termed “Senior Lecturers”. In some colleges and departments they are not required to do anything additional to their lecturing and normal academic duties. The title, the same as that used in Irish and international universities, lends an academic cache to post holders and may confer a benefit on those who wish to be promoted to SL2 or SL3 level. However, as we shall see in later chapters, the promotion to SL1T is not as rigorous as in universities. There, in the main, applicants are evaluated on their teaching, research and community/college contributions and often by very closely evaluated metrics. In the IoT sector the SL1T position is principally known as a “Senior Lecturer 1 (teaching)” position so applicants may be evaluated

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<sup>5</sup> The Senior Lecturer 1 position is actually called the SL1(Teaching) or SL1(T) grade. In theory it is meant to recognise an applicant’s previous teaching record in considering them for promotion but in practice it seems that criteria for this position vary and those participating in this research felt that such criteria as exist are often applied inconsistently and often arbitrarily.

simply on their pedagogical record, philosophy and innovations, often by means of one panel interview. One panel interview is often the only means used to assess an applicant's suitability and, as we shall see in the chapter on human resource functions, with such a "one shot" system there is potential for inaccurate hiring and promotion plus there is an increased chance of bias and favouritism, which may well work against women's chances of promotion if they are not part of a clique. Furthermore, since many lecturers, often female and possessing a doctoral qualification and research publication records, are research active it would seem unfair and anachronistic to be solely evaluating them on their teaching experience and the like. It would be fairer for the Institutes to use an assessment system similar to those currently used in many universities which assesses applicants on a wide range of achievement. This will be dealt with in more detail in the chapter on human resource systems.

While some are appointed straight from outside the Institutes to SL2 and SL3 positions- SL1T positions in the IoTs tend to be advertised and appointed internally- most academics in the IoTs began their careers as a lecturer, at the Lecturer or Assistant Lecturer grade. Assistant Lecturers do the same work as Lecturers but have to lecture for 20 hours per week, as opposed to 18 hours per week, and are paid less than their Lecturer colleagues. The increase to 20 hours lectures per week reduces the chances of being able to conduct research and is as a result of recent Public Service agreements, such as what was termed the "Croke Park" agreement. The reference to "Lecturer 1" and "Lecturer 2" positions are for what used to be the entry level positions for lecturers but which have now been superseded by the Lecturer/Assistant Lecturer dichotomy. Thus all Senior Lecturer positions, 1 to 3 inclusive, are important for lecturers who wish to advance within the Institute of Technology system

### **Analysing the HEA figures**

The HEA presents figures for 13 of the 14 colleges<sup>6</sup>; one college is presented as empty except for two categories. At this point it should be said that this current report will not specify individual colleges, whether in the positive or in the negative. Rather, the overall systemic issues will be presented in the IoTs as a whole. Gender inequality issues apply to most colleges and, as will be seen later in this report, at this stage there is little constructively that will be achieved from highlighting the supposed failings of individual colleges; "supposed" in the sense that as the figures stand they do not account for the variability between departments, with some presumably showing better gender equality figures than others. Furthermore, it is difficult from the HEA figures to see whether the

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<sup>6</sup> Which includes Dublin Institute of Technology.

IoTs have or have not included part-time lecturers and holders of Contracts of Indefinite Duration (CID) in their figures. It is important that in future these are included separately due to the suggestion in successive pieces of research that women are disproportionately over represented in part-time and non-permanent work positions (EU Commission, 2015).

Finally, before looking at the data it is important to state that statistical measures of significance have not been used on the data as what the HEA presented are percentage differences between categories. It would be better if the IoTs also supplied the raw numbers in each category. This should be easily available and does not compromise the privacy or confidentiality of any individual concerned and would allow for the use of sophisticated measures of significance to highlight exactly where there are particular problems with gender inequality.

That being said, the figures show that in most colleges and most employment categories there is an imbalance between the employment of men and women, with women very poorly represented, or not at all, in some categories within some IoTs. While there are a very small amount with equal, or superior, representation by women in some categories or across all categories these are very much the exception rather than the rule.

What can be said with some certainty is that, even without applying the above-mentioned measures of statistical significance, there is a serious imbalance between male and female academics applied to various academic employment positions. This is almost certainly not due to chance and is probably due to multi-factorial issues in each of the IoTs concerned and in the system as a whole. These hypothesised causal factors will be examined in detail later in this report. For now, each of the academic employment categories will be analysed briefly in order to state the scale of the problem.

### **Senior Lecturerships 1, 2 and 3**

The HEA data is both stark and self-explanatory but some emblematic themes will be drawn out. According to the HEA data, in some IoTs there is no female representation at all at SL3 level (4 IoTs), SL2 level (1 IoT) or SL1 level (1 IoT).

Ranges<sup>7</sup> are (excluding outliers<sup>8</sup> of 0 and 50%): from 20% to 33% female representation (SL3 level); 17% to 45% (SL2 level; Some colleges at this level

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<sup>7</sup> In data terms, the lowest to the highest values, or vice versa.

<sup>8</sup> Outliers are extreme, and at times unrepresentative, data values. They are on occasion excluded from statistical analysis as they can “skew”, or disproportionately and inaccurately, pull data in a particular direction. That is not to say that the outliers here are unimportant but that the analysis herein will look at the more mainstream values for lack of gender equality in most of the IoTs.

have equal or greater female representation but while the SL2 level is better than SL3 level for female representation it should be remembered that being an SL2 involves a great deal more work and has less power); 12% to 38% (SL1 level). The aggregate percentage levels for female representation at SL1, SL2 and SL3 levels are no higher than 32% (24%, 32% and 27% respectively) giving an overall representation for women of only 29% at Senior Lecturer level.

So, there is low female representation at all SL levels. While there are some colleges which are better than others there is a particular barrier between SL2 and SL3 levels. It will be important for IoTs to consider that some female academics are very well suited to the strategic nature of the SL3 grade, with its access to and participation in decision-making at the highest level in each IoT, and so should not necessarily have to “serve their time” as a head of department at SL2 level. Interview data suggested that some women are dissuaded from applying for SL2 positions because of its onerous nature due to their own family commitments even though they were willing to work hard in this position. The IoTs need to consider carefully the recruitment and selection of SL3 managers and the supports they give the SL2 incumbents.

### **Lecturer level**

At lecturer level there are still problems, with all colleges bar two having less women than men at Lecturer level and with some as low as 23% and 39% at that level. For Lecturer level, women make up 44% of the academic workforce. Though these figures were published in 2014 there is no evidence to suggest that the levels have improved. As mentioned above, the figures are not disaggregated by department or by academic discipline area. Were this to be the case it would give a better picture of the need for change in particular areas. Such figures should be easily accessible and reportable by every IoT HR department.

But each IoT needs to go further and improve the advertisement of positions to groups such as women so that concerns regarding family commitments and work-life balance are assuaged. Later in this report we will examine means by which colleges and the State can support female academics and their families. But for the time being, each of the colleges need to market and advertise themselves such that the “face” they put forward shows women equally participating and directing the strategic and operational direction of each IoT at every level. This means including an equal amount of photographs and representations of women in all publicity material, but especially on recruitment and selection materials, to include newspaper advertisements, application forms and on all IoT web based material. Research has shown (Moore Walsh & Walsh,

2007) that this is a problem and private sector firms, for example, routinely present a large and equal range of genders, races and (dis)abilities in their HR materials.

The provision of more gender balanced publicity materials will convey a sense that women are, in the first instance, more welcome in the organisation at every level. It is not good enough, as some IoTs seem to imply in their advertisements, that simply by saying that they are an equal opportunities employer that they are so; the scale of the problem is large and significant measures need to be taken to counteract it. This point will be re-iterated in the subsequent chapter on human resource systems.

### **Conclusions**

- The current statistics on gender inequality from the HEA, and thus from the IoTs, are incomplete and out of date. Each properly functioning HR department has easy access to these figures and they should be made available on each Institute's web site and to the HEA on at least an annual basis.
- The statistics for each IoT need to be more up to date and accurate in order to inform the process of achieving greater gender equality

### **Recommendations**

- The gender equality statistics need to be more up to date and the requirement to report these figures in an accurate and timely fashion should be placed on a statutory basis. This would then provide for the linking of an IoT's achievement of specified gender equality targets to its funding.
- The statistics for male and female academics are not, at present, detailed enough. For each IoT they should be broken down by department and then by overall disciplinary area, e.g. department of accounting and then school/college/faculty of business.<sup>9</sup> They should also include figures by gender for those who are employed as: researchers (typically involving "post docs"); part-time lecturers (those who are paid by the hour); postgraduate students (who are technically employees of each IoT and who often work as Demonstrators and Tutors) and those who are on Contracts of Indefinite Duration (CIDs). Since much research suggests that women are disproportionately represented in non-permanent and contract/time de-limited positions, any future figures should be

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<sup>9</sup> These titles are often used interchangeably, and differ, across different IoTs.

disaggregated to show the gender representation in these non-permanent positions.

- Where colleges have merged under the government's proposed merger scheme leading to technological university status the IoT should be required to state the above figures for each constituent college separately so as to show what progress is being made on each campus.
- Institute presidents and senior management teams should be asked to explain what initiatives they have taken annually to improve gender equality. If these are not fulfilled in a satisfactory manner then those colleges should be given a warning and then, if they do not either present meaningful initiatives and/or they do not achieve the gender equality goals they have agreed with the relevant government department they should receive a sanction from that government department. This is important in emphasising the importance and urgency of this area.
- Institute presidents and senior management teams should be required to set targets for gender equality and these should be at least proportionate to the representation of a particular gender in a disciplinary group, e.g. engineering and nursing have, respectively, male and female majorities in their staff numbers. It is also important that such skewed gender distributions as these be factored in when an overall average is calculated in a particular IoT.
- HR sections in IoTs should collect data on the demographic profile of applicants according to the groups listed in the employment equality acts and compare that with those of successful candidates to see if any patterns emerge which suggest that certain groups are doing proportionately better or worse relative to their representation in the workforce. Similarly, this data should be collected for all promotions and this too should be reported annually to the relevant statutory reporting body. This will help identify if there are areas which need improvement in terms of advertising (to relevant groups and the content of the advertisements), recruitment (are the means of applying user friendly and are they easily accessible to all groups?) and selection (is there a bottleneck for some groups one they are short-listed, but then get no further?)

## **Chapter 3: Positive Discrimination- Equality of opportunity vs equality of outcome**

**“Insights from our study suggest that gender practices are at work that privilege inner circle candidates and deny access to outsiders to the effect that the pool of potential candidates is confined to a small and rather homogenous group of men.”**

**(Van den Brink, M. & Benschop, Y., 2014, P. 483)**

Given the scale of the problem in the last chapter, a problem similar to that experienced by under-represented groups in societies around the world and thus not an uncommon one, some might be forgiven for suggesting radical action to combat this problem. Thus some societies, most famously South Africa post-apartheid and in the USA after the civil rights marches of the 1960's and subsequent U.S. Supreme Court affirmative action decisions, have decided that they should introduce a form of positive discrimination or positive action.

As with the other areas in this report, the analysis of positive discrimination/action contained herein was informed by those who were surveyed and by a reading of the literature on the merits and de-merits of such a focussed course of action.

The debate for and against positive discrimination mirrors the debate between equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. Those in the equality of opportunity school of thought believe that once the necessary statutory framework is in place and that, in this instance, there is a “level playing field” in this area that in time there will be equality in the numbers of men and women employed at all levels. Those in this school point to the leaving certificate as an example of how, in many cases, females do better than males on average and that this effect carries on to through their college studies.

Those in the “equality of outcome” school of thought say that simply putting laws in place and removing policies which mitigate against one group, in this case women, is not enough as it may take a generation or more before a different legislative and public policy framework can effect the necessary changes. Thus it may take too long, and may be grossly unfair for women to wait, for the equal representation to which they were always entitled.

The middle way seems to be the “Critical Mass Marker approach” suggested by the University of Cambridge academic Jude Browne (Browne, 2014) who has

proposed targeted rather than blanket measures to address need in particular areas.

So, rather than requiring all areas to reach a 50-50 split between male and female academics there would be a reality that certain areas like engineering (large male majority of entrants) and nursing (large female majority of entrants) are skewed towards one gender and that it is in other areas that measures should be focussed, in a closely monitored and time de-limited fashion, i.e. until equal gender representation both in opportunity and in outcome is achieved. In those academic areas in which women are in a minority internationally, research in the U.S. (Ceci et al, 2014) has shown that women can achieve management positions proportionate to their representation in that discipline.

### **How best to proceed?**

Any positive discrimination measure incurs the criticism that those who are promoted are merely done so on the basis of their gender. This is a powerful argument against such a measure. However, if the same criteria are used for all the “face validity”<sup>10</sup> of such a measure improves and is easier for other parts of the workforce to accept.

What is proposed is a measure which has been used in some Irish universities where there has been controversy over low levels of women being appointed to Senior Lecturer<sup>11</sup> and other senior academic positions. Namely, that while the criteria for promotion need to be changed (as described in the next chapter, on HR and HRD systems) the amount of positions available needs to be reviewed.

Under a targeted and time de-limited positive action measure such as this it would mean that the traditional route for promotion would remain open to both genders but that in addition there would be a certain number open only to women, based on exactly the same criteria as the recruitment and selection for both genders together. This would help kick-start the move towards equal representation at SL1 level, for example, and would thus be an important stepping stone for women towards SL2 and then senior management positions such as SL3 positions.

In addition, IoTs could provide for additional positions for women at SL2 and SL3 level which would be “without portfolio” and which would allow them to attend

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<sup>10</sup> A term typically used in psychometric testing, it is the extent to which those viewing a measure accept its ability to carry out correctly that which it purports to do.

<sup>11</sup> Senior Lecturer positions in Irish universities are not the same as in the IoT sector and are not denominated in the same fashion, i.e. 1 to 3. In the universities they are stand-alone positions which are usually, but not always, awarded on the basis of strict criteria such as an applicant’s research, teaching and university community involvements.

middle and senior management meetings. This would help correct some of the imbalance at this level plus it would give female managers experience of collective planning and decision-making and thus would help their further promotion thereafter. At SL2 level each manager in this cohort could be asked to work as an assistant head of department and at SL3 level they could be asked to work with the incumbent and be an assistant head of school. Furthermore, those in SL3 positions could be asked to undertake strategic planning tasks, for which they would be qualified by virtue of having met the criteria required for this position, and so would make an important contribution to the senior management team.

Before finishing this point, it is important to consider the dissenting perspective in respect of having an additional set number of women being promoted and to promoting women to positions which may not have particular departmental or school/faculty<sup>12</sup>. Simply stated, the argument is that managers should always have functional responsibility for some area and should not simply be sitting on management committees. The idea stated above, of a deputy position, combined with membership of an appropriate management committee and set tasks that contribute to the mission of the IoT could address these concerns.

### **Government investment- the key ingredient**

Such initiatives as those just discussed have a financial and cost consequence. This point will be re-visited later in this report, about individual institutions and concerning the State's role in this issue. The point to be made here and elsewhere is that tackling gender inequality will incur expenditure for the state but that such outlays are worthwhile, in seeking to achieve equality. There is also a school of thought which suggests that organisations which actively promote, support and encourage equality and diversity are ones in which workers are happier and more productive (Dezsö and Ross, 2012).

Ultimately, it is the State which will have to take the lead in the process of gender equality change. It can do this by embracing change in principle, in its statements and, most importantly, in its own actions and in the actions of those it funds; the IoTs. There is a unique opportunity for the State to press for this change but the pay-off will be substantial in greater equality and diversity in decision-making and so better workplaces.

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<sup>12</sup> The term for the level above a department is different in colleges and universities in Ireland. Typically it is department- college-faculty in university colleges and department-school in smaller IoTs. There are different names given to these but the distinction herein between SL2 and SL3 managers is one whereby there is a movement towards greater strategic thinking and planning as the person moves to a more senior role.

## Conclusions

- Many have strong views against any type of positive discrimination as they believe it may favour some who have not met the same criteria as those who were recruited or promoted on mainstream criteria. Those from this perspective feel that if there is a level playing field then any inequalities will, in time, be dissipated.
- The hiring and promotion practices used by the IoTs to date have not ensured that there is an equal amount of gender representation in the IoT academic management sector.
- The State will have to take the lead in the process of gender equality change. It can do this by embracing change in principle, in its statements and, most importantly, in its own actions and in the actions of those it funds; the IoTs. Tackling gender inequality will incur expenditure for the State but such outlays are necessary to achieve academic gender equality.

## Recommendations

- Instead of a blanket system of positive discrimination where all women are favoured over all men for promotion to academic management positions, the State and the IoTs should consider a targeted, time de-limited initiative whereby additional posts from SL1T to SL3 level are made available to women only, providing they meet the necessary criteria for promotion. These criteria would be exactly the same as the normal criteria for these positions.
- IoTs should provide additional positions for women at SL2 and SL3 level which would be “without portfolio” and which would allow them to attend middle and senior management meetings. This would give female managers experience of collective planning and decision-making and thus would help their further promotion thereafter.

## Chapter 4: Human Resource systems- recruitment, selection & promotion

“...the under-representation of women at senior levels has adverse consequences not just for women, but for the research community and society as a whole.”

(Murphy, F.C., Bishop, D.V.M. & Sigala, N., 2014, p. 918)

In this chapter we will examine the role played by the Human Resource (HR) functions in the IoTs in creating and perpetuating gender inequality and perhaps inhibiting its removal. This chapter will further examine the role that HR functions can play in removing gender inequalities.

### IoT Human Resource functions

In most IoTs the Human Resource function recruits/attracts<sup>13</sup> individuals based on process and content criteria stipulated by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The process typically involves an advertisement in a national newspaper and online followed by an application to the IoT by means of a standard application form (SAF) or a curriculum vitae. The debate about the efficacy and fairness of either methodology will not be described here but we will, below, briefly look at interesting ways to reduce potential gender bias at this stage. Unlike private sector companies, the IoTs do not in the main provide for online electronic application forms though they may allow the uploading of the SAF and applicants' CVs.

In terms of recruitment content, the State's Department of Education and Skills (DES) has a central role to play in the reform of this process. The DES has very particular criteria for each externally advertised academic position and requires that the IoTs adhere to this. In the first instance, for lecturer positions, and for more senior academic positions<sup>14</sup> the criteria used are extremely important in ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly. Though nearly all the IoTs wish to have staff that possess doctoral or advanced professional qualifications, the recruitment criteria often merely stipulate an honours degree requirement and

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<sup>13</sup> Attracts is used less widely than “recruits” but is preferred by some as it has less militaristic resonances. Nevertheless, “recruit” and “recruitment” will be used in this report as it is the most commonly used phrase and as such probably the most familiar to readers of this report.

<sup>14</sup> SL1(T) positions tend to be advertised internally and, unless they are temporary or acting positions, SL2 and SL3 positions are usually advertised externally

appropriate professional experience and research experience, publications and funding are not frequently stated as required.

This may seem reasonable in that it increases the pool of candidates. A less benevolent interpretation is that it may diminish the substantial effort that is evident by many female graduates in taking the time and trouble to work towards doctoral qualifications. It may then facilitate the “old boy’s club” (Van den Brink and Benschop, 2014) many interviewees mentioned whereby those in a, usually male, clique rewarded their friends with positions, as a payback for favours or because they thought that men were better suited to being promoted to management positions due either to an inherent suitability to such positions or because they were perceived to have less family commitments and so could dedicate more time to such jobs.

This type of inherent, and often unstated, prejudice- literally having prejudged women not to be good enough- is at play here. It is unacceptable that any group of any gender is immediately at a disadvantage from the outset in their application for any position. The State is in a powerful position here as it provides the remuneration for such positions and so it should require that all positions are fairly and equally filled.

### **Unconscious Bias**

If the State is to succeed in making recruitment and selection fairer and more equal to all then it needs to tackle the area of unconscious bias; a type of prejudice. While the State may require that there be gender balance on interview panels there needs to be greater transparency in terms of who chooses those people to sit on the interview panel and their training to do so. Given the, at times, very sophisticated nature of modern interviewing it does not follow that all interviewers are necessarily good at selecting the best applicant according to the criteria being employed. It is eminently possible that groupthink<sup>15</sup> could come into play and that those chosen to be independent members of the selection panel, usually from outside, may feel they have to agree with the preference of those who have asked them to serve on the interview panel.

In a nutshell, the area of unconscious bias involves, in relation to recruitment and selection, an interviewer making presumptions about a person’s ability or inability to carry out a particular task. That person may not be aware, or may be unconscious of, their prejudging of a person based on a category they may fall

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<sup>15</sup> A term from psychology which indicates the tendency amongst those in a group to arrive at similar decisions and to share explicit views of the world in certain situations due to subjectively felt pressure to do so.

into, whether that be any of the nine grounds in Irish equality legislation<sup>16</sup>. Thus any unconscious bias training should include a discussion about what an interviewer believes about different demographic categories so that they may realise any unconscious prejudices they may possess.

### **Lack of data- future research + better appeals mechanism**

In addition to individual prejudice, unconscious or otherwise, it is important to appreciate the role of institutional prejudice. In Northern Ireland for public sector employment they have, for a number of decades, collected data from job applicants on demographic categories such as age, gender, race, religion and ethnicity. This has been to examine any possible disjuncture between the amounts applying from each of these categories and those who are then called for interview and the numbers then employed. Similar data is also collected in the British civil service as a whole.

Such a model seems appropriate for the IoTs and would help not only at entry level recruitment and selection but also for promotional posts. This would help address gender inequality in identifying the amount of women applying for posts and then the relative gender employment offer success rates thereafter.

It would also help identify not just if women were successful in being offered jobs or promotions but also if there were low rates of women applying for positions, as is suggested by some (Sandberg, 2015). The reasons for this may include women underestimating their own abilities, feeling they will be underestimated by others, having too many other personal and work responsibilities plus not liking the organisational culture and how it may transact business in an aggressive and non-inclusive manner. This is also looked at again later in this report.

This data should be collected and HR functions should be required to do so and the data should then be sent to the HEA, with a plan on the part of the HR function as to how they are going to address any deficit in applications they find. While it is understandable that certain disciplines such as nursing and engineering may have a skewed gender profile it is important that women be encouraged to apply for all posts and the HR section needs to be aware of any possible excluding messages which may be conveyed by non gender balanced publicity material.

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<sup>16</sup> Gender, Age, Race, Religion, Sexuality, Family status, Marital status, Disability status, and membership of the Traveller community

## **Human Resource Development- what's needed**

Some of those interviewed said that one of the reasons why women do not apply for academic management positions was that they felt that they did not have the skills to perform excellently in the position. Thus women often underestimate their own abilities and feel that they do not have role models or mentors to inspire and guide them. We will look at the potential role of mentors elsewhere but here we will look at the important role that can be played by Human Resource Development.

HRD best practice involves bringing the best out of workers for their own personal development and for the benefit of the organisation as a whole. This involves assistance and advice on one's career. Formal HRD programmes, and not Continuous Professional Development (CPD) events<sup>17</sup>, are almost entirely absent in the IoT sector and lecturers and researchers typically learn about how to advance their career on an informal basis from colleagues in their own college and at external academic conferences and the like. In the private sector there is more of an emphasis, in non-educational areas, on developing workers so that in developing their careers that they may also improve the organisation's functioning to better achieve its goals.

That the IoT sector is so poor in its HRD (Clarke et al, 2015) is doubly concerning as this deficit adds to gender inequality by placing more barriers in the way of women advancing in their careers. The question then is what exactly a properly functioning and correctly resourced HRD programme would look like.

## **HRD programmes- the ideal**

The first point to make is that HRD programmes should be available for all and will benefit all within the organisation. Such programmes can actually cost very little and do not have to take up a great deal of time. In fact, a properly functioning and equitable PMDS (Performance Management and Development System)<sup>18</sup> would complement a HRD system. Further, a HRD system would fit in well with many IoTs' stated ambition to become research active technological universities. Being more research active will require that staff are better supported in carrying out empirical and scholarly research and that implicates once again a structured career plan.

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<sup>17</sup> Meaning that CPD events are often either particular to such things as accountancy professional bodies or are offered on an ad hoc basis to develop "hard", as opposed to "soft", skills such as computer programming or IT software knowledge. The HRD mentioned in this chapter is largely to do with soft skills.

<sup>18</sup> The PMDS system was meant to be rolled out in the mid-2000s in the IoT sector but its implementation has been sparse. It has also been beset by a lacking of resources and supports afforded to managers to implement the system as such a system requires that a manager has a sophisticated understanding of a worker's needs and that the manager is then able to assist the workers in further developing their skills and competencies through a resourced and time-lined professional development plan.

While such HRD programmes should be available to all they should also be available to female lecturers by themselves as some leaders in this area (Voice at the Table, 2016) such as Rina G. Lynch have shown that women can benefit from opportunities to discuss their professional and academic development with other women in an environment which is focussed on their particular skills. The same may also be said for men where there is an imbalance in their representation in a particular academic discipline.

Lynch's company "Voice at the table" seeks to enhance and support women's skills in areas such as career negotiating and meeting presence. This is not for the purposes of conforming to a male gendered manner of comporting oneself in what may be an organisational environment with a majority of male managers. Instead, it is once again to support women in developing their skills and competencies in a way that develops them to be as good as they can be in a way that they want to be.

In an academic environment this would involve helping female academics, and males also, to know how to develop their academic career. Such career advancement would include: modern blended and non blended<sup>19</sup> teaching pedagogies; effective ways to present at targeted academic conferences; planning towards high impact publications; how best to develop academic networks; developing research clusters; meaningful participation in professional and scholarly organisations; identifying important outlets for publishing research.

The academic research environment is more competitive than ever before. Since many of the IoTs have expressed a wish to become technological universities and to be research active in the manner of such universities academic training is particularly important as research activity will increasingly be the measure by which academics are evaluated for promotion.

At present the criteria for promotion are largely focussed on management experience or potential and on academic discipline knowledge (at HoD level) and with emphasis on "strategic" abilities at higher managerial levels (at College, Faculty and School levels, for example). Given that women may have had significant child and family commitments they may not have been in a position to acquire academic management experience and so a recommendation for the IoTs is to appoint more women to decision-making committees, particularly when they are not academic managers, so that they can gain experience of

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<sup>19</sup> Blended refers to the amount of "learning technologies", or online learning resources/information and equipment, which is included in a course/module by a lecturer.

competencies relevant to management practice. The work of such committees should also be scheduled in a family friendly manner, i.e. with the normal working day.

### **Criteria for promotion- changes are needed**

A area of dispute in some universities has been the criteria by which academics have been evaluated to senior lecturer level and, by implication, professorial level. The professor grade is not a formal promotional grade at present in the IoTs but it is important that the same rigour be applied in any such similar promotions as there has been considerable coverage of those institutions which have been shown to have a significantly disproportionately higher number of men who gain promotion to senior lecturer and then to professorial positions.

The suggestion is that the imbalance is not simply due to less women being available for promotion arising from child and family commitments. Aside from the suggestion of conscious or unconscious bias, the favouring of males cliques over female applicants and the existence of an “old boy’s club”, what was frequently mentioned by those interviewed was the lack of clarity and transparency in the criteria used to select those for promotion. Further, that the marking of same was done in an arbitrary manner to arrive at an outcome which those leading the process desired.

The current system used in many IoTs is one where interviewers are encouraged to mark according to criteria which many describe as overly general and prone to subjective interpretation due to their ambiguity. This has the danger of different interviewers interpreting interviewee performance in significantly different ways. As stated herein earlier there is the danger of a “norming” or groupthink effect at play whereby many of the panel will feel that they have to agree with the favoured candidates of those expressing a forceful choice, who are often internal IoT managers who may favour the status quo of males in positions of management.

This is not ideal or fair and certainly does not conform to best international interview practice. To rectify this the criteria by which applicants are evaluated for academic promotion positions need to be made public, clearer and more explicit and in feedback post-interview there needs to be a better link between marks given and the remarks and applications forms of each applicant. Furthermore, the criteria need to change.

Though the academic selection criteria used in universities are not perfect- as was highlighted by some of those interviewed- they give greater scope to the wide ambit of experience by women in an academic environment. Many use the

three main headings of research, teaching and community involvement (university and external stakeholder). The key then is the different weighting between the three, with many favouring research and teaching with a 40% weighting each and allocating 20% to community involvement. Others allocate the three areas equally and some allow a “moveable” 20% which the candidate can choose to be allocated to whichever heading they choose. Many of the women surveyed said that this last methodology has strong arguments in its favour as it would allow women who had just returned from child and family commitments, and so had less time to re-start their research, the breathing space to re-commence their research career.

Furthermore, within the “research” heading there is often a tendency to favour those with large amounts of research publications and often in highly “starred”<sup>20</sup> journals and publications. A way to address this, for SL1 promotional positions (instead of just SL1T positions- not to have them for long-service positions), is to allow applicants to submit a prescribed amount of their best publications in a specified amount of time, e.g. their three best papers in the last five years. This will vary between academic disciplines but the point is that those who have had to take time out due to child and family commitments are not doubly penalised when they wish to make progress and be promoted within their discipline. Certainly there is a value to those with large amounts of research publications but those with potential should also be facilitated and this is a manner in which to do so.

### **Conclusions**

- Unconscious bias, or prejudice, before selection interviews may exist not just between genders but on any of the grounds of the Employment Equality Act. Such bias and prejudice can impede the selection or promotion of properly qualified and suitable job applicants.
- The present recruitment and selection system may facilitate cliques who favour each other and these can be male employees.
- There needs to be greater transparency about how selection interview panels are chosen and how much training they have received to do so, especially on modern competency-based interviews.

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<sup>20</sup> The more the stars attributed to a publication the better it is often deemed to be by some. The influence of a journal is also measured by its ranking and its “impact factor”. It is not necessary to go into the exact derivation of each of these but suffice to say that the more a journal article or publication has a higher starred rating, ranking or impact factor the better it is thought to be by many academics in many academic disciplines and the more of those the greater chance of academics being promoted. This is particularly the case for business, the sciences (in the widest sense) but not as much so for humanities disciplines and for those whose practitioners may place particular emphasis on book/monograph publication.

- The present data set only tells us the amount of men and women in each category as employees but does not tell us how many men and women applied for each position.
- Not enough time, resources or management time is being spent on HRD to develop those working as academics in the IoT sector.
- Female academics often do not get enough experience sitting on important internal and external committees, which mitigates against them when they apply for senior academic management positions.
- The criteria for recruitment, selection and promotion for academic and academic management grades in the IoTs are unclear, non-transparent and open to abuse.
- Criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer grades need to be clarified to include the range of experience required by modern academics in pedagogically sophisticated and research active higher education environments.

### **Recommendations**

- The State and its representatives should ensure that all those on interview boards for State jobs, including all academic and academic management positions, complete certified training in selection interviewing, to include modules on equality, unconscious bias and prejudice.
- All interview panels where there is a mixed cohort of applicants should have a gender balanced interview panel. All such members of interview boards should declare any conflict of interest before they participate on such a panel.
- A redacted copy of each of the interview notes should be made available to all of those interviewed for a particular academic position.
- Interview panels should be clear as to which job criteria will be marked before the interview, e.g. a PhD would be marked under “academic qualifications” towards the highest part of the scale. Other areas, such as the quality of published research, can be discussed in depth at interview.
- The scoring system used at most IoT interviews is weak and is not fit for purpose. The general nature of the categories used, with few guidance notes, leads to the possibility that there may be a large disparity between the marks awarded by different interviewers at the same interview about the same applicant. This type of variation is evidence of subjectivity and needs to be removed from all interviews for academic jobs.
- The job requirements for each academic position should be more attuned to the needs of modern academic practice; academic managers should possess

at least a master's degree and/or advanced professional qualifications, e.g. Chartered status of a professional body.

- HR functions should be required to collect, and report on to the HEA, data on the amount of people applying, successfully and unsuccessfully, for all of the categories under the Employment Equality Act. This data should be reported at least annually and should include an explanation of why there may be low applications from particular groups, should this be the case, and a disparity between the numbers applying and being successful from particular groups, should this be the case.
- The HR function of each IoT should be required to produce a report, at least annually, on how it is putting in place plans to rectify any gender inequality as may exist and how it has made progress since the previous year's report.
- Senior management in the IoTs need to put significantly greater resources into HRD for all staff, particularly to provide coaching, mentoring and networking opportunities for women. HRD programmes should also include: modern blended and non blended teaching pedagogies; effective ways to present at targeted academic conferences; planning towards high impact publications; how best to develop academic networks; developing research clusters; meaningful participation in professional and scholarly organisations, and identifying important outlets for publishing research.
- IoTs should appoint more women to decision-making committees, particularly when they are not academic managers, so that they can gain experience of competencies relevant to management practice. The work of such committees should also be scheduled in a family friendly manner, i.e. within the normal working day.
- The criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer/SL grades in the IoTs should be re-considered to give appropriate weighting to teaching, research and community (internal and external IoT) activities. The criteria should also allow applicants to present a set amount of examples of the applicant's best work within a particular period of time rather than simply valuing high quantities of work such as large numbers of research publications, which may discriminate against women who have taken time out due to family commitments.

## Chapter 5- Training and mentoring for women

“...initiatives such as mentoring schemes for female academics and researchers can have impacts that reach beyond the individual careers of the mentees and can begin to change the views and understandings of actors throughout an institution.”

(O Grada, A., Ní Laoire, C., Linehan, C., Boylan, G. & Connolly, L., 2015, p.371)

This chapter examines the role of coaching, mentoring and training in improving the chances of workers in the IoT sector gaining promotion to more senior academic positions or in simply developing their career to be more research active and/or to use different teaching methodologies. As was stated in chapter three, the HR function and allied HRD initiatives will play an important part in improving gender equality in the IoTs. Thus in this chapter we will consider what content might be involved in such HRD.

### **Human Resource Development- who should benefit from what?**

Before describing some mainstream and some innovative approaches to HRD it is important to note that these perspectives, that of the organisation that supports its workers to improve themselves and in so doing to improve the supporting organisation, do require a change in organisational cultural mindset and, in many cases, financial and time commitments by the organisations.

Whomsoever is responsible- senior managers in the IoTs who may wish to receive greater monies from central government and the DES or the DES who may require the IoTs to move more expenditure into staff HRD- it would seem obvious that an organisation does better if it invests in its staff; if, for example, a hospital were to refuse to update healthcare professionals' knowledge of pharmaceuticals and medical procedures then they would not be using best practice and their patients would be receiving less than optimum care. Similarly, lecturers are knowledge workers and while in the IoTs there may not traditionally have been an emphasis on research there has been more so in recent years in the lead up to the Technological Universities (TUs) suggested in the Hunt Report which examined the third-level educational sector.

Given this increasing emphasis on research there will be an emphasis on lecturers achieving greater qualifications, particularly at level 10, and thus the need for them to be supported in then becoming research active and in creating a research community in their home college.

For managers this will mean a need to move away from the more traditional Taylorist “command and control” model of management whereby each individual manager’s duty is to direct each worker in how exactly to do their job in the belief that a manager, by virtue of their position, knows better than any individual worker how best to do that job. Of course this is a type of micro-management and it can, unfortunately, be seen at play in many IoT departments throughout the country.

Classical management theorists say it is a management style that is clear as the source of authority is undoubted and they would argue that if you appoint people best suited to the job of managing that they will yield the best results. Undoubtedly it is good to have people well suited to management in management positions but up to now that has been thought by many to be male managers and so the position has become highly “gendered” (O Grada et al, 2015) with the characteristics of male management style being associated with optimum management styles. There is little empirical evidence to substantiate this idea. It is true to say that in certain settings a Taylorist management style may work for a short period of time but that tends to be one where the nature of the work is more repetitive and where the workforce is not as highly educated as is the case with academic lecturing staff.

Instead, management theory (Harney & Monks, 2014) now suggests that a more appropriate management style for modern workers in knowledge organisations such as the IoTs is one which is more consensual and which values difference and diversity of opinion. This is a style often associated with female managers and is one which actively tries to be inclusive and to work towards team participation in solving workplace challenges.

### **Getting women onto management teams**

Quite a few of those interviewed said that they thought that women managers could bring a fresh approach to managing but that they felt put off not just by the large home and family commitments, particularly at HoD/SL2 level, but also by the often combative management style used by the majority of managers who are male and also by the fact that they underestimated, unfairly it seems, their ability to do the job. This is not saying that all male managers are aggressive and confrontational but having visited a large number of IoTs and met with many IoT academic staff and managers it seems fair to say that there does need to be a change in non-supporting organisational cultures which do not value their workers’ contributions and which can become toxic when bullying, harassment and victimisation is allowed to continue and is not investigated and eliminated quickly. Those interviewed emphasised the need for the State to

improve timely and cheap recourse to investigatory forums and officers, such as those provided by the Workplace Relations Commission<sup>21</sup>, where IoTs refuse to comply with their legal obligations.

Before proceeding, those with a strongly quantitative research orientation may be concerned that numerical research data has not been presented to substantiate an assertion that there may be IoT departments in which managers manage at less than optimum levels and some staff are belittled. It tends to be the case that such managers rarely admit such practices and where they are forced to do so they often plead justification for such actions, either through its being in line with the prevailing organisational culture or because they believe that is a good way to manage. Methodologically, it is hard to access such a group as they may not be honest about their practices.

Nevertheless, there is anecdotal evidence from those who were interviewed for this present study, evidence from internal and external investigatory mechanisms (grievance procedures and rights commissioners' investigations<sup>22</sup>) and the evidence from the lack of clear actions, and at time policies, of this type of behaviour.

Such excluding behaviour belittles many staff and, more benevolently, does not utilise the important and valuable contributions they have to make. Such behaviour frequently arises when a manager is promoted to a level above their competence. *In extremis* it will mean that that manager displays appropriate behaviour bordering on, and including, bullying, harassment and victimisation. Implicated then are the recruitment and selection procedures outlined in the chapter on HR policies herein and the HRD policies thereafter; most management researchers and practitioners believe that a manager must be supported in developing their people management skills irrespective of how good they are initially. But there is little evidence of sophisticated use of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) which was introduced into the IoT sector.

It is important that cultures in the IoT sector move from male-dominated paternalistic ones to ones which are inclusive and tolerant of difference and dissent; dissent in the sense that the cultures therein move away from a private sector unitarist model whereby the only valid source of power is seen as senior

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<sup>21</sup> One of the key responsibilities of the WRC involves "promoting the improvement of workplace relations, and maintenance of good workplace relations"

<sup>22</sup> While both are rarely published or made public TUI members from different IoTs have discussed the content of these investigations.

management to one whereby multiple stakeholder voices, including trade unions, are seen as valid and are embraced. Trade unions are well placed in this regard as central to their mission has always been the dignity of workers in workplaces, including their rights and their needs.

It is a very strong contention of this report that workers arrive in work wanting to do their work well and where this is not the case they should be supported with personal or family difficulties. This is most successful in organisations that listen and actively value and solicit contributions from all sections of the workforce. As men have been in the majority of management since the IoTs' inception in the early 1970's it is reasonable to presume that they may have been more aware of their own needs and may also be used to a style of management which is closer to their own. They may also believe that other styles, those of women for example, may not work as well as their own and so the unconscious bias described earlier in this report may be at play in recruitment and selection.

Clearly there are few IoT senior managers who would agree with the idea that they are in any way complicit with unacceptable behaviour towards workers by any of their management staff. However, many female academics feel that they are being treated unequally and that they do not feel comfortable by the management style currently used in many IoTs at present. This probably holds true for male members of staff also.

Thus the purpose of HRD initiatives is not to "fix" women (O Grada, 2015) so that they may fit in with, or acquiesce to, a male management and organisational culture but rather that they be supported in seeing their own experiences as valid and that a two-fold change take place in academic organisations- that the management styles and organisational policies become more inclusive simultaneous with women being supported in developing their competencies in a non gendered fashion, i.e. not in the direction of aping current masculine styles.

### **Change starts at the top**

Organisational culture change begins at the very top, with the Institute president and then to the senior and middle management teams. While there is value to "bottom-up" aspects of this process, culture change to eradicate gender inequality needs to begin at the top as they are, in nearly all cases, the person who sets the tone for the organisation; they determine what is and is not acceptable in that organisation and if unacceptable practices occur in a well-functioning organisation they will stamp it out. Thus the IoT presidents must buy

into the principle of academic gender equality and must stand full-square behind the measures that will ensure it comes about.

### **What training and with whom?**

In the last chapter we examined the rationale for training as part of a well-developed HRD strategy in the IoTs. While HRD provided by external consultants often embodies best practice and can significantly help the professional development of workers in general, and women moving towards promotional positions in academic management, it can be expensive if used continually. Instead, it can be useful when used in a programmed manner in a number of years to make sure that an organisation is staying tuned to best organisational practice.

In the meantime an organisation such an IoT needs to develop internally the ability to be a knowledge organisation, or one that is able to develop training strategies which answer the needs of its workers. This self-replenishing capacity is used regularly in private sectors firms and it can be empowering if workers are facilitated in working together to identify their needs and then how they might, collectively, answer those needs with the support and resources of management. As stated earlier in this report, we accept that medical organisations and hospitals make sure that the training needs of their workers are provided for as to do otherwise would be remiss in treating patients. Why would it be any different for educational organisations such as IoTs?

Some of the main areas in which all workers, and women in particular, can benefit are those which enhance their confidence and help them plan their academic careers more effectively. This training could easily, and more cost effectively, be conducted across the sector by means of well-organised events which sought to provide women with competency development seminars and workshops and in which they had an opportunity to talk to potential academic mentors. Such cross sector events would also facilitate women in developing networks in the IoT sector and beyond, as academics from abroad could also be invited to speak and to share experiences. In turn, these networks would help those attending to develop their research presence, through being able to potentially be co-author on publications, and also to join research teams applying for funding nationally and internationally. Co-authoring papers and receiving research funding are two very important elements of developing an academic's research profile, which assist greatly in being considered for promotion.

Such events take place in a number of other countries at present. For example, the Higher Education Academy in Britain (HEA-GB) organise events such as “writing retreats” for their Senior and Principal Fellows. The essence of these is to provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which those attending can be assisted in developing strategies to further their academic abilities and their career. The HEA(GB)’s courses are thus a number of very good initiatives which could easily be rolled out throughout Ireland for IoT academics.

If operationalised in the above manner the training events could assist in the development of “soft skills”, such as confidence-building and negotiation skills, as a number of sources (Sandberg, 2015) say women frequently under-estimate their own abilities and so do not apply for positions when they are highly and appropriately qualified to do so. The suggested training would also help women to plan and to structure career activities not just in research but also in teaching and academic community activities.

All of this is not, as some have suggested, to “fix” women or to imply that the under-representation of women at senior academic management levels is due to being deficient. It is to say that all academic workers, but especially female academics, can benefit from sophisticated and well thought-out HRD policies in all the IoTs which have been chronically under-funded for too many years. To state this very explicitly, best practice nowhere in the world in any public or private sector organisation states that productivity, engagement or worker satisfaction is improved by reducing resources and not providing nuanced and focussed HRD policies. It is highly likely that the chronic under-funding in the IoT sector has contributed *inter alia* to the low level of female representation of women in academic management positions.

## **Conclusions**

- Many women feel that they do not want to apply for IoT management positions due to what they perceive as aggressive, confrontational or oppositional management styles by those currently *in situ*.
- Legitimate complaints about bullying, harassment and other employment-related issues are often not taken seriously enough and are often not investigated and resolved quickly enough. This can often create a toxic work environment which dissuades women from applying for management positions.
- The IoT presidents must buy into the principle of gender equality and must stand full-square behind the measures that will ensure it comes about.

- The IoTs need to develop their capabilities as knowledge organisations, to develop training strategies which answer the CPD and personal developmental needs of their workers.
- All academic workers will benefit from properly resourced HRD. However, the IoTs have been chronically under-funded for a significant amount of time and this may well have been a contributory factor to the low level of female representation in academic management positions.

### **Recommendations**

- IoT presidents need to move away from “command and control” management styles in their colleges by selecting for academic management positions those who are more inclusive and consensual in their management style. This can be discerned by using psychometric and assessment centre methodologies in the selection process, in addition to selection interviews.
- While the IoTs are required by law to have grievance procedures in place to investigate bullying, harassment and employment-related complaints and while these need to be dealt with sensitively by all sides concerned, they need to be resolved much more quickly and, in fact, need to be prevented from happening by managers having greater training in the early identification and resolution of such matters.
- The HEA should ask the IoT presidents to express their explicit support for the principle of gender equality and ask them to state how they mean to achieve it.
- The IoTs need to develop tailored PMDS and CPD systems for their workers. These can be developed regionally, in line with the Technological Universities of which they may be a member, with universities in their region or nationally, or perhaps by holding national events to facilitate academic mentoring or networking for female academics.
- The IoT Presidents need to voice their concern about the chronic under-funding of the IoT sector and request that funding be made available, *inter alia*, for HRD.

## Chapter 6- IoT Culture and Supports- from exclusive to inclusive

**“By the 1990s benchmarking and performance management had become favoured strategies for operationalising equality in local government [in Britain]. However, performance based initiatives such as the Equality Standard were argued by some to have a limited impact because they lacked strong enforcement mechanisms”**

**(Conley & Page, 2015, p.44)**

Many of those interviewed and much of the research in this area points to the fact that women bear a disproportionate burden when it comes to raising children and caring for relatives. Later in this report we will consider what role the State could play in this but in this present chapter we will examine how IoTs can provide greater support to female academics in this area. It is also true to say that in some families men play a greater role in this regard, though such men are in the minority. Nevertheless, it would seem fair to suggest that those who carry a disproportionate family burden should be supported in bearing that burden, particularly where this impinges upon their academic career and where that academic career can make an important contribution to the mission of that organisation.

In the converse, it could also be argued that what happens outside of the workplace is the business of those whose home it is and the work organisation therefore has no responsibility. Taken to its logical conclusion that argument could be used to justify the non-provision of maternity leave, paternity leave and even subventions to help with the care of older relatives. Thus public policy has accepted that mothers and fathers should be supported, with money and with time, in raising their children and that families should be subvented to ease the cost of caring for dependent relatives. The amounts of time and money have increased and as State funded bodies the IoTs also bear a responsibility, some would say, to also make sure that talented workers' needs are considered when framing Institute policies.

Some would say that this has not been the case because the workplace, the IoTs included, have been male gendered situations in which it was presumed that women would give way to male partners and stay at home to mind children or care for family members. Those who have such viewpoints may be traditional or may honestly hold such perspectives but it seems reasonable in a modern democratic society that all genders should be allowed equal participation in the workforce rather than having to give this up because their organisation does not

support them sufficiently either before or after maternity leave. We will thus briefly look at some of the main supports which could be provided.

### **Child care and child minding facilities**

Child care provision is both scarce and very expensive in Ireland at present. It is not acceptable that the State has neither provided enough subventions nor helped reduce the cost nor ensured greater capacity. The State's role in this is will be dealt with further in the chapter on the State's role in supporting female workers.

### **Family friendly Work-life balance policies**

The concept of family friendly includes the idea of work-life balance (Grady et al, 2008). Namely that workers be supported in being able to carry out their work, be promoted and make progress in their career and still have the time and energy to raise their family and care for love ones.

Unfortunately, in some organisational cultures there is an implication of an open-ended commitment to work; working beyond contractual obligations in time, energy and output/productivity becomes expected but with no guarantee nor promise that such work will be rewarded or acknowledged. Since such expectations of working hard, with accompanying possibilities of promotion, are tacit or implied it is easy for those who use this modus operandi in different departments to deny that they exist.

Furthermore, those who advance in such cultures are those who are seen to comply with the rules of this game, and those most able to do so are often men as they often have less child and family responsibilities to bring them away from work and so allow them to work longer hours.

While it is true that some academic tasks- such as preparing a paper for submission to a journal, submitting a major grant funding application and even preparing notes for a new module to be taught- require work beyond a normal working day these are exceptional events for most academics and the yardstick by which most academics should be evaluated for promotion is that their work is "good enough". This is not to imply its being merely average or that it is the lowest acceptable standard but rather that it is of such a standard that it is acceptable that that academic be considered for promotion. Otherwise, promotional panels can be dazzled by those who have exceptional, but unrepresentatively high, levels of publications and/or external funding. These exceptional academics have an extremely important place in an academic institution but their exceptional performance should not prevent those who perform highly, such as many female academics, from gaining promotion also.

As suggested in the chapter on HR promotion policies, this will require an IoT to think carefully about the reasonableness of criteria for promotion.

A final aspect of family friendly policies is that men should also be encouraged and facilitated to consider their work life balance and for their work to be family friendly also. This will be a means of supporting their partners in developing their careers also. The DES should ask each IoT in its annual report what measures it is taking to make the workplace family friendly and what resources it needs from the DES to do so.

### **Support for academics before and after maternity/paternity leave**

It is frequently stated in reports on the participation of women in academic life that what should be their most productive period, in their 20s and 30s after they have gained their PhD, and should be moving to publish articles from same at the same time as working as a post doctoral researcher and beginning their lecturing career, is the one when they are most likely to be raising children which will impede accumulating a large enough amount of publications to gain promotion.

While we looked at the criteria for promotion earlier here we will briefly look at the way that institutions can help women raising children at important stages in their academic career to work towards promotion.

Many of those interviewed, and particularly women, said that the immediate months after coming back from maternity leave were difficult and pressurised with having to adapt to a large lecturing and teaching workload. It can thus take a long time to get back into research and thus many suggested that, for a specific time after return from maternity leave, female academics be given a reduced teaching and lecturing workload. This would obviously be dependent on that person possessing particular research credentials and having the requisite research achievements but it could be applied for in advance of maternity leave and it could lessen the pressure on return to research and teaching and so ensure that female academics are better placed to achieve those criteria necessary for promotion.

### **Conclusions**

- IoT senior management in each college needs to provide greater supports for male and female academics who have child and family commitments.
- The IoTs need to have more work-life balance policies to dispel the belief that advancement within the organisation will be based on an open-ended workload commitment to the IoTs.

## **Recommendations**

- There needs to be more supports for academics returning from leave, particularly maternity leave, and the IoTS should consider a reduced workload for the first six months in which a woman returns to work so that she may “get up to speed” again on her research and her modules taught.
- IoT senior management needs to schedule more work within the working day and to use more efficient ways of working within the working day, so as to facilitate child and family commitments.

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## Chapter 7: How the State can promote gender equality

**“Athena Swan ...[was] felt to play an important role in encouraging women to progress in their scientific careers by providing opportunities for networking, advice on how to progress in one’s career, information about funding, employment and legislation, and a framework for formal and informal mentoring.” (Murphy et al, 2014, p. 919)**

We saw earlier how various IoTs can support women more closely and we examined the need to make IoT organisational culture more inclusive. In this chapter we will examine the role of the Irish State and how it can ensure that the change agenda is moved on and how it needs to be a primary change agent in this process, not simply exhorting the IoTs to do more.

### **Supporting parents and families**

While IoTs can be asked by the State to support those who take maternity and paternity leave, plus those who for example may job share to look after their families, this will count for little if it is not backed up with state funding and support; support in terms of the necessary structural and cultural changes which will be needed.

Supports, which are not exhaustive, can include crèche and child care facilities which often require a substantial capital outlay. The State is well positioned to provide guarantees for such expenditure and to help ameliorate the onerous levels of payment required by parents for same.

Without labouring the point, much research suggests that academic women suffer in the early to mid-part of their career, which is often the most productive, post doctoral, part of their career due to their very large family responsibilities. This must be rectified if there is to be a change in the amount of women applying for academic management positions.

### **Setting gender equality targets**

The remaining areas in this chapter involve the State setting targets to be achieved by the IoTs. Some have good gender equality records but many do not, as we saw in the initial chapters of this report. Targets can be an effective way of monitoring how well an organisation is performing and can help it focus on key organisational objectives, one of which gender equality has not been to date.

As we shall see later in this chapter, when targets are set there needs to be an incentive for their achievement; that appropriate funding is released and that those realising such targets are appropriately awarded. As will be suggested

later also, the State through its various departments should consider withdrawing funding where certain criteria are not achieved by the IoTs.

### **Measures of equality- Athena Swan**

Instead of the State having to devise, implement and adjudicate upon a gender equality scheme one exists already in the form of the Britain's Athena SWAN award (Appendix 2). Begun in 2005, it has been centred on achieving equal access for all genders in access, promotion and retention in, for most of its existence, science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) subject areas. Recently it has been extended to arts, humanities, social science, business and law (AHSSBL) subject areas, and is planning to extend into the race equality area soon.

Two Irish third level colleges, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick, possess a bronze level Athena SWAN award and this is a reasonable quality mark for all academic disciplines within the IoT to which to aspire and a certain percentage of each IoT's funding should be tied to achieving the targets on the way to achieving such a gender equality mark.

Tying funding to such as gender equality marks would focus the organisational goals of IoT management. Otherwise they will merely be aspirational and may be achieved very slowly, if ever.

### **Managers responsible for gender equality- IoT Equality Offices**

In order to achieve gender equality targets it is also important to have senior managers with direct functional responsibility for this area. In the past gender equality has been side-lined by making it a discipline which studied gender inequality theoretically rather than having an office and officers whose mission is to set and achieve gender equality targets. Similarly, where this has been the case it has been side-lined by the chief officer in that unit not being represented at senior management level and not having to meet targets set internally and by the HEA, for example. Also, it has often been seen as just a "women's issue" rather than one whose importance affects all within the institution.

In order for this issue to be given the priority it deserves there should thus be a senior manager, who participates in senior management meetings, who is directly responsible for meeting equality targets within each IoT. This manager could either be explicitly and solely responsible for equality as part of the core functions of their job or equality could be part of their remit. With the latter there is the danger that equality could become one of a number of competing areas and so could have a lowly priority for such a senior manager.

Thus the State needs to fund and staff such positions as the IoTs are markedly failing to ensure gender equality in most cases at present. The IoTs are currently under-funded as it is and subvention for such posts needs to come from the State. It is a small price to pay as part of the strategy to achieve academic gender equality. However, such funding should be contingent on achieving set academic equality targets. Should an IoT persistently not achieve these then other funding should be withdrawn as this would help to achieve the extremely important area of gender equality.

### **Gender equality targets- levelling the playing field**

The academic equality targets mentioned in this chapter and elsewhere in this report are contingent on the academic discipline concerned and relate to the different gender proportions represented at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The key argument being made here is that there are structural and historical inequalities at play within the IoT system which mean that there is not, at present, a level playing field in some academic disciplines, which leads to a disproportionately lower number of women moving from undergraduates to faculty and then to academic management.

The State through its various bodies needs to encourage colleges to achieve academic gender equality by tying funding to the achievement of stated and time-line specific objectives. These objectives are process as well as content driven; colleges need to report regularly and accurately on the academic gender equality progress they are making by providing specific and nuanced data from all their faculties; staff and external representatives need to be better trained in selection methodologies and the manner in which staff are treated needs to be less oppositional and needs to be an environment in which lecturing, research and community engagement is to the forefront. The feedback from lecturers throughout the country say that this cannot be taken for granted at present. Thus it is necessary for the State, through its various bodies, to step in and ensure this.

### **Access to industrial relations resolution forums**

The cornerstone of any well-functioning democracy is quick and equitable access to the courts. The industrial relations sphere is no different and a strong issue arose from those contributing to the research in relation to the industrial relations institutions.

Specifically, those contributing to the research expressed deep frustration with the length of time it took to resolve workplace issues. These were not isolated cases and had the effect of creating a very poor working environment where

there was little trust in management's resolution of issues in a speedy and fair manner. This relates back to the earlier point of management style; respondents felt that those with issues were dismissed and reasonable matters were unnecessarily escalated and bad feeling was created.

In such a scenario it is easy to see that women may not want to participate in such a dysfunctional organisational culture. What the State does have control over is quick access to dispute resolution mechanisms which produce specific and realistic adjudications within a reasonable time-frame. The feeling was that this is not the case at present and that the State needs to resource this better, so as to create better organisational cultures that all staff, but particularly women, wish to participate in.

Finally, it is evident from media reports and publicly available industrial institutional reports that some colleges have long-term industrial relations problems, which often incur great expense through the appointment of external mediators or adjudication. The State needs to question these colleges more closely on how they intend altering their organisational culture to avoid these problems happening again and in not scapegoating individual members of staff who are innocent of blame. Such cultures have been labelled "toxic" by many researchers and the State, through its various bodies, needs to exert more pressure on the senior management of these colleges to make sure it does not continue to happen. A start would be by asking them to report the amount of ongoing industrial relations disputes they have and how they aim to resolve these amicably. It could also involve better HRD training for managers to stop the problems happening in the first instance. Unless these problems are resolved and the perception of poor organisational cultures changed then less suitable people, and particularly women, will apply for management positions.

### **Conclusions**

- The Irish State needs to be the primary change agent in bringing about academic gender equality as it will be merely aspirational otherwise and the IoTs will not have to implement any of the reforms outlined in this report or otherwise. This will require an ongoing financial commitment by the State.

### **Recommendations**

- The State needs to encourage the IoTs to provide supports to female academics, such as crèches, child care facilities and an adjustment to their workload to reflect their child and family commitments.
- The State needs to set academic gender equality targets for the IoTs and to link funding to the achievement of these targets.

- The State should require that each IoT sign up to the Athena Swan charter for STEMM and AHSSBL academic areas and achieve one of the Athena Swan awards, to demonstrate academic gender equality.
- The State should provide for the appointment of an equality manager, at senior management level, in each IoT or, in exceptional cases, a senior manager should be given direct and explicit reporting responsibility for gender equality.
- The State needs to provide greater funding to industrial relations resolution bodies such as the Workplace Relations Commission in order to resolve workplace grievance- particularly in those IoTs with a poor industrial relations records- so they do not fester and perpetuate weak organisational cultures.
- Where there is a poor organisational culture, which is not conducive to academic gender equality, the HEA needs to ask IoT management to report on how it is going to change this.

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## Chapter 8: Where does academic gender equality go from here?

**“If we can succeed in adding more female voices at the highest levels, we will expand opportunities and extend fairer treatment to all.” (Sandberg, 2015, p.10)**

It is clear from a review of data, from the extant research and from the testimonies of those who participated in this research that there is a need to address gender inequality within the IoT sector in Ireland. It is a problem which could respond to heavy-handed attempts by senior IoT managers to unquestioningly favour women over men but this perversion of positive action will likely create massive discontent and will poison the well for future attempts to create a fairer and more equal cohort of academic managers.

Thus it would be better if the State, through its various bodies, uses its very great financial and moral influence to improve the way in which applicants are selected for management positions. This is based on the belief that at present there are strong tacit and explicit organisational and societal impediments to women’s equal participation at academic management level.

This report has stated the way in which the State can act to change these impediments, particularly through making the recruitment and selection process more attractive to women, by presenting more female role models *in situ* and by foregrounding positive and important visual and testamentary representations of women’s successful participation in management. This will make applying for management positions more attractive to women and IoTs, with the encouragement of the State, need to make sure that this is done in a valuing and inclusive manner. These are not clichés; there is still a strong and reasonable perception that certain staff are not valued as much as others and that the experience of some is excluded because management is exclusive to a small clique, often an “old boy’s club”.

Recruitment and selection procedures in the IoTs need to be fairer and more transparent and to embrace best practice, as used in occupational psychology where the validity and reliability of the current measures can be seen to be lower than is acceptable. This is accentuated by unclear and arbitrary criteria for promotion to Senior Lecturer grades which need to fall in line with those used in the university sector which take into account research, teaching and community achievements.

Poor hiring and promotion methodologies tend to lead to poor HR and IR outcomes for all concerned, particularly when many interviewers often choose

those who may not be suitable for the job and who are then not supported and developed in their positions. Human resource development is thus crucial to improving the quality of academic management and thus to making management more attractive to women.

In turn, organisational culture in the IoTs needs to be improved and be made one in which the academic voice is allowed to be stronger, rather than the “command and control” managerialist approach which is pre-dominant in many IoTs at present. IoT management has been ineffective in advocating for change and for the correct resourcing of their colleges and this needs to change if the culture is to improve and for the resources to be provided to support gender equality.

Ultimately it is the State, through bodies such as the HEA, which must take the lead on bringing greater gender equality to the IoT sector. It must do this by requiring that IoTs conform to gender quality standards such as Athena Swan and by preparing regular reports on its gender equality statistics and how it plans to increase the amount of women at all levels in the academic parts of the IoTs.

This will require State funding for each of the colleges as promoting and achieving gender equality is not a cost-neutral exercise. Each IoT needs to put it at the top of its agenda and its overall funding should be linked to the successful achievement of gender equality objectives.

Each of the recommendations contained in this report are reasonable and proportionate and will, if implemented, ensure an inclusive, valuing and equal place for all academic workers within the IoT system. Gender equality is eminently achievable within a short period of time but it requires the will of all concerned to do so.

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## Appendix 1- HEA data on gender representation

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	AIT		ITB		ITC		CIT		DIT		DKIT		IADT			
	Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count			
	M	F	Male	Female												
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
Senior Lecturer 3	67%	33%	0%	0%	67%	33%	80%	20%	73%	27%	50%	50%	50%	50%		
Senior Lecturer 2	100%	0%	0%	0%	83%	17%	65%	35%	74%	26%	77%	23%	50%	50%		
Senior Lecturer 1	75%	25%	60%	40%	75%	25%	88%	12%	76%	24%	82%	18%	33%	67%		
Lecturer 2	75%	25%	0%	0%	75%	25%	100%	0%	75%	25%	83%	17%	50%	50%		
Lecturer 1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	50%	50%		
Lecturer	54%	46%	77%	23%	53%	47%	60%	40%	61%	39%	56%	44%	52%	48%		
Proportion of Senior Academic Staff	87%	13%	60%	40%	77%	23%	75%	25%	74%	26%	75%	25%	45%	55%		
	GMIT		LYIT		LIT		ITS		ITTD		ITTra		WIT		All IoTs	
	Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count		Head Count	
	Male	Female														
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Senior Lecturer 3	75%	25%	75%	25%	67%	33%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	76%	24%
Senior Lecturer 2	50%	50%	33%	67%	55%	45%	80%	20%	75%	25%	25%	75%	75%	25%	68%	32%
Senior Lecturer 1	64%	36%	75%	25%	69%	31%	78%	22%	50%	50%	100%	0%	63%	38%	73%	27%
Lecturer 2	67%	33%	50%	50%	89%	11%	67%	33%	67%	33%	0%	0%	77%	23%	75%	25%
Lecturer 1	0%	0%	33%	67%	100%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	100%	100%	0%	39%	61%
Lecturer	52%	48%	51%	49%	61%	39%	56%	44%	60%	40%	46%	54%	49%	51%	56%	44%
Proportion of Senior Academic Staff	61%	39%	53%	47%	64%	36%	82%	18%	67%	33%	50%	50%	78%	22%	71%	29%

## Appendix 2- Athena SWAN Charter

### **Athena SWAN Charter**

Recognising advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all.

ECU's Athena SWAN Charter was established in 2005 to encourage and recognise commitment to advancing the careers of women in science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education and research.

In May 2015 the charter was expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), and in professional and support roles, and for trans staff and students. The charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women.

ECU's Athena SWAN Charter covers women (and men where appropriate) in:

- academic roles in STEMM and AHSSBL
- professional and support staff
- trans staff and students

In relation to their:

- representation
- progression of students into academia
- journey through career milestones
- working environment for all staff

(From the Athena Swan web site- <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/>)