Being WiSER

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

www.tcd.ie/wiser
How WiSER Came to Be.....

- SFI Institute Planning Grant
  - May to September 2005

- What we did..
  - Data collection
  - Interviews
  - Focus Groups
  - Analysis of previous reports
  - Internet survey
Institute Planning Grant: Findings

Percentage of men and women in SE
Trinity College 2005
Institute Planning Grant - Findings

Barriers

- Childcare
- Career progression ‘do-loop’ for postdocs
- Career Insecurity
- Isolation
- Financial Pressures
- Unconscious bias
- Lack of confidence
- Administrative work
Model of WiSER

- Seeks to treat everyone the same. Approach enshrined in law
- Recognises differences between men/women. Approach addresses disadvantage women experience as result of differences
- Also recognises differences. Approach is transforming systems & structures to accommodate & make the most of differences
Being WiSER

- Awarded SFI Institutional Development Award
- Launched in November 2006
- Objectives
  - To promote and increase the visibility of women in science & engineering research in TCD and Ireland
  - To raise awareness of the differing career obstacles male and female researchers face at all stages in their careers in Science & Engineering
  - Create a sense of community within the workplace and the field as a whole
  - Stimulate institutional and cultural change in order to create a more gender-balanced, and ultimately a more productive environment
WiSER Programme

- Creating Community & Visibility
  - ‘Make Wednesday’s WiSER’ Seminar Series
  - Career Development Workshops
  - International Women’s Day 2007
What WiSER does - Springboard

- Personal & Career Development Programme run over 3 months
- For academic women in SET in TCD
- 30 graduates in 2006 – 07
What WiSER does - Springboard

- Topics covered include:
  - Self-assessment
  - Assertiveness
  - Confidence building
  - Promoting a positive image
  - Setting goals
  - Making things happen
  - Balancing home and work

- Role Model Speakers

- Networking Opportunities
Writing Groups – *Publish and Flourish*

- Two groups formed (6 women in each)

**Benefits:**
- Reduces procrastination & gives one an incentive to write (ie a due date!)
- Offers members an opportunity to both receive and give critical feedback from peers
- Makes academic writing seem less daunting!
- Networking opportunities
Postdoctoral Researchers Award

- Recognition that women drop out from academia at this point of the career pipeline

- No opportunity to write grants and have access to independent funds

- Opportunity for individuals to decide what would help them get ahead in their career
“Mountains are molehills, piled one on top another”
Virginia Valian, Why So Slow, 1998

Aim
To create awareness and discussion in the academic community in Ireland about the myriad of issues that affect women's under-representation in science and engineering research
Gender Equality Indicators

Creation of Gender Disaggregated database

- Important to collect baseline statistics
  - Tells us the impact that gender has on who does what

- Examples of Gender Disaggregated Statistics
  - Grade level
  - Promotions
  - Contract type
  - Those in decision-making committees
  - Publications Output
  - Grant Proposals
Future for WiSER

- Addressing Good Practice in Academic Departments

“the best departments do not target measures specifically at women: they create a culture of diversity where all individuals can thrive and be rewarded for their contribution, regardless of gender or family circumstances”

Royal Society of Chemistry, 2004
Future for WiSER

Measuring Good Practice in University Departments

1. Organisational framework for action delivering equality of opportunity and reward in SET

2. Appointment and promotion processes that encourage women/men to apply for academic posts at all levels

3. Structures & systems that encourage and support career progression of staff

- Policy and Procedure Review
Being WiSER in the Future

We will continue to:

Promote different communities across
• Academia
• Discipline
• Industry
• Ireland
• Internationally

Create positive awareness about women working in science, engineering and technology fields
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