Gender Audit at the University of Limerick

Gender Audit @ UL

Dr. Ita Richardson
Gender Audit @ UL

The Team

Project Leader: Dr. Ita Richardson
Dr. Douglas Wilson
Mr. Niall Heenan
Ms. Melissa Clarke
Ms. Rena Connolly, Research Office
Martin Power, Dept of Government & Society
Agenda

• Equality at University of Limerick

• SFI Planning Award

• SFI Development Award
  – Gender Audit @ UL
Gender Equality at UL

- Childcare on campus
- Equal Opportunities committee
  - Chaired by Vice-President Academic & Registrar
- Funding from Atlantic Philanthropies
  - Full-time Equality Officer
  - UL Women’s Forum
  - Equality training for Management
  - Training for administrators and academics
  - Targets identified
- Women’s Studies Research Group
- Initiatives for students
  - Women in Engineering Bursaries
SET Colleges in UL

Start of Academic year 2007/2008

• College of Informatics & Electronics
  – No female professor, one female senior lecturer

• College of Engineering
  – No female professor, no female senior lecturer

• College of Science
  – Two female professors, six female senior lecturers
SET Colleges in UL

New structure from January 2008

• College of Science and Engineering
  – Health Sciences departments in separate College
  – One female professor, four female senior lecturers
SFI Planning Grant

• Summer 2005
• Support of VPR, VPA&R, Director of Human Resources
• SFI Planning Report submitted to Deans’ Council and is publicly available
  [Link](http://www1.csis.ul.ie/research/tech/UL-CSIS-05-6.pdf)
• SFI Institute Development Award application
• Gender Audit @ UL awarded €100,000
Types of Initiatives
(Cronin & Rogers, 1999)

• Initiatives which aim to encourage females to enter SET
• Initiatives which aspire to change the culture of SET
  – Gender Audit @ UL
• Initiatives which attempt to support women currently in SET
Aspire to change the culture of SET

• Women’s under representation in SET is a complex web of interdependent structural, ideological and cultural factors
• Supports at UL are having a positive impact, but are part of a slow moving process
• These need to be undertaken in conjunction with initiatives which seek to tackle the culture of SET
What is a Gender Audit?

• Analyse and evaluate the policies and programs within UL with relation to Gender
  – Collect and evaluate statistics
  – Evaluate reasons behind the results

• Gender Bias difficult to identify in individual case
  – Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Gender Audit - UL

• Funding from Summer 2006
• Funded by Science Foundation Ireland
  – SFI Women in Science & Engineering Research (see www.sfi.ie)
Implementing the Gender Audit

- Project started February 2007
- Develop and execute the survey instrument
- Acquire UL human resource data
  - Promotions and appointments
- Design and execute UL-staff focus groups
- Develop a web-site
Survey

- Reviewed publications & planning grant report
- 69 questions focusing on:
  - General Information; Academic Information; Job Responsibilities; Promotion Issues; Personal Qualities for the Job; Active Support – Goals for Achievement; Training; Career Perceptions and Thoughts; Domestic Situation; Demography; Encouragement
- Questionnaire: UL pilot, UCC & TCD reviewed
Survey

- Interview-based approach
- Interview time
  - Minimum 35 min, max 70 min, average 45 min
- Comments made during interview recorded
- Data analysed using SPSS
- Quality review of data
- Data subject to anonymity
Sample Questions

- What are your current and previous UL job description?
- What are your college committee rôles?
- Are UL’s Promotion procedures fair and transparent?
- What qualities do you possess for the job?
- Have UL training courses been useful to you?
- Are you thinking of leaving UL?
- What domestic factors make it difficult for you to work at UL?
- What is your country of birth?
- Would you describe yourself as self-confident?
Faculty response - dept & gender

Q8. Department
- Manufacturing and Operational Engineering
- Material Science and Technology
- Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering
- Architecture
- Computer Science and Information Systems
- Electronic and Computer Engineering
- Mathematics and Statistics
- Chemical and Environmental Science
- Life Sciences
- Physics
- Physical Education and Sports Science
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Speech and Language Therapy

Pies show counts
Respondents – SET colleges

• Populations:
  – Faculty 226, female – 29%, male – 71%; ratio m:f = 2.48
  – Research staff 127, female = 37%, male = 63%, ratio m:f = 1.7

• Responses:
  – Faculty 101 (45%), female – 41%, male - 59%, ratio m:f = 1.4
  – Research staff 25 (20%), female - 40%, male – 60% ratio m:f = 1.5.

• Note: Research staff are mainly post-doctoral researchers
Focus Groups

• Three focus groups
  – Male junior lecturer/lecturer/researchers
  – Female junior lecturer/lecturer/researchers
  – Mixed gender senior lecturer/associate professor/professor

• Independent facilitator

• Set of specific questions used
Some initial results

• No substantial gender biases at UL through overt institutional generation.
• Females have higher proportion of lecturer posts than men
• Men have higher proportion of senior posts than women
• Females more involved with teaching and caring for students at their detriment for research opportunities.
• Females spend less time on research and write fewer grant proposals, papers etc
• Male / Females spend comparable time on administration (female slightly higher)
• Females have fewer appointments to national / international bodies
Some initial results

- Females have fewer publications, editorships, invitations as keynote speakers.
- Females have lower membership of Appointment boards, Promotion Boards.
- Females are less engaged in developing, executing and evaluating policy.
- Females have a higher lack of mobility.
- Males have a higher contribution to raising admissions.
- Types of committees varies – more females on course committees, more males on ‘policy’ committees.
- More females have never married; fewer remained married.
- More females mix short and long jobs in one day.
Where to from here?

- Recommendations from survey to be made to UL Senior Management
  - To be developed jointly by project leader and Vice-President Research
- Final report for University of Limerick Management – 31st October
- Final report for SFI – 15th November
Benefits of Gender Audit to date

• Provided a forum for academic and research staff to raise issues
• Executive board have demonstrated an interest in the Gender Audit
  – So hopefully, recommendations will be taken on board
Web page

- Web page designed and available
  - http://gender.lero.ie/
- Reports to date
- Other relevant information
Gender Audit @ UL

Thank you!

Please visit our web page at:

http://gender.lero.ie/