



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
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The Faculty of
Health Sciences presents

The Inaugural Lecture of Professor Susanne Benseler 19th June 2025

Inaugural lectures provide newly appointed professors with the opportunity to showcase their academic activity to the College community and members of the public. An inaugural lecture is a significant event in an academic staff member's career. At Trinity College, inaugural lectures are a ceremonial occasion, which is why academic robes are worn by the inaugural professor and the rest of the platform party.





Moving the Flywheel: Precision, Compassion and Partnership for Child Health.

Professor Susanne Benseler
Professor of Paediatrics (2021) and Chief Clinical
Academic Officer (CCAO), Children's Hospital Ireland

Susanne (Susa) Benseler completed Medical School at the University of Freiburg, Germany. Her university training sparked her life-long passion for immunology and inflammation ignited by the transformational partnership and unique student engagement of the Basel Institute of Immunology, the Clinical and Basic Science Immunologists at the Universities of Freiburg and Strasbourg and the newly established Max Planck Institute of Immunology in Freiburg led by Nobel Laureate and B cell pioneer Prof. George Koehler. She joined the PhD program partnered with the University of Innsbruck, Austria, where she advanced a model of systemic sclerosis focused on the pathways of inflammation resulting in skin fibrosis in a basic science lab for Experimental Pathology.

Susa started her residency training at the University Children's Hospital in Freiburg, Germany. Her clinical service focus became paediatric emergency and intensive care. She subsequently joined the University Children's Hospital Bonn, Germany, where she graduated and held an academic appointment before moving to the Hospital for Sick Children (Sickkids), Toronto, Canada

Susa established the international network for inflammatory brain diseases, BrainWork, which includes a virtual international cohort for rare and ultrarare diseases, has decreased variation in care by providing evidence-based protocols for neuroinflammatory diseases and has reduced the dramatic mortality of this life-threatening group of diseases. She served as a clinical leader in the Understanding Childhood Arthritis Network (UCAN), a multinational, transdisciplinary partnership with families aiming to decipher the biologic basis of childhood arthritis and guide treatment decisions. In UCAN she established eHealth-based models of care to advance health equity and decrease the individual and societal burden of childhood arthritis.

In 2013, Susa was appointed Division Chief in Rheumatology at the Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary, Alberta and in addition served as the Deputy Chief Research in the Department of Paediatrics, University of Calgary. She was appointed Director of the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute (ACHRI), a role in which she exponentially grew the Institute and Child Health Research community through transdisciplinary partnership. Jointly the ACHRI leadership team developed the first University anchored and community partnered Child Health and Wellness Strategy in Canada and its Grand Challenges.

Trinity College Dublin Faculty of Health Sciences



In early 2023 after a fierce national competition over two years led by ACHRI, the University of Calgary and its provincial partners were awarded the largest investment in child health in Canada for the "One Child Every Child" by the Canada First Research Excellence Fund matched 1:1 with transformational community investments. The project enables cross sectoral research in the areas of maternal/child health (better beginnings), chronic and complex childhood diseases (precision child health) and neurodiversity and child mental health (from vulnerable to thriving). The three themes are catalysed by cross cutting accelerators focused specific domains including training, big data and an impact/value framework. Importantly, in One Child Every Child Indigenous and Non-Indigenous child health researchers walk Parallel Paths to advance the health of all children in Canada and beyond. One Child Every Child will also focus on the impact of climate change on child and family health and on empowering families from marginalized, vulnerable populations.

In 2024, Susa received the National Healthcare Leadership Award in Canada. She is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and newly appointed Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Since early 2024, Susa is serving as the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and Head of Paediatric Health Affairs enabled by the commitment of Children's Health Ireland and four Dublin-based Universities including Trinity College Dublin and guided by the shared clinical and academic mission. Her work includes advancing the new academic campus co-locating the New Children's Hospital and the Trinity College Dublin partnered St James's Hospital. Together these will be building a centre piece in the Academic Health Science Systems across the age spectrum - a first in Irish Healthcare.

In her CAO role, Susa is serving the passionate and diverse community of child health care teams, educators, learners and researchers and is building cross sectoral partnerships across the island and beyond. She aims to empower the passionate health care teams to embrace and advance research and universities to focus discoveries on the unmet needs of children and families. She established impactful leadership committees including the Paediatric Chairs of Ireland, the Paediatric Academic Health Sciences Network (PAHSC/N) Steering committee, the Academic Leadership Committee and several strong partnerships with government, training networks, funders and the private sector. This first-in-Europe cross-sectoral Irish Academic Child Health partnership is building on the strength of Trinity College in concert with the other Universities across the island, the vision of child health leaders and our shared passion to advance child health outcomes and enable every child to thrive.