



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

The Faculty  
of Health Sciences  
presents

[www.tcd.ie /healthsciences/](http://www.tcd.ie/healthsciences/)

29th February 2024

The Inaugural Lecture  
of Professor

**Owen Smith**



## When Blood Breaks Down: *Tales from Child and Adolescent Haematology & Beyond*

Professor Owen Smith

Owen graduated in both science and medicine from Trinity College, Dublin, and went on to pursue postgraduate haematology training in London's top academic teaching hospitals. Following his return to Ireland in 1995, he commenced a life-long clinical research and academic partnership programme between Trinity and international collaborators. These clinical and academic endeavours were rewarded by Trinity by successively appointing him to lecturer (1995), senior lecturer (1999), and Professor (2002) of Haematology. Since 2002, he has worked exclusively as an academic consultant paediatric haematologist in the National Children's Cancer Service, Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Crumlin. He was admitted to Honorary Fellowship and appointed Regius Professor of Physic [1637] at Trinity in 2009 and 2014 respectively. The following year he was appointed Professor of Paediatric and Adolescent Medicine in the School of Medicine at University College Dublin and Chief Academic Officer to the new Children's Hospital Group. In 2019 he was appointed National Clinical Lead for Child, Adolescent and Young Cancer at the National Cancer Control Programme. In 2022, he was appointed Professor of Child, Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer [2022] and Professor of Haematology [2002] in the School of Medicine at Trinity College Dublin and Visiting Full Time Professor at University College Dublin.

Owen is a passionate and dedicated clinician and researcher who strives to ensure that patients within Ireland and abroad access the highest quality of evidence-based care. His contributions to Child & Adolescent Cancer Care and Scholarship have been recognised by successive Irish Governments over the past 3 decades. Other policy making and strategic key positions he has undertaken include; Membership of National Genetic & Genomic Strategy Steering Group / HSE 2022, Membership of National Genetic & Genomic Implementation Group / HSE 2023 – present, and Chairmanship of the National Genetic & Genomic Strategy Group / HSE [2015 - 2016] - his report "Smith Report" is now in the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future, 2020. These three working streams oversaw the National Strategy for Accelerating Genetic and Genomic Medicine in Ireland report by the HSE.



Over the last two decades he has been the driving force behind development of the new National Children's Hospital on the campus shared with St James's Hospital that will treat highly complex disease in children and adolescents from Ireland and Northern Ireland. As Chief Academic Officer to the Children's Hospital Group he developed a Memorandum of Agreement between CHI and TCD, UCD, RCSI and DCU for an all-island Paediatric Academic Health Science Centre .

He has a strong track record of working collegiately and effectively with other researchers, government, Department of Health, Health Service Executive and the third sector. One of his main priorities is to bring Trinity's clinical and academic missions (not just in child and adolescent cancer) together to support each other in order to make each other better. The co-location of the New Children's Hospital on a shared campus with St James's Hospital working through an Academic Health Science Systems model (the practical and philosophical integration of university & hospital) will be a first in Irish Healthcare. Leveraging the potential synergies and adjacencies that Trinity, St. James's Hospital and Children' Health Ireland bring in terms of the integration of excellence and innovation in; (i) interdisciplinary research promoting team science, (ii) patient care and creative community services, and (iii) educate health professionals and leaders for the future, will be his main focus over the next few years.

Owen has received numerous national and international awards throughout his career including; President's Prize of the Dublin University Biological Association in 1984 and 1985, Postgraduate Travelling Scholarship in Medicine, (Sheppard Memorial Prize in Medicine and the Sir John Banks Medal in Medicine) from Trinity College in 1991. In 2001 2006, he was awarded the 31st St Luke's Lecture / Medal and the 41st Graves's Lecture / Medal respectively. He was admitted to Honorary Fellowship of Trinity College Dublin (the oldest and most valued tradition of the University) in 2009 and was appointed Regius Professor of Physic (1637), the oldest of Trinity's Chairs in the School of Medicine, Trinity College Dublin in June 2014. The following year he was conferred Honorary Commander in the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for his life-long work on cancer in children and adolescents by Queen Elizabeth II, on the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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.



**Trinity College Dublin**

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin



[www.tcd.ie/healthsciences/](http://www.tcd.ie/healthsciences/)