

# DIT Higher Education Policy Seminar Series

## Women, Men and Management in Irish Universities: A Recent Study



Universities are typically presented as meritocratic. In that context the under-representation of women in university senior management can be seen as reflecting an absence of merit. It will be suggested that such a conclusion ignores the gendering of definitions of merit in academia and the importance of social capital in accessing senior management positions. Using data collected in a cross national study (Australia; New Zealand; Portugal; UK; Turkey; South Africa; Sweden and Ireland), and drawing on Sinclair's (1998) analytical model, the paper will present a typology of organisational culture involving denial; identification of women as 'the problem'; incremental adjustment and commitment to a new culture. The paper will conclude by suggesting that the gendered character of Irish universities at senior management level is not unrelated to the disinterest of the state in this issue. The wider implications of the study for gender as a social structure (Reisman, 2004) will be briefly discussed.



**Prof. Pat O'Connor**

Pat O'Connor is Professor of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Limerick. She is currently working on a project on gender in relation to Higher Educational Policies and Structures - with a particular focus on senior management in higher education. Her own experience as Dean in the University of Limerick (first of the College of Humanities, and then as the founding Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) heightened her interest in the area, and ultimately culminated in a cross national project. She has published a number of chapters and articles in the area, including including "*Where Do Women Fit in University Senior Management? An Analytical Typology of Cross National Organisational Culture*" in B. Bagilhole and K. White (eds.) *Gender, Power and Management*, Palgrave Macmillan. She is currently working on a book entitled *Getting in and Getting on: Senior Management in Irish Universities* for Manchester University Press.



- Date: **Friday 11th May**
- Time: **1.30pm - 3pm**
- Venue: **The Boardroom, 3rd Floor, DIT Cathal Brugha St, Dublin 1.**  
Tea, coffee, biscuits and water served from 1pm. Please feel free to bring your lunch.
- RSVP: **Martin Ryan at [martin.ryan@dit.ie](mailto:martin.ryan@dit.ie)**
- Hosted by: **Higher Education Policy Research Unit (HEPRU)**