

Trinity

Women's Review

EVERSHEDS
SUTHERLAND



Trinity 
Women's
Review

Volume II



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Letter from the Editor

“These women aren’t shy and unassuming (unless they are), nor are they screaming through the air, lunatic (unless they want to be). They are publishing in a time of cultural change, and into a new awareness, one that is fed by social media, acknowledged in print, supported by publishers and encouraged by festival curators. At least I hope they are. I hope we will finally sit side by side – in the newspapers, on the stage, up on the damn poster – men and women together. There is plenty of room.”

- Anne Enright, Irish author and Trinity College Dublin alumnus

We have a simple goal at the Trinity Women’s Review: to showcase exceptional academic work on gender written by self-identifying women. We established the review in a world where—as Anne Enright noted in a September *London Review of Books* essay from which the opening passage of this letter is taken—approximately just 20 percent of published non fiction is written by women. This review is our effort to address that figure. It is an effort that, we hope, will amplify the the voices of Trinity women, however they choose to articulate themselves.

After a well-received inaugural edition last year, we are excited to share with you our second edition, which we hope is a worthy showcase of the talent within the Trinity community. We received an overwhelming response to our call for submissions, which required the onerous process of longlisting and then shortlisting before finally deciding on our final essays to feature. We come to you with ten important and timely pieces from a diverse group of Trinity academic writers.

I would like to thank our sponsors, Eversheds Sutherland, the Equality Fund, and Trinity Publications for their generous support, which allowed our vision for this review to be realised. I would also like to thank the Review’s founder and last year’s editor-in-chief, Aisling Foster, who offered invaluable support and guidance. I hope that Aisling’s initial vision for this

review is evident in our second edition. The expertise and experience of our advisory board—a wonderful group of women, Trinity alumni, who have done so much to further the cause of feminism in Ireland—has been incredible. I extend my sincere thanks to them for their support of this review. Knowing we had a band of such powerful women on whom we could call has been of immense comfort.

Finally, I would like to thank our editorial team, who have clocked countless hours to bring this review to you. Editing this review has been such an enjoyable and life-affirming experience, consistently offering, as it did, daily reminders of what a group of women can achieve. Look at the front cover of this review and the hexagonal logo featured in the top left-hand corner designed by our design officer, Louise Conway. The hexagon is considered the strongest shape that occurs in nature, used to great effect in the matriarchy that is the beehive.

Our choice of shape is no accident.

Gemma Mortell, Editor-in-Chief

Foreword

Eversheds Sutherland is proud to sponsor the Trinity Women's Review and to support the Review in promoting women's voices in academia. Under-representation at senior levels is an issue common to women in both business and academia. It is important to ensure we are doing everything possible to understand the reasons behind this disparity and take positive steps to address it. The Trinity Women's Review supports women from all areas of the university, providing them with a platform to showcase their abilities and their work in their many diverse fields of study.

While diversity and inclusion is on the agenda for more and more businesses today, these issues can often be seen as a nice 'to-do' rather than a necessity in organisations. International research tells us that diversity increases innovation, creativity and productivity. It tells us that the strongest teams are those made up of people from both genders and with diverse cultural backgrounds and life experience. Diversity enhances creativity, encourages the search for novel information and perspectives and leads to better decision making and problem solving. In business, this can have a real and measurable positive impact on profits. Research conducted by Catalyst in the UK shows that companies with three or more female board directors achieve a 45% higher return on equity than the average company. This research shows that more gender diverse companies exceed operating results (EBIT) by an average of 56% more than those delivered by companies with no women on their senior management teams.

At Eversheds Sutherland, we have a progressive programme and initiative focussed on providing the tools necessary to encourage our female employees to achieve their full potential. Mentoring is a key element of our programme. Our senior partners and associates

work with junior female colleagues, offering them advice and guidance as they navigate their career path. The result is a tangible growth in confidence and ambition amongst our talented junior female colleagues leading to individual successes and promotions.

Our Eversheds Sutherland Women's Initiative (ESWI) has been in place for a number of years now. It is a dynamic initiative that is constantly evolving and adapting. We understand that there are a myriad of reasons why more women do not reach the highest levels in organisations and that a 'one size fits all' approach is not necessarily the answer. We are determined that those reasons should not include a lack of confidence in one's abilities, or indeed any level of gender discrimination. Our objective is to seek out our talented female employees from the moment they join our firm and support them every step of the way as they advance through their careers.

It is easy to call for greater diversity in the workplace, but putting in place the means to actually achieve this is a real challenge. This is especially true when it comes to senior management teams. A survey among the delegates at an Eversheds Sutherland Chambers Europe Diversity summit, most of whom were in-house legal counsel from large companies in Ireland, UK and Europe, reflects this fact. 94% of respondents agreed that diversity is an important issue among the profession. Encouragingly, 65% said their organisations had strong diversity policies in place. However, 64% were not aware of diversity targets being in place at senior management and board level, and only half said there was a diverse management team in place in their organisation.

Truly diverse organisations can only be achieved when the team at the top is itself diverse. A common challenge is that people tend to hire others who are like them. If we have mostly men over 40 at the top, it can be more of a challenge for women to climb the ranks. The recruitment process therefore has a real impact on driving change. Organisations are encouraged to look at their recruitment policies with a diversity frame of mind, to ensure that they are not promoting copies of themselves, but are in fact hiring the best people for the job regardless of gender or background.

While our experience comes from the business world, and specifically the world of professional services, we believe that the University shares all of our experiences and concerns in relation to gender diversity. We hope our sponsorship of the Trinity Women's Review will help you further your goal of shining the spotlight on the many talented women in the University.

The Trinity Women's Review Vol II. would not have been possible without the generous and ongoing support of Eversheds Sutherland, the Trinity Equality Fund and Trinity Publications.

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