

## Speakers' Biographies

### Tom Boland



Tom Boland is Chief Executive of the Higher Education Authority (HEA), a position he has held since January 2004. The HEA is a statutory body established to allocate public funding to Irish higher education institutions; to oversee the performance of the higher education and research sector generally; and to advise the Minister for Education and Skills on the development of the sector.

Tom is a member of the Board of the Central Applications Office and of the Governing Board of IMHE, the OECD higher education programme. He is former Chairperson of the Board of HEAnet, and served on the boards of Science Foundation Ireland and the Fulbright Commission.

Tom holds degrees in Civil Engineering and Law and was called to the Irish Bar in 1987.

### Professor Mark Brown



Professor Mark Brown is the Director of the National Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL) and holds Ireland's first Chair in Digital Learning at Dublin City University (DCU). Prior to taking up this position at the start of 2014, Mark was Director of the National Centre for Teaching and Learning and Director of the Distance Education and Learning Futures Alliance (DELFA) at Massey University, New Zealand. In addition Mark had responsibility for oversight of the Central Hub of Ako Aotearoa—National Centre for

Tertiary Teaching Excellence, and was President of the New Zealand Association for Open, Flexible and Distance Learning (DEANZ). A recipient of a National Award for Sustained Excellence in Tertiary Teaching, he remains a member of the New Zealand Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence.

Over the past decade Mark has played key leadership roles in the implementation of several major university-wide digital learning and teaching initiatives, including the selection and enterprise-wide deployment of Moodle, the original design and development of the Mahara e-portfolio system, and the implementation of a rich media-learning platform (Mediasite) and of the first New Zealand university-wide implementation of a MOOC platform (Open2Study). He coordinates DCU's Digital Learning Research Network; leads the Policy and Strategy Expert



Group as part of the EMPOWER project; is an active member of both the EU-funded HOME and Score2020 projects; and a partner in the 'Y1 Feedback' and 'Student Success Toolbox' projects funded by Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, of which he became a Board member in 2016. In 2015 Mark was co-author of the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE)-funded report, *Quality Models in Online and Open Education Around the Globe*.

Mark is currently Chair of the Innovation in Teaching and Learning Steering Committee for the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU) and a member of the Executive Committee of European Distance and e-Learning Network (EDEN). In addition he contributes as a faculty member to the US-based Online Learning Consortium's (OLC) Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL) and is currently leading an initiative to establish the Empower Online Learning Leadership Academy (EOLLA) for new and emerging institutional leaders in European universities. Additionally he works closely with Epigeum, a subsidiary of Oxford University Press, in the development of online professional development programmes for university staff.

### Goldie Blumenstyk



Goldie Blumenstyk is one of America's most respected higher education journalists. As a reporter at *The Chronicle of Higher Education* since 1988, she has covered a wide range of topics including distance education, the internet boom, bust, and boom, state politics, and fundraising. She is known nationally for her expertise on for-profit higher education, college finances, and the commercialisation of academic research. She has reported for *The Chronicle* from China, Israel, Peru and several countries in Europe,

and her stories have received numerous awards.

Goldie has been a frequent guest on public radio and public affairs shows and at events, and her work has appeared in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. She is also a co-founder of the *Chronicle's* new reporting project, "Re:Learning | Mapping the New Education Landscape." Before joining *The Chronicle*, she covered government issues and City Hall at *The Orlando Sentinel*.

Her bestselling book, *American Higher Education in Crisis? What Everyone Needs to Know*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2015

Goldie holds a B.A. (History) from Colgate University and a Master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.



## Professor Vincent Cunnane



Professor Vincent Cunnane has been the President of the Institute of Technology, Sligo since October 2014 and has just been appointed President of Limerick Institute of Technology—a position which he will take up in the coming months. He is a native of Stranorlar in County Donegal. An electrochemist, he spent the majority of his career at the University of Limerick where he became the first Vice-President of Research in 2002.

In 2008 he became Chief Executive Officer of Shannon Development, contributing significantly to regional development in the Shannon region prior to merging the company with Shannon Airport to create the Shannon Group in 2014. Professor Cunnane was also appointed Chief Executive of the Mid-West Task Force, set up by the Irish Government in January 2009 to bring new investment to the Shannon region after the cessation of manufacturing by Dell Computers in Limerick. He is a former board member of Shannon Broadband Ltd, Shannon Castle Banquets & Heritage Ltd, and of the first National Research Support Fund Board.

Professor Cunnane was appointed to the Limerick Re-organisation Implementation Group by the Minister of Environment & Local Government in July 2011 to merge the Limerick City and County Councils. He is currently a board member of NIBRT and Chairman of the Governing Council of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (2009–2015).

## Colleen Dube



Originally from Bristol, Connecticut, Colleen holds a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and Art History from Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, a Master's in Philosophy in Irish Studies from National University Ireland, Galway, and a Master's in Business Administration from the Michael Smurfit School of Business at University College Dublin. Colleen has occupied senior positions in Ireland's cultural, heritage and urban regeneration sectors since 1990.

Most recently Colleen was Executive Director of the Ireland–United States (Fulbright) Commission for Educational Exchange. Colleen joined Uversity as its Chief Executive Officer



on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015. She is committed to unlocking the potential of Ireland and Uversity's students through personalised learning programmes

### Paul Healy



Paul Healy is Chief Executive Officer of Skillnets, which works with businesses to address their current and future skills needs, helping enterprise to maintain its competitiveness and to instil the new skills required to drive future job-growth. Skillnets also supports the needs of job-seekers by focusing on integrated training with enterprise, dedicated conversion courses and through work-placement in areas of high employment-potential.

Paul has operated at a senior level in commercial environments for over 20 years, including 10 years' executive management experience in human resources. His career has spanned roles in sales management, change management, consulting and human resource development. Prior to his appointment as CEO of Skillnets Paul had responsibility for learning and development, OD, talent management and management development for a large multi-national organisation. Paul holds a degree in Business Studies and an M.B.A. from Dublin City University. He is Adjunct Lecturer in Human Resource Development at the National College of Ireland Postgraduate Business School.

### Dr. Gemma Irvine



Dr. Gemma Irvine is currently Head of Policy and Strategic Planning in the Higher Education Authority (HEA). She completed her Master's and Ph.D. in Neuroscience in New Zealand before moving to Ireland in 2004 to work as a Research Fellow in Trinity College Dublin. She moved to the HEA in 2007 to coordinate the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTL), and was the Irish National Delegate for 'Research Infrastructures' in the FP7 EU Programme.

Moving to the Irish Research Council (IRC) in 2012, Dr. Irvine co-ordinated the operational merger of IRCHSS and IRCSET into the IRC and was responsible for oversight of IRC-funded research programmes, as well as being the Irish National Delegate for 'Social Sciences and Humanities' in Horizon 2020. Most recently she worked with Máire Geoghegan-Quinn,



European Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science from 2010 to 2014, on the National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions.

### Professor Cathal Kelly



Professor Cathal Kelly took up the position of Chief Executive Officer/Registrar in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) in December 2009. A graduate and Fellow of RCSI, Professor Kelly was previously Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences from 2006–2009.

Prior to his appointment, he was a Consultant General and Vascular Surgeon with a special interest in endovascular surgery in Beaumont Hospital. He combined this role with chairmanship of the surgical division and an academic position in RCSI as Vice-Dean for curriculum change. In addition to completing his basic and higher surgical training in Dublin, Professor Kelly pursued a research fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, USA.

Cathal has also won the prestigious Patey Prize of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland for research he conducted at Beaumont Hospital and he has also obtained first place in the intercollegiate Specialty Board Exams.

### Dr. Paul Le Blanc



Dr. Paul J. LeBlanc is President of Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). Under the ten years of Paul's direction, SNHU has more than quadrupled in size and is the second largest non-profit provider of online higher education in the country, and the first to have a full competency-based degree programme untethered to the credit-hour or classes approved by a regional accreditor and the U.S. Department of Education.

In 2012 the university was number 12 on *Fast Company* magazine's "World's Fifty Most Innovative Companies" list and was the only university included. Paul won a New England Higher Education Excellence Award in 2012 and the 2015 NH Entrepreneur of the Year Award, and has repeatedly been named one of "New Hampshire's Most Influential People" by *New Hampshire Business Review*. *Forbes Magazine* has listed him as one of its 15 "Classroom Revolutionaries" and one of the "most influential people in higher education" for 2016. He





was featured on Bloomberg TV's "Innovators" series, *Fast Company* included him in its "1000 Most Creative People" List, and *Washington Monthly* named him one of America's ten most innovative university presidents.

He most recently served as Senior Policy Advisor to Under Secretary Ted Mitchell at the U.S. Department of Education, working on competency-based education, new accreditation pathways, and innovation. He also serves on the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) and on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Board on Higher Education and Workforce (and served on its Committee on Quality in Undergraduate Education).

Paul immigrated to the United States as a child, was the first person in his extended family to attend college, and is a graduate of Framingham State University (B.A.), Boston College (M.A.), and the University of Massachusetts (Ph.D.). From 1993 to 1996 he directed a technology start-up for Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company, was President of Marlboro College (VT) from 1996 to 2003, and became President of SNHU in 2003. His wife Patricia is an attorney and their daughters Emma and Hannah are doctoral students. Annie, their black Labrador Retriever, studies sleeping on the couch and ways to steal food from the counter tops.

### Dr. Phillip Matthews



Dr. Phillip Matthews was appointed President of the National College of Ireland in March 2010. He holds a B.Sc. and a Ph.D. in Zoology from Queen's University, Belfast and Postgraduate Diplomas in Executive Coaching and Advanced Executive Coaching from UCD Smurfit Graduate Business School.

Before re-entering academia Phillip spent 20 years in industry between pharmaceuticals and human resource consulting.

Prior to joining NCI, Phillip was responsible for establishing and directing the Executive Education Centre at UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School between the years of 2007 and 2010. NCI has an established reputation in adult education, workforce re-skilling and professional education.

A former Ireland rugby captain, Phillip is active in business/executive leadership, and 1:1 and team coaching.



## Professor Sarah Moore



Professor Sarah Moore is the Chair of Ireland's National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning and Associate Vice-President Academic at the University of Limerick. The National Forum is the key system-level infrastructure for the enhancement of teaching and learning in Irish higher education and for the implementation of the recommendations of the *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* in this area.

Sarah has researched and published in the areas of organisational behaviour, pedagogical innovation, academic professional development, and on a range of topics central to promoting and enhancing teaching and learning in higher education. She has a strong commitment to developing creative and engaging learning dynamics between teachers and students. She has explored the process of academic development and uses what she has found to help academics, teachers, researchers and students to develop productive patterns of learning, innovation and professional development. Sarah holds an award for excellence in teaching, and has worked to develop a culture that supports and celebrates outstanding teaching and learning across all disciplines in higher education settings. Sarah has published several books and many journal papers on academic and educational development including *The Handbook of Academic Writing* (Rowena Murray) and *The Ultimate Study Skills Handbook* (with Maura Murphy, Colin Neville and Cornelia Connelly) and *New Approaches to Problem-Based Learning* (with Terry Barrett).

## Dr. Seán M. Rowland



Dr. Seán M. Rowland, President of Hibernia College, was born in Castlebar, County Mayo, Ireland. Having attended St. Patrick's College in Dublin, he taught at primary-school level for five years before travelling to the U.S. to attend Boston College. Here he was awarded a Master's Degree in Curriculum, Instruction and Administration. He then undertook his Ph.D. in Curriculum Instruction and Administration (CIA) with a focus on educational finance. Dr. Rowland also holds a Master's Degree in Public

Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

While at Boston College, Dr. Rowland established and was appointed Executive Director of the Centre for Irish Management. His goals in creating the centre were to encourage economic development and create employment in Ireland through education, executive



development and relationship building. Dr. Rowland also established the Irish Institute at Boston College, and, as Executive Director, worked extensively with young Irish professionals, political leaders and educators to promote Irish–U.S. relations, provide upskilling in a variety of professional areas, and contribute to job-creation in Ireland.

In 2000 Dr. Rowland brought together his colleagues from the corporate, education and technological communities to create Hibernia College, Ireland’s first and only accredited online higher education institution. The programme for which the college is currently best known is its Higher Diploma in Arts in Primary Education. Graduates from this course are now highly sought after by many schools around Ireland. Under Dr. Rowland’s leadership, Hibernia College has also collaborated with Pfizer (the world’s largest research-based pharmaceutical company) to develop a Master’s degree programme in Pharmaceutical Medicine and more recently with the U.K.’s Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to develop an online education programme for secondary-school teachers in England. This programme, which has been extended to universities across England, is exciting because it puts Hibernia College in the unique position of providing teacher education in Ireland and England.

Dr. Rowland is the current President of the Harvard Club of Ireland and is a member of Harvard University's Littauer Society. He is also a member of the Dean’s Advisory Leadership Council at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, a member of the Harvard Faculty Club and an active alumnus of Boston College. In addition Dr. Rowland is a member of the Institute of Directors, Ireland and of the Royal Dublin Society. He is on the advisory board of the Soul of Haiti Foundation and is a board member of the Irish Famine Commemoration Fund. In 2008 Dr. Rowland won the Ernst and Young Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year award and in 2009 was named as one of the “100 greatest self-made Irish entrepreneurs” by Irish Entrepreneur magazine.

## Julie Spillane



Julie Spillane is Director of the Accenture Centre for Innovation in Dublin, which will be a living, breathing innovation hub acting as an accelerator for Accenture and their clients to unlock value.

Julie has held numerous senior leadership roles in Accenture and is expert at leading large-scale multidisciplinary global teams. With deep skills in strategy development, innovation and

finance, her recent leadership responsibilities have ranged from the design, set-up and scaling of new operations to the design and implementation of major global transformation change





programmes. A member of the Accenture Ireland Leadership Team, Julie previously worked in several technology companies including Microsoft and Epicor.

Passionate about education and skills, Julie was recently appointed to the Department of Education and Skills' Steering Group to develop *Ireland National Skills Strategy 2025*. She is also a member of the working group advising the Irish government on ICT skills. An advocate of the need to encourage more women into careers in STEM, Julie is a member of the Advisory Council of An Cosán's Virtual Community College—a social innovation programme which provides a pathway to learning, leadership and enterprise.

With a long standing commitment to driving growth and innovation in Ireland, Julie is founder and chair of the Multinational Technology Forum and has worked closely with the IDA and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) to develop a national strategy for the Global Business Services industry.

A graduate in Electronic Engineering from the National University of Ireland, Galway, Julie has completed a postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies and the Chartered Director Programme at the Institute of Directors. She is a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants (FCCA).

