

## FACULTY COLLOQUIUM

Wednesday

April 15, 2015

UC 222

12-12:50pm

### TO GROW OR NOT TO GROW: CHALLENGES OR CHOICES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS?

By Dr. Emma Fleck, Assistant Professor of Business

It has been widely recognized that the growth of entrepreneurial ventures is central to wealth creation, innovation and economic development. However, it has been noted by many authors that women-owned ventures are not capitalizing on growth potential or economic returns. This paper presents the case of women entrepreneurs in Ireland and investigates whether growth is affected by institutional or normative factors or whether preference plays an important role in this decision. Within the service sector in Ireland, 33 female entrepreneurs were chosen to participate in depth interviews as part of a case study methodology. These businesses demonstrated varying levels of growth which ensured a maximum variation sample for identifying barriers they share in the growth process. The results indicated that preference or personal choice was strongly recognized as a key factor which impacted upon business growth. However, it was noted that a number of factors also inhibited the growth of women-owned firms when female entrepreneurs opted for

growth. These factors were found to be both structural (access to capital, lack of government support, lack of skilled staff, and access to appropriate childcare) and normative (inability to delegate, lack of management skills, lack of self-confidence, gender role orientation and guilt related to parenthood). This study provides new evidence to illustrate that female entrepreneurs have individual preferences, which result in a spread of legitimate growth strategies to include limited or capped growth.



Please come with your lunch and bring your colleagues.