

Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster **imerc**



Dr. Valerie Cummins is co-founder and the Director of IMERC (the Irish Maritime and Energy Resource Cluster). IMERC aims to develop a research and commercial cluster of world standing, to achieve Ireland's potential in the global maritime and energy markets of tomorrow. It is an ambitious initiative that is building on excellence in research and innovation to deliver job creation and a significant new maritime campus. This involves working on behalf of University College Cork (UCC), the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), the Irish Naval Service (INS) and industry partners. IMERC was recognised for excellence in public sector service by An Taoiseach's award in 2012.

Valerie's vision in the development of IMERC influenced her being awarded a prestigious Eisenhower Fellowship in 2012. The Eisenhower fellowship programme, Chaired by Colin Powell, recognises emerging leaders from around the world.

In 2010 Valerie received the UCC President's award for leadership for her role in the development of marine science in UCC. Prior to developing IMERC, Val was the Director of the Coastal and Marine Research Centre for ten years. She developed significant capacity by winning major research grants such as Griffiths and Beaufort funds, and was acknowledged by Forfas one of the most successful principle investigators in Ireland to win European research funds in 2009.

Valerie's passion for research in the field of coastal governance means that despite the demands of the day job, she is actively engaged in a number of important scientific activities. She is on the International Scientific Committee for LOICZ (Land Ocean Interactions for the Coastal Zone) which deals with Global Environmental Change. She is a member of the Climate Science Committee of the Royal Irish Academy and a member of the editorial panel of the International Marine Policy Journal. She has published in peer review journals on marine and coastal governance, as well as co-authoring a book on coastal informatics. She is currently supervising three PhD students.

Valerie is an advocate for realising Ireland's opportunity in marine renewable energy. She is a council member of the Marine Renewables Industry Association and recently, she has been appointed to the Government's Marine Developers Task Force through a Ministerial nomination. Her work with the Irish Naval Service provides her with a unique insight into civil-military cooperation, a topic that she has presented to navies and governments from around the world. Valerie is a member of the Spike

Island Steering Committee and the Cork Harbour Management Focus Group. Prior to joining UCC in 1999, Valerie worked in the environmental consultancy industry and for the British Oceanographic Data Centre, UK.

She is married to Ken Cotter and has three young daughters, Ailbhe, Iris and Muireann. As a family, they enjoy sailing, music and spending time in West Cork.