

# Athena SWAN Annual Report 2016

*School of Geography, June 2016*

# ATHENA SWAN CHARTER

## Background

The Athena SWAN Charter recognizes commitment to advancing women's careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) employment in higher education. During the year in which the Charter celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it was expanded to recognise work undertaken in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL), in professional and support roles, and for Trans staff and students.

## Athena SWAN Principles

As a member of the Charter the School of Geography has signed up to and is actively engaged in the following principles:

- We acknowledge that academia cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of all.
- We commit to advancing gender equality in academia, in particular, addressing the loss of women across the career pipeline and the absence of women from senior academic, professional and support roles.
- We commit to addressing unequal gender representation across academic disciplines and professional and support functions. In this we recognise disciplinary differences including: the relative underrepresentation of women in senior roles in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) and the particularly high loss rate of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM).
- We commit to tackling the gender pay gap.
- We commit to removing the obstacles faced by women, in particular, at major points of career development and progression including the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career.
- We commit to addressing the negative consequences of using short-term contracts for the retention and progression of staff in academia, particularly women.
- We commit to tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by Trans people.
- We acknowledge that advancing gender equality demands commitment and action from all levels of the organisation and in particular active leadership from those in senior roles.
- We commit to making and mainstreaming sustainable structural and cultural changes to advance gender equality, recognising that initiatives and actions that support individuals alone will not sufficiently advance equality.
- All individuals have identities shaped by several different factors. We commit to considering the intersection of gender and other factors wherever possible.

Professor Alison Blunt  
Head of School

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## What have we done so far?

Prior to the Charter expansion in May 2015, we set up our self-assessment team (SAT) and started the process of self-reflection using the criteria specified by the Charter for their Bronze level departmental award. Bronze department awards recognise that in addition to institution-wide policies, the department (in our case the School of Geography) is working to promote gender equality and to identify and address challenges particular to the department and discipline. The department must also plan future actions and in our case this included the SAT:

- Assessing gender equality, including quantitative (staff and student data) and qualitative (policies, practices, systems and arrangements) evidence and identifying both challenges and opportunities;
- Creating a four-year plan that builds on this assessment, information on activities that are already in place and what has been learned from these.

The SAT formed initially in September 2014 and expanded in September 2015; the SAT has met in person six times to date. Some members of the group have taken on “lead” roles which means they are:

- The reference and consultation point for the SAT for their lead area;
- Mindful of equality and diversity (E&D) in all aspects of their lead area, highlighting the need for equality and the Charter principles to other committees e.g. Research and Graduate Studies Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Taught Programmes Recruitment and Admissions Committee, Resources and Infrastructure Committee;
- Identifying any unintentional bias in processes and procedures within their lead area and working collaboratively to resolve these.

Following the self-assessment process, the SAT submitted an application for consideration for a Bronze Athena SWAN award in April 2016, and currently awaiting the outcome. It is acknowledged within the School that there is lots to celebrate, recognising there is still much to do.

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## What did we find?

The analysis of our staff and student data has given us a roadmap on which to focus our actions.

From this we can see our successes to date:

- We have broad gender equality at UG level (52%F: 48%M), and for academic staff (44%F: 56%M);
- For Researchers and Early Career Academics, grades 4-6, there is gender balance, and we compared well to national benchmarks (RGS-IBG 55%F, ECU 47%F);
- For Professorial posts we are pleased to maintain a near gender balance (42%F) which is significantly above both benchmark comparators (RGS-IBG: 21%F, ECU: 21.7%F);
- Our committees are gender inclusive both in terms of committee membership and those chairing the committees;
- Our School Staff Survey indicated 86% of respondents feel staff are treated on their merits irrespective of gender and 94% agree that the School values the full range of an individual's skills and experience in promotions;
- The survey also told us that 83% of respondents agreed that line managers are supportive of flexible working.

...and where more work is needed:

- There is more to do in promoting a diversity of BME role models;
- There are training opportunities for staff, however the take up of these is lower than we would wish and we are looking at how to ensure staff get the training they need to support their career ambitions;
- We recognise the low number of research vacancies in the School which makes the transition to first postdoctoral post or academic post challenging.

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## What's next?

The approved School Strategy (2015-19) has equality and diversity built into it with its five core values. Following on from that and input from the School Management Group and School Committees we are working to create Key Principles for the School. The Principles aim to provide clarity on ways of working, and link closely with our Charter work. Examples of the Principles are:

- Foster a culture amongst staff and students that is collegial and mutually supportive;
- Embed and develop our commitment to equality and diversity and to improve the work-life balance of staff;
- Equality of opportunity for all of our students and staff;
- Nurture a culture that is mutually supportive and committed to the development of its individual members;
- The School has a collective expectation that emails will only be answered during working hours.

The Key Principles were discussed at the School Away Day (05/16; all staff) and will be confirmed at the School Board meeting (9/16; all staff).

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