

School of Geography Equality and Diversity Newsletter

August 2017



Welcome to the Spring/Summer issue of the Equality and Diversity newsletter.

Submission of Application for Silver Athena SWAN Award

In April we submitted the application for a Silver Athena SWAN award following our success in obtaining a Bronze Award last year. We will receive the result in Autumn 2017.

Staff Survey

Thank you to all who have completed the staff culture survey this year – our response rate was an impressive 94%! We will be analysing the results in the E&D Committee to see what we are doing well and what improvements we can make.

Key findings from the staff survey

- **92%** of staff agree that they are treated on their merits irrespective of gender
- **91%** of staff agreed or strongly agreed that the School has a culture which recognises that caring responsibilities are applicable to both male and female staff
- **96%** of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the School's reasons for taking action on gender equality
- **83%** of staff agreed that the School values the full range of an individual's skills and experience.
- **83%** of staff agreed that the School provides useful mentoring opportunities (as a mentor or mentee).

Key findings from the PGT survey

- The academics, nature of the school, environment and ranking are the most important factors for students considering potential PGT study institutions
- Students are concerned by the lack of diversity amongst PGT students and the unequal treatment of students who are on 1 + 3, MA and MRes courses.

Key findings from the PGR survey

- PGR students strongly considered the reputation and location of QMUL as well as the culture and potential supervisor when applying to study
- Students are concerned about pensions, disability and lecturer sensitivity particularly with regards to assumptions made about class and religion that have made some students uncomfortable; an example was given about low-level swearing and blaspheming.

Staff Focus Group

Thank you to everyone who attended the staff focus group. Topics discussed centred around parental leave, career progression and the transparency of School processes. If you could not make it to the focus group meeting and would like to comment on these, or any other E&D issues, you can contact Shabnam Beheshti (s.beheshti@qmul.ac.uk) who facilitated the meeting. The E&D committee will discuss the findings and provide a further update in the next issue.

External Meetings

Alison Blunt attended the RGS-IBG E&D meeting in February and presented on the work being done here which was positively received. More information on RGS-IBG equality and diversity work is available [here](#).

Suggestion Box

Thank you to everyone who has continued to make suggestions. A recent suggestion related to addressing mental health concerns. The H&S Esafe news bulletin for March listed some tips for looking after your mental health.

The School and QMUL are committed to the wellbeing of all its staff and students. Below are some tips on how to look after your mental health:

- 1. Talk about your feelings:** a problem shared is a problem halved.
- 2. Keep active:** regular exercise can help with confidence, concentration and sleep, making you look and feel better. The chapel run weekly mindfulness sessions during term time on a Monday from 12:30pm. Qmotion has also just added mindfulness to its list of classes. It will run every Thursday from 12:15-1pm. It is free for all peak and off peak and members and costs £4.50 for all non-members. The class promotes general wellbeing by bringing your attention to the present moment, through controlled breathing and meditation.
- 3. Eat well:** a diet that is good for your physical health is also good for your mental health.
- 4. Drink sensibly:** drinking alcohol is not a good way to manage difficult feelings.
- 5. Keep in touch:** catch up with friends and keep lines of communication open, it's good for you!
- 6. Ask for help:** it's normal to sometimes get overwhelmed by how we feel, ask for support. Staff can view information on workplace options [here](#). Students with a diagnosed mental health condition may be eligible for further support with their studies. They can make an appointment with Niall Morrissey or Melanie Dupin in the Disability and Dyslexia Service by emailing dds@qmul.ac.uk. Students can also access the welfare advice or counselling support provided by Advice and Counselling on campus. For more information click [here](#).
- 7. Take a break:** make sure you give yourself some 'me time'
- 8. Do something you're good at:** enjoy yourself and boost your self-esteem.
- 9. Accept who you are:** know and accept your limitations.
- 10. Care for others:** this is an integral part of keeping up relationships with people close to you.

QMSU Sports Camps

QMSU run Sports Camps in the spring and summer for children aged 8-13. This initiative is based in QMotion and children are able to take part in up to 15 different sports. For more information please visit the [website](#).

Focus on Impacts

Here in the School we have nine male and nine female professors. The national benchmark for PG and HG combined for professors in 2015/16 is 19%F:81%M whilst our figures are 50%F:50%M, far exceeding the benchmark.

The Technician Commitment

The Technician Commitment was launched at the Higher Education Technicians Summit on 31st May this year. It aims to increase the visibility and recognition of technicians, as well as aiding career development. The initiative is led by the Science Council and Gatsby Foundation with backing from more than 35 research institutions and universities. If you would like to find out more, please click [here](#).

Equality & Diversity Articles

- [Five unconscious biases that hold back female researchers](#) – The Guardian.
- HEFCE – Equality and diversity initiatives are wide-ranging and creative. [Blog post](#) and [report](#) available about pioneering practices in a range of HEI which are implemented within the institutions and in the wider community.
- HEFCE – Insights on equality and diversity for the next REF. This page provides a [summary](#) and a link to a more detailed [report](#) relating to REF and research environments for those who wish to read further.
- [Infographics](#) from UCEA on employment contracts, gender pay gaps and pensions, along with many other topics.
- [Addition not Division](#) is a new website created by our consultant for Athena SWAN applications Ailsa McGregor and her colleague Vikki Layton. The website has a focus on inclusivity and will feature interviews with people involved in this.

Staff Profile: Fran Darlington-Pollock

'I joined the department as a Lecturer in Human Geography in January 2016. Having completed a PhD with a particular focus on ethnic inequality, my continued research in this area made me an obvious candidate for the Equality and Diversity Committee. As the data officer for the School, I have helped with the data analysis for our upcoming Silver Athena Swan application but I also contribute to discussions across a range of equality and diversity issues. In my research, I am interested in the ways in which 'opportunity' is constrained or enabled across multiple

domains for diverse populations, often defined by ethnic group. In the context of our School Committee, this translates into working towards equal opportunities in Higher Education regardless of ethnicity or gender. This is as important for our students as it is for our staff. A diverse student and staff body is something we should value and strive for'.



Fran was employed on a fixed-term contract, and has now moved to the University of Liverpool as a permanent lecturer.