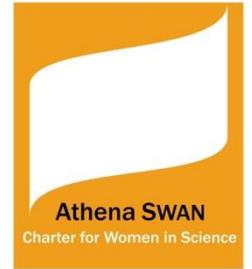


**SBCS Athena SWAN self assessment group**  
**Minutes of meeting held 20<sup>th</sup> June 2012 11.00-12:30**  
**FOGG 3.15**



Present: Rachel Ashworth, Bertille Calinaud, Anna Dulic-Sills, Matthew Evans, Alan McElligott, Kelly Peaston, Richard Pickersgill, Barbara Tennis.

**Part 1**

**1. Apologies for absence:**

Angelika Stollewerk, Evelyn Welch

**2. The following individuals have been invited to join the group and have accepted:**

Evelyn Welch (Athena Swan Chair, VP Research and International Affairs)

Bertille Calinaud (Diversity specialist)

Angelika Stollewerk (Reader in Evolutionary and Developmental Biology)

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 28-03-2012: accepted**

**4. Publication of minutes:** it was agreed that the minutes should be published on the SBCS website, externally facing.

**Part 2**

**1. Support for staff on maternity or sick leave**

The group discussed the best way of supporting academic staff who take maternity or a substantial period of sick leave. It was agreed that the member of staff should be offered support which could be e.g. a postdoc for one year. The exact timing of the appointment of the postdoc would be a decision for the member of staff. BC advised the group that there was a plan to set up a formal way of applying for this benefit across the College. There were concerns however that having to apply and fill out a form might not be helpful. It was also pointed out that staff in other departments might benefit from support in other areas e.g. a reduction in teaching or administrative load and therefore the type of support available should be flexible.

There is a distinction between academic and support staff as it is normal practice for a member of support staff to have maternity cover provided by the College and there are many examples of this happening.

**DECISION:** Staff on maternity or sick leave of six or more months will automatically be offered postdoc support for one year. The timing of the support is up to the member of academic staff. Where possible returning members of staff will have reduced teaching and administrative loads.

## **2. Mentoring of staff / staff appraisal**

It was acknowledged that there are few female academics in the department to act as mentors; therefore it would be beneficial to look to senior academics in other departments to act as mentors (e.g. SMD, Geog, SEMS). BC commented that there is a plan to roll out a mentoring programme across the College. The probation process in SBCS designates a mentor to academic staff and there has been discussion of mentoring for PDRAs at the SBCS Research Strategy Group. BC advised the group to consider the goals/aims of mentoring and to appoint mentors on that basis (male or female). An example of this happening already in SBCS is Prof Verity Brown (Visiting Prof) mentoring Dr Caroline Brennan.

RA had mentioned at the previous meeting that there was mentoring support from the Physiological Society and would email the details to the group. **ACTION RA [done]**

RWP is in favour of setting up an advisory panel to offer advice, make recommendations, which would help with research matters.

BC commented that training could be offered via the Learning Institute for mentors and mentees.

There was a discussion about invited speakers and using the WiSE group to help organise speakers to have lunch and/or meetings with PhD students. At the previous meeting it was agreed to invite a prominent female academic to a dedicated Athena SWAN seminar which would form part of the main SBCS seminar series. There was discussion about whether this should be badged as 'Athena'.

**DECISION:** It was agreed that it would not be necessary to emphasise the Athena connection and that a better way to engage students would be to invite staff, postdocs and PhD students to an open lunch with the speaker. We would contact WiSE to publicise the events. A series of post talk meetings should be timetabled for speakers where possible.

## **3. Interview process for new appointments**

ME explained that he and Evelyn Welch had discussed interview processes and EW had suggested that the current process would favour male candidates. It had been suggested that female candidates would benefit from having a longer recruitment process which involved social events as well as individual meetings. ME would like all elements of this process to feed into the selection of candidates, rather than relying solely on the interview situation. There were some reservations about whether a drawn out process would favour those with caring responsibilities. BC agreed to check the evidence for preferences in interview style: **ACTION BC**

The interview panel should involve female colleagues where possible as this is best practice.

## **4. Composition of SBCS Athena SWAN self assessment group**

A PDRA and postgraduate student would be invited to join the group

**ACTION: RWP**

## **5. AOB**

AGMc commented on the email discussion that had arisen after calls for female colleagues to be invited as seminar speakers (based on the

fact that of the 67 seminar speakers, only 11 had been women). RWP agreed to handle any issues related to this. It was acknowledged that there was some work to be done to change the culture, but that this should be the main focus in addition to the award of silver status.

BC commented that the former Head of Chemistry at York was due to visit QM and it would be worth setting up a meeting to see what Athena SWAN initiatives had been introduced at York

**6. Date of the next meeting:** July – ACTION: KP to circulate a doodle poll