



**SBCS Athena SWAN self-assessment team  
Notes of meeting held  
3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, 14.00-15.30**

**Present: Angelika Stollewerk, Fiona Marsh, Georgia Tsagkogeorga, Janelle Jones, Matthew Evans, Viviana Santos Gomes, Maxi Roessler**

**Notes: Sarah Heskett**

**Action summary**

2.1	SH to finalise a representative from the admin team to join the Committee	SH
3.1	SH to send HF Athena Swan reports from School meetings to be uploaded to the website	SH&HF
3.2	AS to approach possible representatives from CMB to join the Committee	AS
3.3	ME to provide AS with the number of female promotion applications out of the total number of applications along with the percentage of success	SH
3.4	HF to consider developing the website to include a section on 'SBCS Experts' where male and female colleagues are encouraged to engage with the media	HF
3.5	AS to raise the issue subsidy and availability of places for staff at Westfield nursery at the next College Athena Swan meeting	AS

**1. Apologies:**

Kim Warren, Helen Fitton, Sarah Heskett, Alan McElligott

**Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes were accepted.

**2. Matters arising and actions from the previous meeting**

- Unconscious Bias training has been arranged for the 21<sup>st</sup> April. FM to send another email to staff to fill remaining places.
- FM and SH mentioned at an admin team meeting that SH would be emailing admin staff to ask for a volunteer to join the Committee. Stuart Cadby is interested in joining. SH has sent an email and will gather other responses and feedback at the next meeting. **[ACTION: SH]**

- FM and GT have spoken with Joyce Jones and mechanisms for communicating opportunities for postdocs have been implemented. GT has emailed details to postdocs and asked for feedback.
- AS met with Sandra Brown, HR Diversity Manager. Sandra is working on preparing packages for the different levels of award. These will be sent out to Schools once complete, hopefully by the end of March. Data can then be discussed at the April meeting.
- FM updated the SAT on the situation with student data. Monique Arthur has found that the last three years of comparative data can be gathered quite easily. Three years of comparative data and five years of SBCS data can be used and the further two years of comparative data can be added once available. Monique Arthur will attend the April meeting to discuss further.

### **3. Athena Swan Silver renewal application: new action plan**

#### **Establishing the Athena Swan initiative (AS)**

AS suggested changing the title to 'Governance'. This is the heading that many other Schools are using. The majority of aspects for this have been established but the main area for improvement relates to the first initiative;

#### **1.1 Promote Athena Swan ethos within the School.**

- This could be tackled as part of inductions for new staff, postdocs, PhD students, PG and UG students. The outcome of this could be measured via biannual surveys. The newsletters are another medium that could be employed to better communicate Athena Swan initiatives. Athena Swan reports from School meetings should be uploaded to the website. **[Action: SH to send to HF to upload]**
- As the School survey indicated that many people remain unaware of Athena Swan initiatives, JJ suggested that Committee members periodically put Athena Swan on departmental meeting agendas for discussion. ME pointed out that there is currently nobody on the committee representing Cell and Molecular Biology. AS asked for suggestions for a CMB representative and Viji Draviam-Sastry, Rachel O'Callaghan and Guy Hanke were suggested as possibilities. **[ACTION: AS to approach and ask for a representative from CMB]**
- AS asked the Committee to email her with suggestions for a representative from the Technical side of the School as Sonia Dagnino will be unable to serve.

- RWP recommended addressing unconscious bias among the UG student body to determine if female academic ability is under estimated by students as was shown to be the case in module evaluations in the US. This could provide an opportunity for SBCS to go further than other Schools in trying to address unconscious bias among students. ME suggested this could be targeted through the new non-credit bearing PDP module that is being introduced.
- The initiative could be implemented in two stages over a two year period. The first action would be to introduce unconscious bias as part of PDP. The following year an experiment could be carried out to see if raising awareness of unconscious bias has an impact on behaviours. This would also give more time for people to engage with the concept as initial responses can often be quite negative. This will be included in the new action plan. Responsibility for this to be discussed at the next meeting.
- GT suggested producing a short video outlining Athena Swan initiatives, perhaps with a Q&A session where common questions could be addressed. A link to this could go on the website.

## **2.1 Promoting positive role models and attracting and supporting female students**

- As part of 2.3 the action plan should demonstrate that a greater number of women are seeking promotion. The number of women seeking promotion between 2011 and 2016 are; 1 in 2011, 1 in 2012, 2 in 2013 and 2 in 2015/16. ME to check for 2014 and to provide AS with the number of female applications out of the total number of applications along with the percentage of success. [ACTION: SH]

### **Enhancing Gender Equality: Attracting and retaining female staff and offering support to female staff in their career (JJ, AM, AH)**

JJ looked at action plans from departments of Chemistry and Experimental Psychology at Oxford and presented some recommendations that could be implemented by SBCS

- JJ reported that the ECU recommends institutions move away from the tendency to view men and women as distinct categories and instead see them as intersecting categories. The latter model allows for the fact that class and ethnic background as well as gender affect progression and success and challenges the perception that Athena Swan supports women rather than promoting equality in general. As a result JJ recommended starting to consider equality perceptions more generally. Firstly, it would be worth surveying both male and female staff to capture views on whether they feel

Athena Swan helps or hinders their advancement. Certain initiatives appear to work for some areas of the School but not for others. Mentoring for example, is available for postdocs and junior academic staff but is lacking at a senior level for both academic and professional services staff. Oxford provides mentorship for academics and senior staff. It was agreed that it would be beneficial to consider the possibilities of taking mentoring further. This should be done at College level but the Committee and the wider School should seek to influence and agitate for such initiatives.

- JJ suggested enhancing the gender profiles of women in the media. There is a strong link between SBCS academics and the press but this is not necessarily capitalised on. The website could be developed to address this and could perhaps have a section for ‘SBCS Experts’ where male and female colleagues are encouraged to engage with the media [**ACTION: HF to consider**]
- SBCS could introduce a mentoring certificate or award where by a mentee identifies a mentor who has supported their career progression and helped and inspired them. UG could be part of this too and nominate academics who have supported an influenced their decision to go on to further study for example. It was agreed that this would be a good initiative to implement. This will be included in the new action plan. Responsibility for this to be discussed at the next meeting.
- JJ suggested looking at data on men who have taken paternity leave. If SBCS can show that the number has increased since the silver submission it would address a key point in the submission; that Athena Swan in SBCS supports men as well as women. If not paternity leave then the SAT should consider another success measure that could be used to show that the School is supportive of men as well as women.
- Formalising the process of cover if people are on long term sick leave was raised as a suggestion.

### **Promote good work/life balance (MR)**

MR looked at action plans from York and Imperial and discussed ideas with BC. Suggestions that could benefit the School generally and improve the resubmission for silver included;

- Implementing an emergency network for parents to step in at times when people are let down with childcare arrangements. There is a scheme like this in place at Imperial College where people can apply for a certain amount of

emergency childcare. This could function on an informal basis for SBCS if a basic structure was put in place.

- Summer conference childcare facility.
- BC felt it would be useful if important meetings are Q-Reviewed. This could form part of an inclusive policy where people absent from the School on any kind of leave can remain informed and connected with the School.
- MR suggested that there be formal recognition of the fact that staff are not expected to reply to emails outside of normal working hours. There is a culture whereby people feel under pressure to reply to emails in evenings and at weekends – publicising that this is not the case could help alleviate this pressure. Marina Resmini had said to MR that she would raise this at the next SBCS Senior Executive.
- Collecting feedback from staff who have returned from maternity or adoption leave to ensure that the gains are maintained. This could be done informally over coffee as the numbers are quite small and would ensure that staff who are returning to work are supported and aware of the schemes in place to help with the transition.
- Implement a system that allows for timetabling requests so that staff with childcare responsibilities can avoid teaching unfriendly hours. SBCS recognises that meetings and seminars should not be arranged outside of core hours but teaching outside core hours needs to be addressed too.
- MR asked if it would be possible to address the issue of QM nursery subsidy which has been cut from 10% to 5%. QM staff are also supposed to get priority in getting a place for their children but this does not seem to be happening. AS agreed to raise this at the next College Athena Swan meeting **[ACTION:AS]**
- York has a seminar series for inviting female prize winners to give talks and it was agreed that this would be something that could be implemented in SBCS. There are currently four named lecture series, all named after male scientists associated with the School or College. It was suggested that a fifth could be named after a female and Professor Lorna Casselton a Fungal Geneticist was put forward as a possible candidate.
- Ideas from other applications included; introducing a quiet room for breast feeding or praying – this has been implemented at York though it was recognised that space is at a premium in SBCS and QM in general. An annual social event – at York they have a cricket match and BBQ for example. This

used to happen at SBCS and people agreed that it would be good to reinstate it.

**4. Any other business:** there was none.

**5. Date of next meeting: [ACTION: SH]**