



SBCS Athena SWAN self-assessment team
Notes of meeting held
7th September 2016, 12.00-13.30

Present:

Angelika Stollewerk [AS], Kim Warren [KW], Stuart Cadby [SC], Georgia Tsagkogeorga [GT], Fiona Marsh [FM], Sarah Heskett [SH], Andrew Hirst [AH], Fahmida Jamal [FJ], Apsana Begum [AB], Vicki Baars [VB], Janelle Jones [JJ]

Notes: Sarah Heskett

Action summary

3.1	AS to check with Joyce Jones how the funding data has been calculated and whether or not the changing success rates of the different funding agencies had been factored in.	AS
3.2	FJ was asked to double check the staff turnover data; what the data represented, how it has been calculated, remove visiting academics and check that technical staff who changed roles during the restructure have not been included in the data.	FJ
4.1	GT to link postdoc section of career development to the old action plan.	GT
4.3	Consider ways improve gender balance in committee composition	JJ, AH & ROC
4.4	Email staff asking them to respond with details of outreach work they are engaged in.	JJ, AH & ROC

1. Apologies:

Helen Fitton [HF], Alan McElligott [AE], Rachel O'Callaghan [ROC]

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were accepted.

3. Data analysis

FJ reported that she had received the student and staff data from FM but requested data from the previous submission in order to replicate it with the new data. RWP advised that the old silver application is on the SBCS Athena SWAN web page. In addition to

looking at the previous application, FM suggested looking at a selection of recent Gold and Silver applications to glean an idea of how data has been presented by other successful departments.

VB advised that replicating the previous silver application alone would be unlikely to result in a successful submission. This is because the field has moved on significantly in the last 3 years and the panels/ECU will be assessing applications based on what other departments are doing nationally.

AS reported that the College Athena SWAN consultant had highlighted the lack of female Professors as being one of the difficulties with the data. This will need to be well explained in the application. The narrative should highlight that, since the previous submission, focus has been on hiring more female lecturers so that given time they will be promoted and filter up the ranks of the School. Female lecturers now comprise 55% of the total compared with 33% at the time of the last submission. This is extremely positive and in time should lead to an increase in senior lecturers, readers and professors grown from within the School. Another factor that should be highlighted is the general difficulty SBCS has in hiring Professors of either gender. This is largely due to a general lack of resources and an inability to offer the required start-ups.

The application should explain that the Colleges' promotion criteria has recently changed and should mean that different career paths are recognised as the criteria has been extended beyond purely research. RWP explained that the new criteria allows for an acknowledgment of wider contributions such as outreach and collegiality. Recognising this will likely advantage people who engage in a collegiate way with the School.

AS reported that the Athena SWAN Consultant had also suggested looking at the funding success rate in the department to see if it has gone down. Joyce Jones has sent AS a table detailing male and female funding success rate. However, it was not clear whether the changing success rates of the different funding agencies had been factored in. AS to clarify how this data was calculated. **[ACTION: AS]**

AS asked the SAT for their opinion on whether this narrative was a good way to frame the discussion and explain the lack of female professors in the School and the SAT were in agreement. In order to strengthen this narrative VB suggested having a series of

actions describing how we will grow and nurture the talent within the School and link this clearly to the action plan. **ACTION: WHO?**]

There was some discrepancy over the staff turnover data which appeared to be far higher than expected. It was not clear what the data represented or how it has been calculated. It was agreed that visiting academics should not be included in this data and it was suggested that those on fixed term contracts should also be removed. FM explained that during this period there was a restructure of technical staff. Several technicians left their job to take on another role within the School. It is necessary to check that these individuals are not appearing in the data as while they could be seen as leaving their old job they went on to another role within the School and so could be distorting the data. FJ was asked to check this. **[ACTION: FJ]**

4. Paragraphs

5.1 Picture of the Department

It was established that this paragraph should be less statistical and more personal than the first draft submitted by SH. It was also suggested that this paragraph should be finished after the rest of the first draft has been completed so that it can draw on/introduce what is raised elsewhere in the application.

AS suggested using this paragraph to highlight some of the difficulties SBCS has faced such as the restructure, building works, series of temporary contracts and the increasingly high SSR.

However, other SAT members felt that this paragraph should be used to showcase the School rather than highlighting difficulties from the outset. It was agreed that the language and the way the paragraph is framed is very important. RWP suggested that it could be argued that the restructure allowed for a readdressing of the balance. This was successful as it resulted in a much needed increase in female lecturers in the School.

VB suggested using the paragraph to showcase the positive changes that have occurred since the last applications – the increase in female lectures being key to this.

It was agreed that the restructure could be used to explain the gaps in the data throughout the application but that this should be framed in a positive way.

The SAT discussed the importance of linking each paragraph to the old application by structuring them as follows:

- What we set out to do
- Data to support/show effects of what we did
- Identify the remaining difficulties we will focus on moving forward
- Directly link this to new action plan

All paragraphs should be structured in the same way and have a box at the end of each summarising the actions implemented ✓ and highlighting future actions →. This was how the previous application was structured.

5.2 Career development

AS had received a paragraph from GT regarding career development for PDRAs. Actions that the School has taken include; regular informal chats/coffee meets for postdocs, sending an email introducing the postdoc representative, hosting WISE events, better circulation of funding opportunities including specific information on grants that postdocs are eligible to apply for, inviting postdocs to sit on selection panels and providing mentoring opportunities.

AS suggested highlighting that that mentoring for postdocs originated in SBCS and has been adopted elsewhere in the college.

AS also suggested going back to the previous application so that this paragraph can be linked to the previous application.

[ACTION: GT to link postdoc section of career development to the old action plan]

The remainder of the paragraph is in process. AS advised to include mention of the probation mentorship programme that exists in SBCS. **Tell AM?**

5.3 Organisational culture

JJ had provided AS with some bullet points on organisational but reported that she found it difficult to know what to write in relation to culture. In particular how the 'language behaviour and other informal interactions that characterise the atmosphere include all staff and students.' It was suggested that the SBCS staff survey data might be useful here – although this is more about awareness of the Athena SWAN initiative than purely about culture. VB suggested that responses to the University wide staff engagement survey could also be used.

JJ had several questions relating to composition of School committees. Firstly composition is relatively static so JJ suggested implementing formal mechanisms for identifying potential members or rotating of members. It was agreed that this needs consideration so that we can state explicitly in the action plan how we can address gender balance on committees [**ACTION: JJ, AH and ROC to consider**]

Secondly, certain committees have either fully inclusive – e.g. School Committee or restrictive memberships – e.g. Senior Exec. There was a discussion over whether these should be excluded but VB advised that role based committees should not be discounted as they show the gender balance of leadership in the School and give something to improve on going forward.

Outreach is part of this paragraph and this data still needs to be captured. AS suggested sending an email out to all staff asking them to respond with details of outreach work they are engaged in. [**ACTION: JJ, AH and/or ROC**]

5.4 Flexibility and managing career breaks

BC reported that there is a mix of data, some only goes up to 2015 but two of the case studies relate to 2016. BC asked if there should be a cut off point.

There is currently no data at all on staff that are on flexible working contracts. Sunita does not have this data and it was unclear who might have a record. BC asked VB to check to see who keeps a record of staff on flexible working contracts. [**ACTION: VB**]

Shared parental leave only applies for 2016 but as the rest of the document does not VB advised that the EC will understand that when looking at historical data the reporting functionalities do not necessarily give the current year but that policies may have been implemented in the current year. Thus, it should be fine to include 2016 here when it is not included elsewhere. BC will change the language slightly which will mean the case studies can remain.

It was agreed that a second draft should be completed by the end of September
[**ACTION: SAT**]

5. Any other business

6. Date of next meeting

TBC. SH to send doodle poll [**ACTION: SH**]