



**SBCS Athena SWAN self-assessment team
Notes of meeting held
12th June 2015, 10.30-12.00, Fogg 3.15**

Present: Andrew Hirst, Janelle Jones, Alan McElligott, Kelly Peaston, Angelika Stollewerk, Jim Sullivan

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Beth Clare, Matthew Evans, Fiona Marsh, Richard Pickersgill, Maxie Roessler, Georgia Tsagkogeorga, Marcia Williams

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Accepted.

3. Matters arising and actions from the previous meeting

It was noted that Caroline Spence was not able to continue to be part of this committee. AS was informed that Kimberly Warren was likely to agree to be the postgraduate representative, but would need to be formally asked.

ACTION: AS

4. Discussion of the Athena SWAN survey results

Janelle presented the results of the staff survey, which had previously been circulated to colleagues [and included at the end of these notes]. There is general support for Athena SWAN initiatives but staff are not clear about the policies.

It was suggested that it would be useful to see the results by gender (Action: JJ) and for there to be a comparison to the College as a whole.

It was thought that a staff newsletter would help to raise awareness and be an important source of communication, which is an important area for improvement.

5. Any other business

There was a request for the Athena SWAN logo to be moved up higher on the homepage.

AS reported that she had attended an Athena SWAN panel in Durham. There were equal numbers of male and female academics. The abstract selection was based on quality and after that gender and geographical factors were taken into account to achieve a good balance.

More nominations are needed in general for seminar speakers.

Georgia would be asked to recommend the fair selection training to fellow PDRAs as she had found being on a selection panel very useful.

There has been no update about Unconscious Bias training since Marcia Williams' departure.

There was a discussion about communications and whether to produce information for freshers. The idea had been raised at a previous meeting to include a brief introduction about Athena SWAN during freshers meetings. It wasn't clear whether Beth or Tony Michael would be asked to do this. [Check?] It was thought that this would be relevant under the general information about policies against discrimination, and would show that the School is aware of gender issues.

JJ commented that one of the key findings of the survey was that no one felt consulted on key decisions and women less so than men. This is something that the School would need to rectify. One suggestion is to invite the Athena SWAN chair to be part of the Senior Executive.

6. Date of next meeting: September [Action KP]

Athena Swan Survey

Summary of key findings

- Staff members generally support the Athena Swan initiative and its associated actions and policies, despite not being clear about what all of these might entail. The main aim of Athena Swan understood as promoting gender balance in the sciences; Actions/Policies understood predominantly from an employment perspective (i.e., gender balance at all academic levels, in decision making committees, recruitment), and less so about creating opportunities for access and support (i.e., core hours, seminar gender balance, mentoring, career progression).

- Athena Swan is evaluated as an initiative that can reduce workplace inequalities and that is needed in SBCS and in the sciences
- Workplace culture is generally viewed as egalitarian with respect to gender and other protected characteristics. However, women disagreed less strongly that they had experienced discrimination or noticed discrimination relative to men. Although the workplace is seen as highly pressurized it is also seen as supportive. An increase in opportunities for socializing and networking at work would be welcome as would the celebration of successes for all (and may reduce perceptions of cliquey-ness?).
- In terms of gender equality in the workplace, respondents either don't know about the barriers that women might face or believe that there are no gender differences on these issues.
- In terms of decision making in the department, respondents felt that this was not transparent and they were generally not consulted on key decisions. Women disagreed more strongly that they were consulted on key decisions relative to men.
- Most respondents believe that taking parental leave would damage their careers.

Suggestions

- There is still room for improvement in the communication of the Athena Swan initiative and associated actions and policies. Especially in terms of access and support, and overall communication of the initiative to women.
- There is an opportunity to provide information on some of the gender equality issues/barriers that might be faced in the school with respect to promotion, salary, and access to funding.
- We could consider ways that men and women can be more involved in decision-making processes.
- We could consider how to reduce the perception (and possible reality) that parental leave will have a negative impact on careers for men and women.

Athena Swan Survey - The Numbers

DNR = Did not Respond

A. Respondent demographics

N=51

Gender: 24 female, 21 male, 5 Prefer not to say, 1 DNR

Age: 1 person Under 25, 13 people 26-35, 12 people 36-45, 10 people 46-55, 5 people 56 and above, 10 DNR

Work: 48 Full-time, 1 Part-time, 2 DNR

Role: 15 Lecturer, 12 Administrative/Technical Staff, 7 Senior Lecturers, 3 Readers, 1 Senior/Principal Researcher, 1 Professor, 7 DNR

Current contract: 40 Permanent/open-ended, 9 Fixed-term/Temporary, 2 DNR

Post Description: 35 Non-clinical academic, 11 Professional services or technical staff, 5 DNR

Time in current job: 3 < one year, 17 one-two years, 7 two-five years, 8 five-ten years, 8 ten-twenty years, 8 DNR

Entered into REF2014: 10 Yes, 29 No, 12 DNR

Caring responsibilities: 20 Yes, 23 No, 3 Prefer not to say, 5 DNR

1. The Athena Swan Initiative

On average, respondents agreed that they were aware of the Athena Swan initiative in SBCS ($M=6.00$, $SD=1.21$). **There is general awareness of the Athena Swan initiative in SBCS.**

Number of recognized aims: None - 3, One – 20, Two – 16, Three – 11, Four – 1

- **Gender balance in the sciences** – 46 Yes
- Improving working environment for all staff – 24 Yes
- Supporting Progression of Students into Academia – 16 Yes
- Other – 1 Supporting equality and diversity
- Unsure about aims – 2 Yes

On average, respondents agreed that they supported the aim(s) of the Athena Swan initiative ($M=6.12$, $SD=1.01$). **There is general support for the Athena Swan initiative**

On average, respondents were somewhat neutral in their belief the aim(s) of the Athena Swan initiative has been effectively communicated in SBCS ($M=4.44$, $SD=1.42$).

Communication of the Athena Swan initiative has been neither successful nor unsuccessful.

On average, respondents somewhat agreed that SBCS support of Athena Swan will benefit all staff ($M=5.54$, $SD=1.45$). **There is the general belief that these initiatives will benefit all staff.**

Gender differences?

Men were more aware of the Athena Swan initiative ($M=6.45$, $SD=1.00$) than were women ($M=5.43$, $SD=1.29$; $t(39)=-2.83$, $p=.007$)

Men thought that the aim of the initiative had been effectively communicated ($M=4.79$, $SD=1.42$) relative to women ($M=3.92$, $SD=1.35$; $t(43)=-2.11$, $p=.041$)

2. Athena Swan Actions/Policies

On average, respondents were neutral in their awareness of the actions associated with the Athena Swan initiative ($M=3.92$, $SD=1.60$). **There is a slight lack of awareness of the actions/policies associated with this initiative.**

Number of recognized actions: None - 1, One – 2, Two – 2, Three – 2, Four – 4, Five – 12, Six – 11, Seven – 16, Eight - 1

- Seminars/Meetings in Core hours – 35 Yes
- Mentoring – 25 Yes
- Gender balance on seminar series – 40 Yes
- **Improve gender balance at all academic levels** - 46 Yes
- **Improve gender balance in decision making committees** - 43 Yes
- **Improve gender balance in recruitment panels** - 43 Yes
- Support for career advancement for women - 37 Yes
- Other – Paternal leave/support – 1 respondent
- Unsure – 3 Yes

On average, respondents were neutral in their opinion that Athena Swan policies has been effectively communicated in SBCS ($M=3.92$, $SD=1.41$). **Communication has been slightly ineffective.**

On average, respondents somewhat agreed that they supported the policies associated with the Athena Swan initiative ($M=5.67$, $SD=1.30$; 2 DNR). **There is support for the policies associated with this initiative***

On average, respondents somewhat agreed that SBCS support of Athena Swan policies will benefit all staff ($M=5.21$, $SD=1.62$; 3 DNR). **SBCS support of Athena Swan policies is beneficial for all ***

*These responses is should be considered in light of the fact that respondents were generally unsure of the actions/policies and that those selected were largely related to employment issues.

Gender differences? No.

3. Evaluation of Athena Swan

On average, respondents somewhat agreed that the Athena Swan initiative is important for addressing workplace inequalities ($M=5.71$, $SD=1.30$).

On average, respondents somewhat agreed that the Athena Swan initiative is needed in SBCS ($M=5.73$, $SD=1.39$).

On average, respondents disagreed that the Athena Swan initiative was irrelevant for SBCS ($M=2.20$, $SD=1.50$).

On average, respondents somewhat agreed that the Athena Swan initiative is needed in the sciences ($M=5.80$, $SD=1.41$).

On average, respondents disagreed that the Athena Swan initiative was irrelevant for the sciences ($M=1.78$, $SD=1.20$).

Gender differences? No.

4. Workplace culture

On average, respondents disagreed they had been treated unfavourably because of their gender ($M=2.26$, $SD=1.63$; 1DNR).

On average, respondents disagreed they had noticed others being treated unfavourably because of their gender ($M=2.56$, $SD=1.88$; 1DNR).

On average, respondents disagreed that they, or others in the department, had been treated unfavourably because of other protected characteristics ($M=2.16$, $SD=1.50$; 1DNR).

Most respondents (59%) indicated that they would report if they were treated unfairly or discriminated against on the basis of gender or any other protected characteristic (25% Unsure, 6% No, 10% DNR).

Number of workplace descriptors: None - 1, One - 7, Two - 11, Three - 15, Four - 11, Five - 6

- **Supportive** - 30 Yes
- Inclusive - 13 Yes
- Miserable - 7 Yes
- Competitive - 15 Yes
- Happy - 9 Yes
- Welcoming - 21 Yes
- Macho - 5 Yes
- **Cliquy** - 18 Yes
- **Pressurized** - 32 Yes
- Sexist - 4 Yes
- Other - 4 Yes (Lacking communication, Scattered, Stressful, Unhappy)

Social and networking events in my department

5 - Yes, Regularly

30 - Yes, Occasionally

6 - Yes, but I am unable to attend (Organized at the wrong time)

9 - No, but I wish we had them

1 - DNR

Do you enjoy departmental social events

3 - Yes

20 - Yes, and I wish we had more of them

22 - Most of the time

2 - No

4 - No, I choose not to attend

Successes are celebrated in my department

6 - Yes

2 - No

25 - Sometimes but not every time

13 - Sometimes, but only for certain people

4 - Unsure

1 - DNR

Gender differences?

Women disagreed less strongly that they has been treated unfavourably because of their gender ($M= 2.88$, $SD=1.80$) relative to men ($M= 1.60$, $SD=1.19$; $t(42)=-2.71$, $p=.010$).

Women disagreed less strongly that they, or others, have been treated unfavourably because of gender or other protected characteristics ($M= 2.75$, $SD=1.78$) relative to men ($M= 1.50$, $SD=.83$; $t(42)=-2.71$, $p=.010$).

5. Gender equality in department

Promotion

6 - Women significantly disadvantaged

11 - Women slightly disadvantaged

18 - No gender difference

1 - Men slightly disadvantaged

1 - Men significantly disadvantaged

13 - Don't know

1 - DNR

Respondents were equally likely to say that women experienced slight/significant disadvantage here as they were to say there were no gender differences.

Salary

5 - Women significantly disadvantaged

6 - Women slightly disadvantaged

16 - No gender difference

0 - Men slightly disadvantaged

1 - Men significantly disadvantaged

23 - Don't know

Access to Career Development Opportunities

2 - Women significantly disadvantaged

8 - Women slightly disadvantaged

20 - No gender difference

1 - Men slightly disadvantaged

3 - Men significantly disadvantaged

17 - Don't know

Access to Funding

3 - Women significantly disadvantaged

3 - Women slightly disadvantaged

20 - No gender difference

0 - Men slightly disadvantaged

2 - Men significantly disadvantaged

22 - Don't know

1 - DNR

Laboratory and Office Space

2 - Women significantly disadvantaged

4 - Women slightly disadvantaged

27 - No gender difference

0 - Men slightly disadvantaged

1 - Men significantly disadvantaged

15 - Don't know

2 - DNR

Access to Administrative Support

2 - Women significantly disadvantaged

2 - Women slightly disadvantaged

31 - No gender difference

1 - Men slightly disadvantaged

0 - Men significantly disadvantaged

13 - Don't know

2 - DNR

6. Decision making in department

On average, respondents somewhat disagreed that decision making in their department was transparent ($M=3.20$, $SD=1.44$).

On average, respondents disagreed that they were consulted on key decisions in their department ($M=2.84$, $SD=1.57$).

Gender differences?

Men disagreed less strongly that they were consulted on key decision in their department ($M= 3.38$, $SD=1.72$) relative to women ($M= 2.38$, $SD=1.35$; $t(43)=-2.20$, $p=.033$).

7. Maternal, Paternity, adoption and parental leave

Taking leave would damage my career

6 - Not applicable

10 - Strongly Agree

22 - Agree

12 - Disagree

0 - Strongly Disagree

1 - DNR

- 64% of respondents believe that taking maternal/paternal/adoption leave would damage their career

Taking leave has damaged my career

39 - Not applicable

0 - Strongly Agree

6 - Agree

5 - Disagree

0 - Strongly Disagree

1 - DNR

- Among those who have taken leave, there is almost an even split between those who agree it has damaged their career (12%) and those who disagree (10%).

Length of career break

8 - less than 6 months

4 - 6 - 12 months

1 - 1 - 2 years

2 respondents indicated that they had difficulties upon returning from a career break:

1. Change of duties in role on return without consultation, handover from people covering role not comprehensive. Not all documents accessible on return.

2. Marginalized. Expected to focus on teaching not research. Research staff felt isolated.

- The majority of respondents (73%) are aware of the legal changes on paternity leave (26% unaware; 2% DNR).

8. Any other comments?

There were a couple of comments from people who felt that AS has “hurt SBS by adding additional hurdles”. “SWAN should not let its aims for equality hurt our collective aims for excellence in teaching, research, support, and collegiality.”

Dr Angelika Stollewerk
Chair SBCS Athena SWAN self-assessment team