

SBCS Athena SWAN self assessment team



Minutes of meeting 30th September 2013 11:30-12:30 in IRC 207

Present: Matthew Evans (ME), Bertille Calinaud (BC), Alan McElligott (AGM), Fiona Marsh (FEM), Kelly Peaston (KP), Richard Pickersgill (RWP), Ruth Rose (RR), Joanna Sacharz (JS), Angelika Stollewerk (AS), Jim Sullivan (JAS), Georgia Tsagkogeorga (GT)

Part 1

1. Apologies for absence

Jeremy Kilburn, Marina Resmini

2. Handover to new Chairperson

Angelika Stollewerk would take over as chairperson from the next meeting.

Part 2

1. Discussion of feedback on Silver application

Richard Pickersgill congratulated the team on the excellent achievement of receiving the 'Silver' award. He also thanked Barbara Tennis, Anna Dulic-Sills and Marina Resmini for their important contributions. The Head of School, VP for Science and Engineering, Jeremy Kilburn, and Evelyn Welch were also thanked for their support.

There had been no press release from the College as yet but Bertille assured the team that it was in preparation. The feedback on the application from Athena SWAN would be sent through no later than 25th October. The Silver Award logo should be put onto the website as soon as possible and could also be attached to email signatures. The logo should appear in any recruitment information.

ACTION: KP to notify web support team to update logos.

The award is valid until November 2016. There will be a ceremony at Imperial College and the option of buying tickets and a package including photographs and a statuette. It was agreed that it would be important to have a presence at this event.

ACTION: RWP to circulate details of the AS event when known.

The next step is to look at the action plan and consider the future planned actions while developing a plan to prepare a Gold application for November 2015, possibly November 2014 if progress is excellent. Should the Gold award application be unsuccessful, the Silver award would be retained until November 2016. The SAT agreed to look at the feedback and Action Plan at the next meeting.

ACTION: RWP to circulate feedback when it arrives.

For the Gold award the School would need to:

- Demonstrate a substantial and well-established activity and achievement record in working towards equality in career progression in STEMM.
- Show initiative to increase numbers of women students.
- Demonstrate beacon activities in gender equality to the wider community.

ACTION: BC would send information from departments that had achieved Gold status to the team. It was noted that the majority of departmental level Gold award holders are chemistry departments.

The team discussed ideas for 'beacon' events and there was support for a symposium/conference that would be a scientific meeting but would also facilitate discussion of careers in science from the female perspective and encourage female speakers to talk about their experiences.

ACTION: Team members to think of ideas for 'beacon' activities

2. Women into Leadership programme

AS reported that Ian Forristal is running the Women into Leadership Programme and will be making the programme available to female Lecturers and Senior Lecturers as well as more senior staff. He would like to have advice on how to select staff members as there are a limited number of places due to a) costs and b) to keep the group dynamic effective. At the moment this programme is not available to PDRAs or Fellows but there is a strong argument to widen the net. The issue of funding is a problem as there is no 'faculty fund' - Schools would need to decide whether they could contribute funds to this via the PAR process.

It was noted that Caroline Brennan would be attending the WiSE Women into Leadership course in November and that the School had agreed to pay for this.

A key issue for the Gold application will be to focus on the transition of PDRAs to academic careers as this is the main drop off point for female staff. The second post-doc stage is often a career turning point. Team members offered their views based on personal experiences and in many cases the lack of positive messages/role models was key in career decision-making. It would be useful to have an event where staff at those transition points could hear from those who were succeeding in academia.

3. Any other business

Communication: there are many new academics in the school and it will be important for SAT to communicate Athena SWAN issues and actions. One new member of staff had already indicated an interest in Athena SWAN initiatives.

Mentoring: the group discussed whether the mentoring programme could be rolled out to PhD students. It was thought that supervisors should serve as a mentor but it was acknowledged that the supervisor/student relationship was crucial to how effective this was. Students do have access to other panel members should they need to seek advice.

Studentships: It was announced by the College that there will be PhD studentships funded by the Saudi government. Given the poor record of female rights it was suggested that the number of studentships awarded by gender should be monitored. **ACTION: BC**
RWP commented that there are sometimes severe consequences if a student is not awarded a PhD having been funded by one of these schemes, which also complicates matters. It was also suggested that supervisors should be aware of issues arising from cultural differences e.g. difficulties of some female students communicating with males (a similar situation had arisen with one female student who in the end did not continue with her PhD).

There would be a celebratory event on 9th October.

4. Date of the next meeting – 11th November 2013, 11.00-12.30 in Fogg 3.15

ACTION: KP to circulate Doodle poll.

Prof Resmini after the meeting suggested that meetings during school half term should be avoided. Prof Evans agreed to expand this principle to ensure that no School meetings would be arranged during half term holidays.

ACTION: Team members to bring the action plan to the next meeting