Appendix 1

Academic Gender Strategy Committee

11th December 2014
9.00 – 10.00
4.03, Faculty Building

Minutes

Present:
Professor James Stirling
Professor Anand Anandalingam
Professor Maggie Dallman
Professor Dot Griffiths
Ms Kim Everitt
Professor Jeff Magee
Professor Stephen Richardson

Chair:
Dean of Imperial College Business School
Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences
Provost’s Envoy for Gender Equality
Deputy Director, HR
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering
Associate Provost (Institutional Affairs)

Secretary:
Ms Hailey Smith
Welcome Service Manager – Senior Recruitment

Agenda Item  Action

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Apologies had been received from Professor Dermot Kelleher.

Item 2 – Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

(appendix 1: Notes of the Meeting – 5 June 2014)

2.1 The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the previous meeting. All matters arising were in hand.

Item 3 – Chair’s Business

3.1 Athena Lecture 2016
The Chair reported that he had approached Dr Fabiola Gianotti, the Director General of Cern designate, to invite her to give the 2016 Athena lecture. Dr Gianotti had accepted the invitation, her availability allowing, and a date for the lecture would be arranged in due course.

3.2 Shared Parental Leave
The Chair noted that the College’s Shared Parental Leave policy had been published on 1st December 2014. The policy would allow parents to choose to share the care of their child during the first year following the child’s birth or adoption. Employees planning to take shared parental leave would be required to agree blocks of leave in advance, so that departments could plan the cover of their teaching responsibilities etc.. The Chair asked that the Committee take note of the new policy. He said that data monitoring would be important to track the uptake of the new policy.

3.2 Ms Everitt noted that the College’s decision to increase the level of
maternity pay was a very positive one.

**Item 4 – Provost’s Envoy’s Update**

4.1 **What Do Our Women Really Think?**
Professor Griffiths explained that she had conducted interviews with all female professors in the faculties of Natural Sciences and Engineering, along with a selection of male professors for balance, and would discuss her main findings.

4.2 **Career and Promotion**  
Professor Griffiths reported that women were generally more hesitant to put themselves forward for promotion, and required more encouragement to do so, than their male colleagues.

4.3 The Committee discussed how departments might best account for this. It was thought that departments should consider each potential applicant at every academic promotions round. Following which, candidates who were thought ready for promotion but who might not otherwise put themselves forward could be encouraged to apply.

4.4 It was noted that a diverse group of people should be involved in these discussions, to limit the impact of the unconscious biases of those assessing potential candidates for promotion.

4.5 The Committee also felt that it would be important for each potential candidate to have an advocate or mentor, such as a senior academic, with whom they could discuss the academic promotions process and their application.

4.6 Ms Everitt said she knew of instances where women were unnecessarily discouraged from applying for academic promotion. Professor Griffiths said that her research had found similar instances. It was noted that departments should take action to prevent this happening. Professor Magee said that, in the Faculty of Engineering, a candidate who felt ‘pushed back’ by their department would have the opportunity to discuss their case separately with him.

4.7 The Chair said that the College’s academic promotions briefings, given each year at three campuses, were very useful and well received by candidates. He added that more could be done to brief Heads of Departments on the academic promotions processes and good practice relating to it.

4.8 The Chair asked that good practice in encouraging applications for academic promotion be collated and shared at the Committee’s next meeting and subsequently shared with Heads of Departments and via the academic promotions procedure and guidance.  

4.9 **Definition of Success**  
Professor Griffiths said that she had asked professors for their definition of success. In their responses, she found that women were...
more likely to feel success through the achievements of their students and the reception of their papers. For men, success was often about their international reputation and achieving top papers.

4.10 Support for Young Families
Professor Griffiths reported that the Elsie Widdowson Fellowship was highly regarded and appreciated. Professor Griffiths noted that the College had always been very flexible in the way the Elsie Widdowson Fellowship was used and asked if this flexibility should be made more explicit in the guidance. Following discussion, it was agreed that the guidance should remain as is currently written.

4.11 Participants in Professor Griffiths’ research had said that the cost of childcare made it difficult to travel to conferences. Professor Griffiths noted that some of the College’s departments offered financial support but there was no College wide policy or funding to assist academics with young children with these costs.

4.12 The Committee agreed that the College should offer grants to cover childcare costs to academic staff, postdocs and PhD candidates who attend conferences when their children were under school age. These grants would be offered when no other provision for childcare is made by the conference organisers. Professor Griffiths would draft guidance to explain the proposed grants. It was proposed that the charge could be made the Elsie Widdowson ‘pot’. Professor Griffiths

4.13 The College and Faculties
Professor Griffiths said that those professors interviewed described their experiences of the College in positive terms and, she noted, that the Deans were very well thought of. Professor Griffiths also reported that those professors interviewed felt that there was too much bureaucracy around teaching quality.

4.14 The Chair said that one of the aims of the Operational Excellence programme was to reduce the pressure of administration on the College's academic staff. The Committee thought that there could be clearer communication from the College to departments about what pressures are placed on the College from external sources.

4.15 Professor Griffiths said that professors reported feeling alienated by not being able to access the ‘blue cube’, as the Faculty Building was nicknamed. The Chair noted that the need for security control on the building stemmed from the open plan nature of the offices, but would consider the matter of granting access for all professors in more detail.

4.16 Professor Griffiths suggested that the Chair and President hold tea and coffee sessions for the College's academic staff. The Chair noted that this was a good idea and would hope to hold something of this kind in 2015. He noted that he would be meeting with the College’s postdoc representatives later that day. Ms Everitt said that the female professors who had attended the October 2014 conference had appreciated the time spend with the President and Provost and had asked for this to be repeated.

Chair
4.17 Professor Dallman suggested that a summary version of Professor Griffiths’ findings should be submitted to the February 2015 Provost Board.

4.18 Remaining findings from Professor Griffiths’ and Ms Smith’s research would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.

4.18 **Women @ Imperial**
Professor Griffiths updated the Committee on plans for the ‘Women @ Imperial’ celebration:

A series of events and exhibitions would be held from February to June 2015. Starting with ‘Paths for Postdocs’: a series of briefings for postdocs, given by female postdoc alumni, about scientific careers outside of academia. A Women@Imperial Week will run from 9-13 March and will include an exhibition about Women@Imperial in the main College entrance. It will feature Imperial women, past and present and will be launched by the President and the Provost on 10 March. The concluding event will be the Annual Athena lecture in June given by Professor Dame Ann Dowling, President of the Royal Academy of Engineering.

The Committee wished the celebration every success.

4.19 The Chair and Professor Griffiths had agreed a £20,000 budget to support the activity. The Chair suggested Professor Griffiths contact Dr Simon Hepworth, Director of Enterprise, to explore opportunities for corporate sponsorship of the event.

4.20 Professor Anandalingam said the Business School would be creating a committee for gender equity.

**Items 5 and 6 – Athena SWAN Action Plan and Awards Update**

* (appendix 4: Action Plan and appendix 5: Current Athena SWAN Awards at Imperial)

5.1 An updated Action Plan and list of Athena SWAN Awards were presented to the Committee.

5.2 An update on the progress of recommendations made by the Academic Diversity Task Force would be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the Committee.

**Item 7 – Julia Higgins Medal and Awards 2014/15**

* (appendix 6: Julia Higgins Medal and Awards)

7.1 The Committee agreed that it would act as the awarding panel for the Julia Higgins Medal and Awards. The Committee would consider the 2014/15 applications at the next meeting of the Committee.

**Date of the Next Meeting**

6th February 2015
10.00 – 12.00
Boardroom, Faculty Building