1. **General Progress**

Imperial College’s second annual report sets out the College’s continued efforts to make sustainable progress for the advancement and promotion of women in science, engineering and technology (SET). The College has extended an extensive range of activities and events designed to level the playing field, and tackle the leaky pipeline, particularly for women in key transition stages.

Together with a published Gender Equality Scheme (GES) and becoming a Juno Supporter having signed up to the Institute of Physics’ Juno Code of Practice, the College is pursuing an array of actions designed to sustain momentum towards making further progress. As an official (IOP) Juno Supporter the College is working on putting in place additional/complementary actions, similar to those of the SWAN Charter, to achieve Juno Champion status. Similarly, the College’s GES describes activities designed to overcome barriers particularly encountered by female academics.

Faculty sub-committees have been established to prioritise, deliver, and build on the success of local and institutional initiatives. For example, the Physics’ Department sub-committee has met several times, in order to be able to act and evaluate the impact of following initiatives:

- Establish a mentoring scheme for Physics academic staff beyond the probationary period, and extending the pool of mentors throughout.
- Organise an annual survey to monitor academic staff job satisfaction, examine any gender specific trends, and monitor impact.
- Review the transparency of key departmental roles, practices, and processes, such as, the role of Head of Group (HoG), promotions procedures’ use of PRDPs (Personal Review and Development Plans), and flexible and part-time work.
- Closely monitor all academic staff recruitment and promotions and report annually to HoGs.
- Provide evidence of senior management champions who actively demonstrate support for positive action initiatives, eg inclusive wording on recruitment application forms, positive images, targeted development programmes.

These initiatives link closely to the SWAN plans and key areas for assessment as detailed below.

2. **SET Baseline and Academic Profile**

The College continues to monitor the staff and student profile, examining figures by department/division and admissions. Monitoring also includes examining appointments, promotions, turnover, and benchmarking the impact of women on fixed term contracts with similar HEIs (Higher Education Institutes), and comparing to men on fixed term and part-time contracts.
Briefings on the promotions’ process, which are generally over-subscribed, continue to be held regularly. Exit interviews for female academic leavers, and black and minority ethnic staff who choose to give this form of direct feedback are also undertaken monthly. Additional monitoring includes training opportunities and take-up, with more tailored and extended training and development programmes being offered, particularly to postdocs/researchers and female academics.

Local statistics are gathered, for example, current analysis showing some departments’ ratio of women to men has fallen consistently from 9% in 2004 to 6% in 2007. Other regular monitoring is ongoing to explore relevant findings, for example, the impact of postdocs/researchers working on fixed term contracts. The College is currently examining the drop-out rate of female postdoc/researchers where evidence shows that numbers of men and women are an equal 50/50 at entry stage, yet only 10% of women become Academics, in the Faculty of Life Sciences. These findings clearly need closer examination and interventions to prevent further losses of talented women.

Academic sub-committees have been established with additional local monitoring mechanisms being shared. For example, promotions' data revealed that approximately half the amount of women compared to men were put forward for promotion in the Faculty of Medicine (across all divisions over the last 5 years), to a senior lectureship or above. Following these findings further monitoring and analysis of numbers of male and female postdocs and lecturers over the same 5 year period are being examined.

More encouragingly, monitoring of undergraduates in the Physics Department shows an increase from 18% to 25% which is above the national average. Generally speaking female students have a better chance of being admitted, demonstrating stronger applications than their male counterparts.

3. Key career transition points

The Academic Opportunities (AOC), which aims to provide a level playing field for female academics, established three new Female Faculty Ambassadors posts in October 2007. The Ambassadors were appointed for three years to provide support for female staff members at Imperial. Professor Dot Griffiths, Deputy Principal of the Tanaka Business School and Chair of the AOC, explained the thinking behind these appointments. “We wanted to make an impact among female academics and address the needs of each faculty. The AOC is effective at a senior level, but we wanted to make it more successful across the rest of the staff. It is a great example of Imperial taking pioneering action to support its female academics.” The new ambassadors will support fellow female academics in their professional development and recommend such schemes as tutoring or mentoring when appropriate.

The roles of the Ambassadors involve acting as a focal point for faculty female academic staff to gain information on all matters associated with their College
life. This includes supporting female academics in their professional development and offering advice on issues, such as, career development and progression. Additionally, the Ambassadors advise on formal applications and recommend suitable tutoring, mentoring, and networking facilities. They aim to enhance the role of women in the various disciplines, and review the impact by monitoring local and College-wide workforce comparative data. This will also enable further ideas and mechanisms to increase the retention of staff in all faculties.

Recognising the key transition stages, eg from postdoc/researcher to lecturer, the Ambassadors are increasingly examining data at all transition stages, and providing informal advice and support to our this cohort. Increased tailored equalities and diversity training is being rolled out, along with more development opportunities for RAs, (Research Assistants) and those on fixed term contracts. Additionally, greater efforts are being made to ensure all female academics are matched with a Mentor through providing guidance and briefings published on the College’s web sites.

All Faculty Ambassadors are collating and reviewing the numbers of men and women put forward for Fellowship/career awards from each division. Thus more nominations are being made to raise the profile of women within Imperial College, eg nominating some of the best scientists for International wards. The Ambassadors and AOC members also act as visible role models and champions, and regularly act as key note, aspirational speakers to students, postdocs, and an increasingly wide audience.

4. Culture change and gender balance in decision-making

More collaborative working with the Student Union Representative (and many others) for under and postgraduate students has become the norm. Following a successful undergrad. event in 2007 a joint event was recently organised by the SET-Routes University Ambassador Programme and the Imperial College Women in SET society. This event is mutually supported by the College Equalities Unit and is planned to become an annual event. The aim of this event is to raise aspirations by providing inspirational speakers from different institutions, countries, disciplines, who give brief presentations on their personal and professional experiences. It also gives the College the opportunity to provide diverse role models, specifically black and minority ethnic scientists and engineers, recognising there is significant under-representation from this population.

The range of training and development programmes, especially for postdocs/researchers has been enhanced to include Action Learning Sets, three day Residentials, Personal Development courses for new Lecturers, Mentors and Coaches, and tailored Development Centres, the latter specifically for female Academics.

Regular discussions with HoGs have served to review and deal with any inconsistencies in local practices, such as, ensuring recruitment and promotion panels always include women.
The College introduced new awards in 2006 which are being repeated on a bi-annual basis. For this year’s awards, the Ambassadors and other equality champions are actively encouraging applicants for the Leadership, Mentor of the Year, and Equality Awards in an attempt to recognise and showcase talented and highly committed individuals. The Award Ceremony being held October 2008 will raise the profile of the winners, with the Rector publicly demonstrating the importance placed on equalities. This initiative raises morale and gives public recognition to the winners, and nominees, contributing to positive culture change.

5. Champions, responsibilities and accountabilities
The Faculty Ambassadors quickly established direct lines of communication with Faculty Principals and Deputy Principals. Sharing anecdotal and monitoring information the Ambassadors and the AOC Chair established extra resources and support to progress the work.

High profile talks through AWAIC (Academic Women at Imperial College) have been re-established and held more regularly. One such speaker was Professor Paul Walton from York University who delivered a presentation on how the University prepared for, and won, an Athena SWAN Gold award for the Department of Chemistry. This has encouraged Imperial College to consider applying for an institutional Gold award and prepare departments to be successful when submitting for individual Silver or Gold awards.

The faculty academic committees’ representatives also attend faculty management meetings. This has given divisional female academics a more direct voice to senior management and the opportunity to ensure consistent and transparent processes throughout divisions.

Guidelines and processes for speaker selections for in-house meetings and keynote speakers are being designed and published on the web. This is to promote and encourage more individuals, especially black and minority ethnic women, to be given platforms to talk about their research/data with a view to achieving diverse representation and opportunities for advancing the work of the speakers.

The College’s Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy – respect for others, was reviewed and updated in 2007. Complementary training programmes continue to be developed and rolled out to individual departments, as well as management and staff teams. The faculty Ambassadors are committed to ensuring all academics, including themselves, attend relevant diversity and equality training and are proving to be excellent champions for promoting high standards and greater transparency.

Additional to “managing and eliminating harassment” training programmes, tailored training sessions for specific groups has included Mediation Training, and Investigation of Complaints’ training to, for example, the Harassment Support Contacts. This confidential support scheme is seeing more take up from postdoc/researchers and academics who find this informal support extremely useful.
The Faculty of Engineering, led by the Faculty Principal, recently undertook a satisfaction survey which is being replicated in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. Key findings from this survey showed overall a high level of job satisfaction, motivation and commitment. The survey and recommendations will form the basis for cross-faculty findings and comparatives, enabling the College to continue making targeted interventions where necessary.

Through the Equalities Unit a number of focus groups are being held, specifically inviting feedback from diverse groups. These include Chinese Academics, staff with disabilities, black women and men, and many more, the findings to feed into local survey recommendations and development programmes.

Faculty and Deputy Principals have shown an increased demonstrable commitment and support in all Athena SWAN and Juno activities. This support has taken the form of increased financial resources, reviewing and enhancing local processes and procedures (eg promotions, recruitment, succession planning), and visible championing of equality priorities. They receive and act on briefings from the Chair of the AOC and Faculty Ambassadors, and are increasingly being mentors to identified female academics who request this form of support.

6. Summary
Increased activities and events have successfully kept the momentum for change alive and given the College the opportunity to continue making significant progress. Ongoing organisational gender priorities are identifying high profile female speakers, reviewing and redesigning the women’s web page(s) to make it more informative and accessible, and continue flexible working arrangements. The Rector’s Management Board continues to support all equality and diversity events, eg the well attended annual Athena Lecture, which was presented by Professor Irene Tracy from Cambridge University.

The formation of a number of sub-committees and working groups has resulted in more cross-fertilisation of ideas and implementation of shared processes, eg the promotions’ process, training programmes, an increase of diverse role models aimed at retention of (specifically female) postdocs/researchers through to Professors. Faculty Principals and Deputy Principals have taken on more visible championing roles, for example, introducing annual Faculty-wide surveys.

Overall, the outcome of our second year of SWAN activities has led to incremental progress in a number of areas. There is greater participation and sharing of good practice throughout the individual faculties and disciplines. Closer working relationships have also been formed with a range of key stakeholders, both internal and external, specifically, the ECU (Equality Challenge Unit), CASE (Campaign for Science & Engineering in the UK), the IOP (Institute of Physics). Such collaborative working has resulted in greater engagement with key stakeholders, which in turn has led to a more inclusive and positive organisational culture. This has placed the College in an
excellent position to maintain momentum and pursue more SWAN awards in the future.

June 2008

Academic Opportunities Committee