

Athena SWAN College Meeting 21 September 2020

Imperial College London

Present:

Professor Stephen Curry	(SC)	Chair, Assistant Provost (EDI)
Dr Anna Barnard	(AB)	Chemistry
Mr Rob Bell	(RB)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre
Dr Jaclyn Bell	(JB)	Computing
Ms Sharon Citrone	(SC)	Institute of Clinical Sciences MRC LMS
Dr Liz Elvidge	(LE)	Head Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre
Dr Daniela Fecht	(DF)	School of Public Health
Dr Johanna Jackson	(JJ)	Brain Sciences
Dr Katharina Kressig	(KK)	Earth, Science & Engineering
Dr Sam Krevor	(SK)	Earth, Science & Engineering
Dr Nick Linton	(NL)	Bio-engineering
Professor Clare Lloyd	(CL)	Medicine
Professor Aimee Morgans	(AM)	Mechanical Engineering
Professor Catherine O'Sullivan	(CO)	Civil and Environmental Engineering
Mr Christopher Peters	(CP)	Surgery & Cancer
Professor Sara Rankin	(SR)	NHLI
Dr Maria Ribera-Vicent	(MRV)	Aeronautics
Dr Vicky Salem	(VS)	Medicine
Mr John Seddon	(JS)	Chemistry
Mr Vahid Shahrezaei	(VSh)	Mathematics and Faculty of Natural Sciences
Dr Jessica Strid	(JS)	Immunology & Inflammation
Dr John Tregoning	(JT)	Infectious Diseases
Mrs Karen Twedde	(KT)	Business Studies
Mrs Jacalyn Murphy	(JDM)	(Minutes) EA to Chair, Assistant Provost (EDI)

Apologies:

Dr Rebecca Bell	(RB)	Earth Science & Engineering – maternity leave
Professor Mark Burgman	(MB)	CEP
Professor Hector Keu	(HK)	Surgery & Cancer
Dr Eric Kerrigan	(EK)	Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Ms Sally Parekh	(SP)	REC Co-ordinator

	Agenda Item	Action
1.	Introductions and apologies.	
	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and apologies were read.	

2.	Minutes of last meeting held on 11 May 2020 and matters arising (paper 2)	
	The minutes of the last meeting held on 11 May 2020 were agreed as correct. The following matters were arising:	
2.1	2.1 Maternity policy review (paper 3)	
	The review of the College's maternity policy is complete; the College's period of eligibility and enhanced maternity leave and pay will be reduced from a 67 week requirement to 26 weeks. The review also raised the question if the enhanced benefit could be shared between both parents but this has not been adopted as College policy.	
2.2	SC asked for thoughts on expanding the remit of Women at Imperial week in March 2021 to include other events e.g. Diverse at Imperial week. Following a discussion a clear preference is to keep to the current format of a focussed event has been noted.	
2.3	2.3 Update on Nursery (paper 4)	
	The nursery is in a difficult financial position due to COVID-19 restrictions explained in a letter from Jane Neary to all parents and carers; the letter stated that continuing to fund vacant spaces when there are others on the waiting list would have caused long term risk to the future of the centre. CP commented in relation to a risk register for COVID 19 this will even more adversely affect women with caring responsibilities who have been struggling to work from home and cannot return to work as they have lost a nursery place.	
2.4	Magdalena Skipper who was due to give the College Athena lecture has expressed a preference to speak in person for next year. The Provost's office is working to find a replacement for this year and SC will inform the group as soon as a replacement is found.	SC
3.	Advance HE review	
	The response from Advance HE following the Athena SWAN independent review was disappointing to a number of stakeholders (including the review group) as it was not as definitive on the actions they were going to take as had been hoped. Advance HE have since then set up a new EDI Advisory Group with Committees that are	

	<p>governing Advance HE. Further updates on implementing recommendations are awaited.</p> <p>https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/charters/athena-swan-charter/athena-swan-governance-committee</p> <p>RB commented there are a number of departments applying for the one year extensions on existing awards and members are welcome to email RB for any help. Advance HE have published a good practice database online for both Athena SWAN and the Race Equality Charter.</p> <p>https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/charters/rec-athena-swan-initiatives</p>	
4.	Chair's Report	
4a	Impact of Government and NIHR plans to reduce bureaucracy (and break link between funding and AS awards)	
	<p>The government made an announcement on 10 September to reduce bureaucracy in the HE sector in particular and to break the links between national institutes, research funding and silver Athena SWAN awards. There are voluntary schemes where it was seen that there is an administrative burden that is distracting universities from their core activities.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-bureaucratic-burdens-higher-education</p> <p>https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/nihr-responds-to-the-governments-call-for-further-reduction-in-bureaucracy-with-new-measures/25633</p>	
	<p>SC asked for the groups view and the following comments were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The whole Athena SWAN award process is onerous but it has enabled real improvements to be made; it is disappointing if the statement diminishes the importance of the award (CO). - CP agrees, the system is not straightforward but taking away the link to funding will be a disaster as there will be widespread people leaving the scheme. The Medics passionately believe there is a problem with gender balance across all specialities. - A main concern is the implications of a funding loss of £100 million on the BSc renewals which is linked to the Athena SWAN silver award. A very strong environment statement that includes culture is vital. (CL) <p>SC commented the culture working group have provided a tool kit (in part in response to failure of doctoral training grant applications due to lack of sufficient attention to questions of research culture that overlap with EDI concerns). This shows</p>	

	<p>that there is still some external financial pressure to help drive EDI work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AM notes that there are large number of departments at Imperial that have never had a financial incentive. Personally, she sees the value in Athena SWAN but is surprised to hear the Medics do not like it like it decoupled from funding. - VS would like to see the Athena SWAN Leads presence on Boards and some recompense for the work they do e.g. a PhD student. <p>SC will relay the strong disappointment that has been raised with the EDI Strategy Group.</p>	SC
4b	Impact of COVID-19 on staff well-being/effectiveness	
	<p>Peter Lindstedt, Assistant Provost (Promotions) has been working on COVID-19 impacts on productivity. SC has not yet seen similar work on the professional technical side and SL is seeing what can be done. There is a clear no detriment policy message and a statement on the academic promotions web page and to log the effect of COVID-19.</p> <p>https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/recruitment-and-promotions/promotions/academic-promotions/</p> <p>AM commented it is also a research momentum issue as it is very difficult to regain when it is lost due to caring responsibilities, e.g. ongoing school closures. SC commented there is recognition that the impact will role on for many years.</p> <p>JT commented his department are looking at extending the 3 year academic probation for a further year.</p> <p>SR commented there are staff in the department who have been working to cover respiratory positions previously covered by those who are away due to child care responsibilities. This has massively impacted the research as there is insufficient time to write a grant.</p> <p>MRV commented another form of impact is those who have a lot of teaching preventing them from taking leave and asked if extra leave could be carried over.</p> <p>RB advised the College have noted that protecting annual leave would be a good way of compensating people and in exceptional circumstances with permission from the Head of Department leave can be carried over. The annual leave policy was updated:</p> <p>https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/leave/annual-leave/</p>	

<p>5.</p>	<p>College activities and Departmental report highlights (paper 5)</p> <p>SC thanked all for sending in their departmental updates, due to insufficient time a few are summarised below; all reports are on Teams.</p> <p>Aeronautics (MR-V) reported on obtaining quantitative data regarding the ethnicity of students. SC commented for the Race Equality Charter application there is already some information from strategic planning to look at attainment at departmental level and there has been extensive work to create data collection dashboards that should in the future be shared with departments.</p> <p>Business School (KT) – A meeting has been held to establish if HR data could be available for a dashboard for Athena SWAN data requirements. KT is hopeful that this will be available and for use College wide.</p> <p>The Business School are launching an EDI Module which was piloted last year. It is a taught course running throughout the year, KT will share the module description with the group.</p> <p>Chemistry (AB)</p> <p>Unconscious bias training has expanded to include Postdocs and PhDs. Chemistry’s 2nd year module includes the basic principles of EDI, what the College is doing and an external trainer on unconscious bias which students have to attend to pass the module. AB will share the course module description outline.</p> <p>The Committee was advised to consult the full list of reports submitted before the meeting (see papers).</p>	<p>KT</p> <p>AB</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p>LE reminded all this is Postdoc appreciation week with many activities going on and a thank you to all our Postdocs.</p> <p>SC proposed in line with College policy to start future meetings at 10 minutes past the hour and to increase the meeting time to one hour 20 minutes which was agreed.</p> <p>SC thanked everyone for attending and their valued input.</p>	