

**ATHENA SWAN COMMITTEE (ASC) MEETING  
AGENDA  
MONDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2015, 2 PM  
ROOM 5.22**

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**In attendance:** Mike Anderson (MA), Melissa Denecke (MD), Cinzia Casiraghi (CC), Darrien Rozentals (DR), Steve Motley (SM), Ilya Strashnov (IS), Rachel Spilsbury (RS), Marion Wrackmeyer (MW), Helen Ryder (HR), Pamila Sharma (PS)

**Apologies:** Richard Layfield (RL), Rachael Barker (RB), Igor Larossa (IL)

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**Documents:** Minutes of last meeting, AS Handbook, School's Silver Application, Gold Application form, Silver Application form, Good Practice checklist, Previous action plan for AS application, International Women's Day

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### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Richard Layfield and Igor Larossa

### 2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

5.3- Prof Perdita Barran present at last meeting requested proportion of internal and external applications and the average male and female acceptances for physics and chemistry.

Action 1: Peter Gorry and Tasleem Hanif to provide data.

**Tasleem provided the information. Attached**

5.4- Gender data at outreach events needs to be gathered.

Shall we invite Dr Frank Mair for next meeting?

Action 2: Frank Mair to arrange.

**Dr Frank Mair will attend the next meeting.**

### 3. INTRODUCTION

#### 3.1. Athena SWAN (AS) introduction to new members

General information on Athena SWAN and its purpose was discussed by Helen Ryder.

Cinzia Casiraghi provided a comprehensive background on the Athena SWAN (AS) and school's awards. Points highlighted:

- a. School received Bronze award when Prof Paul O'Brian was Head of School (currently- Head of Materials).
- b. Before school made the Silver application, Bronze award was renewed once. To renew the award a staff survey encompassing questions on family friendliness and work atmosphere was carried out (things staff like and things which could be improved) and the results were included in renewal application.
- c. For Silver application, school "actually had to do something":
  1. To prepare for Silver Application, Athena SWAN checklist was used to develop an action plan; however, this is not an official document. Data on several criteria was gathered with help from Human Resources, which made part of the application.
  2. 'Women's career day workshop' was also organised to gain feedback on work atmosphere, a result of which was a rule in place that all research seminars and meetings must be held before 3 pm, in case people have to attend family responsibilities. This was an 'actual change in practice'.
  3. Female staff members were recruited as well as promotions made for existing members.
  4. MA asked if there was any change in communication and engagement- Previous post doc on committee used to send out questions concerning female work life to postdoc community and feedback responses to the ASC.

### 3.2. Silver Application Feedback from AS-HQ

HR indicated that the committee should have a look at the feedback to Silver Application from AS Headquarters.

HR noted that the action plan made by school could also be used for further applications, for example- the Gold Award, however, there is no action plan since Silver Application was made. Melissa discussed if the school developed any action plan after Silver Award to progress further- conclusion is--Possibly not.

Action 3: Mike Anderson to arrange for the feedback document for Silver application.

**Manchester Chemistry Feedback form April 2013.pdf- (From AS-HQ) Attached**  
**PS to develop a document highlighting feedback points- (Table format) Attached**

### 3.3. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

#### 3.3.1 Changes to Athena SWAN

Helen indicated that there will be changes to the Athena SWAN policies since April 2015. It has expanded exponentially since last 10 years. It will merge with Gender Equality Charter Mark (which is a basic quality mark). Athena SWAN is mainly academic and research (STEMM Subjects) staff based, however, from April on- pss staff, part-time staff, honorary lecturers will also be considered. We will need new application forms from April 2016.

#### 3.3.2 Text supplied by Helen Ryder

“There are some changes to Athena SWAN which are coming in the next few months - namely the bringing together of the Athena SWAN Charter and the Gender Equality Charter Mark. This is happening in April 2015. The main changes are that Athena SWAN will be expanded to include non-STEMM Schools and will also include PSS staff, honorary staff and atypical staff (like visiting lecturers).

New guidance - new handbooks, application forms, etc will be released in April 2015. For the November 2015 round of awards you will be able to use either the old forms or the new forms. From April 2016 ONLY the new forms will be accepted. As Chemistry achieved their Silver Award in April 2013 this will mean the new forms will need to be used if taking the full three years period. Dates going forward for submissions will be November 2015, April 2016, September 2016, March 2017, September 2017, March 2018, etc (thus changing from April/November deadlines currently in place to March/September deadlines from Sept 2016 onwards).“

#### 3.3.3 Staff categories on ASC

It was also discussed that the committee should represent a wide range of staff categories- such as staff at different stages of their career, part time members, from different locations/buildings, different age etc. Such representation will be perceived positively by the AS headquarters. Two names were put forward to be invited to join the ASC. Both members have families and they are at different stages of their careers.

- Floriana Tuna (Research Fellow and full-time staff from PSI)
- Carole Webb (Research Technician and part-time staff from Chemistry)

Action 4: Send invites to Floriana and Carole

1. **Floriana Tuna agreed to join the committee.**
2. **Carole Webb was hesitant and thus, Meriel Barham was approached due to the reason indicated in 3.3.2 and her role being a part-time. Meriel is the school's outreach administrator and works closely with Dr Frank Mair.**

## 4. APPLICATION CRITERIA FOR GOLD AND SILVER

### 4.1. Gold and Silver application forms and Good practice checklist

Melissa Denecke's questions were: what is the difference in Gold and Silver renewal? What are the criteria?

Few points highlighted:

- a. For silver renewal- 5 years of data (gender, policy change, status change etc) is required.
- b. For Gold- 3 years of data is required as well as massive visibility of women in the school (including at top levels).
- c. Big changes in leadership and culture are to be shown, e.g. Senior Management Team is gender balanced or a Female Head of School or a massive shift in thinking.
- d. All staff members should have undergone Equality and Diversity training and know about promotion criteria and available workshops.
- e. UG and PG students should also know about and have undergone Equality and Diversity training.

**Noted:** Athena SWAN checklist was used to develop an action plan; however, this is not an official document, so should only be used for guidance and not as a criteria or policy.

### 4.2. Athena SWAN themes and Athena SWAN workshops

#### 4.2.1 Problems need to be addressed on re-engaging female researchers on returning from maternity leave.

- a. Some schools have a policy of providing 6 months grace period to female researchers where they do not have teaching duties, so they can focus on retracing their research projects.
- b. Mike suggested that maybe we can arrange a help in form of a PhD student to get female researchers back on track with their research project.

- c. It was reported that Hannah Roberts (previous postdoc rep on the AS committee) got 2 days left on her contract after she returned from maternity, allowing her no time to work on the research project. It was discussed if freezing of research grant could be possible to avoid such issues; however, this currently is not the University policy but could be arranged at school level.
- d. In current situation school should strive towards consistency of messages to staff, e.g. concerning promotions. A Promotions Advisor could be appointed (apart from the default- Line Manager), who could provide who could be approached by anyone in confidence and be able to guide on school's and university's policy on promotions.
- e. Ilya suggested that a career advisor is also essential within the school.
- f. School should have monitoring programmes to ensure correct gender balanced/neutral culture is in place. For example both genders on all committees. However, if there are only few females on appropriate positions as required, "You can borrow women" from other committees/schools.
- g. Cinzia highlighted that early start (e.g. 9 am) or later Friday afternoon student-tutorials should have some flexitime policy to allow female academics to who have family/children responsibilities to effectively manage work-life balance.
- h. It was further discussed that there should to be a flexi-process set up in the school and staff should be made aware of such a possibility. For example: staff may be allowed 1 day off in a month if they can accumulate enough hours of work, especially for family responsibilities.
- i. RCUK might be revising their Maternity Policy and we can possibly lobby out for positive changes. This would be another better example to take to Athena SWAN of our proactive and positive contribution.

Action 5: Above point is to be discussed in detail in next meeting.

**4.2.2 Why female numbers drop in higher academic positions** when the UG numbers are approximately 50% Females: 50% Males. It is felt that it could be an issue of female retention mainly in chemistry (more specifically- Organic). The possible reasons could be:

- a. Flexibility issues (Less family friendly work culture)
- b. Traditionally male dominated area
- c. No or very little visibility of females in such positions

How do we tackle them- what could be done at school level?

- a. Female/Male ratio monitoring scheme through- UG<PG<PhD<Postdoc<Academics<Professorial<Further positions
- b. Support for family friendly work-policies and culture as well as raising awareness to staff, especially female researchers to improve female retention in STEMM areas
- c. Women speaker specific seminar series- Inviting women on higher positions
- d. Women speakers for AS themed workshops, such as one organised by CC
- e. Opportunity for informal chat to aspiring female researchers with established women in career
- f. Career opportunities workshops etc.

### 4.3 International Women's Day Poster

Discussed, but no further actions.

## 5. FUTURE DIRECTION

### 5.1. Next Athena SWAN application deadline

Next application deadline is in **30 November 2016**. We do not have enough time and we need to progress quickly.

Action 6: Mike Anderson asked if we can defer the award.

**AS-HQ indicated that it is usually not possible until the institution has some serious matter- e.g. restructuring of the department or death/serious illness of the key member.**

### 5.2. Gold or Silver renewal

It was concluded after some discussions that it is more appropriate that we aim for silver renewal rather than Gold.

Reasons:

- a. For Gold application AS would like to see some drastic changes in school culture, policy, recruitment or something else- evidenced by 3 years of data, which can be a highly challenging and possibly not very realistic job, given our current status.
- b. Furthermore, if Gold gets rejected, we are not sure if we can still keep our Silver status.  
Action 7: Implications of Gold Rejection on our Silver Award are unclear. This is to be discussed in next meeting.
- c. It is usually an unspoken practice that AS would like to see an award renewed before they will upgrade the status. This was also the case for school's Bronze renewal before Silver Award.
- d. HR highlighted that Silver renewal in itself will be challenging enough, as we need to provide substantial data and evidence to support our application.
- e. Noted: As discussed in section 4, it will require 5 years' worth of data to indicate that positive changes took place and were integrated in school's policies and procedures.

### 5.3. Resources required

#### Closing ACTIONS

- a. **Homework for everyone:** Look for ideas to have an **Action Plan** and/or a **Magna-Carta** of gender balance for school of chemistry.  
Send ideas to [Pamila.Sharma@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Pamila.Sharma@manchester.ac.uk). All ideas will be discussed further in next meeting. **The idea should have a vision, state its current status within school and list measures required to implement changes to attain that vision. Action 8: Ideas will be discussed in next meeting**
- b. **Read recommendations from AS Silver review.**  
Required for getting ideas and understanding of our current status. **Attached in line with section 3.2.**
- c. **AS good status is already a requirement** for grant/funding success from Research Councils.  
NIHR and EPSRC are considering making AS a requirement- EPSRC might make such an announcement in May 2015.
- d. **ASC requires SharePoint** as working interface for storing and sharing information. MACE has SharePoint already and chemistry should get this soon. There were problems in the past using shared drive as some members did not have access. **This is to be raised with SMT or can we have an alternative?**
- e. **We need representatives from all levels and situations.** Floriana T and Meriel B would be a good addition.  
**Do we need a student rep on ASC like last year?**

#### DECISIONS

- The committee decided to bid for Silver Renewal. We need to implement a culture of gender neutrality before going for Gold. There is much to do before we even try for Silver!

### 6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

#### Funding request from Marion Wrackmeyer

Marion requires \$630 for conference registration. Accommodation and travel expenses have already been arranged. ASC has £1000 per annum budget (Currently, £2000 including from last year's £1000, which was not used).

#### Actions 9:

1. **Announcement made and fund advertised in Chemistry Newsletter.**
2. **The code for Athena SWAN related expenses is AA13373. Prof Mike Anderson (2002153) is the approver.**
3. **Marion to provide a mission statement past the conference, which will be included in the next Newsletter**

### 7. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 21 April 2015, 10am - 12noon, Rm 1.076, Chemistry Building