

Athena SWAN Annual Report- Institute of Cancer Sciences 2017

As the former and present Chairs of the ICS Athena SWAN committee we would like to share with you a brief summary of our work this year. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly our successful application for an Athena SWAN Bronze Award for the Institute. This award has been made in recognition of the proposals that we put forward to improve Institute infrastructure and culture, to enhance opportunity for all, and to comply, as fully as possible, with the spirit of the Athena SWAN Charter (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/about-athena-swan/>). Importantly, whilst the Charter specifically addresses issues to ensure opportunities for women in academia, many of the action plans that we have put in place will be of benefit to all members of staff. Overall, our aim is to develop an Institute culture that supports the aspirations of all staff members and we will do so by 'levelling the playing field' to ensure there is no conscious or unconscious discrimination against any individual. In addition, whilst our application was initially focused on academic staff, we are now expanding our remit to cover all staff within the Institute including Professional Services and Technical staff. Indeed Athena SWAN is moving in this direction anyway and will therefore ultimately enhance career prospects of all staff regardless of job family.

The self-assessment team (SAT) that developed the application for the Bronze Award spent considerable time identifying challenges faced by female staff, and others with caring responsibilities, and in proposing ways of helping to alleviate any disadvantages that may be associated with such challenges. This has resulted in an action plan which we are now busy implementing. Specific actions include developing resources to support fellowship and other funding applications for early career researchers, demystifying the promotions process, and running all formal Institute meetings between the core hours of 10.00 and 16.00 in the hope that this will make it easier for those with caring responsibilities to attend.

We have also initiated a series of action plans aimed at providing better support pre-and post-maternity or parental leave and finding ways of alleviating teaching duties and supporting research activities for members of staff following return from maternity leave. A new family friendly information pack (link below) is available on our website and signposts all the relevant guidelines in this area.

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/cancersciences/athena/informationforcarersparentsandparents-to-be/>

One particular recurrent theme during our evaluation process was the need to improve communication within our Institute – to celebrate good practice and encourage information sharing and collaboration. To this end, we have completely revamped our Athena SWAN website <https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/cancersciences/athena/>. You can also follow our twitter feed for updates - https://twitter.com/ICS_AthenaSWAN. Watch out for other initiatives over the next year, such as showcasing new publications and welcoming new recruits on noticeboards around the Institute. We hope that this improved communication either is, or will become, apparent to all members of staff and will help further establish the strong collegiate identity within the Institute.

In summary, therefore, we believe that the initiatives that we are putting in place will help all members of staff by improving internal communication and enhancing Institute culture. The Bronze Award is not a one-off award and we will be required to either renew this, or upgrade to a Silver Award, in 3

years' time. We are therefore fully committed to developing all initiatives that we proposed in the application and would be very grateful for your help in making this process work. The link to our current action plan is below:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/researchinstitutes/cancersciences/athena/ourcommitment/athenaswanbronzeawardsubmission/>

It is a key priority to get everyone involved in this process – either by formal membership of the SAT or by helping out with one or more of the various initiatives such as mentoring, career development, maternity buddying scheme, social events etc. Given the diverse range of initiatives we hope that everyone in ICS will find an area to which they can contribute.

We look forward to working with you all to realise our ambitious aspirations.

Chris Halsey and Mhairi Copland

(On behalf of the Athena SWAN SAT)



Helen Wheadon accepting our Athena SWAN Bronze Award on behalf of the Institute.



The Bronze Award is currently on display in the WWCRC reception area.