Dear All

Many thanks to all of you who completed the workplace survey before Xmas.

This is an immensely important document, because it provides an excellent snapshot of the working culture and environment here. By considering what's going well, and what could be improved, we can determine our Athena SWAN action plan for this year.

It’s therefore fantastic that virtually of you (c. 95%) completed this survey (thanks partly to Claire's reminders), because it means that this document provides a robust and rich foundation for our actions going forward, and for us to demonstrate our commitment to an inclusive, equitable and supportive working environment. And (we hope) to our School gaining a Silver Award in 2018.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The results of the 2016 survey can be found here:

https://www.bris.ac.uk/biology/intranet/school-business/athenaswan/index.html

In the free text section you can also see some AS committee responses to the issues raised. All of these responses are entirely anonymous. All free text comments have been included, with the exception of a few that allowed individuals to be identified.

The main message of this survey is very positive - especially when viewed alongside the 2014 survey (which only included postgraduates and academic staff).

However, some issues identified include:

(a) A lack of transparent opportunities for progression by Professional Staff
(b) A need for increased awareness of flexible working opportunities
(c) Variation among postgraduates in their experience and level of mentoring
(d) A need to improve training and support, especially of early career researchers
(e) Improvement of web presence and interactions on social media

ACTIONS FOLLOWING SURVEY

Following analysis of these survey results and discussion by the AS committee, we organised a series of lunchtime meetings and consultation groups for (we hope) all interested groups in the School to address specific issues raised.

If you feel there hasn't been a group to which you could contribute your views - or a way that you got your voice heard beyond these efforts, please let us know through the feedback form on the AS page.

These extended consultation period led to a many actions going forward.

You can either read about them on the latest version of the Action Plan, or in the brief summary below:
KEY ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO SURVEY

- Encouraging awareness of unconscious bias and its pervasiveness. This is especially pertinent in e.g. recruitment, promotion, interviews etc, but also in dealing with and in teaching students.
- Generating a transparent reporting and monitoring system for staff to report inappropriate behaviour. On the website you can also submit comments directly to the AS committee that you feel need attention.
- Improving the quality and continuity of PhD students' experiences, through internal and external mentoring. Also through links to external webpage to address key issues in career progression, stress, and work-life balance.
- Improving training opportunities, and identification of progression/promotion possibilities for professional staff.
- Ensuring awareness of policies and opportunities in place re: flexible working.
- Highlighting case studies where staff have received support to achieve a life-work balance, and/or cope with caring responsibilities.
- Continuing to provide a diverse range of opportunities for social and scientific engagement that suit different groups and personalities.
- Promotion of professional development courses within the University.
- Improving web and social media presence to effect better communication and integration among members of the School.

We are also taking steps to improve undergraduates’ awareness of our activities, and involvement, and to increase the role of AS in increasing inclusivity within the School and the University.

Many thanks again for all your input to the survey, and to helping the committee to refine these actions going forward. I'm sure all of them will continue to make our School a better place to work, explore, and be curious in.

All the best

Jon