

MINUTES OF RESEARCH STAFF WORKING PARTY

Wednesday 25 January 2017

Present: Professor Alastair Poole, Biomedical Sciences (Chair)

Dr Anthony Croxford, Mechanical Engineering
Dr Scott Greenwell, UCU Rep, Department of Physics
Guy Gregory, Director of Human Resources
Dr Mike Gulliver, School of Humanities
Professor Chris Hawkesworth, Earth Sciences
Dr Athene Lane, School of Social and Community Medicine
Dr Alison Leggett, Academic Staff Development
Dr Patricia Lucas, School for Policy Studies
Dinithi Wijedasa, School for Policy Studies
Claire Wrixon, Academic Staff Development
Charlotte Royle, Academic Staff Development (Minutes)

Apologies: Dr Paras Nailk, School of Physics

1. Welcome and announcements

Thanks and farewell to Mike Gulliver (MG) and welcome to Scott Greenwell (SG)

2. Minutes of meeting on 20 Sept 16

Changes to Make

Insert numbers alongside heading titles as they stop at item three.

Action: CR

Change 'Research Council Fund' to 'Research Council Funding' in the 'Item 7' heading.

Action: CR

Item 2: Minutes of meeting on 20 May

- Item 7: Staff Contracts and eligibility for Research Council Fund

CW/AP still to investigate grant applications from pathway 2 members of staff.

Action: CW/AP to investigate how we provide list/documentation and case studies demonstrating examples of how others have achieved this and discuss before next meeting.

- Item 10: Teaching Policy for research staff update

- Alison Leggett (AL) is liaising with Professor Nishan Canagarajah who will email all Heads of School to ask for information on the amount of teaching that pathway 2 staff are doing. This will be useful in preparing our HESA submission where we need to decide whether or not to include pathway 2 in our teaching staff numbers. It will also be an opportunity to find out from Heads of School regarding how the policy is being implemented at a local level.

Action: AL to report back at the next meeting

Item 3: Update from the Chair

- CROS Update

CW gave a brief update on the progress of the CROS action plan. CW sat down with the EPR team to discuss the induction process and how this might be enhanced. It was noted that induction varies widely across the university and that there needs to be some unity.

Action: Ongoing. CW, AL and PL to provide an update on this at the next meeting

- Research Staff Coffee Mornings and 1:1's

CW's coffee mornings have had a low turnout but people who have attended have provided feedback and they said that they found the information and opportunity to talk to other researchers invaluable. CW will push to get the numbers up as this support is needed for these researchers.

Action: Ongoing. CW to provide an update on this at the next meeting

- Research Staff Champion role

The update for this is covered in an agenda item.

- Alumni Network

CW and Paras Nailk met to discuss this. It was noted that it would be time intensive trying to locate and record the alumni information, so the project would need administration support. CW has not had the time or resources to focus on this task. There was a discussion about the importance of retaining contact with alumni in order to keep networks alive and provide links for students and current researchers. This item was linked to email access after researchers leave, which was discussed fully during agenda item 5. b)

Action: AP and CW to have a conversation with the alumni office

Item 6: RSWP Membership

It was noted that RED will be invited to all relevant RSWP meetings in the future. SG was invited and attended the meeting.

Item 7: Email access

MG will cover in this agenda item.

3. RS Reps Chair update (MG)

a) Email access

MG gave an overview of the longstanding challenges faced by researchers (particularly) due to the university's management and closure of email accounts. Having pre-circulated the one-page summary requested at the previous meeting by Nishan Canagarajah (NC), he invited feedback from the group. The group suggested that we need to place more emphasis

within the summary on the positive reasons for providing a solution. AP committed to take an amended version to the URC.

Action: MG to amend and circulate again

Action: AL to ask GW4 how they approach email accounts when staff leave

Action: AP to take MG's summary to the next URC meeting

b) Post-doc Champion role

MG explored where the responsibility would sit for this role within faculty management systems. MG found that the place it seems to sit best is with the School Research Directors. Professor Helen Fulton (School of Humanities) and Dr Angela Piccini (School of Arts) are positive about the idea and have agreed to adopt and test it. AP agreed that the SRDs are the right people to take this forward. It was noted that it should be entitled P2 Champion, rather than using the term 'post-doc'. It was suggested that the description of this role be made more specific.

Action: MG to draft and test a one line description of this responsibility with Helen Fulton then circulate to the group

Action: MG to change title to Pathway 2 Champion

Action: Once it is drafted, send to Anthony Croxford to try and implement this in his school too

Action: MG to discuss how to define goals and hand assessment of effectiveness on to ASD.

c) P2 Progression and Promotion

GG gave an update on the review of progression and promotion. GG and Nick Lieven are leading on this review, which includes P2 staff. GG and NL discussed and looked at the scope of the task before the Christmas break. They will go through a Steering Group and then a progress Working Group and a progression Working Group. GG suggested that the sub-group for the P2 staff should be the RSWP. AL noted that the data consulted on needs to include both the university's formal processes and researchers' experience living in the process as it is. NL hopes to review this by March-July 2017. It was noted that the RSWP only commits to three meetings per year and that acting as a sub-group for this review would be a big commitment to take on. It was suggested that the group should contact other universities to see what they do and SG mentioned that UCU has some data that compares universities policy changes. UCU can speak to colleagues to find testimonies if this is required.

Action: GG to clarify what is being asked from the RSWP and to find out where the resource would fall to collate the data

d) Observations on leaving (MG)

MG gave an overview of some of the things the RSWP has achieved since he has been a member. He noted that the group now has a level of visibility within the university that it has not had before and that this now gives the group scope to increase their impact.

MG noted that the culture of the RS Reps meetings had shifted, in the time that he had been chair, from one that was largely campaigning (on issues where researchers felt they needed to push back against the university) to one that was more about looking for ways to pro-actively 'develop' researchers. MG noted, however, that any development envisaged could only really be carried forward if Academic Staff Development had sufficient resource, and if the university was persuaded of the strategic and business importance of change.

MG suggested that the RSWP, with increased recognition, was in an ideal position to push forward a more pro-active researcher development agenda.

MG thanked the RSWP.

4. VC Fellowships update (AL)

AL provided an update on the VC Fellowships and confirmed that there will be 15 (J grade) fellowships running for 3 years from November 2017. The fellowships will be advertised in February 2017 once the website and details have been finalised and there will be a 6 week window for the submission of applications. Applicants will need an academic sponsor, a research project proposal, personal statement and a letter of support from their sponsor. After the application deadline, there will be a process that will include selection panels. The three research themes that we are funding are: digital innovation and wellbeing, bioengineering, and environmental sciences and humanities. AL added that there are plans to provide a personal development programme, which will be promoted as an integral part of the fellowship. The RSWP queried eligibility for the fellowship and AL confirmed that it is open to both internal and external candidates. The current wording says that these are only open to PhD holders but it was agreed that this needs to be altered to include 'PhD or equivalent'. AL will ensure that this is changed before advertisement. MG observed that this differs from the original proposal. The RSWP would like to see the advert before it is advertised, if possible, to check that there are not any barriers to current staff.

Action: AL to circulate the advert before it is advertised

5. Peer Mentoring Update (CW)

CW provided an update on the Peer Mentoring scheme. An English Literature PhD student, Leonie Thomas, is supporting the project alongside Rob Hughes. The mentoring project has a website and the scheme has been advertised to all faculties but it is not open to PhD students yet. 40 people have applied from a wide range of faculties but numbers could be increased in the arts and social sciences. Professor George Banting has agreed to be the scheme champion and there will be a launch event on 3rd March 2017 with people speaking about career progression and their experiences with or without mentoring. CW is planning to meet with Terry McMaster to involve the BDC. Rob Hughes has been asked to provide defined success measures and an overview of the project.

Action: CW to keep the RSWP updated about the event

Action: CW to update the RSWP on Rob Hughes's summary document in the next meeting

a) Picture of Health

CW updated the board on the Picture of Health competition. The competition was really successful. There were between 40 to 50 submissions for the scheme and an impressive website has been set up. 6 photos were chosen, which will be placed on the website and presented publicly.

b) Ignite Presentations

CW has not heard anything yet.

Action: CW to chase and provide an update at the next meeting

6. AOB

1. HR Excellence Report (AL)

AL announced that we were successful in retaining the HR Excellence award for the sixth year. The next award is in two years.

2. CROS 2017 (AL)

AL confirmed that this will be running this year. It last ran in 2015 and launches in May 2017

Dates for 2017 upcoming meetings:

Monday 8 May 2017, 11:00-13:00

Charlotte Royle
Administrative Assistant, Academic Staff Development
charlotte.royle@bristol.ac.uk