



MINUTES OF RESEARCH STAFF WORKING PARTY

Tuesday 09 October 2018

Present: Professor Tim Peters, Faculty Research Director Health Sciences (Chair)
Dr Patricia Lucas, School for Policy Studies
Dr John Day, UCU Rep, Department of Physics
Professor Anthony Croxford, Mechanical Engineering
Professor Chris Hawkesworth, Earth Sciences
Dr Scott Greenwell, Chair of Reps Committee
Dr Kris Magee, Co-Chair of Reps Committee
Claire Buchanan, Director of Human Resources
Dr Mike Gulliver, Academic Staff Development
Claire Wrixon, Academic Staff Development
Katie Manktelow, Academic Staff Development (Minutes)

Observer: Dr Susan Yates (University of Western Australia)

Apologies: Dr Neil Davies, Bristol Medical School,
Dr Simon Swales Project Manager – Gender Pay Gap
Dr Alison Leggett Head of Academic Staff Development
Dr Paras Naik, School of Physics

1. Welcome and announcements

- Tim Peters (TP) noted apologies from Neil Davies, Alison Leggett, Simon Swales and Paras Naik.
- TP noted the changes in membership. TP has replaced Prof Alastair Poole as chair of the Research Staff Working Party. TP welcomed Kris Magee (KM), Co-chair of the Reps Committee, to his first meeting.
- Patricia Lucas (PL) noted that this will be her last meeting.

2. Minutes of meeting on 23 May 18 - Matters arising and actions

2.1 APPROVED: the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 as circulated.

2.2 AGREED: the actions from this meeting were reviewed. All actions were complete or to be marked as ongoing. (see action log for list of actions)

3. Bristol Clear update

Mike Gulliver (MG) noted that Bristol Clear was launched to the research staff community on 02 October 2018 and today has been officially launched to the University's senior team.

Bristol Clear Mentoring update

Katie Manktelow (KMa) gave an update on the Bristol Clear Mentoring Scheme noting it had grown out of the Peers Project which the RSWP funded a few years ago. KMa is managing the scheme and Claire Wrixon (CW) is lead. It is aimed at early career researchers, grades I & J, matching them with mentors from across the university, and outside of their area of discipline to give the mentee an impartial and fresh perspective.

The first round of mentoring has been offered to research staff in SCEEM and Social Science and Law. As the scheme is a pilot, it is starting small with the view to grow the intake every six-months. This decision to start with SCEEM was made due this this being the

school with the least uptake in staff reviews. Social Science and Law were also approached as they have the highest number of research staff in the arts and social sciences faculties.

The first intake saw 53 expressions of Interest (33 Mentees / 20 Mentors). 29 overall in attendance across two skills and information sessions (12 Mentors and 19 mentees). 10 mentors and 15 mentees applied for the scheme. 12 matches have been made, 9 pairs and one mentoring circle, with 3 mentees. KMa thanked Anthony Croxford (AC) who is a mentor on the scheme & TP who is a scheme champion.

Each cohort will run in six-month segments with expectations for matches to meet for a minimum of 3, 1-hour meetings. Evaluation will take place at the 3 month and 6 month stages.

The next intake will be in March 2019 for Science, Social Science and Law & Arts.

KMa noted that anyone interested in becoming a mentor for the scheme can fill out an expression of Interest on the webpage – bristol.ac.uk/clear-mentoring, or email bristol-clear@bristol.ac.uk.

A question was asked on the balance of mentees from SCEEM and Social Science and Law. KMa noted that although mentees came to the skills and induction sessions from both, the scheme did not get application from Social Science and Law so therefore there are more mentees from SCEEM.

4. Reps update

Scott Greenwell (SG) noted that the Reps committee has recently conducted a survey to help them gauge the activities that reps are doing in each school. This has helped to establish which reps are active in their roles. SG asked ASD staff for the HoS & School managers mailing lists, so SG can approach the schools who do not have research reps to ask for nominations.

ACTION – KMa to send SG HoS & School Managers mailing lists.

SG noted the concern among the research reps about the idea that research costs the university more than it makes. SG wanted to request for someone from finance to present to the reps where the money made from research goes.

Claire Buchanan (CB) noted a presentation from Robert Kerse – Chief Operating Officer, which explained how this works. CB noted that research does cost more than it makes, however the university balances this with income from international student fees. TP noted that as a research-intensive university, the value of the research being undertaken is extremely important and the cost should not be taken out of context but viewed within the wider university framework for income. CB suggested contacting Mick Axtall to present to the reps on this topic.

ACTION – SG to contact Mick Axtell, Deputy Chief Financial Officer RE: presentation on finance to the Reps Committee.

A concern was raised that promotion and progression could be affected by the amount of money brought in from Research generally. It was confirmed by the working party that promotion and progression is not affected by this. There was discussion around the language used to express the value of research. It was suggested that other universities use more positive language to express what each department brings and contributes rather than viewing income as being in credit or deficit.

5. Progression and Promotion update

CB noted that the most recent progression and promotion paper would be going to Senate on Monday 15 October 2018, so until the paper had been approved by Senate there is no update to give. It was agreed that CB could circulate the outcome of the paper to the rest of the working party if agreed by senate next week.

ACTION – CB to circulate Progression and Promotion implementation paper to group if approved by Senate.

6. Research Staff Development Fund – 2017/2018 update

MG has confirmed with CB that the RS development fund can span across 2-years, with a budget of £3000 each year but adjusting the over and underspend across that time.

7. Research Staff Development Fund – 2018/2019 Applications

TP noted that there is £3000 available in this fund to support development projects. There have been 3 applications this year.

Application 1 – Vet School Conference, Grace Edmunds, Linda Wooldridge, Emily Milodowski

This application proposed a post-doctoral veterinary research day to improving access to post-PhD research opportunities for vets and aid them in navigating the academic clinical environment by improving communication between the vet school and science faculties and addressing a lack of mentoring.

It was noted that this did address an issue and could help veterinary researchers feel less isolated. It could be valuable for that community, but it was unclear how it would benefit a wider research community. The lack of practical budget was an issue.

Decision: No funding given.

Action: TP & MG to provide feedback.

Application 2 – Emma Anderson, Health psychology intervention group

This application proposed to use the funding to develop a group that has been set up by the author, the health psychology intervention group. The funding would be used to develop promotional tools, host an event, invite guest speakers and improve media communication.

The group felt that the benefits may only reach a small number of researchers. It was felt that the emphasis should be to build more of a community and network internally first, before developing tools to reach out to external professional bodies. It was also noted that the money could be used more effectively if some internal resources were used. It was suggested that less money could be given to focus on building the internal network.

Decision: Funded to be granted with changes to proposal.

Action: TP & MG to provide feedback.

Application 3 – Sara Alvira, International Research Society Programme.

This application proposed a one-day event to hear presentations from international research societies and discuss issues faced by international research staff. It also proposed participation of international research staff society members into existing UoB mentoring schemes and events.

The group were unsure who would benefit from this proposal and how it would be achieved in a one-day event. As the societies already exist the group were unsure what value could be added. The proposal also did not address how it could link in with the existing mentoring schemes. Costings were felt to be unclear.

Decision: No funding given.

Action: TP & MG to provide feedback.

Suggestions for Future applications:

It was suggested that future applicants could be given a space on the score sheet to explain their self-assessment and how they would demonstrate that they were able to justify scoring.

ACTION – KMa to amend score sheet.

8. Strategic Priorities

TP asked the group to take this opportunity to consider strategic priorities, to take stock and to reflect on what has worked and what the group could do differently.

SG noted that there could be more feedback on when actions have been completed and decisions made. Claire Wrixon (CW) noted that it is within the role of chair of reps to be able to request this information. It was noted that a dynamic action log that all the team members could view may help.

ACTION – KMa to set up a share point for the group, especially for the Action Log.

It was noted that this group has the power to lobby to change things but there needs to be acceptance that there will be issues that the group cannot change. It was noted that the working party is good at taking issues from the ground up but doesn't often bring information back the other way. CB asked if this working party makes requests, it was agreed by the group that it does not do this often enough. CB noted that traction could be gained through her role to bring concerns to the HR committee. CB noted a working plan of what the group wants to achieve in the next year could help give the group strategic direction.

KM discussed the staff survey in relation to staff wellbeing. It was noted that the free text response is where there will be very valuable data. PL noted that the CROS survey should be consulted to see which questions worked well and generated valuable data if considering conducting further surveys.

ACTION – KM to talk with MG regarding CROS data in relation to reps survey

ACTION – SG & KM to present on Reps survey at next meeting – 22 January 2019

TP noted that once the Progression and Promotion paper has been through Senate, the working party need to look at it to see what will work and any changes that we want to suggest.

John Day (JD) noted that short term contracts are the most pressing matter facing research staff. JD noted that we cannot retain the best staff if this is not addressed. PL questioned how to ensure that research staff are being marked as progressable on new research staff bids. PL asked if a report could show a breakdown by school as there is currently no one being held accountable. Chris Hawkesworth (CH) noted it comes back to the cultural piece about setting expectations, as there are far fewer permanent jobs than post-doctoral positions.

KM noted that his HoS Chris Jarrold has asked KM to produce an expectations document to be turned into a handbook for new P2 Staff.

ACTION – KM to present expectations document at reps meeting to see if it can be applicable to other schools and possibly shared on the staff hub.

AOB -

ACTION – TP & MG to find a replacement for PL

9. Equality and Diversity issues

Having a gender balance was mentioned when speaking of membership within the Research Staff Working Party.

Dates for 2019 upcoming meetings: 22 January 2019 – Verdon Smith Room – Royal Fort House.

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