

MINUTES OF RESEARCH STAFF WORKING PARTY

Wednesday 24 January 2018

Present: Professor Alastair Poole, Biomedical Sciences (Chair)
Dr Scott Greenwell, Chair of Reps Committee
Dr Paras Nailk, School of Physics
Dinithi Wijedasa, School for Policy Studies
Dr Neil Davies, Bristol Medical School
Claire Buchanan, Director of Human Resources
Dr Simon Swales Head of Academic Staff Development
Dr Mike Gulliver, Academic Staff Development
Katie Manktelow, Academic Staff Development (Minutes)

Apologies: Professor Chris Hawkesworth, Earth Sciences
Dr Patricia Lucas, School for Policy Studies
Claire Wrixon, Academic Staff Development
Dr John Day, UCU Rep, Department of Physics
Dr Anthony Croxford, Mechanical Engineering

1. Welcome and announcements

- Alastair Poole (AP) welcomed Claire Buchanan (CB) who is the new Human Resources Director, taking over from Guy Gregory.

2. Minutes of meeting on 20 September 17 - Matters arising and actions

2.1 APPROVED: the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2017 as circulated.

2.2 AGREED: the actions from this meeting were reviewed. All actions were complete.

Matters arising: Email Access

The group members agreed to keep 'leavers' emails' on the agenda to check on progress.

STANDING ACTION – AP to request and update on the leavers' email access before each research staff working party meeting to provide an update on progress.

3. Bristol Research Staff Development Centre

Mike Gulliver (MG) updated the group on the Bristol Research Staff Development Centre. This has been a project from the PVC-Research, to explore the need and form of a 'Research Staff Development 'Centre''. After looking at other institutions physical and virtual spaces, it was decided that Bristol's need was for a virtual space. On 9 November 2017 a paper went to URC to ask for resource to enable the centre to focus on:

- Mentoring - there is an overwhelming demand for it demonstrated through the peers project, funded by this committee last year. MG and Claire Wrixon (CW)

conducted over 70 one to one's last year and this year the number will rise to over 130, with 100% positive feedback so far.

- VC fellows – A higher visibility around our work with them.
- Researcher training – building a coherent programme of training which will focus on career transition points.
- Data capture – to contribute to redefining the research environment by capturing data around wellbeing and providing the opportunity for culture change.

The paper was approved with funding for two new positions, a staff development advisor to which Katie Manktelow has been recruited and an administrative assistant for 6 months. The Centre will start with an identity exercise and to set up a mentoring scheme that grows every six months. The centre will be headed by MG and CW and it will sit within Academic Staff Development. An advisory group will be set up to advise and champion the centre and work alongside this committee to enhance the work that it does. It was suggested that Ian Craddock from Engineering is looking to do similar things with the move to temple quarter.

Action: MG to speak with Ian Craddock around his ideas for Temple quarter project.

4. Update on Reps Charter – Scott Greenwell

Scott Greenwell (SG) updated the group on the new 'Reps Charter'. The charter has been put together by a selection of the research staff reps, stemming from an away day in September 2017. The charter is to act as guidance and define the character and responsibilities of the research reps. The statement is as follows:

"We are here to provide an informed voice for the research community to promote information flow, personal and professional development, a positive work environment and our well-being."

5. Research staff Development fund

AP gave an update on the research staff development fund. AP noted that we had 3 applications at the last meeting, of which one was not funded and two were asked to revise their applications. Luke Robles application proposed a scheme to provide advice and information to staff involved in authorship disputes. MG and AP spoke with Luke regarding revisions to be made but Luke has not yet submitted a revised application. Gemma Hammerton's application proposed setting up a forum for early career researchers working in mental health. Gemma was advised that the 6-meeting proposed could be reduced and advertised to a broader community. The aims were to develop 3 resources: a data bases of resources, and online presence and guidelines of cross institutions ECR meetings. It was suggested that GW4 do a lot of work cross institutions and it would be good to engage with that team.

Decision: Funding Approved.

Action: MG to notify Gemma of the decision.

Discussion around the future of the research staff development fund

The group discussed what was to be done with the remaining fund from 2017/2018. Two options were discussed

- 1) Send out an additional call for projects
- 2) Using the money to analyse the CROS survey to identify issues that the Research staff working party would like to address.

There were discussions around:

- Getting the funding formally 'ringfenced' to ensure that it is not lost at the end of the financial year.
- Adding in a section on 'support needed from the university' on the development
- The Research Staff Working Party guiding applications by proposing areas or topics.

ACTION: MG to discuss the formal ringfencing of the Research staff development fund with finance to enable it to roll from year to year.

6. CROS / Data Capture.

MG spoke about the CROS Survey, noting it was started as a pilot in 2002, and it has been used by the Sector over the last 10 years to see what is happening in the sector, which in turn influences policy. MG commented that CROS works best when you ask a question of it and suggest that the committee could use CROS to gain answers to high priority questions rather than the key issues coming out of the data which can be skewed due to the participant base. There was a discussion around linking CROS data to other data bases such as PIMS to do a more in-depth analysis of findings, however a question was raised around data protection. It was agreed that MG would send around a list of the CROS questions for the member of the working party to consider and propose possible questions we would like to ask of CROS.

ACTION – MG to Send around questions asked in this year's Cross Survey to RSWP members

ACTION – All: identify questions you would like to focus on and bring to next meeting for prioritisation

7. Incentive Awards

MG spoke to the group about the idea of incentive awards. This would be a non monetary award to recognise:

- A rep who performs strongly
- A member of staff who has worked to raise awareness of / resolve issues faced by researchers. (To be voted for by researchers)

Concerns were raised about making the award competitive as the reps are voluntary positions. It was suggested that the reps could vote for another member of staff, with the possibility of adding it to the star awards.

ACTION: MG to contact Star awards to enquire about the possibility to of adding a new category.

8. AOB

- SG noted that at the last reps meeting the issue of obtaining a travel subsistence credit cards was brought up as an issue. The purpose of these card is to stop staff from having to incur work travel expenses out of their personal finances, which it then can take a month or more to claim back. These should be equally accessible to staff, but it seems there is inconsistencies in applying and gaining these cards.

ACTION – MG & SG to put together a working group to scope out the policy and current situation around apply for these cards.

- MG gave a progression and promotion update. A pathway 2 task and finish group is being set up by Judith Squires to look at P2 in more details as it is more complexed than the other pathways. MG suggested setting up a working group to look at the

Senate paper to see what has to be delivered and to advise the task and finish group on solutions. Volunteers for the working group were MG, SG & Dinithi Wijedasa (DW)

ACTION: MG to speak with Judith RE: Working party to work on P2 Solutions for P&P.

ACTION: MG to package and send round info and an update on where the task and finish group are up to.

- It was noted that Nishan usually attends one Research Staff Working Party a year.

ACTION: KM to Invite Nishan to the next meeting.

9. Equality and Diversity issues

There were no reported E&D issues from the meeting

Dates for 2018 upcoming meetings: Wednesday 23 May 2018. 09:00-11:00 – Brunel Room - Hawthorns

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