

Newcastle University
Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team
Monday 8th June 2023 1pm-2:30pm

MINUTES

Present: Lisette Nicholson (Co-chair LN), Judith Rankin (Co-chair JR), Yvonne Parkinson (YP), Sarah Anderson (SA), Paul Britton (PB), Vi Parker (VP), Emma Haagensen (EH), Sharron Kuznesof (SK), Kevin Johnson (KJ), Meenakshi Swamy (MS), Billie Moffat-Knox (BM-K).

Apologies: Adam Hejnowicz (AH), Malasree Home (on secondment), Gareth Longstaff (GL), Stacey Gillis (SG), Alina Schartner (AS), Chris Stanley (CS), Carolyn Laws (CL), Graeme Holloway (GH), Mel Leitch (ML), Damian Parry (DP).

Renita Barbour (RB) and Eleanor Farrington (EF) attended for specific agenda items.

Item	Notes/Actions	Action by/ Deadline
1	<p>Welcome & apologies</p> <p>LN welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting 6th March 2023</p> <p>Minutes were agreed. Actions from the last meeting in March were discussed:</p> <p>Action 1 - Athena Swan slides for EB members to remain on the agenda for next meeting.</p> <p>Action 2 - Transformed Charter guidance was shared by Alison Jeavons ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>Action 3 - PB reflected that he has contacted Chris Wells (CW) and asked whether the diversity categories used to capture student data mirror those advised by Advance HE or HESA. CW responded to explain the data categories are outlined by HESA but reflected confidence there is similarity between HESA and Advance HE requirements. PB reflected that he has arranged a meeting with YP to explore data categories further.</p> <p>Action 4 – PB, KJ and YP have a meeting arranged with Richard Stewart from Advance HE 9.6.23 and will ask about expectations regarding students and feed back at next meeting.</p> <p>Action 5 – KJ provided update on AS action plan progress and AS/REC combined tracker progress. Keep as rolling agenda item.</p> <p>Action 6 – KJ provided interim update on feedback for group name change. KJ explained that 3 people have opted for Gender Equality Group and 1 has suggested Gender Equality Self-Assessment Group. JR encouraged all to provide feedback and expressed the group will make a decision in the next meeting</p>	<p>PB & KJ, Sep</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>PB & KJ, Sep</p> <p>KJ, Sep</p> <p>JR, Sep</p>

	<p>Action 7 – Network update occurred as part of agenda, see below for update from Eleanor Farrington (EF) and BM-K, rolling item and update at next meeting.</p> <p>Action 8 – Rolling item and update at next meeting.</p>	<p>SG, BM-K, Sep</p> <p>AI, Sep</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>AS Applications (RP/EH/SK)</p> <p>EH reflected that priorities have been agreed for the equality project and shared with respective workstreams. EH explained the team in FMS can now start to write actions for whole project. EH reflected the gender actions will feed directly into the AS application. EH expressed the group have made progress in their AS application and explained there is some content in every section. EH reflected there are some edits ongoing for their retrospective action plan also.</p> <p>SK explained SAgE is not going for a faculty award and will focus on UK departmental awards. Engineering will apply in January, Computing in March, and Maths, Stats and Physics in December 2024. SK explained that 3 Schools are applying for silver and Engineering will apply for bronze. Computing have a desire to delay application due to changes in head of school and the ongoing Growth plan/recruitment. SK reported the AS culture survey for SAgE is out and has been open for approximately one month. Explained they were influenced by REC guidelines when creating the survey. SK expressed that EDI colleagues in the faculty have ownership of the People project and have arranged an initial meeting to explore a new 'SAgE Women's Leadership Forum'. LN/PB reflected on the benefit of including Angela Wren (AW) in discussions, SK reflected AW has been included in plans. VP asked about the plans for the network. JR suggested we can learn lessons from the NU Professors network that is no longer active and experiences and desire for wider faculty inclusion for leadership forums. LN reflected on benefit of including AW in this regard and PS managers forum, LN reflected there is a meeting upcoming in June.</p> <p>PB asked if it would be possible for us to share data from faculty to shape the central culture survey. Reflected 7 core questions are all the same, can we use for central AS action plan? EH reflected about the possibility of sharing data.</p> <p>LN reflected a paper has been to Executive Board outlining a new approach to colleague surveys. Rather than 1 survey every other year, the proposal is to conduct 6 smaller surveys every year. Some new questions will appear in each survey and some will remain the same to track changes in themes. Themes include: wellbeing and workload, career development, leadership, communications, and change. LN reflected the team are looking to move to a more agile question strategy and propose a review will take place after one year.</p> <p>LN to circulate the paper proposing new survey approach for comment.</p> <p>JR reflected benefit of having the data to offer insights about progress. PB added the findings from wellbeing and workload survey may link to trends around existing sickness and absence data capture.</p>	<p>LN</p>

4	<p>Action plan (KJ)</p> <p>KJ provided an update on the AS action plan, explaining that action completion is at 61% (SMART columns, narrative column with some impact detailed). KJ explained we will review all actions in the existing action plan ahead of the next submission in case updates are required (e.g. where annual data are required).</p> <p>KJ explained there has been progress in developing the REC/AS combined tracker. All REC actions have been disaggregated into individual rows. KJ reflected the next challenge is to standardise job titles (e.g. recruitment lead, recruitment panel, recruitment team), pick lead job role for all actions, a lead unit (e.g. Professional Services) for all actions, embed all AS actions, and complete the same exercise for AS regarding standardising job titles, lead job titles and lead units.</p> <p>JR requested report with actions for respective stakeholders ahead of REC IAG, PB and KJ reflected an aim to have this shared in the next 2 weeks.</p>	
5	<p>Review of RSP (RB)</p> <p>RB presented slides;</p> <p>Returners Support Programme (RSP); extended to PS colleagues after a previous review. Third review ongoing as uptake is low although numbers have increased (36 total since 2018-2022 however 24 applicants in 2023).</p> <p>2023 review – compared against others in sector. NU only RG Uni to offer RSP for PS and Academics. Two focus groups have been completed as well as review of other University approaches and some data analysis. A report with 10 recommendations has been drafted. Recommendations include the aim to extend the RSP to those returning from unpaid carers leave. RB/JR to have discussion with Jackie Scott about possibilities for additional funding for those returning from long term sickness absence.</p> <p>JR reflected the 10 recommendations will be presented at senior level for discussion and are subject to review.</p> <p>SK offered feedback from researchers, recommended action 7 (RSP is discussed during KiT/Return to work discussions) could benefit from being strengthened. RB reflected a conversation with People Services about a 1-1 conversation before going on leave, recommendation was for line management to lead this. RB recognised the challenge in administering this in a standardised way given ‘line manager lottery’.</p> <p>VP reflected the benefit of showing timescales and when a person could apply for RSP and when line manager becomes involved. VP explained this could support line managers to deliver standardised support and help applicants to know when to apply. RB reflected that colleagues are often not aware the RSP is available and explained there are ongoing conversations with the appropriate teams to send standard emails to those</p>	

	<p>on leave to promote RSP. JR reflected a challenge is the timing of application to seek appropriate cover.</p> <p>SA asked if we can be promoting the RSP as part of our recruitment life cycle. LN reflected on the benefit of having communications materials which are presented in an approachable way to appeal to colleagues.</p> <p>YP reflected that the Open University had drop in sessions about the support that is available for colleagues including RSP, posed this could be a useful idea to promote the initiative.</p> <p>JR expressed possibility of faculty roadshows to promote the RSP once relaunched.</p>	
7	<p>EDI Networks Update (EF)</p> <p>EF reported change over the last year regarding EDI networks. EF explained there has been a process of review in collaboration with the chair of respective networks, review arrangements in place to support them, how EDI team can support chairs.</p> <p>EF explained the review produced three main themes to focus on moving forward: 1) principles and guidance, 2) Improve leadership capacity (and membership engagement), 3) Improve Intern and EDI Team Support.</p> <p>EF explained there are 2 new intern roles – 1 for comms and events and 1 for projects. EF reflected the projects intern, Taz, has been working with NUREN for a proposal for black history month, looking at survey data on membership of NUREN, and is conducting scoping work with Rainbow regarding the workplace equality index.</p> <p>EF explained that 3 chairs have stepped down from: NU Women, NU Carers, and NU Parents. EF also reflected the possibility of an additional chair stepping down from DIG.</p> <p>EF expressed there have been several handover conversations with outgoing chairs, particularly capturing their views regarding recruitment for new chair(s), barriers, as well as tips for a new chair coming in, and priorities for the year ahead. EF is encouraging a co-chair model moving forward for all networks, particularly for those who are looking for a new chair. EF reflected that sharing responsibility can improve time management, responsiveness, debate and decision making, succession planning, and career development/peer support. EF reported there has been a call out for expressions of interest, some Uni wide and some locally.</p> <p>EF explained priorities include NU Carers and DIG. DIG will have 2 new co-chairs. EF expressed excitement to welcome new colleague for NU Parents co-chair. EF reported NU Women is the only network without a chair or co-chair currently and reflected she is supporting NU Women to shape goals for the summer and beyond. EF encouraged feedback for ideas regarding</p>	

	<p>targeted engagement to seek a possible chair/co-chair role. LN suggested to ask about Aurora alumni could provide a useful pool of candidates.</p> <p>SA suggested contacting candidates from Leading Through Values, promote as a development opportunity?</p> <p>LN recommended comms could express the benefits of the role whilst highlighting the shared responsibility component to encourage applicants.</p> <p>PB 1-1 reflected informal conversation with peers could be useful and encouraged attendees to explore possible chair/co-chair vacancies with colleagues.</p> <p>EF to share role description for NU Women chair/co-chair.</p> <p>SK leadership in SAgE – offered feedback for chair role description should include areas about how workloading will be arranged/is it recognised? EF responded guidance of 2-4 hours per week for one chair (co-chair could therefore have reduce time commitment).</p> <p>VP reflected time commitment is often bigger than planned, can this be considered with line manager before beginning a role? EF encouraged conversation with line manager ahead of any application for co-chair/chair and discuss possible time commitment.</p> <p>RB reflected conversations with people interested in NU Parents, common themes come back about leadership in faculty first. Reflected there can be more visibility in their respective faculty in terms of progression.</p> <p>EF reflected opportunity to change and evolve the network using the feedback from members and new chairs.</p> <p>BM-K thanked EF for the work with the interns and expressed that EF has been incredibly helpful. BM-K reflected an annual report could highlight the different work completed via networks and championing the positive impact of being a network chair. Recommended promotion of opportunities via NU Connections.</p> <p>JR reflected on leadership discussion, asking if people would be happy to share their experiences e.g. citizenship. JR discussed the possibility of talking heads to discuss development as a leader etc. Show some examples of being a chair, how has it contributed to promotions. LN reflected this can be explored in future discussions separately.</p>	EF
8	<p>Update from SU Equality and Welfare Officer</p> <p>AI not present.</p>	

<p>9</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>SK reflected meeting with PDRA's who were part of research culture action group. Reflected they are active and can provide feedback. LN reflected on the benefit of managing volunteers and linkup for action plans. SK reflected the group have a special interest in wellbeing and mental health, making them a good group to approach for feedback.</p> <p>VP reflected new Inclusive Futures Programme will be launched. She would like to bring a speaker in at different points throughout the programme. The programme covers all 9 protected characteristics and a speaker would be an internal person initially. VP requested details of people with lived experiences of benefiting from development programmes and the benefits. VP requested any ideas for possible speakers to reach out to VP directly.</p> <p>JR reflected requirement for communications regarding the group's name change. JR asked for ideas regarding comms.</p> <p>BM-K reflected Rainbow Network will be marching as part of pride on Sat 22nd July.</p>	
<p>11</p>	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>20.9.23 from 2-3:30pm in KG 5.13.</p>	

ACTIONS LOG

No.	Action	By whom
1	Create slides on Athena Swan for EB members to take to FEBs and SMTs to cascade request for logging of activities by senior leaders.	KJ & PB, Sep
2	PB to seek clarity on whether we need to make any amendments regarding students in the Athena Swan action plan.	KJ & PB, Sep
3	Rolling agenda item for Athena Swan, discussion of action points where necessary and update regarding development of combined AS/REC Tracker.	KJ & YP, Sep
4	Discuss feedback from colleagues about group name change.	JR, Sep
5	Updates from EDI Network chairs.	BM-K, Sep
6	Update from SU Equality and Welfare Officer.	AI, Sep