RESEARCH STAFF FORUM
Tuesday 17 October 2017, 12 noon – 2pm (with lunch provided at 11.30am)
Room 1, Wolfson Research Exchange, Library
Chair: Sandy Sparks

Meeting Notes

1. Present:
Felix Achana (FA,WMS), David Armstrong (DA, Physics), Elisabeth Arweck (EA,CES), Helen Ascroft (HA, WMG), Jane Cooper (JC, LDC, Notes), Samantha Flynn (SF, CEDAR), Elizabeth Harrison (ER, HR), Erika Kispeter (EK, IER), Hadi Moztarzadeh (HM, WMG), Steve Ranford (SR,ITS, speaker), Deepak Parashar (DP, WMS), Erick Ratamero (ER, WMS), Sharifah Sekalala (SSE, Law, Research Committee Rep), Sandy Sparks (SSP LDC, Chair), Stephanie Tierney (ST, WMS), Amber Thomas (AT, IT, speaker), Becky Vipond (BV, IAS), Caroline Whitehouse (CW, Engineering).

Apologies:
Sandra Beaufoy (Equality and Diversity), Deborah Biggerstaff (WMS), Mairi-Ann Cullen (CEDAR), Catherine Jones (PAIS).

SSP explained to the forum that the Research Staff Forum commenced before she started working in the Learning and Development Centre (2009) when it was particularly relevant to early career researchers. It remit then became wider to include Research Active Staff (staff on research, academic and teaching t&c’s). It is an opportunity for RAS to meet once a term, a two way communication process – informing what is happening within the University, a RAS staff member from the forum sits on the University’s Research Committee The membership consists of representatives of departments or those who have achieved Research Active Staff (RAS) Network Funding. RSF is an opportunity to share practice and learn about what support and resources are available, for example Elizabeth Harrison is here from HR to update us on new policies. We focus on different topics, we’ve invited Impact Officers, representatives from Promotions Committee and today IT Services (Amber and Steve) are here to talk about Digital Humanities and the initiatives ITS run to support researchers. We rotate the chairing of these meetings to give researchers the opportunity to practice chairing meetings in a safe environment.

Attendees introduced themselves.

2. Actions from Minutes of previous meeting – 23 May 2017
   • Research Committee Deputy Representative
     We need to carry forward from last RSF the selection of a deputy (or deputies) for the Research Committee representative - Sharifah Sekalala is the representative. Both Stephanie Tierney and Elisabeth Arweck are keen to be considered.

   • Diversity and Inclusion
     Mairi-Ann Cullen has a role as Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) representative in CEDAR and is happy to attend the University’s D&I Committee and provide feedback to the
Research Staff Forum (RSF).

- **Brexit**
  Dates to be shared  
  How is Warwick Supporting Staff – Nicky Harris had no update.  
  Webpage: [Brexit Guidance for Staff](#)  
  **ACTION:** Nicky Harris to follow up

- **Demystifying the Promotion Process**
  Feedback on previous workshops, comment around the three t&c’s (1) Research, (2) Academic, (3) Teaching. Academic and Teaching were covered well but it was felt researchers needs were not met. Highlighted that needs of all target markets need to be considered not just academics. In addition to sharing this feedback SSP suggested additional alternatives. If people are interested/keen to create an Action Learning set (ALS) or assist creating a buddy/Mentoring group which could help/support each other with promotion and next career stages.  
  **ACTION:** SSP to share with Louise Kindon  
  All – RAS to consider ideas/options

- **Communications to Heads of Departments**
  Communications with Steerings – how are they shared with Heads of Department so that are aware and can cascade the information down department staff?  
  **ACTION:** Nicky Harris to follow up

- **Request for information on IT Technology**
  SR and AT are giving a presentation at this meeting.

- **Clarity was sought by departments on procedure when travelling on University Business**
  Different practices in different departments. EH started that there is a ‘blanket’ policy which covers all staff when travelling on University Business.  
  **Webpage – University Insurance**

  SSE drew to the forum attention that this is problematic for pregnant women and staff with young children. SSP advised to approach your HR advisor, everybody’s circumstances are different.

  If you have any queries around insurance and what is and what isn’t covered - a good contact is Brian Brookes in the Insurance Office.  
  **ACTION:** EH to discuss with Sandra Beaufoy in Diversity and Inclusion.

- **Draft Report to the Research Committee (Mairi-Ann Cullen)**
  Looking at the support and benefits of the RSF. Waiting for the appropriate time because the University, the PVC for Research and the Research Committee are looking at the University’s Research Strategy and policies.  
  **ACTION** MC to action when appropriate

- **List of Department Representatives**
  In the process of updating, information going to Chairs of Faculties and Heads of Departments to enable them to nominate staff to be involved.
ACTION: LDC to promote opportunity to departments & Jane Cooper update any new RSF members

3. Update from Department Research Reps; Network Leads; Current Issues and Events

- Deepak Parashar – WMS
  Network Lead: WMS Medical Statistics and Journal Club
  I lead the WMS Medical Statistics and Journal Club, essentially to do with reading a state of the art paper(s) or discussing topics of interest to members of the network which can be very useful to the rest of the club. Discussions are very informal. Feedback we have received is that it’s a very lively atmosphere, despite the highly technical subjects. This is the 6th year this network has run.

- Caroline Whitehouse – Engineering
  I’ve only been at the University a couple of months, so I’ve come along to find out what’s happening in other areas of the University.

- Hadi Moztarzadeh – WMG
  Researchers breakfast events at WMG, I gave a talk at the WMG’s researchers forum about our approach towards research-informed teaching, especially on postgraduate level. Additive manufacturing/3D printing capabilities at WMG; we would be interested to collaborate with other disciplines to make use of this innovative technology and develop solutions for different sectors. We have already been collaborating with different research groups at WMG as well as external partners and would be happy to support other disciplines/faculties across University. I have copied Dr Greg Gibbons, head of Additive Layer Manufacturing group at WMG, for info.

- Erika Kispeter - IER
  Network Lead: Connecting Research on Employment and Work (CREW)
  Organised a conference for a journal which has, potentially, generated a substantial income. Our new Director is Ania Zbyszewska in the Law School. Very busy, 25 October 2017 and 3 November discussing Warwick Brexit Briefing (looking at work and employment).

- Helen Ascroft - WMG
  Network Lead: WMG Researcher Forum
  WMG Researcher Forum has been running a long time, always changing members on the committee. New teaching fellow on committee so we’re bridging the gap between teaching and research staff in WMG. Breakfast meetings have some external speakers, training initiatives. New staff come to breakfast meetings to find out about resources etc. In January the HR department in WMG are going to speak about the promotion process, staff also present on their research.

- Felix Achana – WMS
  Network Lead: Health Economics Journal Club
  We work across various sectors within the medical school, the journal club is an
opportunity for us to network. People are busy and the only time they see each other is through the journal club. At the journal club we have two structures which run throughout the whole year – we have a mixture of book chapters and journal articles where one person will take the lead and we also run seminars where we invite external speakers and internal staff to present work they are developing. Been here 3 years and it’s a really young group, we have professors but most of us are very junior. Most members are personally developing and they get the opportunity to present to others for which they receive constructive feedback. Inviting external speakers help us establish links with other groups outside the University.

- Samantha Flynn - CEDAR
  Network Lead: Education and Psychology Research Active Network (EPRAN)
  I have updates on CEDAR (representing RAS staff on behalf of Mairi-Ann Cullen) and am co-chair of the Education and Psychology Research Active Network (EPRAN). I would like to thank LDC for their funding.

  In terms of CEDAR – we had the Unconscious Bias training by Sandy. 3hr session, we implemented all the actions from the training immediately as we were due to short list for a Research Fellow – the timing was excellent. A new Research Fellow starts early November.

  In terms of the Education and Psychology Research Active Network (EPRAN). We’ve got a Parenting Conference on 7 November which is now fully booked. Two seminars which are open to staff and students one on 8th February which is on Mental Health Intervention for Children with Autism (Speaker Prof. Neil Humphrey from Manchester University). On 8 May Commissioning of Autism Education Services (Louise Denne, Senior Research Fellow, CEDAR).

- Erick Ratamero - WMS
  Not representing anyone, on a fact-finding mission. WMS is so exciting, so many people with so many different backgrounds. I was very interested in coming and seeing what’s being done.

- Stephanie Tierney – WMS
  Network Lead: Qualitative and Mixed Methods Interest Group (QMIG)
  Going into 4th year. Originally for members of WMS, but now it’s open to anybody interested in Qualitative and Mixed Methods (PhD students or staff). Over 100 people on our mailing list – wide span of people from different departments. We try to run a session lasting about 90 minutes on topics requested at the beginning of the term. Just had a session on Phil-nomology, in December we’re running a session on Creative Methods to Collecting Data and in January we’re running a session on met-ethnography.

- Sharifah Sekalala – Law
  Research Committee Rep
1. **Update from the newly created Institute on Sustainable Development**

The university is creating an Institute for Sustainable Development in the wake of its unsuccessful bids for Global Challenges Funding. The Centre has already been established and will be launched this autumn.

There is a discussion of some posts (sustainable development) which departments could bid on. The ideas is that the university would leverage 50 percent of the funding and buy out the post holders time into the Institute of Sustainable Development and the department would put up the other half. Interested departments may be asked to add it to their ARC bids for the sustainable development institute. It will go to faculty boards so there will be further discussion.

There was also a suggestion that take up is still very low, and members felt that departments which were not involved should be encouraged to apply. Can the law school contribute in this area especially with its track record on ODA funding?

**What are the mechanisms for discussing the Institute for Sustainable Development more widely?**

The idea is to proceed through consultation on research strategy, HODS forum, faculty meetings and the department of inter disciplinary studies.

2. **University Research Strategy**

Warwick is refreshing its Research Strategy under new senior university management. Research will still be more devolved but there is a sense that they would like more oversight at the centre of the university. There are seven potential pillars of this strategy.

1. People at the forefront of it
2. World class research
3. Impact
4. Interdisciplinary
5. Infrastructure
6. Influence in the knowledge economy
7. Income

There was a discussion that people are critical to this vision so we need to ensure that we are recruiting and retaining better research talent. One of the areas in which we could do more is to nominate early and mid-career members of staff for awards and prizes at appropriate stages. A lot of work would need to be done at the departmental level on this. There is an idea that the university will create database so that we can create profiles and nominate people over time. One of the pro vice chancellors is working on this and will present a paper in due course.
Secondly, we need to work on greater equality and inclusion in order to ensure that researchers are going through out progression pathways in the right way.

We have world class research; should we create themes in order to showcase this research. At the moment, they are suggestions that our research should fall under the themes of 1. Sustainability, 2. Globalisation 3. Behaviours and cultures and States.

We need to map how our research centres map onto GRPs and then how these in turn map onto star researchers across the university

3. Research Impact and Innovation
Impact in the REF has increased to 25 percent. Resourcing has increased in RIS, Impact Advisory is working well Warwick ventures is moving to become Warwick innovation to get further to social sciences
We are leveraging our partnerships with ATI, Farraday and Monash but it is inconsistent across departments. We need to have a wider integration of WMG into the university.

New research communications officer and so there is now more consistency in getting stories out and getting them through university machinery

REF
No updates and questions on funding specifically for REF but there will be some investment

1, Adhoc positions in order to attract funding in order to start making the case for REF

2, Money for impact etc.

- Elisabeth Arweck – CEDAR

EA asked for thanks to be passed the team that organised the activities for the staff who were marking in the summer. There was a wide range of activities offered which enabled people to takes breaks from this demanding job.

EA used to co-organise the Network for Education but it became harder and harder to bring people together. EA is thinking of organising a Network around religion; if anybody is interested, pls let her know. 
CES’s new Director is now in place (since 1 Sept). CES has gone through some turnover of staff in recent months, especially with support staff. The post of departmental secretary has been vacant since the summer.
CES had a departmental away day and the second Islamic Education Summer School in late September. One of the topics discussed during the away day was workload, which was followed up with forms that staff were asked to complete. The details asked for were mainly relevant to teaching staff.
EA raised the way research proposals are handled within the CES and centrally. 
SSP drew to the forum’s attention that this had been mentioned at the Institutional Training Needs Analysis. Before the summer break a lot of researchers asked her on
their behalf to say that previously there was a lot of really good initiatives around training and development in departments around processes, what you need to do. Basically they wanted back what they used to have and SSP was championed to challenge the director and her team. A really good discussion, SSP said she wanted what she used to have please and they agreed with no hesitation. What also came out of the discussion was that Amber and Steve could do a session on What we have to offer, and followed on with longer sessions with a combination of different topics. 

**ACTION:** SSP to take this forward.

- **David Armstrong – Physics**
  Network Lead: Centre for Exoplanets and Habitability Research Network
  Representing the new Centre for Exoplanets and Habitability. We have a wide range of departments being represented (Physics, Life Sciences, Philosophy, History, Psychology, Film Studies). We have several events organised the first one being on 20 November with Mark Bould from Bristol: Science fiction in Films and portrayal. Open to anybody.
  SSP stated that of the 9 Networks for 2017/2018 four or five are new.

- **Becky Vipond – Institute of Advanced Study**
  We’ve a new Director Peter Scott changes to IAS funding. We run several funding schemes which may be of interest to you, we support various parts of the Academic Process. We have some funding with our research networks, a very popular visiting fellowship programme and we do support people with large research grants which involves bringing a consortium of people together. All information on the website which is updated regularly. Fellowships open at the moment which is sponsored by Marie-Curie Actions and the European Commission and is open to people who have resided on the UK for less than 12 months in the last 3 years.

- **Elizabeth Harrison - HR**
  A few of things:
  Merit Pay: at the last meeting Nicky was talking about merit pay and the process was just about to commence. Merit pay will be paid to nominated and successful staff in November, letters will be distributed very soon. Departments have more flexibility, recipients can swap it for annual leave or learning vouchers.

  New HR System: still testing, due anytime soon.

  Flu jab: now being advertised on Insite. Starts on 25 October 2017 and payment is through your salary.
BREXIT – we have employed an Italian member of staff in Italy on a project that Warwick is running. Complete nightmare because we can’t employ people as we do any other member of staff because they aren’t going to spend any time in the UK. We are currently putting together a policy on employing overseas nationals abroad. As the policy develops I’ll share it with you.

- Sandy Sparks – LDC
  Copy of SSP’s one page handout presented at the RSF
  Impact Reports: SSP has been involved in a series of impact reports.
  1 RAS Network Funding Impact reports are on the RAS/LDC webpages; an overview of the funding over the last 5 years, also summary of the funding and which departments received funding. Also a year report and a five year report.
  2 Preparing for Leadership Impact reports: the next course is taking place on 8 and 15 November, an overview on the benefits of the different cohorts, how it helped individuals.
  3 SSP is working on four other impact reports and these will be shared over the next couple of months.

Shared Practice – SSP presented at an international conference in September, which was about Researcher Developer Showing Impact, very exciting because international visitors from Turkey, Luxemburg and Spain were very interested in the initiatives that were being achieved at Warwick and how we measured impact.

Network Funding: 9 networks have been funded, there is a link on the web to all nine networks and you’ve heard from some of them today.

Preparing for Leadership: 8 and 15 November. Closing date **30 October**

Research Staff Forum: Looking at how we can increase membership


- Deputy Representative for Research Committee:
  Stephanie Tierney and Elizabeth Arweck both volunteered, SSP proposed both go forward to attend when Sharifah is unable to attend.

4 **Date and Chair of Next Meeting**

The next Research Staff Forum meeting will be held on 27 February 2018. SSP asked for volunteers to chair the next meeting, EA stated she was happy to chair the meeting if no other volunteers came forward.

5 **Presentation by IT Services – Steve Ranford and Amber Thomas**

To view the presentation please visit the Research Staff Forum Resource Bank Page. Many thanks to Steve and Amber for their presentation.