RESEARCH STAFF FORUM
THURSDAY 24 MAY 2018, 12 NOON – 2PM (WITH LUNCH PROVIDED)
WOLFSON 3, WOLFSON RESEARCH EXCHANGE, THE LIBRARY
CHAIR: SANDY SPARKS
MEETING NOTES

1 Present:
Felix Achana (FA, WMS), Elizabeth Arweck (EA, CES), Helen Ascroft (HA, WMG), Jane Cooper (JC, Notes, LDC), Deborah Harris (DH, HR), Reza Jalilikashtiban (RJ, Physics), Naomi Kay (NK, Engagement Office, presenter), Mandy Maredza (MM, WMS), Beth Middleton (BM, WMG), Stephanie Panichelli-Batalla (SP-B Global Sustainable Development), Deepak Parashar (DP, WMS), Sharifah Sekalala (SSe, Law), Sandy Sparks (SS, Chair, LDC), Vicky Strudwick (VS, Strategy and Policy), Sarah Wilson (SW, Engineering).

Apologies:
Deborah Biggerstaff (WMS), Mairi-Ann Cullen (CEDAR), Vannessa Goodship (WMG).

SS welcomed everybody to the Research Staff Forum (RSF) especially the new-comers and explained that normally we rotate the position of chair to give researchers the chance to gain experience of chairing meetings. The chair for today’s meeting was Deborah Biggerstaff, however, she is unwell and has forwarded her apologies. In her absence SS will chair the meeting.

SS outlined the purpose of the RSF. Firstly, we ask for questions/concerns and/or feedback from departments and networks leads – the opportunity of the two-way process, to share the initiatives/activities that are happening in your department. We have RSF representatives from two University Committees, Sharifah Sekalala, sits on the University’s Researcher Committee and Mairi-Ann Cullen sits on the Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Committee. Unfortunately, Mairi-Ann is unable to attend today. Networks leads are attendees who have been successful in obtaining Networking Funding and support staff also attend from HR etc.

SS informed the forum that today’s focus is on The Public Engagement Team – Naomi Kay (Engagement Officer), from the Public Engagement Team is here to talk about the Public Engagement Team, the support they give, and who they are and what they offer.

2 Actions and Amendments from Previous meeting – 27 February 2018

Diversity and Inclusion (page 1)
Mairi-Ann Cullen (M-AC) is now the Diversity and Inclusion representative, replacing Sandra Beaufoy. M-AC recently attended the University’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Unfortunately M-AC is unable to attend today, but will send an update from the University’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee (bullet points to follow).

Demystifying the Promotions Process (page 2)
There is now a new promotions process. There have been two briefings outlining the new promotions process. DPR’s have now incorporated some of the criteria that staff are measured on in promotions.
**Newsletter (for RAS, for Information groups)**

SS brought to the forums attention GDPR. The University has felt that the newsletter you receive is part of the requirement for your role so it will still be sent to you. If you do not wish to receive the newsletter please let JC know. Several recipients of the newsletter are ‘for information only’ (eg. Support staff), if they wish to continue to receive the letter they are required to ‘opt in’.

SS mentioned the university’s privacy statement – this is now available and a shorted version of this appears on all future RAS workshops webpage and booking form.

SS discussed Athena Swan highlighting we have an institutional Athena Swan, together with bronze and silver at department levels. As bronze (intent – what they are planning to do), silver (what they’ve done and can evidence it) and gold (sharing practice – a beacon of excellence). Over the years it has become harder to get and maintain Athena Swan awards. The Athena Swan re-submission of the Institutional award application has now been re-written and submitted. SS for asked for continued input with regards to Network Funding and Leadership programmes impact reports - as used in previous submissions as an exemplar in HE excellence.

**Update from Department Research Representatives, Network Leads, Current Events and Issues.**

**Reza Jalilikashtiban – Physics**

We had an event regarding early career and research staff. The event called “Fellowship Opportunities for Early Career Researchers” was targeted early career researchers within the Faculty of Science and organised by Dr Roger Singleton Escofet Research Strategy and Development Manager for the Faculty of Science and attended by approximately 70 researchers. Roger presented a presentation introducing different Fellowship schemes available for ECR in different stage of their career and of different science background. Three successful fellows answered questions at the end of the event.

**Elizabeth Arweck – CES**

EA is noted as being a member of CEDAR, she should have been listed as a member of CES, this has been amended.

EA requested the wording in the February notes be amended to ‘Introduced herself and provided an update for the Forum’ - this has been amended.

A Renewal Strategy is underway. The Research Officer is currently on secondment. The post of Director of Research is in abeyance. The RSF is no longer on the agenda of departmental meetings. The grading of the first round of REF submissions has taken place and staff received feedback. Regarding research funding proposals, the University now seems to require research income which covers all economic costs, which presents significant challenges.

**ACTION:** SS to contact R&IS for clarification and also suggested it be discussed at the next RSF. SS commented she is aware researchers had been required to attend meetings to discuss their achievements and plans with their line managers. Some researchers have found this useful, others stressful.

**Deepak Parashar - WMS**

A number of funding streams have changed in the last couple of years, they no longer fall within a PI or Warwick Lead categories. There have been instances where researchers have obtained an external grant but it was part of the Institutional bid. Very few senior
professors appreciate the new procedures and give full credit whereas others, especially those in a position of authority do not. The researchers are classed as Academic Lead because they are leading the project but are caught out in the system since they are not PIs in spite of external bodies and the MRC awarding the money, meaning we’re left in a grey area which doesn’t help with promotions etc. The recommendation, therefore, is to update the system to include project academic leads and apprise senior managers to recognise the researchers’ contributions.

Network: WMS Medical Statistics Book and Journal Club
6th year running. Most of my colleagues are statisticians doing methodology as well as applied research. Ran 6 sessions so far, had PhD students presenting, we had 2 external speakers present and are holding a workshop in June. We are finishing off with a joint workshop with the CTU in July. Funding issues limit us from getting more external speakers.

Beth Middleton/Helen Ascroft – WMG
Network: WMG Researcher Forum
For May’s WMG monthly forum meeting, Sandy had delivered a session on creativity in presenting our research work, and in the next upcoming meetings we have a tour of 3xD Simulator (with technical talk) in June, then in July we are running an interactive session on what research staff want from next year’s meetings (e.g. types of presentations, times/frequency of meetings etc.) I also mentioned that attendance to our meetings has dropped in the last few months and that we need to think of new ways to reach out the WMGs RAS.

Felix Achana/Mandy Achana – WMS
Network: Health Economics Journal Club
The health economics journal club seems to be capturing a much wider audience from the Medical School who are not health economists. The last seminar had 19 participants and we have had other sessions with similar numbers. Previously, the sessions were mostly attended by health economists within WMS and average attendance was 12. We attribute some of this popularity to diversity of topics that are being presented especially by external speakers and active networks between ourselves and other groups within the Medical School.

Sarah Wilson - Engineering
I’ve recently taken a secondment as a Research officer in Engineering and am not aware of any Networks in Engineering.
SS commented historically there were Engineering Networks. Recently SS has met with Engineering because they were looking at some initiatives and ideas.

Sharifah Sekalala - Law
The Law School doesn’t have research only staff but we have been preparing for the REF and have discussed contacting the REF panel about our concerns on potential discrimination if there is no specific allowance for people who take leave for special circumstances and rely instead on lower outputs.

University’s Research Staff Committee
The last meeting for cancelled so nothing to report to the forum.

Stephanie Panichelli–Batalla - Global Sustainable Development
Network: Oral History Network
The workshop led to academic researchers using oral history in Latin America and the Caribbean coming together. It offered an opportunity for discussion and for future collaboration. We had an attendance of approximately 15 people (including two undergraduate students too). The LDC funding allowed for an existing network on Oral History and Cuba to broaden up to a network on Oral History in Latin America and the Caribbean, including national and international colleagues (Cuba, Venezuela, Chile, the United States, Belgium, Cape Verde, among others).

It also allowed to carry out an initial meeting between Prof. Ana Vera and myself about an upcoming joint grant application. We are considering the GCRF (networking) research grant, and plan to apply when the call for funding opens up. This initial meeting has allowed us to come up with a project, on which we both need to continue working in order to be ready once the call for proposals is published.

**Vicky Strudwick – Strategy and Policy**

“The [International Strategy and Relations team](#) supports the University community in building and developing its international engagements, both at an institutional and a disciplinary level. We administer [internal seed funds](#) to support individual researchers to build collaborations with their overseas counterparts in areas of strategic importance for the University and gather/disseminate intelligence to academic departments about [international collaborative funding opportunities](#). We also help to coordinate the University’s relationships with key university partners, governments, Embassies and funders in Europe, China, SE Asia, Australia (through the [Monash Warwick Alliance](#)), India and the Americas. [We can help](#) with the development of legal frameworks for collaboration, as well as advice on hosting overseas visitors and developing partnerships more generally.”

**Deborah Harris – HR**

- **PDR** – launched last week, opportunity to engage with a quality conversation with your line-manager about development, performance and career objectives; not linked to pay

- **Merit pay** – scheme launched on Tuesday 15 May 2018 to all staff on Inbox Insite, information is available to all staff on the process can be found on the Merit pay webpage

- **Promotion Process** – for updates see the website.

- **Re-deployment** - University’s website gives help when contract coming to an end, approach your Departments HR advisor.

- **BREXIT** – University Guidelines are still available. There have been a couple of updates so worth visiting the University’s webpage again. Faculty of Sciences – Brexit pages for staff.

- **STP** - hourly paid and sessional teaching staff
  Engage with the relevant departments for sessional teaching for 2018/19
  Remember those who have visa restrictions in terms of working (paid and unpaid) that you monotony your hours

- **Success Factors** – about to be launched, HR and Finance System. Staff will be able to see their own personal record which details where they fit within the organisation,
personal information, absences, annual leave etc. Various roadshows have been run for staff.

4 Presentation by Naomi Kay from the Public Engagement team: ‘Warwick’s Public Engagement Team’. To view the presentation please visit the Research Staff Forum Resource Bank Page

5 LDC – Sandy Sparks

LDC, Learning and Development (L&D) provision for RAS. SS gets strategic direction from the Pro Vice Chancellor of Research indicating what the senior leadership would like to focus on, e.g. leadership. Also we ask what L&D support/opportunities do research, academics and teaching staff need to help them with their career development.

SS circulated a one pager document which outlines a couple of initiatives which are happening between now and end of July. SS commented she has been approached to attend the Academic Staff Committee (the committee that’s involved with promotions) to present an Unconscious Bias workshop regarding promotions. New this year, we are running a ‘follow up’ workshop for everybody who has attended the Leadership in Action programme. Again new this year, we are running an Autism Awareness workshop which takes place on 26 June which includes the topics Autism awareness, how would you work with colleagues who have Asperger’s or are on the Autism spectrum. In July there is also Academic Bootcamp Retreat. SS communicated to the forum she is doing some bespoke work in the Medical School, an away day on Emotional Intelligence and another on Strengths Profiling.

We have a budget of £28,000 per annum. This is to provide learning and development support/opportunities for Research, Academic and Teaching staff (from new academic year Research focused, Teaching focused and Research & Teaching focused). SS circulated a Summary Report sharing achievements to date for 2017-18, showing statistics for all LDC/RAS workshops, sharing practice, successes for charter marks (Athena Swan, Race Equality charter); areas covered:

Quality Information – Newsletter/Website/Resource Bank pages
Funding – Network Funding.
Events – Workshops, Leadership Programmes, Career Development (One to One support, Mock Interviews).
Skills – Academic Writing, One to One Support, Bootcamp, Collaborative events.

SS is the University’s lead for Unconscious Bias (workshop take place termly), we do a lot of bespoke work (away facilitations for departments). We also have specialist one to ones (Emotional Intelligence, Myers-Briggs (MBTI), Strengths Profiling) together with a Coaching and Mentoring scheme specifically for RAS. SS is also a coach on the Warwick Leadership Programme. We have collaboration around Research Data Management (run jointly with the Library and Student Career and Skills), Open Access (with the Library) and Planning Your Publication Strategy run jointly with the Library and Student Career and Skills). New this year a series of Public Engagement workshop (with the Public Engagement Team). SS is also involved with the Plotina project (contact: Charoula Tzanakou, Charikleia.Tzanakou@warwick.ac.uk). For your information there is a Summer school on peer reviewing (as part of a European Collaboration) in September two days for Arts and Humanities and two for Science with a days’ writing in the middle. SS is also the University’s dignity contact and also leads the University’s Mediation Scheme.
**Action:**
SS asked the forum if there are any needs/wants for next year. SS requested needs/thoughts/ideas be emailed to her or Jane (researcherqueries@warwick.ac.uk).

**Next Meeting**
Date: 25 October 2018 (provisional)
Time: 12 Noon – 2pm (lunch available from 11.30am)
Venue: Research Exchange, The Library.
Chair: We rotate the Chair of the Research Staff Forum to give people the opportunity to practice in a safe environment. If you would like to take advantage of this opportunity please make Sandy or Jane aware of this.