



April 2014

Chemistry Athena SWAN News

Athena SWAN Gold Award Re-submission

After the re-submission made in April 2013, the Department was informed that its due date for the re-submission would in fact be November 2013, so a revised and updated re-submission for renewal of Chemistry's Gold Award was made on 30 November 2013.

In the last round of awards, made in September 2013 (arising from the April 2013 submission) the Chemistry department of Imperial College London gained Athena SWAN Gold status, becoming only the fourth department to achieve a Gold award. The University of Warwick became only the fourth recipient of an institutional Athena SWAN Silver award.

More details and information about the awards and the Charter are available on the Athena SWAN website at <http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/>

Chemistry Athena SWAN webpage

The Chemistry Department's Athena SWAN webpage has been updated with the latest case studies and material from the Gold Award re-submission. See:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/chemistry/department/athenaswan/>

Action Plan update

In order to implement the ambitious Action Plan drawn up as part of the Gold Award re-submission, the Athena SWAN working group will meet six times a year and work in smaller groups to focus on specific areas of the Action Plan – in addition to having a full AS Working Group meeting once a term.

The Department's AS Action Plan will be made available on the Chemistry Intranet; if anyone is interested in a specific area of the Action Plan please contact Helen Coombs (helen.coombs@york.ac.uk) to find out about the relevant meeting/s if you wish to attend.

Boycott raises awareness of gender discrimination in professional meetings

Well over a thousand scientists signed a petition protesting against gender discrimination at a forthcoming flagship chemistry conference and calling for a boycott of the event. The programme for the **15th International Congress of Quantum Chemistry (ICQC)** - to be held in Beijing in June next year - was published on the conference website listing 24 invited speakers, 5 chairs and honorary chairs, not one of which was female.

ICQC is a triannual flagship conference conducted under the auspices of the International Academy of Quantum Molecular Science (IAQMS). The response to the boycott prompted an apology by the chairman of the IAQMS, sent to the petition organisers, and an official apology on the conference website (<http://www.icqc2015.org/dct/page/1>)

The current provisional list now includes six females out of a total of 33 invited speakers.

This webpage summarises recent developments and highlights news/blog coverage:

http://iopenshell.usc.edu/wtc/ICQC/icqc_story.html

Parliamentary report on women in science highlights need for improvement

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee published its report on "Women in Scientific Careers" on 6 February 2014. Key points arising from the report are:

- the UK economy needs more STEM workers and this demand cannot be met without increasing the numbers of women;
- despite clear imperatives and multiple initiatives to improve diversity in STEM, women still remain under-represented at senior levels across every discipline;
- there is no single explanation for the lack of gender diversity in STEM; it is the result of perceptions and biases combined with the impracticalities of combining a career with family;
- scientists often consider themselves to be objective and unbiased, yet studies have shown that scientists are susceptible to the same biases as the rest of the population;
- the Government is called upon to work with the higher education sector to review the academic career structure and increase the number of longer-term positions for post-doctoral researchers;
- disappointment is expressed at cuts on diversity spending by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, and the Government is called upon to monitor the effects of this policy.

Read the full report at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmsctech/701/701.pdf>

An interesting quote from the report...

"Scientists are susceptible to the same unconscious gender biases as the rest of the population and it is unfortunate that some are unwilling to accept this simply because their professional research requires them to be objective."

Gender and the REF

Or indeed "Sex and the REF" as it is actually referred to in this recent THE article -

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/sex-and-the-ref/2012076.article>

- which asks whether or not research assessment discriminates against female academics. Although the results of the REF are not yet published, it is feared that the imbalance noted in the 2008 RAE may well be replicated to some extent in the REF.

A 2009 report published by HEFCE (*Selection of Staff for Inclusion in RAE 2008*) showed that there were more men than women eligible to be submitted to the 2008 RAE, and that they were also more likely to

be selected. The chance of a permanent female academic being selected for RAE 2008 was 48 per cent, whereas for men the selection rate was 67 per cent, and the gender gap persisted even after other factors were taken into account. The HEFCE report suggested that this could “be linked to selection bias resulting from age and gender”, but that “it could equally be a result of deeply rooted inequalities in the research careers of men and women”.

A report by the Equality Challenge Unit cited “gender occupational segregation, both horizontal in terms of disciplines and vertical in terms of academic grades and research experience; work-life balance issues; a tendency for women to have greater teaching, pastoral care and administrative working loads compared with their male colleagues; and lower application rates for research funding” as possible factors affecting the low submission of women to the RAE. The report also made several specific recommendations, which were taken on board by HEFCE in the lead-up to the REF. It remains to be seen what effect they may have had on REF.

RCUK success rates – statistics by age group and gender

For statistics on success rates with RCUK by age group and gender see the following links:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/diversity/>

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/skills/Grantsawardedandsuccessrates.pdf>

A Chemical Imbalance

A recent short documentary (available online) made in association with the Royal Society of Chemistry and the University of Edinburgh’s School of Chemistry serves as a neat summary of why the Athena SWAN agenda matters. Watch “A Chemical Imbalance” at - <http://chemicalimbalance.co.uk/>

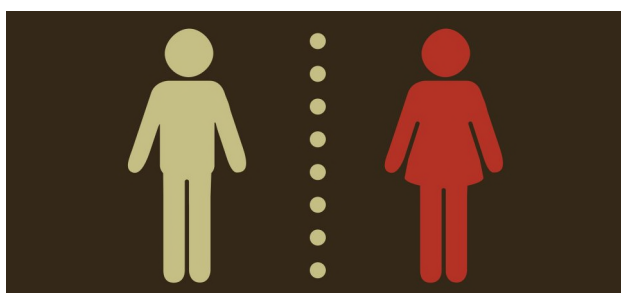
Among other issues, it highlights the fact that over 40 years after the Equal Pay Act came into force in Britain, women still earn on average 14.9% less than their male counterparts, and that if progress towards equality continues at the same pace it will take another 70 years to achieve parity.

Ending unfairness in hiring practices...

Unconscious bias (UB) is the term used for the process by which we all rapidly sort others into different groups. This bias bypasses normal, rational thought. However fair we might think we are, all of us hold levels of UB, sometimes even being biased against the groups we ourselves are in. Even though UB is unconscious, it has a profound effect on the way we think consciously about others and how we evaluate them. The result is that we often favour those who look like us, behave like us and occupy the same group as us. At the same time we overlook those in different groups, underplaying their skills and abilities even if they are talented and able. We are particularly prone to the effects of UB during the recruitment and promotion of staff.

The prevailing bias in favour of males - affecting both male and female recruiting managers - is well documented, and has been the subject of a further recent study discussed in this article:

<http://www.inc.com/will-yakowicz/how-to-help-end-gender-bias-while-hiring.html>



The Chemistry Department is working on ways to eliminate the effects of UB in recruitment, selection and promotion. A crucial first step in this process is to increase awareness of UB in all those involved in these processes, and to this end training has been delivered, initially to academic group leaders. The Department's Athena SWAN action plan includes further training on UB, as part of the aims to continue to increase the percentage of female staff in academic and research posts.

... and in promotion processes

In a letter published on 20 February in the *Times Higher Education*, more than 50 Cambridge staff – among them heads of colleges and departments – appealed for a broader and more inclusive approach to academic appointments and promotions so that talented women stand a better chance of progressing to senior positions. Read more at:

http://universitybusiness.co.uk/News/staff_call_for_action_on%E2%80%A8_gender_progression

LGBT Scientists – Where are they and does it matter?

In early March, Dave Smith gave an invited lecture at University of Liverpool on the topic 'LGBT Scientists - Where are They and Does it Matter?'. This Flagship lecture was organised by the Faculty of Physical Sciences and the University's LGBT Staff/Postgraduate Group. Over 100 people from across the university and city attended, and listened to Dave discuss this 'hidden diversity' issue.

In the lecture, survey data were used to demonstrate the benefits of workplaces supporting LGBT staff, and noted how many such staff working in science although 'out' to friends and family are not in their workplaces. Supportive environments help staff engagement and happiness, and also provide a welcoming atmosphere for students who identify as LGBT, and particularly those who may be struggling with the 'coming out' process. The talk also explored ways in which LGBT scientists can have an impact and change the culture of their institutions.

Although many scientists believe that 'only the research matters', it was noted in the talk that it is vital to treat scientists as individuals, not just 'researchers', when building successful research teams. Diverse teams will come up with diverse solutions to challenging scientific problems.

The lecture was audio captured, and if you would like to listen to it, you can find it online at: <https://stream.liv.ac.uk/rn8w734q>. Dave is also happy to make the accompanying PowerPoint presentation available to anyone who would like a copy.



Daphne Jackson Fellowship in Chemistry at Kingston University

Applications are invited for a Sponsored Daphne Jackson Fellowship that will be hosted and partially sponsored by Kingston University. This fellowship is intended for individuals returning to the research area of Chemistry. The remaining funding will be secured by the Daphne Jackson Trust from an additional sponsor. **Closing date for applications is 30th April 2014.**

For further information please contact the Dean of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing (e.sim@kingston.ac.uk)

Daphne Jackson Fellowships

The Daphne Jackson Trust is dedicated to returning scientists, engineers, technologists and mathematicians to their careers following a break taken for family, caring or health reasons.



Daphne Jackson Fellowships offer STEM professionals wishing to return to a research career after a break of two or more years the opportunity to balance an individually tailored retraining programme with a challenging research project in a suitably supportive environment. For further details please visit www.daphnejackson.org

Fellowships are part-time over two years and consist of a challenging research project and at least 100 hours retraining per year. The unparalleled support offered by the Trust's Fellowship Advisors and administrative staff, coupled with mentoring and retraining provided during the Fellowship, give returners the confidence and skills they need to return successfully to research.

For further information before submitting an application please contact the Trust office on 01483 689166 or via email at djmft@surrey.ac.uk For further details about Kingston University please visit <http://www.kingston.ac.uk/>

Applicants should submit a CV and a personal statement explaining their career break and future career plans. The application should also outline the area of research interest and state the name and contact details of a potential supervisor in the relevant department (if known). Submission should be made by email to the Daphne Jackson Trust office at djmft@surrey.ac.uk stating clearly "Kingston University Chemistry Sponsored Fellowship Application."

National Women in Engineering Day – 23 June 2014

National Women in Engineering Day has been set up by the Women's Engineering Society (WES) to celebrate its 95th anniversary. The aim is to celebrate the work that women do in engineering, and to showcase the great engineering careers that are available for girls. - See more at: <http://www.nwed.org.uk/#sthash.xrlBOYRU.dpuf>

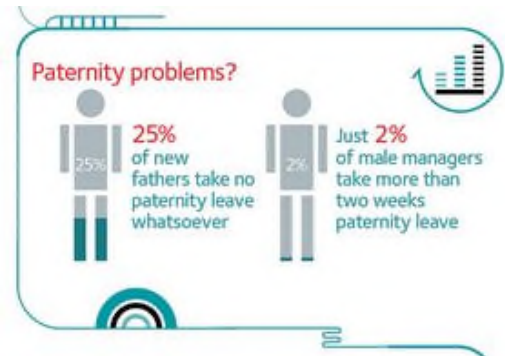
The organisers are calling on all groups (governmental, educational, corporate and others) to organise their own events in support of the day, and link them together for maximum impact (through the use of the NWED logo, website, and supporting resources) – so please share the information with anyone you know who may be interested. www.nwed.org.uk

Culture on paternity leave slow to change

A new report commissioned by the Institute of Management (ILM) entitled “Shared opportunity: parental leave in UK business” concludes that there remains a significant discrepancy between employees’ views and expectations of parental leave and the perceived views and expectations of employers.

New parental leave legislation comes into effect in early 2015, giving parents the option of sharing leave over the course of a year. Campaigners are hoping these new arrangements will encourage more men to share childcare, drive gender equality in the workplace, and eliminate discrimination around maternity leave. However, the limited uptake of Additional Paternity Leave (available since 2010) suggests that the discrepancies arise more from entrenched attitudes than the legislative framework.

After the birth or adoption of a child, 96% of new mothers take more than two weeks off work – but fewer than 10% of men take more than two weeks of paternity leave, falling to just 2% among managers.



The results of the ILM survey suggest that employers are seen to be more supportive of mothers taking up to a year’s maternity leave (63% supportive) than they are of fathers taking just two weeks paternity leave (58% supportive).

Recommendations arising from the report include:

Employers should recognise the importance of parental leave to diversity – as both sexes share parental leave more, the stigma surrounding it should diminish, as it ceases to be perceived as a right only for women, and this will be a vital element in keeping talented women on their chosen career path.

Employers should combat negative expectations on the part of staff by taking active steps such as:

- Proactive communication of the changes in parental leave legislation and what they will mean for staff, and clearly expressed support for the new arrangements;
- Male managers themselves taking at least the full two weeks’ paternity leave;
- Promoting internal case studies of men, particularly senior men, who have taken extended periods of parental leave;
- Flexible work planning to accommodate parental leave by both mothers and fathers, and ensuring that no employees are made to feel that their parental leave is disruptive to the workplace.

The report is discussed on the ILM’s website:

<https://www.i-l-m.com/Why-ILM/Research-reports/shared-parental-leave>

and is available in full at:

<https://www.i-l-m.com/~media/ILM%20Website/Documents/research-reports/shared-leave/ilm-shared-parental-leave-report%20pdf.ashx>