Welcome

Welcome to the University of Essex’s first Athena SWAN newsletter. Athena SWAN is a charter by the Equality Change Unit (ECU) that acknowledges good practice at British higher education in gender equality. This electronic newsletter will provide you with termly updates sharing news, helpful guidance and updates on our Athena SWAN work. If you would like to contribute something to this newsletter, by suggesting a resource that you have found useful, sharing information about events, or writing a few paragraphs about an approach that you are trying in your department that others might be interested in learning about please email Julia Greenwood.

Since September 2013 the University of Essex has held an institutional Athena SWAN Bronze Award which will be renewed in November 2017. Individual departments can apply for their own departmental awards.

University of Essex Institutional Award since Sept. 2013, renewal: Nov. 2017
Departmental Bronze Award Holders:
- Biological Sciences (Apr. 2014)
- Health and Human Sciences (Sept. 2015)
Silver Award Applicants:
- Biological Sciences (Nov 2016)
- Health and Human Sciences (Apr. 2017)
Bronze Award Applicants:
- Computer Science & Electronic Engineering (Nov. 2016)
- History (Nov. 2016)
- Mathematics (Nov. 2016)
- Psychology (Nov. 2016)

Julia Greenwood is the University’s Athena SWAN Lead. She supports all departmental Athena SWAN applications and is the main link between the University and the ECU sharing good practice across departments and bringing in experience from outside the University. Furthermore, Julia co-ordinates the University’s Institutional award and action plan. If you would like support or advice with your application please contact Julia.

As part of the University’s commitment to E&D within and beyond its community, Professor Aletta Norval is the University’s gender diversity champion.

Extension of the Awards

In November 2015 Athena SWAN was expanded to include non-STEMM subjects (e.g. arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law) as well as professional and support staff. The Charter now recognises work undertaken to address gender equality more broadly, and not just barriers to progression that affect women. Nearly 130 applications were received in November 2015 (Pre-May success rate: 68%; post-May success rate: 56%). A detailed summary of the May 2015 changes on institutional and department level is available on ECU’s website. Nearly 160 applications to the April 16 round have been received.

Gender Equality News & Information

- The EU Commission will provide a new online platform that informs about how to set up and implement gender balance plans at universities. It will be available from autumn 16 and will contain good practice collected in Europe and abroad (link to full article).
- The webpage www.gender-net.eu gives you information on promoting gender equality in research institutions and integration of the gender dimension in research contents.

The University Alliance has published a report “Supporting thriving communities: The role of universities in reducing inequality” which shares advice on tackling inequality in general.

- The University of Essex Framework for making an Athena SWAN application can accessed from the Equality and Diversity website.
GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FROM OUR BRONZE AWARD HOLDERS:

- Parent Career Development Fund for academic or research staff (Grades 7-11) within the all Faculties. To help with additional care costs as a result of attending conferences.
- HHS, Biological Sciences and CSEE have established Women in Science webpages to promote the School’s female staff and signpost to career development opportunities and support networks.
- Mentoring and Coaching Scheme (HHS and Bio Sciences). Additionally, Bio Sciences have established a Professorial Mentoring Scheme.
- HHS ensures committee roles are rotated to support career progression.

MORE TO READ:

- Live chat round-up: how can universities fight gender inequality? (The Guardian 16/03/16 link)
- Female academics face huge sexist bias – no wonder there are so few of them (The Guardian 13/02/15 link)
- How to redress the gender imbalance (Times Higher Education 14/05/2016 link)
- 13 ideas to promote female equality in the workplace (Forbes 08/04/16, link)

IF YOU WANT TO DO ONE THING THIS TERM...

- Familiarise yourself with the University’s new Work Life Balance Policy and encourage friends and colleagues to make use of it by spreading the word!
- Take a look at our practical guide to Work Life Balance to find out more.
- If you’re a Head of Department / Section, make sure you also read our essential toolkit for dealing with flexible working requests.

ESSEX STATISTICS

Essex student population 2015/16

- Heterosexual (79%)
- Prefer not to say (8%)
- Unspecified (7%)
- Bisexual (2%)
- Other (2%)
- Gay man (1%)
- Lesbian/gay woman (1%)

Essex staff population 2014/15

- Not Known (57%)
- I prefer not to say (4%)
- Heterosexual (37%)
- Gay man (1%)
- Gay woman/lesbian (1%)
- Bisexual (0%)
- Other (0%)

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