



Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Initiative (WiSETI)

Director's Report
2011-2012

WiSETI

Established in 1999, the Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Initiative (WiSETI) at the University of Cambridge promotes and supports women from Undergraduate to Professor levels, in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM).

WiSETI aims to redress an under-representation of women in employment and career progression in these disciplines within the University.

2011/12 Summary

The University of Cambridge's WiSETI programme of activities is designed to support women across the STEMM departments. The WiSETI programme is co-ordinated by the WiSETI Project Officer, with support from the Equality and Diversity (E&D) section, and is overseen by the WiSETI Steering Committee.

During the past year, WiSETI carried out a significant body of work which fed directly in to the broader objectives on gender equality within the University. In some instances, these activities provide useful pilots for work to be mainstreamed more generally. The Gender Equality Group (GEG) formally oversees the University's gender equality brief, with WiSETI reports, insights and experiences feeding directly in to this committee.

We are very grateful to the University for its commitment to WiSETI and financial support for our work.

Professor Dame Athene M Donald FRS
WiSETI Director & Gender Equality Champion

WiSETI Developments

At the start of the academic year, Professor Jeremy Sanders, Chair of the WiSETI Steering Committee (SC) was appointed as the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Affairs, with responsibility for Equality issues. This has facilitated closer links between WiSETI and senior management within the University. The Vice-Chancellor (VC) invited both the Director and the SC Chair to address one



of the termly Heads of Institution meetings focussed on gender issues, which are increasingly to the fore in the run-up to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF). To broaden impact within the University, the WiSETI Director in her capacity as Gender Equality Champion, also attended a meeting between the VC and the Heads of School to suggest how lessons learned from WiSETI and the Athena SWAN initiative may be applicable across the wider University.

In the first quarter of 2012, the WiSETI Project Officer post became full time in order to fulfill the increasing workload surrounding Athena SWAN applications. WiSETI Project Officer Sarah Dickinson left in March to become the national Athena SWAN coordinator and in May, Dr Vivien Hodges joined the team from Vitae, working full-time on women-in-science issues. With this increased level of support, WiSETI aims to broaden its impact to ensure activities reach all relevant departments. Where appropriate, in tandem with the E&D team, WiSETI continues to create resources which may be useful beyond the STEMM arena.

WiSETI Activities

The Annual WiSETI/Schlumberger Lecture

In March 2012, the Annual WiSETI lecture, sponsored by Schlumberger, was given by Professor Carol Robinson, Dr. Lee's Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oxford. The attendance was the largest recorded. Schlumberger also hosted a lunch and tour at their local research facility for Professor Robinson alongside selected early career women researchers from the University.



The links with Schlumberger have been renewed following a change in leadership, with a new Director of HR and on-going funding secured.

It is anticipated that further joint workshops will be held with Schlumberger in the future, and the possibility of extending these to other STEMM companies in the vicinity is being explored.



The WiSETI CV Mentoring Scheme¹

The CV Mentoring Scheme was introduced four years ago, and provides advice and support to women considering promotion. The process creates an opportunity for female Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Readers to have a senior Academic, with extensive experience of the University's Senior Academic Promotions (SAP) procedure, review their CV and promotion paperwork before it is submitted. SAP guidance did not specify that it was directed specifically at women in STEMM and as a result, some applications for mentoring were received from elsewhere in the University. This highlighted additional demand for the Scheme, so the University's Gender Equality Group (GEG) requested that eligibility for the Scheme be expanded to include women in all disciplines from 2012.

Athena SWAN²

Work around Athena SWAN dominated the WiSETI effort this year. In summer 2011, attention was focused nationally on the Athena SWAN awards following the announcement by the Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies, that for future rounds of Biomedical Research Centre/Unit funding, partnerships where the academic partner does not hold (at least) a Silver Award were unlikely to be shortlisted³. The Clinical School team, led by SC member Professor Fiona Karet, with support from the WiSETI Project Officer, is significantly progressing its application. Other funders are known to be considering similar options and departments across the University are now considering the actions that are needed in light of this.

¹ <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/hr/equality/wiseti/cv/>

² <http://www.athenaswan.org.uk/>

³ <http://www.theukrc.org/news/2011/08/chief-medical-officer-to-make-gender-equality-a-condition-of-bio-research-funding>

In January, A SWAN workshop was held on how to apply for an award and was aimed to assist departments that were considering establishing a self-assessment team. In addition to the Department of Physics, which currently holds a Silver SWAN Award and will be applying for a Gold Award in April 2013, the Clinical School is aiming for a Silver Award in 2013. A further ten other departments are at various stages of preparing for either Silver or Bronze Awards in 2012 and 2013.



All these departments are assisted by the WiSETI Project Officer, and those at the start of the process can also utilise WiSETI's Athena SWAN 'toolkit'. The University will be applying for a renewal of its Bronze Award in November 2012 and this submission is being coordinated by the WiSETI Project Officer, supported by the University's Athena SWAN self-assessment panel.

Future plans

The WiSETI Steering Committee meets termly to plan activities, discuss progress and review plans in light of any policy announcements. The focus this year has been to progress Athena SWAN activities and ensure that the whole STEMM community within the University is aware of recent developments. To some extent this has been facilitated by the WiSETI SC Chair becoming PVC, and the Director being the University's Gender Equality Champion.

Despite the departmental and institutional benefits of significantly increased SWAN activity, the WiSETI Steering Committee remains mindful to balance and ensure that the effort specifically directed at individual women in STEMM is not diluted.

It seems likely that the majority of the work of WiSETI in the coming year will continue to focus on Athena SWAN and delivering further workshops for women in STEMM at various stages of their careers.

2011/2012 WiSETI Steering Committee Members:

Professor AM Donald, Director

Professor JKM Sanders, Chair

Professor PA McNaughton

Professor FE Karet

Professor A Cooke

Professor KT Khaw

Professor AH Brand