

March 2020

Latest news

Things have really stepped up a gear in terms of SWAN activity across the University as we strive collectively towards better gender equality and fairer, more open employment practices that will benefit everyone. Since 2018 BU has achieved an institutional Bronze SWAN award and three departmental Bronze SWAN awards. There is one Department actively working on a submission for the May 2020 deadline (extended from April due to the UCU strike). The majority of Departments now have SWAN leads and submission deadlines to work towards.

This has resulted in an expansion of the institutional SWAN Self-Assessment Team, indicating we are building SWAN leadership across the University, which is essential for changing the culture. Support for Departments has been enhanced significantly with Departments now issued with a SWAN dataset (produced by PRIME and updated annually), improved guidance available on preparing submissions, and a standard departmental SWAN questionnaire ready for Departments to use.

I was pleased to read the BU responses to the national Principal Investigators & Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS), run by Vitae in 2019. 101 BU academic staff responded to the survey (38% response rate). 66% of BU respondents (67 individuals) agreed or strongly agreed BU treats staff fairly irrespective of gender, up from 58% (36 individuals) in 2017. When looking at the responses from BU women only, 61% of respondents (22 individuals) agreed or strongly agreed BU treats staff fairly irrespective of gender, up from just 28% (5 individuals) in 2017. This suggests a shift change in how academic colleagues perceive women to be treated and valued within the University, particularly among female respondents.

Meeting with a colleague from Research England in February, we were given an early indication of the plans for equality and diversity in the research environment to take centre stage in the post-REF 2021 exercise. This should help accelerate the cultural shift across the sector and rightly so as addressing the underrepresentation of certain groups in HE has been slow progress to date. The Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) launched an Inclusion Matters call in 2018 to promote equality, diversity and inclusivity. Some of the research undertaken as part of one of the projects funded from this initiative was presented at a conference attended by Dr Ellen Seiss (Psychology) and you can read about this on page 2 of this newsletter.

We are making progress with addressing issues of gender equality across the University, however there remains much to do as many of the barriers are entrenched in wider society and/or are not yet understood. We need to keep talking

and thinking about equality, diversity and inclusivity and challenging our biases and those of others. We need to keep asking why women and men receive access to different resources and advantages in the workplace



and challenging this when we see it.

I'll leave you with a news story of **how Finland is giving dads the same parental leave entitlement as mums to promote wellbeing and gender equality at a national level.**

Julie Northam



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BU academic named a Woman of the Year

BU's Associate Professor Dr Vanessa Heaslip is a Woman of the Year and was invited to the prestigious annual Women of the Year Lunch & Awards held in London.

The lunch brings together 450 women from diverse backgrounds, each of whom is selected for their extraordinary achievements and contribution to society. Each guest is a 'Woman of the Year' who has made a difference in some way.

Dr Heaslip, from BU's Department of Nursing Science, was named as a Woman of the Year for her commitment in ensuring health and educational equity for individuals from marginalised communities.

Dr Heaslip's educational research in widening participation and fair access in higher education, alongside her clinical research in vulnerability and vulnerable groups in society whose voices are not traditionally heard is nationally and internationally recognised.

As a Woman of the Year, Dr Heaslip has been recognised alongside previous recipients of the honour, including Liz Clegg – a volunteer at the Calais refugee camp, Paralympic athletes Menna Fitzpatrick MBE and Jennifer Kehoe MBE and the Commissioner of the London Fire Brigade, Dany Cotton.

At the lunch, which was hosted by Mel Giedroyc, Dr Heaslip sat alongside news reporters and sports personalities like Moira Stewart and Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and TV personality and choreographer Arlene Phillips. Dr Heaslip also spoke to BU honorary graduate Sheena Byrom who was given an honorary degree in 2016 for her services to midwifery.

Dr Heaslip said: "The Women of the Year lunch was such an amazing day – it was a real celebration of the difference that women make in everyday society.

"We were honoured to be joined by amazing, yet rarely, celebrated women from Bletchley Park which really set the tone for the day. Recognising that each of us individually can make a difference and the impact of that collectively, is massive.



"There was a real buzz to the day in which famous faces joined ordinary women who were striving to make a difference in the world."

Women of the Year was founded by Lady Tony Lothian OBE with Lady Georgina Coleridge and Odette Hallows in 1955 to recognise, celebrate and inspire women of all backgrounds.

Athena SWAN in Psychology National (ASPoN) Forum: Inclusion really does matter



Dr Ellen Seiss

Dr Ellen Seiss, Chair of the Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team (SAT) in Psychology and member of the University SWAN SAT team recently attended the 4th ASPoN Forum at UCL in London.

This very informative day of presentations and discussions was attended by representatives from many

universities, including the two GOLD award holding departments from Queen's University Belfast and University of York.

The day had several highlights. Firstly, a presentation called "**Athena Swan: Preparing a (successful) application**" by Tamara Szucz (national Athena SWAN programme adviser) followed by a two hour Q&A session and some discussions about how to implement a successful mentoring system.

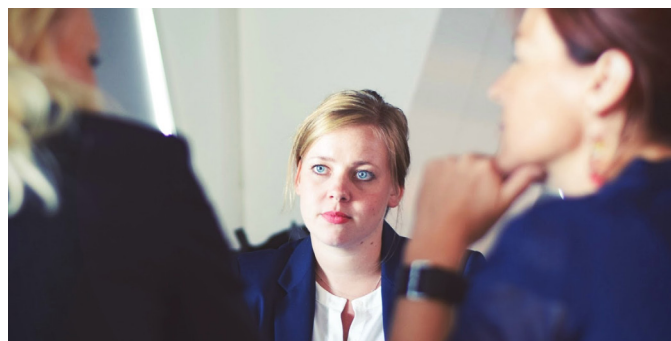
Secondly, the talk about the "**Psychology of Gender in Understanding Gender Equality Initiatives**" by Iona Latu (QUB) discussed her scientific research about gender bias in (inter)actions where concepts like implicit bias and stereotype threat play a strong role. She specifically discussed how these interactions can negatively affect the behaviour of male interviewers and female interviewees in **interview (and promotion) situations** (Latu, Schmid Mast, & Stewart, 2015).

This research is very relevant in light of current BU initiatives to introduce gender-balanced interview panels at all levels.

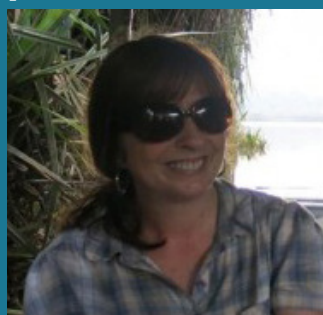
Dr Latu also addressed the importance of **female role models and mentors in public speaking**. Her research tested the male vs female role model priming in public speaking

scenarios using VR research (Latu, Schmid Mast, Lammers & Bombari, 2013). She is part of an interdisciplinary research team which is investigating how to accelerate progress towards gender equality by boosting the effectiveness of existing initiatives. This project is funded by the EPSRC and is titled: **“Inclusion really does matter: Improving reactions to gender equality initiatives amongst academics in engineering and physical science”**.

Further details are available from the [project website](#).



Negative student bias towards women and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) academics: A Women's Academic Network (WAN) panel discussion



Professor Sara Ashencaen Crabtree

A few weeks ago an FHSS colleague in the Women's Academic Network (WAN) raised the issue of how women and BAME academics are generally negatively evaluated by students compared to White male academics.

Most reasonable people would normally regard it as self-evident that the traditional, almost monastic concept of a gendered and ethnic homogeneity of scholars is far from the realities of a diverse and international campus. Yet it would seem old tropes remain embedded in unconscious assumptions regarding what constitutes a conventional academic.

A quick look at Google stock images demonstrates this. Typing in the terms 'lecturer' and particularly 'professor' (given the common US usage of the term for most academic ranks), will throw up multiple images – but these mostly depict the same old stereotype. Reinforced time and again, these false projections of an academic norm are internalised by students and, no doubt, the general public, as the 'genuine article' – meaning that others that do not fit this image will be felt to be of lesser quality, being less legitimised and generally therefore more suspect. It is easy to move from this position to judging the worth of their educational (and research) endeavours as being inherently inferior.

Although this is not breaking news in terms of relevant research literature, the impact of how students perceive diversity among academic staff has yet to be properly tackled in an academic socio-political context, where great efforts are maintained to keep student customers happy. At the same time few academics can be unaware of the huge significance invested by universities in student evaluations, where in respect of the UK there is increasing pressure exerted on programme leaders and departments to achieve high NSS scores.

At BU this pressure now embraces the mid-semester MUSE surveys in a tighter grip. Consequently if any BU students

are subject to acting on unconscious bias towards diverse academics then there are now greater opportunities provided for this to be expressed in a punitive fashion. It was therefore not surprising that our colleague's point engendered a lively email discussion in WAN; and additionally very welcome offers from members to help to take this issue forward. In order to capture the moment, given this discussion was taking place precisely during the MUSE season, a panel discussion was rapidly set up. Invitations to attend the panel discussion were duly sent out across WAN and to other relevant individuals across faculties, beyond WAN, with leading roles in teaching & learning, monitoring and evaluation, together with diversity and equality agendas, including the UCU.

WAN makes a point of providing a respectful, inclusive and candid space for women academics and PGRs to feel heard and supported. This open-to-all panel event was in keeping with that aim. To an attentive audience attendees offered some deeply concerning accounts of conspicuous xenophobia, racism and misogyny via student evaluation feedback or in everyday encounters. Some of these abusive interactions were described as completely devastating, particularly as they were often expressed with impunity, where staff complaints about student offensiveness were regularly trivialised or ignored.

Academics who had experienced or heard of such episodes felt that they were far from adequately protected by existing university regulations; and that a much more robust institutional response of zero tolerance was required to tackle pejorative discrimination

in the student body. It is clear that unchecked, unfair judgements of academics based largely on characteristics of gender and ethnicity (although this may not exclude other facets as well), alongside growing institutional scrutiny of staff evaluations, serves to create a highly toxic and risky environment adding greatly to academic precarity and stress.

In order to explore this matter in the greater depth that it deserves, WAN will be hosting another and bigger open-to-all event in the New Year with a view to developing greater traction to move this extremely important issue forward in a constructive way.

WAN may have done some heavy lifting here (we are aware of much other good work at BU on diversity and difference), but nonetheless there is a great opportunity for the academic

community at BU to come together to ensure that on this issue alone misogyny, racism and xenophobia remains firmly outside of our institution.

If you are not a member of WAN but would like a personal invitation to the next event on this topic please email me on scrabtree@bournemouth.ac.uk

Likewise if you are not yet a member of WAN but would like to become one please get in contact.

Professor Sara Ashencaen Crabtree
WAN convenor

Support and guidance for the menopause at BU

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here. The changing age of the UK's workforce means that between 75% and 80% of menopausal women are in work. Whilst every woman does not suffer with menopause related symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work.

Menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden'. We want everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment. This is not just an issue for women; men should be aware too.

Research shows that the majority of women are unwilling to discuss menopause-related health problems with their line manager, nor ask for the support or adjustments that they may need. Bournemouth University is committed to providing

- **BU Menopause Guidelines**
- **Manager Guidance for colleague discussions**
- **Menopause Advice Sheet**
- **BU Menopause Guidelines Background and Reasons**

Further support

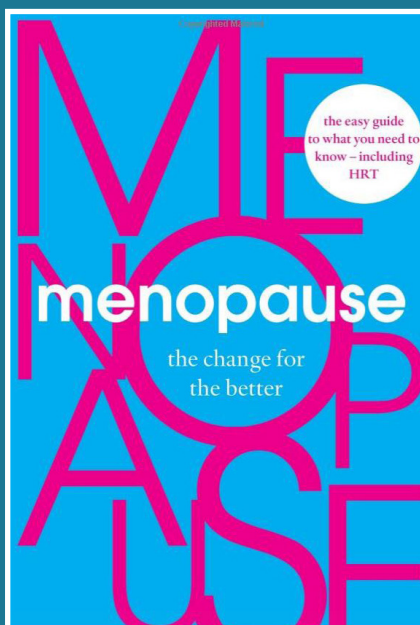
If a member of staff is unable to speak to their line manager, or if their line manager is not supporting them, further support can be accessed through HR (via hrenquiries@bournemouth.ac.uk), their Union, or the staff health and wellbeing team (via occupationalhealth@bournemouth.ac.uk);

The **Employee Assistance Programme** can be accessed 24/7 for free and confidential help, advice and support on any matter (work, home or personal). Please follow the link to access further information.

Menopause Support Drop-in Sessions: an informal opportunity to connect with others and discuss support available both at BU and externally. Open to all BU staff - please come along and join the conversation.

The library also has several copies of the book 'Menopause: The change for the better'. Staff can borrow these from the library.

You can access further information on the staff intranet [here](#)



a working environment in which women who experience menopause symptoms feel confident to discuss it, and ask for support and any reasonable adjustments so they can continue to be successful in their roles or studies.

The following documents set out guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work.

Faculty and Departmental Athena SWAN work

Presentations on Athena SWAN work have been made to the Faculty Executive Teams for Media and Communication as well as Health and Social Sciences. This has involved providing an update on work being undertaken to support departments and responding to any questions individuals might have.

A meeting has recently been held with Heads of Department for the Faculty of Management to discuss Athena SWAN work within the Faculty.

An individual presentation on Athena SWAN has been made to the Department of Computing and Informatics.

Athena SWAN guidance has been enhanced to support future applications which has involved providing a detailed project plan to support submissions in April and November. It has been split into 3 sections which was background, process and advice.

Individual meetings have been held with departmental SWAN leads to share with them departmental information which has been hosted on SharePoint. Support has also been provided to the departments of Psychology and Life and Environmental Sciences to move their actions plans over to Microsoft Planner.

“Thank you so much for taking the time to go through the data and SharePoint demonstration. I am so excited to use this tool to record everything and progress our submission. Also, a big thank you for your support with turning our action plan into planner.”

Feedback from a departmental Athena SWAN lead

To inform Athena SWAN work a departmental survey has been developed and has been run by the Departments of Archaeology and Anthropology, Design and Engineering and Computer Animation.

A mapping exercise has been undertaken to establish what department leads have had Athena SWAN work built into their workload.

Departments have been provided with a SWAN dataset provided by Prime.

Articles of interest

If you'd like to suggest articles for inclusion in this section of future editions of this newsletter, please email them to: diversity@bournemouth.ac.uk

Medical journals must address gender bias



When women physicians and scientists face barriers to publication and journal leadership, the pace of discovery slows and critical perspectives are lost.

reviewers, and editors. Notably, gender is not binary, but studies on publishing related disparities typically compare proportions of men and women, and there is a paucity of data for many people at risk of underrepresentation (e.g. individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ or ethnic or racial minorities). However, an abundance of research shows women in academia, inclusive of medicine, face more barriers to publishing than men.

Read more

Reports demonstrate gender bias in academic medicine, and an important subset of this evidence focuses on journal level disparities, for example the numbers of women as authors,

Women health pioneers honoured on LSHTM's iconic London building for the first time

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) is delighted to recognise the contribution to science and global health of three women health innovators this autumn.

To celebrate its 120th anniversary, LSHTM has gained special permission from Camden Council to add the names of Marie

Skłodowska-Curie, Florence Nightingale and Alice Ball to the façade of its Grade II listed Keppel Street building in Bloomsbury, London.

Read more



Male bias in clinical trials

According to this article, centuries of female exclusion from clinical research has meant women's diseases are often missed, misdiagnosed or remain a total mystery (The Guardian, November 13, 2019).

[Read more](#)

Gender differences in how researchers report the importance of their work (BMJ, December 16, 2019).

Women remain underrepresented in academic medicine and the life sciences more broadly. Even the most recent surveys indicate that the proportion of women declines at every career step, including promotion to full professorship. Women also earn lower salaries, receive fewer research grants, and receive fewer citations than their male colleagues.

One mechanism that may contribute to these gender gaps is differences in the extent to which women promote their research accomplishments relative to men. Yet, systematic evidence of differences in how men and women present

their research findings in the academic life sciences is lacking. Identifying gender differences in how research is self-presented is potentially important given that visible research productivity is central to career progress in the academic life sciences and medicine, affecting hiring, promotion, pay, and funding decisions.

[Read more](#)



Why do so few women win the Nobel Prize?

Because they don't get nominated, according to this study, but when they do they are equally or more likely to win than their male counterparts (The Lancet, November 23, 2019).

[Read more](#)

Stigma in the workplace is preventing men from being more involved parents

We need to make it culturally acceptable for fathers to achieve the balance between work and family they need to stay happy and healthy.

[Read more](#)

