

## **ATHENA SWAN CHARTER**

### **QUEEN MARY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

#### **SWAN BRONZE AWARD MAY 2007**

Queen Mary, University of London (QMUL), a member of the Athena SWAN Charter since 2005, was awarded Bronze recognition in May 2007. The recognition award is valid until December 2010.

#### **THE UNIVERSITY**

Queen Mary is a leading college of the University of London, with over 12,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students, and an academic and support staff of around 2,600 (FTE). The college is research focused and has a strong international reputation, drawing 20% of its students from over 100 countries.

QMUL's roots lie in four historic colleges: Queen Mary College (QMC), Westfield College, St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College and the Royal London Hospital Medical College. Westfield College, which had the specific objective of preparing women for degrees of the University of London, merged with QMC in 1989, and the medical schools joined in the early 1990s.

The main site is at Mile End, which grew from initiatives to bring culture and education to the East End of London. QMUL is still active in outreach in the Thames Gateway area.

Science and Engineering formed the majority of the college until the 1980s. There are now two science and engineering faculties: Natural Sciences, which contains the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, and the Department of Physics; and Engineering and Mathematical Sciences which contains the Schools of Mathematical Sciences and of Engineering and Materials Science, and the Departments of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering. These have over 500 staff at all levels and over 3500 students. There are also cross-disciplinary Research Consortia, such as, the Centre of Materials Research.

Within SET the engineering departments have a higher proportion of female staff than science departments, over 50% of them having been recruited in the last 5 years: they form 25% of lecturing staff in Electronic Engineering and 15% in the School of Engineering and Materials Science, where the higher numbers of female staff and students in Medical Engineering and Biomaterials contribute.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The College has a history of involvement in gender issues since its Westfield origins. It took an active part in WISE in the 1990s. In 2003 QMUL took part in the first round of Athena's web-based survey of SET professionals (ASSET) and in the follow-up round in 2006.

The Physics Department took part in the Institute of Physics (IoP) Site Visit programme, many of the recommendations of which have informed the gender programme.

QMUL also undertakes research in equality and diversity issues through the Centre for Equality and Diversity in the School of Business and Management.

#### **WORK IN SUPPORT OF CHARTER PRINCIPLES**

When signing up to the Athena SWAN Charter, QMUL made four pledges to underpin its work in support of the Charter Principles:

**Pledge 1: monitor progress towards an organisational culture where all can thrive, are equally valued and experience equality of opportunity for career progression**

Senior Management play an important part in promoting equality at QMUL. Since 2005, the annual planning questionnaire to department heads (who are subsequently interviewed by a team led by the relevant Sectoral Vice Principal) has included questions on equal opportunities and diversity. In 2005 it emerged that departments interpreted their duties primarily in terms of selection of students and recruitment of staff. In 2006 and early 2007 specific actions were decided where departments' interpretation of procedures had evolved inappropriately from the College norm, for example, in ensuring that all job adverts are checked by HR.

Since 2005 all senior management team posts have been openly advertised and selection procedures have followed a standard, whereas formerly appointments were made directly by the Principal. In addition, female representation on the Principal's Steering Group has increased from 1 in 9 to 3 in 10. Publicity about new appointments has highlighted the gender of the appointees.

Staff opinion surveys show that female respondents are generally more positive than their male counterparts, but they were less likely to think that they would still be working at the College in 12 months' time. The evidence was widely reported within the College and action points were included in diversity action plans. The College believes that further general surveys are unlikely to reveal new information and will, in future, undertake more targeted surveys, eg, on gender equality.

The College has good maternity provision and a purpose-built nursery. Guidelines on flexible working also cover returners. Self-assessment revealed how little was known about the availability of part-time working and the College has now made plans to improve dissemination.

Human Resources monitors staff participation in selection panels, checking that recruitment panel members are trained and that personnel specifications and job descriptions are not in any way discriminatory. The College also requires all senior members of staff to undertake diversity training. Specially tailored online modules were adopted for 2006-07 as an effective way to provide this and most of the relevant staff have already completed them.

All new staff have probation mentors and all staff take part in an annual appraisal scheme which includes personal development needs. For postdoctoral and junior academic staff, this covers career development, which is of particular value to female staff. Training for new staff includes a programme aimed at management and leadership training. Some modules, such as a course on management for Principal Investigators, are specifically for those new to managing grants and research teams.

Specific initiatives to foster gender equality include a residential event in 2006 for the 'next generation leaders' in SET to provide an opportunity to participate in research strategy development and professional needs analysis. Although not specifically targeted at them, more women were involved in the programme because they are proportionately more numerous at earlier career levels. The event is being repeated this year and is likely to develop into a sustained programme.

**Pledge 2: establish a Women's Network to address the needs of women across the College, including those in science and engineering**

Efforts to set up a network in 2005 failed because there was insufficient enthusiasm for a self-managed group. However, a new Women's Network group is now being established by the Vice-Principal for Science and Engineering which will be less disparate and more focused. The group will start with a small number of senior women in leadership roles.

### **Pledge 3: Commit to addressing the issue of the gender pay gap**

An equality monitoring report in 2003/04 showed a gender pay gap, so the College commissioned a statistical analysis of its data in 2005. This revealed that the main issue was whether women were discriminated against in appointment or promotion to higher grades. Monitoring of recent promotion rounds did not show up any statistically meaningful differences, but monitoring will continue.

In 2006 the College analysed the new salary scales and the equal pay review will be repeated in 2007 when job evaluation is complete.

### **Pledge 4: conduct an Impact Assessment of policies and practices on different racial groups, widening the Impact Assessment project to include gender and other equality strands**

In 2005 outside consultants were brought in to design and assist in conducting QMUL's equality impact assessments. The planning involved collecting written policies and procedures from each department and identifying best practices and potentially disadvantaging ones. After poor initial take up, the Head of History (also Chair of the Equal Opportunities Committee) volunteered to conduct an assessment in her department. The pilot showed that the methodology needed to be simplified and departments needed clearer understanding of what policies and procedures should be considered. The mechanism has been revised accordingly. The next academic department to be assessed will be drawn from SET and will concentrate on three areas: student admissions, teaching and learning strategy, and post-graduate students.

### **SET-specific activities**

There have also been a range of SET-specific activities, such as:

- A CD on 'Women in Engineering' where a range of female undergraduates speak about their experiences of engineering and how women have a role to play
- A Women in Engineering Summer School for 6<sup>th</sup> form girls studying maths and/or physics to find out more about engineering
- Syllabuses that might particularly appeal to women have been developed and promoted, for example, the 'Design and Innovation' programme in engineering whose first year saw 4 women students out of 10
- Physics has improved its training for staff appraisers and appraisees and obtained a better gender balance among colloquium speakers
- Computer Science publicity materials stressing the creativity and range of applications and the significant role which women have played in the development of computer science.

### **THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The self-assessment team was recruited from across the College and from administrative departments, with administrative support from the office of the Vice-Principal for Science and Engineering. Much of the information in the submission was drawn from existing monitoring activities and from the preparations for the Gender Equality Duty.

### **DEVELOPING THE ACTION AGENDA**

The development of the College's Gender Equality Scheme informed the action plan and vice versa. A survey of academic staff was conducted. Although the response rate was small, some valuable suggestions for further work were made. Together with lessons learned from the

Institute of Physics visit and participation in the ASSET survey, new initiatives have been developed to contribute to the goals and objectives of Athena SWAN.

In April 2006 the 'Women@QM' project group was formed to discuss ways of recording and celebrating the contributions of women as teachers and students at QMUL. Particular prominence is to be given to women in SET disciplines. The project board includes Science and Engineering sector representatives and members from the Institute of Cancer, Institute of Dentistry, School of Engineering and Materials Science, and Computer Science.

## THE PLAN

### **SET baseline and academic profile**

- Produce more nuanced information on workforce gender breakdown, including by grade and by SET department and production of SET workforce profile leading to a time series to track impact of initiatives
- SWAN Group and VP (Science and Engineering) to identify targets for improvement in the representation of women based on internal and external sources of recruitment
- Explore the possibility of developing departmental initiatives to boost recruitment and promotion of female staff.
- In-depth equal pay review in winter 2007 following completion of job evaluation and its refinement
- Creation of pay data set relating to women in SET
- Identification of measures to remedy any salary disparity
- All Science and Engineering departments to be encouraged to conduct the Equality Impact Assessment, initially focusing on specific policies

### **Key career transition points**

- Repeat benchmarking maternity leave provisions against other HEIs following planned changes to parental leave entitlement
- Consider possible expansion of nursery
- Raise awareness of flexible working policy amongst eligible staff and managers
- Creation of pool of junior staff trained to take more senior roles
- Consider mentoring for early career researchers
- Repeat 'next generation leaders' event in 2007 to take the agenda forward
- Establish Women's Network group for senior academic women

### **Culture Change and gender balance in decision making**

- Every department, including all SET departments, to have a nominated person responsible for equality impact assessment
- Routine gender impact assessment to be mainstreamed into all service provision and employment activity, not just in policy and initiative design, but also in monitoring of policy and practice
- Extend further diversity training to all staff
- Develop programmes enabling accreditation of prior learning on diversity (eg for those with NHS training)
- Improve monitoring of compliance with policies on fair recruitment and selection
- Carry out planned events for 'Women@QM' in autumn 2007, including an exhibition, roundtable, public lecture series and outreach programme.
- Disseminate information about own and others' good practices between SET departments to stimulate new initiatives, for example, monitoring of destinations of PhD graduates and postdocs, improved mentoring, additional support for flexible working
- Continue making specific efforts to form links with girls' schools