

# School of Divinity Equality and Diversity Annual Report

October 2016

Note: The E&D Committee was refreshed through a call for volunteers in spring 2016, with extra representation sought from professional services. The committee meets three times per year and minutes can be found on the Staff Intranet.

## Key achievements 2015-16

### E&D visibility

- E&D webpage and additional page on gender equality / Athena SWAN refreshed:  
[www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/quick-links/equality-diversity](http://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/quick-links/equality-diversity)  
[www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/quick-links/equality-diversity/ged-divinity](http://www.ed.ac.uk/divinity/quick-links/equality-diversity/ged-divinity)
- E&D notice board established in New College, contextualizing the International Women's Day photograph and providing additional statements of inclusion and relevant notices, including the Athena SWAN principles.

### PG initiatives

- Mentoring scheme ongoing and growing (33 students matched with 17 staff).
- Café Couthie continued throughout 2015/16 but wound down in summer 2016, due to perception that it is no longer appropriate or necessary to support female PGs with dedicated women-only events. An initial meeting for female PGs and staff was arranged for Week 1. Agreed that efforts are now to be redirected into:
- First Friday PG Conversations: A series of 45 minute discussions with PG students (of all genders) and academic staff on themes relating broadly to the PG experience and the E&D agenda. These “conversations” to be followed by the established tradition of First Friday doughnuts.
- 45-minute training session “Postgraduate Work and the Academic Community” in Welcome Week included outline of legal E&D commitments, reflection on appropriate interactions with peers and staff, and links to sources of support.
- E&D responsibilities and the principles of inclusive teaching included in PG tutor training (January and September 2016).

### Gender equality initiatives

- Two teaching rooms were renamed after key female theologians, marked by speeches at the opening lecture of the year. An impressive portrait of Marcella Althaus-Reid will help to address male dominance in New College portraiture.
- Wikipedia Editathon on “Women and Religion” to be held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2016.

### **Workplace Culture Surveys (formerly Gender Culture Surveys) 2016:**

In May 2016 we opened surveys for staff and postgraduate students.

- The PG data was excellent and showed marked improvement in PG culture since the beginning of the Athena SWAN work in 2012.
- Staff data was more of a concern, with results down compared with previous years in a number of key areas. The following areas are identified as priorities for action:
  - As in previous years, several comments challenged our focus on gender equality and highlighted the importance of the broader E&D agenda, including other protected characteristics such as sexuality and religious belief (or lack thereof). The E&D Committee needs to work harder to address the whole E&D agenda, even as it oversees the Athena SWAN process.
  - Many comments, especially from academic staff, noted concerns around working patterns and workload, and the monitoring thereof. These text comments illuminate our disappointing results in many of the key questions relating to workplace culture and workload. Workload and working patterns are key areas for the Athena SWAN charter, and so a full School discussion of these issues and potential solutions is a desideratum. A step in that direction was attempted at the May P&R with the clarification of UoE policy on flexible working.
  - The survey again highlighted the differing experiences of academic and professional services staff. The E&D committee now has better representation from professional services staff, and will work to address issues relating to both groups.

### **Priorities for the coming year**

- We aim to apply for Athena SWAN Silver in April 2017, though we should be prepared for the possibility of receiving only a renewal of our Bronze award for the following reasons:
  - (i) The criteria have changed since our Bronze success and the bar has been raised for all applications. Success rates within CAHSS have been disappointing and puzzling.
  - (ii) We still have several key areas of work to be addressed, and in particular the concerns raised in the staff workplace culture survey this year need to be fairly represented and steps taken to improve matters.
- We will be working to address other aspects of the E&D agenda, including best practice with regard to transgender students, diversifying the curriculum, and increasing visibility of BME scholarship and issues.

Naomi Appleton (Equality and Diversity Officer)