NHMRC Women in Health Sciences Workshop

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B Pharm
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QEII Fellowship
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Gender representation at Unis

Bell S & Yates L
“Women in the Scientific Research Workforce: Identifying and sustaining the diversity advantage”
ARC Linkage project 2011-2014 (LP110200480)
University of Melbourne

Source: DIIISRTE Higher Education Statistics Collection, customised data, 2011
The business case for diversity

Making organisations better for women
make them better for everyone
Diversity in leadership provides a
competitive edge
Increased team collective intelligence – add
more women
Gender equity

Former Qld Chief Scientist
Current Qld Chief Scientist
AMRI
Former CEO ARC
Nalini Joshi FAA ARC Laureate
What is the SAGE Initiative?

- I’m glad you asked
- Science in Australia Gender Equity
- Australian Academy of Science
- Steering Committee
  - Brian Schmidt ANU Nobel & ARC Laureate FAA co-chair
  - Nalini Joshi U Sydney ARC Laureate FAA co-chair
  - Jenny Martin UQ ARC Laureate, NHMRC WIHS
  - Maggie Galea MCRI E/MCR
  - Sharon Bell DVC Darwin
  - Roslyn Prinsley OCS
  - Caroline McMillen VC Newcastle
Workshop brought together senior reps of Unis, MRIs, science funding agencies, govt science orgs, etc.

Agreement that cultural change needed to enable scientists, regardless of gender, to thrive and thereby help maintain the best talent and highest standards for science in Australia.

There is good gender balance at PhD and post-doc stages across most sciences, but <1 in 5 professors are women.

Agreement that AAS should set up SAGE to create a catalyst for change.

Recommended adopting Athena SWAN-like Charter - established in UK in response to the under-representation of women in STEM.

Will need to be adapted to the Australian context.

Pilot study in Australia to be launched in 2015.
What is Athena SWAN?

- Established in 2005
- Founder members reasons - “the right thing to do”, “did not want to waste female talent/investment”
- Established a recognition scheme of excellence in women’s employment in STEM in UK.
- 2005 = 10 founder members
- 2015 = 129 members
Athena SWAN – Founder members 2005

- University of Cambridge
- University of Oxford
- University College London
- Imperial College London
- University of Bristol
- Heriot-Watt University
- Loughborough University
- Queen’s University Belfast
- University of Southampton
- Plymouth University
The Athena SWAN Charter’s ten principles

1. We acknowledge that academia cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of all.

2. We commit to advancing gender equality in academia, in particular, addressing the loss of women across the career pipeline and the absence of women from senior academic, professional and support roles.

3. We commit to addressing unequal gender representation across academic disciplines and professional and support functions. In this we recognise disciplinary differences including: the relative underrepresentation of women in senior roles in arts, humanities, social sciences, business and law (AHSSBL) the particularly high loss rate of women in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM)

4. We commit to tackling the gender pay gap.

5. We commit to removing the obstacles faced by women, in particular, at major points of career development and progression including the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career.
The Athena SWAN Charter’s ten principles

6. We commit to addressing the negative consequences of using short-term contracts for the retention and progression of staff in academia, particularly women.

7. We commit to tackling the discriminatory treatment often experienced by trans people.

8. We acknowledge that advancing gender equality demands commitment and action from all levels of the organisation and in particular active leadership from those in senior roles.

9. We commit to making and mainstreaming sustainable structural and cultural changes to advance gender equality, recognising that initiatives and actions that support individuals alone will not sufficiently advance equality.

10. All individuals have identities shaped by several different factors. We commit to considering the intersection of gender and other factors wherever possible.
Athena SWAN awards

- Recognise universities and departments that do well at supporting women.
- Achieving awards is a major challenge, typically 2-3 years before an organisation will become eligible for an award.
- It’s not a “box-ticking” exercise to find out if appropriate schemes are in place.
- Athena Swan requires member organisations to:
  1. Sign up to the charter
  2. Collect data on women’s progression within the organisation
  3. Critically analyse the data
  4. Identify reasons for exclusion and under-representation of women in the organisation
  5. Develop an action plan to address these reasons (action plans are individual to each dept)
  6. Show progress over time
Athena SWAN awards
for attainment and leadership in gender equality

University and departments can apply
(but University must hold bronze before dept can apply)
Awards are valid for 3 years;
must show progress for new award
Requires staff consultation/engagement

University awards in 2014
61 Bronze universities
4 Silver universities

Department awards in 2014
162 Bronze departments
85 Silver departments
7 Gold departments
Impact of Athena SWAN

• Increases awareness of career progression issues, which affect both men and women

• An award shows potential job applicants that the department/institution is serious about supporting women

• A silver award is now mandatory for major medical research funding

• Institutions now compete to be the best at supporting gender equity
Athena SWAN Evaluation Report 2014
(U Loughborough)

- Positive differences identified in depts with awards
- Not just academics that benefit in Silver Departments
- greater career satisfaction and opportunities for development and promotion, and fairness in workload
- Application process and awards provide credibility and impetus for gender work that was already taking place
- “It’s (Athena SWAN) the most effective standard/process/lever for change I’ve come across in 12 years of equality work.” (Institutional Champion)
- referenced as a requirement or expectation of quality
Now gaining momentum outside the UK

- Considerable interest from abroad, including China, Malaysia, Sweden, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands
- Republic of Ireland currently in 3-year pilot study
- Proposed Australian pilot study
- Silver award is now recognised as a commitment to gender equality
- Leads to real and substantial changes
- International rankings?
SAGE Forum report out soon

Call for pilot study participants soon (gold, silver, bronze awards)

Zuleyka Zevallos appointed as Project Manager