

Athena SWAN in the Faculty Video Transcript.

SM: I'm Sally Middleton and I'm the University's Gender Equality Officer. I've worked in equalities for around 13 years now and I've been in this role as Gender Equality Officer for the last five years.

SW: Hi I'm Susan Wray, I'm a professor of Physiology but also the University's Director for Athena SWAN. I've been engaged and interested in equalities work forever, I would say, but specifically in this role for around eight years.

The number of female professors has increased from around 16% to 26% now and is on an upward trajectory still and that has come about because of increases in transparency and also holding workshops to help all staff, but women in particular have availed themselves of these workshops. Also, if you look at our senior management team, that is now much more gender neutral, if I can put it that way, and of course we have the VC leading us.

The second point I'd like to make is the improvements that have been made for Early Career Researchers. They have a lot of stress on them finding their way, I think it is fair to say that in the past the universities help and guidance hasn't been of the best, but lately it is much improved and we have much to be proud of there. This is reflected in completion rates for PDRs but also their engagement with a lot more activities that the University puts on and I hope that in staff survey, for example, that will be reflected in responses from that staff group.

SM: Other areas where I think we have got stuff to be quite proud about is that we've developed quite a few new staff networks over the years for different equality groups, some of these are gender related, some of these are more broadly equalities related. Some of our more recent ones is we developed a menopause support group and menopause support guidance in the last year. This is a fantastic step forward we think because it's quite a taboo subject, often people don't know how to provide the support in the workplace and also people find the peer support of a network really helpful.

I think the other thing that is more of a broader change is the way that diversity and equality is being considered in University projects. Diversity and equality, we've seen it now taken into account very early on in a quite a few University big pieces of work, a couple of examples of this are the new academic portfolio and also the restructure in Health & Life Sciences, where myself and Sue, and other colleagues from the diversity and equality team, have been involved in that, involved in the conversations and involved in the planning, and talking to people about diversity and equality from the very beginning of those projects. That's been a really positive shift for us.

It is a long-term activity, Athena SWAN and diversity and equality in general, so it's something that, although we've seen progress, we see it's a long-term approach that we need to take and we need to look at the big picture and the long picture. This is both because of changes in the sector around charter marks, so Athena SWAN as a charter mark has changed over the last few years. In 2015 it was expanded to look beyond science, engineering and medicine and now includes humanities, arts and business school, so that's been a change. Athena SWAN is actually undergoing a second review this year so there may be further changes coming with that, which we'll need to keep on top of. We also see

changes in the sector and employment practice so as a University we want to keep up with and hopefully get ahead of best practice there too.

SW: As a physiologist I'm in the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences and I think in my faculty as well as Science and Engineering, the absence of women from having chairs, readerships, even senior lectureships was very apparent compared to the intake at undergraduate and postgraduate level. So, if you will, the gender inequality was very visible. I think in HSS, the problem is not so visible: there are more women around, but the numbers, of course, don't tell the whole story. They don't reflect, perhaps, what's the day-to-day experiences and challenges of staff in this Faculty. The Faculty and the Schools have to dig to understand what the challenges, the experiences are for their staff and students. On the positive side though is the fact that this Faculty does have experts who I'm sure can contribute to Athena SWAN applications and the work of the Faculty going forward, so for example, when you think of the legislation, social justice, sociology, the experts are in this Faculty so I think that's a great positive, a great asset, to those preparing Athena SWAN applications.

SM: Firstly, I think that it's really positive that the Faculty and the Schools have embedded diversity and equality and embedded their Athena SWAN activity into the Faculty and School structures, and this has been done from the very beginning. It's apparent in the committee structures, the reporting structures and how they designate the roles within each of the Schools, so I think that sets the Faculty at quite an advantage in terms of progressing their Athena SWAN activity. I think it's also really important to see, to recognise, that Athena SWAN provides a framework but it doesn't provide all of the answers, so it is something that we can use to make progress but it shouldn't be the final answer and it's not the final goal to achieve Athena SWAN awards. We know how much work goes into an Athena SWAN application, Sue and I have both been there, so we definitely want to succeed in getting our awards when the applications are made but it's good that we focus on the ultimate goal, to actually make the University a better place to work and study for everyone, regardless of gender.

SW: And Sally and I wish the Faculty all the very best with their work and their applications.