

**University of Manchester**  
**Women in Leadership Project**

**REPORT 2, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**SEPTEMBER/NOVEMBER 2006**

**I INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This report outlines the main strands of the work of the project during the academic year 2005-06, identifies some of the issues that have become apparent in running the project, recommends some actions that could help to address the gender imbalance and indicates what might be done further. This is the second project report; the first, on the setting up of the project and the activities of the first few months, was dated June 2005 and presented to Senate on 9 November 2005 and to the Board of Governors on 7 December 2005.

An earlier version of this report was presented to the President and Vice-Chancellor in September 2006. It has been revised in the light of discussion at a meeting of the Planning and Resources Committee on 7 November 2006. At that meeting, the recommendations with a University-wide application were considered. In this version of the report, those recommendations have, where necessary, been reworded to reflect the views of PRC. However, the report also contains recommendations which apply to Faculties, Schools, Administrative Directorates and Academic Services. The authoritative bodies for those parts of the University (including Senate) have not yet had opportunity to feed back their agreed views on the recommendations that apply to them. It is likely, therefore, that there will be some further changes to the wording of the recommendations before they are formally adopted as University policy.

The project was commissioned by the President and Vice-Chancellor in 2004 and began in February 2005, with the following aims:

- (i) To increase the number of women with the aspiration, knowledge, skills and experience to be able to apply for a senior management post with a chance of success that is equal to their male peers.
- (ii) To create a working environment in which both men and women feel comfortable.
- (iii) To remove any identified organisational or procedural barriers to the appointment of women to leadership and management roles.

Section II of the report relates to the first aim, section III to the second and section IV to the third. Some issues have arisen that do not fit neatly under any of the project's three aims: they are discussed in section V. Finally, section VI outlines project plans for 2006-07.

The recommendations in this report arise from meetings, discussions and seminars with, among others, members of the project Steering Group<sup>1</sup>, members of the Parental Leave Group<sup>2</sup>, Deans and their senior management teams, Heads of School, Heads of

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Kersti Börjars, Professor Simon Gaskell, Dr Pat Sponder

<sup>2</sup> Ms Rachel Brealey, Mr Andrew Mullen, Dr Elizabeth Sheffield

School Administration, Faculty HR managers and their teams, female professors, female senior lecturers and readers, female lecturers, female grade 6 academic-related staff, and members of the Gender Network (set up and run by the Equality and Diversity Unit). In some instances the recommendations are supported by the findings of the 2003 and 2004 Athena Surveys of Science, Engineering and Technology (ASSETs), by the Institute of Physics Report *Women in University Physics Departments*, and by case studies from universities that have won awards under the Athena SWAN Charter scheme. The ASSET surveys reviewed the career progression, experiences and perceptions of more than 4,200 scientists (of whom 64% were men) working in 40 UK universities. The Institute of Physics paper reports the findings of visits by panels of female and male physicists to roughly 40% of Physics departments in the UK and Ireland between 2003 and 2005. Quotations from the report of the ASSET surveys are referenced here as Athena 2006, while those from the Institute of Physics report are cited as IP 2006.

So far, limitations of time have meant that the project has focused almost entirely on the experiences and career paths of women in academic posts. Even so, the implementation of the recommendations in this report which relate to good employment practices would have a beneficial impact on the working lives not only of other women in the University but also of many men.

## 2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations which appear in the report are listed below. They are grouped according to the level of the University's governance, leadership and management where accountability or responsibility for their implementation will lie, if they are accepted. Some recommendations apply at more than one level, e.g. to Deans and Heads of School. In such cases they are listed at the higher level, with a cross-reference at the lower level. Because the project has so far focused on academic careers, the report has been written from the perspective of the University's academic structures and organisation. However, many of its recommendations could apply to any part of the University with only the necessary changes of terminology. Therefore, the headings for each group of recommendations include the John Rylands University Library, the Manchester Museum, the Whitworth Art Gallery, IT Services and Manchester Computing (referred to collectively as 'Academic Services' for brevity) and the administrative directorates.

The numbers in the first column relate to the sections in the report in which each recommendation appears with an explanation and justification. Under each structural heading, the recommendations are presented in three broad priority bandings, with those categorised as A being of the highest importance.

Planning to implement the recommendations will also need an understanding of the amount of time and effort that will be needed and the likely cost. Therefore, the fourth and fifth columns relate to ease of implementation and cost respectively. The following descriptions serve as a key to the rankings used:

**Ease:**

- i The recommendation can be implemented with minimal staff time or effort.
- ii Implementation will require some dedicated staff time.
- iii Implementation will be quite labour intensive and may require continuing effort.

**Cost:**

- 1 Apart from any necessary staff time, there will be little or no cost.
- 2 Some expenditure will be needed.
- 3 Significant expenditure will be needed.

**TABLE 1: RECOMMENDATIONS**

REF.	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	EASE	COST
<b>Recommendation to the Board of Governors</b>				
	That, in his annual Stock Take Report, the President and Vice-Chancellor is invited to provide an update on progress in the implementation of the recommendations in this report and on any other steps that have been taken to 'maintain management systems ... that are ... exemplary in meeting all internal and external obligations and responsibilities, and to provide all staff with a safe, satisfying working environment offering rewarding opportunities for professional development' ( <i>Towards Manchester 2015, Goal 7</i> ).	A	i	1
<b>Recommendations with a University-wide application</b>				
15(i)	There is no one pattern of working hours in the University that applies to all members of staff and all academic disciplines. Some members of staff can productively do some of their work at home, for example, whereas for others that is not practicable. Everybody, however, benefits from a recognition that work commitments and home life need to be held in a balance that is appropriate for both the employer and the employee and that enables staff to reach their full potential. Against that background, it is recommended that senior members of staff should guard against giving the impression that it is the number of hours spent on University premises that is valued, rather than the standard and quality of the work output. They should aim to set a good example with regard to taking reasonable amounts of annual leave.	A	i	1
14(iii)	That the following suggestions from the Institute of Physics are implemented where appropriate (IP 2006, p. 9): 'Include details of family-friendly policies and staff benefits in the material sent to potential candidates. ... mention that the department actively encourages applications from women. Consider explicitly recruiting staff at the lower end of the pay spine, so that those with limited career experience can be credible candidates.'	A	i	1

REF.	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	EASE	COST
14(i)	That the University examines all aspects of its recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures, in order to ensure that no outstanding candidates are overlooked or disadvantaged.	A	ii	1
7(i)	That all those who regularly chair meetings are encouraged to undertake training in the skills required.	A	ii	1
11(x)	That the Assistant Director of HR is asked to bring forward a business plan for the scheme he is developing, in partnership with SureStart (the Government's childcare initiative), to make holiday childcare available in the walk-to-work area.	A	iii	2
8(i)	That the University, the Faculties and the Schools pay explicit attention to the signals that are sent about the institution in terms of the gender balance of honorary graduates, guest lecturers, external examiners and so on.	B	i	1
15(ii)	That there should be agreement about what constitutes the normal working day and that meetings which people are required to attend should not be routinely or frequently scheduled outside those hours. <i>(Note: the original recommendation proposed that meetings should not be routinely or frequently held outside the hours of 9.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m, Monday to Friday but it was suggested that this formulation may be too prescriptive and that there should be room for flexibility at local level. Views on the value of a recommendation of this kind and, specifically, on what limits might reasonably be imposed on regular meeting times would be especially welcome.)</i>	B	i	1
9(i)	That the University applies to become a signatory to the Athens SWAN charter.	B	i	1
11(ix)	That thought is given to ways of making a part-time return to work for academics feasible after maternity leave.	B	i	1
11(iv)	That there should be a web site on the University's intranet which pulls together all the information that Heads of School, Heads of School Administration and pregnant women need about statutory entitlements and about the University's policies on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, childcare, job sharing, flexible working and part-time working.	B	ii	1

<b>Recommendations to Faculties and, where appropriate, Administrative Directorates and Academic Services<sup>3</sup></b>				
<b>REF.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>EASE</b>	<b>COST</b>
14(ii)	That the Dean asks a Head of School who has put forward an all-male shortlist for an academic post to provide evidence that steps have been taken to identify and approach any potential female candidates.	A	i	1
7(ii)	That Deans and Heads of School give an annual account of any steps that they have been able to take to increase women's development opportunities and to celebrate women's successes.	A	ii	1
11(vii)	That Faculties consider developing a scheme to provide some protected research time for women returning from maternity leave or adoption leave and for other academics who have had a career break.	A	ii	1
10(i)	That each Faculty is encouraged to identify two or more senior academics (at least one of whom should be a man) who will take on the role of champions or advocates of gender equality in their Faculty and report to the Dean.	A	iii	1
11(ii)	That each Faculty should establish a small fund which could be used both to underwrite the salary saving and to provide extra support where the salary saving is insufficient for a School's specific needs.	A	i	2
12(i)	That there should be at least one subject specialist external assessor for each applicant for a promotional chair.	A	i	2
9(ii)	That the case studies of the 11 Athena Swan Award-holding universities are read by Faculty senior management teams in order to discover whether there are any examples of good practice which would be applicable to their Faculty.	B	i	1
11(xi)	That Associate Deans for Research, in conjunction with heads of research in the disciplines in their Faculty, draw up a list of ways in which staff who have primary responsibility for the care of children or dependent relatives can develop an international research reputation without spending frequent or lengthy periods of time abroad.	B	i	1

<sup>3</sup> The John Rylands University Library, The Manchester Museum, The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester Computing, and IT Services.

11(vi)	That, where appropriate, consideration should be given by the Faculty to the possibility of funding a research associate who can keep the research moving forward during the woman's leave and provide support for her when she returns to work.	B	i	3
11(viii)	That the science Faculties consider the possibility of funding a Daphne Jackson fellowship.	B	i	3
16(iv)	That Deans and Heads of School are asked to identify colleagues who have leadership potential and to plan with them a programme of development which would take account of their need to keep their academic career on track at the same time. If the plans could stretch over a sufficiently long timescale, it should be possible to build in a reduction in normal workload during the professional development period, without burdening other colleagues unreasonably.	B	ii	2
11(v)	That women who want and are able to keep up with the research literature or write up some completed research during their maternity leave or adoption leave should be offered IT support if this would enable them to do some work at home.	C	ii	1
11(xii)	That Faculties consider the possibility of setting up a scheme which would pay some of the costs of the care of children or dependent relatives for those who would otherwise have to turn down an invitation to speak at an international conference.	C	ii	3
	<i>See also: 7(i), 8(i), 14(i), 14(iii) 15(i), 15(ii) in the section above.</i>			
<b>Recommendations to Schools and, where appropriate, equivalent units in the Administration and in Academic Services</b>				
11(i)	That where women follow their six months of statutory maternity leave or adoption leave with six months unpaid leave, their salary for those six months should be specifically used to buy in replacement teaching for them and for any colleagues who have taken on additional work.	A	i	1
16(ii)	That Heads of School and other line managers take active steps, perhaps through annual Performance & Development Reviews, to prevent anyone slipping into the role of School dogsbody, no matter how effectively they fulfil that role (unless their academic career has genuinely stalled).	A	i	1

16(v)	That Schools distribute the opportunity to lead committees, working parties and teams as widely as possible, so that a range of staff within the School have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership skills and so that a variety of leadership styles come to be valued.	A	i	1
16(i)	That Schools put in place a serious programme of induction for their new members of academic staff and provide more than incidental guidance thereafter. It would be valuable for all academic line managers to have some training in career guidance and development.	A	iii	2
11(xiii)	That Heads of School actively encourage eligible staff to take paternity leave or adoption leave.	B	i	1
16(iii)	That at each promotion round and when leadership posts become available, the Head of School, or other line manager, gives explicit encouragement to any suitable potential applicants, both male and female, to apply, on the clear understanding that there is no guarantee of the outcome.	B	i	1
11(iii)	That Heads of School and Heads of School Administration should have access to frameworks for discussion with pregnant colleagues about the arrangements for their leave and return to work.	C	i	1
	<i>See also: 7(i), 7(ii), 8(i), 11(vii), 14(iii), 15(i), 15(ii), 16(iv) in the sections above.</i>			

## **II CAREER DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES (PROJECT AIM 1)**

### **3. MENTORING PROGRAMME**

Undoubtedly, the major piece of work for the project during the year was the setting up of a mentoring programme. During the previous year, one of the most frequent requests from women was for a mentor—a person they frequently characterised as someone who ‘knows how the system works’.

Thirty-five senior professors (25 male and 10 female) responded positively to a personal invitation to act as a mentor for female academics at SL level or above. (Although there is an expressed need for mentors for women who are lecturers and, indeed, RAs, and such provision should be a medium-term goal, it is only the more senior staff who will be eligible to apply for management and leadership positions within the near future.)

All the potential mentors undertook training supplied by the Leadership Foundation for HE. The women who had requested a mentor also received training so that both mentors and mentees would have the same understanding of what the scheme would—and would not—provide.

The literature on mentoring makes it clear that relationships work best when the pairs are carefully matched and when mentees have some say in the selection of their mentor. Accordingly, all the prospective mentors completed a form setting out their academic role, their career history in the University, their leadership experience, and their personal circumstances in terms of responsibility for children or dependent relatives, career breaks and so on. Similarly, the mentees completed a form to indicate what they hoped for from the relationship and what kind of mentor they wanted. On the basis of these preferences, each mentee was offered two possible mentors. Once all the choices were made and agreement reached between the two parties, there was a final list of 32 mentor-mentee pairs.

The basic arrangement (which pairs may choose to vary to suit their individual circumstances) is that mentees may see their mentors up to six times, for between one and two hours a session, over a period of nine to twelve months. Mentors are always from a different School from their mentee and the discussions are strictly confidential.

It would be helpful if mentoring came to be generally regarded in a positive light. It is clear that, for some, it is seen as either a remedial intervention or as an admission of weakness. A number of men said things like, ‘I wouldn’t have thought that she needed a mentor’, which does suggest that, in some people’s minds at least, mentoring is not seen as a means of career development for someone who is ambitious and competent but as a source of support for someone who is struggling. It is also clear that, when offered the opportunity, e.g. through Manchester Gold, very few men in the University request a mentor. Only 12% of the men in the Athena survey thought that a mentor would be helpful to them compared to 24% of the women (Athena, 2006, p. 13).

### **4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS**

The project does not aim to provide a formal leadership development programme for women; it is felt that that would be divisive and unhelpful. The University offers the Headstart programme for all academics who think they may be interested in undertaking a leadership and management role and the aim is to have a good

representation of women on that. However, I have provided informal seminars on topics which women have requested. These serve not only as sources of shared information and advice but also as opportunities for women to meet their peers in other parts of the University, which is particularly valued by women who work in Schools where they have very few female colleagues.

Table 2 (below) summarises the staff development sessions that I provided for female academics during the year, in addition to the training sessions for mentors and mentees. They were all either 1½ or 2 hours in length.

**TABLE 2: Staff development sessions for female academics, 2005-06**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Number</b>
13.09.05	Developing an academic career in the sciences	Lecturers in EPS, Life Sciences and MHS	12
13.09.05	Women in academic leadership and management in the sciences—what are the issues?	Senior lecturers and readers in EPS, Life Sciences and MHS	14
19.10.05	Career planning and CVs	Senior lecturers and readers in EPS, Life Sciences and MHS	11
15.02.06	Using emotional intelligence to develop leadership potential <sup>4</sup>	Senior lecturers and readers from all Faculties	20
24.02.06	Language styles in the workplace	Senior lecturers and readers from all Faculties	21
27.03.06	Making your voice heard and your opinions count	Senior lecturers and readers from all Faculties	22
30.03.06	Looking and acting the part <sup>5</sup>	Senior lecturers and readers from all Faculties	17
09.05.06	Chairing meetings	Senior lecturers and readers from all Faculties	10
19.05.06	Evaluating your CV	Senior lecturers and readers from all Faculties	5
17.05.06	Effective interpersonal communication for leaders and managers	Professors from all Faculties	6
23.05.06	Language styles in the workplace	Professors from all Faculties	12
05.06.06	Making your voice heard and your opinions count	Professors from all Faculties	12
27.06.06	Chairing meetings	Professors from all Faculties	5

## **5. THE HEADSTART PROGRAMME**

The Headstart programme is run for the University by Professor Stephanie Marshall of the Leadership Foundation for HE, supported by Paul Dixon (Head of the Training and Development Unit), Mrs Jan Hennessey (a staff development consultant) and me. Entry is competitive. It was gratifying that six women were selected on merit for the

<sup>4</sup> This session was offered by Dr Christine Bundy, a psychologist and senior lecturer in the School of Medicine.

<sup>5</sup> I conducted this session jointly with Ms Jacquie Wilson, a senior lecturer in textile design in the School of Materials Science.

first cohort of 19. I provided sessions on effective interpersonal communication for leaders and managers; chairing meetings; and career planning and development. It was particularly valuable to be able to discuss some of the issues about language, behaviour and organisational culture that had arisen in the women-only seminars with a mixed group, a number of whom would shortly take on leadership responsibilities.

## 6. CAREER DEVELOPMENT ADVICE

A number of women sought advice from me about their CV and future career trajectory. It is important in a project of this kind that such advice is, on the one hand, supportive and constructive and, on the other, frank and realistic. Only harm is done if someone is encouraged to make an application for promotion that would clearly be premature.

Of the nine women who gained promotional chairs in 2005-06, six had attended WiL sessions and/or received individual advice. This is not intended to claim credit for the project for their success—the women who attend the WiL sessions are a self-selecting group and it is likely that many of them are on the brink of promotion anyway. However, there are some who wrote to say that they were given the confidence to apply earlier than they might otherwise have done.

## III THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT (PROJECT AIM 2)

### 7. ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

There is a predominantly male culture on the academic side of the University. This is partly because it is a large and long-established organisation. Traditionally, and unsurprisingly, the culture of business and the professions has been male. It is also, straightforwardly, because the majority of academic staff, particularly those in senior positions, are male. The figures are given in Table 3. The overall figure shows 62% male but the majority of staff who will have a long-term career in the University are on contracts to do both teaching and research; here the male proportion rises to 74%. This average conceals variation across schools and faculties: the figure ranges from 63% in MHS to 88% in EPS. It is most often from the group who do both teaching and research that academic leaders and managers are drawn. Of the 23 Heads of School, 21 (91%) were male in 2005-06; this figure has risen to 22 (96%) in 2006-07.

**TABLE 3. Academic and research staff by role and gender<sup>6</sup>**

	Female		Male		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Teaching only	213	67%	107	33%	320
Research only	680	45%	846	55%	1526
Other	68	65%	36	35%	104
Teaching & research	517	26%	1446	74%	1963
Total	1478	38%	2435	62%	3913

A male culture manifests itself in a whole variety of ways: for example, talk about football, a pervasive bantering interactional style, and, less commonly, aggressive

<sup>6</sup> Data supplied by the Equality and Diversity Unit, August 2006. Here, non-clinical and clinical roles are aggregated for brevity and clarity.

language and behaviour. (The Institute of Physics visits found a few departments with what they termed a 'laddish' culture' (IP, 2006, p. 3.)) Much of this women have adapted to and learned to live with. It is a matter of concern, though, that a number of senior women, from different parts of the University, have expressed their frustration at the difficulty they perceive in having their voice heard and their opinions taken seriously in relatively formal settings. They may find themselves interrupted, talked down, rudely contradicted or see their contribution ignored until it is taken up, without acknowledgement, by a man. There is a risk that, in the entirely proper pursuit of academic excellence, interpersonal abrasiveness is mistakenly perceived as an indicator of intellectual rigour and tough-mindedness. It is apparent that in a sizable number of cases the chair of a meeting does not see it as his or her responsibility to ensure that the meeting is conducted in such a way that everyone feels able to contribute without fear of humiliation. Unless this changes there is a danger that innovative and possibly challenging ideas will not be heard and that good staff, both female and male, will weary of what feels like a constant struggle and leave.

**Recommendation 7(i):** That all those who regularly chair meetings are encouraged to undertake training in the skills required.

There is a more general point that some women do not feel that their contribution is recognised or valued. The Athena survey reported that only 60% of women believed that their research was valued while the figure for men was 73% (Athena, 2006, p. 15). The report suggests that 'much still needs to be done before women perceive themselves to have the same level of support, encouragement, development opportunities and recognition as their male colleagues' (Athena, 2006, p.1).

**Recommendation 7(ii):** That Deans and Heads of School give an annual account of any steps that they have been able to take to increase women's development opportunities and to celebrate women's successes.

## 8. VISIBILITY AND ROLE MODELS

One obvious consequence of the preponderance of men in the academic side of the University is that women are not very visible. This means that young women joining the University as lecturers do not have many role models or much evidence that any ambitions they might have to progress to a senior position are likely to be fulfilled. This contributes to women's perceptions of their inequality. The Athena study reports that whereas only 15% of male SLs thought that women were 'disadvantaged or significantly disadvantaged with respect to promotion', nearly 50% of female SLs did (Athena, 2006, p. 14). As it is not possible to increase the number of women in senior roles very rapidly, it would be helpful to ensure that all practicable opportunities are taken to increase the visibility of distinguished women academics. That this might not always happen is suggested by the Institute of Physics report:

'Most physics departments have a regular programme of departmental colloquia and specialist research seminars. ... women speakers were relatively under-represented, well below the actual numbers active in research (more than 10% of the total). Although there was no evidence of active discrimination in this respect, most seminar and colloquium organisers had not registered this imbalance.' (IP, 2006, p. 4)

**Recommendation 8(i):** That the University, the Faculties and the Schools pay explicit attention to the signals that are sent about the institution in terms of the gender balance of honorary graduates, guest lecturers, external examiners and so on.

## 9. ATHENA SWAN CHARTER

The Athena SWAN Charter is a scheme that recognises excellence in employment in science, engineering and technology in higher education. It was developed out of the work of the Scientific Women's Academic Network and launched in June 2005. Any UK university which can demonstrate commitment to working towards the achievement of Athena's aims can apply to become a Charter signatory. It now has 24 members, who have the opportunity to apply for a SWAN Charter Award. There are currently 11 Award holders, including Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial, UCL and Edinburgh. Becoming a Charter signatory would help to embed good employment practice, would give a signal to the University's own staff that equality issues are being taken seriously and would raise the University's public profile as a good employer.

**Recommendation 9(i):** That the University applies to become a signatory to the Athena SWAN Charter.

**Recommendation 9(ii):** That the case studies of the 11 Athena SWAN Award-holding universities are read by Faculty senior management teams in order to discover whether there are any examples of good practice which would be applicable to their Faculty.

## 10. EMBEDDING CULTURAL CHANGE

Although a short-term project can draw attention to things that might beneficially be changed, it is only if permanent members of staff take responsibility for the implementation of changes and for the sharing of good practice that cultural change will become embedded and greater gender equality in the management and leadership of the University will be achieved. Furthermore, it is important that it is not left solely to women to try to bring about the necessary changes. The beneficial impact of male leaders who are committed to equality and diversity was apparent in the Institute of Physics visits:

'It was striking the effect a sympathetic [male] head of department or research group could make. There were numerous examples of groups with a large number of women members as a result of the personal qualities of the group leader. In one case, the mere fact that a (male) group leader had publicly stated that he wished to encourage more women into the subject had had a positive effect.' (IP, 2006, p. 3).

**Recommendation 10(i):** That each Faculty is encouraged to identify two or more senior academics (at least one of whom should be a man) who will take on the role of champions or advocates of gender equality and report to the Dean.

## IV ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (PROJECT AIM 3)

### 11. MATERNITY LEAVE, THE RETURN TO WORK AND CHILDCARE

Not surprisingly, one of the biggest issues that women face is the career breaks consequent upon child-bearing and, when they have primary responsibility for childcare, the difficulty of sustaining a working pattern that will give them a realistic chance of success in the competition for promotion. Although the University has excellent policies for enhanced maternity leave, adoption leave, extended leave and paternity leave they are not universally known or implemented. And it is clear that there are considerable differences between women in the way that they like to be

treated during and after their maternity or adoption leave. Some, for example, welcome regular contact with their School; others report that it makes them feel pressurised to return to work before the end of their leave period. In the Athena survey, more than half of the female respondents who had had a career break said that contact with the department during their absence would help the transition back to work (Athena, 2006, p. 9).

Some of the following recommendations regarding maternity leave and adoption leave, the return to work and childcare arrangements will be applicable to all female members of staff who take maternity or adoption leave; others relate more specifically to academic women, because there are some factors that apply largely or even exclusively to that group, e.g.

- the University's responsibilities to its ug and pg students cannot generally be either rescheduled or easily reallocated.
- Developing an academic career depends crucially on developing a high-quality research profile. This is particularly hard to sustain during maternity leave and the subsequent return to work. In the sciences in particular some disciplines and their research techniques are changing so rapidly that even one year away can leave a woman feeling out of touch and out of date.
- Achieving an international research profile is generally facilitated by periods of time spent abroad, either at conferences or working in an overseas university or research institute. Working abroad is challenging for women with young children and for those whose children are older but who are single parents.

Many of the women I have spoken to have described the sense of guilt that they experience when they take maternity leave, because they are aware that their colleagues are having to take on their teaching, assessment and administration. Unfortunately, in some cases this is exacerbated by perceived resentment within the School. It is an inescapable fact that the unfunded absence for from six months to a year of a full-time member of academic staff presents the Head of School with considerable managerial challenges and can impose heavy burdens on colleagues who take on additional work.

**Recommendation 11(i):** That where women follow their six months of statutory maternity leave or adoption leave with six months unpaid leave, their salary for those six months should be specifically used to buy in replacement teaching for them and for any colleagues who have taken on additional work. At present, it seems that, in some parts of the University at least, the salary saving is simply absorbed into the School budget.

**Recommendation 11(ii):** That each Faculty should establish a small fund which could be used both to underwrite the salary saving (in case, in the event, the woman decides to return after her six months paid leave) and to provide extra support where the salary saving is insufficient for a School's specific needs. It has been argued that this cost should fall upon Schools rather than Faculties but the impact of maternity leave is uneven across different schools and disciplines depending on the number of women of child-bearing age and resentment is likely to be less if the costs are more widely shared.

Some Heads of School will only have to deal with one maternity (or adoption) leave during the course of their headship. This means that they do not build up a body of knowledge about the kind of arrangements which have to be made and which, as far as possible, need to be in the best interests of both the pregnant woman and the School's staff and students. Accordingly, I have drawn up a framework of questions,

which could be used to structure a conversation with a woman who is going to take maternity leave.

It would seem sensible for Heads of School Administration (or their nominated representative) to take responsibility for discussions with the pregnant woman about her leave entitlements and the kind of practical arrangements she would like to have made for her leave. Again, there should be a framework of questions that can guide these discussions (this work is being undertaken by the HR Directorate).

**Recommendation 11(iii):** That Heads of School and Heads of School Administration should have access to frameworks for discussion with pregnant colleagues about the arrangements for their leave and return to work.

**Recommendation 11(iv):** That there should be a web site on the University's intranet which pulls together all the information that Heads of School, Heads of School Administration and pregnant women need about statutory entitlements and about the University's policies on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, childcare, job sharing, flexible working and part-time working. (This is a project which the HR Directorate is currently working on.)

One of the biggest career impediments is the loss of research momentum that can follow maternity or adoption leave. A few women find themselves able to continue with some research or writing during their leave. In such circumstances it could be very helpful if they were offered any necessary IT support to enable them to do some work at home. It is important, though, that there is never an *expectation* that the leave period will be used in this way, since women's circumstances differ enormously according, for example, to the speed of their physical recovery from childbirth, the health of their baby, the number of children they have, the domestic support that is available, and so on.

**Recommendation 11(v):** That women who want and are able to keep up with the research literature or write up some completed research during their maternity or adoption leave should be offered IT support if this would enable them to do some work at home.

In the majority of cases women are unable to continue with their research while on maternity leave.

**Recommendation 11(vi):** That, where appropriate, consideration should be given by the Faculty to the possibility of funding a research associate during the woman's leave who can keep the research moving forward and can provide support for her when she returns to work.

Some women report that the interruption to their research, coupled sometimes with an increased administrative and/or teaching load on their return to work, can make the resumption of research very difficult. It is not in the interests of either the woman herself or of the University for a promising research career to stall. It is notable that both Imperial and Bristol have recently started to give six months of protected research time to women returning from maternity leave. A more extensive scheme is the national programme of Daphne Jackson fellowships, which provide part-time funding and mentoring over two years to enable a scientist who has had a career break of at least two years to return to a scientific career. The majority of these fellowships are funded by Research Councils, charitable trusts and industry and are highly competitive: the University has one fellow at present, Dr Jill Stocks in MHS, but has had only two others over the past nine years. It is also possible for universities to fund

fellowships—as the University of Surrey and UCL currently do. The advantages for the university are that it has some say in the selection of the Fellow; it receives administrative support from the Trust; it gains good publicity from Trust events and publications; and the Fellow becomes part of an extensive network.

**Recommendation 11(vii):** That Faculties consider developing a scheme to provide some protected research time for women returning from maternity leave and for other academics who have had a career break.

**Recommendation 11(viii):** That the science Faculties consider the possibility of funding a Daphne Jackson fellowship.

Returning to full-time work can be very demanding for women with one or more young children, particularly if they cannot afford full-time help and do not have either a partner who can take on responsibility for childcare or a network of supportive friends or family members nearby. In such circumstances, part-time work might seem a practical solution. Of the women in the Athena survey who had taken a career break, 59% said that the transition back to work would be helped by a period of part-time work building up to full-time (Athena, 2006, p. 9). In practice, very few academic women return to work part-time, unlike administrative and support staff. One reason for this is that, as academics do not have contractual hours, are not required to be in the workplace at set times and may do much of their work at home, it is surprisingly difficult to operate an academic part-time contract. The danger is that the member of staff works full-time and is paid part-time. It might be worth considering the model of clinical academics who, in effect, work part-time for the University and part-time for their hospital. Although it would be unlikely that two academics could be found in the same subject specialism who would both want a 50% contract, it may be that a doctoral student could provide limited cover, e.g. one day per week, for a woman wanting to make a gradual return to full-time work.

**Recommendation 11(ix):** That thought is given to ways of making a part-time return to work for academics feasible.

A number of women have made the point that, contrary to popular assumption, the period when their children are with child minders or at nursery school is not the hardest to manage. In the pre-school years, childcare is often available from 8.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. at least 48 weeks of the year. When children go to school, those hours are reduced to 9.00 a.m. – 3.30 p.m. for about 40 weeks of the year; where siblings at different schools have different holiday periods, the reduction is even greater. The University is currently developing a plan to enable staff to have access to childcare for school-age children in the school holidays and, possibly, after school.

**Recommendation 11(x):** That the Assistant Director of HR is asked to bring forward a business plan for the scheme he is developing, in partnership with SureStart (the Government's childcare initiative), to make holiday childcare available in the walk-to-work area.

Developing the international research reputation which is essential for success in a research-intensive university normally requires a researcher to spend time abroad, attending international conferences or working with others on collaborative projects. Such spells abroad not only develop researchers' skills, knowledge and experience, they also raise their profile and bring them to the attention of distinguished international scholars who may, in due course, become their referees. Many women with children find it very difficult to spend working time abroad. This is a problem which also affects anyone who has primary responsibility for dependent relatives. There are,

however, some ways in which an international reputation can be built from within the UK, e.g. by serving as a referee or editor for an international journal; by organising and hosting an international conference in Manchester; by setting up an international research project where each participant works within his or her own country; by collaborating with scholars overseas using the Access Grid; etc.

**Recommendation 11(xi):** That Associate Deans for Research, in conjunction with heads of research in the disciplines in their Faculty, draw up a list of ways in which staff who have primary responsibility for the care of children or dependent relatives can develop an international research reputation without spending frequent or lengthy periods of time abroad. Such a list would be useful for those mentoring academics in the early stages of their career.

Some members of staff have to turn down expenses-paid invitations to be a keynote speaker at a prestigious international conference because they cannot afford the cost of the necessary arrangements for the care of children or dependent relatives or of taking the children with them. Oxford University's Mathematical & Physical Sciences division has recently established a fund to provide financial help for staff in such circumstances.

**Recommendation 11(xii):** That Faculties consider the possibility of setting up a scheme which would pay some of the costs of the care of children or dependent relatives for those who would otherwise have to turn down an invitation to speak at an international conference.

Paternity Leave and statutory paternity pay (and the related adoption leave) have been available since 6th April 2003 but, currently, not all eligible men take advantage of their entitlement. Where men do take paternity or adoption leave it sends strong positive signals that childcare is not exclusively a women's issue. Some schools in the University, for example the school of Physics & Astronomy, actively encourage male staff to take paternity leave. This good practice could beneficially be spread across the University.

**Recommendation 11(xiii):** That Heads of School actively encourage eligible staff to take paternity leave or adoption leave.

## 12. PROMOTIONAL CHAIR APPOINTMENTS

When promotional chair committees do not contain someone who is knowledgeable about the specialism of the applicant, they are entirely dependent on what is written by the applicants themselves, by their School sponsor and by their referees. In such circumstances it is not surprising if what may be called standard CVs are easier to assess than non-standard ones. For example, some specialisms typically attract research council funding and PhD students; their research is presented at highly-regarded conferences and published in long-established, high impact factor international journals; and their leading exponents, who can be selected as referees, work in well-known, prestigious institutions. Even a complete outsider to the field has little difficulty in judging the quality of a CV which displays some of those characteristics. In contrast, other specialisms, especially newer ones and those that span traditional disciplinary divisions, may have much less grant funding available and far fewer potential PhD students; their research may be published in edited books or in journals that have not yet established a secure reputation; and the leaders in the field may be beacons of excellence in otherwise undistinguished institutions. In such cases, there are few reliable indicators of quality for a non-specialist to go on. If the procedure

for promotional chair appointments was revised so that it was a requirement to have a subject specialist external assessor for each applicant, the committee could satisfy itself as to the standing of the journals and the referees, the norms for grant income and PhD students, and the strength of the applicant's reputation in the field. Such a modification to the procedure would benefit men and women whose research is of high quality but not in the academic mainstream.

**Recommendation 12(i):** That there should be at least one subject specialist external assessor for each applicant for a promotional chair.

### 13. INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

In pre-1992 universities, it has been the norm for senior academic appointments to be made by the Vice-Chancellor or the Deans and not to be open to competition. Over the past few years the situation has gradually changed in Manchester so that now the posts of Dean, Associate Dean and, in some but not all cases, Head of School are advertised and open to competition. I believe that there would be some benefits in extending this practice to the posts of Vice-President and Associate Vice-President: it would be a tangible demonstration of a commitment to equality and diversity; it would help to allay the suspicion, expressed by many women, that a male network operates in the University from which they are excluded; it would give applicants the opportunity to declare their interest in such a role and to gain the experience of putting forward a CV tailored to a leadership job specification; and it might reveal some unexpected talent.

### 14. EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS

If the University is to succeed in its ambitious goal to become, by 2015, 'a world renowned centre of scholarship and research, able to match the leading universities in the world in attracting and retaining teachers, researchers and ... research teams of the highest quality' (*Towards Manchester 2015*, Goal 1), it will need to examine carefully all aspects of its recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures, since there is a danger that existing practices unintentionally favour the dominant culture (see also section 12 above). If this is the case, the University may lose the opportunity to select from a truly diverse pool of excellent potential applicants.

**Recommendation 14(i):** That the University examines all aspects of its recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures, in order to ensure that no outstanding candidates are overlooked or disadvantaged.

In disciplines which have difficulty in attracting high-quality applicants through the process of external advertisement, it has long been the practice for an informal head-hunting process to operate as well, through a search committee. Where the discipline is traditionally male, it will be largely men who phone their colleagues to sound them out about the job in question. It is not surprising when this leads to an all-male shortlist. Sometimes when a woman's name is suggested, a member of the search committee may respond that 'she is unlikely to move because of her family commitments'. Although there should be no question of including a woman on a short-list simply to avoid an all-male list, it is worth taking the trouble to give specific thought to any appropriately-qualified women who could be invited to apply; this is a procedure recommended by the Institute of Physics.

**Recommendation 14(ii):** That the Dean asks a Head of School who has put forward an all-male shortlist for an academic post to provide evidence that steps have been taken to identify and approach any potential female candidates.

**Recommendation 14(iii):** That the following additional suggestions from the Institute of Physics are implemented where appropriate (IP 2006, p. 9):  
'Include details of family-friendly policies and staff benefits in the material sent to potential candidates.  
... mention that the department actively encourages applications from women.  
Consider explicitly recruiting staff at the lower end of the pay spine, so that those with limited career experience can be credible candidates.'

## 15. WORKING HOURS

The long hours culture is widely regarded to be a problem in the University, for men as well as for women. It would be helpful if there could be a shift from a focus on hours spent on the premises to the quality of the work output. This came up frequently in the Institute of Physics visits:

'A long-hours culture ... was one of the most contentious issues encountered. On the one hand it was clear that many people were working exceptional hours because they were excited by the research and would have considered it absurd to be told otherwise. On the other hand, many younger people, particularly those seeking permanent contracts, felt that they had to give up evenings and weekends to maintain their profile; others felt it would be frowned upon if they were to work more normal hours.' (IP, 2006, p. 3)

**Recommendation 15(i):** There is no one pattern of working hours in the University that applies to all members of staff and all academic disciplines. Some members of staff can productively do some of their work at home, for example, whereas for others that is not practicable. Everybody, however, benefits from a recognition that work commitments and home life need to be held in a balance that is appropriate for both the employer and the employee and that enables staff to reach their full potential.

Against that background, it is recommended that senior members of staff should guard against giving the impression that it is the number of hours spent on University premises that is valued, rather than the standard and quality of the work output. They should aim to set a good example with regard to taking reasonable amounts of annual leave..

Staff who have responsibility for children or dependent relatives are put in a difficult position if meetings which they need to attend are routinely and/or frequently scheduled outside working hours. Although it is not easy to hold meetings during the day because of the demands of the teaching timetable, every effort should be made to find a time which does not conflict with the University's family-friendly policy. One approach would be to set a strict time limit for meetings, dealing with all routine and uncontentious business by the circulation of papers in advance.

**Recommendation 15(ii):** That there should be agreement about what constitutes the normal working day and that meetings which people are required to attend should not be routinely or frequently scheduled outside those hours.

## V SOME ISSUES THAT HAVE ARISEN IN THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT

### 16. INDUCTION AND PERFORMANCE & DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

A surprising number of academics do not have a clear and accurate idea of what is required to achieve either academic or managerial promotion. The Athena report bears this out. Among women at lecturer level, 39% said they had no knowledge of promotion criteria and 50% claimed they had no knowledge of promotion procedures; the comparable figures for male lecturers were 35% and 43% respectively (Athena, 2006, p.13).

The report suggests that there is a more marked difference between men and women in their attitude to appraisal and personal development programmes, with 40% of women stating that appraisal would help them progress to their 'ideal level' and only 30% of men giving that response. The figures for the likely helpfulness of personal development programmes were 39% and 26% respectively (Athena, 2006, p.13).

**Recommendation 16(i):** If the University is to get the best from all its academics, Schools need to put in place a serious programme of induction for their new members of academic staff and to provide more than incidental guidance thereafter. It would be valuable for all academic line managers to have some training in career guidance and development.

It is probably true to say that, on average, women academics spend more of their working time than men do on activities such as pastoral support for students (and secretarial staff), general administrative tasks and the organisation of events with a social component, such as guest seminars followed by a drinks reception, graduation parties, and so on. There are a number of reasons for this: a reluctance on women's part to say no when asked, coupled with a desire to please; unconscious stereotyping by male colleagues, which leads to women being cast in the role of 'carer', 'secretary' or 'hostess'; the propensity of students and support staff to turn to a woman for help or advice when something goes wrong; and so on. Good workload profiling can help to address this problem but it is by no means a complete solution because so many of the things which women do, which are trivial in themselves but cumulatively time-consuming, would not ever feature in a load model.

Understandably, Heads of School are grateful when someone can be relied upon to act as, say, the School Examinations Officer conscientiously and efficiently but it is not in that member of staff's best interests nor, ultimately, to the good of the School for someone to be trapped into that kind of role for 10 years or more because they 'do it so well'.

**Recommendation 16(ii):** That Heads of school and other line managers take active steps, perhaps through annual Performance & Development Reviews, to prevent anyone slipping into the role of School dogsbody, no matter how effectively they fulfil that role (unless their academic career has genuinely stalled).

Many women (though not all—there may be a generational difference here) need to be encouraged to put themselves forward for promotion or for a management or leadership position. The Athena report is interesting in this regard. Only 20% of women on lecturer grade reported having been encouraged to apply for promotion to SL whereas nearly 30% of men did. The comparable figures for those at SL level who reported being encouraged to apply for a chair were 28% and 41%. The report asks: 'Is it that women don't recognise the tap on the shoulder, hear the words of

encouragement or notice the positive vibes? Or is this encouragement absent?' (Athena, 2006, p. 9)

Another related issue is that women may develop their career ambitions later than men. The Athena report expresses it like this: 'men and women appear to be equally ambitious, but men may set their sights high earlier on; for example, similar percentages of male and female senior lecturers and readers hoped to achieve professorial status but at lecturer level a much higher percentage of men aspired to become professors (63% male v. 47% female) (Athena, 2006, p.12).

**Recommendation 16(iii):** That at each promotion round and when leadership posts become available, the Head of School, or other line manager, gives explicit encouragement to any suitable potential applicants (both male and female) to apply, on the clear understanding that there is no guarantee of the outcome.

If the University is to have academic line managers who can contribute to the delivery of the 2015 agenda and who can provide the kind of HR support identified in (16i) to (16iii) above, continuing programmes of training and development will be needed, because there is no reason why academics should innately have the kind of skills and understanding that are needed. But serious, high quality professional development is time-consuming and it is not obvious that there will continue to be numbers of academics, either male or female, who will apply for internal programmes such as Headstart or any of the external programmes that are available.

**Recommendation 16(iv):** That Deans and Heads of School are asked to identify colleagues who have leadership potential and to plan with them a programme of development which would take account of their need to keep their academic career on track at the same time. If the plans could stretch over a sufficiently long timescale, it should be possible to build in a reduction in normal workload during the professional development period, without burdening other colleagues unreasonably. This can be done, for example, by cancelling an optional course unit in a particular year or postponing it and teaching two cohorts together the following year. But because of the need to provide accurate and timely information for students, such adjustments cannot be made a few months before the professional development programme is due to begin.

There are two related problems with this kind of succession planning. The first is that it can be very difficult to identify leadership potential in people who have not had any leadership role; and the second is that this can lead to a kind of 'cloning' approach, where the selectors choose those who have the attributes that are most like those of the people already in such positions. Obviously this militates against increasing the diversity (in gender, race or ethnicity and, more generally, in management style) of the cadre of future academic leaders. One rather limited solution would be for Schools to offer to relatively junior members of staff the opportunity to be a member of an important committee or working party, and in due course, to chair it, or to lead a project team, so that they have the chance to demonstrate any leadership potential. Certainly the Athena survey found that only 41% of women reported that they had 'the opportunity to serve on important departmental committees', compared with 58% of men (Athena, 2006, p. 16). The Institute of Physics report noted that there was a tendency for women 'to be given "softer" administrative responsibilities, for example dealing with the pastoral support for students, while not being involved in the committees making the important decisions.' (IP, 2006, p. 9)

**Recommendation 16(v):** That Schools distribute the opportunity to lead committees, working parties and teams as widely as possible, so that a range of

staff within the School have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership skills and so that a variety of leadership styles come to be valued.

## **VI PLANS FOR 2006-07**

### **17. PROJECT CONTINUATION**

Activities for 2006-07 will seek to build on what has been achieved to date. Particular attention will be paid to the culture of the working environment, since this is a notoriously difficult aspect of organisational life to change. Every effort will be made to ensure that any beneficial initiatives become part of the mainstream life of the University, so that momentum is not lost when the project finishes. Activities will include as many of the following as the time available allows.

#### **Career development activities (Project Aim 1)**

- supporting the existing mentoring programme;
- \* providing informal staff development sessions for senior academic women;
- mounting a seminar series for senior academic and academic-related staff in which Vice-Presidents, Associate Deans, Heads of School and Heads of administrative directorates share what they have learnt from their management and leadership experience;
- undertaking development work with women in the three science faculties at post-doctoral and lecturer level in order to try to ensure that there will be a larger pool from which to draw leaders in the future;
- providing coaching for individual women, as required;
- working with Heads of School, research division leaders etc. on gender issues in relation to the provision of career development advice;
- in conjunction with the Registrar & Secretary and the Head of the Training & Development Unit, making provision for career development support for women in senior academic-related posts;

#### **The working environment (Project Aim 2)**

- working with senior managers and leaders in the University, in particular the identified champions of gender equality in each Faculty, on gender issues in relation to institutional culture;
- identifying and disseminating existing good practice across the University;
- working with the HR Directorate to learn any lessons from exit interviews;
- undertaking staff data analysis, particularly in relation to 'churn';
- analysing the detailed findings of the Staff Satisfaction Survey in relation to perceptions among male and female staff of leadership and management, staff development and opportunities for promotion;
- learning from the Athena SWAN case studies; working with the Equality & Diversity Committee of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education in order to collect examples of good practice from other comparable institutions; studying the outcomes of the Strathclyde project which is currently investigating the gender imbalance in Scottish HE institutions;

### **Organisational policies and procedures (Project Aim 3)**

- working with Professor Helen Gleeson to make an application for Athena SWAN Charter signatory status;
- in conjunction with Professor Aneez Esmail and the Equality & Diversity Unit, benchmarking the University's performance against peer institutions in terms of the proportion of staff in senior positions who are female;
- supporting the implementation of the specific duties placed on the University by the Gender Equality Duty within the Equalities Act (coming into effect in April 2007).

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24.11.06