

THE UNIVERSITY of York

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Time For Change

- **RAE - context**
 - We had been 5* at 1996 RAE and 5* at 2001 RAE, and that meant we were designated 6* (one of three Departments in the UK to be so).
 - We were 17th in the CS Rankings for RAE 2008.
 - For us this was a major blow – though a fair result.
- **2009 - Offered and engaged in a University Research Audit**
 - Problems not limited to RAE materials
 - Dissatisfaction from our Research Associates (varied a lot)
 - Generally felt to be behind the times with respect to many national initiatives
- **Time to change...**
 - Going on much as normal was not an option.
 - Significant overhaul of our modus operandi was needed.
 - Started a much more rigorous, less laissez-faire approach to our general existence.
- **Better for all** philosophy behind almost everything we do.


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Influencing decision makers


- **Institutional commitment and achievement:**
 - We were fortunate in that the University (centrally), from VC, Research Policy, and down committed and have *inclusivity* as one of the four strategic priorities.
 - It can (and has been done) elsewhere – Chemistry have long-standing commitment and experience. In many ways, CS was one of the outliers in the sciences. (Then) Head of Department in Chemistry (Paul Walton) gave talk to our department.
- **Departmental priority:**
 - We had both DHoDs (Research and Teaching) who wanted to see this happen.
 - Resourcing problems avoided *largely structurally*:
 - Many individuals had significant discretion over how they spent their time and they wanted to promote Athena Swan (senior academics, senior HR, senior admin within the Department. (Thus, the composition of the Athena Swan Committee helped avoid potential problems. But also had spare time involvement, e.g. from PhD students). Actually quite informal resource-wise. This will change in time.
 - Also (significant) administrative support for the process sourced directly from CS Research Support Office.
- **National commitment** - Athena Swan scheme, backing of, e.g. Royal Society. Also help from high profile inspirational women (Gillian Arnold and Sue Black)

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THE UNIVERSITY of York  **Influencing decision makers**


- **Inclusivity works economically – let's consider UG recruitment**
 - Computer science not as buoyant as it used to be. (Life used to be very easy.)
 - There is very significant pool of female talent suited to doing CS who don't end up doing CS (here or elsewhere).
 - It's a competitive market and we needed to place ourselves at the front. Revamped our whole approach to this (and all materials).
 - **Stress the economics case!**
- **Promote visibility and recognition: Are there any women here?**
 - Yes, and many of our female undergraduates are happy to assist at open days and interview days.
 - Yes, and it helps if a senior female academic gives talks at open days about the very latest CS related work (e.g. quantum computing or complexity).
 - Yes. Invited lectures, e.g. "Did twitter save Bletchley Park?" – Sue Black, and "Your glittering career in IT" – Gillian Arnold.
 - Yes. Encourage staff to gain appropriate recognition for their achievements (1 prestigious research chair and 1 fellowship)

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- **Do the profiling:**
 - You can't deny the figures (and there may be many sources)
 - The benchmarking/profiling process was most valuable (all manner of things from UG/PG/Degree classes,
 - Highlights where problems are:
 - UG numbers poor – but now certainly improving.
 - PhD – actually fairly average for CS.
 - PhD to RA – awful
 - Achievement of women academics when here – rather good – all are influential figures, including two prestigious fellowships, and the head of our most important research development in recent times, and arguably ever.
 - Number of women who make it to interview stage for lectureships and RA posts – truly awful. (And we have no women at lecturer level.)
- **Data is a lever for change:**
 - I value your opinion, of course, but...
 - What do you make of my data?
 - **Benchmark.** Athena Swan starts with a great idea for entry level award (Bronze) – it rewards/recognizes Departments that recognize they have a problem.

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THE UNIVERSITY of York  **Things to Do**

- **Take an interest in performance reviewing (and careers more generally)**
 - We were concerned about the quality of RA performance reviewing.
 - We changed the format based largely on feedback from RAs.
 - These are all now reviewed by DHoD-Research, with the intention of intervening if adequate career guidance is not apparent.
 - Clear needed for mentoring and advice. (Further actions planned here.)
- **Training**
 - Set about creating a training programme for RAs.
 - "Advancing in academia" sessions, how promotion is gained and what you need to do.
 - Proposal writing module geared to RAs. Also now have much better mechanisms for recognition of contributions to proposals.
- **Consult!**
 - Perceived need for a "networking" module. Talking to the centre about this.
 - Rapid fire on-line surveys. These were VERY effective.

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THE UNIVERSITY of York  Impacts

- **Rising UG numbers of women**
 - Up from 8% to 16%
- **Greater engagement** – encouraging and facilitating opportunities:
 - One limited term prestigious research chair abroad
 - One prestigious fellowship (to be announced).
 - Encouraging RSs to engage in events (two research poster competitions won).
- **Advice/Review monitoring.**
 - Much closer overview of career guidance and advice (but much more work to be done).

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