NU WOMEN
UNIVERSITY REPORT 2018

NU Women has gone from strength to strength since the network was re-launched in 2014. Building on the success of recent years, the network has continued to host an extensive range of events throughout the 17/18 academic year and provided members with various opportunities through initiatives such as Writing Space and Career Conversations. The network continues to be a voice for women staff across Newcastle University.

Events
Following feedback received in the 16/17 Annual Members Survey, the network has continued to ensure that there are a range of events offered throughout the year to appeal to all faculties and to both Academic and Professional Services staff across the university. Working with the 17/18 themes of Representation, Working Lives and Change and Transition, the event schedule varied from Working Through the Menopause with Rachel Tobbell and Wellbeing in the Workplace with Angela Clow, to Visual Representation of Women with Leonora Saunders and Political Representation of Women in Politics with Chi Onwurah and Maarja Luhiste. The Annual Lecture was held in October 2017 with Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson: Gold-Medal Paralympian of 16 years; Crossbench Peer in the House of Lords; Chancellor of Northumbria University; Motivational Speaker; Broadcaster and Mother.

17/18 Event Summary:

September 2017 Secondment and Shadowing Event (PS Network)
October 2017 Annual Lecture w/ Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson
November 2017 Working Through the Menopause w/ Rachel Tobbell
December 2017 Christmas Social: Update on Sexual Assault on Campus Project w/ Peter Hopkins
January 2018 Visual Representation of Women w/ Leonora Saunders
February 2018 Career Conversations Panel w/ Professor Julia Sanders, Kate Aitchison and Coline Poirier
March 2018 Political Representation of Women in Politics w/ Chi Onwurah and Maarja Luhiste
March 2018 Imposter Syndrome: Building your confidence despite feeling like a fraud! w/ Rachel Tobbell
May 2018 "You can feel the exhaustion in the air all around you": The Mood of the Neoliberal University and its Impact on Academic Knowledge and Academics’ Lives w/ Maria do Mar Pereira (Joint event with Gender Research Group)
June 2018  Graded Roundtable Ladder Event (PS Network)
June 2018  Carers Awareness Session w/ Kelechi Dibie
June 2018  Wellbeing in the Workplace w/ Angela Clow
June 2018  Making a Professor (Professor’s Network)
June-July 2018  Development Sessions for Managers (PS Network)

Initiatives

Writing Space

NU Women’s writing groups were inspired by models developed by the Indiana University Women Faculty Writing Group and Texas Tech University’s Women Faculty Writing Programme. Building on the success of the Writing Groups last year, the initiative has engaged a wide range of women staff across the university. Members met for up to 3 hours each week, with each session beginning with a discussion of a set reading or video addressing an issue related to academic writing. This was followed by two-and-a-half hours of dedicated writing in a phone and internet-free space. The groups provided supportive communities, which helped colleagues to develop the skills and dedicate the time needed for the writing process. The feedback received through the 17/18 Writing Space Survey has been extremely positive, highlighting the importance of this initiative for members’ productivity and ability to protect writing time within the university. Members acknowledge the inclusive environment provided by the writing groups as being instrumental for goal setting (in writing and beyond), sharing experiences with women across the university, and being productive without distractions faced in departments, offices or at home.

The main issue raised in the feedback related to the unsuitability of some rooms booked for the writing groups, noise, lack of natural light and windows, plugs etc. highlighted as specific problems encountered. Institutional support in securing suitable rooms for every writing group will be essential if they are to continue successfully into the future. Suggestions for moving forward included extending the writing group to 5 hours to give members the option to write for longer and replacing videos/readings with career-oriented short talks (How to do X kind of research, How I finished the first book etc).

In addition to developing a supportive community of women scholars across the university built on shared experiences and mutual support, collectively the writing groups contributed to the following successful outputs in 17/18:

- 3 pieces for non-academic audiences
- 16 journal articles
- 2 book chapters
- Three book proposals
- 5 co-authored chapters
- 2 manuscripts
- Reviews of two monographs
- 4 conference presentations
- One report
- 10 grant applications
- Revisions of book chapters
- 1 conference proceedings paper

All statistics valid as of 15/08/2018
Career Conversations

The Career Conversations Mentoring Scheme continued to respond to members’ demands for increased access to mentoring. It facilitates one-off meetings between members and senior colleagues (who volunteered to be on our database) to talk about current issues or questions about their career. In February 2018, the network held a Careers Conversations Panel with Professor Julie Sanders (Deputy Vice Chancellor), Kate Aitchison (Team Manager, Student Wellbeing Service) and Coline Poirier (Newcastle University Research Fellow, Institute of Neuroscience).

Twitter

The network has continued to engage with NU Women members and wider communities and networks through Twitter. This platform has enabled the network to communicate information about events, share news stories and document the network’s activity using hashtags such as #WomenInAcademia, #WomenInHE and #GenderEquality. @NU_Women currently has 1,325 followers and follows 1,362 users.

Blog

The network launched a new blog series called Going Global to kickstart 2018, which focused on promoting global connectedness within and beyond the Newcastle campus. Through the introduction of the new blog series, the network hoped to highlight the importance of connections outside the region and recognise the different ways in which members or someone they know have taken their work or interests overseas. The aim of the series is to inspire and encourage members to take up any global opportunities which may come their way and acknowledge the benefits of connecting with women across the world. So far, the series has 3 posts by staff at Newcastle University International Singapore (NUIS): Dr Naayagi Ramasamy (Assistant Professor in Electrical Power Engineering and an Equality and Diversity Champion), Julia Grierson (Deputy Chief Operating Officer), and Dr Cindy Lee (Assistant Professor and Director of Excellence in Learning and Teaching).

The blog has also continued to be used to advertise events to members, to promote network initiatives and to provide members with the opportunity to read about past events through event reviews.

17/18 Highlights

An Artwork Audit was conducted across campus in July 2017 by the Summer Interns, which explored the visual representation of women in the artwork displayed in Newcastle University buildings. Based on the findings of the audit, a leaflet was produced and distributed in 17/18 which included information on the audit, the importance of visual representation in educational institutions and a how-to-guide for schools and units to increase the number of images of women in their buildings.

In January 2018, NU Women Chair Kathryn Hollingsworth visited Newcastle University International Singapore (NUIS) and met with colleagues to discuss how a network for women staff could be developed on the Singapore campus. After this visit, Dr Naayagi Ramasamy joined the NU Women Committee and was the first contributor to the Going Global blog series. Julia Grierson and Dr Cindy
Lee have also contributed to the blog series as a way of connecting with the NU Women network in Newcastle.

Our 17/18 campaign for International Women’s Day was delayed due to industrial strike action. The annual collection for menstrual products, baby care and toiletries took place over one week in April 2018, engaging various departments across the university as well as Northumbria University. The donated items were distributed to The Red Box Project Newcastle, Newcastle West End Foodbank and Newcastle West End Refugee Service.

In August 2018, the network was nominated for the 2018 Outstanding Diversity Network Award at The Inclusive Companies Awards 2018 (formerly the Excellence in Diversity Awards). This exclusive awards ceremony honours the remarkable work of inclusive employers and diversity champions across all sectors. Shortlisted nominees will be revealed in September with winners announced at the Inclusive Companies Awards ceremony on November 15th in Manchester.

Institutional Voice
As well as supporting and championing our members through events, social media, and the writing groups, NU women also provides a voice for women within the wider institutional structures. NU Women Chair Kathryn Hollingsworth is a member of the Diversity Consultative Group and committee member Cat Button is on the University Athena Swan Self Assessment Team. Kathryn is also a member of the Changing the Culture Steering Group (examining sexual misconduct on campus). Chair of the Professor’s network, Karen Ross was on the Task and Finish Group examining pay equality. In 2018-19, in addition to the above representation, we will have representation on the Parenting and Childcare Implementation Group (Nicola Dolman) and the Representation on Campus Project Group (Nikki Godden Rasul). In addition, Kathryn is in regular contact with the Dean and Directors of Equality and Diversity, and Candy Rowe (the current Director of EDI in FMS) sits on our steering committee.

Professor’s Network
During 2017-18, the Women Professors’ Network organised two networking lunches and a half-day workshop on 'Making Professor' which was very well attended. We are already planning the next one to take place in winter 2018. We also contributed to the University's review of the promotion process. We considered the idea of developing a peer-mentoring scheme for senior women (both academic and professional services) which we hope to develop further in 2018-19.

PS Network
The NU Women Professional Services (PS) Network was established in November 2016 following demands from PS colleagues for additional activity that is more targeted to PS challenges. This continues to be supported by additional funding from the Registrar, John Hogan.

There have been substantial changes to the PS Network membership over the last year and is now comprised of:

- Ann Armstrong  Faculty Diversity Officer, FMS Faculty
- Nicola Dolman  School Manager, Computing
- Paula Fitzpatrick  Head of Information Services, Digital Library Services
- Helen Foley  Communications Manager, NU Institute for Ageing
- Debra Jones  Technical Manager, Institute of Genetic Medicine
- Kay Jones  Assistant Director (Business Engagement), Business Engagement and Marketing

All statistics valid as of 15/08/2018
Against this backdrop the PS network delivered three highly successful events in 2017/2018: Secondment and Shadowing Event; Graded Roundtable Ladder Event; Development Sessions for Managers.

**Moving Forward: 2018-19**

Based on discussions during the NU Women Away Day, the **18/19 themes** are: Inclusivity; Wellbeing; Uncertainty/Transitions. NU Women will focus on these themes across the activities/events, Twitter posts and blog content.

Our activities in 2018-19 will commence with a social to start the new academic year and engage members in the network. The substantial range of events held by the network have addressed various issues and topics, however the introduction of additional social events will provide members with the opportunity to meet informally and be encouraged to identify the positives of their roles and celebrate achievements collectively. Following feedback from the Annual Survey, the committee will focus on promoting NU Women across the university as we move into the new academic year. Using new 18/19 leaflets, posters, emailing and NU channels, the network will aim to ensure that all staff at Newcastle University are aware that the network exists and are given information on how to become a member and how to keep up to date with events, news and network updates.

Over recent months, Candy Rowe (Director of EDI in FMS) has been organising a Network of Networks Conference to be held in 2018-19 at Newcastle University. The event for all UK women’s networks for academic and professional staff in Higher Education aims to:

1. Empower networks, at any stage, by learning from established networks about their journeys, and how they have become a powerful voice for women within universities.
2. Offer opportunities for networks with a shared focus (e.g. by staff group or career stage) to share experiences and learn from one another.
3. Get inspired about what networking can achieve and get some ideas about what works (and what doesn’t) to help develop networks, and better support women staff.
4. Scope opportunities for more national networking around key challenges and issues, and whether a networking of networks should become a regular feature in the diary.

The NU women annual lecture will also (hopefully!) take place during this conference. The conference will be followed by a variety of events which have been organised following consultation with the network committee at the NU Women Away Day and in response to the NU Women Annual Members Survey. NU Women will hold joint events with Rainbow@Newcastle, the Parents Network and the Gender Research Group. Writing Space will continue and it is hoped that activity in the NU Women Book Club (launched in May 2017) will pick up again if there is an increase in members’ interest.

With the committee membership replenished and representing a wide array of functions in faculty, central services and technical departments, the **PS Network** activities for 2018/19 include: CV and Interview training session with careers services; Transference: a practical guide to its use in wellbeing; Shadowing and Secondment showcase; Graded round table event; Part Time working: progressing, balancing development with duties; Confidence workshops; Collaborative events with
ED&I networks and Unions and OD/HR programmes such as the Mentoring programme; Creation of a new webpage highlighting the current support services available across the university (including Just Ask and mentoring) and PS Network activity, suggestions board, contacts from talks, and signposting to frequent questions.

The Professor’s Network will undertake events including ‘Making Professor’ and continues to build its membership as the University strives to deliver on aspects of its gender equality agenda by increasing the number of women professors through internal promotion and external recruitment.

_We are grateful for the continued support from the Vice-Chancellor, the Executive Board, and the E&D Team._