CASE STUDY from Swansea University: Inspiring the next generation of women in STEM

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The need for change - working cultures & attitudes around supporting women in STEM

• LOOKED AT ‘Where are we now’ and didn’t like it...
• DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT...
• It’s not enough to be a role model and be ‘AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM’ –
• SO – It isn’t easy but go for it...
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE working with universities – Getting engagement

• We’ve used a series of interventions to raise awareness of issues
• Focus is on ‘USING ALL OUR TALENT’
• Universities are **globally competitive**
• Need best staff & best students to succeed & deliver their ambitions
• Use this to drive STAFF ENGAGEMENT
• Increasing gender equity is an ISSUE FOR US ALL
Join external events: International Women’s Day

- Suite of events across university to recognise IWD
- Keynote lectures by national female academics
- Interactive career progression workshops
- Career workshops for local BAME girls

Senior leadership of events eg International Women’s Day
CELEBRATE EQUALITY & DIVERSITY – SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

MARY WILLIAMS – 1st female appointed to an established Chair in the UK - PIONEER!

Mary Williams Prize - launched 2013 to recognize colleagues who go above and beyond call of duty to support & encourage greater diversity and support careers

Vice Chancellor announcing & presenting winner during the Graduation Ceremony.

HIGHLIGHTS CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO UNIVERSITY SUCCESS – UNSUNG HEROES!
HOW did we unleash potential of women in STEM?

- e.g. Swansea Medical School

- Challenging data – few women in the senior team, few women Profs
- Gave us **FOCUS** – how to make change happen?
- Women who met the criteria for Chair put forward through usual robust promotion processes
- Looked to use **ALL OUR TALENT** & stop making decisions ‘in our own image & likeness’
- Looked at CVs/achievements of wider pool of staff, making sure **ALL** were encouraged to apply for promotion
- Created more welcoming culture
- Greater successes for women in SUMS
TED TALK: Hilary Lappin-Scott ‘MOVE OVER BOYS: Why we need more girls/women in STEM Careers’

- Earn **20% less** than men doing similar jobs
- **Less chance** of reaching senior levels in career
- Further **disadvantaged** in salary/promotion if has children
- Hear ‘Girls can’t do Maths’,
- ‘Coding is for boys’, ‘You’ll be only girl in Physics A level class’

We need to stop saying this to our girls

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5TizhPki74
Some advice to women in STEM

• Don’t get on quietly with your work, thinking someone will notice you and promote/progress you – it doesn’t work like that!

• Do learn to network & use these effectively – MAKE TIME!

• Don’t be quiet in meetings, join in

• Do consider being a mentor and have a mentor too – support other females

• Don’t wait until you ‘tick all the boxes” before you apply for a job or promotion

• Do step up and take on some ‘big roles’ to get noticed
Examples of effective interventions

- Put Athena SWAN KPIs – eg % women in senior team – into leaders performance review. Discuss WHY if no improvement.
- University approval to co-opt women onto senior committees if the gender balance is weak – this has made massive difference at Swansea.
- Holding ‘promotions workshops’ has de-mystified the process and means more women are applying for promotion.
- 50:50 by 2020 initiative, promoted by Chwarae Teg (@chwaraeTeg) to achieve gender balance in leadership in all sectors by 2020 Universities pledge to meet this target, then must deliver. This is driving big changes.
- Compulsory unconscious bias training – especially for those on promotion & selection panels.
- It takes time to bring about culture change BUT improvements are happening.
This is all great advice!
STILL Challenging – yet to overcome.....

- How do we keep females in STEM areas and stop the ‘leaky pipeline’?
- How do we get more female applications for senior posts?
- How can we move towards greater gender balance in all we do?
- How do we ‘use all our talent’?
- ‘Focus on ‘Who is at the front of the room’?
- How do we convince that leadership doesn’t look like a black suit/white shirt & coloured tie? Don’t appoint ‘in my own likeness’
- What does a truly inclusive environment look and feel like?
WHAT ARE **YOU** GOING TO DO?

#BeTheChange

‘IT’s A JOURNEY WITHOUT AN END’