

Minutes from the ECR Liaison Forum (Exeter)

Thursday 13 February 2020 at St Lukes Campus

Baring Court 128 11 am – 1 pm

Attendees:

- Mr Daniel Adanza Dopazo
- Dr George De Ath, ECR (CEMPS, Computer Science)
- Dr Jonathan Doney (SSIS, Graduate School of Education)
- Dr Ben Gardner, ECR (CEMPS, Physics)
- Prof Andrew McRae (Dean of the DC)
- Dr Jemma Shipton (CEMPS)
- Dr Krystal Warmoth (College of Med & Health)
- Dr Chris Wood, Doctoral College (Researcher Development Manager) - Chair
- Juliet White, Doctoral College (Administrator) – Secretary to the meeting

Apologies:

Dr Ryan Ames; Dr Kate Baker; Dr Anna Harper; Dr Michela Faccioli; Kate Foster; Dr Yolanda Hill; Dr Lisa Price; Dr David Ross; Dr Charlotte Tupman; Dr Rebecca Wheeler; Dr Timothy Wilkinson; Dr Sharon Savage; Dr Jamie Stevens; Dr Stefano Pagliara; Pablo Marinez Pancorbo; Dr Emma Roberts; Drs Astrid Wissenburg.

1 **Welcome & Introductions**

Dr Ben Gardner introduced himself and explained his role in the ECR LF and how it fits within the framework of the ECR Steering Group and RIEG (Research and Impact Executive Group). Everyone introduced themselves. Dr Wood went through the Minutes of the last meeting and it was noted that Jonathan Doney's apologies had been omitted in error.

Action points from the last meeting:

- Dr Zoltan Gombos had met with Dr Wood and reported that he is organising a fellowship event.
- Dr Wood to meet with Sharon Savage.
- At the Network Meeting which took place on 30.10.19, it was felt that an ECR celebratory festival-type idea could be looked into and Dr Wood explained that he would bring this up later in the meeting.
- The new ECR Brochure had been published and will be circulated to ECRs electronically and via the 'ECR Hub'.
- A new ECR Banner was on display with new branding and also the ECR Newsletter had been 'refreshed' and made more professional.

2 **Networking 'in our own words' and updates from the ECRNs**

College of Med & Health Network

Dr Warmoth reported that the Network had lost their support lead. A new person from IIB had agreed to take over that role. She reported that PhD registrations had changed re: ECR supervision involvement and it is hoped that new events will be organised in the future.

CEMPS Network

A promotion workshop has recently taken place. Some discussion took place over clear upwards research fellow pathways and funding as well as developmental support from line managers/PIs, short term contracts and lecturer posts. Dr Wood reminded those present that the new Concordat sought to clarify this position with the inclusion of the 10 days/yr for personal development and recommendations for contracts of

employment. It was felt that this may not be enough for some, especially if a fellowships/promotions are being applied for.

It is hoped that Janice Button will be attending the next meeting to talk about the 'Exeter Academic' and the plans for progression training. Oscar Fitch-Roy will also be attending the Cornwall April meeting to share his experience of applying for fellowships as an ECR, which will be shared across the two ECR Liaison Forums.

Jonathan Doney from GSE felt that progression would be very challenging for him as he has a lectureship and it would be expected that he obtain sizeable grant in order to lead to progression opportunities. He reported that he had been through the probation system many times with each new position and was offered permanent contract after 3 years and now expected to meet targets in terms of grants and papers, for future job security. Professor McRae recommended Jonathan check with HR regarding any issues around induction/role and probation.

The role of the ECRN lead was explained and how they would be expected to report back to ECR Liaison Forums, although it was generally understood that some Networks are more proactive than others.

It was agreed that sometimes Networks relied heavily upon one organiser and that this put a lot of additional work on an individual however it was also agreed that this is noticed by employers when applying for future jobs. It was suggested that Networks may need to give a 'focus' on certain topics in order to receive good uptake. With the Medical Health Network it was generally felt that people used the space as an opportunity to complain. Members requested more social events however nobody came forward to help organise these which makes a Network lead feel very isolated.

In CEMPS, a college structure Network already exists however individual departments may not be so well supported.

RD&RC are able to provide funding to support ECRNs and are seeking additional resource from individual colleges, via RIEG.

3 **Strategic issues/requests to take forward to the new ECR Steering Group**

Going forward Dr Wood explained that he saw the ECR LF's as being an opportunity to enhance networking, now that the newly formed ECR Steering Group exists to take strategic items to ECR focussed RIEG meetings (dates yet to be confirmed). Previously issues were escalated to Doctoral College Strategic Board (DCSB; now discontinued) and then to RIEG. Dr Ben Gardner and Dr Helen Eyles (representing the Exeter Campuses) and Dr MD Sharma and Dr Clemens Ullman (representing the Cornwall campuses) are invited to attend the RIEG meetings and Dr Wood will be invited to attend future meetings, as Head of RD&RC. At the first meeting Drs Astrid Wissenburg and Prof Neil Gow asked Reps for their experiences. Dr Wood suggested that Reps contribute to the papers for these meetings and highlighted that Kendra Brown has offered advice on how best to set these out.

Going forward, it was felt that ECRs should be recognised in a type of celebratory 'Research Week' or possibly termly events throughout the year. Dr Clive Betts, Head of People Development, has proposed a 'Festival of Success.' More information to be circulated once details are in place. Research Showcase, which will combine Images of Research, 3 Minute-Thesis (3MT) Competitions (PGR), ECR presentations and 'Tweet Your Thesis/Research', is scheduled for the spring. There will be the usual 3MT heats within Colleges with the winner going through to regional heats.

Some discussion around the Concordat followed highlighting that policies seem to be in place but not yet implemented across the University. It was felt that signatories need to provide an 'action plan' at a very high level and involving funders, etc, to be put in place and cascaded down. As a group, we contributed towards the new Concordat and it is hoped that in 5 years' time there is more awareness and consequences. Dr Wood explained that he sat on the Concordat Steering Group with Drs Yolanda Hill and Tim Wilkinson as ECR reps. Dr Wood will be working with Drs. Astrid Wissenburg (Director of Research) to help cascade information about the revised Concordat through the University hierarchy.

Dr Jemma Shipton explained that, as a lecturer new to post she is undertaking the Academic Professional Programme and is allowed 20% of her time to carry this out. She appreciates the aims and intentions behind the course, but is struggling a bit with the literature on the reading list which is very generic and difficult to read. She feels that there is a bit of a missed opportunity here for the individual departments to contribute suggestions for reading that are more relevant (and readable!) to the separate disciplines. As we are also asked to write about departmental context and culture, and there is a desire within departments to communicate certain practises, it feels like there should be a way to bring these two aims together. This would also provide an opportunity to connect with other recently appointed lecturers within the department. Dr Wood suggested that a colleague Dr Lisa Alberici, be invited to a future meeting and asked Juliet White to invite Jemma to the next ECR Steering Group meeting to discuss this.

It was felt that a 'call out' to other ECRs for items to take to that Steer Group would be a good idea.

A short coffee break resumed.

4 **Update from the Doctoral College (Changes in the RD&RC Team, Changes to the ECR and Research Staff Training provisions, Research Staff Development Manager post).**

Dr Wood reported that he is now leading the RD&RC team and recruitment for his previous role as ECR Programme Manager would be comencing within in the next few weeks. An individual with post-doc experience and who has a good understanding of the cohort will be essential. The position will be permanent. Dr Wood offered to meet with anyone who might be interested in the post.

Further changes include the Research Programme/IIB Essentials Programme coming into the RD&RC remit on top of the 'core' ECR programme and RLI's. It is hoped that the newly appointed manager will be able to take this forward over the summer with Dr Wood and Roz Harrison-Brown. This will result in a more streamlined activities, larger cohorts and an enhanced more 'joined-up' porgramme.

Dr Warmoth sought clarification about the Orientation Event she had seen advertised. Dr Wood explained that it is a type of induction event included in the 'Welcome to Exeter' Event where we invite an ECR to talk about their experiences and explain what support is available to them. Dr Warmoth felt that line managers do not know what support there is for ECRs and Dr Wood said that we can offer talks to groups should there be enough interest.

5 **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

6 **Close of Meeting** (date of next meeting: 15 April 2020 (11 am – 1 pm) @ Streatham Campus, LSI, Seminar Room A)

The meeting closed at 1 pm.

Exeter ECR Liaison Forum - Action Points Summary

Item No	Action Point	Assigned to	Completed
1	Charlotte Jiggins to circulate electronic form of ECR brochure to PIs/ECRs.	CJ	
1	Dr Wood to ensure that a schematic of how the ECRNs, ECR Liaison Forums, ECR Steering Groups and RIEG work together is available from the RD&RC website	CW/CJ	
3	Festival of Success information to be circulated (when received)	CW	
3	Invite Dr Shipton Steering Group Meeting 28.2.20	JW	13.2.20

