



Mercian Conference Group

Online Meeting Friday 21st August 2020

Agenda

Present: Cheryl Coveney (OU), Charlie Hill (BCU), Laura Newman (Loughborough London), Christine Bradford (Warwick), Damian Pugh (Nottingham), Alison Charlesworth (Leicester). Deborah Munro (Birmingham), Emma Walton (Loughborough, Steering Group Sponsor)

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Apologies: Claire Brown, Gaz Johnson.

1. Update from conference sponsor and thanks

DP provided an update from the Steering Group, whose meeting (13th August) he'd recently attended. In general, it was noted the SG expressed thanks to the group for their work so far and were looking forward to next year's conference.

2. Group membership

It was confirmed the following would remain on the group: Deborah Munro, Charlie Hill, Laura Newman, Alison Charlesworth, Cheryl Coveney and Christine Bradford; in addition to Damian as incoming Chair. Claire as planned would stand down as Group Chair and member in October.

The group agreed it should seek to recruit at least 2 more members, and ideally try to get more library assistants involved, if possible. It was felt this could lead to different perspectives, approaches or ways of thinking in preparing for future events.

It was agreed the group members should try approaching colleagues at our own institutions and within their networks who may have previously expressed an interest in joining. Laura suggested someone at Cranfield who might be interested. It was decided to allow time for people who might be interested to respond, before putting a general call out.

ACTION: ALL to approach potential candidates to join the Conference Group by mid-September

3. January 2021

The group generally liked the idea of having some kind of January 'get-togethers' facilitated over Zoom. However, it was noted with changes to working practices since March, people's appetites for video-conference meetings might be diminished. It was also noted for many university staff January might be the time when people start returning to physical workplaces. As such, this might compete for their attention, and appetite for online events may be diminished.

It was agreed, should they be organised, these 'January events' should be kept informal and focus on exploring library staff's experience with the first term 20/21; along with sharing information and keeping people in touch.

ACTION: ALL to consider options for January 2021 events and come prepared to discuss at next meeting

4. Nottingham 2021

After discussions it was agreed that the Conference would not be moved to an earlier date in 2021. Planning for the start of term, the unknowns of the current situation and the fact that people are familiar with when the conference usually takes place, and perhaps plan their diaries around this date, were all factors in the decision. Should the Steering Group or Directors take a different view, then the January mini-event(s) would be cancelled to allow time for planning.

In terms of themes for 2021, it was agreed to return to the original theme of diversity, steering clear of anything too Covid specific or related. In this respect there was a perceived danger that people would be 'fed up' of hearing about it this topic, or already attended events on this specific theme.

5. AOB

None.

The next meeting will be arranged by the Chair during the autumn term.

ACTION: Chair to organise date of next meeting.