



Mercian Collaboration Conference Meeting
Minutes
4th November 2019, Loughborough University Library

01 Introductions & Apologies

Present: Emma Walton (Chair), Jen Brotherton, Claire Browne, Matt Cunningham (MSDG ex officio), Helen Curtis, Gaz Johnson (MC Development Officer), Jo-Anne Watts

Apologies: Cheryl Coveney, Charlie Hill, Kim Maxwell

02 Conference Group reflections and learnings

Lower attendance figures this year compared to 2017 and 2018. Discussed possible reasons including the timing of the conference as some institutions appeared to have earlier induction periods this year potentially excluding some members of the collaboration from attending. It was also felt that communication and awareness of the conference could be improved.

The group agreed that there isn't a strong case to move the conference at the moment as this would mean it would clash with other main conference periods during the year. Moving it might also mean not being able to run the conference in 2020 as it would reduce the available planning time.

ACTION 1: MC to discuss using the Staff Development Group to support communication and champion attendance at the conference within their institutions

ACTION 2: EW to discuss attendance and conference timing at the steering group

03 Review of feedback

Feedback received was positive about the conference including the quality and variety of the parallel sessions as well as the having keynote speakers from within the collaboration. A few negative comments were specific to the venue (e.g. noise disruption during the keynote). The other main issue is still the plenary session and the group discussed how to close the conference in a positive and upbeat way without it falling flat.

Other developments for next year to include looking at the timings of the day, the possibility of lightening talks, and offering opportunities for facilitated networking, maybe particularly for conference first timers.

ACTION 3: Conference Group 2020 to take forward discussions about changes and developments

04 Publicity/write-ups

Agreed too much time had passed to seek write-ups from delegates. GJJ had circulated a blog post from the WHELF Development Officer.

ACTION 4: GJJ to write a piece for the website including the write-up from the WHELF Officer



05 Group membership/terms of office

Reviewed membership of the group. Jo-Anne, Helen and Jen are now stepping down now their term has ended. Kim has returned to studying and is no longer working within the Mercian Collaboration and as such has left the group. Charlie and Cheryl will stay on for their second year. EW thanked group members for their hard work and contributions.

Agreed that the link with the SDG is useful so MC will seek an SDG member to take his place as ex officio member. Agreed that the most useful meeting to attend for the SDG rep is when paper submissions are reviewed so emerging themes can be taken to SDG for discussion, and any unsuccessful submissions can be followed up as part of the SDG programme if appropriate.

ACTION 5: EW to contact Charlie and Cheryl to confirm their intentions for the coming year

ACTION 6: MC to identify SDG member to support the conference group and join the conference group meeting to review the conference paper submissions

06 Governance

Sponsor, chair and vice chair

EW confirmed that Claire will be staying on as the chair of the group with EW acting as sponsor to the group, and a vice-chair will be recruited from the new Mercian senior deputies group.

Recruitment to the group

Agreed to try to recruit 3 additional members to the group. EW will contact those who volunteered before to see if they are still interested and available to join the group. After that a general call will go out.

Terms of reference

Reviewed and confirmed the principles and terms of reference.

ACTION 7: EW to seek new members for the group

07 Conference 2020

The 4th Mercian Collaboration Conference will take place at the University of Birmingham in 2020. The suggested date is Tuesday 8th September 2020 and EW will confirm in due course.

EW reported that the Steering Group suggested a theme centred on “diversity, staff and services” which was agreed.

08 AOB

Sponsorship

Successful in obtaining sponsors this year but agreed to review how we seek sponsors and the charging structure.

ACTION 8: GJJ to get feedback from colleagues at other collaborations on sponsorship charges

09 Date of next meeting

TBC in January