

## Mercian Staff Development Group (MSDG)

### Minutes of the meeting 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019, The Hive, University of Worcester

**Present:** Jo Aitkins, Mary Betts-Gray, Angela Brady, Cheryl Coveney, Matt Cunningham (Chair), Gaz Johnson, Kirsty Kift, Annmarie Lee, Heather McBryde-Wilding, Kate Marshall, Jane Mortimer (Minutes), Chris Porter, Laura Pilsel, Sarah Pittaway, Clare Towle, Laura Waller (guest – MDF), Janet Weaver

#### 1. Apologies

Louise Colver, Heather Green, Kay Jeffries (Clare Towle attending), Teresa Jordan, Susan Rodda, Sue Storey, Lesley Thompson/Liz Mallett

#### 2. Introductions and welcome to new members

RC informed the meeting she would be moving on to a new role at Keele and would be stepping down from the group. She will be replaced by Steve Parton, on an interim basis. Ruth was thanked for her contributions to the group.

#### 3. Minutes of meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and matters arising

The minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

Reps were reminded to:

- Send any documents for archiving or guidance/protocols to GJ for the website
- Provide GJ with images, also for the website
- Promote the Mercian Collaboration distribution list ([mercian-collaboration@jiscmail](mailto:mercian-collaboration@jiscmail)) at own institutions. Membership now at 130.

#### Action: All

JA provided an update on the SCONUL Workforce Development work being led by Caroline Taylor at Leicester. The focus is on what Directors can do to nurture workforce development and what SCONUL can do to support Directors. SCONUL has been consulting on its new strategy over the past 6 months or so and one clear piece of feedback from Directors is that this area continues to be a high priority, so we can expect the work to continue through the next iteration of the SCONUL strategy. The Workforce Development Task & Finish Group currently has three strands of work:

- Research into BAME staff experiences in academic libraries in the UK; this work is nearing completion, the group has received the consultants draft report and is awaiting the final report. Research was carried via a survey, focus groups and 121 interviews. The T & F group is expecting that final report will provide a good basis for considering the issues and taking action in this area at both an institutional level and at a SCONUL level where appropriate
- The pipeline for new talent; this will seek to understand from new entrants, their route into the profession, the match between their skill set and their roles, the opportunities they have to develop skills in the workplace or indeed any blocks to their development. The research brief is completed but consultants/researchers are not yet appointed.
- Developing existing staff; this strand of work has recently begun and a brief for the work is currently being developed.

It was agreed no particular action was required of MSDG at this stage in respect of workforce development, but that we will discuss the reports as they become available.

GJ advised that all the news articles for the Annual Report were provided by members of the group.

There had been discussions with the RDM group with regard an Open Access event, which the MSDG had offered to facilitate. This has not been taken forward. The RDM group continue to run their own events, which non-members are welcome to attend.

Buddies at Coventry and Leicester had been asked to provide feedback.

The CSGUK event for frontline staff had run, successfully, at Leicester, with over 40 attendees from across the region and beyond.

#### **4. Mercian Disability Forum**

Laura Waller, Disability Support Officer at Warwick and Chair of the Mercian Disability Forum (MDF) reported on the work of the group and presented proposals for closer collaboration. *(See separate Powerpoint presentation)*

Opportunities for collaboration between the two groups were discussed, including:

- Considering the accessibility angle of each event MSDG runs
- MDF provided guidance on running inclusive events – venues, presentations, handouts and participant information etc
- Members of the MDF providing advice to specific libraries, for example around customer journey mapping at Coventry or around accessibility for distance learners (OU)
- Toolbox of good practice on the Mercian Collaboration website

LW will discuss these ideas at the forthcoming MDF meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The MSDG draft programme will be shared with LW for identification of possible input. **Action: MC.** After first few events of the 2019/20 programme we will review how the collaboration is working. LW is welcome to attend future MSDG group meetings.

The Mercian Disability Forum is on the website so all can see who their reps are.

#### **5. Update from Mercian Officer (GJ)**

At the March Directors Board (26th, BCU) we welcome the incoming new Steering Group with Diane Job (Birmingham) taking over as Chair, and Chris Porter (Newman) coming in as Vice Chair. This Steering Group is elected through to March 2021. The change of Steering Group will also mean the MSDG's sponsor will change, with potentially the new Vice Chair taking on the role (given she is already a member of the group, this could be the most sensible approach).

The meeting will be addressed by Liam Earney (Director of Licensing) of Jisc on topics including Plan S, but will also allow Directors to ask a variety of questions. The Annual Report 2018 will also be released alongside the meeting. Notably, the Collaboration's strategic plan is not as far along as was hoped, and will be a key task of the incoming Steering Group to address. However, this delay will allow it to more closely relate to the SCONUL draft strategic plan.

Two new proposed special interest groups (SIGs) will also be considered at the Board - Marketing and Communications, and Metadata. Proposals have been prepared by staff from across the Collaboration (with advice from GJJ), and there is a strong likelihood these SIGs will be agreed. Although, going on past experiences Directors will probably want to tweak some aspects of their configuration to better match the Collaboration's aspirations.

GJ meanwhile keeps busy on his limited hours for the Collaboration. He is in close contact with the other regional collaborations, and where possible makes use of their expertise and

activities to inform the Collaboration's development. GJ noted that although we are the newest collaboration, we have a strong staff development offer.

Full Mercian Officer report available at <https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/key-documents>

GJ will invite Jo Cornish, CILIP, to attend the June MSDG meeting. **Action: GJ**

#### **6. Update from the Chair (MC)**

MC provided an update on planning for the 2019 Conference. This, the Collaboration's third conference, will be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September at Nottingham. (It has been decided to alternate between Nottingham and Birmingham as conference venues). The theme and keynote speaker have yet to be confirmed. A couple of suggestions for speakers were made: Regina Everitt, Director at UEL, and Anne-Marie Imafidon at Jisc. Further ideas for speakers or topics to MC. **Action: All.** The call out for papers will go out in due course.

The Positive Influencing event at Aston was well received. The group was reminded that there is a budget for external speakers and we can consider including again in next year's programme.

#### **7. Evaluation update (SP)**

SP had identified that there are at least two versions of the evaluation form in use. She proposed a revised version, with changes to questions 2 and 5. The meeting approved the changes. SP will circulate the amended form for final comment, after which it will be hosted on the website. **Action: SP and then GJ**

The idea of a post card to event participants to encourage reflection after an event was proposed and discussed. It was agreed not to pursue this at this moment as it would be an additional task for event hosts (who would be responsible for posting) and that the end of year evaluation survey served the same purpose.

It was noted that some events had proved very popular, leading to waiting lists and requests to attend being turned down. Re-running events was felt to be an option, although the potential time and costs involved were noted. MC stressed that hosts are under no obligation to provide lunches; it is acceptable to ask participants to bring their own provided this is made clear in the publicity. Alternatively, hosts could bid for funds from the Mercian Collaboration central funds.

#### **8. Admin Officer update (JM)**

Following no expressions of interest in the role, JM has agreed to stay on as Admin Officer for a further 12 months. Anyone considering taking this on next year is welcome to discuss with JM. With RC moving on, we will also need a Vice Chair. Expressions of interest in Vice Chair role to Matt. **Action: All to consider**

JM provided an update on the buddy scheme. There have been 8 matches since the scheme started in Autumn 2017, with 2 currently deemed active. JM will seek feedback from the matches over 6 months old and check progress with a request for a buddy at Lincoln with the rep there. **Action: JM.** CP to check if match for a member of her team did proceed. **Action: CP**

It was agreed it was important to continue to publicise the buddy scheme:

- Reps to promote, particularly to new starters and those who change roles **Action: All**
- JM/GJ to write an article for the website **Action: JM/GJ**

## 9. Programme planning 2019-2020

The following **All the Same but Different** visits were agreed:

OU	December 2019
Newman	Jan/Feb 2020
Leicester	June 2020

Any other offers to host welcome.

GJ will compile and circulate a list of who has already hosted All the Same but Different visits. **Action: GJ**

A long list of topics for the **learning exchanges** was generated. MC will type up and circulate. Reps to ask colleagues at own institutions for preferences from the list, offers to host/input and for any other ideas. Reps to get back to MC by end of April. **Action: MC/All.** GJ will share list at upcoming Directors' meeting. **Action: GJ**

## 10. Updates from members

Member updates had been circulated prior to the meeting. Questions and further contributions were invited.

AB confirmed the success of the Conflict Resolution event at Aston. Others have offered similar – Worcester, Loughborough (Dealing with Difficult Customers) and Newman (using Suzy Lamplugh Trust).

Leicester has been doing work with their Equality and Diversity Unit on microaggression and white privilege. NTU has run unconscious bias training and Loughborough looking at this in relation to staff recruitment.

JM asked if anyone has undertaken shadowing. Northampton did team-based shadowing in the run-up to the campus move. Both Keele and Newman have had staff go out to other university departments. Aston holds "getting to know you days" for staff to find out about other teams and departments.

JM to circulate final set of updates with the minutes.

## 11. AOB

None.

## 12. Forthcoming meetings

June 2019 – Northampton – date to be confirmed. **Action JM to arrange**

September 2019 – tbc

March 2020 – tbc

Sue Storey had offered to host either the September or March meeting at Nottingham. Offers to host the other meeting to be sent to JM. **Action: All**