

## Mercian Collaboration Conference Meeting

### Minutes

9:30-13:00, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020

Main Library, University of Birmingham

#### **01. Welcome to new and returning members and apologies**

Apologies from Emma Walton (sponsor)

Welcome to Chris, Laura, Deborah, Alison and Damian.

Present:

- Claire Browne (Chair)
- Matt Cunningham (Mercian Staff Development Group, ex officio)
- Gaz Johnson (Mercian Collaboration Development Officer)
- Cheryl Coveney (OU)
- Charlie Hill (BCU)
- Laura Newman (Loughborough London)
- Christine Bradford (Warwick)
- Damian Pugh (Nottingham)
- Alison Charlesworth (Leicester)
- Deborah Munro (Birmingham)

Confirmed that the next conference is due to take place on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> Sept** at University of Birmingham.

#### **02. ToR and reports:**

The current terms of reference are being updated -combining the previous terms of reference document with the principles document. CB has written a draft that will need final Steering Group (SG) approval.

**ACTION: CB/EW** to finalise, send for approval, and distribute to rest of conference group asap.

The annual report from last year's Mercian activity (including the review of the conference) will be available online soon.

**ACTION: GJ** to update conference group mailing list and distribute report on collaborations conferences

### **03. Member roles and responsibilities:**

Noted that for new members, we usually ask for two year commitment to the group. Members are asked to take responsibility for a role but are expected to support each other where needed. Roles were discussed but the group given time to consider which appealed and to mail CB with choices. If not evenly selected, CB will assign roles to members.

*Sponsor, chair and vice chair:*

- EW acts as sponsor for the group and is our link to the overarching steering group.
- CB will be chair for this coming year, as conference to be held at Birmingham.
- DP kindly agreed to be vice-chair as 2021 conference is expected to take place in Nottingham.

*Ex-officio:*

- GJ is Mercian Collaboration Development Officer (MCDO) and supports all aspects of the collaboration.
- MC is chair of the Mercian Staff Development Group (MSDG). Noted his term as chair is due to end in March so another member may join us then.

*Member roles:*

CH and CC wished to continue in current roles, but would share tasks with new members and with review of the sponsorship process (see section 06).

DM will act as venue liaison for this year (with support of team member) as based at Birmingham

AC specified a willingness to take on delegate liaison.

**ACTION:** CB to distribute list of roles from ToR.

**ACTION:** ALL other members to consider what role they would be interested in taking and to inform CB by **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February**.

### **04. Conference Theme:**

As the previous meeting minutes show, the Steering Group have suggested a theme centred on “diversity, staff and services” which was agreed.

Discussed that “diversity” needs to be addressed in the broadest sense, and needs to be attractive and inclusive e.g. a lot of conferences on this theme, must appeal to all staff in terms of papers and as delegates. Diversity could include race and ethnicity, gender and identity, disability, neurodiversity, age, assistive technology, etc. and above all must be authentic.

Was noted that we will need to address issues in terms of representation on the organising committee.

The call for papers will perhaps need more consideration this year.

**ACTION:** ALL to consider the theme and wording for conference description/call for papers

## 05. Keynote speaker

In the feedback from the 2019 conference that some delegates liked that it was from a relevant, local institution, others preferred an external speaker. Noted the cost of external speakers but also the value of senior academics speaking (good speakers and a wider view of HE)

Noted that the keynote needs to reflect the theme and any speaker would need to be aware that the audience would be a range of levels of seniority.

Potential relevant UoB departments to approach could be:

- [centre for race equality](#)
- [Professor Julie Allan, Professor of Equity and Inclusion, school of education](#)
- [Sexuality and Gender studies](#)

Discussion of a non-Mercian region keynote; anyone involved in Information Science research?

**ACTION:** ALL to consider and recommend keynotes (discuss with colleagues) ready for next meeting

## 06. Sponsors

GJ provided clarification of loss-leader arrangement of conference, with offset costs through sponsorship.

GJ had been approached by BibliU who wished to sponsor us, and various other sponsors were discussed. GJ noted a list of potential sponsors also available on NC/NoWAL report which would be circulated. Further discussion on if sponsorship levels are comparative with NC/NoWAL.

Group noted that sponsor engagement is important and liked the idea of “sponsor bingo” or similar to drive interaction. (e.g. discover their favourite film).

Agreed that the SIG desk was not worth pursuing for another idea, but this would form a part of the welcome address, including photos of any SIG members present should delegates wish to meet them.

Given the theme the group discussed the possibility of inviting charity sponsors at a reduced rate.

Noted that the web page and letter to sponsors should make information easy to find and should highlight (in letter) that regional directors are present.

**ACTION:** CB to organise a specific sponsorship meeting with EW, CC and any others ASAP.

**ACTION:** ALL to pass any recommendations for sponsors to CC.

## 07. Planning schedule (e.g. date for call for paper)

Meetings will take place in April, June, and August (prior to conference). Polls and details will be forthcoming following CB/EW meeting.

Noted that the June meeting will be to review the paper submissions.

Last year's call for papers was 29<sup>th</sup> April (just after Easter bank holidays). Felt this was a good time and likely to go out week beg. 20<sup>th</sup> April to fall at same time.

**ACTION:** EW to send doddle poll for forthcoming meetings ASAP.

## 08. Conference structure

Discussion around the structure of the day and what lessons have been learned from previous conferences.

**ACTION:** CB will arrange the opening address from either herself or EW/DJ.

Discussion on how to close the conference and what that might look like: plenary vs second keynote vs interactive. Group felt a networking event would be most popular; want people to leave energised.

If time is saved at the end of the day, felt that we could include sponsorship session (10 mins) post lunch for 'a word from our sponsor' and draw the bingo results before sending off to sessions.

To try to engage first time speakers, felt we could offer lightning talks (as workshop slot or elsewhere in the day), thus the full structure of the day could not be outlined till we receive papers. Group decided to not include poster sessions.

Would offer in call for papers 3 options however (timings approx.):

- Lightning talk (10/15 mins)
- Talk (30 mins)
- Workshop (50 mins)

Also noted that we would accept pre-recorded presentations if this would support delegates nervous of speaking.

Brief discussion on delegate fees/spaces for non-Mercian delegates, but seen as unworkable in terms of fees etc. Could be arranged if quid-pro-quo with other Collaborations?

**ACTION:** schedule planning will be discussed at next meeting. (April)

## 09. Date of next meeting

TBC but most likely April at Loughborough.

**ACTION:** EW to send doddle poll

## 10. AOB

Shared space for documents etc. Agreed to remain with Google drive but new drive space to be created for 2020; will use the group gmail address for this (not reliant on individual)

**ACTION: GJ** to send CB log on for gmail address

**ACTION: CB** to create drive and transfer across any relevant documentation

Additional volunteers:

**ACTION: CB** to write back and thank, but note we are now at capacity.

### **11. Look at T&L building (likely conference venue)**

Teaching and Learning Building (TLB) has been provisionally reserved for the 8<sup>th</sup> Sept.

Agreed the venue would be suitable for speaker locations (lecture theatre 2, seminar rooms) – some rearranging of outer space would be necessary for sponsors and catering.

**ACTION: CB/DM** to contact Conference and Events at UoB to discuss this.