

# Athena SWAN Bronze Submission AACME May 2020

## Summary for Human Resources Committee

### Introduction

AACME has used the feedback and learning from an unsuccessful application for an Athena SWAN Silver award in 2016, to strengthen its bid for a Bronze award, with a submission date of 20 May 2020. The bid has been prepared by a Self-Assessment Team (SAT) selected from a broad range of academic, student and support staff roles, with various levels of seniority and with a balance of gender. The SAT is led by the Dean, Professor Chris Rielly, with Tom Carslake (Operations Manager) and Martin White (Projects Manager) supporting the bid writing. The School is finalising its EDI Action Plan and sees the Athena SWAN submission and action list as an integral part of its wider people strategy. The SMT has agreed to appoint a Director of Equality and Diversity, who will work with the Dean and the SAT to champion the EDI agenda.

### Main Issues

The main issues identified by the SAT are as follows

1. Gender inequality in current UG student populations, particularly in Automotive Engineering and to a lesser extent in Chemical Engineering: Figure 1 shows these data generally falling below national benchmarks, but also indicates positive trends, such as the increase in female Materials UG numbers, following the introduction of new Bio-Engineering programmes.
2. Gender inequality in academic staff numbers, particularly at Senior Lecturer level, which represents a problem for the future promotion pipeline of senior women: Figure 2 shows positive overall comparisons against sector average data for RTE female staff, but with some gap to bridge to meet university 5-year discipline targets. The proportion of women in senior RTE roles is low, but in recent years the School has promoted three female academics to Reader and one to Professor.
3. Cultural recognition of gender imbalance: we feel there is a journey to be travelled for many of our staff to understand the full nature of gender inequality in our School. AACME staff survey responses around PDR effectiveness and transparency of promotion criteria provide some specific areas to tackle as a starting point. In addition, a wider communication strategy is necessary to inform and educate School staff in relation to the EDI agenda.

### Key Actions

1. Appointment of an academic champion as Director of EDI: to ensure alignment of our Athena SWAN bid with our wider EDI strategy and help drive the communication, promotion and understanding of this strategy amongst staff and students.
2. Improve visibility of female role models within student recruitment processes: to include marketing materials, student ambassadors on open days, staff awareness of support for female students, promotion of student-centred support (Women's Engineering Society) and critical awareness of the perceptual lens through which prospective female students view our programmes.
3. Programme review: we have recently completed a full MSc programme review through a PMB led by the PVC(T) and Dean. The PMB recommended changes to existing programmes and the development of new programmes, some of which would be more accessible to female applicants (e.g. Biotechnology and Biomedical Engineering). These changes are being implemented over the next 18 months. We are also reviewing Chemical Engineering UG module coverage, to address gender imbalance in their UG populations and applications.
4. Research Staff: a set of actions will focus on induction, mentoring, research community engagement and guidance about developing longer term careers in academia.
5. Recruitment of and support for female academic staff: actions include JDPS templates that are more conscious of diversity, gender balanced shortlisting, and a buddy scheme to accompany the more formal probation process. For existing staff, we have identified actions around promotion, supporting women in leadership roles (e.g. Aurora initiative) and the need for wider Unconscious Bias training amongst our staff.

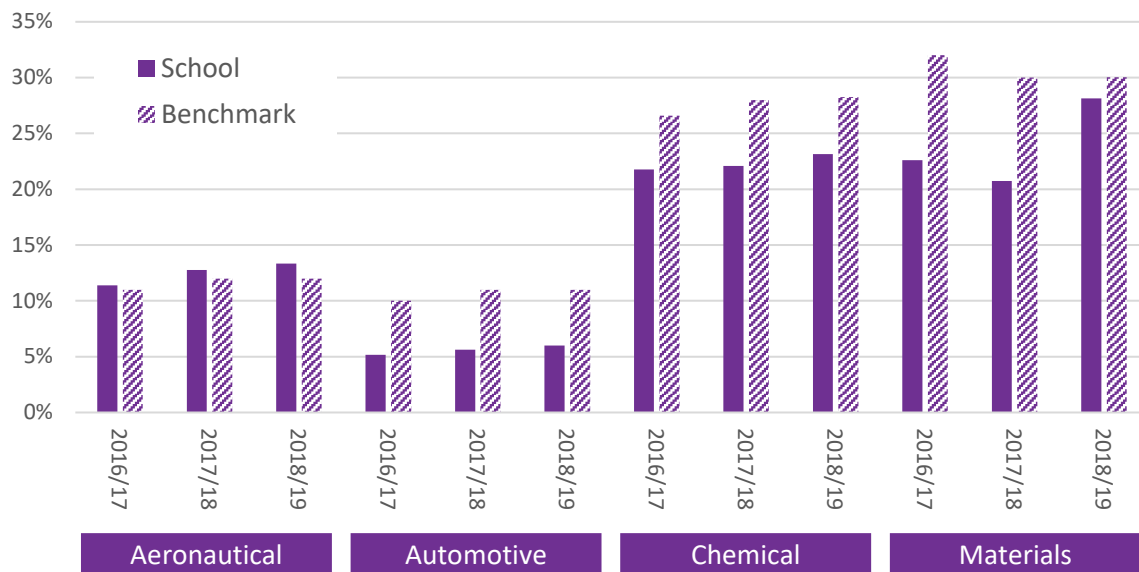
### Institutional Support

Several of our actions will need involvement with HR and other support services. Specifically, we would like to implement a better exit interview process for academic staff and PDRAs and would like to work with HR to implement this.

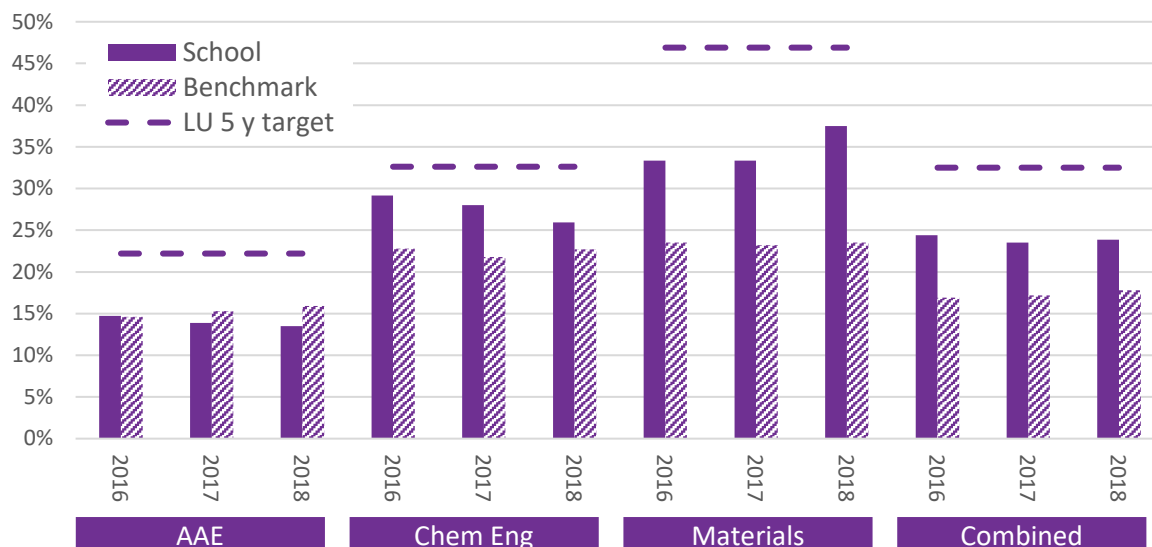
### Action Plan

The Action Plan is now about 70% complete (delayed due to Coronavirus) but is attached for reference.

*Professor Chris Rielly, Dean of AACME  
Tom Carslake, Operations Manager AACME  
30 April 2020*



**Figure 1 Percent women in full-time UG study by programme and year vs national benchmarks**



**Figure 2 Percent women RTE staff by department and combined for the whole School, compared with national benchmarks and LU 5-year discipline-based targets**