

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament
Cross-Party Group on STEMM

Meeting at 18:30, Tues 12 December, via Zoom

Chair Notes

Attendees: Mike Charlton, Leigh Jeffes, Jack Sargeant MS (Acting Chair), Emily Wood (Acting Secretariat), Dr Geertje van Keulen, Robert Hoyle, Dave Hardwood, Faron Moller, George Jameson, Joshua Bell, Mike Edmunds, Dr Peter Cotgreave, Keith Jones, Tom Addison, Dr Emma Yhnell, Mark Isherwood MS (Vice Chair), Wendy Sadler.

1) Welcome

Acting Chair Jack Sargeant MS welcomed members to the meeting including speakers Dr Yhnell, Dr Cotgreave and Prof Moller.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cerian Angharad, Megan O'Donnell, Peter Arnold, David Rees MS, Lewis Dean, Rhobert Lewis, Andrew Bellamy, Helen Taylor, Prof. Jas Pal Badyal, Niall Sommerville.

3) Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

Previous minute noted inviting the Minister for the Economy to a future meeting, the Secretariat is taking this forward

4) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in STEMM

The main area for discussion was on the topic of equality, diversity and inclusion in STEMM. This had been suggested at our previous meeting as key area the group should be looking at. The group heard from three speakers:

- Dr Peter Cotgreave, CEO, Microbiology Society – Dr Cotgreave talked through the EDI Initiatives at the Microbiology Society. Identified key challenges they are facing. Noted diversity is different in different

disciplines and that diversity is particularly poor in higher echelons of STEMM organisations/academia. Discussed his organisations work to address EDI issues and the work of their “Member’s Panel”

- The Chair noted there is good EDI on this group, but political representation isn’t diverse enough and said this is something he and colleagues should take forward.

- Dr Emma Yhnell, Cardiff University – Equity in STEM Board – Dr Yhnell spoke briefly about the Welsh Government Equity in STEM board which she has recently joined, noting the next meeting is Thurs 14 Dec, she is happy to provide updates following this meeting.
 - The Chair noted that the CPG should invite the board Chair Hannah Blythyn MSto come to the CPG in the new year.

- Prof. Faron Muller – Technocamps, Winner of 2022 UKRI Award for Outstanding Contribution to Widening Participation, Diversity and Inclusion in STEM – Prof. Muller talked through the work that went into winning the UKRI award as well as other ongoing work in engaging young people in STEMM.
 - Gender and Geography, noted Nesta’s Young Digital Makers report and talked through the findings of this.
 - Technocamps in /numbers. Talked about the engagement they have had with young people, supporting the BBC’s new launch of their Micro Programme and they are trying to get schools across the UK that are eligible to engage. Wales has over 95% of eligible schools participating on this programme, which is much higher than other regions
 - Chair sent congratulation to professor on the awards he has won one over the number of years in his work.

Questions from members

- Tom Addison: Asked how Prof Moller brings this to where young people are instead of expecting them to go to where activities take place. Prof Moller said a lot of their activity is in schools across Wales. Like to have schools to

come to university as this is the first-time students go onto campus and see this is an opportunity for children to see university as an option for them.

- Dr Geertje van Keulen added technocamaps is also really good at reaching out at science festivals, allowing children to get experience in digital training.
- Dr Geertje van Keulen asked a question to Dr Emma Yhell about the board. Advising on Science across Wales and Emma shared a Wales Online article <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/people-wales-least-well-qualified-28253139>
- Wendy Sadler is also on the Board and Education Sub Group and have heard some great work of teachers implementing diversity in their curriculum work.
- Dr Emma Yhell asked Peter about underrepresented groups sometimes have to take the load. Peter acknowledged this, and can't rely on small number of people doing this work or you end up with same people doing all the work. No one has to be on their Member's Panel, it is up to the individual if they feel their community's voice isn't being heard. Only wrong thing to say is nothing at all.
- Dave Harwood: How much work are people still doing to promote the minority and protected groups who are already in STEM? In terms of tackling bias already out there.
- Wendy said in the university sector there is a lot of work around tackling those unconscious bias such as mandatory training and Cardiff Uni are being proactively anti racist instead of just tackling the issues as they arise.
- Chair said he feels we can always do more, especially in political membership' representation.

Dr Geertje van Keulen said that training is important to people from underrepresented groups and that may help people to step into more senior roles.

5) Update from Welsh Government Office for Science

Introduce Robert Hoyle from the Welsh Government Office for Science to speak briefly on any important updates on their work.

- Jas Pal has completed his tour of all 8 universities and has been interesting. Have been looking for world leading research. Picked up on a number of areas of particular note within research community and now undertaking a cluster analysis. UK Government is going to be putting funding into clusters across UK and so they are looking agri-tech, nuclear, and others. Looking where they have industrial strength that match research strengths.
- Spoke about Nurse Review: evidence stands whatever party wins next election and hope some of the work they are doing will be interesting for national institutes.
- EDI: Asked the questions about EDI when visited universities, several of the universities had less than 30% women which is not good enough, despite these organisations having gender equality policies and worry some institutions hide behind these policies, some lessons to be learned.
- Jas Pal is now visiting schools across Wales.
- Noted they are facing challenging budget times Jack thanked Robert, and noted they are aware of the budget situation.

6) Updates from professional bodies and learned societies

- Tom Addison: Society published work on heat resilience strategy [Developing a Human-centred Heat Resilience Strategy - The Physiological Society \(physoc.org\)](#)

Keith Jones ICE: Email has asked for link to be sent (Emily has emailed Keith for this)

Dr Geetje noted microbiology association has submitted evidence NHS England on AMR and prescriptions (I think it was this? [The Antimicrobial Products Subscription Model: consultation on proposals - NHS England - Citizen Space](#)? Not essential but of interest, Emily will follow up if needed,

Mike Charlton: REF work: showing impact of Wales and how Wales is punching above their weight in this area. Asked Mike to send Niall link (Mike is sending this on Friday)

Leigh noted Science and the Senedd is on 21st May, Legh will be writing out in January about this.

7) AOB

- Wendy: Science and the Senedd are there open calls to submit ideas of topics and speakers, as she feels this should be more transparent/inclusive. Chair suggested people got in touch with Niall.

Meeting closed.