Dear Students and Colleagues,

We are once again pleased to be hosting a range of events for International Women's Day 2018 at the University of Leicester. International Women’s Day is a day when we shine a spotlight on women and recognise their contributions and achievements. International Women’s Day has been observed since the early 1900s and is celebrated each year on March 8. The day brings together women’s organisations, corporations, charities and the education sector to celebrate progress but also acknowledge that more needs to be done. It is a day about women but isn’t just for women. It is a day that unites everyone in challenging gender inequality.

The theme of this year’s International Women’s Day is #PressforProgress. Whilst we recognise that gender parity will not happen overnight, women across the globe are making positive gains day by day. Colleagues and students from the University of Leicester have drawn together a fantastic programme of free events for all staff and students so please join us as we continue to #PressforProgress.

Kate Williams,
Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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I had the honour of being named Diversity Champion in the University staff awards last November. This meant more to me than I could articulate, because it meant that people had gone to the effort of putting in a case for me, valuing the work I am doing, and that is a good feeling. I lead the Equality and Diversity (E&D) Committee in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, and spent three years on the Diversity Committee for the Royal Society, a learned society for science in the UK. As a younger physicist I didn’t feel any bias or barriers, but the challenges built up as I faced a series of short-term contracts, a "two-body problem", and work-life balance questions as I became a parent and looked at increasing workload, tenure and promotion. I also saw behaviours and policies that seemed to disfavour and discourage women or parents and carers. That is when I thought that joining the equalities team could make a difference, and so far it has been an eye-opening and rewarding experience, if sometimes very challenging.

Together with my colleagues, I have been involved in International Women’s Day (IWD) events for a few years. In 2015 the Department of Physics and Astronomy held the first program of events to mark IWD. We included a suggestion box in the foyer. At the following meeting of the E&D working group we emptied the box and found the comment: "Why isn’t there an international men’s day celebration?" Fair question you might say, but for me it lay at the heart of the need for discussion around the experiences of women in the workplace. There are undoubtedly men whose contributions are overlooked, who are talked over in meetings, who are slower to get promoted, who are given the less prestigious or less career-building additional roles. But this happens more often to women and other minority groups. Seeing things from their perspective and recognising that there are barriers faced by some and not others, is why we need an International Women’s Day. Diversity should be seen as the strength it is.
By 2016 the momentum around E&D activities in Physics had built as far as enabling us to host the UK launch of the ESA/SIPA Press photographic exhibition Space Girls Space Women, opened by Met Office Chief Scientist Professor Julia Slingo. In 2017 we were able to begin discussing intersectionality of gender with other protected characteristics, for example race or disability. We held a screening of Hidden Figures, marked LGBT+ History Month for the first time with a display in our foyer, and hosted the first leg of Angela Saini’s UK Universities Book Tour for Physics World Book of the Year ‘Inferior: how science got women wrong’. All too often the barriers are interwoven and complex to disentangle.

Marking International Women’s Day is becoming an integral part of university life. We need to celebrate the achievements of women, often unsung, and highlight the equal roles that men and women play in cutting-edge discoveries. And the outcome: to acknowledge the challenges we have not yet faced and pledge to take action.

Rhaana Starling,  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Physics and Astronomy
Inspirational Women Portraits Unveiled

2.00pm – 4.00pm, Council Suite, Fielding Johnson Building

To celebrate International Women’s Day, we’re unveiling three new portraits of our women of influence and inspiration. Come and join us for the viewing which will be followed by Afternoon Tea.

Book your place: www.le.ac.uk/iwd-portraits

Standing Together Creative Writing Workshops

5.00pm – 7.00pm, Attenborough Building, Room 208

This event is for students only

Standing Together presents two consecutive workshops focusing on writing about and performing pieces along the theme of sexual violence and harassment to help increase awareness and start discussions. The workshops are open to all students at the University of Leicester – regardless of previous creative writing experience or ability.

The first workshop (Monday 5th) will focus on writing and the second workshop (Monday 12th) will focus on performance – the workshops will be led by local writer Natalie Beech and local performer (and Students’ Union operations guru) Jack Britton, respectively. Refreshments will be provided!

Book your place, email: Harriet Smailes (Standing Together Project Officer, Student Welfare Service) at hs365@le.ac.uk

If you think you might struggle with the workshop content, or if you have any other questions or queries, please get in touch with Harriet Smailes (details above).
Senior Women's Network Panel Discussion: 'I Did it My Way'

12.15pm – 2.00pm in the Ken Edwards Building, 5th Floor, SR 526

Chaired by colleagues from the Senior Women’s Network

Join us at this event where a range of academic and professional services colleagues share their inspiring leadership journeys, including:

- Penny Jackson, Director of Operations
- Turi King, Professor of Public Engagement
- Zoe Radnor, Dean, School of Business
- Brita Sread, Director of Estates

These presentations will be followed by a panel discussion, where staff, students and graduates will have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss the experiences of the speakers as well as their own experiences of career progression.

The Senior Women's Network is a newly formed network of grade 10 women, both academic professors and professional services colleagues. The group was formed in 2017 in recognition of the small numbers of women in these grades and the need for a support network.

The event will be followed by a networking lunch. This is a free event open to all staff, students and graduates.

Book your place: www.le.ac.uk/iwd
Inspiring Women to STEM Success

6.15pm – 8.15pm, George Davies Centre, Room 1.34

There is a real bottleneck in career progression for women in science. This event aims to inspire female students to achieve their potential and to overcome some of the perceived barriers to women in science. Female speakers from various roles and career stages will talk about their career path, what they have achieved and what hurdles they overcame along the way. The presentations will be followed by a Q&A and networking reception including posters with profiles of women in scientific careers.

All students and staff are welcome to attend.

Book your place: www.le.ac.uk/inspiring-women or email Rachel Norman / Lakmini Liyange at rln11@le.ac.uk / lsl9@le.ac.uk
Dorothy Jones Lecture: ‘Cytokine interference in immunity to infection – my journey through science’

12.00pm – 2.00pm, Frank and May Lecture Theatre, Henry Wellcome Building

This lecture series is in memory of Dr Dorothy Jones who joined the University as a Research Biologist in 1965, became a Senior Research Fellow and then an Honorary University Fellow.

The speaker Professor Anne O’Garra obtained her PhD in microbial biochemistry at the MRC National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), London and then pursued a postdoctoral fellowship in immunology, on the role of cytokines B cell function. Now an Associate Research Director, and Head of the Laboratory of Immunoregulation and Infection at The Francis Crick Institute, Anne O’Garra continues to direct research on cytokines and the immune response, with major emphasis on the immune response in tuberculosis in mouse models and in human disease. As an advocate of women in science, O’Garra chaired the Athena Swan Institute Pilot Bronze award for the NIMR and continues to promote gender matters in science at The Francis Crick Institute.

This free lecture is open to graduates, students and staff.

For further information, email: Gina Barnett at gb183@le.ac.uk
'Lessons from Litigation – sexual harassment claims to employment tribunals'

1.00pm – 2.00pm, JGR Law School

This event is for staff only

This event is organised by the Law School Athena Swan group to mark International Women’s Day. Dr Graeme Lockwood from Kings College will lead the seminar which is aimed at staff only.

Places are limited and registration is mandatory.

Book your place, email: Pascale Lorber at pascale.lorber@le.ac.uk

‘Night-time economy and sexual harassment’

5.00pm – 6.00pm, Belvoir Park Lounge, Charles Wilson Building

This event is for students only

Dr Anna Carline and Dr Clare Gunby will lead this seminar on sexual harassment which is aimed at students. This seminar explores the nature of, and responses to, unwanted sexual attention in night time leisure spaces (i.e. bars and clubs).

Places are limited and registration is mandatory.

Book your place, email: Dr Eugenia Caracciolo Di Torella at ecdt1@le.ac.uk
Poetry Exhibition

11.00am – 2.00pm, Events Square

To commemorate International Women’s Day, we will have a poetry display around campus. Please join us in the Events Square to have your photo taken for our #PressforProgress display.

Interactive Poetry Drop-In

1.00pm – 3.00pm, Digital Reading Room

Get your creative juices flowing in our interactive reading space. We will be offering staff and students the opportunity to write poems focused on International Women’s Day.

For further information, email: Events Team at events@le.ac.uk
IWD #PressforProgress Stand

10.00am – 2.00pm, George Davies Centre foyer

The Department of Health Sciences will be holding a stand in the George Davies Centre foyer, showcasing their department’s Athena Swan activity. Visit the stand to snap a #PressforProgress selfie which can be shared on social media to show your commitment to accelerating gender parity and encourage others to press for progress too.

For further information, email: Sarah Clayton at sec56@le.ac.uk

International Women’s Day Celebration

12.30pm – 1.30pm, Café Cardiologique, Glenfield Hospital

In celebration of International Women’s Day, the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences presents a series of bite-size lunchtime presentations to reflect a breadth of careers across the department. This event is open to all staff and students.

For further information, email: Gina Barnett at gb183@le.ac.uk
Bhangra Dance Class (women only)

2.30pm – 3.30pm, Charles Wilson Sports Hall

Let’s Do Leicester is putting on a Bhangra dance class in the Charles Wilson Sports Hall. The class is free and participants will be able to pick up free Let’s Do Leicester branded bottles at the event.

For further information, email: Gina Hirst at gh169@le.ac.uk

Film Screening – ‘The Divine Order’

8.15pm – 10.00pm, Phoenix Leicester

The University has collaborated with Phoenix Leicester to offer staff and students the opportunity to watch ‘The Divine Order’. Based in rural Switzerland, a young housewife challenges the status quo by fighting for women’s suffrage.

For further information, email: Events Team at events@le.ac.uk

Book your FREE place: www.le.ac.uk/iwd

Please note: max two tickets per person.
Institute for Advanced Studies Workshop: 'Alternative Rites of Passage'

10.00am – 2.00pm, College Court

Alternative Rites of Passage have become increasingly used in countries like Kenya as rituals that symbolise female initiation into womanhood, but without female genital mutilation or cutting.

Alternative Rites of Passage is one element of longer term strategies that include community education, awareness raising, the empowerment of girls and women and law enforcement.

The workshop is intended for university PGRs and staff, policy makers, and practitioners from the health and voluntary services. Please follow the Leicester Institute for Advanced Studies website to access recordings of talks, and to see Dr Lotte Hughes in dialogue with Dr Parsitau, Mr Leshore and Prof Wamue-Ngare.

Book your place: www.le.ac.uk/iwd

For further information, email: Dr Diane Levine at dtl6@le.ac.uk
Women in our History

12.00pm – 2.00pm, Archives and Special Collections Reading Room, David Wilson Library

Join Special Collections at this lunch time drop-in as they unearth treasures from the University Archives, providing an insight into the University’s history and revealing how women have helped shape the institution from its foundation to the present day.

Learn of the vital role women played as early benefactors to the University during its foundation in the 1920s, examine the changing experience of the female students through photographs and memorabilia, and discover the significant impact women staff have made through their research and discoveries.

The drop-in will provide an opportunity to handle rare and unique material from within the University Archives.

Archives & Special Collections Reading Room, located in the basement of the David Wilson Library.

For further information, email: specialcollections@le.ac.uk

Due to our archival nature, food or drink cannot be consumed in the reading room.
DNA Secret of Photo 51

3.30pm – 4.30pm, Molecular Modelling Lab (Room 0.15A/B), George Porter Building

Solving the structure of DNA and unravelling the physical basis of the genetic code in 1953 is arguably one of the greatest scientific achievements of all-time for which the Nobel Prize was awarded in 1962. The story of the race to solve this structure is certainly fascinating and contains what many people feel is one of science’s great injustices. The docudrama DNA Secret of Photo 51 tells the story of Rosalind Franklin, a talented young scientist and her underrated contribution to this amazing story. Following the showing of the documentary there will be light refreshments and a discussion of why there are so many famous female X-ray crystallographers.

This event is open to staff and students.

Book your place, email: Professor Paul Cullis at pmc@le.ac.uk
Inspirational Women 2018

To mark the centenary of the 1918 Suffrage Act (which granted the vote to married women over 30), Dr Emma Parker (English) and Dr Kaitlyn Mendes (Sociology) invited colleagues to nominate inspirational women who have made an outstanding contribution to their field or to university life within the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

Over 100 nominations for 33 women in every Department and School in the College were received.