

Annual General Meeting 2018

5th September 2018, at 17:15, University of Glasgow

Notice of Meeting and Associated Documentation

Agenda

1. Chair's Report
2. Secretary's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Ratification of membership of Steering Group 2018/19
5. Future plans for the sigma Network

Chair's Report

It is now two years since the **sigma** Network was constituted as a professional association for people working in HE mathematics and statistics support. Despite no longer having external funding, we have been able to maintain a thriving programme of meetings, professional development and training events, resource creation and publications for the benefit of mathematics and statistics support practitioners across HE. This is due entirely to the hard work and commitment of our maths support "community of practice" and the willingness of institutions to facilitate and host meetings and otherwise enable their maths support staff to engage.

Specifically, the **sigma** Network would not exist constitutionally without the work of its Steering Group, and as Chair I would like to thank all SG members for their efforts and involvement over the past year to keep things running. In a few moments I will be inviting you to ratify the proposed Steering Group membership for 2018/19. But now I would like to record our appreciation of the contribution of two people who have recently stepped down from the Steering Group:

- Noel-Ann Bradshaw was actively engaged with the **sigma** Network for many years, as the co-ordinator of the former south-east regional hub. Noel-Ann has now left the University of Greenwich to go back into industry with the Argos group. Her place as co-opted IMA representative on the Steering Group has been taken by Michael Grove.
- Eugenie Hunsicker took on the role of secretary two years ago, and acted as a key link between the Steering Group and Loughborough University, where many of **sigma's** legacy

resources are still held. Eugenie has now moved to a different position in the university, but we are pleased that Mary Lorimer has offered to take her place.

I would like to use this report to highlight some of the successes of the **sigma** Network over the past year. Some of you may have attended the presentation earlier today when, alongside colleagues from the SMSN and IMLSN, I outlined in detail how the **sigma** Network can demonstrate impact and sustainability in its work on behalf of the HE mathematics and statistics support community. In summary, during 2017/18, we organised:

- 7 regional networking meetings and CPD events around the country (Bath, Sheffield Hallamx2, Cardiff, Coventry, Bournemouth, Staffordshire) as well as 2 co-ordinated training events for new maths support tutors (Greenwich, Cardiff);
- In fact, over the past two years, we have organised 19 events which attracted 353 attendees from 64 institutions. This demonstrates considerable reach across the sector.
- Publication of a booklet of case studies of successful practice in employability development (by our Employability Special Interest Group);
- A “task-and-finish” group to review, catalogue and secure a range of legacy resources for mathematics and statistics support, and enhance the accessibility of the mathcentre and statstutor websites (by our Accessibility Special Interest Group);
- Focused training on advanced statistical methods, and resource development, for people working specifically in statistics support (by our Statistics Special Interest Group).

We have maintained communication with the mathematics and statistics support community through:

- A mailing list that has grown to over 350 subscribers, including some international members;
- A new look Newsletter, published twice a year;
- A website that is expanding and kept as up to date as possible.

We have developed our links with other bodies:

- The IMA, through continued co-opted membership on our Steering Group;
- The Association for Learning Development in Higher Education, and the LDHE Network;
- The national Q-STEP project and the Nuffield Foundation;
- Newly established maths support centres at a number of universities in the Czech Republic, through the provision of training and consultancy;
- And not least, our friends in the Scottish Mathematics Support Network and the Irish Mathematics Learning Support Network who continue to actively support the **sigma** Network through co-opted membership of our Steering Group.

Looking now to the coming year, our main goal will be to introduce a membership scheme for the **sigma** Network. This is required by our constitution, in order that the future direction of the **sigma** Network can be informed by a defined membership with voting rights at future AGMs. And, of course, membership will be a way in which you can evidence your professional commitment to mathematics and statistics support. Ideally we would have liked to have had a membership scheme already in place, but the uncertainties in the past few months relating to the new data protection

(GDPR) legislation meant that we had to review things very carefully before proceeding. We are most grateful to the University of Bath for agreeing to host our membership database securely and in line with GDPR requirements. We will announce the new membership arrangements through our mailing list and website in the coming weeks, and hope for your support.

In summary, I believe that over the past two years the **sigma** Network has demonstrated that it has coped admirably with the transition from a funded project to a voluntary professional association. In a moment I will ask this meeting to ratify the membership of the Steering Group to continue this work over the coming year, and also ask you all for your views of what the **sigma** Network could focus on in the next twelve months that could help you in your work in maths and statistics support.

For now, I would like to express my thanks to the Steering Group and everyone else who has contributed to the continued success of the **sigma** Network this year.

- *David Bowers*

Secretary's Report

A Secretary's report would typically cover matters relating to association membership. However, for reasons just outlined in the Chair's report, we have not been able to implement a formal membership arrangement yet. Fortunately the maths support "community of practitioners" remains strong and supportive enough to carry the work of the **sigma** Network on a self-sustaining basis.

In the future we might wish to consider a more formal membership arrangement for both individuals and institutions, but only if this would have clear benefits and sufficient support. Nothing will be done without consultation and approval from a future AGM if any subscription-based model is proposed.

- *Eugenie Hunsicker*

Treasurer's Report

This is a very brief report. Over the past 12 months, the **sigma** Network has been able to sustain its activities through the voluntary involvement of the Steering Group and other key players, with the support of their institutions. We are particularly grateful to Loughborough University for continuing to host our websites, and for the CETL-MSOR conference organisers to allow us to host our AGM here at Glasgow. Also, we acknowledge the generosity of many institutions in hosting meetings and events on behalf of the **sigma** Network this past year (including Bournemouth University, Cardiff University, Coventry University, Loughborough University, Sheffield Hallam University, Staffordshire University, University of Bath, University of Greenwich. Apologies for any omissions!)

Our bank balance stands at £624.80.

- Income: £568.80 (return of unspent project funding from 2016) plus £56.00 (contribution to travel expenses)
- Expenditure: zero

No formal audit was deemed necessary.

In the coming year we will be looking more actively at ways of generating income in order to be able to invest in future development work. Ideas of how to go about this without risking the good will that currently exists within the maths support community to sustain the ongoing work of the **sigma** Network would be welcome.

- *Chetna Patel*

Ratification of membership of Steering Group for 2018-19

Nominations received (together with institutional statement of support):

Hansa Bissoondeal	University of Essex
David Bowers	University of Essex
Emma Cliffe	University of Bath
Ruth Fairclough	University of Wolverhampton
Mark Hodds	Coventry University
Mary Lorimer	Loughborough University
Tony Mann	University of Greenwich
Ellen Marshall	Sheffield Hallam University
Mohamed Mehbali	London South Bank University
Alun Owen	Coventry University
Chetna Patel	De Montfort University
Robert Wilson	Cardiff University

Plus 4 co-opted members . . .

Representative of the IMA	Michael Grove
Representative of the SMSN	Peter Davidson
Representative of the IMLSN	Fiona Lawless
Membership database officer (Bath)	Ed Southwood

Future Plans for the sigma Network

Suggestions and ideas that reflect the interests of HE mathematics and statistics support practitioners will be invited from the meeting, and may also be submitted in advance to chair@sigma-network.ac.uk