

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER  
School of Chemistry

**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

Minutes of the School Board meeting held on  
Wednesday 19 February at 2.00 pm in lecture theatre G.51

Present: Dr P Gorry (Chair), Professor M Anderson, Dr M Attfield, Mrs R Barker, Dr A Brisdon, Dr N Burton, Dr C Casiraghi, Ms K Charters, Mr M Clegg, Professor D Collison, Mrs J Cowley, Mrs J Flanagan, Professor R Goodacre, Dr B Gore, Miss B Graham, Mrs T Hanif, Dr S Heath, Dr R Henchman, Dr A Horn, Dr M Ingleson, Mr S Kelly, Dr G Law, Dr N Lockyer, Dr J McDouall, Professor E McInnes, Dr F Mair, Mrs C Martyniuk, Dr D Mills, Professor G Morris, Dr C Muryn, Dr C Pearce, Professor D Procter, Professor G Procter, Mr M Pumford, Dr P Quayle, Dr A Regan, Dr P Sharma, Dr R Speak, Mrs C Taylor (minute taker), Dr F Tuna, Miss V Turner, Dr S Webb, Dr M Whiteley, Professor J C Whitehead, Professor R Winpenny, Dr L S Wong, Professor S Yeates.

**1. Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences to address members of the School Board concerning Head of School succession.**

The Vice-President and Dean announced to the School Board that the present Head of School, Professor Whitehead, will retire at the end of July 2014. The Dean thanked Professor Whitehead for all that he has done for the School of Chemistry during the last five years. All his time and effort during this period has left the School in a very good position.

The Dean told the Board that the Head of School position will be advertised internally to staff within the School of Chemistry. The advertisement will be posted in March. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by a panel of staff and the successful candidate will officially take up post starting 1 August 2014 for five years though it is expected that there will be a few months overlap. The Dean is available to see anyone who wishes to see him about this matter.

**2. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from: Professor P Barran, Dr A Fielding, Mr S Holden, Dr A Jones, Professor D Kell, Dr S Koehler, Professor F Livens, Dr L Natrajan, and Professor S Pimblott.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 November 2013.**

The minutes were accepted.

**4. Matters arising.**

4.1 It was brought to the Chair's attention that the School Board meeting had been arranged during the half term break. In future, meetings will be arranged to avoid half term breaks.

## 5. Policy and Procedure on Contracts of Employment.

In accordance with University statutes and ordinances, the School Board is informed that currently there are 26 staff on fixed term or permanent contracts whose funding is of finite duration and are therefore at risk of redundancy at the conclusion of their contract of employment. Any comments on this statistic should be sent to the Chair of the School Board, Dr Gorry.

## 6. Report from Head of School (Professor Whitehead) – see presentation A.

Noted:

### 6.1 Academic leave 2014/15.

The School's Personnel Committee received applications for academic leave from Professor David Procter and Dr Richard Layfield. Both cases were considered and approved. Unless there are contrary views to this decision, academic leave is granted to both these people. Mrs Taylor will inform Human Resources of this decision.

**Action: Mrs Taylor.**

### 6.2 Staff changes.

A welcome was extended to new staff joining the School and thanks extended to those who have retired for their contributions to the School of Chemistry.

### 6.3 A period of growth.

The School of Chemistry has grown over the last three years as can be seen by the increase in research income. It is expected that by the end of this financial year estimated research spend will be £15M. The majority of this income pays for research staff e.g. postdoctoral workers and the overheads fund the technical infrastructure. This growth in numbers has had an impact on space within the Chemistry building which has reached capacity as the majority of staff are located in the Chemistry building whilst others occupy space in MIB, PSI and DCF. The question we need to ask is how do we manage space consumption whilst continuing to increase our research income?

### 6.4 How do we compare against our competitors on research spend?

We are placed fourth after Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial over the REF period. Our goal is to overtake Imperial and challenge Oxford and Cambridge. How do we do this? We are good at being awarded money from Research Councils but we need to do better. We need to look for new sources of income that comes with overheads, e.g. industry, charities. We also need to find more sources of income for postgraduate support, ensure that all grants awarded are spent to the limit and all the man-months are used, put in more proposals (fully-costed) and everyone who is research active must contribute.

### 6.5 2014/15 budget.

Budget setting for the financial year 2014/15 is progressing. Target numbers for student recruitment are unchanged and will be focusing on improving quality of all undergraduate and postgraduate applicants. The target number for undergraduate students the next academic year is 196 home and 24 overseas, for postgraduate taught students the target number is 35 and for postgraduate research students the target number is 55 home and 25 overseas.

Research income for the next academic year is set at £14.8M but this figure may change after the meeting with the Dean on the 18 March.

For the first time, we have been allowed to put in the budget an allowance for capital expenditure. In consultation with Drs Armstrong and Muryrn, a list has been suggested for the new financial year.

#### 6.6 Estates matter.

The Head of School informed the meeting about the work due to start on the fume hood extract fans based on the 9th floor of the Chemistry Building. The fans have been wearing out their bearings with increasing frequency and the School has been informed by the Estates team that there is a significant risk that there will be a catastrophic failure of the axle, potentially the fans themselves and plenum unless some preventive maintenance is carried out. In order to do this, contractors need to gain access to the fan chamber and the only way that this can be done safely is by clearing the fume hoods and ventilated chemical storage cabinets that are served by the fans, of their chemical contents.

The fume hoods and ventilated chemical storage cabinets that will be affected are:

- Upper Brook Street wing – 1st, 2nd, 3rd floors
- Dover Street wing – 3rd, 5th floors

It is appreciated that this will be extremely disruptive, though to do it in a planned way will involve a much shorter downtime than if there is a catastrophic failure when the disruption could last many weeks, and in order to try and minimise this it is proposed that the work will be carried out over the Easter holiday.

The proposed timeline for work is as follows:

- Relocation of chemicals from ventilated cabinets and hoods to the new facility on the 6th floor week commencing Monday 7 April, to be completed by Friday 11 April.
- Inspection of fans and peripherals by Contractors on Saturday 12 April
- Works to fan shafts and/or bearings 14-25 April (hopefully 25 April is the worst case scenario)
- Relocation of chemicals to labs week commencing Monday 28 April.

### **7. Undergraduate Teaching Matters (Professor Garry Procter) – see presentation B.**

Noted:

#### 7.1 School of Chemistry NSS Survey 2014.

This survey has started and closes at the end of April 2014. The Head of School and the Director of Teaching have explained the purpose of the survey to third and fourth year students. The response rate to the survey so far is 50%, which is excellent. The overall score for the School in 2013 was 97%, the highest in the University. We need to keep our score above 90%.

#### 7.2 RSC Accreditation.

Work on the RSC accreditation process is currently happening. Information is being gathered and the necessary forms are being completed. Please respond positively to Ms Charters when you receive requests from her for information. The deadline for completed forms for our degree programmes is 17 March 2014. The Royal Society will visit the School on the 7 May and the outcome of the exercise will be announced in June 2014.

- 7.3 e-Learning Strategy Review meeting.  
This meeting will take place on 19 March at 2.00 pm with Alison Hamilton (EPS e-Learning Manager) and Patrick O'Malley (Academic Lead for e-Learning, EPS). This is an opportunity for us to share our views on the e-Learning Strategy. Views and ideas about this matter should be forwarded to the Director of Teaching in time for this meeting. Details about the strategy will be circulated for comment.  
**Action: Professor Procter.**
- 7.4 Faculty Peer Review of Teaching.  
This scheme has been passed by Senate following strong objections to this idea. Basically, all teachers will be reviewed every 5 years by one member of the Faculty College of Peer Reviewers and one person from the School. This is a huge operation to implement especially populating the College with people to undertake the review. This gives cause for concern.
- 7.5 School Peer Review of Teaching.  
Please be reminded that the School Peer Review of Teaching should now be underway.

## **8. Research Matters (Professor Anderson) – see Presentation C.**

Noted:

- 8.1 REF 2014.  
The paperwork for REF has been submitted and the outcome of the exercise will be published in December 2014. The six impact case studies submitted are available to view on our website.
- 8.2 School Research Committee.  
The new Research Committee has been established and has met once. The meeting considered the University's 2020 Research Strategy which is to be one of the top 25 research universities in the world. Ideas on what the School should be doing to enable the University to achieve its aim are to continue to increase research income, improve the quality of research outputs, employ quality staff, better data collection, being more proactive in seeking out funding from Research Councils and other funding bodies, and benchmark ourselves against our competitors. In addition, Professor David Leigh has agreed to Chair a School's Research Strategy to review our current research position and make recommendations for future direction. The Chair of this Group will report to the School's Management Team and will present a document to the School Away Day on 13 May.
- 8.3 DTA competition.  
The DTA competition has been launched which is a different scheme to previous years and was agreed by members of the Management Team. The idea of the scheme is to get the best students on the best projects. Seventeen projects were advertised, 33 applications came in and 12 applicants were shortlisted for interview. Interviews will be held the first week in March and approximately 6 offers will be made.

It was agreed that this scheme should be launched earlier in future years with offers of studentships being made early February.

## 9. Undergraduate Admissions (Dr Gorry) – see Presentation D.

Noted:

### 9.1 Thanks.

Appreciation was expressed to all staff involved in the admissions process, especially the UCAS open days.

### 9.2 Applications 2012-2014.

So far we have received 1127 UCAS applications which are up on last year by 16%. We were expecting a drop due to MChem grades rising to AAA. The rise in applications from the previous year to that has gone up by 65%. Virtually all of the 16% increase has come from the BSc programmes (Chemistry and Chemistry with Medicinal Chemistry).

### 9.3 2015 entry grades.

In order to reduce the BSc applications, which have a poorer success rate, we will raise the BSc grades to AAB.

### 9.4 Current position.

The current number of home applicants holding us firmly is 40. The UCAS deadline for candidates to make a firm or insurance decision is 7 May so there is still plenty of time for potential candidates to make their decision. Our target number for the academic year 2014/15 is around 196 in the December 2014 census so we need 200 students registering in September 2014.

The overseas current position is 125 applications compared to 109 received last year and 62 the year before. The target number for the academic year 2014/15 is 24 in the December 2014 census so we need 27 students registering in September 2014. So far we have 2 firm acceptances compared to 4 last year. The overseas target number was met last year though it is too early to say whether we will meet our target number this year. Some years we get several students at confirmation and clearing whilst in other years we get virtually none.

## 10. Any other business.

Noted:

- 10.1 Two new lectureship positions are to be advertised; one in organic chemistry and the other in bioorganic chemistry.