

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

**Minutes of the Management Team Meeting held on
Monday 20 September 2010 in room 4.20**

Present: Professor J C Whitehead (Chair), Dr E M Armstrong, Professor E J L McInnes, Professor J Micklefield, Professor G A Morris (vice Yeates), Professor G Procter, Mrs C R Taylor (Secretary), Professor E J Thomas.

1. Apologies for absence.

Professor S Flitsch, Ms N Snook, Professor S Yeates

2. Report from Health and Safety Committee and Estates Issues.

Received:

Verbal report from Dr Armstrong.

Noted:

- 2.1 At the last Health and Safety meeting, members discussed some legacy radioactive materials which had been found in the School on the fifth floor. The storage of these materials has now been brought under control and the relevant authorities in the University have been informed.
- 2.2 All new postgraduate students will receive a health screening questionnaire in their registration packs, part 1 of which needs to be completed in conjunction with their supervisor and signed, the other parts are completed by the student. The completed forms are strictly confidential and must be sent directly to Occupational Health.
- 2.3 The new arrangements for the delivery of the Health and Safety Induction courses have been introduced. Part 1 of the course will be given every first Monday of the month. The remaining parts of the course will be given on a quarterly basis. Quarterly dates will be announced soon and displayed on the School's plasma screen.
- 2.4 Dr Armstrong thanked academic staff for their cooperation in assisting with the audit of Chemical Risk Assessments in the School. The exercise has been very useful and has informed changes to the Chemical Risk Assessment form.

- 2.5 The University is being sued by a student who claims that the chemicals he used whilst in the laboratory gave him dermatitis. Whilst at University, this student did not comply with Health and Safety regulations which state that COSHH forms or risk assessment forms need to be completed prior to an experiment. This is no evidence of these forms ever being completed thus he has no evidence to back up his case. This is a misconduct on his part, however it is a timely reminder to all that it is imperative that chemical risk assessments and other forms are completed and signed by the supervisor and that these forms remain the custody of the School of Chemistry along with laboratory notebooks.
- 2.6 The University will undertake an audit of Health and Safety across the University and an audit form for this purpose has been prepared. The audits will start in October 2010.
- 2.7 The refurbishment of the lecture theatres in Chemistry is now complete but there is ongoing difficulty with the ventilation system. This problem is expected to be resolved by the end of the second week of Semester 1. The Media Centre will give a demonstration of the audiovisual equipment in G.53 on Wednesday 22 September at 2.00 pm.
- 2.8 Estates have confirmed that the concourse floor will be sanded and resealed over the Christmas break. They have also confirmed that the cork tiles along the back corridor on the ground floor will be replaced with linoleum over the same period.
- 2.9 The School has ordered new tables and chairs for the Schunck Library to create a more comfortable study area for the students. Please note that the new chairs are strictly for use in the library and should not migrate to other areas in the School.
- 2.10 The new fire alarm system is now working well but as always if you suspect there is a malfunction of the system, please let Dr Armstrong know.
- 2.11 Dr Armstrong was thanked for all the work she did on the EPR tender. Her efforts are greatly appreciated. This is an important bid that we need to secure.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting.

The minutes were approved and Mrs Taylor was asked to make them available on the School intranet.

4. Matters arising from the previous minutes.

Noted:

4.1 Actum 4.2

We have been notified that the School of Chemistry's application is the preferred tender for the EPR Service. The preparation of the bid has been time consuming for all staff involved. If the bid is successful then the facility will be based on the ground floor in the Photon Science Institute.

4.2 Actum 4.3

Professor Whitehead said that he had met with the Head of School in Pharmacy about the proposals for the new 'Chemistry with Medicinal Chemistry' course. He was very support of the proposals put forward but there are some issues that needed resolving soon if the course is to appear in the UCAS handbook.

4.3 Actum 5.7

The North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) is to cease trading in April 2012. This could affect funding already secured to run the Knowledge Centre for Materials Chemistry especially vacant posts. The *Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Regional Growth Fund* will replace the NWDA. Further information on this topic can be seen at <http://www.sqw.co.uk/services/local-enterprise-partnerships-and-the-regional-growth-fund>. The first tranche of bids from this fund will be announced in December 2010.

4.4 Actum 6

The Finance structure in the School is still not working well. Pauline Morgan, Head of Faculty Finance, did have a plan for improvement, which did not happen. A further idea has been presented which might involve a confederation.

Pre-award finance in Chemistry has lost Andrew Smith to Mathematics but gained Patrick Kirwan who is on a year's contract. The working relationship with Faida Austin is going very well.

Ms Snook, Head of Administration for Chemistry and Earth Sciences, has agreed to spend four days in Earth Sciences until December 2010.

5. Report from the Head of School.

Received:

Verbal report from Professor Whitehead.

Noted:

5.1 Professor Whitehead gave a formal welcome to Dr Cinzia Casiraghi who is a Lecturer in Graphene Chemistry. Dr Casiraghi is based in the Photon Science Institute.

5.2 The Dean of Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS) has resisted the move to restructure EPS, as he did not see a benefit to the University. Instead, he is relying on growth in overseas undergraduate and postgraduate students and non-UK government income. This means that it is imperative we have a strategy to increase these student numbers and targets to help us delivery our strategy.

5.3 The number of overseas students admitted to the School this year did not meet our targets (except for PGT).

UK plc report that universities are overcharging overseas students and thus pricing ourselves out of the market. It should be noted that we are the only School in the Faculty that does not have a collaboration agreement with an overseas university feeding International U/G students into the School. This needs to be rectified. It is important that we increase our numbers as the university cuts will hit hard.

5.4 The taught MSc course in Chemistry has 12 overseas students registered on it. Since we only started to advertise this course at Easter, this is a great start. Dr Whiteley is Course Director and is well aware of issues often experienced by overseas students. The first two weeks of this course is an intensive English course to help them with the forthcoming lectures. Before these students can progress to a research project, they need to pass the written component of the course.

5.5 The ERVS deadline has been extended to the end of October 2010. The staff we have lost so far are: Val Boote, Allan Griffiths, John Robinson, Kevin Flower and David Tyrer. The School will consider any further applications for ERVS. The School is appreciative of the contribution that these people have made over the years and wishes them well.

5.6 Our application submitted for consideration for the Athena Swan Silver Award was turned down. More detailed feedback on our submission will be received shortly. Professor Helliwell and Mrs Taylor have agreed to take over this task.

6. To update School SWOT analysis and Risk Register.

6.1 Members considered the School SWOT analysis and put forward ideas for change. Professor Whitehead would make the changes and forward to the Dean.

7. Report from Head of School Administration.

7.1 Apologies were received from Ms Snook.

8. Report from Director of Teaching.

Received:

Report received from Professor Procter (Appendix 1).

Noted:

8.1 The National Student Survey results were disappointing for Chemistry. The University is taking a very robust view of this. Professor Tony Brown stated that we need to do better and hopes that this year's result was only a blip. This has ramifications if we do not do well. Why would a student pay tuition fees to study at Manchester when he/she can go to another University ranked higher than us? The results are all hinged on one question and that is 'Are you satisfied with your course'? It has been established that the students mark you down if they have been frustrated by issues that have not been resolved. The School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) have put in place an action plan to deal with students' issues in the School. EEE work predominately on third and fourth year students to resolve problems. In Chemistry, one complaint of students is that they cannot make contact with staff quickly. Professor Whitehead said he is having a meeting with staff involved with teaching to put a mechanism in place to make sure that (a) marking is done within 15 days of submission and (b) that staff have an open office at least for one hour per week.

8.2 Professor Whitehead and Professor Procter will meet with students in all years to listen to any problems they may have so that these can be remedied and the outcome feedback to the students. Is this feedback best given via Blackboard or on a one to one basis? A further suggestion on giving feedback to students could be for Programme Directors to have meetings with students on a quarterly basis.

8.3 The Annual Review of teaching took place on 14 July and action points were proposed, which are listed in Appendix 1 of this document.

8.4 A meeting of the Teaching Committee took place on 3 September and matters that arose from this meeting are listed in Appendix 1.

9. Report from Director of Research.

Received:

Report received from Professor Micklefield (Appendix 2).

Noted:

9.1 At the Research Committee meeting on the 28 July, research theme leaders presented a brief overview of the organisation and activities of each theme over the last six months. All but two of the research theme areas have made good progress. It was acknowledged that the depth of information on the website needs updating and theme leaders were actioned to provide more content and attractive images.

9.2 The seminar arrangements in Chemistry have been reviewed and in light of this, Chemistry seminars are now under a single programme, and the topics are aligned with the School's research themes. Hearing about the latest research is important for all, particularly postdoctoral workers and PhD students.

9.3 This year, the DTA competition will be held earlier to help with the recruitment of PhD students from an early stage. Last year, six studentships were awarded via the algorithm and six awarded via the DTA competition. If staff are unhappy with this balance, then we need to know about it. Dr Fretwell to be asked to start the process of the DTA competition.

Action: Professor Micklefield.

9.4 The School needs to take steps to achieve the School's strategy to improve citation of papers in preparation for REF. Steps also need to be taken to improve EU income.

10. Any other business.

10.1 As a consequence of ERVS, it is necessary to restructure technical staff within the School. Ms Snook is looking at the restructure and when draft documents are available, they will be presented to Management Team for discussion.

10.2 A sum of money for School equipment was put into the budget but the Dean moved it to a combined Faculty list. If we return a surplus in our budget, some of the requests for equipment may be funded. Therefore, this is an incentive to manage our budgets well.

10.3 The External Advisory Board is to take place on the 12 November, which is now chaired by Professor Robert Donovan. At this meeting, the membership of the committee will be reviewed.

10.4 The School has had a visit from Syngenta, which was organised by the Business Development Unit who are setting up a University-wide MoA.

10.5 The negotiation with Waters to provide financial help with the Michael Barber Centre is going very well. The package put forward to them was not a financial concern. .

11. **Date of next meeting.**

11.1 The meeting Management Team meeting will be held on Monday 18 October at 12.00 noon in room 4.20.