



Minutes of the 21st Annual Meeting held at Nottingham Trent University April 2003 (unconfirmed)

Tuesday 15 April

Welcome

The meeting began with a welcome from Professor Peter Jones, acting Pro Vice Chancellor and acting Chief Executive of Nottingham Law School Ltd, who welcomed delegates both to Nottingham and to the University. He apologised for Trevor Palmer, Dean of Science, who was to open the meeting but could not attend and lighted on the interdisciplinary nature of the Biomedical Research Centre at NTU and its drive in striving for innovation.

Presentation

'Commercialising Environmental Knowledge'

Dr Robert Beattie and Dr Peter Redfern, Principal Lecturers, School of Science

Dr Peter Redfern presented an interesting overview of EcoCampus, an environmental management system and award scheme for the further and higher education sectors which is being piloted by 14 institutions.

Benefits include:

- identifying financial savings through, for example, improved resource productivity and a reduction in energy consumption and landfill costs;
- helping to establish compliance with environmental legislation, so reducing the risk of incurring penalties for unlawful activity;
- enhancing student recruitment potential by providing evidence of responsible practice;
- improving external perception of the institution;
- enhancing research and consultancy opportunities;
- actively involving staff and students in the institution's activities, helping to create a sense of community involvement and ownership.

EcoCampus is designed to be flexible, allowing a step-by-step approach to its implementation, with institutions helped to consider 8 key themes. The 8 key themes are: Built Environment; Community Involvement; Resource use (including energy and water); Curriculum Greening; Waste; Health, Welfare and Safety; Transport; Purchasing

Dr Robert Beattie described how this had led to the development of a spinout company, Loreus, which was developing a software toolbox for business users reviewing their environmental management systems. This allows a staged approach to improving environmental management using software tools and recognised benchmarks such as ISO14001. Organisations can then approach environmental improvements in stages at their own pace with supporting tools. It has developed a novel e-training system based on a semantic neural network with a powerful tracking system to evidence engagement and learning. Currently there are ten final year project students out in businesses carrying out environmental reviews

The meeting thanked Drs Beattie and Redfern.

Presentation

'Legal Responsibilities of Middle Managers'

Mr Chris Coffey, Principal Technician/Lecturer, School of Property and Construction

Chris Coffey explained that the law in the workplace is a source of compliance rather than enforcement unless there is a major breach (the exception being waste regulations – cradle to grave concept). Under the law, students are probably not considered as employees but they possibly could sue if there are breaches of Health and Safety regulations. Breaches of H&S legislation can result in up to £20k fine or 6 months imprisonment from a magistrates' court for EACH offence, and magistrates can pass cases up to the Crown Court. Health and Safety is a responsibility that must be taken seriously, is delegated to Heads of Departments and involves self-regulation to comply with the principles as far as is reasonably practicable.

The meeting thanked Mr Coffey.

COFFEE and biscuits in Trade Exhibition area

AGM and Association Business

Part 1 of the AGM started at 1125 with reports from officers and representatives

21/1

Welcome

The Chairman (Robert Campbell) welcomed members, particularly new members attending for the first time. Welcome extended to Roger Dainty from NABBS who will be joining meeting later. Sadly Basil Boam (Honorary President) was unwell and unable to attend: Mark Cosgrove (host) has written to him expressing our best wishes.

21/2

Apologies

Apologies were received from Basil Boam, Aylsa Hume, Eric McAvoy, Terry Lymn, Phil Jefferies, Peter Crosby, Colin Chinnery, Mike Gover, Roger Haslam, Fiona Bowers, David Smart

21/3

Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising

Proposed, seconded and approved. There were no matters arising. Thanks to John Robinson for these

21/4

Chairman's Report

- The Chairman stated that the main aims of the association are to satisfy the wishes of the membership and the committee has contributed well in fulfilling this role. He thanked Mark Cosgrove and Jane Braithwaite for hosting the conference and putting together a good programme and noted that attending members represented 21 institutions.
- The Chairman expressed his disappointment that there had been no feedback from members in response to a request for topics for discussion items.
- On a more positive note, he welcomed the development of the UBMA website as a very useful tool for members and for others who wish to take an interest in UBMA's activities. This needs continual input to improve and develop it in future.
- More definitive links with HUBS have been developed over the past year, also with UKLSC (still intention to be a federation) and with NABBS. It is hoped to build on these links in future as a mutual process.
- Availability of committee for re-election – ALL the committee is available EXCEPT the Chair, but all positions are available for nominations.

21/5

Membership Secretary's Report

Membership stood at 66, with two new members and six retirements since last year. The membership secretary has tried to contact the replacements of the retired members. Two of the 66 have associate membership having changed jobs. Discussion whether retired people should be offered associate membership, but the view

was that although this had been offered to two people who had changed their role, UBMA generally wants active members. The secretary was asked to send a letter of thanks to the retired members.

21/6

Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report was tabled and accepted. Alison Bate and Jayne Bromley audited the accounts

The annual subscription of £20 for members was agreed.

21/7

UBMA Representatives Reports

.1

HUBS

No one from UBMA attended HUBS but the Chair has been in contact with the Secretary of HUBS. HUBS are willing to continue the links between UBMA and HUBS and are also happy to send one of their members to attend the UBMA meeting. The problem this year was that both meetings clashed.

David Smart used to be the representative, but he now wishes to stand down. He recently sent some information to the Chair. HUBS' membership represents 100 institutions out of 110. They also hold an autumn meeting, the theme this year being the impact of biological research on the economy of the nation and the funding of research.

.2

NABBS

John Dwyer is UBMA's representative (NB NABBS wanted the UBMA rep to be a committee member) and attended the NABBS conference in September 2002 in Harrogate. The conference lasted for two and a half days allowing more time for business than the UBMA annual meeting. Talks included:

- the business perspective of procurement followed by a discussion
- HESDA initiative - technical staff training
- Hay/HERA overview
- Brief history of NABBS and life after NABBS

The format was similar to UBMA but the topics could take a whole session.

There followed some discussion on the merits of taking one item in depth rather than covering a range of topics (although it was noted the NABBS conference is longer). It was suggested that the UBMA membership could consider this in Wednesday's business meeting.

.3

UKLSC

Alison Bates was appointed by the committee as UBMA's representative because the Chair of UKLSC is based at Manchester. She is both willing to stand again and willing to let someone else stand. She has had no contact from UKLSC, but the Chair has told her there have been no meetings since October.

The following information was noted

After 6 successful years member societies of UKLSC voted to disband the organisation from December 2002 in order to pave the way for the founding of the Biosciences Federation. This new body will continue and extend UKLSC work and brings together learned societies from across the whole spectrum of the biosciences, including the Institute of Biology. It aims to become the single voice that provides authoritative information and opinion on developments in the biosciences to government, media and educational authorities on behalf of the biosciences community.

The Biosciences Federation represents over 40 organisations and 60,000 people.

Discussion took place as to whether UBMA should explore the possibility of joining the Federation (one year's membership costs £1 per member). John Robinson to contact the Federation with a copy to the Secretary.

This part of the AGM closed at 1215

Presentation

'Personalised medicine and therapeutic targets'

Dr Shahid Mian, Post Doctoral Research Fellow, School of Science

Dr Mian gave a fascinating presentation on proteomics and its application towards 'personalised medicine' and the identification of therapeutic targets. Proteomics is the analysis of the protein complement within a cell or given tissue at a moment of time. There are between thirty and forty thousand genes with possibly from half to one million potential products. Proteomics could be used to study disease pathways, for the identification of biomarkers (eg the likelihood of the return of a tumour in different patients), the development of therapeutics and the understanding of biological pathways. Proteins may act as therapeutic targets, prognostic markers for disease progression or markers for drug responsiveness. There may be individual responses to different diseases and different treatments. Proteomics may, in the future, allow the prediction of an individual patient's response to an expensive treatment thus reducing risk to the patient and increasing cost-effectiveness to the NHS. Proteomics is at an early stage, and involves expensive equipment, methodologies and sophisticated algorithms for analysis. Nevertheless it offers exciting possibilities for future treatments tailored to patients' individual responses to different diseases

The meeting thanked Dr Mian

LUNCH in Trade Exhibition area

Breakout sessions

The following sessions were held in the afternoon with the facilitators who would report back to the meeting the following morning. Members were invited to sign up for the two sessions of most interest to them during the lunch break.

1	Hay/HERA	Amanda Taylor
2	Building refurbishment	Dave Diggins
3	Higher grades	Joyce Macmillan
4	Technician recruitment	Peter Hague

Tea and biscuits in Trade Exhibition area

Town or Gown

A visit to the Galleries of Justice for a fascinating insight into crime and punishment of yesteryear or a visit to the School of Science at the University's Clifton campus including the newly opened Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Centre

Champagne reception sponsored by Nottingham Trent University

Conference Dinner

The association expressed its thanks to Robert Campbell for his valued contribution as Chair of UBMA for three years.

Wednesday 16 April 2003

AGM and Association Business

Part 2 of the AGM started at 0915

21/8

Election of Committee Members

Chairman – Alan Wilcocks proposed by Peter Hague and seconded by John Dwyer.
Elected unopposed

The following three officers were re-elected unopposed

Secretary	Anne MacMahon continues
Treasurer	Mark Cosgrove continues
Membership Secretary	John Kent continues

Committee members

John Dwyer was willing to stand for re-election.

Dave Diggins was proposed by John Dwyer and seconded by Steve Parker.
Audrey Jeffries was proposed by Joyce Macmillan and seconded by Paul Phillips
John Dwyer was proposed by Robert Campbell and seconded by Mark Cosgrove

Dave Diggins withdrew so **John Dwyer and Audrey Jeffries were elected unopposed**

Alan Wilcocks reminded the meeting that the committee has the authority to co-opt people onto it if necessary, for example, the host of the meeting

Auditors

Terry Lymn, Alison Bates and Jayne Bromley were proposed by Alan Wilcocks and seconded by John Dwyer

21/9

UBMA Representatives

.1

HUBS representative

Peter Hague was nominated by David Diggins and seconded by John Dwyer. **Agreed**

.2

NABBS representative

John Dwyer was nominated by the committee – NABBS has set a condition that they want a member of the UBMA committee to attend. John Dwyer will continue. **Agreed.**

.3

Biosciences Federation (formerly UKLSC)

Alison Bates was asked by the committee to take on this role. It has not developed to date, but Alison is willing to continue. This was **agreed**. John Robinson will notify Alison.

21/10

Changes to Constitution

.1

Amendment to Rule 6 (Honorary President)

“The Honorary President is regarded as a lifetime post. However, election of the Honorary President can be brought up at the Annual General Meeting given the appropriate notice” proposed Robert Campbell, seconded John Kent.
Constitution states president has to be elected each year. Discussion took place over

whether president should be elected every year or if he is 'there for life'. This proposed amendment was intended to bring the constitution in line with what the association has done in practice. An alternative amendment was suggested that "The Honorary President is elected for life". This could cause problems if the president's activities conflicted with UBMA's interests, hence the second sentence in the original proposed amendment. The meeting agreed that Basil's appointment was unique as founding member and that the constitution could be amended at a future date if considered necessary, with the appropriate notice.

.2

Amendment to Rule 8 (Subscriptions)

Addition to the end of Rule 8

'The subscription for associate members will be half the full subscription'

(Secretary's note – committee agreed associate membership for two members with effect from January 2003)

The question was asked why there should be associate membership. It was explained that the people in question no longer fulfil the criteria to be members but have been active members in the past, they have something to offer to the association in their new careers in purchasing and they would like to continue their links with UBMA. Associate members will not have voting rights and cannot serve on the committee. It may be that the committee may wish to offer associate membership to others in the future or possibly people who retire may wish to continue as associate members.

The amendment was proposed by John Kent, seconded by John Dwyer. **AGREED**

.3

Further amendment to Rule 8 (Subscriptions)

Addition to the end of Rule 8

'New members who join after 1st July will have their subscription for that year waived.'

Currently the annual date for renewal is January

Proposed John Kent, seconded Mark Cosgrove. **AGREED**

.4

New Rule - 14 - Data Protection Act

a) A register of members, including contact and subscription details, may be maintained by association officers on computer.

b) Contact information will be made available to other members, who must not pass this on to non-members.

c) The contact information for those attending association meetings may, with the member's consent, be passed on to any sponsors of that meeting.

It was explained that without this amendment UBMA would have to register under the Data Protection Act (voluntary organisations are exempt from registration if they have this as part of their rules). It was noted that members' names have been taken off the web page and that during registration for the conference delegates were asked if their details could be passed on (for example, to sponsors).

Proposed John Kent, Seconded Joyce Macmillan. **AGREED**

21/11

Recruitment

There are 100 Higher Education institutions, of which UBMA represents 37 with 66 members. It was noted that further recruitment could take place within currently represented organisations but ideally UBMA would benefit from attracting members from other universities to expand its influence and keep it well-balanced. The following points were noted:

- there are 129 members of Supt-Bio cf 66 members of Supt-UBMA. Membership secretary does mention UBMA when he enrolls people into Supt-Bio;

- personal contacts and networking thought to be more effective than email/fliers, although several people reported instance when this had not succeeded in gaining interest;
- Robert will talk to the Chair of HUBS to see if members will raise awareness of UBMA with their technical managers.

21/12

Publicity Material Fliers updating

Fliers need updating – new Chair, Secretary, website information. **John Kent**

21/13

Use of UBMA funds

It was noted that although the previous meetings had generated two windfalls, this probably will not happen again. The question is whether UBMA wants to keep its cushion of approximately £4K or spend it. There was some discussion of paying members subs, for example, in the case of redundancy, or if someone's Head of Department would not pay their membership (a case would have to be submitted). It was noted that representatives attending other organisations on behalf of UBMA would get their expenses paid by UBMA

21/14

Future Meetings

Bath was confirmed as the venue for 2004, dates 14-16 April (Wednesday to Friday). Thanks to Ray Dickson and Felicity Veazey.

Dublin was confirmed as the venue for 2005 (probably the Wed/Thu/Fri after Easter) hosts Michael O'Sullivan and Michelle Finnegan

21/15

Any other business

HESDA is developing an advanced course on leading/managing technical teams. Bob Hardwick is running a pilot in Manchester with approximately 20 people (2 days in May) and looking for nominations from various groups such as UBMA (3 to 4 from each). The course will be free but participants will be expected to provide critical feedback. Seen as an opportunity for UBMA to have an influence. Interested people to give names to John Robinson over coffee, will conduct a ballot if more than three or four names.

The AGM closed at 1030

Feedback from Breakout sessions (chaired by Alan Wilcocks)

Job Evaluation schemes – Hay/HERA presented by Amanda Taylor

There are two main schemes – Hay and HERA – being used as part of the agreement to address inequalities in pay and ensure equal pay for work of equal value (government driven, concerns about prosecution under equal pay laws)

Hay was originally developed for local government in the 50s or 60s. Not fully in operation anywhere but about to be rolled out at Nottingham University.

HERA was specifically developed for use in Higher Education institutions and is being developed in a couple of universities, but again not fully in operation.

A further scheme – EQUATE – originally developed for the water industry is being trialed at Hertfordshire University.

Roger Dainty reported that Nottingham University is using the Hay system to evaluate the technical staff initially, with the view to roll it out across the other groups (academic, academic-related, admin/secretarial) in the future.

There are approximately 580 technical staff in the university (blue book) and medical school (Whitley council). Hay was announced in 2000 and £2 million pounds additional

funding earmarked. January 2001 consultants started talking to technical staff groups. February 2001, focus groups were set up and determined five job families with grades attached from grade 1 to grade 5. This was followed by Technical Consultation Groups and then by Steering Groups. Grade 5 was divided into 5a and 5b to accommodate those with very specialist skills, such as surgical procedures, but with little or no supervisory responsibility and positions with more admin. finances etc. Academic-related grades extend to 6 and 7 as well. The job evaluation process started in 2002 and should be completed for posts in the 1-5 grade range by October 2003, but salary scales still not known. (Salary drops will be ring-fenced for a set number of years). Roger was impressed with Hay and thought it fair in the way it was handled at Nottingham University. However, concerned that salaries are not known and that the unions do not trust the University. Still unknown are the number of levels in a grade, progression criteria and the performance-related element. The process is resource-intensive and there will be appeals.

During discussion it was noted there is a general problem with progression for very skilled technical staff who wish to continue using their skills and it is hoped job evaluation will lead to some movement for them.

Technician recruitment – graduate v non-graduate presented by Peter Hague

Graduates are:

- willing to take short-term research posts (a stepping stone in their career);
- have background knowledge of teaching;
- available – large pool looking for jobs.

BUT

- may have higher ambitions so may not stay long in a continuing post;
- may be reluctant to take on more mundane tasks;
- lack experience and may have little knowledge of health and safety and lab craft;
- require on the job training.

Non-graduates:

- have qualifications at the appropriate level;
- have the potential to study part-time (course could take 5 years) leading to better retention;
- are more adaptable;
- are more content to undertake mundane tasks.

BUT

- not many are available with scientific background therefore recruitment difficult;
- may be available only four days a week if studying by day release;
- require on the job training.

It was noted that there are differences between the 'old' and the 'new' universities. The former have a very high research base, and hence wanting to recruit graduates on short term contracts, whilst the latter have a high teaching base and may want a higher proportion of people who want to pursue a career as a technician.

All of above acknowledged to be generalisations and some graduates may well be happy with a technical career

Glasgow has recruited three people on modern apprenticeships which are fixed term, but hopes it can find posts to keep them

There was a general consensus that people would like to take on trainees but that there are few available. The main influence is the availability of graduates and the fact they apply even if the post specifies 'A' levels or equivalent. This reflects the government policy to increase participation in Higher Education hence leading to a larger pool of graduates. Note – would an opportunity to get a degree by day release without incurring a large debt be attractive to school leavers?

Managing building work/refurbishments presented by Dave Diggins

Pre-design and design phase:

- Don't underestimate the time needed for this.
- Vital to act as a conduit between architects, M&E consultant, and structural engineer who don't always communicate with each other.
- Important to involve people who will use the space and allow them to be party to the decisions made (again the conduit role). It is important that they understand if they have not got what they asked for, why not. However, keep numbers to a minimum - a nominated rep from each group/discipline. (Almost a shepherd role!)
- Get HSE, Fire Officers involved early in design stage (not at final design stage or when built)
- IMPORTANT to keep minutes and notes of all meetings and communications (time-consuming – studying plans, revisions to room data sheets etc – need records)
- Attend as many meetings as possible – things may be pushed through you don't want
- Check for errors – cross-check paperwork, date drawings when they arrive, cross-check room data sheets with plans to avoid discrepancies
- Continuity may be a problem especially as few M&E consultants are expert in science buildings. Check they understand what is wanted and that plans do match up

Building Phase

- Ensure only one person acts as client in dealing with the contractor – keep the academic staff out of it!
- Amendments - maintain constant vigilance over the interpretation of the plans (for example, gas taps were nearly installed too low)

Most important overall is **communication** – acting as a conduit between the users and the design team is a vital role

Discussion followed raising following points

- Important to attend site meetings when building starts (walls have been built in the wrong place!)
- Relationship with Estates may be important in some institutions (project manager may be Finance or Estates) but vital that the 'client' had contact with the architect
- 'Value engineering' may determine what is really necessary as opposed to what the end user would like (for example, supply of very pure gases may not be justifiable). Costs may need breaking down to prioritise what is needed
- End user must sign off the drawings, especially any changes in wishes and design during the planning process
- **Changes in plans are costly**

GHI grades – Presented by Joyce Macmillan

GHI are the most senior technical grades in the 'old' universities' blue book and apply to superintendents.

At Glasgow these have been developed for technologist-type roles: there are a few very highly qualified and skilled technicians who do not fit the F grade. It was agreed that GHI could be developed separately from the management role. (It would thus be possible to have a grade G managing a grade H.) This allows highly specialised technical staff to stay at the bench and not be forced into a management role to gain a promotion. Seen as being positive, but not altogether happy with job descriptions (for example, includes raising grant money which is not realistic). These people are seen as technologists, not scientists, are the only person with a particular skill and are engaged in advanced research.

Hay may be positive in recognising such people. It is thought the Russell group will follow Nottingham in adopting the Hay system, and grade 5 might recognise these skills

This concluded the feedback from the breakout sessions. Delegates were invited to let the committee know if they wished to continue with these at next year's meeting.

Coffee and biscuits

Group photograph

Outline of the workings of the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) and its new initiative the Higher Education Senior Managers Forum (HESMF)

Ms Alison Wild, Pro Vice Chancellor Administration and University Secretary, Liverpool John Moores University. and Deputy Chair and Hon Sec of AHUA and Mr Jeremy Hoad, AHUA Executive Officer

The Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) is a membership organisation made up of university registrars and secretaries (and various equivalents). It was formed in 1992 with the amalgamation of the associations of university secretaries and polytechnic secretaries.

Its main purposes are:

- to provide a forum for development of effective management in universities;
- to share experience and encourage best practice;
- to consider and seek to influence matters of national policy in respect of higher education in so far as they affect the management in universities;
- to support Universities UK in the development of policy on and the implementation of issues relating to university management;
- to support and encourage appropriate training for managerial and administrative staff.

Higher Education Senior Managers Forum (HESMF)

The Higher Education Senior Managers Forum has been established as a means for the main representative professional groups in the sector to collaborate effectively in areas where there are issues of shared interest. The Forum, which follows an initiative taken by AHUA, consists of the following:

- The Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA)
- Academic Registrars Council (ARC)
- Association of University Administrators (AUA)
- Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE)
- British Universities Finance Directors Group (BUFDG)
- Universities Personnel Association (UPA)

They represent the five core business areas in higher education institutions throughout the UK:

- general management
- academic administration
- finance
- estates
- personnel

The main purposes of the Forum are to:

- be pro-active in identifying strategic issues and developing policy
- provide a clear route and more effective process for consultation
- develop the means to ensure a more effective and representative voice
- enable UUK to engage with the diverse needs and priorities of the sector
- exchange information and ideas and provide a valuable resource of knowledge and expertise for the sector

The key benefits expected to result from the establishment of the Forum are to:

- have a more influential, representative voice in the sector
- avoid duplication of effort
- enhance communications between the groups

- inform UUK of the issues of concern to senior managers and advise on the best professional practice
- use members' expertise more effectively

Four working groups have been established to coordinate the work of the Forum:

- spending review implications / fees and markets in HE
- leadership and management
- infrastructure issues
- investigatory processes

The Forum meets twice a year and supports its business through virtual communications. Representatives of Universities UK (UUK) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) attend the Forum.

The key specialist associations and stakeholders in the sector will be kept informed of the work of the Forum and consulted about any issues of shared interest which may arise.

Further information is available from Jeremy Hoad, Secretary to the Forum:

Current issues in Government White Paper

AHUA have submitted a response which includes:

- recurrent funding (teaching) is inadequate especially with respect to low pay (Betts report);
- student contributions welcome but supplementary income is not sufficient and students need more grant support if from poor backgrounds;
- Access Regulator – fairly cynical about this, concerns about social engineering
- 50% participation target – do not think it's possible to be delivered by foundation degrees alone (implied in White Paper)
- research concentration and differentiation of universities – feel things have gone far enough – don't think it's wise to have a differentiated sector (although diversity welcome)
- Leadership Management Governance – not as bad as the government thinks but no room for complacency – need development of staff now to lead and manage in the future

Following some discussion about how small groups such as UBMA could have some involvement HESMF is made up of six sub-groups and the wish is for it not to grow too much or it will not work. However, other organisations can feed issues to this group. Ms Wild's view is that issue-driven approaches work very well.

The meeting thanked Ms Wild.

Closing remarks from the Chair

The Chair spoke briefly of recent changes and how over the past three years UBSA had become UBMA. UBMA is a structure that allows members to deal with issues, have a voice and deal with their own needs, and also serves its members and also all technical and related staff. It is developing links with other organisations. He hoped that the founding members of UBSA agree that the organisation has not been damaged by the changes made and that UBMA continues to develop.

Vote of thanks

John Robinson thanked the Chair for his brevity. He spoke of the diversity of experience offered to delegates each year and how this conference had been no exception, ranging from viewing an 800 year oak tree to a talk on the latest techniques in proteomics. He thanked Mark Cosgrove for hosting a fascinating and well-organised conference.

Thanks also to Jane Braithwaite for her contribution to the organisation and to James Parry from NTU for his help, particularly with transport

List of Sponsors UBMA Conference 2003: Acro; Cambridge Bioscience; Mazurek Optical Services; Fisher Scientific; Scientific Laboratory Supplies; VWR International.