



Minutes of the 24th Annual Meeting 2006
held at
King's College Conference Centre, University of Aberdeen
(unconfirmed)

Wednesday 5th April

0915 Welcome

Audrey Jeffries opened the meeting as host, briefly touching on the changes the university has undergone since its foundation in 1495, the £9 million investment plans involving much change and restructuring to build a strong intellectual and financial base to secure its position as a leading university with an international reputation.

Professor Steve Logan, Senior Vice Principal, University of Aberdeen welcomed the delegates to the university, Aberdeen and North-East Scotland. He praised UBMA for providing a forum to share best practice and raise issues of mutual interest. There is great commonality in issues across a broad range of universities and institutions which are all competing in a world-wide market for staff, students and research. Laboratory managers play a key role in providing quality facilities to underpin the core business of teaching and research. He wished UBMA well and hoped the conference would be a success.

0930 Presentation

'Into the Abyss – Research at High Pressure'

Mr Owen MacPherson, Research Technician, Oceanlab, University of Aberdeen

Oceanlab specialises in deep sea landers, photography and technology reaching down to depths of 6000M. It is the world's first purpose-built ocean LANDER laboratory, located in Newburgh on the Ythan estuary, a site of special scientific interest. Owen gave a fascinating talk, outlining the range of activities undertaken by Oceanlab, highlighting the synergistic relationship of biologists and engineers working together to investigate the largest unexplored realm on this planet. Details of the talk are in Appendix A, page 11. The meeting thanked Owen for his presentation.

AGM and Association Business

Part 1 of the AGM started at 1000h with reports from officers and representatives

24/1

Welcome

The Chairman (Alan Willcocks) welcomed members to the meeting and thanked Audrey for the previous day's tour of Royal Deeside, the most enjoyable visit to Fettercairn Distillery and the excellent meal at the Banchory Lodge Hotel.

24/2 Attendance and Apologies

Attendance Hilda Bohane, Jane Braithwaite, Jayne Bromley, Mark Cosgrove, Chris Davey Mick Hurst, David Knight, Jacqueline Kolkowski, Kim Lainson, Mark Lane, Anne MacMahon, Joyce MacMillan, Haydn Morris, Arthur Nicholas, Michael O'Sullivan, Steve Parker, Ila Patel, Paul Phillips, Philip Reilly, John Robinson, Paul Rooney, David Stanton, Amanda Taylor, Peter Whelpdale, Alan Willcocks, Mary Pryce, Susan Blaney, Janice Gordon,

George Henderson, Ken Hogg, Audrey Jeffries, Linda Key, Lynne Lumsden, Dot MacKinnon, Norma Moore, Liz Muckersie, Marie Robertson, Lorna Smith.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Alison Bate, Norman Beach, Barbara Birch, Fiona Bowers, Robert Campbell, Joe Cremin, Peter Crosby, John Cull, Ray Dickson, John Dwyer, Michelle Finnegan, Donald Gardiner, Letitia Gibson, Mike Gover, Peter Hague, Allister Hamilton, Christine Haskell, Roger Haslam, Peter Hillier, Aylsa Hume, Phil Jefferies, Eric McEvoy, Irene McKay, Lynne Neale, Laura Nuttall, Linda Parkin, Phillip Reed, Rose Salter, David Smart, Felicity Veazey, Mick Warren, Kathy Whitfield

24/3

Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters Arising

The minutes were approved. There were no matters arising

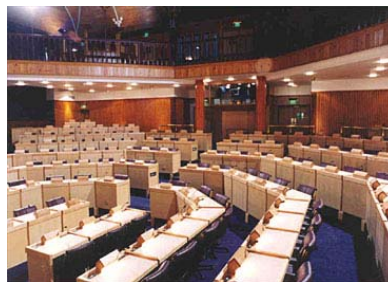
24/4

Chair's Report

4.1

Welcome

On behalf of UBMA, Alan thanked the officers and committee members for their work behind the scenes. The list of apologies is quite lengthy, but this may be explained by the demands of the day jobs, especially when so many institutions are facing much change. He thanked Audrey, Lynne and Janice for hosting the meeting in the splendid setting of King's College Conference Centre.



The constitution serves UBMA well, it was designed to make UBMA an inclusive organisation and we should continue to be an inclusive organisation

All the officer posts are elected at the AGM. The suggestion has been that officers should serve no longer than three years to ensure fresh thinking. This year the Secretary is definitely standing down, the Chair has served three years and is standing down; the membership secretary and treasurer are willing to continue. The Chair thanked Anne for her skills, her eloquent summaries and her patience.

Alan expressed concern that some members are not getting funding from their own universities to attend UBMA. However, he was delighted to be able to welcome some new members and hoped they would enjoy both the formal and informal parts of the meeting.

Next year's meeting will be the association's twenty fifth and will be held at Royal Holloway, University of London. Because it is the twenty fifth we are considering marking the occasion by possibly making it larger and/or longer and involving other bodies such as BUCLAS * and NABBS * and inviting high-profile speakers. We will be seeking people's views on this, as UBMA is run by members for members.

* BUCLAS - British University Chemistry Laboratory Administrators/ Supervisors

* NABBS - National Association of Biochemical and Biological Sciences (Managers)

UBMA also has representatives at other bodies, for example, John Dwyer has reported back from NABBS meetings in the past, although he could not attend the last meeting. Peter Hayes is our representative at HUBS (Heads of University Biological Sciences) but he could get neither the release nor the funding to attend the last meeting. It should be noted that UBMA would fund anyone attending on behalf of the association.

UBMA is a member of the Biosciences Federation an influential authority representing the UK's biological expertise, providing independent opinion to inform public policy and promoting the advancement of the biosciences. The Chair is receiving many reports from them and would like to know how best to communicate these to members without clogging up the email. These reports are important politically and strategically.

4.2

Officers available for re-election

Basil Boam (President) is elected for life
The Treasurer and Membership Secretary are willing to continue.
The Chair and Secretary are standing down.
Two committee posts (currently John Dwyer and Ila Patel)
The host of next year's meeting will be a member of the committee

24/5

Membership Secretary's Report

Steve Parker

The association now has 81 members and 2 associate members. This is a small increase. Five members have joined in the past year. There has been an enquiry from Saudi Arabia and a couple of other enquires for which no detail was provided. Forty four different institutions are represented at UBMA. One new member was left off the list but his has now been corrected and an apology given.

UBMA is therefore representing approximately one third of all universities. We have looked at expanding membership and note that other associations such as NABBS and BUCLAS are experiencing problems because of dwindling membership and are also looking to recruit new members

24/6

Treasurer's Report for year ending 31 December 2005

Mark Cosgrove

6.1

Report

The outgoing treasurer presented the accounts which continue to show a healthy balance.

Expenses included the committee meetings, and charges to 4-Sight for maintaining the WebPages, paying the Secretary's fees for the Dublin meeting and sponsoring a member to attend another event. The current subscription charges cover the annual running costs (the committee meeting and the grant to the host organisation). The autumn committee meeting in 2005 was expensive because of travel costs to Aberdeen. A slight deficit was offset by a healthy income from Dublin.

The targets for 2005 were:

- Maintain book keeping/financial records suitable for audit
- Invoice members
- Assist host of conference with financial matters as necessary
- Chase members for outstanding payments
- Hand over accounts to new treasurer
- Close account on 31st December 2005 and prepare report
- Assess financial status of association and make recommendation

The membership fee of £20 generates approximately £1.5 thousand a year. The outgoing treasurer recommended that the membership fee for this year (2006) remains unchanged unless income generation for other purposes is felt necessary.

The report was accepted, subject to audit by UBMA's auditors, and the outgoing treasurer was thanked for his diligent work

6.2

Membership Subscription

Discussion took place about membership status for those who don't pay the fee and when and if the membership should lapse. Some people pay their fees personally; others have their fees paid by their institution, and this itself may lead to delays. The feeling was that it was beyond the call of duty to constantly chase individuals by telephone and email, and that payment of the subscription is the definition of membership.

The question was raised as to what the benefits are in someone does not attend conference, that maybe we should not be collecting fees but asking them if they wish to continue as members. This was countered by the argument that should a conference be a disaster we need to continue to have reserves to underwrite it.

The following **MOTION** was proposed (Motion 24/1)

The membership fee be scrapped

Proposed by John Robinson, seconded by Mark Lane

A show of hands showed 2 in favour, 26 against and no abstentions.

The association therefore agreed to continue with a membership subscription.

The following **MOTION** was proposed (Motion 24/2)

After the invoice is sent out, there should be one reminder if payment is not received and membership should cease if payment is not received after a fixed time

Proposed by Joyce Macmillan, seconded by Phil Reilly

An **AMENDMENT** to the above motion was proposed

If the invoice is not paid, a double invoice should be sent out the following year, and membership would lapse were this not paid

Proposed by Michael O'Sullivan, seconded by Peter Whelpdale and Jacquie Kolkowski

A show of hands showed 20 in favour, 5 against and 1 abstention

The amendment to Motion 24/2 was therefore carried

The amended Motion 24/2 is therefore

The invoice should go out annually. In the event of non-payment there should be a double invoice the following year, and membership lapses if this is not paid.

It was noted that if agreed this should be made explicit on the invoice and that the Treasurer should ask people to let him know if payment was being requested through the accounts department in case of delays.

A show of hand on the amended Motion 24/2 showed 24 in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention. **The motion was carried.**

This part of the meeting closed at 1115 (coffee break and visit to exhibitors' stands).

The meeting resumed at 1130

Presentation

'Implementing the Framework Agreement'

Dave Cumming, Deputy Director of Human Resources, University of Aberdeen

The National Framework Agreement for modernisation of HE pay formed part of the 2003 pay settlement and all the trade unions signed up to it. Dave Cumming outlined the background and key features of the framework agreement and stressed the importance of fostering good working relationships with the trade unions and described how this was being implemented at Aberdeen University. More details are given in Appendix B, page 13.

The meeting thanked Dave Cumming for his presentation, and he kindly agreed to stay to chair a discussion on the framework agreement later in the day.

Presentation

'Investors in People'

Gordon Robertson, Training and Development Officer, University of Aberdeen

Gordon Robertson presented an interesting overview of 'Investors in People'. IiP is designed to recognise that people are any organisation's most valuable asset and therefore they must be allowed to do well and improve. More details are given in Appendix C, page 14.

The meeting thanked Gordon Robertson for his presentation

1245 Breakout Session

National Framework Agreement chaired by Dave Cumming

Feedback the following day.

The meeting thanked Dave Cumming for his input

1330-1400 Lunch, King's College Conference Centre

1400 Presentation

'Manage print mail: Stop the Flood'

Susan Sinclair and Stephen Hoare, Ikon Informatix Ltd

<http://www.i-kode.com/web/I-KODE/index.cfm>

Ikon Infomatix is an independent company with much experience in the Life Sciences industry that has been set up to allow mail recipients to receive mail they want and not what they don't want, and mail senders to receive accurate and updated data so they target people who want and will use their mail and products. Scientists can register with the service free and easily notify companies of their change of address via i-kode. Savings are significant, both to companies sending out mail and to institutions in cutting down on unwanted mail and hence waste disposal. They can send i-kode lists of leavers and unwanted mail addresses. 40 partners are currently participating and 18,000 scientists are registered

Ikon is developing special interest and Principal Investigator groups on i-kode.com. These could receive one catalogue per group instead of one per person.

A proposed new service is that of Research NewsStands which could be located in reception areas or common rooms and contain new catalogues and new product flyers. These could be updated every 2 to 4 weeks, with the vendors being co-ordinated by Ikon. Departments would need to nominate someone to receive and change the literature but would be paid a fee for each catalogue or flyer so would cover this minimal administration cost. Ikon is looking for 20 departments to trial the new system.

The meeting thought the proposal a good idea, and thanked Susan and Stephen for their presentation.

1500

Breakout Sessions

Restructuring

Full Economic Recovery

Both to be reported back the following day

1530-1730

Granite City Tour and visit to Maritime Museum

1930

Taste of Scotland Dinner at Elphinstone Hall compete with bagpipes, Scottish dancers and haggis, followed by a ceilidh

Thursday 6th April

AGM and Association Business

Part 2 of the AGM started at 09.15

24/7

UBMA Representatives Reports

7.1

HUBS

No report. Peter Hague could not attend because he could not secure the time off or funding from East Anglia. UBMA will be looking for someone to attend, and will pay the expenses

7.2

NABBS

John Dwyer could not attend, but Alan, the Chair, attended for half a day. It was held at Sutton Bonington, Nottingham University's School of Agriculture and included a visit to a robotic dairy (automated milking system). There were about a dozen delegates, the membership seems to be declining and they are keen to recruit more including some on the UBMA list

7.3

Biosciences Federation

Alan regularly receives massive reports from BF involving a range of issues such as submissions to DEFRA and reports on stem cell research. He is reluctant to send these out to everyone simply on the grounds that they would soon clog up people's mailboxes. It was suggested they could be posted to the UBMA website and accessed by password say for three months. Alan will look into this and let people know the outcome.

Action Alan Wilcocks

24/8

Election of Committee Members

Chair

The secretary chaired the meeting. No-one had been found who was willing to take up the role. Alan thought it was time for fresh faces. Mark Cosgrove was nominated by Joyce Macmillan but he declined. John Robinson suggested that as the next meeting will be the 25th and is ear-marked to be special, then experience was needed as there would be extra tasks. Audrey pointed out that someone had agreed to be nominated for Secretary a year ago and had been shadowing Anne. It was suggested that Mark should continue on the committee with a view to standing for Chair at the next AGM. **Mark and Alan agreed to this.**

Alan Willcocks was elected unopposed as Chair for a further year and returned to chair the meeting.

Secretary

Ila Patel was nominated by Jacquie Kolkowski and seconded by Audrey Jeffries. She was willing to accept the nomination.

Ila Patel was elected unopposed.

Treasurer

Paul Phillips was re-elected unopposed, (nominated by Mark Cosgrove and seconded by Joyce Macmillan)

Membership Secretary

Steve Parker was re-elected unopposed (nominated by Audrey and seconded by John Robinson).

Committee members (two in addition to the hosts, Jacquie Kolkowski and colleagues)

Lynne Lumsden was nominated by Joyce Macmillan and seconded by Ila

Arthur Nicholas was nominated by Mark Cosgrove and seconded by John Robinson

Both were willing to stand and were elected unopposed.

Co-opted members

The committee will co-opt Mark Cosgrove with the view he will stand as Chair next year.

Auditors

Jayne Bromley and Mark Cosgrove were elected as auditors

24/9

UBMA Representatives

.1

HUBS representative

The value of attending HUBS was questioned. It was **agreed** to leave this to the committee

.2

NABBS representative

John Dwyer was nominated by John Robinson. This was **AGREED**

.3

Biosciences Federation

It was agreed there is no need for a representative. Alan will look at putting more information on the UBMA website

24/10

Changes to Constitution

None proposed

24/11

Membership Subscription

Mark Cosgrove proposed this should continue as £20, this was **AGREED**

24/12

Recruitment

Mark Cosgrove was co-opted onto the committee to try and increase membership. Rachel Wilkins, an independent scientific sales representative who publishes a quarterly newsletter directed at Bioscientists. She would charge us to access her database, and would draw up some information to help UBM and help disseminate the information.

The following points were made

- Information alone not enough, need to follow initial approach with personal contact (telephone or meeting)
- Would money be better spent on finding out why people don't attend meetings? The feeling was probably not – this hasn't yielded results when tried in the past by meeting hosts – and UBMA meetings have never been inqurate. We should be positive not negative about our attendance record
- We do need to try and increase the number of institutions UBMA represents

Mark had agreed terms with Rachel Wilkins and proposed UBMA employs her to make new contacts. This was seconded by John Robinson. A show of hands showed 20 in favour, and 1 against. It was therefore **agreed** that Mark pursues this.

24/13

Use of UBMA funds

Suggestions included

- Recruitment campaign (see 24/12)
- John Robinson did say last year that he would put in a proposal for UBMA to help fund some training and development. However, HEATED (supported by the

Leadership Foundation) has now kicked in and conducted a survey of technical staff in the HE sector with an aim of developing a professional body for this group of specialist staff with training and development plans. Once the results and recommendations are known there may be a clearer idea of the needs. The Chair suggested that if a proposal were submitted in a few months time the committee could consider it. This was **AGREED**.

24/14

Future Meetings

.1

2007

2007 will be the 25th anniversary meeting, and the proposed venue is Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey, hosted by Jacqueline Kolkowski, probable dates Tuesday to Thursday 17th to 19th April

Because this will be the 25th meeting, it was suggested that this could be a joint meeting with other organisations and include high profile speakers (for example the Chief Executive of HEFCE) to attract other organisations to attend. The format needs considering to separate out the AGM from the joint activities. This will take more planning than a normal annual meeting so the committee will meet in May.

.2

Venues are needed for 2008 and 2009 (although there may be a couple of possibilities for 2008)

24/15

Any other business

None raised

The AGM closed at 1030

1030

Feedback from Breakout sessions

Restructuring presented by Peter Whelpdale

This is affecting many institutions at the moment. The following points arose from the discussion

- Generally units are becoming larger (departments →schools, faculties →colleges) and there is a reduction in the number of senior posts.
- This is accompanied with a devolution of administration from the centre with more administration, finance and human resource management being devolved to college level
- There is a general reduction in funding and a change in balance of technical posts with there being more academic and administrative positions.
- Method of making change increases flexibility.

Negative outcomes include

- Technical staff have no say/input
- People have to reapply for their own jobs
- Some may be treated unfairly (or feel they are)
- Workloads increase

Positive outcomes include

- Ability to retain staff in a wider pool of technicians from research grant income (eg photography and workshop positions)
- Reinstatement of technical trainee programmes, for example at Aberdeen

There followed some general discussion about the trend in reducing numbers of technical staff. More staff have to be more flexible but there may be some loss of specialist knowledge.

Full Economic Cost Recovery presented by Jacquie Kolkowski

Research projects now have to be fully economically costed using guidance published by HEFCE for calculating indirect costs (administrative, technical and estates) in addition to costs for academic and dedicated technical support

(see <http://www.jcpsg.ac.uk/guidance/about.htm>)

However, no-one gets the full economic funding for research. The best that can be hoped for is 80% from research councils, with other funding bodies providing much less. Arguably if an academic staff member earned their full salary they may stop teaching! There is also concern that not all the money being claimed is going back to the research supervisors.

HEFCE requires all projects to be fully economically costed from 1st September 2005.

This will cause an increase in administrative work and posts, and the full impact will probably be seen next year.

Framework Agreement presented by Joyce Macmillan

A number of questions and discussion points were raised including

- Equate job evaluation scheme won't be supported in the future
- >70% are using HERA, the rest Hay (the latter generally being used by research intensive universities with the exceptions of Oxford and Cambridge)
- 51 point pay scale was discussed. Affordability will be important when assimilating posts. In some institutions the VC will not be on this pay scale.
- Generally manual staff will be a little better off
- There is a wealth of different job titles in different institutions making comparisons difficult in some instances
- Red circling will happen to an extent as a consequence of meeting equal pay evaluation. Some universities including Aberdeen will look at enhancing the job if possible (within the timescale of protection of 3 -4 years)
- At Aberdeen the highest technical roles are coming out as level with academic related roles
- Aberdeen has identified four job/career families. Senior IT staff are included in the technical family, cleaning staff and porters are included in campus services. Administrative includes a range from secretaries through to senior managers. The fourth group is academic/research
- The only thing agreed nationally is the pay spine so there will be differences between organisations
- In most institutions including Aberdeen, it will be surprising if a large number of staff will be out of alignment
- The outcome should provide career progression opportunities for staff and equal pay for work of equal value

Discussion took place comparing specific experiences, such as appeals mechanisms, people over- or under-egging their job descriptions, difficulties in breaking through ignorance concerning specialist technical skills. The definition of a good outcome was also raised: some would see it as more pay (and no red circles), but the aim should be a transparent, robust local grading system

1130 Coffee Break

1145 Presentation

'Engineering and Commercialising the Human Immune System' Professor Andy Porter, University of Aberdeen and Haptogen

Professor Porter gave an entertaining and informative talk outlining his progression from genetic engineer to Entrepreneur of the Year 2005 which does not mean that he is making any money!

Immunology at Aberdeen has a 5* rating under RAE, but here is a steady brain drain to commercial organisations. This helped provide the motivation to set up Haptogen in 2002 involving the remaining post doctorates. There were funding problems: it was founded soon after 9/11, soon after the 'dot-com bubble' had burst, and drug

development is very costly

Professor Casey stressed how the company was run on fire-fighting strategies initially, and its current commercial success is largely due to recruiting a CEO to handle the commercial side and negotiate contracts to deliver revenues and retain intellectual property. This allows the scientists to concentrate on their knowledge of antibodies and research to develop therapeutic antibodies

Antibodies and non-toxic, specific and have reduced side effects compared to other forms of treatment, are more likely to progress to phases 2 and 3 of clinical trials and the therapeutic antibody market is large and growing rapidly

The work is wide-ranging and includes anti-infectives (for example, against hospital acquired infections) anti-obesity therapy, biotoxins, and antibodies to track damage and treatment progress in liver disease

Please see the website for outlines of Haptogen's work <http://www.haptogen.com/>

The meeting expressed its thanks to Professor Porter for his interesting talk

Closing remarks and vote of thanks

Anne MacMahon thanked Audrey, Lynne and Janice for hosting a wonderful meeting which emphasised the importance of water in the development of Aberdeen and its environs, namely.

- The spring water that gives Fettercairn whisky its unique quality
- The visit to the Falls of Feugh
- The peep into the abyss
- The visit to the Maritime Museum

We have discussed important issues such as the Framework Agreement, have looked at change in the University of Aberdeen and been able to draw comparison with other institutions. We have been shown the beautiful granite city and have been splendidly accommodated and entertained in the very grand surroundings of King's College and Elphinstone Hall. We have had but one, but two conference dinners, even if we were expected to dance for our supper, and we certainly experienced a true Scottish flavour. Thanks also to all the other people who have helped, with the accommodation, the catering, the driving and the visual aids in the conference centre, and to the excellent speakers

Alan thanked Anne for her term as Secretary and she was given two gifts (Secretary's note -THANK YOU all very much – absolutely delighted)

Audrey closed the meeting with a few words

“So here with the water of life I give you a toast. The Highlandman's toast; but by way of aiding your understanding I remind you we have as a staple part of our diet oats which in olden days were stored in a barrel known as a "girnal" and the peat smoke left your home via a "lum" a chimney”

”So here tae ye”

” May the best yi'v ever seen, be the worst you'll ever see
May the mousey ne'er leave yer girnal wi a teardrap in his e'e
May yer lum keep blighthly reekin' 'til yer aul' eneugh tae d'e
An' may ye aye be jist as happy, as I wish ye now tae be.”

”Slaithie....Safe home.”

List of Sponsors UBMA Conference

Becton Dickinson, Biotec, CAC (Clean Air Containment) i-kode, Mazurek, Microscope Systems, Scotland, Miltenyi, Refer Scientific, Scientific Laboratory Supplies, Thistle, Triple Red

Appendix A

Presentation

'Into the Abyss – Research at High Pressure'

Mr Owen MacPherson, Research Technician, Oceanlab, University of Aberdeen

Oceanlab is the world's first purpose built Lander laboratory and designs and test equipment used in deep sea for research and industry as well as conducting university research at all depths, from estuary silt down to ocean depths of 6000m. Currently there are about thirty staff (teaching, research, technical and research studentships) but this will double over the next few years.

Seventy per cent of the planet is covered by water and most of this is more than 1,000 metres deep. Currently we have the technology to go down to 6,000 metres and can access 98% of the world's oceans, but techniques are being developed to go down to 12,000 metres, the challenge being the high pressure.

Ocean research methodology includes

- Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) which need to be controlled from a ship and hence need to be accompanied (mostly used in the oil industry)
- Manned submersibles which can go down to 6,000 metres and again have to be accompanied by a support ship
- Landers, unmanned vehicles that free-fall to the ocean floor, can collect samples on the way down and can be left in situ for a lengthy period – even a year – before being signalled to release their ballast and rise to the surface for recovery. The ship therefore just has to release the Lander and return later to retrieve it.

There are a number of different Landers that have been designed at Oceanlab

- **ROBIO**

The ROBIO (RObust BIOdiversity) Lander has been designed to investigate biodiversity of the benthic communities around oil exploration sites. Its onboard camera can take up to 1400 frames of film over a time period of up to one year.

- **ISIT (Intensified Silicon Intensifier Target)**

The ISIT (Intensified Silicon Intensifier Target) Lander has been designed to research bioluminescence to depths in excess of 4000m.

- **High-speed video Lander (Sprint)**

Designed to test the swimming ability of deep-sea fish by video-taping them as they perform escape-responses.

- **AUDOS (Aberdeen University Deep Operation Submersible)**

This carries a video camera and can be used for up to twenty four hours at a time. The meeting was shown vide footage of eels, fish, crabs, shrimps, and sharks including a Portuguese dogfish that is the deepest known shark and has been found at 3670 metres.

- **Autonomous Fish RESPIrometer (FRESP)**

This was developed to take measurements of the metabolic rates of fish while they are still on the seafloor. Fish are attracted to the Lander by bait (Mackerel) and then trapped in a sealed chamber by the Lander.

While the fish are in the chamber their behaviour is recorded by a video camera, and the metabolic rate is determined by measuring and comparing oxygen levels inside and outside the chamber

- **DOBO (Deep Ocean Benthic Observatory)**

The Deep Ocean Benthic Observatory (DOBO) is a titanium Lander capable of long term deployments (up to a year). It is usually loaded with bait (drop the dead dolphin) and the feeding is then recorded.

- **BICS (Benthic Incubation Chamber System)**

6000m, ROV deployed animal respirometry and feeding chambers

- **SPI (Sediment Profile Imagery)**

8000m rated, wire deployed, drives a wedge in to the sea floor to allow high resolution imaging of sediment/animals interactions.

Research undertaken so far has been diverse, for example

- Surface chlorophyll in the Atlantic
- Deep sea fish
- Fish tracking using a Code Activated Transponder (CAT) swallowed by fish from bait delivered using AUDOS
- Distribution of fish at different depths (at great depths, the fish are larger: bony fish can be found down to 6,000 metres)

Landers offer great potential for the exploration of the deep. The limiting factor for the time they can be deployed is the power of the batteries. The first 12,000 metre Lander will be deployed off the coast of Japan

The talk was illustrated with some breathtaking pictures of deep sea life. Examples can be found in the Gallery on the Oceanlab website <http://www.oceanlab.abdn.ac.uk>

The meeting thanked Owen MacPherson for providing a glimpse into the abyss.

Appendix B

Presentation

'Implementing the Framework Agreement'

Dave Cumming, Deputy Director of Human Resources, University of Aberdeen

The framework agreement formed part of the 2003 pay settlement and was agreed by all the trade unions.

Background

Dearing (1997) and Betts (1999) highlighted a number of issues relating to pay in Higher Education and this led to the formation of JNCHEs, Joint Negotiating Committee. For Higher Education Staff, this replaced ten different negotiating bodies.

Key Features

Pay

- Single national 51 point pay spine (Aberdeen University had 113 different grades) with 3% steps between points
- Local non-consolidated payments

Grading

- Job evaluation
- New grading structures (most universities will have 9 or 10 grades, some will have 11)
- Progression within/between grades

Working hours

- Harmonisation of a standard working week
- Reduction in current working week for support staff (for example, at Aberdeen the working week for manual staff has been reduced from 38 to 36.5, and for technical staff from 37 to 36.5 hours)

Equal Opportunities

- Action to foster equal opportunities (NB gender and ethnicity)
- Ensure delivery of equal pay for work of equal value

Partnership

- Partnership working to reach agreement – this means working with the trade unions: good working relationships with the unions are seen as very important at the University of Aberdeen.

Steering Group

There is a joint management and trade union group whose role is to enhance existing bargaining machinery. It includes representatives from all recognised campus Trades Unions, meets on a monthly basis and has an agreed project plan and communication strategy (Web pages, regular staff bulletins, briefing sessions for staff, question and answer sheets, a dedicated email address)

Job Descriptions

Up to date job descriptions are needed for all staff. A standard template has been prepared, and guidance given on completion and HERA elements. They have to be agreed and signed off before being evaluated. This is important as they will be used in determining grades in the new pay structure.

Job Evaluation

New pay and grading systems must be supported by a University wide Job Evaluation /Role Analysis. Aberdeen is using HERA - Higher Education Role Analysis. This is being used by over 100 institutions and was developed by the sector for the sector. It uses 14 elements comprising 50 questions that are common to all evaluations.

Aberdeen has trained 38 volunteers as role analysts of whom about half are trade union representatives. Trade union involvement is seen to be important to establish openness and transparency.

The University of Aberdeen has conducted 170 interviews for benchmarking, and the resulting role profiles are signed off. Other jobs are scored using job descriptions. There are approximately 3,000 jobs at Aberdeen and each individual job description has been scored. There have been problems with only about ten of them

Grades

Work on developing the grades for Aberdeen began early in 2006; assimilation to the new grades will take place mid 2006 with full implementation of the new pay and grading arrangements on 1st August 2006.

Memorandum of Understanding

'No Detriment' involves assimilation to the new spine, levels on 'contribution threshold', annual progression and timescales for reaching scale maximum. Grading for academic related staff will have common grading across staff groups

What Next?

Conduct an Equal Pay Review
Develop the use of the Contribution Points
Agree revised promotion and discretionary exercises

Appendix C

Presentation

'Investors in People'

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'People are our most valuable asset'

Investor in People (IiP) helps organisations turn this rhetoric into reality. It provides a nationally recognised standard for developing people based on continuous improvement using the business planning cycle PLAN-DO-REVIEW. IiP enable individuals to achieve more of their potential.

Benefits of IiP recognition:

- Creates more growth and wealth
- Better personnel systems
- Improved training delivery and evaluations
- A means to link individual objectives to business plans
- Better communication
- Better management of people
- Higher staff motivation and morale
- Lower staff turnover and absence
- Investors helps organisations deal with change

How do organisations use the standard?

- As a way of introducing improved processes
- As a first step in bringing about change
- To achieve public recognition
- To benchmark against similar organisations
- To stretch once the standard has been achieved

What is the recognition process?

- An internal diagnostic or 'health check' assessment

- Identification of strengths and development areas
- Formal external assessment. If the standard is met, the recognition is generally valid for three years and there may be areas highlighted for improvement. If the standard is not met, then areas for improvement and good practice are highlighted and an action plan prepared for improvement with re-assessment within 2 years.

What is involved in the assessment?

- Assessor(s) gather evidence against 39 requirements
- All evidence requirements must be met for recognition
- Most evidence is gathered by interviewing staff
- Interviews are based on representative sample
- Evidence is objectively gathered – no trick questions
- Final report contains: the methodology; an organisational overview; summary of findings and decision; strengths and weaknesses plus areas for improvement: the recommendation and timescales for action.

The University of Aberdeen

The University of Aberdeen has developed a standard to use for achieving IIP status involving three principles, ten indicators and thirty nine Evidence Requirements (ERs). Of these, the onus will lie with managers, with 11 ERs being provided by top managers, 11 by managers and 17 by other staff. Rather than tackling individual Schools and Departments, the University is aiming to achieve IIP status in the larger groupings of Colleges and University Administration.

The Evidence Required

Three Principles - Evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation (plan, do and review)

Ten Indicators – Investment in People improves the performance of the organisation

Thirty nine evidence requirements

1. Top managers can describe the organisation's overall investment of time, money and resources in learning and development
2. Top managers can explain and quantify where appropriate how learning and development had improved the performance of the organisation
3. Top managers can describe how the evaluation of their investment in people is used to develop their strategy for improving the organisation
4. Managers can give example of how learning and development has improved the performance of their team and the organisation
5. People can give examples of how learning and development has improved their performance, the performance of their team and that of the organisation

The main obstacles are

- Time – it takes time to clarify aims, implement plans and evaluate results
- Effort - a degree of culture change is needed – can be difficult
- Money – there are costs involved in assessment plus indirect costs associated with staffing, training and facilitation

What can help achieve the standard?

- Commitment from top management
- Recognising the difficulties (time effort and money) good teamwork is needed
- Reconciling rhetoric with reality – making positive changes and doing the right thing so people believe they are the organisation's greatest asset

Appraisals, communication, staff induction, the sharing of good practice and internal health checks are all key. An employee survey has been used to highlight strengths and weaknesses (a traffic light system) to inform the planning process