



PHEE

A forum for Academic Leaders in
Electrical Engineering and Allied Technologies

NEWSLETTER No. 17

October 2009

From the Chairman

Last year the hot topic of discussion at the PHEE Conference was the recently published outcome of RAE2008. By the time of the January 2010 conference, the HEFCE Consultation on the form of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which will replace the RAE, will just have closed and we will be awaiting the outcome. **There are several issues in the REF consultation document (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_38/) which are controversial within the engineering community and the committee would welcome views on the HEFCE proposals in time to submit a formal PHEE response by Dec 16th.** Not least amongst the issues is the proposal to reduce the number of Engineering Units of Assessment (UoAs) from six to one, which would cover a very broad range of disciplines: Civil, Chemical, Electrical and Electronic, Mechanical, Manufacturing, Metallurgy and Materials and General Engineering. This strategy aimed at preventing tactical submissions by Universities would make the Engineering UoA 30% larger than the next largest (Clinical Medicine) and with 4,600 staff submissions it would be two and a half times the size of a 'typical' REF sub-panel. There are likely to be knock-on effects in terms of percentage of outputs examined in detail, degree of use of metrics and other techniques necessary to manage the workload. It is also not clear whether this very broad panel meets HEFCE's own criteria that 'UoAs should be defined to cover substantive areas of activity that are academically coherent, and that are at a level of detail that is useful both for the purposes of funding and for providing research management information to institutions.'

Another area of debate to which PHEE is currently contributing is that of funding of the accreditation process. EPC (Engineering Professors Council) is undertaking a survey of academic opinion on possible changes to the predominant model across Professional Institutions (PIs) where academic time is provided by HEIs and PIs cover the panel visit costs. Views are being sought on matters such as the introduction of fees for accreditation visits and/or whether there is any potential for simplification of the process or merger with other processes. Anecdotally there is a feeling that accreditation has many benefits in terms of recruitment and maintaining standards. It needs to be suitably resourced but consultation with HEIs over how this can be best achieved and how to make the process more efficient is essential. The survey should allow us to assess opinion in this area more quantitatively. It can be found at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=vScId8ilCAKDfJBBCDtQKw_3d_3d

This year we are holding our Annual Conference in conjunction with PHOMME (Professors and Heads of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering). I encourage you to come to the conference in January (and bring your colleagues). I am confident that this year's conference will add to the discussion on REF and accreditation as well as address wider issues such as the contribution engineering can, and does make to the national economy. There is a stimulating programme based around 'Investing in the Future' and in particular how engineering can contribute to recovery from the recession. There will be discussion of topics that are on all our minds and plenty of time for networking.

Wishing you all a successful 2009/10 academic session.

Professor Stephanie Haywood
University of Hull

Chair of PHEE

Annual Conference 2010

The next Annual Conference will be held on **Wednesday 13th January 2010** at the IET, Savoy Place, London, the focus being on the challenges we face in the coming year.

The new academic year brings with it some key issues:

- Higher Education's role in engineering the Recovery
- Engineering in Higher Education – the Future
- Research and Innovation.

All of these topics will feature in the event and your committee is seeking to secure knowledgeable and eminent speakers to inform you and provoke lively debate. Our traditional format will include adequate time for discussions. Tea, coffee, lunch and copies of presentations are included. As ever the success of the conference depends on your active participation, so please make a note in your diary now. Registration and booking details are enclosed; please pass copies to your colleagues.

PHEE Website: www.phee.org

The PHEE website continues to evolve. It includes all previous newsletters and information on previous conferences including copies of most of the presentations. If you have any comments on the new design or suggestions for additional features, do please forward them to me or to one of the committee members.

Details of the January 2010 conference together with the registration forms are available on the website.

Committee membership for the current session is:

Mr Dan Canty (IET)	Rev Stuart Poole (<i>Treasurer</i>)
Prof Andy Downton (Essex)	Prof John Senior (Hertfordshire)
Prof Roger Green (Warwick)	Prof Ken Hurst (Manchester Met)
Prof Stephanie Haywood (Hull) (<i>Chair</i>)	Prof Alistair J Sambell (Northumbria)
Prof Emmanuel Ifeakor (Plymouth)	Dr Michael Shaw (Liverpool John Moores)
Prof Dik Morling (Westminster)	Prof John F Watson (Robert Gordon)
Prof Roy Perryman (East London)	Dr Sean Wellington (Southampton Solent)
Prof Roger Pollard FRENG (Leeds)	Prof Moofiq Al-Tai (Staffordshire)
Dr Lee Jones (Glamorgan) (<i>Secretary</i>) - email: dljones@glam.ac.uk	