



# PHEE

## A forum for Academic Leaders in Electrical Engineering and Allied Technologies

NEWSLETTER No. 18

October 2010

### From the Chairman

**UK higher education** is entering a period of unprecedented change and this will affect Engineering Departments and PHEE members. Government cuts in public spending are about to be implemented on a scale not seen since the 1920's. With schools funding protected, higher education looks to be an area that will bear well above average cuts. The Browne Review has recommended removal of the cap on student fees as a route to replacing much of this funding for HE institutions. However in proposing no mandatory upfront payment by students, it signals that there will initially be a move of existing HEFCE T grant from Universities to student loans. Public funding for Band D and Band C students will be removed and funding to Engineering and Science substantially reduced. This process will only affect public expenditure in the short term if significant numbers of parents choose to pay fees upfront to limit their children's debt or sufficient universities charge over £6000 in fees and hence pay a levy to government. The uncertainty surrounding choices that students and parents will make in this 'free market' where funding follows the student implies turbulent times ahead for all but a few HE institutions if (or when) these proposals are adopted. It seems highly likely that some universities will be allowed to fail financially if they are not attractive enough to students. Whether highly successful institutions will be willing to expand their student numbers or will simply charge higher fees from the same number of students to increase their income remains to be seen.

Research budgets are likely to see less severe cuts (rumoured to be 'only' 24% HEFCE R and about 16% in RCUK funding) but are almost certain to withdraw funding from 2\* research and to weight the remaining monies heavily towards 4\* and the STEM disciplines. This will concentrate research income in a small number of institutions reversing the effects of RAE 2008 and perhaps recreating the binary divide in all but name.

Everyone in Engineering HE will be affected by the impending funding changes. Hence, we have chosen the economic environment and its implications as the core topic of our Annual Conference to be held on 12th January 2011. Last year's conference held in conjunction with PHOMME (Professors and Head of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering) attracted excellent speakers and a large audience - despite the heavy snow - so we have decided on a joint event again this year. I encourage you to come to the conference in January, bring your colleagues and join the discussion on *Engineering HE in a Challenging Economic Environment*. Speakers include Prof. Julia King a member of the Browne Review team and Sir Chris Snowden, former president of the IET, who has been involved in the recent UUK/HEFCE report: 'The future is more than just tomorrow: Higher education, the economy and the longer term'.

To report on more routine PHEE activities: You may remember PHEE responded to the HEFCE Consultation on the form of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) suggesting that the reduction of the number of Engineering units of assessment (UoA) from six to one heralded a number of problems. This made the Engineering UoA 30% larger than the next largest (Clinical Medicine) and with 4,600 staff submissions two and a half times the size of a 'typical' REF sub-panel. The final decision has resulted in a main panel of Engineering & Physical Sciences (B) with sub-panels responsible for individual engineering disciplines such as resulting an Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Metallurgy & Materials (sub-panel 13), Computer Science and Informatics (sub-panel 11) and General Engineering (sub panel 15). This is a success for all Engineering bodies which lobbied for this change and appears to be a situation acceptable to most HE institutions.

This October, PHEE also nominated a number of colleagues to be on the REF sub-panels following an invitation to all members to submit names and a brief CV. We had 5 names submitted in time for us to nominate ahead of the October 8<sup>th</sup> deadline: Panel 13: Prof Alwyn Seeds, (UCL); Prof David Bull, (Bristol); Prof. Richard Vintner (Imperial); Panel 15: Prof Stephanie Haywood (Hull) and Panel 11: Prof Susan Craw, (Robert Gordon)

Wishing you all a successful 2010/11 academic session and looking forward to meeting many of you at the Annual Conference.

Best Wishes,

Professor Stephanie Haywood  
University of Hull  
Chair of PHEE

### **Annual Conference 2011**

The next Annual Conference will be held on **Wednesday 12th January 2011** at the IET, Savoy Place, London the focus being on the challenges we face in the coming year.

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**PHEE Website:**     [www.phee.org](http://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.

Details of the January 2011 conference together with the registration forms are available on the website.

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Committee membership for the current session is:

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