

Engineering Professors' Council

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 26th Annual General Meeting of the Engineering Professors' Council will be held  
at 15.00 on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2020  
online via Zoom.

### AGENDA

Item	Lead	Paper
1. Apologies	CT	Verbal
2. Minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting held on 14th May 2019 at University College London	CT	AGM 20-01
3. Matters arising (not covered elsewhere in the agenda)	CT	Verbal
4. Election of Officers: a. Vice President and President Elect b. Board members x 3	DH/CT	AGM 20-02
5. President's Report	CT	Verbal
6. Treasurer's Report – Approval of the Accounts for the financial year ended 31 July, 2019	SH	AGM 20-03
7. Subscriptions – Proposal to freeze subscription rates for 2020/21	SH	AGM 20-04
8. Committee Reports and approval of chairs	CT	AGM 20-05
9. Congress venue for 2022	CT	Verbal
10. Any other business	CT	



## 25<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

### **Minutes of the Meeting Held at University College London, Torrington Place, London WC1E 7JE on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Profs David Harrison (Glasgow Caledonian University and Honorary Secretary), Jim Yip (Honorary Treasurer), Simon Hodgson (Teesside University) and Dr Henri Huijberts (Queen Mary University London)

#### **2. Minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**

The minutes of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at Harper Adams University were APPROVED with the exception that the reference to Prof Georgina Harris should be amended to The Open University rather than Manchester Metropolitan University.

#### **3. Matters arising (not covered elsewhere in the agenda)**

There were none.

#### **4. President's Report**

The EPC President, Professor Spurgeon said that the EPC Bulletin, the newsletter emailed regularly to the full membership, should inform the members of EPC activities. She said that she is optimistic for the EPC and encouraged colleagues to become involved.

The President then thanked the EPC Executive Team, Johnny Rich, Stella Fowler and Vicky Elston for all they do for the EPC and all those present gave their thanks with a round of applause.

Prof Spurgeon then thanked all those present, along with those on the EPC Committees for their support and said how much she had enjoyed her time as President. She hoped that Prof Colin Turner would enjoy his tenure as the next President. Prof Turner then proposed a vote of thanks for all the work done by Prof Spurgeon as President and previously as a Board member. There was a

round of applause and Johnny Rich presented Prof Spurgeon with an EPC paperweight and a bottle of champagne.

## **5 Treasurer's Report and Approval of the Accounts for the financial year ended 31 July 2018**

The accounts for the financial year ended 31 July 2018 were presented by Prof Sarah Spurgeon on behalf of Prof Jim Yip, the Honorary Treasurer, who had sent his apologies.

Prof Spurgeon explained that the EPC has over £150k in the bank which is more than one year's operating costs. There has been a gap in spending in the last year due to proposed work on the website and CRM being slower than intended due to other priorities. It was emphasised that it is important to allow time to ensure the correct specification for the work given the large investment.

EPC membership has increased this year and Prof Spurgeon put this down to the hard work of the EPC Executive team given the current reluctance of some universities to spend on non-essentials.

As agreed at the 23<sup>rd</sup> AGM, membership subscriptions are to be linked to RPI so the increase for 2019/20 will be 3.1% with the new subscription rates rounded to the nearest £25 and this will be communicated to the main university representatives.

Prof Spurgeon said that Prof Jim Yip wished to step down as Honorary Treasurer and asked that a formal vote of thanks be recorded for his many years of hard work in the role.

The accounts for the financial year ended 31 July 2018 were APPROVED by a show of hands from the Council.

Proposed: Dr Georgina Harris, The Open University  
Seconded: Chris Atkin, City University

## **6 Election of Officers for 2019/20 (Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary and 4 x Board Members)**

The 25<sup>th</sup> AGM marks the completion of Prof Sarah Spurgeon's tenure as EPC President and for 2019/20 she will take on the role of Vice President, Past President. Prof Colin Turner's tenure as Vice President, President Elect also comes to an end and he will now step in the role of EPC President until the 27<sup>th</sup> AGM in 2021.

In the absence of the Honorary Secretary, Prof David Harrison, who had given his apologies for the meeting, the President ran proceedings for the election of officers and Board members for 2019/20.

- **Honorary Treasurer** – Prof Yip has expressed his wish to stand down, so a successor is now needed to hold the post for the next 2 years until the 27<sup>th</sup> AGM in 2021. Prof Spurgeon asked for a formal record of thanks to Prof Yip who has held the position of Honorary Treasurer for the last 8 years. There had been one paper nomination, from Prof Stephanie Haywood, a past President of the EPC. Prof Spurgeon asked for support for the nomination and this was given:

Proposed: Dr Georgina Harris, Open University

Seconded: Prof Mike Bramhall

Prof Stephanie Haywood was duly elected as Honorary Treasurer.

- **Honorary Secretary** – Prof David Harrison's tenure in this position ends at the 2019 AGM, but he has expressed his wish to stand for re-election. No paper nominations had been received and there were no other proposers at the meeting.

Prof David Harrison was duly re-elected as Honorary Secretary.

- **Board Members x 4**– The terms of office of Profs Barry Lennox, Tanya Vladimirova, John Mitchell and Mike Sutcliffe have all ended, so 4 Board members are needed for the next 3 years until the 28<sup>th</sup> AGM in 2022. Profs Mitchell and Sutcliffe will remain as ex-officio members of the Board as Congress 2019 Convenor and, subject to approval of the Council, Chair of the Engineering Education and Employability Skills (EEES) Committee respectively. Prof Barry Lennox has expressed his wish to stand down (recently awarded a Royal Academy of Engineering Innovation Chair) and Prof Vladimirova does not intend to stand again. Prof Spurgeon thanked Profs Lennox and Vladimirova for their work on the Board.

Prof Spurgeon said that 3 paper nominations (proposed and seconded) had been received from Mr Steve Faulkner, London South Bank University, Mr Greg Rowsell, Harper Adams University and Prof Carsten Maple, Warwick University.

Prof Spurgeon asked for any further nominations and Prof Mike Bramhall was proposed:

Proposed: Prof Colin Turner, Ulster University

Seconded: Dr Georgina Harris, Open University Prof Mike Bramhall

No other nominations were received so:

Mr Steve Faulkner, LSBU

Mr Greg Rowsell, Harper Adams University

Prof Carsten Maple, Warwick University

Prof Mike Bramhall

Were all duly elected as Board members until the 28<sup>th</sup> AGM in 2022.

## 7 Committee Reports and Approval of chairs

The President presented paper 19-04 Committee Reports and appointment of chairs.

Written reports from the **Recruitment and Admissions (RA) Committee** and the **Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer (RIKT) Committee** were tabled and presented by the Committee chairs, Dr Georgina Harris and Prof Alan Smith respectively.

Johnny Rich reminded members present that the EPC Bulletin and the Annual Review give regular updates on the activities of the Committees.

Johnny Rich then gave an oral report on the **Engineering Education, Employability and Skills (EEES) Committee** in the absence of Dr Henri Huijbert's (EEES Committee chair).

The main body of work over the last couple of years has been on Degree Apprenticeships, with the result, in 2017, of a toolkit (thanks to, amongst others, Prof Simon Hodgson) and then the formation of a Working Group on Degree Apprenticeships (chaired by Prof Mike Sutcliffe) which published a paper, *Experience Enhanced*, in November 2018. The paper presented over 50 recommendations for government, IfATE, the Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs), universities, employers and other stakeholders and was well received by government and the HE Commission.

Subsequent to the launch of the paper, the Working Group organised a meeting between the Engineering Council, the PEIs and IfATE and many of the recommendations have been accepted.

The EEES Committee has also been working on the New Approaches initiative (more details can be found in the EPC Annual Review) and also with AdvanceHE and OneHE looking at the setting up of new subject centres (to help fill the gap left by the closure of the previous Higher Education Academy subject centres).

As well as working with the EERN, the Committee has also been working with the IDEA team at Leeds University on Engineering Ethics, in particular supporting a conference held at Leeds University in September 2018. The output from the event, a 10-year vision document, has just been made available and those present were encouraged to take a copy.

Kathryn Blythe from the IDEA team, who was present at the AGM, then gave a brief update on the project and thanked Johnny Rich and the EPC for their help. She said the IDEA team are now seeking feedback from the HE sector on the 10-year vision

document and a consultation will be open until January 2020, so encouraged those present to respond to the consultation on behalf of their university, department or as an individual.

The Council NOTED the Committee reports with no questions and was then asked to agree the schedule of appointments of Committee Chair and Vice Chairs:

- The EEES Committee chair to be replaced at the 2019 AGM
- The RA Committee chair to be replaced at the 2020 AGM
- The RIKT Committee chair to be replaced at the 2021 AGM

The Council AGREED this schedule.

The Council was then asked to approve the appointments of:

- Prof Mike Sutcliffe as the new chair of the EEES Committee until the 2022 AGM. Dr Henri Huijberts, the previous chair, will take on the role of Vice Chair until the 2020 AGM when a new Vice Chair will be selected.
- Dr Georgina Harris to continue as Chair of the RA Committee until the 2020 AGM. Richard Morgan, UWTSD, will take on the role of Vice Chair until the 2020 AGM (Prof Colin Turner has stepped down from the role to avoid any conflict with his role as EPC President) when he will take over the role of Chair from Dr Harris.
- Prof Alan Smith will continue as Chair of the RIKT Committee until the 2021 AGM. Prof Barry Lennox has stepped down from his role as Vice Chair and the RIKT Committee will select a new Vice Chair at their next meeting.

The Council APPROVED these appointments.

The President reminded members that if they wish to become involved with any of the EPC Committees, they should contact a member of the Board or the Executive Team.

## **8 Congress venue for 2020**

The President asked members to consider hosting an EPC Congress in 2020 or 2021. Flyers in the Congress delegate packs had a hyperlink with details of how to make a bid. If any member has any questions, they should contact previous Congress convenors.

## 9 Any other business

Dr Georgina Harris, Chair of the RA Committee reminded members about the RA Forum 2019 which is scheduled to take place on 27<sup>th</sup> November at the University of Wales, Trinity St Davids and said that bookings are now being taken.

The President then thanked everyone for participating and the meeting ended.

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## 4. Election of officers

### 1. President and Vice President

No election is required for President this year as Prof Colin Turner continues his 2-year term until the 2021 AGM.

However, Prof Sarah Spurgeon's 1-year term of office as Vice President, Immediate Past-President ends so there will be a vacancy for the new post of Vice President, President-Elect.

### 2. Election of Honorary Treasurer

No election is required this year. Prof Steph Haywood continues in this role for another year and her two-year tenure will end at the 2021 AGM.

### 3. Election of Honorary Secretary

No election is required this year. Prof David Harrison continues in this role for another year and his two-year tenure will end at the 2021 AGM.

### 4. Election of three Board members

The 3-year terms of office of Profs Andrew McLaren, Lisa Brodie and Stefaan Simons end resulting in vacancies for three elected Board member positions. The posts will be held for approximately three years until the AGM in 2023.

The term of office of Prof Dave Allan as Congress 2018 Convenor also ends. Prof Catherine Hobbs will join the Board as Congress 2021 Convenor (The University of the West of England).

### 5. Procedure

The EPC Honorary Secretary or their nominee will declare the candidates who have submitted eligible nominations for the posts. Other candidates who are present in person at the AGM will be entitled to nominate themselves and seek a proposer and seconder (who may propose or second more candidates than they may vote for, i.e. one for Vice President, but three for Board members).

In the event of an uncontested election, the candidate may wish to speak briefly in favour of their candidacy and may then be elected on a simple expression of the assent by the meeting. Any objection to their election requires a formal election using the online poll during the AGM webcast.



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In the event of a contested election, the candidates' written statements (if provided) will be read out or they may speak briefly in favour of their candidacy. A formal election will follow using the online poll.

## **6. Eligibility to vote**

Up to three representatives from each member institution may exercise a vote as part of the Council (the AGM).

Prepared on behalf of Professor David Harrison, Honorary Secretary,  
by Johnny Rich, Chief Executive  
2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

## 6. Report of the Honorary Treasurer and Approval of Annual Accounts for the Year Ended 31st July, 2019

### 1. Financial year 2018/19

The Board recommends for APPROVAL the Engineering Professor's Council's (EPC) draft accounts (see Appendix 1) for the financial year to 31 July 2019 (academic year 2018/19).

*Key points of note and context from the Profit and Loss Account:*

- Members will note a surplus of £15,024. The underspend is in relation to the development of EPC online, which includes the redevelopment of the EPC website and membership database and the launch of the Engineering Academics Network – a new initiative for EPC members to connect as individuals. Although some of this work has now started, the investment is now planned for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

*Key points relating to the Balance Sheet*

- Members' Funds stand at below £200k, which is higher than one year's worth of operating costs.
- This stands the EPC in good stead for the rescheduled investment in the coming year in EPC online.

PROPOSED:

SECONDED:

### 2. Forward look: financial year 2019/20

#### 2.1 2019/20 invoicing

Membership continues to be strong with almost every eligible UK university signed up as an institutional member. The 2018/19 financial year ended with 82 university members (a net increase of one on the previous year).

#### 2.2 Operating budget

The budget for 2019/20 agreed by the Board projected an operating loss of £50.5k in order to make delayed EPC Online investments in line with the EPC Strategic Plan. In recent years, projected deficits have proved to be the result of very cautious budgeting and the EPC has in fact, ended each of the past three years with a healthy surplus. While a cautious approach has been maintained this year, the budget allows for costs at the high end. For this reason, the deficit is unlikely to be as large as

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allowed in the budget (currently projected at under £30k) partly due to continuing delays to the EPC Online work.

High levels of reserves mean that the proposed investments are easily affordable while maintaining a sufficient level of reserves.

Given the EPC's sound financial position and normal remote working structure, it has not been necessary to access any of the Government's emergency funding arrangements nor furlough any staff as a result of Covid-19. The EPC has adequate reserves to withstand a significant fall in income (from lower revenue from subscriptions and events) that is a likely consequence of the current pandemic (not least because of a proposed freezing of subscription levels). Nonetheless an ongoing risk should be noted and the Board continue to explore and monitor actions to be taken to mitigate the risk.

### **3. Subscription rates**

The EPC is acutely aware that members' financial positions may be more precarious at the moment. It is therefore appropriate that EPC does nothing to worsen the situation for members and takes steps to recognise the challenges and support members.

In accordance with the policy adopted by the AGM in 2017, an increase in subscription fees in line with inflation would be chargeable for the 2020/21 year. It will be proposed under item 7 of the agenda that fees are frozen for 2020/21 instead.

Professor Stephanie Haywood  
Honorary Treasurer  
2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

## 7. Subscriptions

### 1. Subscription rates

In accordance with the policy adopted by the AGM in 2017, there is a standing arrangement to increase subscription fees annually in line with inflation.

### 2. Proposal to freeze subscription rates for 2020/21

We recognise that our members will face unusual financial challenges as a result of the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and the EPC should not only seek to avoid adding to members' difficulties, but should take all available steps to support members.

- i. It is therefore proposed that fees are frozen for 2020/21
- ii. Payment for two or three years' membership at the same time will also be frozen at the same rate.
- iii. From 2021/22, the RPI increase to the annual fee shall be resumed (allowing for a single increase at the rate of RPI as it stands in June 2021, rather than the compound rise since the last increase).

### 3. Proposal to introduce a lower band for 2020/21

EPC membership fees are banded, depending on the number of staff. The lowest band currently covers universities with fewer than 40 engineering staff.

- i. To increase inclusivity, the EPC Board recommends to the AGM the introduction of a new band 0 subscription at a nominal rate of £200 from 2020/21. This would not affect existing EPC members and would apply only to new member institutions that have fewer than 10 academic engineers.

### 4. Proposal to introduce cost code 121 for 2020/21

The HESA engineering cost centres on which the EPC currently bases its membership fees exclude 121 IT, systems sciences & computer software engineering.

- i. To increase inclusivity, the EPC Board recommends to the AGM an adjustment to allow new member institutions that have engineering staff in cost centre 121 only from 2020/21.
- ii. To better represent our members, the EPC Board seeks AGM delegation of powers to the Board to decide whether to introduce cost code 121 for existing members for 2021/22. The decision would be ratified by the 2021 AGM, subject to the challenges facing the sector at the time and the assessed impact on individual institutions.

## 8. Committee Reports and Approval of Chairs

This paper is to receive the reports of the standing Committees of the EPC and ratify the appointment of Committee Chairs.

### 1. Education and Employability Skills Committee

The following report has been provided by the Chair, Prof Mike Sutcliffe:

This has been a busy and productive year for the Engineering Education, Employability and Skills (EEES) Committee.

A key focus continues to be the New Approaches to Engineering Higher Education programme – exploring how a sector-wide shake up of how students are taught to become engineers can be encouraged and supported. This is a joint initiative between the EPC and the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET). Our activities this year kicked off in October 2019 with a Global Perspectives on New Approaches to Engineering HE Round Table – a vibrant and productive discussion engaging leaders from the UK and a senior delegation from TU Delft. It was clear from the discussion that many, probably most, engineering schools in the UK (and in the Netherlands) are experimenting with innovations intended to promote the future relevance, flexibility and social responsibility of their education programmes. The New Approaches in Practice Conference in November 2019 had some excellent presentations of case studies<sup>1</sup> as well as stimulating discussion – illustrating just how far the community has progressed in the two years since the first conference in 2017. Digital learning was discussed at our meeting in early February as a possible future focus – and then came Covid-19! Our highly popular (260 attendees) Digitally Skilled webcast in June – focussing on how we can better equip our engineering students with the digital skills they and employers need – saw insightful and engaging discussion. Today's webcast – Does accreditation help or hinder new approaches to Engineering education? – promises to do likewise.

Continuing to build on our well-received policy paper on Degree Apprenticeships<sup>2</sup> – drawn on widely by the Higher Education Commission's report to government – we have been facilitating the process of the PEIs/Engineering Council feeding into the work of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. Most recently this has included addressing concerns over the need for engineering input into the External Quality Assurance process for apprenticeships.

Following discussion at the Board retreat in January on the embedding of ethics in the curriculum, we are exploring EPC involvement with the RAEng/E4E ethics project. Our work on graduate outcomes and employability is ongoing. We also continue to keep a watching brief on accreditation – particularly in terms of possible impact on innovation and the ability to deliver PEI expectations during Covid-19.

It has been a pleasure to Chair EEES over the last year – my first year as Chair, with Henri Huijberts (previous Chair) as Vice-Chair. A big thank you to all committee members and to the secretariat for all we have achieved.

Mike Sutcliffe  
8<sup>th</sup> July 2020

<sup>1</sup> <http://epc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/New-Approaches-Proceedings-Nov19.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://epc.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Experience-enhanced.pdf>

## 2. Recruitment & Admissions Committee

The following report has been provided by the Chair, Richard Morgan:

The Recruitment and Admissions Committee has, formally, met twice since the last board meeting. Although additional, supplementary, meetings have been held to facilitate more detailed discussion on issues arising. The committee meetings have principally focussed on three areas:

- Preparation and planning for the 2020 Recruitment & Admissions Forum
- The 2020 Enrolments survey
- The OfS Admissions Consultation

### **Preparation and planning for the 2020 Recruitment & Admissions Forum**

As one might expect, the committee has needed to give careful consideration as to how the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting social distancing measures will impact the 2020/21 recruitment cycle across the UK. In order to best support the EPC membership, the committee have taken the decision to reformat the annual Recruitment & Admissions Forum. The longstanding one-day face-to-face format will be replaced by a series of shorter (around 2hr) virtual sessions, which will be held on recurrent Wednesday afternoons in November and December. Working titles and proposed speakers have been identified for each of the sessions and the committee is aiming to confirm these at the next committee meeting in early September. Previously, NMITE had kindly offered to host the annual Recruitment and Admissions Forum at their Hereford Campus. It is intended that this arrangement will be deferred for one year, after which, it is hoped that the forum will be able to return to the one-day face-to-face format.

### **Enrolments Survey**

The committee have acknowledged that there is still a great deal of uncertainty around this year's university admissions. Furthermore, members responsible for completing the survey will likely have additional challenges which may impinge on workload and the time available for collating a response. For these reasons, the decision has been taken to focus on

percentage change (higher or lower enrolments) in admissions this coming year. The provision of absolute numbers will be optional and not sought by gender, mode of study etc. Instead, specific questions to seek data on new and existing students deferring, suspending or discontinuing will be included. It is intended that the output and conclusions resulting from the enrolment survey will be presented during the final on-line R&A session in December.

### **The OfS Admissions Consultation**

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and associated social distancing measures, the OfS has paused their review of the English Higher Education admissions system and admissions consultation. In order to furnish EPC with the information and evidence which it requires, to effectively represent its members, the R&A committee has approved a one-off pre-enrolments members' survey. It is intended that the results of this survey will enhance EPC's ability to represent the interests of its members when responding to future Admissions Consultation policy proposals.

### **3. Research, Innovation & Knowledge Transfer Committee**

The Chair, Prof Alan Smith, will deliver a verbal report on the activities of the Committee.

### **4. Actions**

The Meeting is asked to RECEIVE the reports and RATIFY the appointment of the Committee chairs and deputy chairs as follows:

Education and Employability Skills: Prof Mike Sutcliffe  
Recruitment and Admissions: Mr Richard Morgan  
Research, Innovation and Knowledge Transfer: Prof Alan Smith

Johnny Rich, Chief Executive  
8<sup>th</sup> July 2020