

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at Burlington House on 6 October 2010

PRESENT: Stuart Monro (Chair), Jim Andrews, Vanessa Banks, Stuart Smallwood, Bill Gaskarth.

APOLOGIES: Samme Brough, Chris King, Stuart Hitch, Colin Graham, Joanna Mears.

In attendance: Judi Lakin.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies as above were noted.	
2	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING The minutes were agreed without alteration.	
3	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>i) CRAC and Scottish student questionnaires Students have returned questionnaires asking about their motivation for enrolling on a geology degree in. For the Scottish data set, C Graham is starting to analyse the results. One emerging headline is that media influence (eg the 'Iain Stewart' effect) is a much lower factor than expected. J Andrews confirmed that when available the CRAC results will be available online. J Mears was asked to download for the next Committee meeting.</p> <p>ii) Higher Education Networking Group J Andrews circulated notes on the launch meeting planned for 19 January in Leeds. The GEES subject centre will be administering the event, and charging £25/delegate. They will also negotiate to cover costs for speakers. Unfortunately there is not yet an agreement in place with the Geological Society as there was more business than could be fitted into the September Council Agenda (Sept 29). Apologies were given that this has not moved on faster. From the Society's perspective, the Group would only be worthwhile if the scope was broadened so that teaching and research from a student's perspective is included. This would give the opportunity for discussion on topics such as funding. Nic Bilham will take J Andrew's original terms of reference and combine it with something that addresses these concerns. An additional consideration is how this initiative fits with the context of other Group-related changes, such as the development of the Environment Group into a more cross-cutting and 'virtual' body.</p> <p>The next Council meeting is on 24 November. A meeting will be arranged between J Andrews and N Bilham/E Nickless to discuss the way forward.</p> <p>iii) Posters for Schools In the absence of J Mears there was uncertainty about progress with this item. S Smallwood asked if he (and S Hitch) could have PDFs of the posters and they will then provide feedback on how these are received. V Banks would like to ask David Bailey at BGS what he thinks as well.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>NB</p> <p>JL</p>

	S Monro asked that J Mears gives some thought to the next programme and presenters and then asks this group to comment.	JM
5	<p>COURSE ENDORSEMENT</p> <p>J Lakin has taken over administration of the training course endorsement scheme. This is now in better shape than recent months but improvements could be made – the Committee will be kept informed about changes. A further development will be the establishing of a list of recommended short or lifelong courses for the amateur (especially FOGS) market. S Monro would like to know how we intend to treat these courses as consistency of delivery is important. J Lakin said that she has not thought about this second phase of work yet. It was suggested that amateur courses might be dealt with in conjunction with the GA, and/or that we could link with the Open University. S Smallwood added that he has around 30 pupils taking YAS courses at present. Dave Rothery and Sandy Smith were mentioned as useful people to speak to.</p> <p>Branding</p> <p>G Worrall has produced Style Guidelines mainly for GSL staff which set out rules for using the Society’s logo, and other areas where a uniform approach is needed. As a result of this exercise and the work on course endorsement, a set of new logos for educational activities such as the Friends scheme, Geoscience Education Academy and Accredited courses, has been created.</p>	JL
6	<p>DEVELOPMENT & FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE</p> <p>There are several educational activities that we may be able to raise sponsorship for.</p> <p>i) Online educational modules</p> <p>S Monro feels that a combination of online and other activity is the best approach – you can’t just load the website with material for teachers. A series of images, where some are annotated; and some supporting diagrams would be a worthwhile project. B Gaskarth thought that a selection of say, 500 exceptional images would be welcomed as the BGS collection is too big and not very searchable.</p> <p>ii) Schools Geology competition</p> <p>What the Development and Fundraising Committee (D&F) is looking for is an outline of what we’re trying to achieve so that they can use that to look for financial support. After some discussion about the standard that this should be pitched at, S Smallwood agreed to work with S Monro on a ‘higher level’ competition (eg using specifically geological questions that will be suitable for students who are currently studying geology, rather than a broader-based test that a larger population of pupils might take part in). The Geology Association’s questionnaire will be used as a starter.</p> <p>J Mears to confirm the next D&F meeting date, and any guidance for the sponsorship proposal from E Nickless, and pass to S Smallwood.</p>	SS JM
7	<p>EXTENDED A LEVEL PROJECTS & MENTORING SUPPORT</p> <p>This has come to the attention of the Committee through the unfortunate experience of V Banks, which is outlined in paper EC/25/10. Vanessa was interested in the opinion of the teachers on the Committee, and wondered if there would be any desire on behalf of the Committee to become involved in these projects on a more routine basis.</p> <p>As a teacher, S Smallwood was appalled that this situation has arisen, as extended projects should only be taken on by a school if they can provide the support needed. There was general agreement and the Chairman summed up by asking the Committee to note that its role is to support teachers.</p>	

8	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>i) Comments from the September ESTA meeting</p> <p>J Andrews circulated a paper that took a list of education and training needs generated at a meeting of 4 educational organisations in January, and used these responses to ask questions of ESTA delegates about the skills that should be taught to students at GCSE and A level. This debate produced the usual comments about increasing fieldwork time and encouraging observational skills, amongst others, but from one group also the statement: 'Geological Society needs to be more proactive in raising visibility of Earth science to politicians - match initiatives of other learned societies'. The other point to note was that even amongst ESTA conference delegates there was not a clear understanding of who 'owns' the GCSE and A level curricula. Teachers themselves would like to be consulted.</p> <p>ii) Geophysics review</p> <p>S Monro brought this item from the Council meeting on 29 September to the attention of the Committee. There is a specific action on the Education Committee to seek opportunities to raise the profile of geophysics - with a reporting date set of the Council meeting in April 2011.</p> <p>J Mears will circulate the review by email and the Committee is asked to send comments in by the end of December.</p>	JM
9	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Friday 21 January is at 1.30pm suggested, please let J Mears know if this is not convenient for you.</p> <p>Please note, provisional dates for 2010 are: Wednesday 11 May and Wednesday 28 September</p>	ALL

J Lakin/ J Mears