

Much of the meeting was concerned with preparation for the annual conference. Decisions were made on the title ('Beyond Graduation: The Readiness is All!'); on the conference focus, which would include employability of graduates and pathways into industry (morning session), and postgraduate opportunities and training (afternoon session); and on the format of the day, which would follow the model of recent years starting with the AGM at 9.30 and the conference at 10.15, with 3-4 speakers in each session speaking for 15 minutes each.

Summary Minutes of NAMHE Committee Meeting held on 4 March 2007

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

- Update on the HESA and NSS statistics consultation
- Report on RNCM training for part-time teachers
- Discussion on the state of play for a Europe-wide project on practice-based research
- Unpaid subscription: update sought and discussion on encouraging smaller units to join
- Portfolios and chairs of groups (indicated by italics) to be posted on website
- Update on Dartington situation – no further action at this point

Treasurer's report

- Financial position is healthy, no subscription increase proposed
- Discussion on post of Treasurer from 2008 and need for new signatories to be recognised

Chair's report

- Revision to Music Benchmark Statement: Richard McGregor and Jan Smaczny to represent NAMHE at the meeting
- AHRC panel 7 and peer review college nominations: NAMHE's nominations were accepted for consideration. A longer 'lead in' time was needed for preparing nominations
- British Library: consideration of letter draft concerning a potential 5% cut in funding which was agreed with minor alterations
- Discussion of charges by PRS re student examinations in HE institutions

Annual Conference

- The details for the conference were finalised [and as reported elsewhere in this Newsletter – ed.]

Palatine initiative

- Palatine is proposing to fund a project concerning instrumental teaching's connectedness to academic programmes. Allan Moore proposed a study to map the skills acquired during a music degree: interim report to next NAMHE Committee meeting [and see Allan's report in this Newsletter – ed.]

Creative and Cultural Skills Agency

- Paper by Simon Frith was tabled expressing concern about the involvement of the Agency in areas related to media training

Creative and Media Diploma

[substantive minute included for information – Ed.]

- Jan Smaczny (hereafter JS) reported on the first substantive briefing meeting between Skillset and representative from HEIs concerning a proposed new diploma in creativity and media studies; the diploma is to have three levels and acts both as a 'stand alone' qualification and an access portal to HE. In general, HEI representatives expressed concern about the over-ambitious nature of the proposed qualification. The two representatives of HE music, JS and Andrew Bates (Leeds College of Music), drew attention to the fact that music was represented by a single heading in contrast to design which had ten. While the general feeling is that the impact of the diploma in the area of music will be for the time being minimal, JS and Andrew Bates nevertheless offered to scrutinise protocols for music in the hope of preventing the kind of mistakes that have made A-level problematic from the HE perspective; the time-scale for such a consultation is very narrow (protocols are to be up and running for 2008 pilot projects by the end of April 2007). The committee supported a joint monitoring initiative between NAMHE and CUK

Newsletter and Publicity

- The contents of the next Newsletter were discussed and agreed.

AOB

- Conference questions finalised
- Conference folder contents discussed
- HEFCE asking NAMHE to comment for purposes of a review on the activities of the Institutes of the School of Advanced Study, University of London
- NAMHE to be represented at the SCUDD conference in Derry at the end of March

Committee Portfolio Membership

Lead name in *italics*.

Research Chair (*Mark Everist*), Darla Crispin, Katharine Ellis, Jonty Harrison, Allan Moore
HE Learning & Teaching *Jan Smaczny*, Mike Russ, Richard McGregor, Liz Garnett
External Relations Chair, (Administrator), Liz Garnett, Darla Crispin
Annual Conference Chair, (Administrator), Richard McGregor
Newsletter & Website *Richard McGregor*, Chair, Geoff Smith
Pre-HE *Nick Fells*, Richard McGregor
Infrastructure *Linda Merrick*, Thomas Schmidt-Beste



Editorial

This Newsletter contains a report by Allan Moore and Katharine Ellis on the annual conference held this year in Belfast. There was, as you would expect, some lively discussion arising from all the areas covered and we are very grateful to our lead speakers for helping to generate such vigorous debate. As usual there are Minute summaries for recent committee meetings. I'm sure you would all want to join with the committee in offering our congratulations and best wishes to Alison Marlow (formerly Wright) our administrator and her husband on the birth of their son. As a result of Alison's maternity leave the Minute summaries are all in different format this time,

having been done by three different people. Instead of editing them into one style I thought I would ask you which of these formats you prefer: 1) brief summary of all items or 2) brief summary but with more substantive items given fuller treatment or 3) brief summary but following the headings of the agenda. Please send any comments to me at richardmcgregor1@yahoo.co.uk.

Prof Richard McGregor
St Martin's College
(University of Cumbria, from August 1st)

Report on the Annual Conference

BEYOND GRADUATION: 'THE READINESS IS ALL' Queen's University, Belfast, 8 May 2007

MORNING SESSIONS

The morning saw three presentations: on careers and destinations from Dr Linda Merrick (RNCM), on vocations and industry from Prof. Keith Negus (Goldsmith's) and on the 'liberal arts' perspective from Prof. Thomas Schmidt-Beste (University of Wales, Bangor). In various ways, all three speakers, and the subsequent discussions, focused on the apparent (but often illusory) distinction between the acquisition of 'skills' and of 'knowledge'. Dr Merrick spoke of the formalisation of vocational training within the RNCM (and referred to similar developments at the RCM). The need to support entrepreneurialism, to raise awareness of transferable skills, and to enable students to develop various career paths, because embedded in the curriculum, had a potential impact on what could be incorporated within that curriculum, and the need to 'sell' this approach to both staff and students was still dominant, even though one key driver was the need to respond to students/parents' developing conception of themselves as consumers. Although about one third of their alumni consider themselves teachers of music, RNCM were concerned to rethink the potential locations in which 'teaching' could be found.

Prof Schmidt-Beste compared the British music degree with

that elsewhere (particularly in the USA and Germany) in querying whether the UK single honours programmes adopted a liberal arts perspective: rather than develop the 'well-educated person', they appeared to aim for the 'well-rounded musician' (a position which other European countries seemed to be moving towards). Some discussion focused on the (implicit) skills focus of such programmes, such as (informal) lateral thinking, the ability to organise and express thoughts, or the inculcation of the desire to meet challenges, and this brought out perhaps the key distinction between university departments and conservatoires, in that the former do not have non-negotiable elements, whereas the latter do (i.e. the development of specific practical skills).

Prof Negus took a different focus, looking at the profound changes the music industry has recently undergone, and how music graduates might create roles within it. He pointed to three areas. First, the switch from deriving major revenue income from recordings, toward deriving it from performance, which is likely to result in a relaxation of pursuing rights in recordings. Second, the development of the internet as a promotional medium, delivering an increasing degree of control back toward entrepreneurial musicians. Third, the growing involvement of other business areas in the funding of music: for some musicians, getting a song used for a TV advert is far more lucrative (and hence a more cost-effective

focus of promotional work) than setting up a tour. One key outcome of this is the potential openings for music graduates with a wide repertoire knowledge, and understanding of copyright in all its forms, in a much wider variety of organisations than traditionally sought. But again, the notion of musicians creating their own career possibilities was paramount. In all, the floor certainly appeared to accept the chair's summary that we begin to identify a new kind of music graduate: one with practical abilities, a very wide range of repertoire experience, and a knowledge of how to operate both technologically and in a business sense, and not just in terms of music's connection to other media.

Prof Allan Moore

AFTERNOON SESSIONS

The afternoon session comprised three, rather than four, presentations, since Emma Carey from the AHRC was unable to attend, and the AHRC was unable at short notice to supply a replacement speaker. Leigh Landy (De Montfort) argued eloquently that ostensibly vocational programmes, such as those in Music Technology or Sonic Arts, could be framed in such a way as to maximise students' cultural sensitivity, and to allow the generic/liberal to inform the vocational. When taught within such a frame, Music Technology's ill-defined status as potentially both art and science actually led to a broader range of career possibilities than was likely to obtain for Music students following more traditional programmes. Discussion centred on the need (or not) for students to be musically literate, the support structures required to help students if they decided upon a career path that demanded more literacy than they possessed, and the more general importance of the sector finding its own, specialist, ways of preparing students for the world of work, rather than by having initiatives imposed by central government.

Chris Philpott (University of Greenwich) offered a salutary update on the state (or fate) of the PGCE, following the QAA directive that its title was invalid in an environment in which the term 'postgraduate' implied the presence of Level 4 courses within a programme. Members asked why the term 'postgraduate' was suddenly being equated with 'master's level' and thus creating a problem that did not exist before: this was, however, water under the bridge. Chris Philpott reported on current moves to re-title existing programmes as Professional Graduate Certificate in Education, or to develop them to include Level 4 modules (especially in generic and theoretical subjects) and thereby keep the title Postgraduate Certificate in Education. Such moves were fragmenting the market. Introducing Level 4 components had benefits (students gaining potentially transportable Level 4 credits for work that has often been at Level 4 anyway) and disadvantages (a new emphasis on types of academic writing that might be well beyond the experience of students coming

from very practice-oriented undergraduate degrees; a 3-tier system in which students qualifying as undergraduates with Qualified Teacher Status, in particular, could be squeezed out of the job market by those with Level 4 credits in hand). Extensive discussion revealed general disquiet at the changes.

Laura Leante (Open University) brought an international perspective to her presentation on the research/career development balance of the postdoctoral research fellow, having cross-checked her own experience against that of RF colleagues in other countries. She stressed how the new status of 'employee' should signal a distinct break from the postgraduate student experience, and pointed to inclusion at Department meetings, and research committee decision-making, as essential aids to demystifying the operational aspects of academia. Important, too, was help in the preparation of bids for external funding, and, as discussion revealed, support in teaching practice. The risks inherent in RF work were multiple: sometimes RFs were being employed to undertake the research of others (and thus neglected their own career-furthering work); sometimes they could be drawn into too many administrative-type tasks. The capacity of the line manager (whether PI or HoD) to set and keep to acceptable boundaries was crucial.

At the end of the meeting, Kate Buchanan (RNCM) was invited to present a short coda to Linda Merrick's morning talk. She explained how the 'Pebblepad' virtual personal development plan used at the RNCM unites the qualities of blog and personal website, with provision for uploading audio-visual documents, a CV and other materials, and to be shared with a tutor.

Mike Russ, who chaired the afternoon session, thanked our participants and hosts, and brought discussion to a close in time for tea, taxis and (for most of us) take-off.

Prof Katharine Ellis

EVIDENCING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS IN THE CURRICULUM

NAMHE representatives will recently have been contacted by email to take part in an online survey for a project going by this rather unattractive (but self-explanatory) name. This is a short project being undertaken at the University of Surrey on behalf of NAMHE, with funds kindly provided by PALATINE. The project develops, in part, from concerns which were the subject of this year's conference, recognising that we have to be acutely aware of the value we contribute to our students' academic experience, over and above the subject-specific content and skills we deliver. An initial literature survey has

determined that, although there is significant research into the issue of transferable skills in higher education in general, there is very little into the transferable skills acquired as part of a music degree. (That said, if you are aware of any research in this area that we might have overlooked, we would be very happy to hear of it – contact details are below.) Yet, as we are all aware, one of the major selling-points we have in encouraging students to read for a degree in music is the value such a specialism has to a whole host of career paths. While we may be on firm ground in insisting that those transferable skills we identify are of wide value, it is far less clear that we can claim credit for their presence in our curricula, as anything other than incidental by-products.

Accordingly, the purpose of this project is to secure evidence for both the delivery of transferable skills in music in higher education, and the intentional design of aspects of the curriculum to enable this to take place. This meets two perceived needs within the community at the present moment. The first is to provide instances of good practice, with the purpose of enabling our departments to legitimise any claim to the provision of a range of transferable skills. The second is to build a body of evidence to enable an organisation such as NAMHE better to argue the necessity to contemporary society of the presence of music in higher education. Because the project has a short timescale, it may not be able to gather the full range of evidence which might turn out to be available. However, it should put us all in a stronger position to argue our value to all our stakeholders, from directors and vice-chancellors down to prospective students and their parents. The project will report as early as possible in 2008, and details will be made available via the NAMHE website (and elsewhere).

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NAMHE Committee Meeting summary meeting of 7 October 2006

The Committee has recently adopted a policy of inviting guest speakers from sister associations to its meetings. The invited speaker for 7 October meeting was Dr Hugh Benham, Chair of the Music Examiners for EdExcel, who came to talk to the Committee about the new EdExcel Music specifications. There had been a danger that Music and Music Technology A' Levels would not be reaccredited; fortunately, this had not happened, but attempts were being made to simplify the specifications. There was an extended discussion, which everyone present agreed was most valuable.

Plans for the 2007 Conference in Belfast were discussed. It

was agreed that the theme should be teaching-related, since the 2006 conference had focused on research. It was decided to focus on employability and higher degrees for music graduates.

The Committee discussed its responses to a number of consultations, including the AHRC Consultation on Postgraduate Funding and the HEFCE Consultation on post-2008 RAE.

Committee members recorded their thanks to Professor Stephen Banfield, whose last meeting this was, for his six years of outstanding service on the Committee, including two and a half as Chair.

NAMHE Committee Meeting summary meeting of 20 January 2007

January's meeting was chaired by Richard McGregor in Mark Everist's absence due to illness. Richard welcomed Allan Moore and Thomas Schmidt-Beste to the committee following the committee elections.

The issue of the re-location of Dartington College of Arts was discussed. The committee felt that DCA was a unique institution that made an extremely valuable contribution to the Music HE discipline both regionally and nationally. The proposed move would have a significant impact on DCA staff, and on regional HE Music provision, particularly with the recent demise of the Music Department at Exeter. A proposed relocation to Falmouth would not alleviate this regional problem. A letter had been sent to the authorities at DCA, and the committee agreed to monitor the situation at DCA carefully, particularly in respect of the well-being of Music staff.

Nominations for the AHRC Panel 7 and the Peer Review College were discussed, although final nominations were to be deferred until absent committee members could be consulted by email.

There was a discussion of institutional distributions of FEC income, which had been raised by email. There did not seem to be a clear picture of how (or what) FEC income will be distributed to departments in institutions. Katharine Ellis suggested the question be raised on the NAMHE mailbase to determine whether there is a problem nationally. It was suggested NAMHE would have to work in tandem with other subject associations in determining whether there was a problem; Jan Smaczny suggested it might be worth trying to ascertain whether there was any parity across the Russell Group, for example. It was decided that the issue would be raised on the mailbase, and the infrastructure group would pursue this once responses were received.