

Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians



Report from the Registrar – May 2010

Board Meetings

Once more there have been three formal Board Meetings throughout the Faculty's fourth year –

1. 21 September 2009.
2. 1 February 2010.
3. 26 April 2010.

The Minutes of these meetings are available on the website to give an indication of the discussion that took place.

The 'norm' is that the Minute will be both full and accurate with only limited redaction on sensitive issues. This reflects the Board's wish to be open and transparent, thereby partly fulfilling its obligation to the public as a registered charity.

The amendment to Standing Order 2.2.3 permitted extension of the period for Foundation Membership by another six months and this expired on 13 October 2009 meaning that the sole route to Membership of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine for Medico-Legal Advisers and Forensic Physicians is by examination.

Representation has been made in respect to admission by medically qualified coroners where a small number had insufficient time served prior to the Foundation Membership period closing and the Board is considering how best to deal with this. Also, thought requires to be given to Forensic Pathologists where a large number of this group have elected to make the Faculty their natural home and the Board is deliberating how they might permit this to continue in that, again, there is not a specific entrance exam for this speciality.

Mr Phil Willan and Dr Michael Robertson have joined the Board as public interest members and already made a valuable contribution. It is particularly helpful to have the benefit of their wide experience to draw on when considering diverse issues including those pertaining to our charitable status.

Key targets for Faculty Officers and committees have been revised and the Board believes that we continue to be on track to complete various projects as scheduled. These will now be published as objectives and are set out below.

Attendance

Board Meetings 2009/10

Name	21/09/2009	01/02/2010	26/04/2010	TOTAL
Prof Ian Wall	1	1	1	3
Dr George Fernie	1	1	1	3
Dr Margaret Stark	1	1	0	2
Dr Peter Schutte	1	1	1	3
Dr Stephanie Bown	1	0	1	2
Dr Jason Payne-James	0	0	0	0
Dr Elizabeth Stearns	1	0	1	2
Dr Victoria Evans	1	1	1	3
Prof Carol Seymour	1	1	1	3
Prof Peter Vanezis	0	1	0	1
Prof Anthony Busuttil	1	0	0	1

Revalidation Committee Meetings 2009/10

Name	29/6/09 (teleconf)	10/11/2009	08/03/2009	TOTAL
Dr Stephanie Bown	1	1	1	3
Professor Ian Wall	1	1	1	3
Dr Matthew Lee	1	1	1	3
Professor Carol Seymour	0	1	1	2
Dr Elizabeth Stearns	0	0	1	1
Dr Margaret Stark	0	1	0	1
Dr Roy Palmer	1	0	1	2
Dr Neil Margerison	n/a	1	0	1
Dr Jason Payne-James	0	0	0	0
Dr Michael Gregory	0	0	0	0

Academic Committee Meetings 2009/10

Name	14/05/2009	07/09/2009	19/01/2010	14/04/2010	TOTAL
Dr Margaret Stark	1	1	1	1	4
Dr Stephanie Bown	1	0	1	0	2
Jo Delaforce	1	0	1	0	2
Dr Michael Devlin	0	1	0	0	1
Dr George Fernie	0	1	1	1	3
Dr Jeanne Herring	1	0	0	0	1
Prof Guy Norfolk	0	0	0	0	0
Dr Jason Payne-James	0	1	0	0	1
Mr Jerry Randle	1	1	1	0	3
Dr Deborah Rogers	1	1	0	n/a	2
Prof Guy Ruttly	1	0	0	n/a	1
Dr Peter Schütte	1	1	1	1	4
Dr Elizabeth Stearns	1	0	1	1	3
Prof Ian Wall	1	1	1	1	4
Dr Cath White	1	1	0	1	3
Prof Peter Vanezis	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1

Fellowship Committee Meetings 2009/10

Name	20/07/2009	23/11/2009	25/01/2009	TOTAL
Prof Ian Wall	1	1	1	3
Dr George Fernie	1	1	1	3
Dr Cathie James	1	1	1	3
Dr Vicky Evans	0	1	1	2
Dr Elizabeth Stearns	0	1	0	1
Dr Jason Payne-James	0	0	1	1
Dr Roy Palmer	1	0	0	1
Dr Stephanie Bown	1	1	0	2

Board Elections

Elections have now taken place for 3 new Vice-Presidents and Elizabeth Stearns (Medically qualified Coroners), Stephanie Bown (Medico-Legal Advisers) and Jason Payne-James (Forensic Practitioners) have completed their terms of office. They have been replaced respectively by Andrew Reid, Nick Clements and Cath White. The Board is especially grateful for the hard work undertaken by the first Vice-Presidents, without which such significant progress would not have been achieved.

Vicky Evans and Carol Seymour attended their last Board meetings as Ordinary Board members. Their valuable contributions both to the Board and other committees ensured the considerable

work identified was progressed timeously throughout the year and Carol will continue to participate as an active member of the Research Committee.

Dr Anthea Martin and Professor John Farnan will be joining the Board at the next meeting after a keenly fought election where 8 candidates put themselves forward suggesting that democracy is alive and well in the Faculty.

Objectives

Positive progression has been made with a number of the key targets highlighted in last year's report. Some of these have been completed and others are ongoing –

Promotion of forensic and legal medicine

- Continue to work with Government to raise the profile of forensic and legal medicine and to contribute to and develop new policy
- Seek opportunities to promote the specialty to medical undergraduates
- Seek opportunities for sharing educational and good practice work with colleagues overseas
- Seek to publish articles to promote forensic and legal medicine awareness
- Seek to improve communications and press coverage
- Completion of Medical Examiner curriculum (December 2009)
- Develop marketing and promotional literature
- Consider accreditation of medical expert witnesses (May 2009)

Education and training

- Develop new Faculty specialist examinations and prepare for their administration (April 2009)
- Maintain good communication links with PMETB, MMC and Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AOMRC)
- Write the Membership regulations (April 2009)
- Maintain Introductory Training Course for Forensic Physicians
- Develop Introductory Training Course for Healthcare Professionals
- Re-establish Development Training Courses (March 2009)
- Develop training course for membership examination (October 2009)
- Maintain and review faculty educational documents
- Maintain and support Forensic Science Committee
- Update Forensic Sampling guidance every 6 months
- Establish a Research sub-committee (September 2009)
- Run an Annual Conference and one other conference
- Produce new or updated guidance as appropriate

Professional development and standards

- Respond to consultation documents, and contribute to associated work of other bodies such as the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)

- Stage 1 application for sub-specialty (May 2009)
- Develop curriculum (2011)
- Consider Stage 2 application for sub-specialty (2011)
- Develop new Fellowship nomination procedure (June 2009)
- Establish the Faculty examination (October 2009)
- Launch Faculty CPD scheme including manual process for accreditation of courses relevant to Faculty members (May 2009)
- Finalise guidance for Faculty members on CPD (April 2009)
- Work with RCP to try and negotiate use of a version of the online CPD application (July 2010)
- Increase participation in Continuing Professional Development
- Encourage members to recognise that CPD participation is becoming a mandatory, not a voluntary activity
- Review effectiveness of CPD scheme once launched and feedback from Faculty members (December 2009)
- Develop appraiser training courses (July 2009)
- Launch appraisal documentation (July 2009)
- Launch Faculty appraisal service (October 2009)
- Monitor developments in relation to recertification, for purposes of revalidation
- Develop multisource feedback documentation (October 2009)

Membership

- Attend at least one medical careers fair (October 2009)
- Renew exhibition stands

Governance, Resources and Internal Matters

- Present audited accounts to Board and AGM (April 2009)
- Present budget forecast for 2010 (April 2009)
- Review financial arrangements with RCP to ensure timely receipt of accounts and value for money (December 2009)
- Review standard of service provided by current auditors (May 2010)
- Review standard of service provided by C Hoare & Co (May 2010)
- Draw up premises plan for 2011 when lease terminates
- Review the Standing Orders and Governance Regulations to ensure they are fit for purpose (May 2010)
- Review and develop a house style for documentation
- Review staffing and resources (May 2009)
- Review staffing structure (May 2009)
- Develop 3 year plan and objectives
- Develop in house policies and procedures
- Review faculty document management system
- Produce a quarterly newsletter
- Continue development of Faculty website (ongoing)
- Upgrade database e-commerce module (July 2009)
- Launch Direct Debit system (July 2009)

Revalidation

The Revalidation committee has met on 4 occasions since the last AGM and there have been two appraiser training courses run in conjunction with East Midlands NHS Workforce Deanery, the most recent in January 2010.

The Faculty's appraisal documentation will be mapped into the four domain and attribute areas of the General Medical Council's *Good Medical Practice*. Appraisal folders and guidelines are available on the Faculty website and are reviewed after every committee meeting.

There is now a Faculty database of appraisers on the website.

The RCP is in the process of developing a suite of revalidation tools to help populate the revalidation framework documents. The RCP have recommended use of GMC validated multi-source feedback tools for revalidation and is providing continuing input into the development of work based learning.

Matt Lee chairs the CPD sub-committee which has been endeavouring to develop a bespoke FFLM CPD website through the RCP system and is hoped this will be functional by next year.

The Faculty have submitted a bid to the AOMRC for funding for an additional appraiser training course, and advanced appraisal skills course and for funding for the e-CPD website.

Specialist Status

A credentialing group has now been formed and had two meetings with PMETB prior to its disbandment with its functions being taken over by the GMC in order to continue our progress towards sub-specialist status as a pilot. This will initially apply to forensic physicians but the intent is to use this experience to facilitate a similar process to achieve this for medico-legal advisers.

PMETB has defined a credential as:

"...being a marker of attainment of competences (which include knowledge and skills) in a defined area of practice at a level that would allow the holder of the credential to work with limited direct supervision in that area of practice".

Most Forensic Physicians work without direct supervision. Following further meetings, the Director of Quality of PMETB has confirmed that after discussion at the Credentialing Steering Group, the wording had been changed to "no direct supervision". It was also confirmed that credentialing is not the same as a CCT.

We believe that to credential by practitioner competence we require an agreed entry requirement (based on the Faculty's standards paper) which involves a knowledge assessment (the MFFLM examination), followed by a work placed based assessment and linked to appraisal and revalidation.

Initially it would be necessary to credential a number of senior, experienced Members or Fellows of the Faculty. This would need to involve workplace-based assessments such as Case Based Discussion, Direct Observation of Procedural Skills (DOPS) and/or Peer Assessment Tool (mini-PAT), Witness Statements and/or Courtroom skills. The process would again be linked to the Faculty's proposals for appraisal and revalidation.

These credentialed doctors would then be trained as assessors of other doctors who wish to be credentialed and would receive further training to become future supervisors. A formal bid has been submitted to the former PMETB to pilot credentialing in the four nations and we expect to learn of the outcome of this bid in the summer.

Fellowship Committee

This Committee has once again met physically and corresponded by email.

Current membership at the time of writing is –

Fellows -	135 (143)
Foundation Members –	389 (305)
Affiliates –	219 (231)
Total -	743 (679)

Last year's figures are also shown for the purposes of comparison where it is apparent there has been a healthy growth in numbers overall. There is a slight reduction in affiliate numbers but this was felt to be due to the increased numbers of doctors who achieved foundation membership before this route became time expired. It is hoped this will be reversed now that entry to membership is by examination where affiliation prior to sitting the examination will be the usual way of attaining membership.

All Foundation Membership challenges have been resolved and the Board instructed that the criteria should be implemented fairly but consistently where this approach appears to have been accepted by appellants.

Now that the examination has been effectively implemented it will be necessary for any successful candidate applying for membership of the Faculty to consider if it is appropriate for them to sign the Form of Faith confirming that they are in good standing. If in doubt the applicant should discuss this with the Registrar or email him on registrar@fflm.ac.uk

The new Fellowship procedures have yet to result in members putting themselves forward and the Board would very much welcome applicants who believe they may be eligible.

Premises

The current lease for 116 Great Portland Street will expire in 2011 and the Board continue to actively investigate other alternative accommodation. Our previously stated position of eventually

being located on the College 'campus' at a future date remains our aim but presently appears a less likely ultimate solution. The Board are also considering the possibility of sharing accommodation with other similarly sized Faculties so that any arrangement is as cost-effective as possible.

Staff

The Faculty continues to be indebted to Clare Pillinger as Faculty Manager and Sarah Llewellyn as Information and Learning Coordinator, both working full time. Once again, their support in the last year has been exceptional and members regularly comment on our good fortune in having their services. During the year we appointed a third full time member of staff, Ms Toni Keeling, who has specific experience in book keeping in order that as much of this as possible can be done in-house.

Website

This continues to be accessible at <http://fflm.ac.uk> and has further evolved under the supervision of the IT Steering Group where Sanjeev Gaya continues his involvement despite emigrating to the Antipodes to further his career as a forensic physician. The Direct Debit system has been implemented and the Board commends this to members to ensure that annual subscriptions are received as intended.

In addition to the annual subscription, the Board wishes to remind members of the President's Fund with a suggested annual donation of £10 in the hope it will be possible to purchase a medal for outgoing Presidents as a token of appreciation for their contribution to the Faculty during the preceding two years. This can be done via credit card payments as well as by cheque and I would direct you to the website as to how to do this.

I would reiterate to members that electronic committee papers are the preferred medium. Members will continue to be aware of the use of electronic 'mail shots' from the Faculty on a variety of subjects of interest to them.

Journal

The *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* goes from strength to strength as our flagship publication and there are an increasing number of articles relating to legal issues, reflecting the breadth of our membership. The Editor will provide additional detail in his report.

David Jenkins Chair in Forensic and Legal Medicine

Our first President, Dr Guy Norfolk, has succeeded Jason Payne-James in this prestigious role and we look forward to another outstanding address after the AGM delivered with the panache we have come to expect from Guy. The Board have confirmed that an appointee need not necessarily come from within the Faculty ranks.

W G Johnston Memorial Fund

The Trustees (Dr A Irvine, Dr R Roberts & Professor A Busuttill) continue as before to administer this Fund and also the Jenkins Trust reporting to the Treasurer. A paper has finally been agreed with the Trustees on the criteria for proposals and this will be available shortly on the website. The delay was due to a necessity to consider what type of audit might be acceptable in applications and the detail needed within a CV.

Representation on Other Bodies

The Faculty has enhanced representation with continuation of the supervisory arrangement whereby a Board Member invites comment through the website and includes comment thus received to properly reflect the membership's views on these matters.

There is now a standard form that all representatives of the Faculty **must** complete as soon as possible after an attendance.

The Faculty via the President and Registrar wrote on several occasions when there was any suggestion that standards were being compromised. Of particular note was the report of the *Taskforce on Violence Against Women and Children* where the President was able to ensure that a formal recommendation was that the Faculty should set standards in forensic medicine. This has subsequently been endorsed in the HM Government's interim response. As a result of this, the Faculty has launched a consultation exercise on its proposals for interim quality standards in clinical forensic medicine.

Faculty consultations 2009/10

Death Certification, Burial and Cremation
April 2010

The North Review of Drink and Drug Driving
February 2010

Credentialing and Revalidation: A Position Paper
February 2010

Draft Service Specification for services providing care to adults in Wales who have been sexually assaulted or abused
February 2010

Office of the Public Guardian: amendments to secondary legislation
February 2010

Consultation on a review of the Future Regulation of Medical Education and Training
February 2010

Study into the legislative regime for drink and drug driving
Publication Date: pending

The framework for responsible officers and their duties relating to the medical profession
October 2009

Specialist Standards and Supporting Information for Revalidation
Publication Date: pending

RCPCH 'The Physical Signs of Child Sexual Abuse - An evidence based review and guidance for best practice'
September 2009

Together we can end violence against women and girls - a consultation paper
May 2009

Coroners and Inquests - A Guide
April 2009

NICE: Psychosis with substance misuse
April 2009

Conclusion

It is difficult to believe that we could have a year that was even busier than the three previous ones but the workload has increased yet again. Despite this, our staff have risen to the challenge and the Board members have fulfilled all that has been asked of them. The MFFLM is a reality and it was a true privilege for those of us fortunate enough to be selected to examine to participate in this. The Faculty continues to thrive and, importantly, has expanded an increasingly influential role. We have clear objectives in mind and the opportunity of developing specialty status becomes closer.

Dr C George M Fernie
Registrar