

FACULTY OF FORENSIC & LEGAL MEDICINE

of the Royal College of Physicians of London



Registered Charity No 1119599

REGISTRAR'S REPORT

13 MAY 2011

Board Meetings

On this occasion of my final report as Registrar, there have been four formal Board Meetings throughout the Faculty's fifth year –

1. 3 September 2010
2. 4 October 2010
3. 31 January 2011
4. 27 April 2011

An additional meeting was necessary to specifically deal with greater autonomy from the Royal College of Physicians at the request, and with the support, of the College along with the various ramifications pertaining to a marked change in our status.

I would remind members that Minutes of these meetings are available on the website to give an indication of the discussion that took place where we have continued the policy of having as full a record as practicable of what was said in the interests of openness and transparency.

The amendment to Standing Order 2.2.3 permitted extension of the period for Foundation Membership to 13 October 2009 with the sole route to Membership of the Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine for Medico-Legal Advisers and Forensic Physicians subsequently by examination where two diets of the exam have now been successfully held. Despite the best endeavours of the Fellowship Committee, there remain two outstanding applications under the Foundation Membership arrangements where further information has been requested from the individuals concerned so that a decision can be reached.

The representation I referred to in my last report by medically qualified coroners and forensic pathologists has borne fruit in that we have specific proposals to consider at the AGM on admission of these two groups by equivalency criteria rather than by examination. In addition, the Board also deliberated on expanding membership to include Dental Legal Advisers (DLAs) but, primarily, because of our ongoing aspirations to achieve specialist status through credentialing, it was decided that this was not the correct time to pursue this possible evolution although a commitment has been given to review this decision in the future.

The Faculty also has the possibility of expanding affiliate membership to include medical examiners in anticipation of their imminent appointment and the Registrar continues to attend meetings with the designated Lead College for this group, the Royal College of Pathologists, although it will ultimately be for the medical examiners themselves to decide where their natural home lies.

Mr Phil Willan and Dr Michael Robertson as public interest members have again made a most valued contribution where their experience from outwith the medical and legal professions was particularly appreciated at a time of further change within the Faculty.

Attendance

Board Meetings 2010/11					
Name	03/09/2010	04/10/2010	31/01/2011	27/04/2011	TOTAL
Professor Ian Wall	1	1	1	1	4
Dr George Fernie	1	1	1	1	4
Dr Margaret Stark	1	1	1	n/a	3
Dr Peter Schutte	1	1	1	1	4
Dr Catherine White	0	1	1	1	3
Dr Nicholas Clements	0	1	1	1	3
Dr Andrew Reid	1	0	1	1	3
Dr John Farnan	1	1	1	1	4
Dr Anthea Martin	1	0	1	0	2
Professor Peter Vanezis	0	1	1	1	3
Dr Michael Robertson	1	1	1	1	4
Mr Phil Willan	1	0	1	1	3
Mr Clive Constable	1	0	1	0	2
Dr J Victoria Evans	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
Prof Richard Shepherd	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
Dr Patrick Cadigan	0	0	0	0	0

Academic Committee Meetings 2010/11				
Name	08/09/2010	09/01/2011	10/04/2011	TOTAL
Dr Margaret Stark	1	1	n/a	2
Dr Vicky Evans	n/a	n/a	1	1
Professor Ian Wall	1	1	1	3
Dr George Fernie	1	1	1	3
Dr Peter Schutte	1	1	1	3
Dr Catherine White	1	1	1	3
Dr Nicholas Clements	1	1	1	3
Dr Andrew Reid	1	0	1	2
Dr Jason Payne-James	1	0	0	1
Dr Bernadette Butler	1	1	1	3
Professor Peter Vanezis	1	0	0	1
Dr Michael Devlin	1	1	1	3
Mr Jerry Randle	1	1	1	1
Ms Jo Delaforce	0	0	1	1
Dr Jeanne Herring	0	0	0	0
Dr Jacqueline Mok	1	1	1	1
Ms Jennie Smith	1	0	0	1

Fellowship Committee Meetings 2010/11			
Name	19/07/2010	06/01/2011	TOTAL
Professor Ian Wall	1	1	2
Dr George Fernie	1	1	2
Dr Cathie James	1	1	2
Dr Vicky Evans	comments sent	1	1
Dr Jason Payne-James	0	0	0
Dr Roy Palmer	comments sent	1	1
Dr Cath White	1	1	2
Dr Nick Clements	1	1	2
Dr Andrew Reid	1	0	1

Revalidation Committee Meetings 2010/11			
Name	13/09/2010	18/04/2011	TOTAL
Dr Nick Clements	1	1	2
Dr Matt Lee	1	0	1
Dr Neil Margerison	0	0	0
Dr Andrew Reid	0	1	1
Dr Margaret Stark	0	n/a	0
Dr J Victoria Evans	n/a	0	0
Professor Ian Wall	1	1	2
Dr Cath White	1	0	1
Dr Sandy Fielding	0	1	1
Dr George Fernie	0	1	1
Dr Peter Schutte	0	1	1

Board Elections

Since last year, there had been a relative period of stability in Board membership with the exception of the resignation of Professor Anthony Busuttill due to excessive work commitments. The Board would like to thank him for his contribution over this time. His replacement by election was another forensic pathologist, Professor Richard Shepherd who is of a similarly high calibre within this part of the profession.

Most unexpectedly, Dr Margaret Stark informed the Board that she was relocating to Australia, which required a replacement to be appointed as Academic Dean. After a very close selection process, the Board were delighted to welcome Dr Victoria Evans to her first meeting in this capacity at the April Board meeting. It is difficult to over-emphasise the enormous contribution Dr Stark has made to the Faculty in helping bring it in to being and performing her role as Academic Dean since its inception. Her presence will be sorely missed although the Board fully understands the unique opportunity for Margaret and would like to wish both her and her family every happiness in this exciting venture.

Professor Ian Wall is coming to the end of an incredibly successful period of tenure as President with a prodigious work-rate where he has completed a number of major objectives and built upon the initial outstanding work of Dr Guy Norfolk. After a keenly fought election, Dr George Fernie was selected as President and is the first Medico-legal Adviser to hold this role.

The Faculty are fortunate indeed that the new Registrar, again after election, is our current Treasurer, Dr Peter Schutte, who has steered the Faculty through difficult financial waters to a position where we are able to continue to develop and meet the needs of members during a period of sustained growth.

Objectives

Key targets for Faculty Officers and committees had to be markedly amended in-year for a number of reasons that had not been fully anticipated at the time of the last AGM with the Board grasping the opportunity to maximise benefit to the Faculty from these unexpected developments.

The Faculty taking over direct responsibility for various matters including employment of staff from the College necessitated radical revision of goals and objectives as set out below.

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
- Publication of Quality Standards in Forensic Medicine, initially for doctors but also now underway for other healthcare professionals working in this field
- Meet with Professor Louis Appleby, National Clinical Director for Health and Criminal Justice
- Seek opportunities to promote the specialty to medical undergraduates
- Seek opportunities for sharing educational and good practice work with colleagues overseas
- Completion of Medical Examiner E-learning programme
- Appointment of Mr Michael Hutchinson as Media Relations Adviser resulting in a number of articles being placed in publications and interviews being granted

Education and training

- Implement Faculty specialist examinations successfully and subsequently refined these with first exam for MLAs now held
- Introduce Diploma in Human Identification through Academic Committee
- Maintain good communication links with GMC and Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AOMRC)
- Maintain Introductory Training Course for Forensic Physicians
- Continue Introductory Training Course for Healthcare Professionals
- Re-establish Development Training Courses including child protection
- Formulate E-Learning course for membership examination in conjunction with University of Ulster
- Maintain and review faculty educational documents
- Maintain and support Forensic Science Committee with consideration given to working of this group given the imminent abolition of the Forensic Science Service
- Update Forensic Sampling guidance every 6 months
- Research sub-committee given higher profile with workshop at annual conference to promote
- Run an Annual Conference and one other appropriate meeting per year
- Produce new or updated guidance as appropriate

Professional development and standards

- Respond to consultation documents, and contribute to associated work of various other bodies
- Continue to build on work to develop curriculum
- Participate in GMC credentialing pilot with hope of achieving specialist status through this mechanism
- Promote Fellowship nomination procedure
- Revise the Faculty examination
- Launch Faculty CPD web-based on-line scheme to build on manual version
- Evolve guidance for Faculty members on CPD based on GMC requirements

- Increase participation in Continuing Professional Development
- Encourage members to recognise that CPD participation is becoming a mandatory, not a voluntary activity
- Develop appraiser training courses including advanced version
- Refine appraisal documentation
- Maintain Faculty appraisal service (October 2009)
- Monitor developments in relation to recertification, for purposes of revalidation
- Develop multisource feedback documentation as part of overall process

Membership

- Attend at least one medical careers fair
- Renew exhibition stands

Governance, Resources and Internal Matters

- Effect TUPE arrangements with staff, revise contracts and produce staff handbook
- Present audited accounts to Board and AGM
- Develop real-time budget forecast for 2010
- Develop autonomous financial arrangements from RCP
- Review standard of service provided by current auditors
- Review standard of service from accountants
- Review standard of service provided by C Hoare & Co
- Draw up premises plan for 2011 when lease terminates
- Further review the Standing Orders and Governance Regulations to ensure they are fit for purpose
- Maintain and develop a house style for documentation
- Review staffing and resources
- Review staffing structure
- Develop 3 year plan and objectives
- Revise and expand in-house policies and procedures
- Review faculty document management system
- Produce a quarterly newsletter
- Continue development of Faculty website
- Continue to upgrade database e-commerce module in keeping with requirements

Revalidation

The Revalidation committee has met on 2 occasions since the last AGM and two further appraiser training courses, one advanced, have been held. The group is now chaired by Dr Nicholas Clements in his role as Vice-President of Medicolegal Advisers.

In respect to appraisal the following documents are now available on the website –

Appraisal Questionnaire Report

Appraisal will be a core component of relicensing and revalidation, and the Faculty is developing tools to assist with this process. The Revalidation Committee has been discussing ways in which the faculty could support members who may currently have difficulty in accessing appraisal and decided to send out an online questionnaire to establish whether there is interest and experience among Fellows, Members and Affiliates in offering appraisal through the Faculty.

Appraisal Module Table

The committee has produced an appraisal module table. This sets out which of the 9 heads of GMP would be relevant for appraisal in each of the 3 fields of practice.

Appraisal Documents

Appraisal Guidelines
Appraisal Folder for Coroners
Appraisal Folder for Forensic Physicians
Appraisal Folder for MLAs
MSF document
Trained Appraisers (updated 16.11.10)

Audit Documents

Audit Factsheet
Significant Events Audit Factsheet

Consideration has been given to the new GMC appraisal guidance for revalidation published in March 2011.

The committee was of the view that the changes do not impact on the Faculty's current appraisal and revalidation documentation, which therefore will not need amending.

Consideration has also been given to the requirement for Responsible Officers and the ability to access them by our membership. A questionnaire gathering information on this matter will be sent out shortly which will allow us to also assess the effectiveness of the Faculty's current revalidation and appraisal documentation, and to establish the extent of any ongoing difficulty in respect of appraisals.

Dr Matthew Lee continues to chair the CPD sub-committee and a bespoke FFLM CPD website will be functional by June 2011 with this being funded through a grant from AoMRC which also financially supported the advanced appraisal skills training course.

Specialist Status

Further developments have taken place in respect to credentialing with the purpose of achieving specialist status and the Faculty have been appointed as one of three pilot groups.

The GMC have emphasised this is by no means an assured outcome of participation in the pilot but the Board remain optimistic that specialism may ultimately be reached through this route.

The timeline for this process is –

March 2011 - outline proposals submitted to GMC
April- June 2011 – one day training courses on work place based assessments (WPBA)
June 2011 – agreement on the standard format of a WPBA and the pilot documentation
June – July 2011 – work place based assessments commenced
August 2011 – interim report to GMC
December 2011 – pilots completed and final report to GMC.

In summary, the Faculty has detailed plans for a UK wide credentialing pilot incorporating:

- A relevant forensic medical qualification;
- A work place based assessment and appraisal mapped to the GMC competency domains.

Fellowship Committee

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

Current Faculty membership at the time of writing is –

Fellows –	144 (135)
Foundation Members –	365 (389)
Affiliates –	251 (219)
Total –	760 (743)

Last year's figures are also shown for the purposes of comparison where it is apparent there has been a continued growth in numbers overall notwithstanding the current financial climate and the mechanism by which full membership is now achieved for forensic physicians and MLAs.

As indicated earlier, the Foundation Membership challenges that had been thought to be resolved have not quite been finalised. Once more, the Board instructed that the criteria should be implemented fairly but consistently, as any exceptions would require clear justification so that other applicants who had been turned down did not believe they had been unjustly treated.

Reference was made last year to the Form of Faith confirming that they are in good standing. The website now has fresh guidance on the subject –

If elected, Fellows, Members and Affiliates are expected to comply with the Standing Orders and will be required to sign a Form of Faith confirming that they are in good standing.

Good standing is a concept, which is not clearly defined. It is not by itself affected by a complaint being made to the regulatory body about an individual. For the avoidance of doubt, good standing includes payment of subscriptions in compliance with FFLM regulations. However, should there be a finding of impairment of fitness to practise in this context, having been through due process, then this should be reported without delay to the Registrar, in confidence. Depending on the sanction this outcome attracts, there may be implications for continued membership of the FFLM. Where a registered medical practitioner is subject to an interim order by the GMC or equivalent body then the Registrar must likewise be informed but no action would usually be taken in this situation. Should the member or applicant for Affiliate membership, Membership or Fellowship receive or accept a warning from their regulatory body this must also be reported to the Registrar.

If the member is in any doubt as to their position they should contact the Registrar to clarify their obligations where this can best be done via registrar@fflm.ac.uk

The new Fellowship procedures have resulted in a small number of candidates putting themselves forward and the Board have asked me to underline they would very much welcome applicants who believe they may be eligible.

There has been a change of personnel within the committee due to the retirement of Dr Catherine James who has provided sage advice to the committee since its inception and Dr Julia Nield has succeeded her. Dr Victoria Evans resigned upon her appointment as Academic Dean and Dr Jeremy Smart has agreed to join in her place.

Premises

The current lease for 116 Great Portland Street will expire in November 2011 and the Treasurer has now visited a number of locations to ascertain their suitability. It is hoped that arrangements will be finalised in early course where, if at all possible, meetings will be held in-house. In the current year, other venues from RCP have been used for committee meetings in order that we are as cost-effective as possible. Consideration continues to be given to the possibility of sharing premises with other medical bodies.

Staff

The Faculty continues to be indebted to Clare Pillinger as Faculty Manager, Sarah Llewellyn as Administrator and Toni Nicholls, Accounts and Subscriptions Administrator all working full time. Their support in the last year has been truly amazing especially as we had a number of events outwith our control occurring and they had to respond at extremely short notice whilst continuing with their normal work. Again, I have had members regularly remark on how lucky we are in having their services.

Website

This continues to be accessible at <http://fflm.ac.uk> and has undergone some fine-tuning. Dr Sanjeev Gaya demitted his role as Editor of the Site and, again, the Board would wish to thank him for all he has done.

The Board once more 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 gift 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 remind members that electronic committee papers are the preferred medium. Members will be familiar with the use of electronic 'mail shots' from the Faculty on a variety of subjects of relevance to them.

Journal

The *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* continues to do well as our flagship publication although I have some comment that it would benefit from further legal material in addition to the current forensic component. I am sure the Editor will respond by reminding members that he can only publish articles that he receives so I would ask you all to consider a possible contribution.

David Jenkins Chair in Forensic and Legal Medicine

You will recall that the Board confirmed that an individual need not necessarily come from within the Faculty ranks to be appointed to this prestigious position and the current incumbent, Professor Jacqueline Mok, shows how an appropriate candidate may be identified to fill this role. Professor Mok is well known to many of us and has been instrumental in developing Peer Review, critically considering training of forensic physicians and paediatricians along with helping in formulating an evidence basis for the diagnosis of sexual abuse in children.

W G Johnston Memorial Fund

The Trustees (Dr Alistair Irvine, Dr Raine Roberts and Professor Anthony Busuttill) continue as previously to administer this Fund and also the Jenkins Trust reporting to the Treasurer. Helpful guidance in respect to the Funds is now available on the Faculty website.

Representation on Other Bodies

The Faculty has enhanced representation to a number of bodies and has taken the opportunity of advertising vacancies on the website for such participation where the Board has been delighted by the enthusiastic response received on every occasion.

The standard form Faculty form is one, which **all** representatives of the Faculty **must** complete as soon as possible after an attendance and this can be downloaded.

Further Faculty comment has been made both independently and in conjunction with the BMA when standards have been compromised

Faculty consultations 2009/10

- Review of Research and Development in Forensic Science - March 2011
- Review of Clinical Guideline - Triage, assessment, investigation and early management of head injury in infants, children and adults - March 2011
- Commons Select Committee: Inquiry into the Forensic Science Service - February 2011
- GMC Call for evidence on doctors' roles and responsibilities in child protection - January 2011
- Royal College of Radiologists: Making the best use of clinical radiology services - January 2011
- Department of Health: Expanding the list of "never events" - November 2010
- Certification of Death (Scotland) Bill (SP Bill 58): Health and Sport Committee Call For Evidence - November 2010
- NHS White Paper - Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS - October 2010
- BASHH Draft UK National Guidelines on the Management of Adult and Adolescent Complainants of Sexual Assault 2010 - September 2010
- Psychosis with substance misuse: guideline consultation - September 2010
- GMC Call for evidence on doctors' roles and responsibilities in child protection - September 2010
- Forensic Science Regulator: Codes of Practice and Conduct for forensic science providers and practitioners to the Criminal Justice System - September 2010
- Expert witness fees project Working Group and Reference Group - August 2010
- Quality Standards in Forensic Medicine - November 2010
- Reform of coroner system - June 2010
- Revalidation consultation: the way ahead - June 2010

Conclusion

Yet again, the Faculty has achieved all that it had hoped for in the last year, which built upon the solid foundation created by our predecessors. This was despite a marked increase in pace where thanks to the dedication of our staff and superb team working we were able to once again overcome the challenges with which we were presented. Major progress was made in respect to credentialing which must be the greatest challenge facing us in the year ahead.

Dr C George M Fernie
Registrar