

## **Executive Director's Review of the Year – AGM 2014**

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President, Council members, Fellows and guests, I am delighted to once again present the Executive Director's report to the Annual General Meeting.

You have already heard from the President and Treasurer that this has been something of a landmark year. Early in 2014 we quietly launched a transformation fund and accompanying Case for Support, which set an ambition to bring £5 million into the Academy over the next 3 years, over and above existing income streams. This will support ongoing work in policy and careers, bringing greater sustainability, but also, importantly, support new initiatives.

This transformation has absolutely been demand-led – as our success and influence has grown, so has the volume of suggestions, requests or even - I have to say - demands for Academy activity. To do everything that's suggested to us, we wouldn't just have to be five times the size, we would have to feature some very different characteristics. To give you a flavour, here is a selection of suggested roles for the Academy that have come in over the past year: a permanent office to evaluate the impact of UK medical science; a body to arbitrate on behalf of trainee clinical academics across the home nations; a hotline for doctors seeking to give innovative medical treatments; a new body to investigate research integrity. All of these are important and major roles, and perhaps not being undertaken by any other existing body, but would necessitate a major shift in focus.

Staying close to our strategic objectives is extremely important in this sort of environment, and I am immensely grateful to Officers and Council for their clarity of vision and guidance during the never ending process of prioritising and deciding what we do and don't do. An important measure of organisational health for me as Executive Director is the interest of Fellows in standing for Council, and judging by the slate of 13 names in the most recent election we're doing very well indeed. Of course, if you think the Academy should be doing different things, or doing things differently, I urge you to stand for Council and have your say.

Winning programmatic funding from the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, to match the support we receive from the Department of Health, has been a hugely important milestone and a major driver of transformation. Not only does it bring welcome financial sustainability, but it recognises our role at the interface of science and health, and confirms our status in the National Academies group. The BIS support doesn't remove the need to secure external funding for our projects and schemes, but it does provide welcome leverage to offer to partners.

Support from BIS, along with support from Wellcome Trust, MRC and BBSRC has allowed us to launch three major policy projects this year: Health of the Public

2040, Improving Research Reproducibility, and Team Science. I'm delighted that we have the opportunity to hear from the project chairs later today. All of these projects feel timely and vital, drawing on the strength of the Fellowship from basic, through clinical, to population science and beyond. I think they all share a common thread of self-improvement in science – the community having the confidence and maturity to look very hard at its processes, culture and resources to make sure they are optimised and oriented towards important problems. Another common feature is that all three of the project chairs are women – a coincidence, but very welcome as we seek to showcase the full range of talent in the Fellowship.

In the midst of launching new projects, we have been busy following up previous reports, notably on research regulation & governance, personal data, the role of teaching in biomedical careers, and stratified medicines. The work of convening stakeholders and targets for recommendations is hard but important if we are to drive the impact of these reports.

Another ongoing activity is what we broadly call our 'sciencebase' work, engaging policymakers at the highest level to ensure the UK has a first class environment for medical science in terms of resource, organisation and leadership. We do much of this in partnership with the other National Academies, through which we can present a powerful united front for UK science, and make the case for the inter-dependency of the entire science base. We are also part of an extremely effective partnership with the medical research charities. Needless to say, we are well prepared for the forthcoming general election and subsequent spending review, but there are significant uncertainties about the political mix we may end up with after May 2015. What we can be sure of is that pressure on budgets, particularly in health, will be strong. Europe will be an issue for science over the next few years just as it is for society, and our Academy, along with the others, will need to consider if, when and how we intervene in the debate.

It's been really rewarding to see the re-energisation of the Academy's FORUM over the last 12 months, as a mechanism to convene the industrial, academic, regulatory and healthcare sectors. As part of the programme we've held excellent meetings on regulation of medical software, open innovation in the NHS, and looking ahead to 2025. The last meeting of the year is tomorrow, on the too-little discussed topic of patient adherence. In March we held an important roundtable meeting on data in safe havens – the latest in a series of Academy activities on the use of patient data in research that has been ongoing for 10 years. The FORUM programme for 2015 will cover geographical clusters, stratified medicines, and real world data, as well as a lecture from the new Minister for Life Sciences, George Freeman, accompanied by the three life science champions.

An important addition to our policy work this year was the re-establishment of our careers committee – sent into hibernation when we lacked the resources to

support it, but happily re-constituted as a single committee to span both non-clinical and clinical careers, co-chaired by Anne Ridley and Chris Pugh. The committee has already launched the team science project, which it will be combining with an ongoing programme of reactive work.

No review of careers policy would be complete without mention of Shape of Training; we convened various scoping groups and workshops to consider the impact of the proposals on clinical academics, and will keep a close watching brief as the report is implemented.

A major area of transformation in the last year has been in the Academy's international domain, particularly in becoming a Delivery Partner in the Government's Newton Fund – a £375 million, 5 year fund to establish scientific collaborations between the UK and 15 emerging economies. As part of this 5 year programme the Academy will award 20 Newton International Fellowships to allow early career researchers to spend up to 2 years in the UK, and 40 Newton Advanced Fellowships, providing 3 years of support for mid-career researchers in country. Delivery requires matched funding agreements with each participating country – challenging naturally, but also a huge opportunity to boost our overseas connections.

Our Foreign Secretary, George Griffin, has made important investments in our international networks this year. The Federation of European Academies of Medicine is our primary platform for engaging on European issues, where we have tackled the Clinical Trials Regulation, Data Protection Directive, Horizon 2020 and unfortunate removal of post the European Chief Scientific Adviser. George also serves on the Executive Committee of the InterAcademy Medical Panel, whose meeting we will be hosting next year. Another major milestone was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with our US counterpart – the Institute of Medicine – the only such Memorandum they have signed, which came at the end of our first joint AMS/IOM meeting on healthcare systems.

We started a significant transformation in our careers programmes this year, including a pilot programme, SUSTAIN, to provide mentorship, support and leadership training to women returning to research after a career break. We have also been advancing our long-held ambition to develop a starter grants scheme for early career non-clinical researchers, which could mirror our successful programme of Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers. We're in very promising discussions with Wellcome Trust as a potential founding partner, and I hope we will be able to make an announcement in the new year.

In the midst of devising transformative new schemes we've been busy delivering current programmes, awarding 54 Starter Grants to Clinical Lecturers and 20 Daniel Turnberg Travel Fellowships, along with 5 prestigious Clinician Scientist Fellowships with the Health Foundation.

Our mentoring programme has now paired 381 mentees with an Academy Fellow, including a growing number of non-clinical researchers thanks to a pilot

scheme with the Medical Research Council. Over 400 participants attended our career development events in 2014 in Edinburgh, London, Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester, with a further 65 attending mentoring skills workshops. Nearly 300 trainees attended our popular Spring Meeting for Clinical Academics in Training, held with the legacy support of the Medical Research Society and boosted by an excellent partnership with *The Lancet*.

I'm sure you will recall our INSPIRE scheme to engage medical students in research and foster a research culture amongst clinicians entering the NHS, supported by Wellcome Trust. This year we gave out £115,000 to support 7 high impact projects with coverage across the UK, including one consortium of 23 medical schools. The second round of small grants open to all UK medical schools will be awarded next Monday.

Our public dialogue and engagement activities have also undergone something of a transformation over the year, led by the launch of our new website at the end of 2013. We have prioritised creating film content that can be shared and linked through social media, and all Academy activities now have the generation of web content embedded from the start. Similarly, we have been able to really start using 41 Portland Place as a venue for public engagement, with a major event on music and medicine in March, and fringe events to accompany the Spring Meeting and FORUM meetings on mobile health apps, the science of laughter and screenings of vintage public health films. Thanks to a Wellcome Trust People Award, public dialogue has been embedded into our Health of the Public 2040 project with workshops in Birmingham and London.

Not really public engagement, but I must also give a quick mention to our ever-popular Fellows Discussion Dinners, of which we've held 7 this year. The feedback on these small, multidisciplinary events is fantastic and I strongly recommend that you try to attend one in 2015 if you can. I would also like to draw your attention to 10 new Academy Regional Champions, appointed last July and already busy engaging local Fellows and researchers around Academy work.

A £5 million transformation fund to support new initiatives relies on external partners investing in the Academy, and we are immensely grateful to the organisations, Trusts and individuals who have contributed thus far. We are well on the way to hitting £1 million of new income as part of this fund. A very special thank you to Fellows who are supporting us as part of the Helix Group. Your support is extremely valuable to us, not simply in financial terms, but in the signal it sends to other partners and donors.

With regard to ongoing income streams, as you've heard from the Treasurer, the conference and office rental business at 41 Portland Place is going well, and 2014 looks like being a particularly profitable year. We have also initiated plans to refurbish 8 Weymouth Mews, at the back of 41 Portland Place, into lettable office space, which will generate welcome income in due course.

I mentioned the need for steady guidance on the part of Officers and Council earlier, and I am therefore delighted to have the opportunity to thank Sue Iversen and Patrick Sissons who step down as, respectively, Treasurer and Vice-President today. Sue has been a first rate Treasurer during a time of significant financial upheaval following the move to 41 Portland Place and growth of the organisation. A very important characteristic in a Treasurer is the ability to tolerate just the right amount of risk, and Sue has covered investment strategy, the development of the trading company, the negotiation of the lease extension and all sorts of other areas I cannot imagine she ever wanted to be involved with.

Patrick joined the Officers group in 2009 when we were still in Carlton House Terrace, which already feels like a different lifetime. He has been a fantastic asset to the Officers group, helping us to steer the right course on many tricky issues, and taking the lead on a number of careers policy activities. Prior to serving as Vice-president, Patrick was a valuable Council member and chair of our Careers Committee – I could not begin to calculate the number of hours of service he has given to the Academy. He even agreed to chair a meeting on epidemic influenza this morning, on his last day in office. A huge thank you to Sue and Patrick on behalf of the office – it's been a pleasure and privilege to work with you.

In bidding farewell to Sue and Patrick, we also welcome Anne Dell and Chris Day who take up office as Treasurer and Vice-President from tomorrow. The staff are very much looking forward to working with you.

At the start of this year of transformation, the President and Council re-iterated some priority objectives, including achieving operational and financial sustainability, improving and showcasing the diversity of the Fellowship, refreshing the Academy's FORUM, taking our international strategy to the next level, and extending our schemes of career support to non-clinical researchers. I am extremely proud that we have made good progress in all of these domains. This has been possible through the outstanding leadership of Sir John Tooke as President, the commitment and enthusiasm of Fellows, the investment of our stakeholders, and the talent and dedication of our staff. It is a very special mix and a privilege to be part of it. Thank you again for your ongoing support.

Thank you President.