

# IoP HE Group AGM 2020

Virtual Meeting 20 attendees

Apologies: Tom Stallard

## 1) Welcome

NL welcomed everyone to the meeting

## 2) Treasurer's report (Helen Heath for Tom Stallard)

We had a substantial increase in group funding to fund events and prizes. Most expenditure could not take place. The IoP has commented that underspend will not affect future funding.

## 3) Secretary's report (Helen Heath)

Last calendar year's activities reported in the annual report

- a. 6 meetings organised by the group.
- b. Involvement in VICE/PHEC.
- c. Support for MORSE
- d. Emily Brunsdon is producing regular newsletters – and contributions are very welcome at anytime

Resources from all events are available on the IoP website

<https://www.iop.org/physics-community/special-interest-groups/higher-education-group>

Find out about our events on the IoP web site #HigherEducationGroup

Twitter: @IOPHEG

Committee news: David Westwood left the committee. We welcomed Bethan Cornell. Note that there will be a number of positions up for election next year (2021) so please consider standing for the committee.

Grainne Walshe commented that we are hoping that the May 2021 meeting will be held in Ireland with an associated community meeting kindly hosted by the IoP.

## 4) Chair's Report (Nic Labrosse)

Recent meetings were MORSE in Dublin in November 2019 and the Physics PhD supervisor network meeting in London 2019. The LTHE-Physics meetings to discuss the response to COVID-19 were strongly supported by the group. @LthePhysics.

vVICEPHEC is on this week with a live session between 10&15 on Friday with presentations that can be watched at any time and a live session on Friday.

Joint meeting with History of Physics group is planned for 9&10 November "Developments in Physics Teaching and Learning in Higher Education during the last 100 years (9-10 Nov 2020).

STEM education by the Lake is planned for April 2021 (postponed from 2020). A weeks intensive training by scientists for scientists. You are encouraged to attend yourself or suggest that younger colleagues attend.

We are hoping to run more events in the future – please follow us on twitter or read emails

In addition to the twitter feed with over 300 followers, the newsletter, and the web site we have a PER (Physics Education Research) mailing list and networks.

NL showed the committee membership and highlighted Bethan Cornell, [bethan.cornell@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:bethan.cornell@kcl.ac.uk) and Alex Crombie [alex.crombie@SHU.ac.uk](mailto:alex.crombie@SHU.ac.uk) who are our early career members.

Membership: NL presented some statistics on the current membership. We have over 1,300 members with 30% women. The proportion of female members has slowly increased over the past few years. Membership is increasing and we are currently the 20<sup>th</sup> group by membership. NL asked us to encourage colleagues to join. Members are well distributed across the UK and Ireland but there are also members distributed across the world. Our average age is relatively low. NL also encouraged members to go into MyIoP and update details because currently it appears that 40% of our members are undergraduates and it may be that this is due to colleagues not updating their status.

## 5) Group Strategy (Nic Labrosse)

A group strategy is under preparation and NL outlined the key points for discussion.

The aims of the group are to promote and support higher education in physics in the UK and Ireland through: physics education research, improving HE Physics teaching and learning, promoting student engagement and progression and the development of skills and competencies, staying informed about policy and practice that affect higher education in physics including international aspects.

The group is currently focussing on: sharing innovation in physics teaching practice, presentation and discussion of physics education and higher education research results, employment and skills development, influencing, for example through IoP responses to consultations, policy and sharing funding information. We would like to develop networks with overseas organisations with similar interests.

Priorities of the group are to increase its visibility and to establish the group as a trusted group with expertise that IoP staff and members can consult. It is important to work with networks. We would like to increase group membership and more importantly to increase the number of active members both attending events and developing higher education research collaborations. We want to help develop staff involved in postgraduate teaching and our PhD members. Want to facilitate discussions to ensure that our graduates have the technical and soft skills to thrive. We are concerned with the impact of mental health issues on students and staff and want to promote good practice. We will continue to work with the IOP to try and develop funding streams for higher education research.

There was a discussion about the issue of funding. David Sands commented that there is still a job to be done with the research councils to persuade them that physics education research should not be classified as social science. DS was happy to help. Michael Fox commented that the National Science Foundation does fund PER in the US. GW commented that lack of funding is the same in Ireland and also that there might be mileage in working with those researching in secondary education. Alex Crombie commented that there is an issue with reviews when applying for science funding. DS pointed out that without funding PER work is not taken seriously and this means it is hard to get funding.

## 6) AOB

There was no AOB and NL thanked members for attending and closed the meeting.