

## Technician Commitment Steering Group

Tuesday 26 June 2018  
14:00 – 15:00  
3.19, Faculty Building

### Minutes

Meeting #5

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#### 1 Welcome and apologies

##### Present

Nazia Hirjee	Faculty Operations Officer, Natural Sciences (Chair)
Dawn Beaumont	Faculty IT Support Manager (Natural Sciences and Medicine)
Lindsay Comalie	Joint Acting Head of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre, HR
Allison Hunter	Technical Operations Manager, Life Sciences
Gareth Hyde	NHLI Safety & Technical Services Coordinator, National Heart & Lung Institute
Ken Keating	Laboratory Manager, Bioengineering
Angela Williams	Training and Development Coordinator, Estates Division
Paul Brown	Mechanical Workshop Instrumentation Manager, Physics
Russell Stracey	RSM Workshop Supervisor, Materials
Joel Abrahams	Biological Research Officer, Department of Surgery & Cancer
Cynthia So	Management Trainee, Secretariat to the Steering Group

##### Apologies

Tim Killip	Head of Maintenance, Estates Division
Leigh Davenport	Head of Customer Service, ICT
Paul Jennings	Head of Service Operations, ICT
Roger White	Operations Manager, Department of Surgery & Cancer
Yvonne Aftyka	LDC Administrator, Secretariat to the Steering Group

- Joel Abrahams is here to replace Roger White on the Steering Group. Joel has been actively involved in the appointment of Divisional apprenticeship posts in the Division of Cancer and is also very supportive of Outreach work with local schools so is able to give first-hand experience of junior technical post development in the Department.

#### 2 Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting

NH

- NH: Technician Commitment Action Plan now signed. Action closed.
- DB: DB has met with Monica Suarez and come up with some names; they will reach out to nominees soon. Monica contacted AW as well to coordinate and they will move forward. Action closed.
- AW: A couple of apprentices have provided case studies to CS; case studies will be put up on the Apprenticeship webpages. AW is chasing up managers as well to provide case studies.
- GH: The technician who won an award for her role in the Territorial Army would be very happy to be included in the next newsletter. GH will pass on contact details to CS.
- CS: Quote from SLTP participant in the newsletter will be included in the August/September newsletter.
- GH/AH/LC: Ross Manson gave a fantastic talk at the Technical Managers Forum.

- NH presented Action Plan at Provost's Board to positive reception. Provost suggested some minor amendments. Comments were about inclusivity and the importance of reaching different people within the technical community. NH thanks everyone in the Steering Group for their contribution to the Action Plan.
- NH: How can we facilitate better communication with Comms team on one-off news stories?
  - AH: Went to Comms team for the UBMA Conference. As long as you have some information and a good picture, the Comms team can help to write and tease out the full article, so the main takeaway is not to be daunted by the prospect of having to write a polished piece.
  - NH: Would be good to have a piece about Comms in the next newsletter, with the message from Comms: "We want to hear from you", and who to contact about putting up news stories.
- NH: Research outputs – need more discussion.
  - AH: Some academics routinely put technicians, some don't. Need a policy.
  - PB: Techs are generally mentioned in acknowledgements rather than put down as authors.
  - AH: May depend on the discipline what sort of contribution you've made.
  - NH: Some complexity as to nature of input. Will initiate discussion when we get further into REF process. Therefore TBC for now.
  - JA: In his dept (Surgery & Cancer), techs contribute to most of the experiments and are second authors on papers. They do get recognised.
    - PB: It's rare in Physics.
- RS: How are people aware of the Technicians' Portal?
  - LC: It was launched through the typical College communication channels, e.g. Staff Briefing, launch event, newsletters. It's down to people cascading the information.
  - JA: Technicians at Hammersmith aren't really aware of it. → Need to plug link at future event in Hammersmith. And Steering Group to plug the event at Hammersmith when that happens.
    - LC: The Technical Managers Forum will now be rotated to different campuses.
  - AH: It should be that everyone can contribute to the Portal. Could have a note on the Portal encouraging people to send in things that could be put up on the Portal?
  - NH: We need flyers and posters for the Technicians' Portal, printed marketing material and possibly printed versions of the newsletter for wider distribution.
  - LC: We do have a banner that people can use at their events.
  - AW: Could we have Technician Champions to promote more awareness?
  - AH: Have a board at the summer event with post-it notes so people can leave comments on it.
- NH: Role models – members of the Steering Group should provide information about role models. This might tie in with AW's Technician Champions idea above.
  - AH: Could technicians be interviewed in person? This could make it easier for technicians who don't want to write about themselves.
  - NH: Yes, we can interview them and turn that into a piece for them.
- NH: With training and development, the aim is to promote what is already available to everyone, not just technicians, although there will also be technician-specific opportunities developed.

## 4 Career pathways

- The College will be doing work on career pathways. The new Deputy Director of Organisational Development & Inclusion, Susan Littleton, will be working on this. LC and NH will meet with the external consultant engaged by the College and NH will push technical career pathways.
- NH hopes there will be a sub-group of people within the Steering Group looking at technicians' career pathways.

- KK: Was at FOGIT career pathway meeting where they saw the software package that will be used.
- AW: Estates, Campus Services have done their career pathways; ICT are doing theirs.
- LC: The career pathways work is about increased clarity around roles – both technical & general competencies. Having simple, straightforward JDs. People will be able to measure where they're at – they will self-assess, and their managers can validate that. People can see what's expected at each level/role and explore.
  - KK: It would be good if you could flag your skillset against the vacancies that come up.
    - LC: That will be a sophisticated use of the software, probably somewhere down the line.
- GH: People have to be willing to move on if they want to move up, but they're sometimes reluctant.
  - AH: It's about changing people's mindset so they are willing to move to different areas to progress, encouraging them to think about what's available within the university but also outside. People need to be more aware of what's happening in the wider science context in the UK.
- RW, JA, AH, KK, TK, and PB can all speak to the consultant about career pathways. NH will flag those names to Beth, the consultant.
- JA: Apprentices as well – the question of what happens after the apprenticeship. Is that managed?
  - NH: Try to recruit the people coming off the apprenticeship scheme – figure out what jobs are coming up and plug those to the people who are finishing. This is sometimes successful.
  - LC: LDC offers support for staff on fixed-term contracts who are looking at other jobs.

## 5 Honours and Awards List

CS

- PB: Internally, Presidents' Award for Technical Support. Externally – Royal Society? Do they have awards for technical staff? CS will investigate.
- NH: There are lots more in the College. Faculties have their own awards, ICT as well, Estates are just starting one. There are also Health & Safety awards and Provost's awards.
- AH: Sustainability Labs every 2 years – next one is April 2019. Building design refurbishment, new laboratories, energy efficiency. Open to technical staff. Also the UBMA Technician of the Year Award.
- CS to check all the professional bodies for awards.
- KK: Students nominate their favourite support staff. Technicians have won these before.
- AH: It will be important to have departmental consultation before we do this so we're not duplicating efforts.

## 6 Technicians' Network Summer Event – 25 July

CS/LC

- CS asked for volunteers to provide an update on activities in the College (e.g. the signed Technician Commitment Action Plan) during the event. AH and GH volunteered.
- AH: They can each take a different section of the Action Plan and talk about that in more detail.
- CS: Newsletter's going out in early July with invitation to register for the event. CS will also send the FOOs the invitation so they can tell HoDs to encourage staff to register.
- AH: Need to explain the topic of leadership & management so that techs of all levels will come along and feel it's for them no matter what level they're at.

## 7 Any Other Business

NH

- AH: There are 5 people at Hammersmith really keen to go forward with professional registration. AH is doing career workshops with them.

- NH has taken on a new part-time role at the Science Council as their Interim Director of Operations while they finalise their strategy.

## **Actions**

- ***GH to pass on contact details of technician who won an award for her role in the Territorial Army to CS***
- ***CS to include in future newsletters***
  - ***A) A message from the Comms team***
  - ***B) Quote from SLTP participant***
  - ***C) Story from technician who won an award for her role in the Territorial Army***
- ***CS to look at creating printed marketing material for the Portal and consider distributing printed versions of the newsletter***
- ***CS to look at the different professional bodies to compile list of awards***