

## **MECCSA AGM 2006**

### **REPORT ON THE AMPE/MECCSA DISCUSSIONS AND ON THE MOTIONS BEING PUT TO THE AGM**

#### **Background Information for members from MeCCSA Chairperson**

The MeCCSA AGM in January 2005 instructed the Executive Committee in the following terms:

This AGM believes in principle that the interests of the subject area would be best served by a single organisation with appropriate sections/networks for specialist interests. It therefore instructs the Executive Committee to pursue this aim with AMPE and any other interested organisation and report back to the next AGM

As a result of the discussions held during the year, the AGM 2006 will consider two motions which recommend moving further down the road to a single organisation. This report provides some background to the recommendations.

Following agreement at the two AGMs, representatives of the two executive committees met four times during the year and after each meeting there were reports back to our respective executive committees. For the first two meetings, we discussed the nature of the two organisations, the work we do in representing members to a variety of bodies, the structures we work within and the HE environment generally. It was clear that the problems we faced were the same, that both organisations relied almost entirely on the voluntary work of their committee members, that joint activity was already being undertaken eg in relation to Skillset and the annual conference. This meant that there was a positive approach at the meetings and those involved in the talks certainly believed that a single organisation was desirable in terms of enabling us to work more effectively and removing complications in decision-making and duplication in workloads.

Over the summer a new constitution was drafted which was the subject of detailed discussion at two meetings in the autumn. The proposed constitution is the result of that work. Much of it is based on existing arrangements in our current constitutions but we all recognised the crucial importance of ensuring proper representation for practice-based staff. The new constitution provides for sections to be established and the transitional arrangements commit the Executive Committee to setting up a section for practice staff immediately following the 2006 AGMs with a Section Chair to be elected alongside the new Executive Committee in the Autumn of 2006. Just as MeCCSA's Women's Network, with the support of the Executive Committee, has developed through the activity of members, so there is a great opportunity to develop a strong, effective Practice Section which will have the force of a single organisation behind it. In addition, the constitution provides a framework which should allow other appropriate organisations to join or act with us without requiring further amendment. More generally, the new organisation would allow us all to work more effectively and to direct our energies into addressing outside challenges rather than internal structures.

Both AMPE and MeCCSA are putting these proposals to their AGMs with a view to the new organisation coming into being on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006. This is designed to give time to sort out some issues which still remain but at the same time will ensure that

there is a new, functioning Executive Committee elected by the membership to take over at the next AGM in January 2007. The timetable would be as follows:

AMPE and MeCCSA AGMs 2006 approve constitution and transitional arrangements;

Feb 2006 transitional executive begins to meet but separate organisations still exist. Discussions of future arrangements, particularly regarding finance, and name take place;

31<sup>st</sup> August previous organisations dissolve as agreed;

1<sup>st</sup> September MeCCSA with AMPE comes into being, subscriptions are paid to the new organisation and the transitional executive continues;

Nov/Dec nominations are sought and elections take place for the Executive Committee and Chair of the Practice Section in accordance with the new constitution;

January 2007 first AGM at which name is discussed and agreed.

This timetable does two things. First, there are some details which need to be worked out including the question of a name which at the moment remains unresolved. The timetable allows time and space for all Executive Committee members to participate in discussions of the final details and to get to know each other before the new organisation comes into being. Secondly, it provides for a new Executive Committee to be up and running with the backing of the membership within the year. Postponing the final decision to the AGMs in 2007 would mean that the transitional period would be prolonged probably for another year and cause further uncertainty.

The Executive Committee endorses the constitution and recommends it to members. We recognise that there is still work to be done in sorting out some of the detail but believe that this can be achieved with commitment and good will. A single organisation will help us be a more effective voice on behalf of all our members particularly as the duplication of effort and the liaison work which now takes up a lot of time will be cut back. It is an important stage in the development of a subject association for the whole field.

Christine Geraghty  
Chair, MeCCSA  
January 2006