



Annual Review April 2008

We have had an exciting and fulfilling year at AURIL; representing your views to stakeholders and pushing the innovation agenda to make sure that research is successfully commercialised and equally used for the social good. Both aspects of knowledge transfer leading to benefits for UK plc.

There have been several important reviews and consultations this year and it was good to see that government in particular in moving forward together and hopefully we will see a “joined-up strategy” - with innovation policy from DIUS being linked into recognition of innovation within REF (post RAE) all underpinned by the acceptance of the Sainsbury recommendations and nicely underpinned by HEIF. This is quite a nice package.

AURIL fed into each one of these reviews and was able to make sure that our core message ran right through them all.

Innovation is at the heart of what we do and embedding the innovation culture within our institutions is key to delivering impact. Changing culture is not a short term deliverable and both we, as practitioners, and our stakeholders, must realise that and continue to build on all the positive changes in KT we have made to date.

We cannot emphasise too much that we are a young sector and still fragile in places, and mixed messages from any of our stakeholders could have an adverse effect on how we deliver and therefore how make social impact.

Conference – Cork, October 2007

This was one of our best conferences with a full agenda. One criticism was that it was too packed, but that was largely due to the Sainsbury Review being delivered just before the conference so there was a lot to talk about. Needless to say all the delegates enjoyed themselves – the next conference will be in Glasgow 9-10 October 2008.

The Sainsbury Review

Lord Sainsbury was kind enough to launch it just before the AURIL conference in Cork and we had both HEFCE and DIUS debating the potential effects of it on the KT community. There were no real surprises and AURIL officially welcomed the report. Caroline Quest and I had met with Lord Sainsbury earlier in the year and emphasised that KT still needed support, that it was a long term activity, and that the UK was punching above its weight internationally.

HEIF 4

One of the major outcomes from ‘Sainsbury’ was the establishment of the formulaic approach to the allocation of 3rd mission funding. AURIL representatives had sat on both HEFCE and UUK working groups that fed into the decision.

The first sets of plans have been submitted to HEFE and the allocations announced.

We held an event on late February to discuss the HEIF submissions. Both HEFCE and DIUS presented and 4 AURIL members presented their institutions plans (Keele,

Northumberland, Queen Mary, and Reading). The event was very well received and a sell out!

We will be monitoring how the formulaic approach is settling down and if it is delivering what it set out to do.

Institute of Knowledge Transfer

The IKT was launched in May of this year and already has had a rush of members. Visit the site www.ikt.org.uk

AURIL has no special position within IKT but we did resource it to get it established. The number of organisations involved has been crucial. Even government couldn't get this number of organisations round the table! So I think that illustrates its significance. A full list of partner organisations is on the web site.

I think it might be useful to explain the difference in the 2 organisations.

AURIL's actual members are the universities, PSREs and NHS IP Hubs. We have 122 voting members but currently 1,376 in our 'Family' (that is those who receive emails etc) so the *institution* is the member and we represent their interests while keeping you informed.

The IKT is a *personal*, professional body. Significantly, over half the current membership is NOT from higher education. The IKT hits many targets for you as an individual:

- you will be a member of a professional body;
- you as an individual will hold that membership and it will travel with you as your career develops;
- business contacts hold a significant wedge of the membership so networking is key; and
- YOU, not your institution will help feed into KT policy and strategy.

I firmly believe that the two organisations can work in parallel and have a natural fit.

I would encourage you to join or at least check it out.

The IKT will be developing a CPD tracker so you can monitor and log your professional development.

It will also be producing a Newsletter which will contain some "thought" pieces as well as general information.

Professional Network

We have launched the first professional KT network in the world! It's at www.ginnn.com. It's in its infancy and needs more of you to post! It's a cross between the THES and Facebook. I have started new groups there for jobs, events and to discuss HEIF.

All jiscmail communications will also be posted on AURIL/GINNN

Mentoring

One of the Chair's (Caroline Quest) aims this year was to establish a mentoring system. We believe that it is an essential element to career development. It is not a

coincidence that mentoring has become so popular over the last few years. For so many of us, work has become more fast-paced, unpredictable and challenging than ever before. We want to plan our next career step, yet it is difficult to know which move to make. We get deeply involved in complex projects, and when problems arise we are so close that we find it hard to see a way forward. For example we might struggle to balance our role as working parents, yet worry that admitting it will affect our career. Some of these issues we will happily discuss with our line managers; others we would rather not. Instead, we would appreciate an independent perspective – someone to listen to and challenge us without our having to worry about the consequences of our discussions.

This is where mentoring comes in. It provides a strictly confidential, safe and independent space in which we can come to our own conclusions about how to move forward. Mentoring has been described as “one of the best methods to enhance individuals’ learning and development”. AURIL recognises this and is committed to promoting and facilitating it.

Therefore we believe that mentoring is an essential element to career development and therefore a key membership service, especially if used in conjunction with the CPD tracker. We have been lucky enough to tap into the mentoring programme of the Institute of Physics which we have amended it to suit those in the KT sector. At the moment we are just sorting out technical issues as detailed above in the ICT section.

It is hoped that other organisations will feed into the programme thereby giving the widest possible coverage.

Before we launch the mentoring programme we will be calling for members to sign up as mentors and mentees.

Another first for AURIL!

Seminars

We have delivered seminars on:

Open Source Software – 4 April 2007
HEIF 4 Strategic Plans – 19 February 2008

We will deliver themed sessions on the following:

- UUK/AURIL session on embedding KT within the intuition and how we can have an impact on stakeholders (13 August)
- Internal/External management of IP – do we contract it out? (late June/early July)
- Framework 7 (27 May 2008);
- Governance for KT for 3rd Mission activities (to be confirmed);
- RDAs – how do we engage with them (25 April);
- CCI session scheduled for 16 June 2008 with another for December 2008.

Conference 2008

Dates are 9 and 10 October 2008 in Glasgow.

Topics covered will be:

- DIUS review on innovation
- HEFCE report into post-RAE

- Evaluation of reach out funds - HEFCE consultant report on 3rd mission funding should be due out)
- Gower review of copyright (implications for e-learning)
- Celtic themed session(s) – KT funding in Scotland involving SFC and Scottish Enterprise
- Pooling Resources
- RCUK session on KT
- Progress measurement of social & economic Impact
- 3rd mission funding (the importance of ring fencing)
- Imbedding of innovation culture within institutions
- DCMS Creative economies survey on HE KT and creative industries
- EU IP Code/Charter
- State Aids/Charity Law and KT
- Governance
- Launch of the Mentoring Programme
- Case studies: HEIF 'flagship' innovative knowledge transfer projects
- The new Finance Act – implications for Directors and conflict of interest.

Research Partnerships

I have had negotiations with UUK about revamping the Research Partnership brochure and they are keen to be involved. It was last produced in 1999 and since then we have moved on considerably. I would like it to contain information on FEC, European Framework contracts, Lambert Model contracts, Innovation strategy, Social Impact models, State Aid, so it is much wider and inclusive than the old Partnerships document. I will be looking for ideas from you as to what should be included and some editorial input.

Consultancy Guide

I have had discussions with UUK on a revised addition of our consultancy guide. This guide may now take on a wider significance if consultancy gets embroiled in the State Aid issue.

DIUS Innovation Review

The global economy is becoming ever more competitive. Innovation is vital to increasing our competitiveness, improving our economy and our quality of life. It's the way that Britain will stay in front as a leading nation in the 21st century. It can also help us to meet some of the most challenging issues we face such as climate change and pollution. AURIL responded to the DIUS review in full.

The response can be found on the web and on GINNN however our main comments are:

- If UK is to remain a leading world economic power we need to compete with both our traditional rivals and the rapidly emerging power houses – not just China and India but also the middle and Far East and Australasia – we need to build on our world class manufacturing, design, pharmaceutical and engineering bases.

We need to address enhancing the quality of life and consider critical issues as highlighted by the TSB and to help embed that national innovative culture, continued support should be provided at European and national levels to encourage SME involvement in collaborative research.

By making the UK a world-innovation HUB we will be able to compete with low-wage economies, those with a less developed research base and develop more competitive services, e.g. the Financial Sector.

- The government must create an environment which allows innovation to flourish. We need to have a healthy balance between innovation and risk underpinned by skills development – this is what will create or build a healthy innovative culture. We need to have a light touch to regulation.
- In order to generate an innovative culture government must create an environment where people can transfer easily between sectors, be it academic, KT, business, voluntary, public or stakeholders. Individuals now realise that a job is not a job for life.
- It is important that all public sector schemes have a light touch. It is very easy to knock back any advances in the sector very quickly. This is a new and emerging sector and is still developing; and we believe a light touch approach.
- Universities should be allowed to play a greater role in setting the innovation agenda. As universities are now taking a more strategic approach to their internal research agenda we believe that they could feed, more productively than in the past, to the national innovation debate and in fact should be a key contributor.
- We should be teaching key business skills from school level and increasing that skill development through university. Embedding entrepreneurship modules in courses will help build an innovation culture from the bottom up. For PhD students mentoring on “innovation” as well as supervision on their research project would be valuable.
- We are the interface between universities and business; and still a young sector. So we need a light touch while we move to our self governing professionalism via associations like the Institute of Knowledge Transfer.
- It is important that we no longer view innovation as a national issue. We must think internationally both in terms of fitting the research we undertake on global issues (like global warming, aging, security, etc) to how we address those problems.

HEFCE Consultation on Post RAE - REF

HEFCE issued its consultation paper on the REF and AURIL responded fully. The main points are below and the full response is posted on the web and on GINNN.

- That we must recognise the impact on the user community
- That citations will not be a fair reflection of those researchers who might be on the innovative cutting edge and who could be lost in the assessment by falling down the cracks between the units
- That innovation is recognised
- That those making a contribution to public policy are recognised
- That societies stakeholders, be it business or the voluntary sector, should have a voice in the peer assessment panels
- Young researchers should be acknowledged as long as the quality is there.
- That there should be some linkage between the system for assessing science and non science based research
- That the administrative burden does not increase

State Aid and Charity Commissioners

We are concerned that the State Aid issue has still not been settled with any direct and concrete guidance from the government. We are also concerned that we are receiving mixed messages – on the one hand encouraging us to exploit university research and on the other reminding us that we are charities.

We have partnered with the Universities Finance Directors Group and the Association of University Legal Practitioners to discuss the position of the Charity Commissioners with government and to seek clarification.

One worry is that by moving all commercial activity outside the university structures (i.e. separate holding companies) we lose a core activity which will allow us to embed an innovative culture within the academic community which in turn would not deliver on long-term social impact. Leaving only research administration within the university central structures will not deliver cultural change. We could see separate divisions being established to manage exploitation of research and the social impact of research. I expect this issue to run for some time until we receive clear guidance from HEFCE/Charity Commissioners.

Whatever the guidance we will then be in a key position as to advise on how institutions should approach this issue.

We will be holding an event possibly with JISC to discuss the State Aids issue.

Leadership Foundation

We are involved in discussions with the Leadership Foundation as to how we could produce some underpinning research into governance issues surrounding KT management.

FP7

With the launch of FP7 last year, AURIL has responded to your needs and interests in this area in several ways:

- inviting your comments and views of your experience of working within FP7
- setting up a special interest group on GINNN where items of interest and news in the area can be posted and read;
- DIUS inviting AURIL to work with them to explore the reluctance of SMEs in the UK to join FP7 projects;
- AURIL (Linda Baines) being invited to join DESCAs, the working group that develops the model FP7 consortium agreement that most universities and public sector research organisations and actively feeding your ideas and suggestions on this to them;
- actively liaising with the EU Commission to provide feedback on your views;
- Running topical workshops on topics in the area, such as the event being held on 27 May 2008 in London.

Lambert Agreements

As a member of the Inner Core Group (Brian McCaul), AURIL has played a very active part in the review and updating of the Lambert model research collaboration agreements and the development of the new consortium agreements which are due to be launched in the next few months. AURIL plans to carry out a survey of its members to review uptake and use of the Lambert agreements and seek feedback.

AURIL CPD (Continuing Professional Education)

AURIL's Steering Group oversees the development of the AURIL CPD framework and has been collaborating closely with Birmingham City University on the development of new courses and modules based on the competencies and skills. The Steering Group is exploring alternatives for further development of the Framework in collaboration with other organisations, including IKT.

BSSP Innovation Stakeholder Group Meeting

AURIL has been a very active member of the BERR led stakeholder group.

The proliferation of publicly-funded business support schemes (it is estimated that there are currently about 3000 publicly-funded business support schemes available in England alone) results in confusion for business and discourages take-up of support. In addition, the complexity of access, delivery, and marketing results in inefficient use of public resources and a disproportionate burden on business.

The Government has admitted that it is the source of the problem; therefore it has consulted with key stakeholders to help solve it. AURIL has played a key part in giving advice on:

- reducing duplication by limiting the occurrence of overlapping services and establishing consistent frameworks for the access, delivery and marketing of publicly funded business support in order to:
- reduce the amount of time spent by business in searching for and understanding business support;
- achieving efficiencies in the provision of publicly-funded business support; and increase its effectiveness.

The recommendations are due to be published shortly and you will be advised of the changes. Several new laws will then come into effect.

EU Intellectual Property Charter/Code

Council member Gillian McFadzean chaired an Expert Group that advised DG Research on the elements of such a Code of Practice, popularly known as the "IP Charter", as part of developing a framework for knowledge transfer in the ERA. Members were drawn from universities and research institutes such as the Fraunhofers across Europe and industry was strongly represented.

One of the objectives of practitioners on the group was to ensure that whatever the Commission adopted did not conflict with existing national strategies as we have in the UK, or indeed with existing Codes as there are in Ireland, yet neither seemed too naive to more advanced knowledge transfer practitioners such as the AURIL community. This was the first time that the Commission had adopted the consultative approach that AURIL pioneered so successfully with the UK government on matters of policy and practice across the sector.

The Code was then formulated by the internal Commission staff.

The purpose of the document is to propose guidelines for the management of intellectual property and knowledge transfer by public research organisations (PROs). As always in Europe the focus is on the public sector and the engagement of industry is not pushed as an agenda.

It will be short, probably no more than 20 recommendations of good practice in ownership and management of IP. The impact in the target countries where no national strategies, codes or accepted standards yet exist may be considerable

although the reaction is most likely we believe to be development of their own strategies or codes of practice and AURIL Council will continue to work with colleagues through ProTon Europe to demonstrate that an equal partnership of practitioners and policy makers can make a difference at the "coal face" every day

Gowers Review of Copyright

Following his report on IP, Gower believed that more work needed to be done in the area of copyright. AURIL responded on your behalf with the help of Eversheds. I was also a member of the JISC Expert Working Group on IP and they also borrowed from the AURIL response for their submission. The review looked at widening the dated copyright laws to take into account modern communications methods. Currently it centres on library rules regarding physical copying of documents for research and teaching. The recommendations will address e-communications i.e. dissemination of materials via networks and this will also have an impact on E-Learning activities. The response is on both the AURIL website and the GINNN network.

ProTon Europe

Another member of AURIL, Dr Pat Frain, has taken over the Chair of the Board of ProTon Europe from Gillian McFadzean. Dr Frain is Director of NovaUCD, the Innovation and Technology Transfer Centre at NovaUCD.

A major priority for 2008 will be the development of collaboration between ProTon and the National Partner Associations. It is intended that a number of initiatives will be launched to share good practice and maximise the benefits of ProTon membership for the national associations and individual members. It is also intended that ProTon will continue to play a major role in the development of the knowledge transfer profession and of knowledge transfer policy across Europe (see EU Intellectual Property Charter/Code).

AURIL Ireland

Over the last year the staff levels in Technology Transfer Offices in Irish universities have increased significantly. Funding has been provided under the €30 million Technology Transfer Strengthening Initiative launched by Enterprise Ireland as part of the Government Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation (2006-2013). There is clearly an opportunity for AURIL and ProTon to assist in the development of this relatively young profession in Ireland.

Thank you

Thank you all for your continued support through out the year, especially to those who have responded to requests for information or who have fed into consultations.

Thanks also to the Chair and Council who give of their time voluntarily and put in a lot of hard work, and Katie Fleming who has managed the Conference and Events brilliantly.

AURIL does have influence and the above review shows that as we are active in so many areas of KT we are best placed to give provide a strategic input into stakeholders policies.

Philip Graham
Executive Director

