Seasons Greetings

This will be the last newsletter of the year, so let me take the opportunity to offer thanks for the numerous and varied contributions to the life and work of the school over the year. Although no Head of School anywhere experiences plain sailing at all times, my experience has overwhelmingly been of a staff that show a significant commitment to the school and discipline, and I am grateful for the many different forms of support that I have received during 2009. Best wishes for an enjoyable and relaxing festive season.

Pending Budget Gloom

You do have a Scot writing this, however, so any output that presents an overwhelmingly positive tone leaves him at least suspicious, if not a little queasy! In any event, it is perhaps appropriate to comment on the pending budget cuts, as reported, for example, by the BBC in: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8404788.stm

These figures suggest cuts of around 10% in Higher Education budgets. It is not straightforward at this level of detail to understand how this will affect the school, or the extent to which things like increases in student fees might be able to compensate for reductions in government funding. In any event, there is likely to be significant pressure on the sector, and thus the school, over the next few years, with the school experiencing this change hot on the heels of a significant loss of revenue from the changing funding formula associated with the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise.

How will the school respond? We have set out plans for a managed reduction in costs, for example by reducing our academic staff numbers by 5 over a 5 year period, but we will also need to pursue several ways of growing non-government income. Some steps are already being taken, and we must hope that our revised masters programmes and associated distance learning activities will increase overseas fee income. However, the school plan for 2010 is also likely to place a significant emphasis on developing collaborative teaching activities (such as 2 + 2 programmes) and on growing research income from non-UK government sources (including, for example, the EU). In any event, I hope that we can avoid a Corporal Jones-like (e.g. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZR6wok7g7do) panic early and often model, instead directing our energies at well informed actions that, if successful, will strengthen the school longer term.

Events

Christmas Party 16 Dec 09

The School Christmas party will take place on Wednesday 16th December starting at 4pm in the Staff Common Room. There will be a DJ and pizzas. All staff and postgraduate research students are invited. Please bring a bottle.

Graduation ceremony 16 Dec 09

The CS graduation ceremony is being held on Wednesday 16 December at 14:30. If you have supervised an MSc dissertation for the 08/09 cohort or a PhD student who has been awarded their degree since July 09, you are very welcome to attend the ceremony as part of the platform party.
There will be a pre-graduation reception in School for the Graduands from 12:00-14:00 in the Atlas Suite.

**Workshop: Collaborative Spaces creating an Enhanced Research Environment 17 Dec 09**

A workshop of two parts as part of the Virtual Research Environment CREW (Collaborative Research Events on the Web) project, funded by JISC.

Part one at 11:00 and Part two at 14:00, Room 1.10, Kilburn Building (or via Video Conferencing/IOCOM/Access Grid).

All welcome (even at the last minute), to either or both parts. Please email Martin Turner if you wish to attend.

**Prize and Award Opportunities**

A reminder that the following prizes/awards are close to deadline:

**BBSRC Innovator of the year Call for Applications 16 Dec 09**

An annual competition to celebrate the successes of BBSRC-supported scientists in delivering economic and/or social impact from their excellent research. Individual scientists or teams can submit an application detailing their activities that have resulted in economic and/or social impact.

A prize of £5,000 will be made directly to the winner of each category, with the overall Innovator of the Year receiving a further £5,000. For team winners the prize money will be split equally among the applicants.

An assessment panel will select the best applications under the following 3 categories:
- Commercial innovator
- Social innovator
- Most promising innovator

More information
Deadline for applications: 16th December 2009

**BCS Lovelace Medal Call for Nominations 18 Dec 09**

The Lovelace Medal is presented to individuals who have made a contribution which is of major significance in the advancement of Information Systems or which adds significantly to the understanding of Information Systems.

This year the panel will be seeking nominations relating to contributions in Information Systems Science, i.e., basic research that has added significantly to our understanding of Information Systems.

More information
Deadline for nominations: Friday 18th December 2009

**BCS Roger Needham Award Call for Nominations 18 Dec 09**

The Award is made annually for a distinguished research contribution in computer science by a UK-based researcher within ten years of being awarded their PhD.

"UK-based" means that candidates have been ordinarily resident in the UK for three years prior to nomination, or have an equivalent substantial connection to the UK.

More information
Deadline for nominations: Friday 18th December 2009