



Minutes of the AAU Meeting, University of Brighton, Friday 16th February 2010

Apologies: Charley Crocker (AAU Communications Officer), Chris Toomer (UWE), Chris Neal (Merlin), Steve Bond (City University).

Present: John Farley OBE (AAU President), Alan Jocelyn (AAU Vice President, Listechology), Thurai Rahulan (AAU Chairman, Salford), Mike West (AAU Treasurer, Coventry), Simon Prince (AAU Secretary, City), Dal Koshal (Brighton), John Hutchinson (Brighton), Ruth Mallors (Director, Aerospace & Defence KTN), Steven Wright (Leeds), Paul Hogan (London Metropolitan), Titus Olaniyi (London South Bank), David Philpott (ESDU), Reza Mokhtarzadeh (Brunel), Mohamad Askari (Kingston), Carol Featherston (Cardiff), Mike Jacobs (Birmingham), Alexander Fanourakis (Listechology), Ken Hart (Hertfordshire), Paul Bailey (Deputy Chief Executive, Royal Aeronautical Society).

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting of 6th November 2009

These were agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising from Meeting of 6th November 2009

Aerospace Research Institute and Survey of Test Facilities. Simon Prince reported that the survey of UK wind tunnel test facilities was now complete and the data had been passed onto the Aerospace and Defence KTN's where a decision will be made with ADS and industry as to how best to make it public. The survey of the wider resource of test infrastructure yielded much information and forms the beginning of a much broader database that was beyond the capability of the City University team to complete in the timeframe envisaged. The non-wind tunnel data will also be made available – possibly with the data of a Ministry of Defence study, for addition to the wind tunnel database at a later date. Simon reported that the Aerospace Research Institute proposal had effectively been abandoned due to a perceived lack of industry convergence.

Ruth Mallors, Director of the Aerospace and Defence Knowledge Transfer Network said that the survey data would be put online as a public resource and would feed into a national innovation database, and a review of the National Aerospace Technology Strategy. The Chairman and the association thanked the City University team for their efforts on this project.

CEAS2009. Thurai reported that the CEAS 2009 conference held in Manchester had been a major challenge, but that it had all come together successfully in the end, and thanked the UK and European aerospace community for all the excellent papers presented at the event.

AAU Website. The Association recognised the excellent progress made in radically overhauling and improving the AAU web site, and thanked the conspicuous contribution of Charley Crocker and all concerned, in coordinating this. The Association wished her, her family and newborn son all the best.

ESDU Datasheets for Education. A discussion took place on the use of ESDU design data sheets as education tools for design projects in University engineering courses. The consensus was that these were generally heavily used in projects, and that any initiatives to make them more easily and cost effectively available for education purposes would be beneficial. Dr David Philpott from ESDU said that he provides lectures on the ESDU design sheets for Universities, and informed the group that ESDU would not be updating hard copies of the data sheets since digital copies were more fit for purpose and provided a much better means for searching for data.

Treasurers Report

Mike West informed the Association that the current account stood at £***, while the business account stood at £***, which would be available to fund the cost of attendance at Farnborough International 2010. Mike said that in future all expenses would be paid electronically, and that receipts would need to be produced.

Events

Thurs 8th April 2010: The Universities Flight Simulation seminar is to be held at the RAeS at Hamilton Place, organised by the RAeS Flight Simulation group. Thurai questioned whether the April AAU meeting, to be held prior to this event in London, should be held at Hamilton Place, given the price quoted by the RAeS, or whether it should be held elsewhere at a nearby venue to allow members to attend the Flight Sim seminar later. Paul Bailey said that he would reassess the costs, but City University and ADS both offered an alternative venue in case an agreement could not be reached with the Royal Aeronautical Society.

19th-25th July 2010: Farnborough International Air Show 2010. Futures Day will be held on Friday 23rd July and will focus on students, schools and the young.

Fri 29th Oct 2010: The John Barnes Trophy presentations and the Annual General Meeting. The venue is to be decided, but suggestions included RAF Museum Cosford and the Robin Hood Bay International Airport in Yorkshire.

FI 2010

The details of where to locate the AAU stand during the Farnborough International Air Show 2010, and how to fund the costs were discussed. Simon Prince reminded the Association of

the proposal to join the Aerospace and Defence KTN in sharing a stand. Ruth Mallors said that the KTNs would be hosted in the UK Pavilion in Hall 1, which would focus on UK capabilities and be well positioned with industry. Ruth said that the first four days of the event would be about trade, and a Government Minister would attend each of the four days. Some 5000 students would also be expected to attend on Futures Day on the Friday. An alternative suggestion to join the RAeS Careers stand was briefly discussed, but it was finally agreed that if it could be arranged, the AAU would join the Aerospace and Defence KTN.

It was agreed that a staff of 5-6 people would be required to man the stand each day, that a computer based presentation was required and terminals to allow internet access to the AAU website. It was also decided to produce a leaflet providing information on the AAU, its website and listing its members – Charley Crocker would be asked to facilitate the production of the leaflet.

Any Other Business

Simon Prince raised the question of the strategic positioning of the Association within the sector, and how it could better influence the future development, and protect the interests of the sector in the coming period of financial austerity and cut-backs. It was agreed that the British university aerospace departments are at the very heart of the UK's ability to remain competitive in the sector, and to retain and grow its current businesses – by educating and training top quality engineering graduates, and providing the competitive edge in research and development for British Business. Simon made the point that the AAU, as the representative body of these departments, needs to be seen to be taking part in the national scene, with government and industry to fight for the interests of the British aerospace sector. There was general agreement with these sentiments.

Alan Jocelyn proposed that the Association commission a study to develop a “Roadmap” for the Aerospace HE sector for the next 25 years, which should account for all of the threats and opportunities facing the sector and help to position it better with industry and government.

Ruth Mallors made the point that the findings from such a study would influence the forthcoming review of the National Aerospace Technology Strategy, and that it would be important to focus on what the UK academic engineering sector can supply to industry and government, via education, training and research, and what the trends in the demand for these are likely to be.

The members present endorsed the proposed study and, on the basis that some of the research undertaken by his students had already started to look at this, Simon Prince agreed to coordinate a consultation exercise for the study, making use of an EPSRC distribution list of funded academics in the sector, and also a TSB list of active academics.

Paul Hogan suggested that he could invite Mr Gerald Howarth, MP for Farnborough, with whom Paul is acquainted, to a future meeting, to discuss how the Association could better influence political debate on the issues which affect the UK aerospace sector. The Association agreed that Paul should proceed with an invitation.

Paul Hogan asked what position the AAU would take on the Governments proposed 2 year degrees. It was the overwhelming consensus that the required engineering disciplines, which are currently taught intensively over 3 – 4 years, could not possibly be reduced into 2 years without significant investment in manpower resources unless research activity ceased. The AAU would therefore not support the adoption of 2 year engineering degrees.

Paul Hogan informed the Association that the AAU had been charged with running the Aerospace section of the Engineering Professor's Council, and that he was the AAU representative. The next meeting is to be 12th-14th April in Huddersfield, and he would be informing the Council of the AAU's activities.

Ruth Mallors announced that a 2 day conference would be taking place on 27th-28th April, organised by the KTN's, on the subject of "Technology Investment". This would aim to bring stakeholders together discuss investment for innovation in Aerospace and Security sectors. The event will be held in the Lancaster Hotel in London, and have a £50 per day attendance fee.

Thurai mentioned that the ACARE workshop was held on 25th Feb at the European Commission DG Research, Rue du Champ de Mars 21 in Brussels.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at a venue in London (to be decided) on 8th April.