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Annual Review 2010

Paul Acarnley, Academy Manager

I am delighted to be able to report on a year of successes and new initiatives for the E3 Academy.

Following the 2010 recruitment round, the E3 Academy has 37 scholars studying at Newcastle and Nottingham Universities. In summer 2010 four scholars graduated, with all obtaining first or upper-second honours. In the next couple of years the E3 Academy will begin to have a significant impact on the recruitment practice of the participating companies, as the number of graduating scholars increases: nine scholars are due to graduate in 2011. A new monitoring scheme has been introduced with scholars being asked to reflect on their development each university semester and after the summer placement. Reports from tutors and industry mentors are shared between companies and universities, facilitating an integrated approach to education and training.

The Academy aims to develop a sense of community among its scholars while introducing them to the wider electrical energy engineering community. There are encouraging signs that scholars are responding to this involvement, with many of them appreciating the opportunity to engage with those from other companies and universities. At their own suggestion, a mentoring scheme has been initiated so that new E3 entrants are put in touch with more experienced scholars during the first week of the university year.

Of course the major community activity is the annual Summer School, which this year was held in Lincolnshire and was attended by a total of 47 delegates, including all scholars and representatives from member companies and universities. The event included a visit to Cummins Generator Technologies at Stamford, a generator design-build-test team competition, seminars and inspiring guest speakers. Organisation of the Summer School is a considerable undertaking and I would like to thank everyone who gave so freely of their time to make the event both thought-provoking and thoroughly enjoyable.

A new innovation in 2010 was to hold a couple half-day satellite meetings in parallel with the Summer School. This year the meetings covered the subjects of Human Resources and Publicity and brought together appropriate specialists from the participating organisations to discuss detail of the Academy's operation and make suggestions for further improvement. For example, the HR meeting was an opportunity to highlight best practice in dealing with E3 scholars both in academic and company environments. It was agreed that similar meetings should be held next year so that progress could be reviewed.

In the 2009 report I highlighted two major challenges facing the Academy: how to expand the numbers of participants and how to engage with more young people considering career in electrical energy engineering. While these challenges remain, it is pleasing to report some progress. At the 2010 Council meeting we shall welcome a new company partner – Edwards – and consider the possibility of admitting another university. Discussions with several other companies are at an advanced stage. Engagement activities have included participation of E3 scholars at the 2010 Big Bang Event in Manchester, as well as local initiatives by E3 partners.

Therefore, despite the continuing difficult economic position, the E3 Academy has continued to thrive in 2010 and is now starting to fulfil its primary function of supplying talented and well-trained young professional engineers to its member companies.

Paul Acarnley
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