THIRD ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE (EO&DC)

A report by the Chair of the EO&DC

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this third Annual Report is to:

   - **Section 1** - Provide highlights of the major activities which have been undertaken during the past year to recognise diversity and to foster inclusion;
   - **Section 2** - Assess the extent to which we are being both proactive and responsive to equalities legislation, particularly in respect of eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of access and opportunity and promoting good race relations;
   - **Section 3** - Assess the College’s progress in relation to the EO&DC’s longer-term ambitions which were stated in the second Annual Report published in 2005.

As background information, Appendix 1 shows a “Diversity Snapshot” of staff at November 2005 and Appendix 2 shows student data for 2005-2006.

SECTION 1 – HIGHLIGHTS OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES; RECOGNISING DIVERSITY AND FOSTERING INCLUSION

ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY – (SET)

2. Our most significant challenge in relation to gender inequality remains the attraction and retention of female academic staff and this is the major focus of the Academic Opportunities Committee (AOC). In 2005, it published “Action for Opportunity” which reviewed progress and achievements since its inception seven years ago and set out recommendations - “Taking Action”.

3. Subsequently, the Chair of the Committee addressed the College’s most senior staff at the Rector’s Away Day in November 2005. Professor Dame Julia Higgins was able to report positively on our successes - many of which led the College to win a Silver Athena Swan Award in March (Scientific Women’s Academic Network – run by the Royal Society). The Awards are given in recognition of demonstrated commitment to the progression of female academics and Imperial was the only institution to be so awarded (no golds were received and Edinburgh’s Chemistry department won a silver).

4. Despite this public recognition, and the strides forward which have been taken, it is clear that there is always more that we can, and must, do. Statistics indicate that a higher number of female academic staff are leaving than are being appointed. This means that, in spite of significant efforts to attract and retain, our staff profile remains
the same and we are not achieving our strategic aim to increase the percentage of female staff. Following AOC-instigated exit interviews to establish why staff are leaving, some female leavers had reported a sense of isolation, and others felt that there had been a lack of support, particularly during or leading up to maternity leave.

5. In February 2006, members of the AOC met with the Principals, Deans and departmental/divisional representatives to talk through the Committee’s ideas on how it might support the faculties and their departments/divisions. The Committee recommended action on a relatively small number of issues which should have the most impact. These included: two senior staff in each faculty, called either “Faculty Athena Professor/Reader” who would provide a local, supportive role; compulsory female representation on interview panels; a dedicated website that would be the first port of call for any female academic so that information is easily accessible; guidance for Heads of Departments/Divisions (HoDs) on best practice for dealing with staff going on maternity/paternity/adoption leave; and a requirement that at each HoD’s annual performance review, each Principal asks for a progress report on progress in relation to equality and diversity with specific questions relating to female academics. The AOC will be reviewing progress over the coming year.

“IMPERIAL AS ONE” STAFF NETWORK

6. Early in 2005, our black and minority ethnic (BME) staff established “Imperial As One”, a group specific to their needs and interests, but which would also have an advisory role for the EO&DC. Its three priorities were to:

- Promote career progression and professional development;
- Establish a structured mentoring programme;
- Improve social and cultural relations.

7. The official launch was held on 12 July 2005 and hosted by the Rector. The group has been very active over the past year and the College has provided support for “Imperial As One” to meet its three priorities. Individuals, and the College, have benefited in the following ways:

- Members have provided valuable input into the review of our recruitment and selection policy and procedures, and of our appraisal scheme;
- Members have taken up training opportunities to enhance their development – programmes attended have included: recruitment and selection; communicating positively; making effective presentations; equality training;
- A mentoring programme is in place using a combination of College mentors and successful, external BME representatives;
- Members are becoming more visible role models for internal and external audiences e.g. being featured in our Postgraduate Prospectus and in specialist publications;
- Networking opportunities have increased across the College and with external organisations such as the NHS, Local Authorities and the Royal College of Nursing.

8. Presentations by two magistrates and a school governor have been held to encourage staff to participate and thus help to increase BME representation in these important community roles. Participation would also be personally developmental and improve skills and confidence.
9. A video, introduced by the Rector, has been completed. It will be used to introduce “Imperial As One” and will be played during staff induction and at relevant events and training sessions.

10. “Imperial As One” organised activities to celebrate Black History Month last October as an example of its aim to improve social and cultural relations and the group has “bigger and better” plans for the coming year.

**ENCOURAGING RESEARCH STAFF TO CONTRIBUTE FULLY TO THE SUCCESS OF COLLEGE**

11. In late 2004, we employed a Staff Development Adviser whose remit is to have dedicated responsibility for the career development of research staff. Over the last year, extensive development provision has been put in place and our equalities and diversity agenda is a mainstream element of the training and associated activities.

12. This agenda is particularly relevant because, at November 2005, 36% of research staff were female and 21% were from an ethnic minority background. During 05-06, 31% of research staff who attended development activities were from a BME background. 51% of those who attended were female (46% in 04-05) and 15% were female from a BME background (12% in 04-05).

13. A Research Staff Working Group is involved in shaping future programmes that are relevant to the needs of researchers, and termly meetings of research staff in departments/divisions provide valuable feedback on service and communication matters. A “Virtual Senior Common Room” has also been established to encourage research staff to share ideas and gain information on issues of importance to them. The College-wide mentoring programme for research staff was re-launched in 05-06. All new research staff are given the opportunity to have a mentor to advise and guide them on career development and general “working at Imperial” topics. We have also recently achieved a workplace agreement with our Joint Trades Unions on fixed-term employment contracts. This will provide greater stability and certainty for research staff.

14. The above all help to assure participation by, and equitable recognition of, research staff.

**PROMOTING ACCESS**

15. Our aim is to ensure that access for those with disabilities is a core institutional activity.

16. The Centre for Educational Development (CED) has embedded equality into our educational development provision. For example, academic staff work with Directors of Undergraduate Studies to address how best to ensure that students with various disabilities can learn effectively in their specific discipline. CED has also enhanced its web-based resources and information in relation to disability matters over the last year.

17. The staff development programme has continued to raise general awareness and to improve knowledge of specific disabilities and issues. We have targeted those disabilities that students present at College e.g. Autism and Asperger Syndrome and dyslexia.
18. Ensuring good facilities for those with disabilities is a mainstream topic for those with responsibility for buildings and services. For example, the new Sports Centre and new Halls of Residence have been planned and built to high standards of accessibility. New signs have also been introduced which have incorporated disability access routes around the campuses.

19. Our work to ensure that new and existing web sites are assessed and improved continued via the College’s Web Accessibility Officer. Two members of ICT staff have, as part of their job role, responsibility for student support.

20. In the last Annual Report, the introduction of Departmental/Divisional Disability Liaison Officers was noted. Since then, this network has consolidated. Officers provide practical guidance and support, and are a good source of information and feedback.

OUR EQUALITY EMPHASIS IN THE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (RAE), ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS AND RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

21. We have developed an Equality Code of Practice which governs the selection of staff to be submitted for the RAE. Over the next few months, we will provide briefings to ensure wide understanding of the day-to-day impact of the Code, particularly from those who will be making submission decisions.

22. In the last year, we have strengthened the equalities aspects of academic promotions and academic recruitment and selection. In promotions, changes have included enabling staff to provide fuller details about personal circumstances which might have affected their contribution e.g. maternity leave, carers' leave, a disability. In addition, improvements have been made to the application form so that staff are clearer about what evidence of their achievements they should provide e.g. in teaching. In recruitment and selection, female representation on interview panels is expected. It has been agreed that interviews should not take place without a Dean and the guidance in relation to Further Particulars has been expanded so that potential candidates are provided with improved information.

SECTION 2 – ARE WE PROACTIVE IN PROMOTING EQUALITY AND COMPLYING WITH LEGISLATION?

PROMOTING EQUALITY THROUGH OUR LINKS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

23. A key requirement of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) is to promote good race relations and the Imperial Volunteer Centre (IVC) facilitates interaction between the College and the wider community. The IVC is a successful example of corporate social responsibility and, currently, 206 external organisations are linked.

24. The Centre enables student and staff volunteers to work with community projects and some of these support our objective to promote race equality and good race relations. Projects which have continued from last year include: the St Clements and St James into University Project (which gives young people from an ethnic minority an opportunity to experience university life); the Refugee Council, whereby volunteers act as tutors to refugee children; and an After School Homework Project which assists children from an ethnic minority. Four notable additions have been established over the past year: a supplementary school for Eritrean children; after school English language support for recently-arrived immigrants in Lambeth;
financial advice for the Angolan community; and the Lila Project which promotes inclusion for children with a disability or a limiting medical condition. Survey feedback shows that the projects are well received by those communities with whom IVC works.

25. The latest volunteer profile shows that: 59% were female, 10% were staff, 63% were undergraduates, 21% were PhD students, 2% were alumni or family members and 4% were undisclosed. 1% declared a disability.

PROMOTING EQUALITY IN SEXUAL ORIENTATION

26. The College, mindful of the recent legislation relating to civil partnerships, together with the anti-discrimination and anti-harassment law on sexual orientation, became a Stonewall Diversity Champion in 2005.

27. As part of our response to promoting equality in sexual orientation, our second Annual Diversity lecture was given in May 2006 by Ben Summerskill, the Stonewall Chief Executive. He took as his theme "Winning Fair Treatment in Education and at Work for Gay People in 21st Century Britain". In addition, staff have approached HR with their idea to form an informal network and this will be supported during the coming year.

PROMOTING EQUALITY BY REINFORCING OUR VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Training

28. In order to ensure that staff are aware of College policies and procedures, our equality and diversity training programme has continued. In 04-05, 296 staff attended training on Disability Equality, Harassment – confronting inappropriate behaviour, Harassment – the management perspective, and Promoting Race Equality. In March, 12 of our most senior staff attended “The Anatomy of Prejudice” programme.

29. Building management and leadership capability is a key activity and the integration of equality and diversity into our management programmes at all levels continues to instil our standards and values. In 04-05, 1535 participants attended training events on management and leadership (1175 the previous year). The gender profile take up is similar to 03-04 i.e. female staff make up 42% of the workforce and took up 56% of the training. The analysis of attendance by ethnic origin on management and leadership courses shows that there is a 5% discrepancy between staff profile and attendance. We will monitor this gap, particularly in the light of those initiatives described in the section on Imperial As One. Analysis of 04-05 equality and diversity training statistics also shows that we need to ensure that a broader cross-section of staff attend e.g. academic and research staff make up 49% of the staff total but accounted for 15% of attendees.

30. Good equal opportunities practice in recruitment and selection is vital if we are to ensure that we optimise the quality of applicants and successful recruits. We continued to implement the College’s policy that selection panel members must be trained and training attendance nearly doubled in 04-05 compared with 03-04 (390 compared with 207).

31. We monitor compliance with the policy and, in 04-05, staff on one in six recruitment panels had not undertaken College training (although they may have
been trained by other providers, or trained by College preceding monitoring). To achieve greater adherence, we will implement pre-interview checks in addition to post-interview. We will continue to provide lists of those who have been trained so that departments/divisions are aware of their trained pool. To date, providing this information has resulted in an increase in training attendance and, in time, should increase the diversity of our interview panels.

**Representation**

32. In December 2005, Council received a comprehensive monitoring report regarding ethnic origin, gender and age of the Court and Council and it was agreed that the priority was to redress gender imbalance. By October 2006, three new women members will have joined Council and, following due process, it is envisaged that a fourth will join at the end of November.

33. Analysis of our workforce composition shows that, in particular, there is poor representation of women and staff of BME origin in senior management. This also means that high-level decision-making committees are not diverse. While we have two female academics at the highest levels whose focus is academic management, the College’s support services senior management is almost exclusively male and white although this may change to some extent if the College’s succession planning comes to fruition. We have College targets for female academic and research staff representation but have not, as yet, considered whether positive action initiatives and representation targets could be useful for senior managerial levels. We believe that this should be a discussion item for our senior committees during 2006.

34. In relation to students, the College’s outreach programme continues to raise the educational aspirations of potential students, including those from ethnic minority groups who are currently underrepresented. The programme’s projects are diverse and the areas in which the College works includes many with high BME representation. The Access Agreement, developed in 2005, embodies the College’s commitment to widening participation.

35. In order to ensure academic staff improve their understanding of equalities issues in relation to learning and teaching, the Centre for Educational Development offered a new workshop entitled “International Students: Understanding and Supporting Cultural Diversity” last year. It gave participants the opportunity to enhance their understanding of cultural diversity in HE contexts and to debate practical issues, such as adjusting courses and teaching in response to student diversity. This programme complemented two of the core workshops that were re-designed in 2004 (“Becoming a Personal Tutor” and “Designing for Learning”) to give greater emphasis to equality and diversity – these have continued to run successfully.

36. A key aspect of EnVision 2010, a major project which is focusing upon engineering education in College, is the attraction and retention of girls and young women to study and work in engineering. The research findings will be fed into the reform of engineering provision. In addition, 20 “Green Design Challenge Scholarships” – to study engineering at the College - were taken up in October 2005 following “The Green Design Challenge” competition held in 2004.
Celebrating Skills

37. Three “Rector’s Awards for Excellence” have been introduced this year: for Leadership and Management, Mentor of the Year, and achievements in Equality and Diversity. The Awards will celebrate involvement, inspiration and skills. Excellence in management, mentoring and equality all contribute to improved equal opportunities, and College recognition of capability in these three important areas is a positive step.

External Recognition

38. We are mindful of the importance of our corporate image and reputation and the work of the IVC, described above, is one example of outward-facing activities that help to raise our external standing and thus contribute to the principles and values in our Strategic Plan.

39. The College is a member of the Exhibition Road Cultural Group and participates in events with other institutions in the area. The Exhibition Road Music Day held on 21 June 2005 attracted visitors from a wide range of communities and the music was international. Children from many London boroughs also attended music workshops. 2 October 2005 marked “The Big Draw Meets Carnival”. Workshops aimed at families were held and 1,000 visitors came to College that day.

40. We have participated in external networks and fora and have been invited to speak at employer networks and training courses to share our experiences of our equality and diversity work. In addition, we have entered for equality and diversity recognition awards e.g. the SWAN silver award described in para.3 above, and participated in gender benchmarking with Opportunity Now, where we also achieved silver.

Procurement

41. The College continues to implement procurement practices in line with our Code of Practice (developed as part of our Promoting Race Equality Policy). This year, for example, we selected a new provider of temporary staff and a significant reason for the choice was the company’s commitment to diversity.

COMPLYING WITH LEGISLATION - EXAMPLES OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

42. The Registry and Human Resources Divisions have improved their collection and analysis of data. This has enabled us to monitor and measure trends more accurately. Statistics and analyses relating to staff and students are provided regularly to relevant College committees.

43. An example of a student-related impact assessment is the review of admissions policy and statistics by the Undergraduate Admissions Committee in November 2005. In particular, it considered a report that had been drawn up at the request of the Recruitment and Admission Policy Committee on trends in applications and admissions by ethnic group. The four-year analysis showed that the number of White British applicants had dropped significantly and that the number of offers to White British prospective students had dropped in line with the fall in applications. The number of offers to other major ethnic groups had increased by more than the rate of applications but there were differences in the conversion rates between
ethnic groups i.e. from applications to acceptances. This will continue to be monitored.

44. In relation to staff, we collect and analyse a wide range of quantitative data in order to review and evaluate the current state of play e.g. on pay, promotions and staff development take-up. Last year, we identified that there was a sustained high level of turnover in the operational services areas and we commissioned a project to establish whether there were any specific contributory factors. In fact, it was identified that we employ a lot of students on fixed-term contracts. This distorted the figures and, compared with the catering sector in London, and the security services sector nationally, the College’s turnover in these areas was actually low in comparison.

45. In undertaking the project, various equality-related matters came to the fore that we are taking forward. For example, some staff have greater access to the College’s flexible working policy than others and this needs to be standardised; childcare difficulties were also highlighted and childcare provision is to be expanded in consequence.

46. Since 2002, general turnover statistics by gender and ethnic group remain consistent although it is notable that, each year, more women than men leave, and the lowest turnover by ethnic origin is white. While analysis of exit questionnaires and interviews have provided information to help us understand why female academic staff might leave, it has not, as yet, provided us with information to identify specific issues encountered by other female staff, or those from a BME background.

SECTION 3 – PROGRESS IN RELATION TO THE EO&DC’S LONGER-TERM AMBITIONS

47. In the second Annual Report (May 2005), the EO&DC stated its longer-term ambitions*. During the last year, commitment and support from senior staff at the highest level has been much in evidence. Focus group feedback, however, shows that staffs’ view of our commitment to equality and diversity is largely influenced by how their manager behaves, or when they hear of instances of bullying or harassment that are not dealt with. Activity over the past year has, therefore, focused upon improving management skills generally, making managers aware of their responsibility to take complaints of harassment and bullying seriously, dealing effectively with perpetrators, and implementing changes to ensure that recruitment and selection, promotion and remuneration processes are “felt fair”. This work will continue.

48. There is increased understanding of the benefits of equality and diversity to Imperial, both as an employer and as a teaching and research institution. Equality and diversity issues are much more public and are talked about much more. We still have not, however, achieved the position whereby the principle of equality is “mainstreamed” into the introduction and/or revision of all College policies and procedures. It is not, yet, embedded in our “DNA”.

* Longer-term, the EO&DC wishes to see: increasing leadership and public commitment for those senior staff with managerial responsibility; greater recognition of the achievements and contribution of a wider range of staff than exists currently – working for a prestigious organisation is very positive but elite organisations can be less successful at being inclusive: increasing understanding of the benefits of equality and diversity to Imperial, both as an employer and as a teaching and research institution; and increasing communication with, and greater participation by, a wider range of staff and students.
49. Participation in College life by a wider range of staff and students has increased. PR and communications has improved and it is envisaged that the new equalities website for staff – introduced in May 2006 – will aid communication still further.

50. As an employer, we are required to consider representation figures by ethnic group and we widen this analysis – see the “Diversity Snapshot” Appendix 1. Our position as a major research university employing international academic and research staff, and our central London geographical location, means that we do not have an obvious “local population” from which to draw. For the most part, therefore, the 2001 census data, and subsequent data analysis by the Greater London Authority, is useful benchmarking data for support staff.

51. In 2001, 40.2% of London’s population were from ethnic groups other than White British. A crude comparison with the College’s snapshot shows that our support staff should be more ethnically diverse. We should also be mindful of the fact that there are fewer men than women at all ages over 21. This is reflected in support staff figures in the more junior grades ie women represent 56% of the total for support staff in levels 1-4, but as noted previously, there is a steady and significant decline in female representation at the more senior grades.

52. Implementing equality and diversity at Imperial is about change. It is challenging work and requires involvement and commitment from all – particularly from those who make important decisions, those who manage staff and those who have significant responsibility for, and contact with, students. It requires systematic action and a focus on developing an “open” environment. It is a continuous process, not an initiative. This Annual Report shows that our progress is positive and steady.

53. In the coming period, new work will focus upon preparing the College for the wide-reaching Age legislation, the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty.

DECISIONS

54. The Management Board is asked to:

a. note the findings of this Annual Report;

b. consider the impact of actions taken to date.