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TREASURER'S REPORT – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, MANCHESTER 2017

Membership

The official membership of the Society at the end of 2016 was 588 of which 57 were (free subscription) honorary members and the remainder paid-up members.

This represents a very small increase since the end of 2015, when there were a total of 586 members.

Last year we introduced a short survey that is sent to members who actively cancel their membership, so that we can start to monitor their reasons for leaving. However, the majority of our 'lost' members do not actively cancel – instead their membership lapses following non-payment (and several attempts to chase).

As noted in previous years, many (~300) 'inactive' members remain on our database because they continue to contribute to the Society via their Standing Orders to our NatWest account. Whilst every effort is made to contact former members, given the time and associated costs involved we are no longer proactive after 18 months' failure to make contact, and their payments are received as 'donations' to the Society.

Finances and SSM investments

Overall, the Society's finances remain healthy. At the end of August 2017, the Society's bank balance was £93,744.41. In 2016 the Society made a profit of £8,132.

This was largely due to the enormous success of the York ASM. A principle of the Society is to keep ASM costs as low as possible, acknowledging that some venues are more expensive than others and that in some years a surplus is made while others operate at a loss. The York ASM had cheaper venue costs than seen for some previous locations, as well as a high turn-out (304 attended).

Use of SSM funds has been guided by the Society's new strategy, which was proposed at last year's AGM and refined during a daylong committee meeting in January.

The first aim of the strategy is to invest in our members across their career life course. Commitment to our ECR members (which make up approximately one third) of our membership), for which the society is renowned, has continued under the careful and energetic watch of the ECR sub-committee. Last year also saw the launch of the mid-career researchers (MCR) sub-committee and 24 (including non-member participants) attended the first pre-conference workshop this Wednesday. This year we have also seen quick expansion of the SSM mentorship scheme. Thus far a total of 44 SCR and MCR members have received free mentorship training, during three successful sessions, two in London and one in Manchester. Now that we have a good base of trained-up mentors, the process of pairing mentors with ECR and MCR mentees has begun.

The second aim of the SSM strategy is to support scientific rigour. With this in mind, funded places on a joint 2 day course in advanced modelling strategies (run in conjunction with The Leeds Institute for Data Analytics) were provided for 5 ECR and 2 MCR SSM members. The society has also committed to subsidising a workshop on systematic reviewing (University of Southampton) which we hope will take place in the near future. We continue to use these workshops as an opportunity to advertise the benefits of SSM membership and to recruit new members.

In support of the third strategic commitment (to provide an expert voice for population health), and after a vote at the York AGM, an SSM Health and Brexit one-day conference was held in May. Arranged by several committee members, and with the help of other SSM members and experts, the day was attended by 66 people (24 SSM members, 34 non-members, and 8 ECRs who attended for free). This was fewer than planned for, partly due to a clash with another key event, but perhaps also because of time pressures faced by researchers and the relatively high fees (£99 for SSM and EUPHA members and £135 for non-members – which were later reduced for SSM members). Regardless, the day was an enormous success and has led to the production of an output statement (which at time of writing was under review with the BMJ).

The fourth aim of the strategy is to foster and facilitate multidisciplinary collaboration. It is the committee's intention that all of the previously mentioned investments have and will continue to encourage cross-disciplinary relationships and activities amongst the membership, and this is to be further supported by the recently launched Membership Network platform.

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Committee expenses were £4,617 in 2016, lower than in 2015. Discussions have been underway to consider how the committee might be made more efficient, particularly in light of the growing number of roles in recent years. We are taking steps to merge some of the less involved roles and will continue to audit roles as the needs of the committee and the SSM membership evolve.

Other expenditure has included the invaluable clerical and administrative support provided by Hg3 to the SSM committee.

Thanks

Dr Anna Pearce, Honorary Treasurer (anna.pearce@glasgow.ac.uk)
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