

## AGCAS Alumni Reunion 2014

### Introduction

The very successful 2014 reunion of retired, former and honorary AGCAS members took place on 24<sup>th</sup> September at Senate House, University of London, thanks to the support of the Careers Group. It was organised by Margaret Dane, former Chief Executive Officer of AGCAS and was attended by 25 participants. A list of these is attached as Appendix A at the end of these notes along with the names of those who were unable to attend but sent greetings to their former colleagues. The programme included interesting introductions from participants outlining their previous career and current activities; a presentation about recent developments in the sector and in AGCAS by the new AGCAS President, Eluned Jones, Director of Student Employability, at the University of Birmingham; plenty of opportunities for participants to chat and catch up with each other and a brainstorm to identify what retired members wanted from their membership and how the retired membership group could go forward. The resulting consensus of ideas is described more fully below.

Following the meeting, Mike Tiley hosted a very enjoyable and interesting visit to St Mary-le-Strand, a beautiful baroque church where he is verger, and to the new premises of the LSE careers service where Sean Russell kindly showed the visitors round. This was deemed to be a very useful model for future meetings when an optional extra local visit might be offered.

### Discussion about Retired Membership of AGCAS & future arrangements

Margaret Dane introduced this discussion, describing past arrangements and benefits of retired membership of AGCAS. These primarily focussed on receiving quarterly printed copies of Phoenix, the long established AGCAS journal. From 2002 to 2012 there was also an annual reunion for retired members, organised in different parts of the country by one or more local retired members together with the former AGCAS CEO. In Biennial Conference years, this was organised as part of the conference with the additional support of other AGCAS staff. There was no reunion linked to the last Biennial Conference in Exeter in 2013 as it was clear that as a result of work pressures AGCAS staff were no longer able to play a central role in organising one. As a result retired members agreed to take over the organisation of the 2014 reunion themselves, with the AGCAS office staff only involved in the overall financial aspects of the event. This has worked fairly well and is likely to be the pattern for the future. Key points arising from the discussion are as follows:

Retired membership - The current statement on the AGCAS website says that it is designed to keep such members "in touch with what is going on in the sector". Benefits are listed as:

- *You'll be part of an active, committed and supportive community of current and retired HE careers and employability professionals;*
- *You'll be kept up to date by ARENA, AGCAS' informative e-newsletter, sent direct to your inbox every fortnight;*
- *You'll enjoy lively opinion pieces and features on the latest developments in the sector three times a year in Phoenix, AGCAS' professional digital journal;*

*Subscription for Retired Membership 2014-2015    £24 plus vat = £28.80*

(It should be noted that recipients of the AGCAS Lifetime Achievement Award become Honorary Members of AGCAS and as such are not expected to pay any subscription.)

### Suggestions for future development

Participants were keen to make Retired Membership of AGCAS more meaningful than simply receiving on-line publications and felt that the purpose and aims of the group should be redefined. Ideas suggested included the development of an active on-line community, continued annual reunions in different parts of the country, more publicity aimed at attracting those about to retire into continued membership, updating and consolidating the database of retired members and providing access to this for all the members listed. Participants were also keen to ensure that retired membership provided a real social network of former colleagues and friends who might meet face-to-face as well as on-line. It was also suggested that more recently retired AGCAS members might offer their service as mentors or consultants to those still in post.

- Redefine purpose, aims and arrangements for retired membership in the ways outlined above to make it more active and attractive and enabling retired members to do much of the necessary work themselves. This would include recognizing that retired membership is also a way of thanking those who have contributed to AGCAS (often significantly) in the past and allowing them to continue the relationships between members which AGCAS fosters, as well as looking at appropriate fees and benefits.
- Develop an active on-line community to provide a focus for ideas and discussion. This could be as one of the many AGCAS Communities or possibly as a Linked-In group if that was felt to be more appropriate.
- Continue annual reunions in different parts of the country to foster on-going relationships and links with other parts of AGCAS
- Develop publicity to attract AGCAS members about to retire to ensure that they know about it
- Update and consolidate the database of retired AGCAS members and provide those listed with access to it. It is recognised that it is very difficult and often time-consuming to keep databases up-to-date but also that the current arrangements for retired members are unsatisfactory with some paying and others not, some questioning the value of their subscriptions and a lack of clarity as to who is listed where at present.
- Provide a real social network of former colleagues and friends to meet face-to-face and have fun as well as on-line. This would include annual reunions for all retired members, but also encourage more regional get-togethers too.
- Consider how recently retired members might offer other AGCAS members the benefits of their knowledge, experience and contacts through personal mentoring, supporting research or consultancy.

### Future reunions for retired members of AGCAS

It was agreed that there would be another reunion in 2015 and several participants from the Eastern region agreed to plan and organise this. These included: Anne Hillary, Joan Newton, and Joanna Symons.

A further group from Yorkshire including Val Butcher, Dick Lidwell and Valerie Metcalfe agreed to plan an event for 2017 when Hull will be a European Capital of Culture. Both groups agreed to build in a social element to the event. It was felt that a one-day meeting from around 10.30am–3.30pm is about right, that it should not be connected to future AGCAS Annual Conferences and that the programme should include an AGCAS speaker, but not necessarily from the Board.

### AGCAS Archive

Finally there was also a brief discussion about the AGCAS archive which AGCAS needs to keep and value. While it is recognised that there are lots of pressures on AGCAS at the present time, it is also important that key records and documents relating to the history and development of AGCAS are not lost to future generations of AGCAS members. There might be a role which retired members could play in supporting this area as volunteers who understand the past development and achievements of AGCAS.

## Appendix A – List of participants

Val Butcher  
Tony Caston  
Margaret Dane  
Jack Daniels  
Anusha Everson  
Mike & Pam Gavin  
John Gough  
Diane Hay  
Anne Hillary  
Arti Kumar  
Dick Lidwell  
Wilma Martinelli  
Valerie Metcalfe  
Rose Mortenson  
Joan Newton  
Elaine Paradise  
Pat Pearce  
Peter Pierce-Price  
Bob Porrer  
Eileen Scott  
Noel Starr  
Joanna Symons  
Mike Tiley  
Tony Watts

## List of those who sent apologies & greetings

Ruth Cohen  
Sheila Cross  
Pat & Keith Dugdale  
Barbara Graham  
Paul Hacking  
Bernard Kingston  
Anne Lickiss  
Wendy Llewellyn  
Richard Maynard  
Audrey Newsome  
Martin Pennington  
Jan Perrett  
Richard Pethen  
Peter Philips  
Tony Raban  
Brian Read  
Jane Saxton  
Ann & Brian Steptoe  
Maureen Tibby  
Margaret Wallis

## Appendix B - Dates & venues for previous AGCAS Alumni Reunions

2002 Leicester  
2003 Edinburgh  
2004 Cambridge  
2005 Warwick  
2006 London  
2007 Birmingham  
2008 Oxford  
2009 Brunel  
2010 Reading  
2011 Nottingham  
2012 Sheffield  
2014 London