

RICS and efficiency could be the title of this article!

The content the article on page 3 of the last edition of QS News certainly lends weight for the need to spell out what QS's in the Institution led by the QS & Construction Faculty are doing to improve the efficiency of the Institution and the delivery of services to members from students through to senior managers.

But before I get down to business, I would like to offer my best wishes to Jeremy Hackett, mentioned in the last edition, who has recently, successfully, undergone heart surgery in London Bridge Hospital; I understand from Jeremy's wife that he is recovering; Please get well soon, Jeremy, your contributions whilst not always appreciated by some is welcome to the overall debate.

Back to the RICS, what is not commonly known at the moment is that there is an intensive, internal, review of the role of the Faculties in the Institution; the process begun last October and November has aroused much debate and suggestion for the way forward. The QS & Construction Faculty is playing a leading role in it along with its sister faculties in the Built Environment Group, the Project Management and Building Surveying Faculties.

Concurrently the QS Faculty has continued to develop its programme, nationally and internationally, to provide better support services to its members and the worldwide profession as a whole.

Some of the projects underway are:-

- The International Measurement Initiative led by Stuart Earl of Gleeds and supported by members throughout the UK and Worldwide.
- The E-Tendering brief; produced by the faculty's IT group led by Peter Sell of Davis Langdon and Steve Pittard of Elstree Computing
- Guidance on the proposed new Consultant's Appointment (as it affects QS's)
- PFI/PPP; better project control systems for the ever developing market for PFI/PPP; The QS Faculty recently hosted a very successful conference at 12 Great George Street on the issue.
- Development of Whole Life Cycle Cost (WLCC) techniques for both traditionally let project for PPP procured schemes; this work is supported by all of the major UK practices, Faithful & Gould, E C Harris, AYH Gleeds to name but a few, as well as the QS Faculty's overseas contemporaries such as the AACE (USA), the members of the Pacific Association of Quantity Surveyors (SISV, HKIS, ISM, AIQS and NZIQS); the involvement of WLCC techniques also contributes to the measurement initiative mentioned earlier.
- Assisting the Construction Directorate of the European Union review industry productivity in the enlarged EU; a recent survey reflected very poorly on the UK industry.
- Comparing Cost Planning techniques for infrastructure projects throughout the EU.
- A complete and thorough review of the APC requirements and competencies for QS graduates offering themselves for membership of the Institution; led by Stuart Earl and Mike Wood.
- And perhaps the most important development to recreate the QS and PM Community that has been lacking since 1999, has been the development and establishment of the Faculty Journal "Construction Journal", circulation 38,000, led by Michael Sullivan and Richard Schofield (PM Faculty Chairman) and the editorial team; this development is the first step in allowing the QS & Construction Faculty to make members aware of current technical developments in their field of practice.

And there are more!

But how will the members of the QS Faculty and the public benefit from these projects and take advantage of the tools provided to them to help their daily practice lives?

In an increasingly global construction economy, a global presence in the UK that will increase with the delivery of the 2012 Olympic Games, QS's need to be aware of international best practice in project programme and construction cost management. The QS Faculty is playing a major part in bringing that expertise to the profession in the UK.

And for anyone who is unsure of the penetration of overseas investors into the UK construction market, just bear in mind the recent acquisition of BAA by Ferrovial of Spain – a company that already owns Amey in the UK; ASDA is owned by Walmart of the US and there are many others.

For the UK practitioner to take advantage of the opportunities that will arise with these investors, working knowledge of international best practice in programme and construction cost management will be a major boost for his or her chances of securing work.

The work the faculty is doing with education, on a global basis, will also address the current worldwide shortage of quality resource to the profession; a shortage that will threaten the government's ability to deliver public works programmes in the UK if it not addressed now.

Once more the practitioner in the UK will see the benefits of this work – providing the QS Faculty is able to successfully restructure the role of the faculties within the Institution as part of the current review process.

The combination of the professional development work and improved educational processes, led by the QS Faculty, will also help us address the current uncompetitive position of the UK industry in Europe as reported in the last edition of this magazine.

I don't feel embarrassed by listing all of the work the QS Faculty is doing because having done so it is simpler for me to explain the QS view of the future of the Institution.

That senior members of the Institution such as David Tuffin, appear to be unaware of the work we are doing confirms to the QS Faculty one the major points the Faculty, with other members of the Built Environment Group, has raised within the current internal review.

The woefully poor communication process between the Faculties, which are “the custodians of the intellectual property of the professions” and therefore the deliverers of professional support services and educational guidance at all levels, and the International Governing Council, which is charged with the strategic management of the RICS.

What is the source of this problem?

The QS Faculty along with other Faculties in Built Environment Group and elsewhere within the RICS, believes that the “corporate”, “centralist” RICS that has developed since 1999 (“The Agenda for Change”) is insensitive to the needs of its members, is not best placed to respond to the professional practice and educational needs of the members nor is the appropriate vehicle for the international development and expansion of the profession.

And why should it be?

Time has clouded the fact the RICS is a federation of associated professional surveying bodies from the Chartered Surveyors' Institution and the Quantity Surveyors Association in 1921 through the absorption of the Valuers' Institution, The Chartered Land Agents' Society, the Chartered Auctioneer's and Estate Agents Institution to the IQS and more recently the ISVA.

To forget its federal origin will hinder the RICS in promoting and developing the professions under its roof and thus providing the services its members want.

Based on the concept of a federal RICS, the QS Faculty has put forward a proposal for a streamlined structure of the Institution which would see:-

The QS and Construction Faculty as the custodian of profession responsible for:

- Development of professional services and support to members
- The management of the education process at all levels
- The expansion of the profession through developing relationships with similar professional bodies worldwide.
- The improved relationship between the regions within the UK and the National Associations overseas; representatives from both would be elected to the faculties boards to ensure that international best practice is under constant review.
- The creation of a Faculties Conference within the Institution on which all Faculty Chairman would sit.
- The Chairman of the major faculties would sit on IGC.

The intent of this proposal is to devolve the responsibility for professional development from "corporate RICS" to the Faculties, to which, in turn, the support staff of the RICS will directly report.

The principle intentions of the QS Faculty proposal are to restore the relevance of the RICS to its members whilst improving the delivery of members' services.

Up until now I haven't mentioned the staff in the RICS who will have some genuine concerns as to their future when this proposal is implemented. There some very fine staff with whom I have had the opportunity to work, Jill Craig In Brussels, Brian Berry in Public Policy and of course Ed Badke and his team within the Built Environment Group in London.

Similarly the role of BCIS under Joe Martin's guidance can and must be developed and expanded to fulfil its fullest national international potential.

I must also mention Sean Tomkins, The Chief Operating Officer, with whom we have been developing our ideas since the faculties review process started last year.

All of the perceived arguments, as referred to in last week's article, are of little interest to members who see subscription as a necessary evil of practice with no obvious benefit.

So where will members see the positive effect of the faculty's proposal?

In a phrase that is very appropriate to the current national interest, "the midfield strategy", the Faculty in a Lampardesque role, is being developed with the staff I have mentioned and will play a central role in the development of the quantity surveying and construction cost management profession worldwide; it will at the heart of:-

- Delivering education at all levels through the regions and national associations to all levels of member.
- Guiding members on the implementation of professional tools to meet the public's needs and
- Developing RICS influence through best practice in areas where the Institution does not as yet have a major role.

All of these are possible but can only be delivered if the streamlining process takes place within the RICS and proper and sufficient resources, staff and financial, are placed at the control of the Faculty.

On behalf of the Quantity Surveying and Construction Faculty Board, as well as our fellow faculties within the Built Environment Group, we have made our proposal to improve members' services, we are not complaining nor are we withdrawing or refusing to take part in the RICS. We are taking the Faculty back to the central of the Institution, a federal institution, as I said we would last September.

That senior members are ignorant of the progress we are making supports our concerns.

To address the current lack of communication, we have already agreed to support the incoming President Graham Chase, a valuer, when he takes office in July and also to remove any misgivings or concerns David Tuffin, the Senior Vice-President, has, we have invited both members to meet the Faculty Executive to present our proposals in detail.

Michael Byng
Chairman
RICS Quantity Surveying & Construction Faculty
For and on behalf of the Faculty Board and our members
9th June 2006