

# ACADEMIC DEAN'S REPORT 2006

During 2006, in its third year as a College of the University of London, The Institute had another outstanding academic year. We have seen the successful continuation of our established academic activities as well as a number of important new strategic initiatives. In particular, we congratulate our newly appointed professors and qualifying students.



**Alan Horwich**  
PhD FRCP FRCR FMedSci  
Alan Horwich is Professor of Radiotherapy and the Academic Dean of The Institute of Cancer Research

## Awards

The achievements of our senior scientists and clinicians continue to be recognised by the conferment of academic titles of the University of London. The following titles were conferred: Judith Bliss became Professor of Clinical Trials; Richard Marais became Professor of Molecular Oncology; and Stephen Johnston became Reader in Breast Cancer Medicine.

## Conferences, lectures and seminars

A highlight of The Institute's academic year is the annual Institute Conference, an event which aims to share knowledge and expertise across The Institute and The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and encourage collaboration in research. Staff and students contribute in a variety of ways, and the blend of lectures, student presentations and team poster presentations display the breadth of research in The Institute and The Royal Marsden.

The sessions of this year's Institute Conference, held at the University of Surrey, were entitled: A Crossover Tour of Chemistry and Clinical Trials (Chair: Kathy Weston); Molecular Biology of Metastasis (Chair: Clare Isacke); Prostate Cancer (Chair: Amanda Swain); New Faculty (Chair: Alan Horwich); Arrays Workshop (Chair: Colin Cooper); Best Student Abstracts (Chair: Ann Jackman); Late Breaking News (Chair: Peter Rigby); and Developmental Origins of Cancer (Chair: Mel Greaves).

Student oral presentations were chosen by submission of abstracts and were of customary high quality. The Third Year Student poster prizewinners were James Day, Joanna Holmes and Nicholas Turner. The Oral Prize was awarded to John Macfadyen.

The Institute's Distinguished Lecture Series continues to attract outstanding scientists of international renown. Notable lectures this year included: 'Targeting ERBB Receptors in Cancer' (Professor Nancy Hynes, Friedrich

Miescher Institute, Switzerland); 'Exploring Chromatin Structure using Nucleosome Arrays' (Professor Timothy Richmond, Institute of Molecular Biology and Biophysics, Zurich); 'Early Cancer Clinical Trials for Molecular Targeted Agents: Sense and Sensibility' (Dr Elizabeth Eisenhauer, National Cancer Research Institute, Canada); and 'Testicular Germ Cell Tumours in a Broader Perspective' (Professor J Wolter Oosterhuis, Erasmus Medical Centre, Rotterdam).

There were four Inaugural Lectures: 'Wilms Tumour: Trawling the Genome to Treat the Child' (Professor Kathy Pritchard-Jones, Section of Paediatric-Oncology); 'Myeloma Genetics and Treatment' (Professor Gareth Morgan, Section of Haemato-Oncology); 'Adventures of a Synthetic Organic Chemist' (Professor Keith Jones, Cancer Research UK Centre for Cancer Therapeutics); 'Medicine, Science and Politics in Radiation Oncology' (Professor Michael Brada, Section of Radiotherapy).

The Thirteenth Annual Link Lecture which took place in October 2006, was given by Dr Dennis J Slamon, Chief, Division of Hematology/Oncology, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, Los Angeles, California. The title was 'Update on HER-2 Directed Therapy'.

There were two Inter-site Lectures which are designed to foster greater links between the Chelsea and Sutton sites. These, along with the Sutton Site Lectures complement the large number of seminars with external speakers that are organised by individual sections.

### Virtual Learning Environment: cancer.ed

During 2006, The Institute purchased a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that Institute students can use to access course content such as lecture notes, and communicate with each other and members of staff.

The VLE, christened cancer.ed, is currently being used by students enrolled on The Institute's taught postgraduate course in Oncology. The students have been enthusiastic about cancer.ed and are using the website regularly; there is an average of 200 logins a week from a student body of approximately 130.

It is planned to develop cancer.ed so that students can take their multiple choice exams online. Additionally, a trial of providing audio and video recordings of lectures is expected to start in the near future.

The Institute is aiming to develop its research and taught course programmes and to make use of information technology to enhance and deliver these courses; cancer.ed will play a large part in achieving these aims.



Professors Peter Rigby and Karen Vousden

### Research degree students

Our research degree programme has over 130 full-time research degree students working on cancer-related projects and enrolled on MPhil or PhD degrees of the University of London. Demand for entry to our PhD research training programme remained very high with many outstanding students from the UK and overseas keen to join us. There were 903 applications with 31 new MPhil/PhD students joining in September 2006, including six clinical fellows. We have 15 part-time MPhil/PhD registrations. In addition to those following MPhil and PhD degrees, 41 clinical research students were registered at the end of 2006 for a two-year part-time Advanced Degree in Medicine of the University of London, the Doctor of Medicine (MD(Res)).

As always we acknowledge and thank those organisations that have supported our students during the past year: AstraZeneca, Breakthrough Breast Cancer, Cancer Research UK, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, the Medical Research Council and Leukaemia Research Fund.

The Institute's Award Ceremony took place on 11 May 2006 in the Brookes Lawley Building, Sutton. In total 23 graduands received their University of London degrees; 20 gained the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and three received the Doctor of Medicine (MD). The Chairman's

Prize for the best graduating PhD students was awarded to Dr Corey Don Gutierrez and Dr George Tzircotis. There were also six conferrals of 'Member of The Institute' and two of 'Associate of The Institute'.

Additionally, two honorary appointments of Fellow of The Institute were conferred to recognise major contributions made by distinguished individuals to the advancement of The Institute's objectives. Professor Harrap, the first Director of the Cancer Research UK Centre for Cancer Therapeutics at The Institute, was honoured for being instrumental in building up what is now the major academic centre dedicated to the design, synthesis, evaluation and development of anticancer drugs. Baroness Morgan of Drefelin was recognised for her achievements as Chief Executive of Breakthrough Breast Cancer (1995-2005) during which she took the charity from being a relatively small organisation to the pre-eminent position it has today.

At the Ceremony The Institute also awarded its first honorary degree since it became a College of the University of London in 2003. The recipient of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (Medicine) was Professor Karen Vousden FRS FRSE FMedSci, Director of Cancer Research UK's Beatson Institute for Cancer Research at Glasgow University. The award was given in recognition of her pioneering and continuing contributions to cancer research, which include a leading role in improving collaborations within Scotland that have had a significant impact on patient treatment. Professor Vousden embarked on a lifelong career in cancer research after working at The Institute as a researcher. She spent four years investigating the molecular mechanisms that underlie cancer in Professor Chris Marshall's laboratory in the Section of Cell and Molecular Biology.

## Taught course in Oncology

In 2006, a new taught part-time course in Oncology commenced at The Institute of Cancer Research and 92 students were enrolled by the end of 2006. The modular programme is aimed at specialist postgraduate students in the fields of Clinical and Medical Oncology and leads to a Postgraduate Certificate, a Postgraduate Diploma or an MSc in Oncology.

The overall aim of the course is to encourage proactive problem solving and reflective approaches to medical or clinical practice, producing graduates who are well equipped with the highly refined intellectual, scientific and clinical skills necessary for leadership careers in twenty-first century oncology.

The course also delivers the curriculum needed to sit the Royal College of Radiologists' Part One and Part Two

examinations in Clinical Oncology, leading to Fellowship of the Royal College of Radiologists (FRCR), for those students who require it.

## Visitors

The Institute hosted a typically large number of visitors in its laboratories. We are fortunate in having the resources of the Haddow Fund with which to foster important links with the international scientific community attracted by the scientific excellence of The Institute. This year the Haddow Fund supported a visit from Professor Suming Huang to work with Dr Eric So in the Section of Haemato-Oncology.

## Interactive Education Unit

### Catherine Dunbar, Manager

The Interactive Education Unit (IEU) was established at The Institute in 1999 with the remit to develop Web- and CD ROM-based educational resources ([www.ieu.icr.ac.uk](http://www.ieu.icr.ac.uk)).

The overarching aim of the IEU is to promote and disseminate the educational, research and clinical activities of The Institute, by exploiting new media, to improve the treatment, care and quality of life of people with cancer.

The Unit has won a number of awards, including a Platinum award (the highest accolade) for its website in the MarCom creative awards, a leading international marketing and communications competition. It has also twice been identified as an area of good practice by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in reviews of The Institute's educational activities. IEU projects are developed in collaboration with leading scientists and clinicians at both The Institute and The Royal Marsden. The Unit has three key audiences: students and scientists, healthcare professionals, and patients and the public. Students undertaking The Institute's new taught postgraduate course in Oncology also fall within the 'healthcare professionals' category. Examples of projects in each of these three categories are detailed below.

## Students and scientists – developing resources to aid research/career development

- The Study Skills Website was launched in July 2002 on The Institute's intranet. It aims to provide students with a range of transferable skills such as time management and communication. The website is part of The Institute's strategy to meet the skills training requirements for PhD students.
- *Study Skills: A Student Survival Guide* was published in March 2005. Content from the Study Skills Website was adapted and expanded into an informative and user-

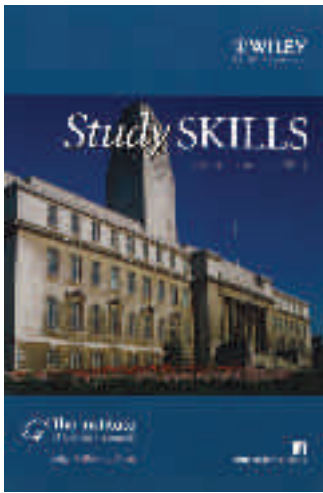


Figure 1: The cover of the University of Leeds custom edition of *Study Skills: A Student Survival Guide*

friendly handbook, published by John Wiley & Sons. It identifies the transferable skills research students need to progress successfully through their PhD and on into their working lives. The book is an invaluable aid to science-based PhD students across the UK. In 2006 the book won a top prize in the MarCom creative awards competition. It was also translated into Japanese and adapted into a special branded edition by the University of Leeds (see Figure 1).

- *Perspectives in Oncology* – the cancer science website (see Figure 2) was launched in June 2004 to provide students at The Institute with a thorough and connected grounding in the field of cancer science. The site emphasises how discoveries in scientific research translate into clinical care and highlights how the fields of physics, biology, chemistry and medicine all contribute to understanding, managing and treating cancer. The site was launched initially with five modules, covering causes and prevention of

cancer, common cancers, therapies, genetics of cancer, and bioinformatics. A module on medical physics was added in 2005, with a further four modules scheduled to be launched and developed in 2007-8.

## Healthcare professionals – supporting evidence-based practice

- The *A Breath of Fresh Air* CD ROM is an interactive guide to managing breathlessness in patients with advanced lung cancer and is based on research work pioneered at The Institute and The Royal Marsden. Nearly 17,000 copies of *A Breath of Fresh Air* have been distributed worldwide since its launch in 2001. The program is provided free to healthcare professionals thanks to generous sponsorship from the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund Project, Macmillan Cancer Support and Marks & Spencer, and can be ordered by calling 0800 9177263. A second edition of the program is currently being developed and is due to be launched mid-2007.
- *RT Plan – the conformal radiotherapy website*, currently in development, will help to educate oncology clinicians and trainees in 3D conformal radiotherapy planning in patients with localised prostate cancer.
- *Pain Management* CD ROM, currently in development, is an interactive guide to managing pain in cancer and will provide a comprehensive overview of the subject, featuring case histories and tools to use with patients.

## Patients and the public – educating them about cancer

- *Relax and Breathe*, developed in collaboration with Macmillan Cancer Support, is available in both CD and audiotape format and features practical guidance and exercises on relaxation. The resource is designed to help people with lung cancer cope with their breathlessness, but can also be used by healthcare professionals wanting to learn and practice relaxation. Nearly 13,100 copies of the CD, 3,900 of the audiotape and 2,100 of the healthcare professionals resource pack have been distributed so far. *Relax and Breathe* is available free thanks to sponsorship from Macmillan Cancer Support, and can be ordered by calling the Macmillan Resources line on 01344 350 310, specifying the preferred format.

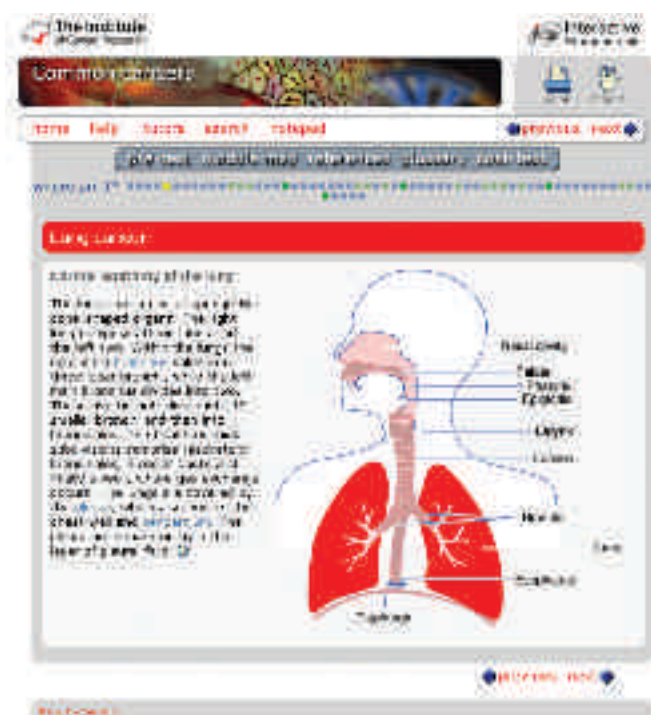


Figure 2: A screen from the common cancers module of *Perspectives in Oncology - the cancer science website*