

The future of *whynotchemeng*

IChemE's UK Board has approved changes to the management and activities of the *whynotchemeng* campaign to incorporate its work more fully into IChemE's 'business as usual'. The decision has been made to ensure that *whynotchemeng* activity is seen as the first step on the membership pipeline.

We understand that many members – especially our *whynotchemeng* volunteers – will have questions about why we've made changes to the campaign and how these changes may affect them.

Is *whynotchemeng* closing?

No. Although it could be argued that *whynotchemeng* has done its job – in that there has been a significant increase in applications to UK chemical engineering courses in the past decade – IChemE still has a responsibility to provide careers information to chemical engineers at all levels. This includes 'prospective' chemical engineers (schoolchildren, teenagers and undergraduate students).

Changes will be made to the campaign in the coming months to bring it into IChemE's 'business as usual' activity, while maintaining support to students, schools and volunteers.

Why is it changing?

whynotchemeng was launched in 2001, when the number of students applying to study chemical engineering at university had been falling for several years (from 1437 in 1994 to 940 in 2001). Numbers were dropping, professional chemical engineers were retiring, and a skills gap was looming.

The landscape looks very different today. Despite a small decline in applications and intake to chemical engineering courses (and university courses in general) in 2017 and 2018, chemical engineering as a discipline still has record numbers of students graduating. Our plan is to align the *whynotchemeng* work with other areas of the 'talent pipeline' to ensure relevant careers information is given to students, undergraduates, recent graduates and beyond. There is much we need to do and making changes to *whynotchemeng* will help.

What's changing?

The biggest changes will be internal – work and responsibilities will be spread across a larger number of staff/departments and will no longer rely on sponsorship income. The biggest change from our members' perspective will be our collaboration with the STEM Ambassador scheme, who will take over the managing of volunteer attendance at events.

Will IChemE stop promoting chemical engineering as a career?

No. The *whynotchemeng* branding, website and careers literature will remain, although there will be changes to the website towards the end of 2018 when IChemE's new web platform is launched.

Although the volunteer organisation will be handled by STEM Ambassadors, we will continue to provide our members (and schools, universities etc), with careers literature and display material for events.

Are we still sending literature into schools?

Although we'll stop sending regularly-scheduled mailings into schools, we can send information to relevant schools as needed – ie special events/campaigns such as the Year of Engineering, or member group events that may appeal to a younger audience. We'll direct schools to the relevant webpages where they can print leaflets and posters and will also post literature to schools on request.

Why are we not asking for sponsorship?

If *whynotchemeng* is to become an integral part of the IChemE membership pipeline, it is no longer appropriate to ask external stakeholders to fund our work in this area. However, we may seek funding in the future for one-off projects or to help develop new resources.

Where will IChemE find the money to pay for *whynotchemeng*?

whynotchemeng sponsorship has paid for (or contributed to) staff resource and central overheads (the campaign had two dedicated members of staff), and direct costs such as literature production, advertising, web development, etc.

By bringing *whynotchemeng* in line with IChemE's usual work, the workload will be spread across various members of IChemE's staff team. This will include:

- admin and posting of literature = Member Support and Engagement Team
- web content and literature development = Membership Marketing
- academic stakeholder engagement = Qualifications team
- social media = Communication and Brand Development

This leaves the only tangible costs to be the printing and posting of material to member groups, universities and volunteers – something we already do with other IChemE literature and marketing materials.

Why isn't IChemE managing *whynotchemeng* volunteer outreach?

Our volunteers are the biggest resource we have, and we're extremely grateful for all the work they've done over the years. However, we're very much aware that we're unable to provide as much support as we'd like, which is where the STEM Ambassadors scheme comes in.

Many of our volunteers are already registered as STEM Ambassadors. The advantages of being registered include access to training, advice, insurance and DBS checks, and support at a regional level through STEM Ambassador Hubs across the UK.

They work with students and UK schools at all levels – primary, secondary and FE – providing free teaching resources, teacher CPD and Ambassadors. This will give our members more choice in their outreach work.

IChemE will continue to provide secondary-level literature and display material as needed.

Do I have to register with STEM Ambassadors?

It's not compulsory – if you already have strong links with a local school, feel free to maintain that relationship. However, if you're an active *whynotchemeng* volunteer, or if you're interested in school outreach and promoting chemical engineering, we would suggest registering as a STEM Ambassador.

Where will I get display material for events?

Our Member Support and Engagement Team will provide literature on request. Please email them at membersupport@icheme.org.

Alternatively, literature, handouts and presentations are available to download at www.whynotchemeng.com/volunteers-information

Who do I contact with any questions?

If your questions or concerns have not been answered in this document, please contact Claire Cooke at ccooke@icheme.org for further information.