

*With a new design of the newsletter we want to mark the occasion of the enlarged IDEA League – now with ParisTech.*

### Grant scheme for research projects

A special IDEA League grant has been created promoting the collaboration in research projects: the grant will be €1,000 for a minimum period of 3 months and will be awarded by the university which sends the students. It is planned to start the scheme in April 2006. These grants can be used at all student levels (bachelor, master, PhD). Students will remain registered in their home universities, where they will pay their tuition fee. Each subject-specific group of one IDEA university can offer one place for each partner (normally 3 places).

This agreement was signed last November 2005 by the heads of the founding IDEA League partners - Imperial College London, TU Delft, ETH Zürich and RWTH Aachen.

### Joint master in applied geophysics

Three of the IDEA League institutions - TU Delft, ETH Zürich and RWTH Aachen University - have launched a new joint-degree programme in Applied Geophysics.

The joint MSc is a two-year programme that builds on the strengths and the complementary expertise in earth sciences at the three universities. It offers a combination of study and research, leading to an outstanding qualification in applied geophysics. Students can specialise in either hydrocarbon exploration and management or environmental and engineering investigations, including geothermal energy exploration and management.

Deadline for application is 1 May 2006; the programme will start in September 2006, see also [www.idealeague.org/geophysics](http://www.idealeague.org/geophysics).

### Workshop 'mathematics in engineering'

If you are concerned with "*mathematics in engineering*" you are invited to participate in a workshop addressing this issue – we hope to welcome representatives of all the engineering subjects of the 5 institutions. This workshop will be hosted by Imperial College London, starting on 25 April at lunch time and finishing on 26 April around lunch. The following themes will be addressed:

1. Introductory overview of mathematics teaching in the 5 institutions
2. Mathematics teaching with respect to the diversity of engineering subjects
3. Measures to deal with mismatch from school to university education (how do you measure the mismatch and how does it affect the curriculum?)
4. Mathematics as killer subject (selection at entrance and progress during study)
5. Qualification of lecturers, organisational workload, logistics
6. Computer use
  - o can multimedia tools help ?
  - o laptop projects survey
  - o supplementary computer-based courses to improve mathematics skills
7. Round-table discussion on future needs
  - o raise awareness concerning decreasing level of mathematics
  - o demands of engineers: soft skills, industrial design next to computer science, etc.
  - o IDEA statement concerning secondary-school mathematics teaching
8. Conclusions

This workshop, initiated by the quality-management group, is the third in a series of instruments contributing to the transfer of good practice within the IDEA League.

### Mentoring project

The IDEA mentoring project has passed the evaluation threshold of the EU Framework Programme 6 in science & society, gender issues (see also New IDEAs no. 26). Normally, proposals which passed the evaluation threshold are invited to enter into contract negotiations; and we expect to receive further information on this in due course.

### Concert – Verdi requiem

Some 120 voices and 90 instrumentalists from the universities of Aachen and Delft will jointly perform the Verdi Requiem in Aachen and in Den Haag.

The two concerts of the choir of RWTH Aachen (Collegium Musicum) and the TU Delft orchestra and choir (Krashna Musika) will take place on Saturday 18 February at 20h in the Krönungssaal of Aachen's town hall and on Sunday 19 February at 20.15h in the

Elandstraatkerk, Den Haag. Conductor: Gilles Michels, Dorothy Grandia - soprano, Ina Boersma - mezzo-soprano, Aart Mateboer - tenor, Pieter Hendriks - bass.

### News from working groups

The work on the *white paper* of the IDEA League will shortly be resumed including ParisTech. The members of the working group are: Chris Hankin (chair), Imperial, Rene de Borst and Patrick Dewilde, TU Delft, Dimos Poulikakos and Gerhard Schmitt, ETH Zürich, Reinhart Poprawe, RWTH Aachen, Pierre Avenas, ParisTech, and Herma Büttner, IDEA.

Benchmarking is high on the agenda of the partners, also with respect to the increasing interest in university rankings. However, comparison of facts & figures requires an understanding of the underlying systems and structures. A working group '*institutional analysis*' will look into fact sheets and the definition of data sets amongst the institutions. Urs Hugentobler, ETH Zürich, will chair the meeting; other representatives are Michelle Coupland, Imperial, Ellen van der Sar, TU Delft, Hans-Dieter Hötte, RWTH Aachen, and Sylviane Gastaldo, ParisTech.

*Continued education* is another topic in which the IDEA partners want to learn from each other and intend to discuss possibilities of collaboration. The following people will meet in April considering this issue: Mervyn Jones, Imperial, Erik de Graaff, TU Delft, Hans-Rudolf Frey and Daniel Künzle, ETH Zürich, and Christoph Heinen, RWTH Aachen.

### Collaboration with student councils

A database for research projects and a summer school addressing areas like ethics, management, international law, etc. were the major points of discussion between representatives of the IDEA student councils and the advisory & coordination committee when they met in January. The IDEA general assembly had suggested such a meeting with the further intention of considering the introduction of a prize for students: innovation award.

### News from within the institutions

#### TU Delft

Mr. José Barroso, President of the European Commission, was speaker at TU Delft's 164<sup>th</sup>

celebration of their Foundation Day on 13 January 2006. His speech outlined measures to make science as successful as the arts in Europe. Further, the Commission intends to boost excellence through the creation of a European Institute of Technology (EIT); 'excellence needs flagships,' said Mr. Barroso. Details for the EIT are not yet finalised, but the plan at the moment for the EIT is 'a form of organisation performing high level education, research and innovation activities, both in some strategic thematic areas and in the field of science and innovation management'. 'To avoid reinventing the wheel, it should be based on the principle of pooling existing European resources', added Mr. Barroso. If the next Spring European Council (23/24 March) gives the go ahead to the idea, a legislative proposal is likely to be put forward this summer with a view to the EIT welcoming students for the academic year of 2009/2010.

#### RWTH Aachen University

In the first decisions in the framework of the Excellence Initiative for universities in Germany, RWTH Aachen University has assured success in the draft proposals for all three funding lines: seven out of nine draft proposals submitted by RWTH Aachen University obtained positive results. The decision was reached by the Joint Commission of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG) and the German Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat) on 20 January 2006.

### Forthcoming meetings

*Ethics*: 14 February in London.

*Concerts*: Verdi Requiem 18 February in Aachen and 19 February in Den Haag.

*White paper*: 20 February in Delft.

*Institutional analysis*: 23 February in Delft.

*Life sciences*: 27 February in London.

*International activities*: 3 March in Delft.

*Chemical engineering*: 9 March in Aachen.

*IDEA heads meeting*: 27 March in Zürich.

*Continued education*: 5 April in Zürich.

*Materials science*: 11 April in Aachen.

*Advisory and coordination committee*: 12 April in Paris.

*Transfer workshop 'mathematics in engineering'*: 25/26 April in London.

*Quality management*: 26 April in London.

*Web*: 27/28 April in London.

*Communications*: 1/2 June in Delft or Paris.