A significant milestone in my career

As a project manager for University College London (UCL) Estates and Facilities Division, Richard Braybrook has been involved with the development programme that includes the latest clinical skills facilities at UCL Eastman CPD. Here he describes his role in the recent scheme.

My involvement with UCL Eastman CPD began in the autumn of 2007 when I was asked to project manage expansion of the existing clinical skills laboratories on the third floor of 125 Gray’s Inn Road. During these extensive improvements (which saw the installation of additional bench space with new phantom heads as well as a modern compressed air service) the Director of Eastman CPD, Prof Andrew Eder, had mentioned his intention to expand into the fourth floor, occupied at the time by a specialist Department of the Institute of Child Health (also part of UCL).

The expansion and modernisation of the child health facilities at Guildford Street and at Chandler House meant that the fourth floor was soon to become available. This was when I was called in. Having successfully overseen the earlier third floor improvements, Prof Eder kindly invited me back to manage the creation of the new clinical skills facility.

In the beginning...

In June 2008 an initial briefing was scheduled to formulate the plan of action for the project. I was not, however, expecting to be ushered into a seminar room filled with dozens of dentists, all of whom had ideas about what should and shouldn't be included in the new clinical skills facility: I wasn't prepared for such an intense deluge of ideas and questions!

It soon became apparent that a smaller core group was needed. Chaired by either Prof Eder or Dr Chris Louca, its role was to be the decision-making representative group that would act as the intermediary between the dentists and the project managers.

As I am not a clinician, it was important to complete the final architectural and finishing designs based on the consultations with the staff at UCL Eastman CPD, along with the scheme layout plan from the company that would be installing the dental equipment. It was vital to give the staff and graduates the best possible facilities that would allow them to develop their clinical skills.

Before the project could begin, Planning and Building Regulation approval was needed from the local authority. As the rear of the building is adjacent to a residential Mews, there are strict rules governing noise from external plant (the machinery that serves the air-conditioning system). A noise survey had to be submitted to show the minimal impact the new plant equipment...
To minimise disruption, most of the demolition and construction work had to be conducted early in the morning as well as during evenings and weekends. However, for the project to move forward, construction during normal working hours was unavoidable. I have to say the co-operation we received from the UCL Eastman CPD staff on the fifth floor, along with the skills lab nursing staff (led by Anita Graham) on the third floor was fantastic. Everyone was extremely helpful and patient with the building work taking place.

Bringing it together

Despite the limitations imposed on the project by the site, it was completed in a relatively short time, with building work finishing at the end of October 2009. The principal contractor, Russell Cawberry Ltd did a great job in controlling the contract, supported by sub contractors W Portsmouth Ltd (electrical) and EMS Ltd (mechanical). The site team worked harmoniously together and maintained a very good working relationship with the occupants of the building.

Having won the tender, A-Dec arranged, supplied and installed all the dental equipment, such as benching, phantom heads and dental units, with Dentalstyle Ltd supplying the cabinetry.

The finished result is a suite of clinical skills training facilities that boasts a Skills Laboratory with benching to host 18 graduates plus a teacher’s station and a Seminar Room seating 18 people. There are also five clinical surgeries, a sterilisation suite conforming to the latest HTM-01-05 guidelines, a radiography room equipped with a state-of-the-art 3D CT scanner, as well as other auxiliary rooms and areas.

As far as possible, the installation is environmentally friendly, with energy saving automatic lighting and ventilation systems. Wherever possible, sustainable products have been used. I am proud of the fact that not only was the project completed fairly quickly, but also that the finished product is bright, modern and fit for purpose.

On a personal note, the memorable highlight of the project was being able to invite members of the construction team to the official opening, and being presented to HRH The Princess Royal.

I am grateful to Prof Eder, Dr Louca and the UCL Eastman CPD team for the support provided and, now that the project has been completed, can reflect upon the achievements with a great deal of personal satisfaction and pleasure as I consider this project to be a significant milestone in my professional career.

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