A meeting of the Senate was held on Wednesday 26 November 2003 at 2pm in Lecture Theatre 1, Queen’s Building.

PRESENT:  
Vice-Chancellor, Professor S M Smith (Chair)  
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor M C Cook  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor R J P Kain  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor P Webley  
Professor J D Armstrong  
Professor N Armstrong  
Mr K Asare  
Dr D M Baker  
Professor W L Barnes  
Dr J Barry  
Mr M Bolam  
Dr H R Bridge  
Dr S F Brooks  
Mr M Burch  
Professor R Burt  
Dr R M Davie  
Mr M Donald  
Professor P R Draper  
Professor J Dupré  
Professor K M Economides  
Ms K L Edwards  
Professor K E Evans  
Ms S J Fenton  
Professor R Gagnier  
Professor J M Kay  
Cornwall Provost, Professor K Atkinson  
Registrar and Secretary, Mr D J Allen  
Academic Secretary, Dr P K Harvey  
Director of Finance, Mr K R Blanshard  
Senior Assistant Registrar, Miss S E Odell  

APOLOGIES:  
Professor J C Inkson, Mr G K H Ley, Professor T C Niblock, Miss R J Singleton, Professor J E Tooke, Professor G Walters, Mr M Wright.

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed new members.

03.57  Minutes  
The unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2003 were CONFIRMED (SEN/03/70).

03.58  Report by the Vice-Chancellor  
It was REPORTED that the Vice-Chancellor’s report to Senate had been placed on the University's website and could be accessed from the University's homepage via the route Information for Staff/Key Documents/Committee Minutes and Papers.
In addition, the Vice-Chancellor REPORTED on the following matters:

(a) **Anniversary Chairs**

He had set aside up to £700k pa for a maximum of 5 years for perhaps eight to ten centrally-funded “Anniversary Chair” appointments, which would be advertised together with vacant Chairs early in the New Year and be made only in order to bring Roberts 3* academics to the University. The Chairs would be in areas identified as having research strengths. The funding provided centrally would be for a fixed period, to take the posts through to the next RAE. By the end of this period the posts would be fully integrated within School business plans. The precise level of central funding was to be determined, but it was envisaged (a) that it would differ across broad academic disciplines, to reflect typical salaries and start-up costs, and (b) that it would taper across the period, perhaps at a slower rate in smaller Schools. In terms of process, Professor Kain and Research Committee would co-ordinate the next stages, as follows: bids for anniversary chairs would be invited from Schools in School beacon areas. Joint bids from Schools would also be possible, linking inter-School research strengths. Schools’ bids would have to provide an assessment of the impact on research quality that an Anniversary Chair would make, create a business plan and assess the field for potential candidates.

(b) **Research funding for new Medical Schools**

He had chaired a group of Vice-Chancellors of universities with new medical schools, which had negotiated with the Funding Council to obtain funding for research to bridge the gap of two years between the original RAE date of 2006 and the likely revised date of 2008. There might be £3m among seven medical schools.

(c) **University Networking and Lobbying**

He stressed the importance of national involvement for networking and lobbying purposes. The Registrar and Secretary, with previous experience as Registrar and Secretary at Birmingham and Nottingham, had recently been appointed to the Board of the national HE Leadership Foundation, and he himself was a member of the UUK Teacher Education Advisory Group and its Research Strategy Board. There was the opportunity to talk to key players, including Government Ministers and officials and MPs, who were also visiting Exeter. A meeting was planned, for example, following a recent visit to Exeter by key Treasury officials, between the Chair of the 94 Group, him and the two officials before the HE Bill went to Parliament. The Secretary of State, Charles Clarke, had agreed to visit Exeter later in the academic year.

**03.59 Briefing on Current Government Policies for the White Paper on HE and the Roberts Review of Research Assessment**

The Vice-Chancellor drew attention to some significant recent successes as a result of lobbying:

?? a major victory on the funding of the 4s, for which funding was now guaranteed until the next RAE. This had not been a foregone conclusion and had gone contrary to the Secretary of State’s personal wishes. There would be £118m pa cash limited for the 4s (compared with £238m in 2001/02) ie a decline of 3.4% pa from now on because of the effects of inflation, but no funds at all after the next RAE.

?? an assurance that the dual support system would continue: a letter from the Minister, Alan Johnson, and Lord Sainsbury stated that the Government was “committed to the dual support system”. Robust data from the TRAC exercise would help to ensure that the basic funding via the Funding Council for research would be maintained and, it was to be hoped, increased.

?? the Universities of Bath and Bristol had agreed to participate in a joint high-level working party on research collaboration with Exeter to be chaired by Professor Kain to prepare a bid to the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund on behalf of the Region, including, possibly, joint research studentships.

So far as the Roberts Review was concerned, although not public, he had been told that 95% of the consultation had supported the existing RAE process. 92% of the responses had rejected the preliminary use of metrics, and so there were unlikely to be any metric qualifiers. There would be no 80% rule. They had not decided whether to have four or more publications per member of staff. The exercise was likely to be delayed until 2008. There were likely to be four grades for individuals: 0, one
star, two stars, three stars. The step change funding between grades would be dropped in favour of a linear scale. Funding would attach to stars on a basis to be determined. There would still be a league table, but more gradual. The focus would be on output quality and research concentration would still drive the whole process. One star would be the equivalent of the top half of national excellence, two stars the bottom half of international and three stars the top half of international.

The Higher Education Bill was the first item in the Queen’s Speech that day, including tuition fees of up to £3,000 from 2006 and the introduction of OFFA. The next three months would be difficult as the proposals were debated. He (and the Principal of Marjon) had lobbied MPs to vote in favour. He personally had opposed fees (and had lobbied against them being included in the White Paper, without success) but there was now no option if universities were to be properly funded. Various proposals had come forward from groups of Vice-Chancellors, but he was in favour of the £3,000 fee, with institutions using part of the fee for bursaries. He expected the Government to have to make concessions and that is what the lobbying would now concentrate on. Some of the possible concessions could cause damage to Exeter.

The Deputy President of the Guild reaffirmed the Guild’s position on fees: it continued to believe that the University’s approach was prudent but disagreed with any form of tuition fees. It was grateful for the information and consultation by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Guild, especially for emphasising to the Minister when he visited that universities were underfunded.

In response to questions, the Vice-Chancellor said:

(a) that age bore little relation to international ranking of staff – it was perfectly possible to be international at 27;

(b) that Anniversary posts should only be professorial because they provided academic leadership and research reputation. It also made a public statement about the University’s future.

(c) that he was expecting good candidates for the Chairs and was aware that already Heads of Schools were telephoning potential people.

Reports by the Deputy Vice-Chancellors

Senate RECEIVED reports from the Deputy Vice-Chancellors (SEN/03/72).

2.1 Research Committee

In response to a question, Professor Kain said that Research Committee was aware of the sensitivities surrounding the data used for the research output monitoring exercise and a paper about data handling had gone to Research Committee, Senate and Council previously. The data were in the public domain, but the reviews involving a group consisting of the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor who was chair of the BPRG, the Head of School, the Director of Research, on occasions the Disciplinary Director of Research, and the Research Committee mentor were confidential. Individual outputs were reviewed and actions identified. The Head of School took the actions to the relevant staffing forum in the School, while the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had responsibility for University action. The Research Committee mentor prepared a report, summarising the outcomes without naming individuals, for Research Committee. It was an annual “stock-take” for the University. No irreversible label was put on individuals. The exercise was developmental for individual staff, who were entitled to feedback from the Head of School. Practice in Schools varied. The data forms were not passed on, but were retained in Research and Development Services.

3.7 Social Work

Professor Webley and his predecessor Professor Lea were congratulated for the way they had handled this matter.

3.8 University of Exeter Press

It was REPORTED to Senate that, since the meeting of Planning and Resources Committee on 11 November 2003, the UEP Board had received by the 12 November deadline only one bid (a management buy-out) and had decided to pursue this bid. A sale had been agreed in principle and Solicitors were preparing contracts. The intention was that UEP would belong to Mr Simon Baker’s company by 1 January 2004. The company would operate from Reed Hall and would include both UEP and a new imprint, to help income generation. There would be a Publications Panel, to approve
any publication under the UEP imprint, so that the academic reputation would be protected. Marketing would be improved.

03.61 **Reports by the Deans of Faculties**

Senate **RECEIVED** reports from the Deans (SEN/03/73).

2.2.4 Postgraduate Admissions

Professor Gagnier confirmed, in response to a question, that admissions for the following October were not dealt with in the previous October, when the Faculty Office’s efforts were concentrated on current admissions. The system would be reviewed, however, in the light of staffing levels.

2.3 Postgraduate Community

Professor Gagnier confirmed, in response to a question, that the arrangements for the postgraduate induction week and the distribution of the Postgraduate Students’ Handbook would be reviewed for 2004/05, including better coverage for PGCE students. In addition, there would be larger groups involved in the skills workshops, providing a useful opportunity for postgraduates from a range of Schools to become acquainted.

03.62 **Council**

Senate **RECEIVED** the unreserved section of the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2003 (SEN/03/74).

03.63 **Planning and Resources Committee**

Senate **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** approval of recommendations arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 14 October and 11 November 2003 (SEN/03/75 and SEN/03/76) concerning the following:

(a) University Press (minute 03.76);

(b) Business Planning – School of Geography, Archaeology and Earth Resources (minute 03.77) (see below).

**MINUTE 03.63 – TRAC**

In response to a question linking the number of days’ work per year used by management a few years before for calculation of the amount of pay to be removed in respect of a day’s industrial action to the calculations to be used for the TRAC diary exercise, the Vice-Chancellor acknowledged that academic (and other) staff worked unpaid overtime but stressed that the TRAC exercise was designed to produce robust data about the proportion of total time spent on research, in order to obtain more funding for that aspect of universities’ work. The Registrar and Secretary said that, based on previous experience elsewhere, he would hope to move eventually to a workload allocation model, as he and the Vice-Chancellor were keen to maximise academic time for teaching and research rather than form-filling. Professor Kain stressed that he and Mr Barnett (Finance Division) would be happy to visit Schools to discuss the detail of the current TRAC exercise.

**MINUTE 03.70 – INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE**

It was confirmed that there was no intention to change the role of the Information Services Committee, which reported to Planning and Resources Committee, and to Academic Policy Committee and thence to Senate, ensuring academic input into policy. The Registrar and Secretary, who would be assuming line management responsibility for the Director of IT Services, reassured Senate that, like Senate, he was committed to the provision of high quality facilities to the academic community and it would be foolish not to listen to clients’ views.

**MINUTE 03.77 – BUSINESS PLANNING – SCHOOL OF GEOGRAPHY, ARCHAEOLOGY AND EARTH RESOURCES (SoGAER)**

(and APC minute 03.80, 11 November 2003)
Introducing discussion of PRC minute 03.77 and paper PRC/03/69, relating to the financial situation of the Camborne School of Mines element of SoGAER, the Vice-Chancellor reported as follows:

(a) There had been a need to take action because of the seriousness of the figures relating to the past, present and future subsidy by the University of the School. He summarised these as follows: from 1997, the University had supported CSM by allowing it to make a very low ICE contribution and the figure amounted to £1.844m in the six years since then; the School entered the current financial year with a £200k deficit which was estimated to reach £630k by the end of the year; by 2007, the end of the planning period, it was estimated that there would be an additional deficit of £1.6m, contributing to a total deficit between 1997 and 2007 of £3.44m. The 2007 figure had been predicated on a target of 85 for the number of annual undergraduate admissions - £200k pa. It was thought this should be reduced to 75 and this would imply an operating deficit of £300k pa. Also included was a requirement to pay back the accumulated deficit at a rate of £100k pa. The total savings to be made therefore amounted to some £400k pa and there was an average gross cost per academic staff member of £44.2k pa.

(b) Action now had to be taken. The situation was not new. The main reasons were: that the first round of research output monitoring for CSM had not given rise to confidence that the unit would be submittable as the equivalent of its current 4 to the next RAE, that there was a concern among partners in the Combined Universities in Cornwall project that the situation should be sorted out before CSM moved to Tremough, especially given press coverage if problems arose after the move, and that spending of Objective 1 EU money on equipment for the new building at Tremough needed to be committed by December 2003/January 2004 and that it was important to ensure that there was no waste of public money by ordering equipment that would turn out not be needed for areas to be discontinued.

(c) Professor Webley, as Chair of APC, and members of the relevant BPRG, supported by Adrian Davey, Management Accountant, and other administrative staff, had met several times earlier in the term to give detailed consideration to the figures and recommended to Professor Smith that he would probably have to act to correct the situation. There was a choice between putting the matter to the relevant committees and risking leaks occurring, or the Vice-Chancellor personally addressing the staff at CSM. Wishing to avoid a situation in which staff heard via leaks from committees and also respecting the wish of the School to be told what was happening, the Vice-Chancellor had travelled to Camborne on 7 November to address staff. In advance of doing so, he had alerted senior members of Council, the CSM Trust, its representative on Council, senior members of Cornwall County Council, the local Council, the local MP, the Principals of Falmouth College of Art and of the College of St Mark and St John, and the Vice-Chancellor of Plymouth. All had given strong support to the proposed action, although of course with great regret. Members of the Personnel Division had visited, together with external employment consultants. The students’ concerns had been taken on board and a series of meetings with them had been organised.

(d) As to next steps, negotiations were taking place with certain individual members of staff about severance, which it was hoped would be voluntary. There were signs that this would be so. However, in case there was a need for compulsory redundancies, Planning and Resources Committee had recommended to Senate and Council that Council be asked on 15 December to establish a Redundancy Committee under the provisions of the University’s Statutes. He would put forward two names of Senate members for the Committee at the end of the debate. It was clear that there would be no future for CSM unless this action was taken.

Professor Webley wished to reassure Senate about two aspects of the matter: first, that the new business plan was robust, accurate and sustainable, having been examined with great care; and secondly, that a change management group had been established to ensure that matters such as personnel, teaching, applications, the move to Tremough, research, PR and relations with stakeholders were dealt with sensitively and consistently. Various scenarios had been considered within the overall SoGAER plan, but this had been the only viable plan to emerge.

The Cornwall Provost, Professor Atkinson, who referred to his eight years as Head of CSM, said that he had wanted to maintain the School on a relatively even keel in order to ensure that it was incorporated into CUC as he had realised that its future was inextricably linked to developments in Cornwall generally. CSM’s position reflected the trends in mining education globally. Its research had improved consistently over recent RAEs, moving from a 3A to a 4B. As Head of School, he had tried to diversify the academic programmes on offer but unfortunately recruitment to them had not been as
successful as hoped. A quota of 180 had gradually been reduced to 60 over the years. He paid tribute to the staff of CSM, but he admitted with tremendous reluctance that the figures spoke for themselves and this was the only way forward for the School.

In a long discussion, points made included the following:

(i) there had been planning blight in respect of CSM for many years, and no investment by the University;
(ii) the recommendations of a University Review of CSM had not been implemented;
(iii) CSM staff had put much effort into designing laboratories and programmes for CUC at Tremough;
(iv) mining was an important part of the economy and CSM students were extremely employable;
(v) action had been taken before Senate had had the opportunity to debate the matter;
(vi) the Guild would like to have been kept better informed and had received hostility from CSM students;
(vii) it was unclear which programmes were being terminated and which research areas were to be maintained;
(viii) it was unclear whether there would be further redundancies after this current round.

Professor Webley and Professor Scott gave details of programmes being retained and Professor Webley indicated that the objective was to avoid any need for redundancies in the future.

In response to comments on constitutional issues, the Registrar and Secretary said

(1) that there were multiple accountabilities involved, not just those to Senate and Council. The Vice-Chancellor had general responsibility for the good order of the institution and was accountable to the Chief Executive of the Funding Council and to the Public Accounts Committee, and to the European Union and the Government Office for the South West for the expenditure on the Tremough campus development. Senior managers worked in a complex world and also had a responsibility to the staff affected for good, direct and fair communication. It would have been irresponsible and cruel to allow staff to find out by means of committee leaks before the Vice-Chancellor had spoken to them.

(2) Planning and Resources Committee, which had put forward the recommendation for a Redundancy Committee was a joint Committee of Senate and Council and a powerful body. Its members consisted of most of the senior lay and academic members of the University. The Vice-Chancellor had consulted fully the lay officers and the Chancellor.

(3) It seemed to all concerned that the numbers were compelling and it had therefore been the duty of senior managers to act as they did. A report was made to Planning and Resources Committee as soon as possible after it had become apparent that something had to be done urgently.

(4) If compulsory redundancies had been announced at that juncture, this would have been ultra vires. The Vice-Chancellor had told staff that he wanted the savings to be made by voluntary means and that if not Council would have to be asked to consider setting up a Redundancy Committee. 12 December was the deadline given to staff for decision because Council was to meet on 15 December. This gave staff enough time and meant that the decisions would be made before the Christmas period. The voluntary severance offer was generous.

(5) Senate and Council were being consulted on the question of compulsory redundancies. Senate voted by 23 to 3 with 4 abstentions to RESOLVE that, in the event that Council established a Redundancy Committee under the provision of the University’s Statutes, Professor Paul Webley and Professor Janice M Kay be the members of the Committee nominated by Senate.

03.64 Student Affairs Committee

Senate RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL approval of recommendations arising from the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2003 (SEN/03/77) concerning the following:

(a) Residence and Catering Accounts for the Year Ended 31 July 2003 (minute 03.23) (see below);
(b) Student Mental Health (minute 03.30);
(c) Student Exclusion – Amendment to Regulations (minute 03.31);
(d) Student Complaints (minute 03.34).

MINUTE 03.23 – RESIDENCE AND CATERING ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2003

In response to points made by Senate in relation to point (6) of part A of the minute, the Registrar and Secretary REPORTED
(i) that, for the first time, there were management accounts for the University’s catering operation, with a sheet of paper for each of the activities;
(ii) that these showed that the external catering activities had made a surplus of £404k and that the staff and student catering had made a loss of £383k;
(iii) that there was a cross-subsidy from external catering to the staff and student catering operation;
(iv) that the accounts raised a number of questions, for example, should the University be doing more or less external catering work, should the external catering pay more than currently, should the subsidy from external catering go to staff and student catering or to other University activities?
(v) that if the subsidy was removed prices for staff and student catering would need to be increased;
(vi) that, except where the confidentiality of the external operation needed to be respected for commercial reasons, the accounts should be transparent and reported to Student Affairs Committee;
(vii) that the accounts would be audited;
(viii) that the Director of Finance would need to assure himself that the management accounting was of an acceptable quality;
(ix) that the approach being adopted to the catering accounts was a beginning, not an end.

Senate welcomed the increased transparency and accountability in the University’s approach to these accounts.

03.65 Academic Policy Committee

Senate RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL approval of recommendations arising from the minutes of the meetings held on 29 September, 14 October and 11 November 2003 (SEN/03/78, SEN/03/79 and SEN/03/80) concerning the following:
(a) Learning and Teaching Committee (minute 03.68) – amendment to Regulations;
(b) Peninsula Allied Health Collaboration (minute 03.78).

MINUTE 03.80 – BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW GROUP 3

Discussion about this minute is included in minute 03.63 above, in the record of the discussion of Planning and Resources Committee minute 03.77.

03.66 Staff Liaison Committee

Senate RECEIVED the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2003 (SEN/03/81).
Guidelines for contribution-based pay allocated by Schools

In response to a question, the Registrar and Secretary REPORTED that the Director of Personnel was meeting later that day with Heads of Schools to consider draft guidelines and that the matter would be for discussion at Senior Management Group on 11 December. The guidelines would then be discussed with the Unions and announcements made thereafter to staff generally.

03.67 Race Equality Policy and Action Plan

Senate RECEIVED a report approved by Council in July 2003 (SEN/03/82).
03.68 **Exclusion of Student**

The Vice-Chancellor reported the exclusion of Michael Gempeler, a student on the General English Language Course, ELC, with effect from 14 August 2003.

03.69 **Military Education Committee – Annual Report 2002/03**

Senate RECEIVED the Annual Report 2002/03 (SEN/03/83).

It was REPORTED that the Forces were distributing much of their education function to universities and Schools should be aware of opportunities, working in conjunction with the Dean of Academic Partnerships and the Faculty Office.