

STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy, Performance and Resources Committee was held on Wednesday 1 July 2009 in the Council Chamber, Northcote House.

PRESENT:

Mr D J Allen (Chair)
Mr C J Allwood
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor N Armstrong
Guild President, Mr J Cox
Dr E Isayev
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor R J P Kain
Pro-Chancellor, Mr P Lacey
Professor D A Myhill
Sir R Nicholson
Pro-Chancellor, Mr K R Seal
Professor N J Talbot
Ms S Wilcox

IN ATTENDANCE:

Dean of Taught Programmes, Dr J Barry
Assistant Director of Planning Services, Dr N J Horseman (Secretary)
Pro-Chancellor, Mr R Hughes
Guild Chief Executive, Mr J Hutchinson
Director of Estate Development, Mr H McCann (for item 09.44)
Planning Officer, Ms Laura Ottery
Director of Academic Services, Ms M Shoebridge
Deputy Director of Finance Services, Ms A Shrubshall
Dean of Graduate Research, Professor R Van de Noort
Executive Officer to the Registrar, Ms Gillian Weale

APOLOGIES:

Vice-Chancellor, Professor S M Smith
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor J M Kay
Director of Planning Services, P J Kennedy
Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Mr J C Lindley
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor M Overton
Professor R Rylance

09.36 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2009 were **CONFIRMED** (SPRC/09/47).

09.37 **Matters Arising**

Pay Settlement 2009/10 (minute 09.30) – The Registrar and Secretary reported that the employers' offer of 0.4% had been rejected but was still on the table. Negotiations were continuing, involving ACAS, and the next meeting would be held on 15th July.

09.38 **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Vice-Chancellor (SPRC/09/48). On behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar and Secretary drew particular attention to the following points from the report with additional oral items:

- **Times League Table and Good University Guide** – The University had been ranked 9th in the Times Good University Guide and was now the highest ranking university in the South West. Considering the University was ranked 34th just four years ago, this was the biggest recent rise of any university in the UK. It was reported that letters had been received from partner institutions in China congratulating the University on its success in breaking into the top 10.
- **Appointment of new Chief Executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Council** - Professor Rick Rylance, Head of the School of Arts, Languages and Literatures, had been appointed Chief Executive of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) on a four-year secondment in the first instance starting on 1 September 2009. Arrangements were in train to appoint a new Head of School.
- **NUS Participation Award** – Congratulations were conveyed to the Students' Guild for winning a national NUS Participation Award in recognition of the high level of student involvement in its activities, services and events. The Participation Award recognised students' unions that had increased the levels of involvement of their local students through elections, democratic participation and clubs and societies. The Guild were recognised for recording a 34% of the student population compared to an average turnout for students' union elections is just 13.8%.
- **Committee members** - The Vice-Chancellor's thanks were conveyed to all colleagues on the Committee for all their work and for the valuable time that they have committed to the University over the past year. In particular, gratitude was expressed to the retiring members of SPaRC, John Cox, Dr Elena Isayev, Professor Rick Rylance, and Professor Nick Talbot for their valuable service.
- **Dean of the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry** - Professor Sir John Tooke was leaving the University at the end of November to become Vice-Provost (Health), Head of the UCL School of Life & Medical Sciences and Head of the UCL Medical School. The Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Registrar and Secretary were holding discussions with the University of Plymouth regarding future arrangements. Members commented on Sir John's outstanding service to health and education on the Southwest Peninsula.
- **Swine 'Flu** – a number of cases of Swine 'Flu have been reported at the University amongst students and staff. The contingency plan had been enacted and had worked well. Currently symptoms had been mild but future patterns were uncertain. Health Protection Agency advice would continue to be followed and the contingency plan would be kept in place. It was noted that there was potential for the outbreak to have an impact on the willingness and ability of overseas students to travel to the UK.
- **National Teaching Fellowships** - Sue Burkill, Head of Education Enhancement, and Associate Professor Alison Wride, Deputy Director of the Business School, had been awarded National Teaching Fellowships by the Higher Education Academy and were warmly congratulated.

09.39 Financial Forecast 2008/09

The Deputy Director of Finance Services gave an oral report to the Committee on the forecast 2008/09 outturn noting that there were no substantive changes from the previous report made to the Committee in May of an operating surplus of £4.9m and that, if anything, there was potential for further favourable movement. It was noted that the surplus was after payment of the University bonus, payment of which would be considered at the October meeting of the Committee.

09.40 University Budget 2009/10 (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services (SPRC/09/49)

09.41 Student Residences Transaction (**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**)

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services (SPRC/09/50).

09.42 Research Performance Review (**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**)

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Knowledge Transfer) (SPRC/09/51)

09.43 Corporate Social Responsibility

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Stakeholder and Corporate Responsibility Manager (SPRC/09/53) which updated on progress made within Corporate Social Responsibility. In 2007/08, the University joined the HERDASW Higher Education Benchmarking Project for Corporate Responsibility (CR), using the Business in the Community (BITC) CR Index and achieved the highest grade (platinum) for its full submission.

As part of Dual Assurance, the Task and Finish group that had been established to produce the 2007/08 submission was asked to continue with the 2008/09 submission under a new three year HEFCE project known as 'Universities that Count'.

The main areas where there had been improvement compared to the previous year's submission were: community, public reporting and some aspects of sustainability including environment and biodiversity. Areas where extra work was still needed were: sustainability in the curriculum, a cohesive community engagement plan (to include the Guild and the work of the Community Liaison Officer) and parts of the Environment section. Plans were in place to work on these areas, led by the Stakeholder and Corporate Responsibility Manager.

The hard work and leadership of those working in this area had a positive benefit and Exeter was now regarded as one of leading institutions, especially within the pre-92 group. Final results from the 2008/09 CR Submission would be made available to each institution in early July 2009. Based on feedback received it was expected that the University would achieve a gold or platinum banding.

The Committee commended the work of those involved, in particular, the Stakeholder and Corporate Responsibility Manager, Heidi Hallam.

09.44 Geoffrey Pope Building – Request for Revised Budget (**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**)

The Director of Estate Development attended for this item. The Committee **CONSIDERED** a request from the Registrar and Secretary (SPRC/09/57) to increase the budget for the Geoffrey Pope refurbishment project.

09.45 Performance and Risk Steering Group

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report on performance overall (SPRC/09/54) firstly on the University's Top 10 KPIs, secondly on reputational measures with national and international league tables used as a current proxy, and finally on financial KPIs. The University's KPIs continued to show a generally improving picture. The internal KPI data taken as a whole generally corroborated the evidence from external assessments that Exeter was positioned on the entry point of Top 10, that there were some further areas to improve and others to consolidate. National league tables showed Exeter to have an average position of 14th, up from an average of 15th in 2008.

The comparator set of institutions, which included those within, at or about top 10, was still regarded as appropriate and no changes were made. Further KPI updates were anticipated, in particular, the NSS results in August and graduate destinations comparative data was being sourced over the summer.

Regarding international league tables, discussion had taken place with the compiler of the THE-QS World Rankings and research undertaken into the supporting citation database. It had been found that PCMD research was not being credited to Exeter and that if corrected would make an 8% improvement to that indicator; this was being pursued. Also the compilers now had Exeter's favoured employers to be included in future recruiter review surveys. Some small improvement in Exeter's ranking was anticipated in the new table publication which was scheduled for October.

A final report covering 2008/09 would be presented to the Committee in October 2009, and would include the KPIs from the draft financial out-turn performance data.

The Committee then **RECEIVED** an end of year report from the Performance and Risk Steering Group (SPRC/09/55). The report updated the Committee on the current risk environment and how the risk management process was being embedded in Schools and Services, and also how PRSG had built in processes to ensure responsive action to the current changing external environment. It was noted that this was the end of a full cycle of assessments and that there had been a decrease in the number of recommendations from Internal Audits. Five risks had been added to the Fundamental Register (Affordability and sustainability of pay costs, INTO, Student accommodation to meet demands, Cornwall Campus developments, UG completion) and three additional risks had emerged which would be considered (Internationalisation, Impact management of infrastructure developments, Contact hours). Exeter's recent achievements meant that the institution was under greater external scrutiny and that this brought opportunities but also risks. The Pro-Chancellor (Finance) reported that the internal auditors, Mazars, regarded the University's risk management processes as leading edge.

09.46 Investment Appraisal for the Environment and Sustainability Institute (Phase 3 Cornwall Campus) (**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE**)

The Committee **CONSIDERED** an investment appraisal for the Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI) (SPRC/09/56).

09.47 Arts and Culture Strategy

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report on the University Arts and Culture Strategy (SPRC/09/58), which had been revised following comment from Council in March.

The 3-year arts and cultural strategy proposed the following: a brand; website and calendaring project; a staged programme of major arts/cultural events on three campuses, with an 'Exeter Film' launched 2011-12 as a showcase for the Arts and Culture strategy and the Forum; and a Forum Festival to open the building in 2012. The Strategy involved brigading existing activity into a coherent whole as well as introducing new activities. It was noted that Guild Societies held many events and that these should be captured in the one consistent approach. The Corporate Social Responsibility aspects of the Strategy were recognised.

09.48 Internationalisation Strategy

The Committee **RECEIVED** a final draft of the Internationalisation Strategy (SPRC/09/59) from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Internationalisation), and was invited to comment on the general direction of the proposed strategy. The strategy had been developed with a wide-ranging consultation and with the involvement and endorsement of the incoming Director of International Exeter, Dr Shaun Curtis. The strategy provided a step change from previous

strategy which had focussed on international recruitment. The new strategy addressed 'being international' and how this would 'permeate everything we do'.

The integration of international students (and staff) was key to enhancing the student experience for all students including UK and on all campuses. The Guild would have an important role to play in the success of the strategy. A summary of resources to support the strategy were tabled in an appendix. A more detailed appendix would be attached when Council considered the strategy and it was highlighted that this included substantial activity on the Cornwall campus. The investment needed totalled £1.5m the majority of which was recurrent and would mostly commence from 2010/11. This would be addressed in the normal business planning round.

An objective of 4000 international fee paying students (fte) for 2015 was included in the strategy which would bring the University in line with top 10 institutions. The emphasis would be on those taking programmes in excess of one year and with a spread over Schools and countries of origin.

Whilst the proportion of international staff employed at Exeter was comparable to other institutions, there were steps to be taken to enhance the experience and benefit gained from visiting academics, in particular, in offering high quality accommodation and ensuring that their presence was promoted across the University and not just concentrated in the host School.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** the strategy for approval. Council would consider the paper augmented with the expanded appendix.

Thanks were expressed to all those who had developed the strategy and, in particular, to the Dean of International Development, Dr John Withrington, for his contribution.

09.49 Cornwall Campus Strategy Group

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the meeting of the Cornwall Campus Strategy Group held 9 June 2009 (SPRC/09/60). It was noted that the lobbying ESI dinners previously held with local stakeholders had been helpful and suggested that these should be continued, which the Cornwall Advisory Group would address.

09.50 Ethics Committee

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the meeting of the Ethics Committee held 3 June 2009 (SPRC/09/61).

09.51 Dual Assurance Reports

The Committee **RECEIVED** Dual Assurance reports for Information Services (other than Infrastructure) (SPRC/09/63), and Education (SPRC/09/64).

09.52 Financial Statements 2008/09 – Schedule for Sign-off

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report detailing the schedule for sign-off of the 2008/09 Financial Statements (SPRC/09/65).