

STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy, Performance and Resources Committee was held on Wednesday 28 June 2006 at 10.00am in Committee Room A, Northcote House.

PRESENT: Vice-Chancellor, Professor S M Smith (Chair)

Pro-Chancellor, Mr K R Seal
Treasurer, Mr G A Sturtridge
Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor P Webley
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor N Armstrong
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor R J P Kain
Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor J M Kay

Mr D J Allen
Dr J Barry
Professor P R Draper
Dr R Lawson-Peebles
Ms J Percy
Professor W B Richardson

Academic Secretary, Mr D F Batty
Director of Finance, Mr J C Lindley
Senior Assistant Registrar, Mr P J Kennedy

IN ATTENDANCE: Dean of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies, Professor H M Lappin-Scott
Professor M Overton, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Designate
Mr S N Fishwick, Permanent Secretary to the Students' Guild
Mr R J Alcock, Director of Buildings & Estate (for discussion under 06.52)

APOLOGIES: Mr A Desmier, Professor R J Hawker, Ms R King, Dame Suzi Leather,
Professor M Macnair, Sir R Nicholson

06.45 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2006 were **CONFIRMED**, (SPRC/06/38) subject to a correction to minute 06.36, so that the second sentence in its 4th paragraph was amended to read "historical cost basis", not "current cost basis".

06.46 **Matters Arising**

- **Investment Committee (minute 06.37)** – three companies were identified as potential candidates for the University's investment managers, and the Treasurer confirmed that the existing managers, Rensburg Sheppards, had been re-appointed.
- **Postgraduate Scholarships (minute 06.40)** – the DVC Resources confirmed that the Senior Management Group was content with the Merit and International Scholarship schemes which would now be implemented from 2007 entry, and that there would be more work undertaken next session on a scheme that would include reductions in tuition fee levels for the progression of Exeter undergraduate students to Exeter postgraduate programmes.

06.47 **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Vice-Chancellor **REPORTED** on the following matters:

- **Appointment of Chancellor** – colleagues were delighted to have as our new Chancellor Dr Floella Benjamin OBE HonDLitt (Exeter), who would be officially installed at the first Degree Ceremony this summer (11 July). Colleagues had been deeply impressed by her commitment to helping young people reach their full potential and in helping them see life from others' perspective, and were looking forward to a very successful partnership with Floella.
- **Dame Suzi Leather - New Chair of Charity Commission** – congratulations to Suzi Leather on becoming the next Chair of the Charity Commission from 1 August 2006, taking over from Geraldine Peacock. Suzi would step down as Chair of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and also as Chair of the School Food Trust.
- **Industrial Dispute** – the industrial action by the AUT (now part of UCU) had been suspended, after a protracted period of negotiations. The ballot result would not be known until July. Every possible measure had been taking in the interim period to protect the position of our students, particularly those due to graduate this summer, and the Vice-Chancellor expressed gratitude to AUT officers and to all colleagues for the mature and flexible way the matter had been handled in the University.
- **Framework Agreement** – most of the matters were now agreed and the University was working hard with the trades unions to resolve the outstanding issues. If agreements could be reached by Council's meeting on 17 July then it should be possible to migrate staff to the new pay spine from 1 August.
- **Research Assessment Exercise 2008 and Consultation about Arrangements Post 2008** – a consultation paper entitled *Reform of HE Research Assessment and Funding* had been issued by DfES for response by 13 October. The paper proposed a metrics-based research assessment and funding system to replace the RAE after 2008. Led by Professor Roger Kain, Research Committee would frame the University's response to the consultation, with the results from the consultation expected in time for the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Pre-Budget Statement. It was likely that metrics would come into play for the assessment and funding of research after the 2008 RAE. For Exeter, it would be particularly important to inform the approach taken for arts/humanities/social sciences, and the Committee was pleased to note that Professor Kain had been invited to join the working group that HEFCE and AHRC had commissioned to evaluate the issues in these cognate areas. The Vice-Chancellor urged colleagues to ensure that within their professional associations they argued in favour of maintaining the balance of investment of research across science and non-science areas, but also that we should be preparing the University for an era where the relationship between research outputs and the wider economy and society would grow stronger. An information pack highlighting these issues and including relevant papers would be circulated to members of SPaRC, Senate, Research Committee and to senior colleagues.
- **Combined Universities in Cornwall Phase 3** – Professor Paul Webley, and after his departure Professor Mark Overton, had been asked to lead a strategy planning group for our part in Phase 3 of CUC. It was important that Exeter's character as a leading research University was fully reflected in the plans which went forward, and there were major opportunities for the University in Phase 2, which must be fully funded. There would also be a risk assessment group, chaired by Russell Seal, that would report on its review of major risk issues to Council.
- **Comprehensive Spending Review** – it was important to recognise that the 2007/08 CSR was likely to be particularly challenging. The prospects of significant additional revenues being provided to Higher Education looked remote at this stage, and indeed one scenario was that the unit of resource would be cut. The Committee was satisfied that the right level of contingency (in the form of cautious estimates of QR research income) was in the plans going forward, but CSR developments would be monitored very carefully.

The Registrar and Secretary **REPORTED** on the following matters:

- **Wave Hub** – the University was exploring a potential partnership with the SW Regional Development Agency and the University of Plymouth to support a £25-30M project for a 'wave hub' off the Cornwall coast. This would be delivered with private sector partners, with a view to exploiting wave power to generate electricity, and through that initiative a variety of collaborative research projects would be possible. The project could help underpin a range of research and teaching interests, including those in the areas of renewable energy and applied mathematics. The University would not be required to contribute any capital investment. The Committee endorsed the direction taken to date, and requested that it be kept informed on the progress of this exciting project.
- **Science Park** – good progress was being made, with a possible site adjacent to the M5 at junction 29. Further evaluation work was continuing, to include option appraisals for the organisational/management model for the Park, and again the Committee would be kept up to date on this important long-term development.

Thanks to Colleagues – The Vice-Chancellor thanked all colleagues, including his Deputies, Deans, Heads of Schools and School Managers, the Registrar and Secretary and Heads of Professional Services, the Guild of Students and the secretariat to the Committee for their co-operation and hard work in what had been a challenging year. Particular thanks were expressed to Paul Webley for his outstanding work as Senior Deputy, and Committee members joined the Vice-Chancellor in wishing him great success in his new post at SOAS. The Vice-Chancellor also placed on record his appreciation for the huge contribution that David Batty and Sue Odell had made to the work and life of the University over many years, and they were wished well in their retirement.

06.48 **Student Applications for 2006 Entry**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the DVC Education on student applications for 2006 entry (SPRC/06/39).

The report provided the Committee with the latest position on applications for 2006 entry, and although it was noted that it was still relatively early in the cycle for postgraduate applications in particular, a number of trends and issues could be identified:

- For undergraduate applications, there had been a 13% reduction in applications compared to the previous year, although adjusted for phasing out in certain programmes post re-structuring the real-terms decrease was 9%. This compared to a national decline of 4%. The decrease in acceptances was significantly less, and this evidence supported the belief that there was a growing trend towards fewer applications, but on average these being more likely to convert into offers accepted and registrations.
- The postgraduate and international markets continued to be challenging, with slight decreases in applications, but again with improvements in 'conversion rates' into offers being accepted. Applications from Channel Islands students were again up on last year, by over 16%.
- Applications to programmes on the Cornwall campus were very encouraging, and with particularly noteworthy growth for postgraduate programmes.
- Major universities were experiencing a similarly volatile admissions cycle, with some current top 20 universities seeing near 20% declines in applications. The international market was clearly a challenge for all, and growing numbers in this climate would be a major achievement.

It was noted that the DVC Education and colleagues from Student Recruitment and Admissions would continue to work with Schools over the summer period to optimise the University's recruitment position this September/October. It was also noted that the Vice-Chancellor would be joining the UCAS Board as the Universities UK representative for a period of three years from 2006/07.

06.49 **Financial Forecast 2005/06**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Director of Finance on the latest forecast for the financial year 2005/06, i.e. the year ending 31 July 2006 (SPRC/06/40 attached for Council).

The forecast surplus of the University was now £1.5m compared to the surplus of £1.2m reported to the Committee in May 2006. This forecast assumed that the one percent Contribution Based Reward (CBR) would be paid as the result exceeded the £1m minimum performance targeted. The main movements from the last forecast included adverse variances (£0.2m) in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, but offset by various other positive movements totalling £0.5m. The latest forecast assumed that Crossmead, Rowancroft and Bonhay House would be sold in 2006/07, and included a historic cost surplus of £0.4m in relation to End Cottage (£0.2m on a current cost basis). If exchange of contracts was delayed beyond 31 July 2006, the historic cost position would be affected.

The latest forecast did not take into account the outcome of the ERBS pension fund actuarial valuation, due to be reported in July, and if this impacted adversely on the total pension liability, there might be an adverse effect on the historic cost position for 2005/06. A full revaluation of fixed assets was currently in progress in accordance with FRS15, and although this would not impact on the historic cost position, it would result in increased depreciation on the re-valued assets, and affecting our reported current cost position for the year.

The Committee welcomed the improvement in the forecast, and noted that there was a reasonable expectation of further favourable variances as the year-end approached.

06.50 **Budget 2006/07 and Financial Plans to 2009/10 (Commercial in Confidence)**

For SPaRC, Senate and Council members only.

06.51 **Performance and Risk Steering Group – Risk Assessments and Issues**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Chair of the Performance and Risk Steering Group on risk assessments and issues arising from the 2005/06 programme of review (SPRC/06/42 attached for Senate and Council).

The overall profile of risk for the University had not undergone fundamental change since the previous year, and the Group's work had continued to refine our understanding of risk, but some important movements were apparent. In particular it was clear that the external environment was less certain, and was likely to become increasingly uncertain, with the research funding and comprehensive spending review obvious examples of potential volatility on the near horizon. These higher-risk scenarios made income generation that much more important for the University to improve, as well as improving the controls in place to manage existing risks. In addition to income generation there was a further major group of risks around physical infrastructure that continued to be at the top of our risk register. Emerging risks would be assessed early in the next cycle, including for issues such as the impact of variable fees, fund-raising, the 2007 QAA Institutional Audit and pension-scheme contributions. The more frequent and pervasive use of risk-based techniques was welcomed, both as a part of project planning and mainstreamed within business planning at all levels. It was also noted that to ensure best practice, Council would receive a termly briefing on risk issues as from Autumn 2006.

06.52 **Performance and Risk Steering Group – Performance Review**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a performance review report for the period to 2008/09 (SPRC/06/43 attached for Senate and Council). This paper presented the third and final review of the indicators of success for 2005/6 assessing progress on each of the indicators, which essentially provided an update on progress towards the 'contract' between Council and senior managers of the University. This report also included a brief summary on the progress

for the indicators of success for 2008/9 from the Corporate Plan. Additionally, the Committee received updates on the Key Performance Indicators, presented within the context of the Key Characteristics (from the Corporate Plan) that they support.

For the indicators of success for 2005/06 this final summer report showed substantial more completion of activity. Of the fifty indicators; ten were not on target (red), many of which were delays in delivery; three had revised targets (amber) and six were on target (green) but could not as yet be reported as completed; for the remainder the activity that was planned for 2005/6 had been completed. Further updates on the indicators and reports on all KPIs would be included in the final version of the paper for Council. The main area of concern for the Committee was research, where there was evidence of a slow-down in the increase in research income, and of a decline in applications and grants awarded, although in most areas the financial value of the applications being submitted was higher. An additional and related concern was on the recruitment of postgraduate research students, where there was no evidence of the step-change growth in intake that was necessary. Both these issues, if not addressed, would present major risks going forwards into the likely metrics-oriented research funding era, and the Committee requested the DVC Research to continue his focus on these matters with Research Committee. The progress towards 2008/09 indicators was also noted. With the exceptions on research noted above, the Committee was generally content with the progress being reported.

It was noted that the Staff Survey would offer greater value to Schools if it could disaggregate the data (provided the data met certain thresholds to ensure compliance with data protection guidelines) to academic and non-academic staff, and the Director of Personnel and Staff Development would be requested to take that forward with Heads of School. There was also an issue on the payment of bursaries to postgraduate research students undertaking graduate assistant roles, and whether in fact there were tax implications for such students – this would be investigated by Personnel and Finance Services.

The Committee welcomed the discipline of this regular reporting, noting also that the reporting would focus increasingly on outputs and performance from Autumn 2006, and oriented around the top 20 metrics. Although there would be a change in format to the Corporate Plan (minute 06.54 refers) the approach of utilising both a review of performance through metrics and a progress report on annual operating plans should continue.

06.53 **Estate Strategy**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** the draft Estate strategy (SPRC/06/44 attached for Senate and Council), together with a covering note from the Director of Buildings and Estate. Also received was a synopsis of the comments received in response to the earlier publication of these documents.

This was the first time in which a long-term and strategic document on the development of the Estate had been produced, and this was welcomed. The Strategy document was currently still a work in progress, and in particular was being revised to ensure that it captured more clearly the major actions for decision-making by SPaRC and Council. Key themes for the Strategy included:

- The optimisation of the efficient use of space – this was vital to get right for the University's campuses if we were to ensure that our physical infrastructure was sustainable over the long-term, keeping both new building costs and maintenance costs down. The introduction of space-charging had been an important driver and the benefits were starting to come through in efficiency, and the focus on space management in the next year and onwards was a key theme;
- The rationalisation of academic and non-academic space around the campuses, ensuring that Schools had sufficient space to accommodate their growth plans and giving students access to the fullest range of high quality facilities. One important element to this work was the future of St Luke's (other than PMS), and this would be subject to a full review in Autumn 2006. It was recognised that although no decisions had been taken on the future of St Luke's, it was a potentially higher-profile issue and one that should be carefully

thought through by way of a communications strategy to the student and other communities.

- Learning resources – for the Exeter and Cornwall campuses there will need to be clear plans to ensure that the next generation of students are able to access high quality resources, both for teaching and for learning, and the provision of fit-for-purpose learning resources centres will be key to delivering on those aims.
- Linking all that we do in estate planning to the top 20 agenda – being clear on what top 20 means and looks like, and ensuring that the development of the University's buildings and campuses is planned in the light of that understanding. One important element will be identity for the campuses, and also creating clearer campus hubs, a particular issue at present for the Streatham campus.
- Sustainability – taking an environmentally and financially sustainable view on the development of the University, so that the legacy for the remainder of the 21st century and beyond is a high quality and sustainable University. Specific elements of this will include car parking and other 'green travel' plans.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that it approve the strategy, subject to the further revisions to be made to the Strategy in the light of comments received from SPaRC and from other sources. Council would be provided with that final draft for consideration at its 17 July meeting.

06.54 **Corporate Plan 2006-2010**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** the Corporate Plan covering the period 2006 to 2010 (SPRC/06/45 attached for Senate and Council).

The Corporate Plan included a synthesis of the strategies for the 'core' business of the University, set in the strategic context and in light of the principles originally laid down in *'Imagining the Future'* and now being articulated into a strategy to become a top 20 UK university by 2010. The 'core' strategies were identified as research, education and outreach. These key elements of policy were the subject of support from the main service strategies that underpin the core: finance, human resources, estate, information services and professional services.

The draft Corporate Plan was based on an earlier draft circulated to members of both SPaRC and the Senior Management Group, and had benefited from specific feedback from a number of colleagues. Its format was consistent with the previous iteration, and as advised to SPaRC and Council in Spring 2006 changes had been kept to a minimum. Once the top 20 metrics review work was completed at the end of this summer, it was planned to re-cast the plan to 2010 using the top 20 agenda as a way of sharpening the plan, and focusing also more on outputs and performance measures and less on inputs and process. That work should be completed in Autumn 2006. The Corporate Plan should in future also make much clearer linkage to financial plans, i.e. making clear how the financial plans would be in support of the strategy to top 20. Specific comments made included:

- Mission Statement – this currently did not emphasise employment, a vital component of our Education Strategy and drive to top 20, and this should be addressed in the draft for Council
- Education – the e-learning indicator of success should also be applied in the period to 2008 as well as for the longer-term
- HR section - Contribution Based Reward – the wording on page 16 should be improved
- Information Services – the third objective (final sentence) on page 20 should also be refined for clarity of meaning
- A number of the indicators were more concerned with inputs and process than outputs and measures of performance – this would be addressed in the Autumn work programme.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED TO SENATE AND COUNCIL** that the Corporate Plan be approved, subject to any revisions they wish to see made in the final version, and that Senate and Council note the development work planned for Autumn 2006.

06.55 Top 20 by 2010

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Registrar and Secretary as Chair of the Top 20 by 2010 Group (SPRC/06/46 attached for Senate and Council).

The Registrar and Secretary said that the Group had been established to ensure that the University had a set of metrics through which it could clearly establish what top 20 performance was, what it should focus its efforts and resources on to achieve top 20 status by 2010, and in the light of the competition for the few places likely to be available in the top 20 by that point. Once established, these metrics would guide the development of the Corporate Plan to 2010, and would be provide the main reporting mechanism to SPaRC and to Council. As well as the means to set institutional targets, there would be applications of these targets where applicable to Schools and Services.

The Committee **APPROVED** the following 15 metrics:

- Research income – driven upwards from benchmarked per academic staff fte data
- RAE outcomes
- PGRs per staff fte
- PGT student population (a volume growth target, % of population for peer comps.)
- International student population (a volume growth target, % of population for peer comps.)
- Student entry standards (tariff scores)
- Student retention and completion (submission rates for PGRs)
- Firsts/2:1s
- Employability (graduate level)
- National student survey (NSS)
- Sport (BUSA ranking and other measures of participation and health/wellness)
- Estate improvement
- IT and learning infrastructure (spend per student fte)
- Student facilities spend (spend per student fte)
- Non HEFCE Income as a proportion of total income (with narratives to capture increases in HEFCE income from new initiatives and University-taken actions)

The Group had considered other measures but for a variety of reasons had decided that the set above, all of which would provide for robust comparative analysis, that were key components in institutional strategy, and which would be commonly held up by peers and others as genuine measures of top 20 status should not be added to. The sports measure was potentially more contentious, but it was viewed as being an increasing priority for the future, and one that would capture health and wellness issues as well as sporting performance, but one that also reflected on Exeter's strategic emphasis on these areas being part of the student and staff experience. The Committee endorsed those views.

The Committee also **APPROVED** the comparator group, which was as follows (with Times 2006 positions shown for reference):

| | |
|----|----------------|
| 6 | Loughborough |
| 7 | Bristol |
| 9 | Bath |
| 10 | Durham |
| 12 | Royal Holloway |
| 14 | Nottingham |
| 15 | York |
| 16 | Cardiff |
| 18 | Leicester |
| 21 | Lancaster |

| | |
|----|-------------|
| 22 | Southampton |
| 23 | East Anglia |
| 25 | Newcastle |
| 30 | Essex |
| 33 | Birmingham |

The previous main comparison group had been the 1994 Group and that had proven useful as a gauge, but with the drive to top 20 the obvious reference point was those peers with whom we are competing for available places, and ensuring coverage of regional peers and of certain similar universities.

Good progress had been made in establishing the metrics at a detailed level, and SPaRC could look forward to receiving a detailed analysis of current performance measured against our main top competitors in Autumn Term 2006. That analysis would give the framework for agreeing targets for the period to 2010 against each of these metrics, and would be the basis for agreeing operating plans going forwards.

The Committee also welcomed the news that the University had improved its position in the 2006 Times league table, up to 28th from joint 34th in 2005; this league table was an important one for the University's main stakeholders and interest groups. The University was also currently 28th in the Guardian table and 25th in the Sunday Times. With improvements in performance and with data lags falling out of the system, it was hoped that these positions would be sustained and improved upon.

06.56 **Implementing the International Strategy (Commercial in Confidence)**

For SPaRC, Senate and Council members only.

06.57 **Professional Services Outward Facing Investment Plans**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report by the Director of Communication & Partnership on Professional Services outward facing investment plans (SPRC/06/48). The Committee welcomed and endorsed the direction of travel set out in this document, which set out how the investments previously approved by SPaRC in the areas of marketing, student recruitment and employability would be used to help deliver on the top 20 agenda. A number of feedback and monitoring arrangements were noted, and some of these would form part of the review of performance against the top 20 metrics.

06.58 **Trust Schools**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a verbal report from Professor Richardson, who had been leading the co-ordination work with the five Exeter schools. The University had entered into this arena to try to help the city address the underperformance very evident in educational achievement at the secondary level, but it was evident that there now appeared to be little commitment from all of the schools and other players to take forward an approach to trust school status. It was hoped that the University could continue to offer a supportive role to improving the educational prospects for the city's future generation of schoolchildren.

06.59 **Research Committee**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Research Committee meeting held on 1 June 2006 (SPRC/06/49 attached for Council).

The DVC Research reported on the following:

- **Pilot RAE 2008** – external assessors for all but 2 units of assessment had been appointed, and it was hoped to make the outstanding 2 appointments shortly. Pilot RAE

documents were with the appointed assessors, and their feedback would be received in July. The self-evaluations did indicate that there would be a significant improvement in the submissions compared to 2001, and it was expected that returns of staff would be increased in % terms over the 2001 RAE also. A tabled analysis of the relative strengths of the draft profiles comparing all Exeter units of assessment was received, and that information in addition to the feedback from assessors and the sharing of good practice internally would help guide the RAE planning work over the next few months.

- **Research Income** – it was noted that the forecast for 2005/06 research income was £15.9M compared with £13.4M for 2004/05, an increase of 16%. The research income plans recently approved showed a projected increase over the period to £25m by 2009/10. These plans had been drawn up in the light of peer performance in 5/5* departments and with two exceptions revealed plans to outperform competitors by the end of the plan in research income per staff fte. The plans were in some cases highly ambitious, but were considered to be at the right balance point of attainable and stretching.
- **Research Grant Activity** – the overall picture was disappointing with declines in the number of applications and awards (-19% and -18% respectively), and in the value of applications and awards (-14% and -16% respectively) compared with the same period last year, and it seemed that the exceptionally high number of applications and awards in the first 9 months of 2004/05 had not been sustained. However, there were indications from more recent data for April and May that the number of applications was picking up although it was still unlikely that the levels achieved in 2004/05 would be reached. There was further analysis needed to determine the reasons for the drop in performance on these key indicators and the DVC Research would be asking the Research Development Officers to lead on this.

06.60 **Science Strategy**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a progress report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) on the Science Strategy (SPRC/06/51). The Vice-Chancellor reported that Sir Robin Nicholson fully supported the report.

The Science Strategy Board, which from 1 August would formally report to SPaRC, had made considerable strides in developing a Science Strategy. It was clear that if Exeter was to be a top 20 research-intensive University, it had to have top quality Schools in Science, Engineering and Medicine (SEM), working co-operatively to a clear, dynamic, forward-looking and distinctive Science Strategy.

It was evident that Exeter already had some top quality beacon areas in its SEM Schools but was not currently perceived as top 20 because most of the beacon areas were too small and too few and the SEM activity was insufficiently "joined up". Looking forwards, two important themes were apparent:

- Performance in RAE2008 was likely to provide only an entrance ticket to significant funding schemes. Funding would be through 'metrics', a large part of which was likely to be research council income. Our small scale meant that increasing research income, particularly in terms of large platform grants, was difficult. We did not have enough large, well-focused research groups from which such applications should naturally arise, and to be effective in attaining high value awards, we would have to add value through growing beacon areas and, where appropriate, develop synergies between them.
- The likely HE environment over the next 10 years was one in which public investment in science would continue to grow, with research funding measured and disbursed using metrics, and possibly at the expense of social sciences, arts and humanities. In a university like Exeter that was rich in social sciences, arts and humanities, we must ensure that we invest in and grow our generally strong but still small-scale science base.

The Board was continuing its work to identify key development areas and investment strategies, and would report to SPaRC on its conclusions next session. Members of the Committee welcomed this important strategic review, and were strongly supportive of the

preliminary conclusions presented in the progress report. It was evident that there would be significant resource implications for implementation, and in addition to external funding sources it was anticipated that investment from the University would also be necessary. The Committee recognised that requirement, and would consider proposals for investment once these were available, but it was agreed that an important condition to any investment was that all the SEM Schools were fully committed to the strategy and their role in its implementation. It was also noted that a critical element in the development of the strategy was the establishment and building of inter-disciplinary relationships between the SEM Schools and other Schools in the Arts/Humanities/Social Sciences, and that Board membership of colleagues from those areas should be considered from the next session.

06.61 **Learning and Teaching Committee**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Learning and Teaching Committee meeting held on 23 May 2006 (SPRC/06/52).

06.62 **Ethics Committee**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Ethics Committee meeting held on 30 May 2006 (SPRC/06/53). It was noted that the Ethics Committee was content that there were no ethical grounds on which funding from the Kurdish Regional Government should be rejected for the proposed Centre for Kurdish Studies.