

STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy, Performance and Resources Committee was held on Friday 27 May 2005 at 2.30pm in Committee Room A, Northcote House.

- PRESENT: Vice-Chancellor, Professor S M Smith (Chair)
- Pro-Chancellor, Mr K Russell Seal
 Pro-Chancellor, Professor R J Hawker
 Treasurer, Mr G A Sturtridge
 Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor R J P Kain
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor J M Kay
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor S R M Wilks
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor P Webley
- Mr D J Allen
 Dr J Barry
- Professor P R Draper
 Professor W B Richardson
- Deputy Registrar & Academic Secretary, Dr P K Harvey
 Director of Finance, Mr K R Blanshard
 Senior Assistant Registrar, Mr P J Kennedy
- IN ATTENDANCE: Dean of the Faculty of Undergraduate Studies, Professor M Macnair
 Permanent Secretary to the Guild of Students, Mr S N Fishwick
- APOLOGIES: Mr T Edwards, Ms R King, Dr S Leather

05.27 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 9 and 16 March 2005 were **CONFIRMED** (SPRC/05/31 and SPRC/05/31(a))

05.28 **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

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

- Dentistry – the early stages towards a national expansion in dental student numbers were now commencing, it being likely that at least one new Dental School would be created to help provide for the growth levels needed. Through the Peninsula Medical School, the University was submitting an expression of interest.
- Regional Research Collaboration – the proposals for this collaborative set of proposals would be considered by the HEFCE Board at its 16 June meeting.
- HEFCE ASNs bid – a bid for additional funded student places (ASNs) was being progressed on a regional basis through HERDA-SW – the proposal being developed by the University was for some 375 places over 2006/07 and 2007/08. It was thought that the prospects of a major allocation were good, and regular progress updates would be provided to the Committee.
- Initial Teacher Training – unit funding issues for ITT were still being raised with the TTA by HEIs; separately, lobbying was proceeding on the PGCE 'end-on' issue, where currently direct undergraduate-to-PGCE entrants would not be required to pay the variable fees until 2009/10. These were particularly significant issues for those research intensive HEIs that, like Exeter, had large ITT portfolios.
- Academic Restructuring – progress on restructuring in Chemistry and Music in particular was reported. It was noted that some £5.2M in recurrent cost was being taken out of the University's baseline, at a cost of circa £4.8M plus £750k in pension costs.

- Director of Finance – Jeremy Lindley, currently Deputy Director of Finance at the University of Birmingham, had been appointed to this post with effect from 5 September 2005.
- Deputy Registrar and Academic Secretary – Dr Philip Harvey would be taking up an Acting Registrar post at the University of Sussex on a secondment basis to 1 April 2006; David Batty would be acting Academic Secretary during that period.

05.29 Review of SPaRC Membership

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a proposal from the Vice-Chancellor that there should be an additional member of the Committee for an elected representative of the Academic Staff Association (SPRC/05/32).

It was **RECOMMENDED TO SENATE AND COUNCIL** that the membership should be amended to include the additional member, from Senate, as follows:

- (a) Four members of Senate (other than the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors and student members) elected by the Senate, at least two of whom should be Heads of School and one a non *ex-officio* member of the Academic Staff Association; and that
- (b) This change to the Committee's membership would be reviewed after a year.

05.30 Social and Recreational Music at the University

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a paper from Professor Stephen Wilks that proposed how, within the context of the University's exit from music as an academic discipline, there should be provision for social and recreational music at the University (SPRC/05/33 attached for Senate and Council).

The University's key objectives in seeking to promote social and recreational music were:

- to enrich the social life of the University,
- to facilitate student participation in music as a social activity across all the varieties of music,
- to provide entertainment for the student, staff and City and District community,
- to encourage student musicians not pursuing music degrees to consider Exeter as an attractive University,
- to contribute to music making in the local and regional community, and
- to maintain the long traditions of contributing to the musical activities of the local religious community

The proposals would need to address the position of religious music, and there would need to be a continuation and development in particular of the partnership with the Cathedral. It was noted that there were already significant strengths upon which to build, in particular within the Guild of Students, including for example some ten music societies across a wide spectrum of musical types, and with membership drawn primarily from outside the Music Department. It was also noted that a number of other universities without academic music departments had successful social/recreational music developments, and a review of these approaches had informed the model being suggested for Exeter. More specifically, the proposals put forward by Professor Wilks would:

- create a Director of Music, and Assistant, who would be managerially located within the Academic Office,
- establish a programme of music tuition,
- create vocal and instrumental scholarships,
- provide the Director of Music with resources to supplement the Guild budget for music activities, and
- establish an infrastructure of practice and performance facilities.

It was noted in discussion that there was significant potential for working with both Exeter

College and with Dartington College of Arts, that there was scope for providing students with academic credit where they were involved in leading music-making by students, and that possibilities existed, in particular in the 50th Anniversary context, to secure some commercial support for music making at the University.

The Committee **APPROVED** the overall approach being proposed within the paper and the specific proposals within it, noting that the business plan was partly reliant on 'central funding' released from Music QR, but that from 2007/08 additional funds should be sought from the private sector for sponsorship for a high quality set of music offerings to the University and its communities. It was **DECIDED** that Professor Wilks should take forward these proposals, for further discussion with the Guild and other interested parties, and that next steps would include the launch of the choral scholarships within the University's overall scheme for scholarships.

05.31 **Corporate Plan 2004/05- 2008/09**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** the draft Corporate Plan, which in its current iteration consisted of individual specific strategies together with a plan for how these would be brought together into a single document for the next meetings of SPaRC, Senate and Council (SPRC/05/34).

It was noted that institutional planning in the current year was in a transitional mode and, in that context, the construction of the Corporate Plan had been highly inductive. Although the individual strategies had all drawn from the Vice-Chancellor's *Imagining the Future* paper, there had been little opportunity to reflect on their relationships with other strategies; whilst the current production of the new Corporate Plan was exploring synergies across the various themes, it would take a further cycle to have fully complementary strategies. The strategies themselves were in various stages of production – some were current and fully updated, others were in the process of being revised and others had only recently been drafted and were being seen here for the first time by SPaRC. The new Corporate Plan would in that sense act as a "Green Paper" for the next planning cycle. The Committee noted these constraints, and in particular the need to ensure that the Plan was completed for receipt by Council on 18 July and for onward transmission to HEFCE by the end of July.

By way of structure, the Committee welcomed the shift from the previous Institutional Plan approach, which had provided excessive material, and was not fit-for-purpose for circulation to external partners, towards a more concise and tightly focused document consisting of:

- A clear and concise statement, professionally presented and suitable for wide readership of the University's corporate strategy – its mission, key objectives and targets, and performance against objectives in the core strategic areas of its activities (including, where relevant, reference to governance and management, new academic developments, strategic partnerships, and regional and international activities);
- Statements on progress against strategic priorities up to 2004/05 and the priorities for 2005/06;
- Assumptions about future trends to 2008/09 and where relevant beyond;
- Core strategies for: Research, Education and Outreach;
- Supportive service strategies covering: Finance, Human Resources, Estate and Information Services;
- Statements on Governance and Management, and on Risk Management;
- A section on Monitoring Progress; and
- A Financial Forecast for the period 2004/05 to 2008/09 in the context of the University's financial strategy, including capital elements.

The Committee also made the following observations to inform the next stages in the drafting of the Plan, namely that:

- There should be a clear recognition of where the University currently stood, and of what it needed to do to in 2005/06 and in future years of the planning period to become a top-20 University;

- A greater sense of prioritisation and in turn investment in resources should be brought out;
- The flavour of activity within Schools in particular should come through more prominently, and any elements of strategic cross-subsidy in financial plans should be brought out in the Plan;
- Outreach was a better descriptor than Business, Community and Knowledge Enterprise for this strategic area, and this area continued to be one where a genuine cultural shift had yet to take place – a greater emphasis on how the University would move this key set of issues forward was needed;
- The Education Strategy, which was an excellent start, should seek to present the University's unique offerings to students in as distinctive a way as possible, with the focus on employability an essential component to expand upon, and with the need to look also on postgraduate programme offerings and on portfolio development more generally;
- The HR Strategy was originally written, in part, with a view to gaining HEFCE Rewarding & Developing Staff funding and required some updating, with a concern for some being a perception of a lack of flexibility within current personnel policies;
- The Estate Strategy would be wholly updated in the current calendar year through work being advanced by Physical Resources Committee, which would deliver a plan spanning a 5 and 10 year period, and that Health & Safety and Sustainability issues would be core components within that strategy; and that
- Risks and their management through contingencies and other means should be well articulated.

The Committee **DECIDED** to:

- (a) Endorse the revised structure to the Corporate Plan;
- (b) Request that its observations inform the drafting of the Plan into its new format; and
- (c) Note that the revised Plan would be presented to SPaRC on 1 July and thereafter to Senate and to Council.

05.32 **Budget Monitoring Group**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Budget Monitoring Group meeting held on 25 April 2005 (SPRC/05/35).

It was noted that the historical costs deficit for the year 2004/05 was expected to amount to just under £10M, based on deficits within Schools and Services and on the costs of academic restructuring. It was also noted that good progress was being made on the sale of outlying properties which would bring in substantial capital receipts.

05.33 **Programme & Pricing Group**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Programme & Pricing Group (SPRC/05/36). The report focused on part-time undergraduate provision and variable fees from 2006, with a particular emphasis for DLL on how these issues were being taken forward.

For some time Exeter had been charging at below-market rates for DLL programmes, and in the light of tuition fee changes on the near horizon the Group had decided to make changes to the fees being charged to new students, with levels of protection at current rates being provided for defined time-spans to current students. Subject to legal advice, students entering from 2005 (or progressing to the next level) would be charged pro-rata to the tuition fees in force for full-time students. The same principle would generally apply from 2006, i.e. that the fees would be pro-rata to the full £3,000 fee. It was noted that this shift could lead to the market for such programmes becoming so small as to be unviable, and it would be necessary therefore to finalise a policy on part-time fees for DLL activity that would provide contributions to the University's regional/local mission but within clearly understood and affordable financial limits. The Committee **DECIDED** to request the Programme and Pricing Group refine this element of the policy on part-time fees and report back to it.

The Committee also noted that an institution-wide deposit scheme for postgraduate applications was being considered by the Group, but that further work was necessary before this scheme was finalised for 2006 entry implementation.

05.34 **Capital Planning Group**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Capital Planning Group, summarising progress towards the University's submission to HEFCE of the bid for capital for research, learning and teaching, and infrastructure, due for submission to HEFCE not later than 30 May (SPRC/05/37 attached for Senate and Council). Within that tight timeframe the Capital Planning Group had taken forward the University's proposals to HEFCE.

The most significant items within the submission, which together with University funds totalled some £19M worth of projects, were:

- £3.4M for adaptation and refurbishment of space within Queen's
- £3M for Amory for similar works to those in Queen's
- £5M for establishing the new School of Biosciences within the current Chemistry building, and
- £1.6M towards investment in IT infrastructure, including that for AV equipment and videoconferencing.

The development of the Montefiore building for SHiPSS was also noted, supported by £600k from a donor.

The Committee was pleased to note the good progress being reported on capital planning, but wished to stress that it would be important for a clear audit trail to be available for each individual project, summarising at the outset the intended outcomes and costs, and with regular updates maintained alongside those initiation documents, such that at the conclusion of these projects there would be proper records of intended and actual results. Whilst members noted the tightness of the timetable set by HEFCE, there was concern that future investment decisions of this nature should be made with greater input from SPaRC.

05.35 **UEC Management Group**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the UEC Management Group meeting held on 22 April 2005 (SPRC/05/38).

The following points were of particular note:

- Phase 2 Working Capital – some £5.4M had been allocated to the University, which was some 2.5 greater than that secured for Phase 1;
- Phase 2 Student numbers – the University was seeking an additional 100 student numbers for Phase 2 which would help improve critical mass and further spread overheads – prospects were good for receiving this extra allocation from within the CUC Phase 2 total;
- A Campus Services Director was to be appointed to act as the focal point for a more efficient and cost-effective delivery of services to students and staff at Tremough; and
- An additional 250 residential rooms for students were planned for Phase 2 – SPaRC would receive a paper at its final meeting of the year on the Tremough Campus Services' borrowing plans for this project.

05.36 **Learning & Teaching Committee**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the Learning & Teaching Committee (SPRC/05/39).

It was noted that the National Student Survey, which would give on-line information to

applicants based on questionnaires completed by finalists, would need a 50% average response. The University response was currently at about 70%, compared to a national average of around 60%. The University would be able to view quantitative data from early July ahead of applicants being able to see this information from September 2005. The data, including that of a more qualitative nature, would be circulated to Schools and Services once available.