

STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Strategy, Performance and Resources Committee was held on Thursday 21 October 2004 at 10.30am in Committee Room A, Northcote House.

- PRESENT: Vice-Chancellor, Professor S M Smith (Chair)
- Pro-Chancellor, Dr G G Pope
 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 P Webley
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor S R M Wilks
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|--------------------------|--------------|
| Mr D J Allen | Dr J Barry |
| Professor P R Draper | Mr T Edwards |
| Ms R King | Dr S Leather |
| Professor W B Richardson | |
- 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 K R Seal

04.1 **Terms of Reference and Membership**

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Terms of Reference and Membership of the Committee for 2004/05, as approved by Council at its July 2004 meeting (SPRC/04/1).

04.2 **SPaRC Operations and Planning**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** proposals regarding how the Committee would perform its role and operate in the light of its terms of reference assigned to it by Council, and within the academic and business planning cycle proposed by PRARG (SPRC/04/2, SPRC/04/3).

The Vice-Chancellor stressed to the Committee that its role was fundamentally different to that previously performed by Planning and Resources Committee. SPaRC was accountable to Senate and Council for the University's strategy, performance review and resource allocation, replacing what had previously been Academic Policy Committee, Finance Committee and Planning and Resources Committee. SPaRC would be the principal focus for institutional planning and budgeting. Members would be requested to involve themselves in these matters from a corporate rather than representation basis having the best interests of the University as a whole foremost in mind. Minutes would continue to be written to comprise a formal record of decisions taken and summarise their rationale.

The Committee would need a sub-structure to assist it in performing its business, but consistent with Council's decision that the Committee system should be streamlined, represent genuine value for money and not accrue additional sub-committees. The sub-committees would be: Information Services, Investment and the UEC Management Group committees, together with the PRARG (Planning and Resource Allocation Review Group), Budget Monitoring Group and Performance & Risk Group. Additionally, it was anticipated that a group would be established to guide matters relating to pricing of taught provision (business previously conducted through the Tuition Fees Working Party, which the new group provisionally entitled Programmes and Pricing would replace).

It was intended that the Committee's business would be structured both across the year and within meetings to enable it to cover the various strategy/planning, performance monitoring and review, and resources issues. Academic and business planning matters would be considered corporately, ensuring planning for School growth and change was supported by associated plans for Professional Services.

PRARG had proposed a planning cycle for Schools/Services based on the overall approach endorsed by Council in July 2004. The cycle would help ensure that planning was a more collaborative operation, and with planning activities extended across the year rather than highly concentrated into single events. For 2004/05 certain additional activities would be needed, on account of the transition from the old approach to the new system, and it was also noted that in the transitional period there remained the need to further define certain planning activities. Central to the approach would be the establishment of School/Service Planning Groups (annex B to SRPC/04/3). These Groups would be formed around the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), the Head of School (or Registrar & Secretary for Services), and would include the School Manager, with colleagues from Management Accounting, Personnel and Planning. The intention was to ensure as far as possible that resources and support are provided for planning, in an advisory and partnership capacity. SPGs would work to terms of reference being established across all DVCs, and sub-sets of the SPGs would meet to deal with Budget Monitoring and other matters.

The Committee **DECIDED**:

- (a) to note the areas of the Committee's responsibility in addition to those set by its formal terms of reference (SPRC/04/2 section 2.3);
- (b) to approve a sub-committee structure, initially comprising UECMG; Information Services; Investment; Budget Monitoring; Performance and Risk; PRARG; and Programme and Pricing (SPRC/04/2 section 3.1);
- (c) to request regular reports on activity from other bodies as listed (SPRC/04/2 section 3.2);
- (d) to approve the general framework for SPaRC business at meetings (SPRC/04/2 section 4.2);
- (e) to approve the detailed planning process and cycle as set in SPRC/04/3.

04.3 **Vice-Chancellor's Report**

The Vice-Chancellor **REPORTED** on developments in the external environment, and the challenges these developments presented for the University. It was evident that the HE environment was getting increasingly competitive and the University would have to respond decisively if it was to gain its place in the top 20 research-led Universities. The Vice-Chancellor continued to engage with policymakers at the national level, enabling the University both to help shape future policy and to gain early access to likely future directions.

04.4 **Vice Chancellor's Executive Group Residential Planning Meeting**

Minute 04.4 is for SPaRC Members Only Commercial in Confidence

04.5 **Budget 2004/05 and Forward Financial Direction**

Minute 04.5 is for SPaRC Members Only Commercial in Confidence

04.6 **Student Numbers – Preliminary Report for 2004/05**

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report on the preliminary intake/aggregate position for 2004/05 (SPRC/04/6).

The data, which looked only at full-time categories, were produced at an early stage in the Autumn Term and so would need to be treated with some caution. Another preliminary student count would take place in the first week of November which, together with an initial assessment of the teaching

loads, would allow analysis of the financial implications of the student population. Part-time students would also be included in this count. This information would be presented at the November meeting of SPaRC. In subsequent years, when the planning cycle was embedded, planned numbers from the budgets would be available from the preceding planning cycle, allowing financial assessments to be made from all student number counts.

It was noted that the registration of students for the current year saw, broadly, about half registering on-line and the balance registering in person/by post. For 2005/06 it was expected that all student registrations would be on-line, improving student services, reducing administrative loads and improving data accuracy and currency.

The preliminary census indicated some growth across the institution (except PGCE) but the growth in numbers was modest and was uneven across Schools. The overall numbers showed a 5% increase in UK/EU undergraduates and 3% in International undergraduates. There were increases of 5% and 4% in UK/EU and International postgraduate taught students respectively; PGR student numbers were static. International postgraduate taught recruitment was still concentrated in the School of Business & Economics, and heavily dependent on the Far East market. It was envisaged that these student numbers would ensure the teaching contract with HEFCE being met in full; although some ITT holdback from the TTA was anticipated.

04.7 University of Exeter in Cornwall

The Committee **RECEIVED** a report from the UEC Management Group's meeting held on 7 October 2004 (SPRC/04/7). The build programme for Phase 1 had been completed within time and within budget, although not without difficulties in release of accommodation immediately prior to the academic year. The residential accommodation for students was likewise on time and within budget. Student numbers for the first undergraduate intake were close to target, and with substantially increased levels of interest now being seen for 2005 entry.

The Committee also **RECEIVED** an oral report on prospects for Phase 2. There were positive signs that Phase 2 would be funded and proceed, with additional student intakes from 2007/08.

04.8 Value for Money (VFM)

The Committee **CONSIDERED** a report from the Director of Finance, based on a paper that Audit Committee had approved at its 6 October meeting (SPRC/04/8). This was an important element of the University's financial strategy and one that had been underplayed in previous years. The new approach to getting better value for money should enable the University to improve its financial performance and liberate resources for new investments. The pro-active approach to VFM would be linked closely to performance and would be implemented through the Performance and Risk Group, reporting to SPaRC. The Committee strongly endorsed the approach set out in the paper and noted that it would be presented to Council in December 2004.