

Minutes

Meeting title:	Council (Special meeting)	
Date:	25 September 2008	Time: 3.00pm
Location:	The Council Room, George Thomas Building	
Present:	Dame Valerie Strachan (<i>in the Chair</i>), Professor N H Foskett, Professor R Holdaway, Mr A J Jukes, Professor J Kilburn, Mr M Killingley, Mr P Lester, Professor W Powrie, Ms R Rivaz, Mr M J Snell, Ms A Tanfield *, Professor W A Wakeham, Mr A J Walker, Professor A A Wheeler, Professor D M Williams	
In attendance	The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Director of Finance, Professor D Humphris** and Dr K A Piggott	

- not present for restricted business
- ** after minute 1

Unrestricted

4 The Vice-Chancellor's report

The Vice-Chancellor presented an oral report, as follows:

Professor Caroline Thomas - With regret the Vice-Chancellor reported that Professor Thomas remained seriously unwell, and had chosen to retire on ill-health grounds, with effect from 22 September 2008.

Payment of the October salary settlement and future pensions arrangements - Members were reminded that the 2006-09 pay settlement provided for the final instalment to be paid in October 2008 at 2.5% or RPI in September 2008, whichever was the higher. When the agreement was reached, RPI was 2.5%, but was now closer to 5%. The University had budgeted for a payment at 4%. The agreement provided for institutions to defer payment for up to eleven months if they were in financial difficulties.

With regard to pensions the Pensions Forum had begun to discuss with USS how to reform the scheme - it was clear that the current arrangements were no longer affordable. The starting position was that employees would need to make a greater contribution. Negotiations must be finished by April.

Members were in broad agreement that under the circumstances it would be appropriate to pay the full award in October; it was however suggested that it would be helpful to emphasise to staff that this would mean the cost-base problem must be addressed. Members were also strongly of the view that a robust line must be taken in the forthcoming pay negotiations. The position regarding contribution rates to USS must also be taken into account as part of these negotiations.

The Vice-Chancellor reminded members that Council in July had approved a clear policy on the withholding of pay for partial non-performance in the event of industrial action. Members discussed the most appropriate way and time to communicate this to staff and the Trades Unions. It was judged that it would be helpful to communicate directly with staff, rather than solely through the Unions, so that the University management could convey the message in the way it wished.

Insurance claim - The Director of Finance updated members on progress with the insurance claim. The detailed loss-adjusting process had now recommenced. He also advised members that, as previously notified to Council, the University's insurance cover was no longer placed with UMAL; after market testing, the insurance contract had been placed with Zurich, with Aon as the main broker.

InEx Project - At the invitation of the Vice-Chancellor Professor Wheeler gave a brief update on progress. He was pleased to report that the project was on track. In particular research income for 2007-08 had

increased to c. £82m (the target for 2008-09 was £84m). The recruitment of international students had also been excellent, although it was not possible to confirm exact numbers until enrolment was completed; however income from this source should increase by at least 10%. On the expenditure side, the new organisation for the management and delivery of IT support and services (iSolutions) had been established, and the salary sacrifice scheme had been implemented successfully. A detailed report on the project would be presented to Council in October. The key issue now to be addressed was 'closing the gap' (how the University would find the further savings necessary to meet its first key target of reducing staff expenditure to 58% of income in 2009). This had been discussed at the Senior Managers' awayday. It was anticipated that proposals relating to this would be brought to Council in January.

University of Winchester award of research degree awarding powers - The Privy Council had now approved the award of research degree awarding powers to the University of Winchester.

Physics Review - The report would be published at 5.00pm on 1 October.

Outcomes of National Students' Survey - Although the University had improved its overall score in the National Students' Survey it had fallen in the rankings because other institutions had improved more significantly. However, in the Sunday Times University Guide the University had improved its position to twelfth, and was also one of three runners-up as 'Sunday Times University of the Year'. The Vice-Chancellor was also pleased to report that the Student Finance Team had been nominated in the 'Outstanding Student Financial Support Package' category of the Times Higher Education Awards.

5 **Update on LR** agendum 2

This item is commercially confidential and is covered in a confidential minute for Council members only.

6. **Committee Review**

6.1 **Proposed revised terms of reference and membership of University committees** agendum 3.1

Received (i) A paper from the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer dated 10 September 2008 and headed 'the committee review: structure and terms of reference' setting out the outcomes of the committee review, including proposed terms of reference and membership for University committees; (ii) an addendum to the above paper, dated 24 September 2008, setting out further amendments to the proposed membership and terms of reference of committees.

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer presented the paper, reminding members of the proposals previously endorsed by Council, as set out in the 'background' section of the circulated paper, and highlighting the arrangements proposed for UEG and the roles of the executive and compliance committees.

The Treasurer welcomed the provision of all the committee information in one document, but suggested that it would be useful also to include the terms of reference of Council, the powers of Standing Committee, and a clear indication of those areas where Council had delegated its powers. It was explained that this information was set out in the Standing Orders of Council (agendum 3.2) and in the Statement of Primary Responsibilities which was currently being amended and would be presented to Council in November.

It was noted that the terms of reference and membership of committees document would be presented to Senate at its first meeting of 2008/09 on 12 November 2008.

Members thanked all those who had played a part in the work of the committee review especially those who had been involved in the preparation of the final outcomes.

Resolved That the committee structure and the revised terms of reference for the committees for the academic session 2008/09 be approved as set out in the circulated paper, subject to the amendments set out in the addendum paper dated 24 September 2008.

Post meeting note: A further amendment to the membership of the Honorary Degrees Committee has been identified, which was omitted in error from the addendum paper. The Honorary Degrees Committee should be chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, with the Chair of Council as a member. The

rationale for the change is that the Honorary Degrees Committee deals with academic matters and therefore should be chaired by the leader of the academic community..

6.2 **Council Standing Orders** agendum 3.2

Received A paper from the Registrar and Chief Operating officer dated 15 September 2008 setting out proposed revisions to the Standing Orders of Council.

Members were advised that amendments to the Standing Orders were being brought to this meeting, rather than to the first ordinary meeting in the year, because some amendments to the Standing Orders were necessary as a result of the proposed revisions to the committee structure and it was therefore clearly appropriate for these matters to be considered together. The opportunity had also been taken to review the Standing Orders more generally.

Resolved That the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of Council be approved.

The meeting finished at 5.05pm

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