



Council

Date and time Thursday 12 July 2007 at 4.00 pm

Place The Council Room, George Thomas Building

Present Dame Valerie Strachan (*in the Chair*), Professor I T Cameron, Dr S J Deuchar, Professor A D Fitt, Dr M O Gobbi, Professor J K Hammond, Mr A J Jukes, Professor J D Kilburn, Mr M S Killingley, Ms S Moore*, Professor P A Nelson, Professor M Ratcliffe, Mr B Rogers*, Mr M J Snell, Mr R H M Symons, Professor C A Thomas, Professor W A Wakeham, Mr A J Walker, Professor A A Wheeler, Professor D M Williams and Mrs J Wood.

By invitation Mr P Staniczenko for item 79 and Mr N Smailes for item 84.

With The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources and Dr K A Piggott.

(* Members not present for the restricted section of the agenda.)

Unrestricted

Welcome

Dame Valerie welcomed members to the meeting, in particular Mr Higman, the new Registrar and Chief Operating Officer and Ms Moore the new Students' Union President.

Presentations

Members received two presentations:

- DVC Thomas (Deputy Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for human resources matters), Revd A Strike (Director of Human Resources) and Ms K Dey (Diversity Officer), on 'diversity'.
- Mr S Waring (Acting Director of Corporate and Marketing Services) on the local and regional impact of the University.

Business meeting

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer advised members that, although the meeting was quorate in terms of overall attendance, less than half the members present were lay members. According to the Standing Orders this meant that a majority of the lay members present would be able to require that a decision on any item be deferred to the next meeting.

70 Obituary

Dame Valerie announced with regret the death of the following members of the University and asked Council to stand as a mark of respect:

Mr A R Lock Estates & Facilities, 15 April 2007

Ms Julie Aguilar Year 2, BA Spanish & Latin American Studies, 20 April 2007

Ms Amanda Rapley-Redfern Year 1, BA Fine Art, 26 April 2007

Professor Peter Ucko Professor of Archaeology and Dean of Arts from 1993-6, 14 June 2007.

71 **Minutes (unrestricted) of the meeting held on 15 March and 31 May 2007**

Resolved That the Minutes of the meetings held on 15 March and 31 May 2007 be approved and signed.

72 **Matters arising**

72.1 **Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Improvement Notice issued under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974** (minute 59.3)

DVC Nelson reported on actions taken to address the issues raised by the HSE. A response from the Vice-Chancellor would be submitted by the deadline. More substantive actions would be required in the longer term.

72.2 **Governance matters: amendments to the Charter and the Statutes** (minute 54, 12.3.07 and minute 69, 31.5.07)

Received An errata paper prepared by Dr Piggott drawing attention to, and correcting, minor proofreading errors in the proposed amendments to the Statutes and the Ordinances as approved by Council.

Members were advised that the amendments to the Charter and Statutes approved for the second time at the special meeting in May, had been submitted to the Privy Council. With regard to the errata paper it was emphasised that the amendments were of the proof-reading variety and not matters of substance.

Noted The errata paper.

73 **The Vice-Chancellor's report**

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the following items:

- The Rt Hon John Denham MP, the new Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, was an alumnus and former President of the Students' Union. The Vice-Chancellor hoped that the structural changes to government departments would be beneficial for universities; there were however some concerns because there was no evident Minister for Science.
- Southampton City Council had previously been 'hung' three ways. Following the last election the Council was now 'hung' between Conservatives and Labour, with a new Conservative leader, Mr Alec Samuels (former Chair of the Planning Committee).
- The University (alongside other local educational and voluntary organisations, and local businesses) had been part of Southampton Education Trust, set up to bid to oversee the operation of two new trust schools in Southampton. However, the bid had not been successful - the schools would be overseen by the Oasis Trust.
- The University had achieved thirteenth place in the Guardian league table, which was very pleasing. The results of this year's National Students' Survey would be available in September.
- Discussions were ongoing with regard to the new 14-19 Diplomas.
- The Vice-Chancellor had been appointed as Chair of UCEA, and was also Chairing a Pensions Forum which would bring employers and USS Ltd together.
- The Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer had instigated a review of the University committee structure, and each committee had been asked to reflect on its own effectiveness and whether it added value to the decision-making process. The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer would be taking this forward over the summer.

Some concern was expressed that universities were not playing a sufficiently proactive part in the development of the 14-19 Diplomas. It was explained that there had been little consultation with universities at the beginning of the development, and there was an apparent expectation that universities would be prepared to accept the Diplomas on the basis of very limited information. It was emphasised that individual staff members from Southampton had been heavily involved, and the University had been involved in a partnership with local schools to bid for a pilot project (although the bid had not been accepted). It was suggested that, if possible, it would be helpful to have a paper on developments, at the next meeting.

74 **Report from the President of the Students' Union** (Agendum 5)

Received The report from the President of the Students' Union.

Mr Rogers presented his final report, and drew particular attention to:

- The value of partnership working between the University and SUSU, and the importance of good communication.
- The great success of the course representation system, such that Southampton was now leading the country in this area.
- The significant efforts being made to improve relationships with the local community.
- SUSU's attainment of the 'Investing in Volunteers' Kitemark (one of only three universities in the country to achieve this). This meant that every volunteer accredited by the Union would have national recognition.
- Significant sporting achievements, and the need for investment in the Boat Hard.
- The success of SUSU's commercial outlets, with the exception of the Travel Centre, the options for which would be considered over the summer.
- Issues which had arisen at Winchester School of Art, and the efforts made by the Head of School and DVC Thomas to listen to students and work with them.

He commented in addition that students were concerned about the position at the School of Health Professions and Rehabilitation Sciences; effective communication would continue to be the key to managing this situation (see minute 85).

- Resolved**
- (i) That the report be noted.
 - (ii) That Mr Rogers be thanked for all his work during his period of office - his enthusiasm for the role and for the University had been particularly appreciated.

75 **Financial monitoring statements quarter 3, 2006/07** (Agendum 11)

Received The financial monitoring statement for 2006/07, dated 14 June 2007, comprising a summary of the overall forecast and trends, with accompanying tables, prepared by the Deputy Director of Finance. (The paper was designated 'commercial in confidence').

The Director of Finance drew attention to the following:

Schools were generally performing to target; the forecast for Professional Services was slightly below target. Variances were explained in the paper.

There would be a loss shown on normal activities because (i) the expected level of capitalisation of equipment spend had been reduced downwards and hence a greater cost would be charged to expenditure in the year (ii) provision had been made for repaying balances accrued by the NERC Units when they were part of the University (£2.6m was to be paid back over four years); (iii) A £600k capital for revenue swap had taken place with Southampton University Hospitals Trust, but the University had gained back £670k in cash terms.

An exceptional item – the sale of New College - would have a significant effect on the final accounts, showing as a large surplus. However, the cash would be ploughed back into the capital programme. The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that that the accounting surplus after exceptional items had no effect on the University's ability to address the issue in SHPRS, although the position was easily misunderstood. It was agreed that it would be essential to make a clear, upfront, statement in the accounts to address the point.

With regard to the performance of individual Schools might there be greater scope for Schools to share their financial success strategies? It was explained that the specifics of particular disciplines meant that some Schools did not have access to the full multiplicity of income streams (for example, where Professional Body requirements prevented international recruitment, or there were limited enterprise opportunities). These matters were explored with Schools as part of the strategic planning process. The development of the International College should assist some Schools. There had also been a presentation to all Heads of School recently about developments at Winchester School of Art, where there had been a significant shift towards providing programmes to meet demonstrated market needs.

Resolved That the financial monitoring statement be noted.

76 **University budget and financial projections 2007/08**

Received A paper prepared by the Director of Finance entitled 'University budget 2007/8 and future financial framework', dated 21 June 2007. (The paper was designated 'commercial in confidence').

The Director of Finance presented the paper, and explained that the projection was a £5.5 million surplus on normal operating activities. 2007/8 would be a key year for financial outlay on the capital programme. Attention was drawn to the key risks and uncertainties, as highlighted in the paper, in particular: increases in salary costs, the potential issues arising from a move to increased use of measures of research income from industry in the allocation of research funding, and changes in USS provisions for early retirements. The greatest risks were associated with the capital programme, as there were major uncertainties inherent in the work – a major risk was that HEFCE capital funding had not yet been confirmed beyond 2008, although the University had estimated an allocation of £30 million.

The Treasurer commented that to his mind the papers demonstrated a well-controlled budget and careful planning – however it was clear that a number of assumptions had been made, and there were some significant risks. He highlighted also that the University was still restricting its expenditure on long-term maintenance below that which was required.

Resolved That the budgetary proposals for 2007/08 be approved.

77 **Long term loan funding**

Received A paper from the Director of Finance, dated 20 June 2007, setting out a proposal that the University take out a £50 million loan for 40 years at current rates of interest, by means of a 'bank loan' framework offered by Barclays Bank.

The Director of Finance presented the paper and explained that as long-term interest rates were starting to increase it would be advantageous to the University to take out the loan of £50 million required for the capital programme now, rather than in 2008, The money would be invested for a year at the short end of the yield curve until it was required in 2008. Interest rates were currently lower for longer-term borrowing,

hence the proposal to extend the loan period to forty years. The risk was that that interest rates would go down further, but in any case the University would still have secured a good deal based on historic rates, and it seemed much more likely that rates would rise in the longer term. Seven other higher education institutions had recently taken out loans on 40 year terms. The proposal was to take out the loan as a deferred capital payment, with capital payments beginning in year 30; this would mean that the University would have more cash available at a crucial time. The Director of Finance and the Treasurer both considered that the 'bank loan' framework offered by Barclays Bank provided the best terms and the simplest legal agreement.

It was recognised that extending the loan period would be committing the successors of current Officers to a significant debt. It was however emphasised that the purpose of the debt was to invest heavily in the University's estate, which would create productive capacity for the University for at least the duration of the loan.

With regard to the sinking fund, it was questioned whether the terms might be creating a cash-flow issue for the longer term. The Director of Finance commented that while the contractual obligation was to pay into such a fund annually after 30 years, there was no reason payments could not commence before this.

Resolved That the proposal to take out a loan on a 40-year basis on a fixed rate of interest for the life of the loan, under contract with Barclays Bank under a bank loan framework as outlined in the paper on Long term Loan Funding from Malcolm Ace, Director of Finance dated 29 June 2007 be approved; and that the loan be taken at the earliest possible opportunity.

78 **Report on the status of the new capital programme** (agendum 14)

Received A paper from DVC Wheeler, dated 26 June 2007, updating Council on the different projects which make up the capital programme, including the current cost estimate.

DVC Wheeler presented the report on the status of the new capital programme, drawing attention to the current cost estimate (which was c. £44 million in excess of the agreed control envelope), and the uncertainties which currently existed regarding future income streams, which it was hoped would be clarified over the summer. It was proposed to take time over the summer to reflect on the position and the associated risks to the University, and then to bring forward firm proposals about the capital programme in September. It was not however intended to delay the enabling works, design and programme developments in the interim. He emphasised that it would be necessary to make hard decisions about the programme, focussing on the business case for each project, in the context of the estates strategy, and how costs might be reduced. There would need to be a clear understanding of the risks involved.

Members recognised the concerns and agreed that taking the time out to consider the overall position was entirely appropriate. It would be essential for Council to be properly prepared to take decisions in September; the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor would discuss the most appropriate means to ensure an informed discussion.

Resolved

- (i) That the proposed planned period of reflection on the capital programme, explained in the tabled paper be endorsed.
- (ii) That proposals regarding the future of the capital programme should be brought to Council in September, and that the Chair and the Vice-Chancellor would consider the most appropriate ways to ensure an informed discussion.

79 **Key Performance Indicators 2007**

Received A paper from the Head of Planning, dated 2 July 2007, presenting in detail the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) agreed by Council at its March meeting (see minute 49); addendum paper circulated separately, including data tables omitted from the original document.

The Head of Planning presented the paper and explained its structure. Members commented that the presentation was extremely clear and helpful, enabling key issues to be identified very quickly. The Vice-Chancellor confirmed that it would be a useful management tool for UEG. Members agreed that reports on 'red' items should be brought to each Council meeting. In terms of the detail in the paper there was a brief discussion of the University's performance in respect of the number of first class and 2:1 degrees awarded, relative to its comparators.

It was confirmed that in its current form the document was intended as a paper for Council. Some of its contents would be regarded as 'commercial in confidence'. It was agreed that consideration should be given to developing a version specifically designed for general internal circulation.

A query was raised about the Risk Register. The Vice-Chancellor reported on the new methodology used for reviewing and revising the register, and the progress made. A report would come to Council in December. Once the revised register was in place it would be a key document for determining where the University should focus its Audit activities. It was important that activities in this area should be appropriately evidenced. Members were also advised that a Crisis Management Team had been developing generic procedures and processes to manage major crises.

The Chair thanked the Head of Planning and all colleagues who had input into this work.

Resolved

- (i) That the report on KPIs be noted.
- (ii) That reports on 'red' items be brought to each Council meeting, with a full report on the KPIs being brought forward each July.
- (iii) That further consideration be given to developing a version of the report for wider internal circulation.

80 **Future options for the Textile Conservation Centre: progress report**

Received A report drafted by Professor Foskett and the Director of Finance, entitled 'Future Options for the Textile Conservation Centre' (TCC), together with a copy of correspondence from the Trustees of the TCC.

The Director of Finance presented the report in Professor Foskett's absence, reminding members of the discussions regarding options for the TCC which took place at the March meeting (minute 52). These options had continued to be discussed, on the basis agreed by Council, but none had produced very helpful results to date. Discussions with the Trustees had however led them to put forward a further option, offering financial support over a period of four years to give time to bring the TCC into financial viability. This was set out in the paper and the Trustees' letter. It was proposed that the offer be evaluated in more detail over the summer, in discussion with the Trustees, with a revised business plan for the TCC in the light of this being presented to Council in September. In discussions of this new option at PRC it had been felt that there were a number of significant issues still to be addressed, but that it was incumbent upon the University to consider all available options before taking a final decision on the TCC's future. Taking time to work through the proposal would not affect the University's plans should it be decided not to accept the offer.

There was a brief discussion about reputational issues, perception and impact.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the offer received from the Trustees be pursued and that further discussions be held to explore the viability of the proposals.
 - (ii) That a revised business plan taking into account the points raised in the circulated paper be presented to Council in September for consideration.
 - (iii) That a decision on whether to accept the Trustees' offer be deferred pending Council's consideration of the business plan.
 - (iv) That a decision on the establishment of a redundancy committee be deferred until the September meeting of Council.

81 **Southampton International College – Progress Report** (agendum 17)

Received A progress report on developments relating to the International College, prepared by Professor Foskett and the Director of Finance, and dated 12 July 2007. (The paper was designated commercial in confidence).

The Director of Finance presented the paper in Professor Foskett's absence drawing particular attention to space and planning issues.

Ms Moore commented that the integration of the International College students into the University community was under active discussion, and the Director of Finance thanked Mr Rogers for his positive responses to issues raised so far.

It was suggested that the time might not yet be right to make a formal announcement about the project, as initially recommended; members were however content to approve the issuing of such an announcement when those leading the project felt that it was prudent to do so.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the progress on the Southampton International College Project be noted and the developments and plans outlined in the report be endorsed.
 - (ii) That the proposed timescale for the approval and contract for the Project be approved.
 - (iii) That authorisation be given to issue a formal announcement of the Project, subject to the caveat that the proposal is subject to final agreement, at the appropriate time.
 - (iv) That the final agreement be presented to Council in September.

82 **Governance matters: amendments to Ordinances** (agendum 18)

Received A paper from the Director of Human Resources setting out proposed procedural Ordinances, required by the revised Statute Section 31.

The Director of Human Resources presented the paper and explained the relationship between the Ordinances now put forward and the amendment to Statutes previously approved by Council and now awaiting Privy Council approval. He emphasised that the proposed new Ordinances were modern, fair and transparent and aligned with employment law. There had been detailed consultation, including with UCU and with Senate. Agreement had not been reached with UCU, as they objected in principle (in accordance with the Union's national position) to the separate treatment of fixed term workers. In response to a query about this position he explained that the Zellick report, on which the new arrangements were based, had indicated that fixed term workers could be treated differently, and the University's own legal advice had also taken this line – however, should case law demonstrate differently, further amendments to Ordinances would be proposed.

Resolved That the proposed Ordinances be approved as set out in the circulated paper, for use from the date that the revised Statute Section 31 comes into effect.

83 **Innos and Pension Schemes – University acting as Guarantor** (agendum 19)

Received A paper from the Director of Finance, dated 20 June 2007, setting out a proposal that the University act as Guarantor for Innos for the USS and PASNAS pension schemes; together with a paper setting out the nature and technical aspects of the guarantee.

(The members of Council who were Directors of the Board of University of Southampton Holdings Limited, Innos Limited and the Trustees of PASNAS (Mr Ace, Mr Higman, DVC Nelson, Mr Symons, Mr Walker and Professor Williams) declared their conflict of interest in this matter).

The Director of Finance explained the rationale behind the proposal that the University should act as a Guarantor for the two pension schemes if Innos attracted external investment, and was thereby required to leave the USS and PASNAS pension schemes (being no longer 100% owned by the University). He emphasised that the guarantee which the University would enter into was not connected to the financial health of Innos but to the viability of the pension schemes. In his view there was only a very low risk to the University in agreeing the proposal, but without this guarantee Innos would not attract investment, because of the pensions liability.

Resolved That the recommendation that the University should provide a guarantee for Innos Limited in respect of the USS and PASNAS schemes be approved.

84 **Creating a future Source of Early Stage Investment Funding for University Spin-out Companies** (agendum 20)

(Mr Smailes the Director of SET^{squared}, attended for this item)

Received A paper prepared by the Director of Finance, the Treasurer and the Director of SET^{squared}, entitled 'creating a future source of early stage investment funding for University spin-out companies', dated 20 June 2007.

The Director of Finance explained current arrangements for initial investment in spin-outs, and the rationale for the proposed change. The establishment of a company quoted on the alternative investment market, in collaboration with the other universities named in the paper, would produce a self sustaining fund for future investments in return for the University giving the new investment company rights to invest in University spin-outs in the future. It was proposed that a small group be set up to explore the detail of the arrangements, and it was requested that the small group also be empowered to endorse the appointment of the company CEO. The University would enter into an agreement with the other participating Universities only if the contractual terms were satisfactory. It was noted that it was now unlikely that Bath would participate. This was discussed briefly and those involved in compiling the proposal emphasised that this should not prevent the activity from going ahead.

Although the paper's primary purpose was to seek endorsement for a mechanism to raise funds on the stock market and for the University to be a shareholder in this new company, it was emphasised that the greatest value to the University would be produced by the increase in value of the original shares that the University held in the spin-out company. The investment funding available would allow the company to develop, and hence the value of the University's original shareholding to grow.

A query was raised about exclusivity and it was explained that the new company's value would be based on privileged access to the participating universities' intellectual property. The contract term was likely to be fifteen years. The University would be entering into a commercial exchange – granting a right to the company to take shares in future University spin-off companies and in return gaining funding for initial investments. In terms of other risks, if the company ran out of funds then alternative sources of support for spin-outs would need to be found. It was emphasised that there were termination clauses in the current IPO contract, which would be replicated. There might be a reputational risk if the stock market chose not to subscribe, but brokers had indicated that the case was strong, and in any case the publicity was likely to be minimal.

It was questioned whether, given Southampton's good reputation in the spin-outs arena (eg in the Library House Report) we might pursue the company option alone rather than in partnership with the other institutions. It was however pointed out that working as a group would offer investors a greater volume of companies and a smoother stream of opportunities in which to invest. The Universities proposed for the company had been selected on the basis of past cooperation and effective partnership. However, the relative extent of each University's spin-out activities would be something to consider as part of the contractual negotiations.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the proposal to form a company to invest in future University spin-outs to produce a fund for future investments in collaboration with Universities of Bristol and Surrey (and the University of Bath, should it opt to participate), as set out in the circulated paper, be approved in principle.
 - (ii) That a small sub-group be established, and empowered to negotiate the contractual terms and make a recommendation to Council, and to endorse the appointment of the CEO for the company.

85 **Strategic review of the School of Health Professions and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHPRS), the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the Healthcare Innovation Unit: progress report** (agendum 21)

Received A paper from Professor Williams, dated 6 July 2007, updating members on progress in respect of the recommendations approved by Council at its March meeting, following a comprehensive review of the Schools concerned.

(Dr Gobbi, as a member of the School of Nursing and Midwifery, declared a conflict of interest in this matter).

Professor Williams presented the update report, focussing particularly on (i) the restructuring of the SHPRS, which was now in the hands of the Redundancy Committee and a committee considering early retirements; and (ii) discussions of longer-term options for closer collaboration between the three groups which were the subject of the review.

Members were advised that the Redundancy Committee would report in September, on schedule. Letters had been sent to affected staff, who now had the opportunity to challenge their data against the criteria (staff could not, however, challenge the criteria).

Focussing on the 'leafleting' protest by UCU immediately before the meeting, the Chair commented on the exemplary behaviour of those involved. There were issues raised in the leaflet which she felt would need a response. Communication from the

management team would be very important to ensure a clear understanding of the University's position.

Several members shared the outcomes of their conversations with participants in the leafleting – particular concerns had been raised about the voluntary severance arrangements, consultation, and staff-student ratios in Physiotherapy and their effects on the quality of the programme. With regard to the latter, it was emphasised that the University was bound by the contract with the Strategic Health Authority, which specified staff:student ratios, which would be met, and that the quality of the education would remain the highest priority. This had been discussed with SUSU.

It was noted that in the leaflet, UCU had requested that Council acknowledge the quality of activity within the School, demonstrated through the outstanding final year results for 2007. Members agreed that this would be appropriate, given that the decisions which needed to be taken were not directed by the quality of activity, but rather by the need to respond to external funding decisions.

Mr Rogers thanked Professor Williams and DVC Thomas for the time they had taken to discuss these issues with SUSU. It would assist if SUSU could have a response to the issues raised in the leaflet, as this would help communication with students.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the update report be noted.
 - (ii) That members of UCU be thanked for the exemplary and professional way they had conducted the leafleting campaign which took place before the meeting.
 - (iii) That Council acknowledges the quality of the programmes provided within the School, and the contributions of the staff, while recognising the need to address the situation created by external financial constraints

86 **Report from the meeting of Senate, 20 June 2007** (agendum 24)

Received The report from the above meeting of Senate.

The key item reported related to Senate's consideration of the procedural Ordinances (see minute 82).

Resolved That the comments and information provided by Senate be noted.

87 **Reports from the meetings of Policy and Resources Committee:**

87.1 **10 May 2007** (agendum 25.1)

Received The report from the above meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

The key issues reported had been addressed as separate items on the Council agenda.

Resolved That the report from, and the decisions taken by, the Policy and Resources Committee be noted.

87.2 **28 June 2007** (agendum 25.2)

Received The report from the above meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.

The key issues reported had been addressed as separate items on the Council agenda.

Resolved That the report from, and the decisions taken by, the Policy and Resources Committee be noted.

88 **Report from the meeting of Standing Committee of Council, 11 May 2007**
(agendum 26)

Received The report from the above meeting of Standing Committee of Council.

The Chair drew particular attention to item 7, minutes of the Audit Committee, and advised members that Council should formally approve the recommendation for the appointment of the external auditors, and note the appointment of the internal auditors.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the recommendation that Mazars be appointed as the University's external auditors for the audit of the University's financial statements for 2006/7* , and that subject to continued satisfactory performance no further market testing will be taken until the audit of the 2009/10 financial statements, be approved. (*not 2007/7 as in the report).
 - (ii) That Standing Committee's decision to appoint KPMG as the University's internal auditors for a one year period until 31 July 2008, with a review of performance to be conducted at the end of the current calendar year, be noted
 - (iii) That the report from, and the decisions taken by, Standing Committee of Council be noted.

89 **Report from the meeting of Nominations Committee, 28 June 2007**
(agendum 27)

Received The report from the above meeting of the Nominations Committee

Resolved That Mr Paul Lester be nominated for appointment to Council (Class 2) for an initial period of office to run from 1 August 2007 until 31 July 2010.

90 **QAA Institutional Audit – oral update** (agendum 30)

DVC Thomas reported that preparations for the institutional audit were well in hand. The University's documentation was due for submission to the QAA in October, and would be available to Council in September.

91 **Gender Equality Scheme** (agendum 31)

Received The University's first Gender Equality Scheme, dated 20 April 2007, as required by the Equality Act 2006.

Resolved That the Gender Equality Scheme be approved for publication and adopted as the institution-wide plan for eliminating gender-based discrimination and promoting gender equality.

92 **Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech** (agendum 32)

Received The Annual Report on the operation of the Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech within the law, prepared by the Head of Legal Services.

The Registrar and Chief Operating Officer presented the report, drawing attention to the fact that it had not been necessary to use the procedures during the academic year because no activity had been classified as 'designated'.

Resolved That the report from the Responsible Officer, as defined in the Code of Practice to Ensure Freedom of Speech, be noted.

93 **Students' Union: Review of Code of Practice** (agendum 33)

Received The Annual Report from the Director of Student Services on the operation of the Code of Practice which governed the way in which the requirements of the Education Act, 1994 in respect of Students' Unions were met.

Resolved That the report on the review of the Code of Practice regarding the requirements of the Education Act 1994 be noted.

94 **Annual Review 2006** (agendum 34)

Members were advised that the Annual Review 2006, as presented to the meeting of Court in May 2007, had been approved on delegated authority by the Vice-Chancellor and the then Secretary and Registrar.

Resolved That the Annual Review 2006, approved on delegated authority for presentation to Court, be endorsed.

95 **Dates of main committee meetings during 2007/08** (agendum 35)

Received The schedule of meetings of the main University committees for the academic year 2007/08.

Resolved That the dates of the main committee meetings for the academic year 2007/08 be noted.

96 **Valedictions**

The Chair thanked those members who were attending their last meeting of Council – Professor Alistair Fitt, Professor Jeremy Kilburn, Mr Ben Rogers, Mr Chris Whittaker, and paid particular tribute the Professor Joe Hammond, who was not only leaving Council membership but also retiring from the University. His had been the 'quiet wise voice of reason' and his input would be sadly missed.

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The meeting finished at 7.45pm