



## Council

Date and time	Thursday 28 September 2006 at 5.00 pm
Place	The Council Room, George Thomas Building
Present	Dame Valerie Strachan ( <i>in the Chair</i> ), Professor I T Cameron, Professor A D Fitt, Professor N H Foskett, Dr M O Gobbi, Professor R Holdaway, Mr A J Jukes, Professor J D Kilburn, Mr M S Killingley, Professor P A Nelson, Professor M Ratcliffe, Dr M P Read, Ms R Rivaz, 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 and Professor D M Williams
By invitation	Dr K A Piggott (Observer) and Mr P Staniczenko (for Agenda 11 and 15)
With	The Secretary and Registrar, Director of Finance and Ms C J Gamble

\* Members not present for the Restricted Section of the Agenda.

### Welcome

Dame Valerie welcomed Ms Rivaz, an alumna of the University and Chair of the University of Southampton Society, to her first meeting of the Council. She also welcomed Mr Staniczenko, Head of Planning, who was attending for Agenda 11 and 15, and Dr Piggott from the Secretariat who observing the proceedings.

Dame Valerie reminded members that the September meeting of Council concentrated primarily on strategic issues and that the usual agenda format had been changed to reflect this.

### Unrestricted agenda

#### 1 Obituary

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

- Emeritus Professor Tony Gale: 22 August 2006. Professor Gale had been the Head of Psychology from 1988 – 1992 and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from 1992 until 1994. He had retired from the University in 1994 and had subsequently been appointed a Visiting Professor.
- Mrs Rosemary Rose, School of Management: 8 September 2006.

#### 2 Minutes (unrestricted) of the meeting held on 13 July 2006

Dame Valerie drew attention to a correction to the Minutes. The first sentence of the fourth bullet point of Minute 66 (ii) should read:

'The University would seek to maximise the return on the Research Assessment Exercise through bringing forward some agreed academic appointments, and would look to increase student numbers as long as this did not compromise the quality of student intake.'

**Resolved** That the Minutes (unrestricted) of the meeting held on 13 July 2006 be approved and signed, subject to the amendment agreed at the meeting.

### 3 Matters arising

#### 3.1 **Organisational changes resulting from the retirement of the Secretary and Registrar** (Minute 61.2) (Agendum 3.1)

**Received** A paper entitled 'The University Senior Management Structure', prefaced by an introduction prepared by the Secretary and Registrar.

The Secretary and Registrar presented the paper that had been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in September 2006 on the senior management structure and outlined the changes set out in his preamble to the paper. He explained the background to the appointment of Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs) when there had been two, whose periods of office overlapped, with the longer serving of the two acting as the senior DVC. This distinction had been blurred when a third DVC had been appointed. The proposal to move to a senior management structure that included one Deputy Vice-Chancellor and three Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVC) would reinstate a clear line of deputyship. However, this raised two particular questions about the composition of Council: should the DVC and the PVCs all be members; and, if they were, should the Deans remain as *ex-officio* members? The University Executive Group (UEG) had considered the position and proposed that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor should remain an *ex-officio* member on Council and that the three PVCs and three Deans should not be *ex-officio* members. However, it was further proposed that up to three of the PVCs/Deans could serve as members of Council as part of the group of six nominees from Senate. The total membership would thus be reduced to 25 rather than 27. The PVC(s) and Dean(s) not elected by Senate to serve on Council would in any event attend meetings of the governing body. The Secretary and Registrar emphasized that, although Council had already approved the reduction in the size of its membership, the formal readings of the proposals would be take place later in the academic year at Council and Senate before they were submitted to the Privy Council for approval with the aim of introducing the new arrangements from August 2007, prior to the start of the academic year 2007/08.

The Vice-Chancellor explained that the role of the DVC/PVCs would not be dissimilar to the current DVCs' roles. Their workload was unreasonably heavy and, in addition to their duties, they were academically active. The appointment of another PVC would lessen the burden and enhance the delivery of key policy areas. Like the PVCs, the DVC would have a portfolio of activities, while taking on the responsibility of deputizing for the Vice-Chancellor. The proposed structure might develop in future along the lines of the model in US universities which typically had a President, who fulfilled a more ambassadorial role, and a Provost who was responsible for the internal academic management of the institution.

On the subject of the membership of Council, the Secretary and Registrar highlighted the need to protect the lay majority, a Privy Council requirement. If all the PVCs and Deans were to become members, the lay majority would be eroded and this opened the possibility of meetings not complying with the rules of quoracy.

Members supported the proposals to change the structure of the senior management team and the composition of the governing body.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the proposals outlined by the Secretary and Registrar to the senior management structure and to the membership of Council be approved.
  - (ii) That the Secretary and Registrar should arrange for the formal readings of the changes to the Charter and the Statutes and the Ordinances in accordance with a timetable that would allow the changes to be introduced as soon as possible, but, in any event, no later than 1 August 2007.

### 3.2 **Estate Strategy** (Minute 67)

The Secretary and Registrar reminded members of the plans that were in hand for a further presentation of the Estate Strategy that would explore its detail and long-term implications. The three major elements of the Strategy were the rebuilding of the Mountbatten Building, the refurbishment of the Faraday Tower and the development of the Boldrewood campus. With regard to this latter element, it was important that members understood the key points at which decisions would have to be taken and the accompanying risk management issues. He wished to propose that a meeting be convened on Thursday, 9 November 2006 at 4.00 pm. The presentation would be followed by dinner. He said that he hoped members would be able to attend, and apologized to those who might not be able to. It had been difficult to find a date that was convenient for the lay and the senior officers.

Dame Valerie reiterated that the main purpose of the presentation would be to convey clearly and concisely the risks that were involved in undertaking the Boldrewood project, the amount of funding that was required at each stage of the development, and the points at which Council would be required to take decisions. She invited members to inform the Secretariat if they required another copy of the Estate Strategy which had been circulated in advance of the meeting in March 2006 in addition to letting the office know whether there was any other information they would like to have about the Strategy before the presentation in November. It would also be helpful if members could suggest by 6 October 2006 what, in particular, they would like to see included in the presentation.

In discussion, the following suggestions were put forward about the content of the material that would be presented:

- list four or five bullet points which summarized the most important aspects of the Strategy;
- explain the financial parameters for the development of the Boldrewood campus set in the context of the capital programme up

to 2010, together with information on the effect on the University's capacity to borrow money.

- set out the scope for capital expenditure after 2010.
- place the Estate Strategy in the context of the current developments in the sector, for example, how did the University's plans for its Estate compare with similar projects being undertaken or planned by other higher education institutions?
- draw comparisons with the University's international competitors. (The Vice-Chancellor responded that the information that would be required to make those comparisons might not be easily obtainable.)

Dame Valerie thanked members for their suggestions and stated that every effort would be made to provide the information requested.

The Secretary and Registrar sought Council members' views on the programme of presentations and tours that were usually arranged before the meetings of Council. Members had stated in the last two reviews of the effectiveness of Council how informative the sessions were. However, the attendance at such events had always been low. He understood that members were busy people and that making time available to attend events and meetings at the University was difficult. What could the University do to help members engage with the challenges that the University faced and the issues that were topical in higher education? In response, members volunteered the following ideas:

- circulate the notification of the tours and/or briefings six months in advance of the meeting;
- set up a website for members of Council where information on different aspects of the University should be made available, for example, a copy of the Estate Strategy;
- focus on discussions and exchanges with staff rather than touring buildings;
- reduce the programme and organize a later start at 4.00 pm with the formal meeting commencing thereafter at 5.00pm.

The Secretary and Registrar thanked members for their ideas and said that he would consider how best to proceed. He invited members to forward to him any further suggestions they might have.

- Resolved**
- (i) That members should forward any further suggestions about the information they would like circulated in advance of the presentation on 9 November 2006 to the Secretariat by 6 October 2006.
  - (ii) That members should submit any further comments on the style and format of the programme that customarily preceded Council meetings to the Secretariat at their earliest convenience.

#### 4 **The Chair's report**

Dame Valerie prefaced the meeting with an overview of the main developments and constraints of the year ahead:

- the academic year 2006/07 had heralded the introduction of variable tuition fees. There had been much speculation on the effect that this might have on students' expectations of higher education. The National Student Survey, which sought students' views annually on their learning experience at their *Alma Mater*, had been published in September, placing the University in the top ten nationally: the highest score among the University's direct competitors in the Russell Group.
- the financial constraints that would be faced during the year would be tight. There would be a great need for budgetary groups either to increase income or reduce expenditure in order to achieve a break-even or a surplus position.
- the external context would pose further challenges for the University. The Higher Education Funding Council for England's Strategic Plan, 2006-2010, would be discussed in the meeting and the accompanying commentary, prepared by the Head of Planning, drew attention to some of the risks that might flow from HEFCE's strategy.
- the need for first-class business systems and processes to help the University enhance the delivery of teaching and research.

#### 5 **The Vice-Chancellor's report**

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the following subjects:

##### *Variable fees*

One of the ways higher education institutions (HEIs) were able to judge how students viewed their experiences at university was by evaluating the results that were published annually in the National Student Survey (NSS). The University had achieved eighth position in the concluding section on overall satisfaction with the programme, a position that no other Russell Group institution had bettered. Some of the institutions had not been able to achieve the minimum return of 65 per cent of the final-year cohort of students.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Thomas said that the University ran, in parallel to the NSS, an exit survey in order to accumulate more information about areas of the learning experience that could be improved upon. Assessment and feedback were two of the areas that had emerged from the national survey as being particularly important to students in the learning and teaching process. The University had scored well in these sections. Professor Fitt commented that the School of Mathematics was undertaking some statistical analysis of the results in order to understand their value.

##### *'Routes into Language'*

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) had announced a £4.5m programme to encourage the take-up of language courses in England. Under the programme, a number of regional networks would be established in which higher education institutions would work together, and with schools and

colleges, to enthuse people about studying languages. The programme would be led by the UK Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies (LLAS), hosted by the University, in a partnership with the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) and CILT, the National Centre for Languages. It would run for four years from 2006-07 to 2009-10.

#### *Research contract in School of Electronics and Computer Science*

The School of Electronics had recently been awarded a large contract to work on dynamic networks in partnership with, among others, the Ministry of Defence.

#### *Associated British Ports' (ABP) Port of Southampton*

ABP's Port of Southampton had announced an investment of £4.1m to increase the capacity of the handling and storage facilities by approximately 85 per cent at the port's Bulk Terminal. The announcement was good news for the City and the region, and for the research activities at the University with a maritime theme.

#### *Annual national negotiations on salary*

The annual national negotiations on salary had been resolved in July 2006. The financial settlement that had been reached covered a three-year period, the last year of which provided for a minimum increase of 2.5% and further negotiations once an independent review of university finances had been carried out. The Vice-Chancellor said that, unfortunately, the concluding phases of the dispute had been acrimonious. It would be worthwhile exploring the advantages and disadvantages of moving to a framework of local negotiations and the first steps had been taken to look into the matter. A report would be brought back to Council at the December 2006 meeting that would compare the merits and drawbacks of local and national frameworks, and describe the process that would be followed if changes were to be made, which would include the way in which the expertise that was available at the level of Council could be drawn upon as part of that process.

#### *Mountbatten rebuild*

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Wheeler reported on the recent developments in respect of the new Mountbatten Building. The main contractor had been appointed during the summer months; the planning application had been submitted; the demolition of the damaged building was expected to commence in early October 2006; and the detailed design phase was nearing its conclusion. The project remained on track for completion during the summer of 2008.

#### *South Central Strategic Health Authority*

The Strategic Health Authorities had been reorganized. There were two Authorities in the South East of which Southampton fell within the scope of the South Central Strategic Health Authority (SCSHA). It had been announced that the number of health professionals who would be trained would be reduced by fifteen per cent. The University had been prepared for this reduction. However, in addition to that announcement, the SCSHA had decided that it would not provide funding at the benchmark price determined by the National Audit Office for the national contracts. This would remove the expected increase in the level of funding that would be received by the University for the programmes of study in the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery and Health Professions and Rehabilitation Sciences, an increase which would have offset the decrease in contract numbers.

The University would take a robust line in the discussions with the SCSHA and the Department of Health about this development in representing its own interests and in concert with other HEIs that were similarly affected.

Dame Valerie proposed that the particular developments that affected the two Schools should be presented in a report to Council as soon as possible. Members endorsed the proposal.

#### *Strategically important and vulnerable subjects*

The Vice-Chancellor gave a brief overview of the work that HEFCE had undertaken in respect of subjects deemed to be of strategic importance to the country or considered to be vulnerable in terms of a mismatch between supply and demand or by a concentration of the subject in institutions which may be particularly vulnerable to change. One of the areas identified by HEFCE was science, technology, engineering and mathematics. There had been a number of announcements of late by institutions that they were considering closing their science departments, the latest of which had been delivered by the University of Reading which intended to close its Department of Physics.

#### *Student numbers, 2006/07*

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Thomas reported that the current undergraduate numbers for the 2006/07 academic year were 130 below the target figure and, while it was not possible to give a precise number for the postgraduate intake until the students registered at the start of the term, it was estimated that it would also be below target, by around 500.

- Resolved**
- (i) That a report comparing local and national negotiating frameworks be submitted to Council at its meeting in December 2006.
  - (ii) That the reports on the reviews of the Schools of Nursing and Midwifery and Health Professions and Rehabilitation Sciences be presented to the meeting of Council on 14 December 2006.

## 6 **Corporate Performance Indicators** (Agendum 11)

**Received** A paper, prepared by the Head of Planning, which set out a comparative analysis of the use of corporate performance indicators and critical success factors in assessing the University's progress towards achieving its strategic aims, together with examples of both approaches.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the background to the subject, summarizing the work that had been done on the use of performance indicators and the alternative approach – critical success factors – that was described in the paper. The Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) was carrying out a project on the monitoring of institutional performance and the use of key performance indicators by governing bodies. It had suggested that institutions should make publicly available the data that they had on their own performance. The University had a very detailed list of indicators of which it would be appropriate to publish only a subset. He invited Mr Staniczenko, the Head of Planning, to present the paper.

Mr Staniczenko explained the principal difference in the two approaches: performance indicators were closely coupled to an institution's strategic aims

whereas critical success factors were independent of the aims but could be linked by means of a mapping process. When comparing the two systems, it was evident that critical success factors were more flexible in their application; the information they provided was more tangible than the use of strategic aims which were couched in rather aspirational terms; and they gave a wide range of information from which a selection could be made for publication.

In discussing the subject, members made the following points:

- A number felt that the critical success factors were more useful than the performance indicators.
- It was not completely clear how the mapping process worked. It was possible that the systems that were being used to record the University's progress were in a poor state and thus not delivering accurate information on the University's progress in achieving its strategic aims. Mr Staniczenko said that he would undertake to improve the clarity of the process.
- Would it be possible to maintain both systems? There should be more information that focused on the quality of teaching and learning. Should critical success factor 10 (recruit, retain and develop a diverse world-class workforce) provide information on funding invested in staff development?
- The two systems should be combined to show where good progress was being made. The critical success factors did not give any area a 'green light' which indicated that the University was 'on track and making good progress', although the performance indicators did.
- The information provided by the critical success factors would help staff to understand in greater detail the context of the strategic aims. It would be useful to disseminate the information across the Schools as well as using it at the level of Council.
- A more general discussion about how the University was doing overall rather than overlaying all the areas of activity with performance measures would be helpful.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that a review of the provision of services in respect of teaching and learning across the University, such as the Centre for Learning and Teaching and the Educational Development Service, had resulted in the setting up of a new unit that would bring together all the expertise and would be called the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Unit. It would build on the current range of courses that were offered to academic staff. The critical success factors could link information on this aspect to the results from the annual student evaluation questionnaire and the quinquennial unit reviews.

The Secretary and Registrar stated that CUC had invited the University to contribute to a one-day conference on 30 November 2006 at which the results of its project would be disseminated because the University was considered to be at the forefront of the work that was being undertaken in this area. He and Dame Valerie would relay members' comments about the two approaches to the monitoring of institutional performance to that wider audience.

Dame Valerie concluded the discussion, thanking all those who had worked on the drawing up of the critical success factors, in particular Mr Staniczenko.



**Resolved** That Mr Staniczenko should undertake to improve the clarity of the mapping process that linked the critical success factors to the strategic aims, and present a revised document for Council to consider at the meeting on 14 December 2006.

7 **Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report** (Agendum 12)

**Received** The Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005, together with an extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 September 2006 which set out the discussion on the Vice-Chancellor's Report.

In introducing his report, the Vice-Chancellor drew attention to the footnote on page three of the University Health and Safety Adviser's Report: it should be deleted. The Secretary and Registrar's report had been submitted shortly after the Health and Safety Adviser's Report had been compiled. The information extracted from the Secretary and Registrar's report appeared in Annex 2, 'Generic issues identified in reports from Deans and the Secretary and Registrar'. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Nelson explained that he, as Chair of the Safety and Occupational Health Committee, had authorized the inclusion of the comments that had been extracted from the Secretary and Registrar's report. Although the name of the University's Health and Safety Adviser appeared on the report, he had not been responsible for the section that related to Professional Services. He said that the wording of the response to the first comment in that section, which dealt with the subject of safety policies, would be amended to state that the groups within Professional Services would consider sharing the common themes of their policies for those office-based activities that were identical in nature.

Turning to the report, the Vice-Chancellor said that progress was being made in inculcating upon staff the appropriate approach to health and safety and thus it was being seen less and less as a procedural hinderance. The implementation of the action plan that had been drawn up in response to the Health and Safety Executive's recommendations in respect of the aftermath of the accident in the boiler house on the Highfield campus in 2003 was being monitored by the Safety and Occupational Health Committee (SOHC).

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Nelson commented that the quality of the health and safety documentation was improving and the programme of training was proving successful. Two of the matters that would be under consideration by SOHC during the forthcoming year would be the training of the Safety Officers in the Schools and Professional Services and the role of the Area Safety Advisers. A review would be carried out during the year. In response to a question about the completion of the fire risk assessment, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Nelson said that the work was on schedule and should be completed by the end of the year. On the subject of staff training (Annex 1, section 6), he reported that the programme that the Heads of School and Professional Services had followed would be offered to the levels of staff below, and would include all those who required the training.

Dame Valerie suggested that a progress report on the fire risk assessments be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee (PRC). Members endorsed the proposal.

Professor Williams outlined the work that was under way at the Boldrewood campus: fire prevention measures were being introduced, such as the installation of fire doors; staff were being trained, and a Buildings Manager had been appointed to look systematically at the procedures; regular fire drills would be

held; and a tour of the building had been organized for the Hampshire Fire Brigade so that they were familiar with the layout in case of an emergency. He was satisfied with the progress that had been made. Looking to the future, he said that a safety expert would be included in the project team that would be assembled for the new building for the Institute of Life Sciences.

- Resolved**
- (i) That the Vice-Chancellor's Annual Health and Safety Report be noted.
  - (ii) That the planned submission of the review of the Safety Office in December 2006 to Council be noted.
  - (iii) That Deputy Vice-Chancellor Nelson should arrange for a progress report on the fire risk assessment work be considered by PRC at the earliest opportunity.

8 **HEFCE Strategic Plan, 2006/2011 and commentary prepared by the Head of Planning** (Agendum 15)

**Received** A copy of the HEFCE Strategic Plan, 2006/2011, published in March 2006, publication number 2006/13, together with a commentary prepared by the Head of Planning on the key points of the Strategy and how their delivery might affect the University.

The Vice-Chancellor introduced the commentary which provided a useful summary of the key points of the HEFCE Strategy. There were some statements which could be interpreted as not being in the best interests of the University, such as the spreading of research funding more widely and therefore more thinly. Mr Snell commented that he hoped the University would not interpret the term 'vocational' in the learning and teaching sections very narrowly.

**Resolved** That the HEFCE Strategic Plan for the period 2006-2011 be noted.

9 **Annual Review, 2005** (Agendum 16)

**Received** A copy of the Annual Review for the year 2005.

The Secretary and Registrar explained that the design of the Annual Review was increasingly aimed at appealing to an external audience.

**Resolved** That the Annual Review be noted.

10 **Valediction**

Dame Valerie announced that as a result of changes within the Secretariat, Ms Caroline Gamble would hand over the responsibilities of working secretary to Council to Dr Karen Piggott. On behalf of the members, Dame Valerie thanked Ms Gamble for the work that she had done in relation to the governing body over the last six years.

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## Restricted agenda

### 11 Minutes (restricted) of meeting held on 13 July 2006

**Resolved** That the Minutes (restricted) of the meeting held on 13 July 2006 be approved and signed.

### 12 Matters arising

There were no matters arising from the restricted Minutes of the July meeting.

### 13 The Vice-Chancellor's report

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, in the light of the withdrawal of some contracts by a number of Strategic Health Authorities, a review had been instituted of the School of Health Professions and Rehabilitation Sciences to examine the detail of its academic activities and financial position. Professor Williams, the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Life Sciences, had written to all members of staff, informing them of the review and its purpose. The Trades' Unions would also be informed at the next Joint Negotiating Committee meeting. A similar letter had been sent to staff in the School of Nursing and Midwifery about the review that was being undertaken in that School (see Minute 5 above).

### 14 Notification of appeal and appointment of barrister-at-law in accordance with the requirements of Statute 31 (Part V) (Agendum 25)

**Received** A statement prepared by the Director of Human Resources on the developments in respect of the redundancy notice served on Professor Taylor and a formal notification of the intention to appeal.

In the absence of the Director of Human Resources, the Secretary and Registrar presented the notification of appeal and appointment of a barrister-at-law in accordance with the requirements of Statute 31 (Part V). He reminded members of the stages of the appeal process, and stated that, even at this juncture, it remained possible that a settlement might be reached.

**Resolved** That the submission of an appeal by Professor Taylor against his dismissal from the University by reason of redundancy be noted and the appointment Mr Self, a barrister-at-law, to hear the appeal be approved.

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The meeting finished at approximately 7.30 pm.

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