

Faculty Executive Board
Minutes of Meeting held on 11th May 2011

Present: Professor John Derrick (JD), Ms Liz Robinson (LR), Mr John Cocking (JAC), Professor Phil Wright (PCW), Professor John David (JPD), Professor Mike Hounslow (MJH), Miss Jenny Miller (JM), Professor Rob Dwyer-Joyce (RDJ), Professor Visakan Kadirkamanathan (VK), Dr Malcolm Butler (MAB), Professor Harm Askes (HA), Professor Geraint Jewell (GWJ) Dr Andrea Bath (AB), Professor Sheila MacNeil (SM), Professor Mark Rainforth (MR).

In attendance – Mr Ian Moulson

Opening

1. Apologies

Dr Stephen Beck (SB), Professor Allan Matthews (AM).

MJH welcomed Liz Robinson who will be the Faculty lead on HR issues, whilst Janis Webster moves to a temporary position with oversight of several faculties.

R&IS have appointed a new RIOM Heather Sugden who will take over from Graham Sykes. Faye Robinson will also support Engineering one day a week in this role.

2. Minutes of FEB Meetings held on 13th April 2011.

With regard to item 9, the Board were offered reassurance that the Global Engineering Challenge would be academically ambitious enough for students.

The minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising/Outstanding actions

The Board considered and reported on all outstanding actions. See action list for details.

4. FPVC Report and UEB Feedback

University Finance

UEB have looked at the University's outturn position - a prediction of what the year-end position will be. The outlook is positive with a good surplus expected. UEB have also considered the following year's position. This looks less positive because the University will feel the effect of the HEFCE cuts but will not yet be benefitting from the increased fee income which will replace it. Costs are also rising in some areas. This will produce a deficit. A flat cash budget will be proposed to Finance Committee for Professional Services and for the Faculties in aggregate in order to minimise this deficit.

Faculties should expect a budget similar to that received this year. Any Faculty that has grown its income above average can expect this to be reflected in its allocated budget, meaning that the Faculty of Engineering can expect to be in a positive position.

With regard to PYA, this will not be taken away from the Faculty and any saving made this year will be made available next year. However, there is a need to ensure that recurrent expenditure is increased so that departments do not continue to under spend and appropriate plans should be made to deal with this years' PYA. Toward this end departments should effectively be planning to spend their current PYA, whilst also ensuring value for money, plus future recurrent income. The next stage is for the Faculty to agree a format with the Director of Finance on how to spend PYA and reserves.

Faculty Strategy

Much of the Faculty's strategy was written three years ago. It was proposed that the time has come when this should be refreshed in a more detailed and considered manner. This should be done in time for the Planning Round after next (December 2012).

Before this time (during the Autumn) the Faculty should consider where it stands against current strategy and should take some time to reflect upon its position with regard to what has been omitted, what has been achieved and what needs to be advanced – Action.

Departmental Propositions

Views were sought from HoDs on whether they thought departments should produce their own proposition following that produced by the University as part of Project 2012. Each department has already responded differently to the University Proposition. COM has identified a number of things that should be done and are consistent with the University Proposition but are not writing a specific document. MEC have produced a values document as a result of the increased number of staff within the Department. The Board agreed that departments should establish what things they must/ought to do in response to Project 2012. It was also agreed that the Proposition should be used, in part, as a source of marketing our values.

Each department and the IPO will write down what they think they should be doing (and what they should not be doing or should stop doing) in response to Project 2012. HoDs should send this information to AB who will compile a document for FEB. (31.05.11) - Action.

Also see UEB minutes <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ueb/minutes.html>

5. Report from FDR&I

Fellowships & Individual Awards

A paper will be submitted to the next meeting of FEB which will look at Fellowships and individual awards and how these can be better dealt with - Action

Research Councils

GWJ is required to write a response to a delivery plan of all research councils. Once complete this will be distributed to FEB – Action.

Peer Review of Grant Proposals

A paper regarding peer review of grant proposals has been produced by R&IS. It identifies differences between departments and proposes a set of principles and guidelines. GWJ will distribute the paper to FEB – Action. A response needs to be delivered by 19th May.

Funding Details

Overall the Faculty has a positive story to tell but there are some areas that require a closer look. It was suggested that the FEB agenda could be revised so that issues relating to funding are not always left until last – Action.

6. Report from FDL&T

FLTC

Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee are meeting on 16th May. A report will be submitted to the next FEB meeting.

Nuclear Engineering

The Nuclear Engineering programme has now been given final approval.

7. Report from FDO

Estates

Tony Bell has been appointed working 3 days a week for the Faculty as Director of Projects to help progress the large volume of estates/space based work on behalf of the FDO. It is important that

Estates see him as an Estates professional who works in both Estates and the Faculty and understands our business.

CICS strategic liaison meeting

Key current projects of interest are MOLE2, ongoing improvements to student attendance monitoring package, much greater wireless access, a new interface for students prior to arrival at UoS, a project to look at research data management (security and access). They also reported that there is a significant investment in pool teaching space planned for the summer.

Technical Mentoring Scheme

Technical Focus (a new FoS/FoE mentoring/coaching initiative for technical staff) was launched on 5th May. There was a good turnout and lots of people signed up to be involved.

Faculty Strategy

The update on Faculty strategy done as part of the planning round will be presented to Professional Services.

New Builds

There is still plenty of activity going on and the User Groups are meeting frequently. The Phase A move in to the Biolncubator has been delayed by the furniture supplier.

For Decision

8. Post Releases

CBE put forward a proposal for the appointment of three academic staff at lecturer level. The Department has headroom and PYA available which it would like to use strategically to support growth already achieved along with further predicted growth. The appointments will allow the delivery of core option teaching to UG and PG students as well as increased international level research. The Department would like to run a recruitment scheme based on the Faculty Prize Lecturer scheme that was run previously. The posts would be advertised in:

- Particle Technology – lots of activity in the Department including lots of industrial activity
- Nuclear Technology – a response to the approval of the Nuclear Programme
- Safety & Loss Prevention – there is a successful MSc in this area but not enough critical mass to support it

The posts were released.

For Discussion

9. List of 'out of contract' staff

The Board discussed the 'out of contract staff'. The ACSE case will be investigated by VK – Action. It was noted that HR do send correspondence to the Head of any department that appears on the list informing them of the issue. This can they be used by HoDs when discussing the issues with PIs – Action.

HoDs were reminded that substitution roles should be set up during the holiday period.

10. Sheffield Engineering Gateway Report

The Board received the Sheffield Engineering Gateway (SEG) Report that outlined the achievements of SEG to date. The paper will also be submitted to the HEIF4 Management Committee. HoDs reported that they generally had a good understanding of activity taking place between their departments and SEG, but as communication usually takes place directly with the academic involved there were some lapses in awareness. There was some consensus that there are too many engagements that do not come to fruition including some of the items in the report listed as being

successes. Whilst the general experience with SEG is good it was felt that too much staff time is being spent on projects that are not continued. It was agreed that there is a need for SEG to be better focused.

The Board felt that SEG has a strong role to play in establishing a civic university in both the city and the region. SEG could take much of the pressure off departments in this respect.

Funding for SEG will continue and in order to ensure that it is focussed it was agreed that a steering committee will be set up which has broad Faculty representation and will be led by the new Faculty Director of Communication and External Affairs – Action.

11. Engineering Destination Data Report

The Board received the Engineering Destination Data Report. It was noted that according to the data provided the Engineering Faculty has the highest rate of unemployment in the University. However, the Board questioned the extent to which Engineering students hold out for professional employment in their field where other student may be more likely to take on any employment available to them. The Board also questioned what fraction of students go on to employment and what fraction continue in further study.

It was agreed that more effort should be put into increasing the student response rate. The Board felt that the analysis of the data was incomplete and that a broader picture should be gained in order to understand the data better.

It was acknowledged that with the introduction of higher fees, student are going to become much smarter in choosing a University with a good rate of post-degree employment leading to a good job. Faculty activity in this area does not yet accurately reflect that concern and more needs to be done to address the issue.

The Board agreed that more needs to be done in order to prepare students for work to ensure that they stand a good chance of getting a good job. This effort should be coordinated across the Faculty. This will be addressed in part during years one and two with the introduction of Skills Week. The importance of ensuring the visibility of the Careers Service was highlighted and the Board recognised that the importance of working with students on careers is more important now than at any point previously.

CBE have already moved to invest greater staff time in working on the preparation of students for employment e.g. encouraging better engagement with the Careers Service. This increased effort is expected to improve the Departments' situation. The Board agreed that more staff time should be invested across the Faculty in order to create a more driven process and to deal with the issues raised. HoDs nominated the following individuals within each department:

- Nigel Russell – CBE
- Rachel Horn – CSE
- Roger Moore – COM
- John Rigelsford – EEE
- Andrzej Nowakowski - MEC
- Robin Purshouse – ACSE
- Martin Jackson - MAT

The Board requested that a second paper be brought to FEB containing more detailed analysis of the data and an analysis of student needs and recommendations for addressing these- Action.

For Information Only

12. Income and Expenditure Financial Reports

There has been no significant change in the Faculty's financial position which continues to look healthy.

The situation relating to reserves has greatly improved with departments reducing the amount being held through planned spend.

13. Research Net Contribution and Research Income

The Faculty reports a healthy headline research income figure. However, it was noted that much of the success was down to a small number of large grants written by a small number of staff who are consistently responsible for bringing in money. Effort should be made to ensure that a greater number of staff are responsible for winning grants and in turn increasing the research income further.

14. A.O.B

Admissions Applications

CSE have reported issues with incomplete applications being forwarded to the Department from central admissions. It is often a time consuming process to get these completed and it was felt that it might be a more simple process to find a solution centrally. It was agreed that the CSE RAF representative should raise the issue at the next RAF and if it was felt to be a common issue then a solution could be found.

Workshops

HA questioned whether workshop space could be better utilised to help departments who are struggling for space. It was agreed that the issue should be discussed by Lab Supers.