UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM

Minutes of a meeting held on
Tuesday 8 November 2011

Present:

Dave Hall (Chair)
Paul Goffin
Geoff Green
Martyn Riddleston (vice James Hunt)
Dawn Kemp
Susan Lapworth
Alun Reynolds
Nigel Siesage
Richard Taylor
Mary Visser

In attendance Andrew Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Anne Hall and James Hunt

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

11/M26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Group considered the minutes of a meeting held on 11 October 2011. The Group approved the minutes subject to the amendment of a typographical error in M16.

11/M127 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M17, the Group noted that the Leadership Foundation had announced the availability of funding to support change management within the higher education sector. Full criteria for bids had not been released however the initial emphasis was on collaborative projects, rather than projects in individual institutions. Also arising from M17 the Group noted that the analysis of the total cost of the University’s administration in order to define the different elements of corporate expenditure was ongoing.

Arising from M18 the Group noted that a paper on dual reporting within academic departments was under development by the College Directors of Administration, to be considered by relevant members of the Senior Management Team in light of the overall aim of achieving a unified administration.

Arising from M19 the Chair reported that nominations for colleagues to attend the Registrar’s workshops had been received from the majority of divisions and colleges.

Arising from M20 the Group considered the development of HR policy and support in light of the recently introduced amendments to University ordinances. It was noted that where a complex case arose, the range of HR processes involved could become cumbersome, and it would be helpful for managers to be provided with clear guidance from the relevant HR Advisor regarding how to best manage multiple processes.

Arising from M21, the Chair reported that the Professional Services’ website would be made live following the second Professional Studies Forum on 16 November.
The Group agreed:

a) That it would be helpful to establish a dialogue with the Leadership Foundation regarding the potential allocation of funds to support change management initiatives within individual institutions.

b) That colleagues within the Division of Finance be invited to provide a report on the Total Cost Analysis for the December meeting of the Group.

c) That those members yet to identify colleagues to attend the Registrar’s workshops should direct nominations to the Chair.

d) That it was essential to encourage an open and effective dialogue between managers and HR Advisors when addressing the specific circumstances of individual HR cases, to ensure that the appropriate processes could be adopted for their resolution.

e) That feedback on the operation of the new Ordinances and associated HR policy should be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources, in order both to develop guidance for HR Advisors when assisting managers with complex cases, and also to inform discussions with the Trade Unions.

f) That an update on the implementation of the Unified Administration Communications Plan should be included as a standing item on future agendas.

11/M28

CHAIR’S BUSINESS

The Group received a final draft of the letter from the Registrar and Secretary to all Professional Services Staff, which would be circulated in December. The Group noted that further guidance would be provided regarding the role that service improvement plans would play within the University planning round. The Chair reported that all draft Divisional Plans would be considered at a Group away day, in order to promote a shared view of the development of the Professional Services.

The Group noted that the paper entitled ‘Developing the Professional Services’ (PSMT/11/10) had been circulated to divisional management teams and discussed in detail.

The Group considered potential topics for the Brown Bag Lunches to be held as part of the Unified Administration Communications Plan. It was noted that the sessions would be organised by Staff Development and held monthly, to commence in January 2012. Each session would provide an opportunity to share information and developments with colleagues from across the University, regarding issues of both institutional and national relevance and therefore help to reinforce a cross-institutional perspective among staff.

The Group considered internal communications both between the Divisions of Corporate Services, and between divisions and academic departments. It was noted that academic departments were subject to multiple and varied data requests from central services throughout the year. It would be helpful to establish a holistic view of the purpose, content and timing of all such requests, in order to inform departmental planning and the more effective scheduling of data requests.

The Group agreed:

a) That any feedback from divisional managers on the unified administration briefing note should be directed to the Chair in order to inform the drafting of a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document, should one be required.

b) That each Division and College would be invited to host one Brown Bag Lunch, beginning with the Division of Corporate Affairs and Planning.
c) That all Professional Services staff with less than two years service to the University would be required to attend the Brown Bag Lunches.
d) That a calendar of University planning processes and associated data requests from academic departments should be compiled by the Secretary for consideration at a future meeting.

MEASUREMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

The Group considered reports from the Divisions of Corporate Services and the Colleges on methods currently in use to measure service performance and enhancement. The Group noted the contents of all of the reports, and discussed a range of issues relating to the measurement of service delivery. The Group noted in particular the importance of distinguishing between institutional KPIs and divisional level measurements of service delivery. Furthermore, it was helpful to formally identify a structured series of measures that would yield meaningful results in both the short and long term, such as the current systems thinking project underway in the School of Archaeology and Ancient History addressing the management of student related processes.

The Group noted that there were risks associated with the establishment of formal KPI requirements, particularly for Professional Services teams located within academic departments. However, it was observed that within Colleges the majority of measurements took place at a departmental level, which could result in a lack of consistency in some areas. Increasing College level oversight of processes within individual departments could help to improve consistency. However, it was noted that several of the processes which could be subject to measure in departments were closely linked to associated central services, for example in the field of admissions and recruitment. Accordingly, the development of a consistent system of measurement in departments would depend upon an effective dialogue between departments, colleges and central services, in line with the aims of a unified administration.

The Group agreed:
a) That it was helpful to maintain a shared overview of the measures used within individual Divisions and Colleges, and to share good practice where appropriate.
b) That it was important to distinguish between divisional ownership of specific institutional KPIs and associated measures, and the measures of service performance which related to divisional level processes.
c) That, although ownership of individual measures often resided within academic departments, it would be helpful to develop systems at College level and between Colleges and Divisions of Corporate Services in order to achieve greater consistency.
d) That the institution did not wish to set formal KPIs for divisions and colleges, however encouraged individual offices to identify and implement effective means of measuring their service performance and improvement.

DURATION OF MEETING: 1 hour 30 minutes