UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 23 May 2012

Present:

Dave Hall (Chair)
Geoff Green Anne Hall
Louise Jones Dawn Kemp
Susan Lapworth Ian Mehrtens
Carol Prokopyszyn (vice Martyn Riddleston) Nigel Siesage
Richard Taylor Mary Visser

In attendance: Liz Bailey and Andrew Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Alun Reynolds and Martyn Riddleston

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

12/M30 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Group approved the minutes of a meeting held on 29 March 2012.

12/M31 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M20, the Group noted that further training workshops had taken place in the use of Outlook Calendar and other shared IT facilities. The training sessions had identified a number of cultural factors which limited the effectiveness of shared facilities, and that these may require consideration at institutional level.

Arising from M23, the Group agreed that it would be helpful to undertake a Myers Briggs Type Indicator exercise at an away day in the 2012/13 academic year.

The Group agreed:

a) That an appropriate external advisor should be identified to facilitate a Myers Briggs Type Indicator exercise at a future away day;  Action: Secretary to coordinate

b) That members should complete the Myers Briggs Type Indicator paper analysis in advance of the away day.  Action: Secretary to coordinate

12/M32 CHAIR’S BUSINESS

The Chair reported that Heads of Divisions within Corporate Services had been working with the Management Accountant for Corporate Services to identify the required savings for the coming academic year, in terms of both pay and non-pay expenditure. The Group also noted that Alun Reynolds would be meeting with members to discuss the process of managing staffing changes in the light of the financial position.

The Chair also informed members that any requests for additional resource should be reported to him and the Director Finance as soon as possible.
The Group agreed:

a) That requests for additional resource should be sent to the Chair and Director of Finance asap; Action: Heads of Divisions of Corporate Services

12/M33 PSMT AWAY DAY

The Group considered a report of the Away Day held on 19 April 2012. The Away Day had focussed on reviewing HR procedures, chiefly job specification and approval, recruitment and selection, and promotion and reward. The Group agreed that, subject to a minor amendment, the report represented an accurate record of the discussions and recommendations. The Group noted a number of issues arising from the report, including:

a) That Alun Reynolds was drafting revised job specification forms and that these would be presented for consideration at a future meeting;

b) That the process for staff re-grading differed from that discussed at the Away Day, but that it was still essential for Heads of Divisions and Directors of College Administration to have greater involvement in the process;

c) That, given the extent of the changes proposed following the Away Day, there may be sufficient grounds to warrant a further round of consultation with trade unions regarding the staff-related ordinances;

d) That it would be appropriate to have different selection processes for grade 6 posts, depending on the job focus;

e) That clearer guidance was required to define the grounds for, and style in which submissions for merit awards could be made, and the criteria against which these would be judged.

The Group agreed:

a) That revised job specification templates should be considered at the next meeting; Action: AR

b) That Heads of Divisions and College Directors of Administration should be able to view the outcome of initial re-grading panels and make recommendations to the final Panel; Action: AR

c) That relevant guidance should be amended to reflect that divisional or college discretion should be exercised in the selection process for grade 6 posts; Action: Kevin Ritchie

d) That clearer guidance should be developed to set the criteria to the granting of merit awards. Action: AR

12/M34 ATYPICAL WORKERS

The Group considered a report on progress with the atypical workers project. It was noted that the proposal was undergoing further development in consultation with the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor regarding the costs associated with migrating the current establishment of associate tutors onto the singly pay spine. Once this had taken place a full proposal would go forward for consideration by VCAC.

The Group noted that the current systems thinking work underway in the area of HR was generating data that might be relevant to the assimilation of associate tutors into the single pay spine. It was further noted that there would be a significant administrative workload for departments associated with implementing the policy once agreed, and that central support should be provided for this.

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The Group agreed:

a) That the project team should liaise with members of the current Systems Thinking intervention team in HR;  
   Action: Liz Bailey

12/M35 SYSTEMS THINKING INTERVENTIONS

The Group considered a report on progress with current systems thinking work underway within the University.

a. Maintenance
The Group noted that the intervention had delivered significantly reduced end-to-end fix times in those buildings operating the new system. Furthermore, the capacity that had been released as a result allowed staff to pro-actively identify and address potential issues before they were reported. The intervention also highlighted that some current external maintenance contracts did not provide sufficient value for money, and that these would be reconsidered by the Division of Estates and Facilities Management.

b. Staff Recruitment and Induction
The Group noted that the intervention team had largely completed the demand analysis and would shortly be moving to the experiment phase. There would be several strands to the experiment phase focussing on weekly payment, the process of staff recruitment and induction from approval of the post right through to receipt of the first paycheque, and electronic methods for feedback. The Group considered proposals arising from the intervention team relating to electronic methods for signature, and probationary periods with the Professional Services.

The Group agreed:

i) That an email from a unique UOL log in could be accepted as a formal signature, except where a signed paper was required by an external body;  
   Action: Liz Bailey to feed into HR intervention

ii) That the issue of probation within the Professional Services would be discussed at a future meeting;

The Group agreed:

i) That any accommodation related data from the ‘Make me a Student’ experiment should be fed back to Frances Stone;  
   Action: Kathy Robinson

d. Archaeology and Ancient History
The Group noted that this intervention had produced systems which were now well established within the School. The report indicated that the new systems had yielded significant improvements, for example piloting electronic assignment submission. However, it was also noted that the peaks in activity around enrolment and submission dates prevented the swift analysis of failure demand. Furthermore, the current practice of maintaining those student records that pre-dated the intervention in a separate database caused a significant additional workload.
e. Distance Learning in the College of Science and Engineering
The Group noted that the intervention was now expanding to include further DL programmes within the College. Within the Actuarial Science programme, the most recent cohort were working through the programme under the new clean flow and analysis of the data showed a significant fall in failure demand. The Group noted that the College of Science and Engineering was developing a single hub for the administration of all distance learning programmes within the College. The Group discussed how such a system could deliver efficiency savings, however acknowledged that in Colleges where there was a greater number of more established distance learning programmes, this could involve a significant change to the existing infrastructure, and that this would require careful consideration.

The Group agreed:
  i) That the proposed administrative arrangements for new distance learning programmes be considered in the light of the data generated by the relevant DL interventions;  

Action: College Directors of Administration and SL

f. Museum Studies
The Group noted that the intervention in Museum Studies had just commenced and that a full report would be considered at a future meeting.

The Group also noted a report on the new intervention into ‘The Research Journey’ would be considered at a future meeting. The Group further agreed that the next Away Day would focus on analysing the information generated by the current interventions.

12/M36 IT STRATEGY
The Group received a report from Mary Visser regarding the implementation of the IT strategy. It was noted that work was ongoing in the five key areas of personal computing, printing, virtual servers, software and IT Support. The group noted in particular that the implementation of network printing would require involvement from the divisions of Finance and Estates and Facilities Management, as well as the support of all senior management.

12/M37 UKBA POLICY
The Group received a report from Richard Taylor regarding UK Border Agency policy. It was noted that it was essential for the University to develop and maintain robust processes for the systematic monitoring of international student attendance, in order to maintain its Highly Trusted Status (HTS). The Group noted that a VCAC working party would be undertaking an internal audit to establish current levels of compliance and identify areas for enhancement.

The Group agreed:
a) That the outcome of the internal audit should be reported to the next meeting, for information.

Action: RT

DURATION OF MEETING: 1 hour 30 minutes