UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM

Minutes of a meeting held on
Thursday 6 November 2014

Present:

Dave Hall (Chair)
Liz Bailey
Geoff Green
Martyn Riddleston
Nigel Siesage
Tim Yates (vice Trevor Humphreys)

Jenny Dnes (vice Thomas Veit)
Professor Sue Law
Professor Jon Scott
Frances Stone

In attendance: Angela Walker and Andrew Petersen (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from Chloe Grobler, Trevor Humphreys, Becky Johnson, Dawn Kemp and Thomas Veit

UNRESERVED (ONLY) BUSINESS

14/M48 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Group considered and approved the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October.

14/M49 MATTERS ARISING

Arising from M46, the Group noted that a list of proposed priority IT projects had been developed consideration by the University Leadership Team.

The Chair reminded members that any request for additional IT resource must be supported by evidence of a full systematic review which demonstrated both the nature of the demand and the rationale for the IT solution proposed.

The Group agreed:

a) That members should feed back to their senior management teams regarding the requirements when requesting additional IT resource

Action: All PSMT members

14/M50 CHAIR’S BUSINESS

The Chair reported that the University and Colleges Union (UCU) had formally begun action short of a strike on 6 November, which included a boycott of assessment and marking activities. The University had released a statement confirming the action that would be taken to withhold partial pay in the event of academic staff striking and the Group noted that the University’s policy was in line with the bulk of the sector. Contingency plans for the operation of Panels and Boards of Examiners had been drafted for the upcoming assessment round.

The Group also noted that UCU guidance confirmed that non-academic staff were not expected to take part in the action.
REPORTS FROM COLLEGES AND DIVISIONS

The Group received updates from members regarding service improvement activities and staffing movements within Divisions;

College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology

Nigel Siesage reported that colleagues from the College were closely involved with several ongoing service improvement projects including the review of Postgraduate Research administration and the Smarter Purchasing project. It was also noted that the formation of a single Professional Services support team for the Departments of Biochemistry and Cell Physiology and Pharmacology had been successfully completed, and that consideration was being given to the structure of the support services for those departments which would be based in the new Medical Sciences Building.

Estates and Facilities Management

Tim Yates reported that a Reactive Maintenance Manager had been appointed and that this, combined with improvements in the maintenance and helpdesk workflows should allow more swift response times. It was also noted that the Division was nearing completion of a condition survey of all University buildings to allow the identification of opportunities for pro-active maintenance. The Group also noted progress with major capital projects underway.

Finance

Martyn Riddleston reported that service improvements were underway though the planned automation of the invoicing process, and that the Smarter Purchasing Project was delivering significant efficiencies, in part due to the removal of the requirement for physical signature. The appointment of procurement managers was also facilitating the development of revised processes for procurement across the institution.

It was also noted that the Research Support Office had developed proposals for significant process changes and were in the process of securing IT support for these.

IT Services

Liz Bailey reported that the division was supporting a range of service improvement projects such as Smarter Purchasing and the implementation of the new Content Management System. It was noted that the division was reviewing the way in which it used the outputs of monitoring tools in order to bring these together to support more pro-active monitoring of system performance. The Group also noted that the division was upgrading the University’s block storage facilities which would result in the migration of all business processes over the summer.

Leicester Learning Institute

Professor Sue Law reported that the Institute had recently formed a Technology Enhanced Learning Team which included a new post specifically to support the development of MOOCs. The team was also supporting the development of the CPD framework for academic staff.
Residential and Commercial Services

Frances Stone reported that RACS had recently undertaken a full review of roles and values throughout the division. This had resulted in the creation of a skills matrix defining the qualifications and skills that were required for each role. New induction programmes had been created for all staff, both existing and new and a recent away day for senior managers had identified training needs for staff throughout the division. The Group also noted that an incentive scheme has been created whereby colleagues who demonstrated the core values and behaviours articulated through the above process would be invited to attend a recognition and award event.

Student and Academic Services

Professor Scott and Geoff Green reported a range of service improvements were underway including a review of postgraduate research student administration, using the systems thinking approach, and working with Student Welfare to review the fees payment process for students suffering financial difficulties. It was also noted that a new Projects and Developments team had been established to support service improvement.

The Group also noted that proposals for the restructuring of the academic year and harmonisation of the credit framework would shortly be presented to Senate and would, if approved, result in a significant workload over 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The Group agreed:

a) That it would be helpful to receive updates on the success of the rewards process piloted by RACS, and consider whether there may be potential to roll this out across the Professional Services  
   Action: Secretary and Frances Stone

14/M52  
PSMT AWAY DAY, 2 DECEMBER 2014

The Group noted that the away day in December would focus on considering the work already undertaken in divisions and colleges, and use this as the basis for developing a shared set of Professional Services values and behaviours. The Group noted that the day would be facilitated by Clare Thompson and that selected members of PSMT would present to the Group regarding the work already underway. Colleagues from within the relevant areas would also be invited to attend to demonstrate how they were engaging with the process.

The Group agreed:

a) That colleagues in the Colleges of Arts, Humanities and Law and IT Services should be invited to attend to speak at the away day;  
   Action: Dawn Kemp and Liz Bailey
b) That these colleagues should be drawn from outside of the senior divisional or College administrative management teams;  
   Action: Dawn Kemp and Liz Bailey
c) That the Chair would send around more detailed briefing notes ahead of the event;  
   Action: Chair
d) That the output of the day should feed into a future Professional Services Forum

Duration of meeting: One hour and 10 minutes