Proposal for the Re-organisation of the University

A Response from the School of Education

1. **The principle of re-organization which allows for more direct lines of communication and decision making was welcomed.** However, in the documentation provided, there is a lack of evidenced based justification for the specific proposal of moving towards a school structure.

2. **The grouping of existing departments into Schools has the potential for creating an artificial separation between academic and managerial functions, with the latter taking precedence over the former.** In many respects, there will little difference between the role of a Head of School with responsibility for numerous sub-units and the current role of the Dean of a large Faculty. The occupant of either of these roles will be unable to have a detailed academic knowledge of all of the sub units. This creates possibilities for, on the one hand, bias in decision making, or on the other, Balkanisation, whereby sub-units seek to retain separate identities and engage in conflict with other sub-units.

3. **Specific proposals to combine the SoE with LILL are a source of concern to many colleagues in the SoE.** The current SoE has undergone enormous changes over the past 5 or 6 years, during which time, for example, our contribution to central costs has risen from 20% to 31%. On the basis of the most recent available figures, the combining of the SoE with LILL would produce a school making a combined contribution of 20%. Both the geographical location(s) of LILL and the admin-heavy nature of their activity makes it difficult to see how any economies of scale would be gained in terms of administration. Academically, the two Schools relate to entirely different constituencies in terms of the bulk of their work. Finally, the research outputs of the two departments are highly disparate. Other departments with which the SoE might be more appropriately linked were CLMS and Museum Studies (minority support for MS). It should be noted, for example, that a significant proportion of CLMS staff are entered under Education for the purposes of the RAE. A smaller proportion from Museum Studies are entered under Education. The SoE also has some interests in common with other units which do not appear in the proposed model, but with whom SoE might reasonably have links: ELTU, Staff Development and BDRA.

   **Whilst the SoE is not in a position, in our present state of knowledge, to express any firm preference about which other existing Departments might make the best partners in a School system, we feel that detailed academic, research, administrative and financial considerations should form the basis for such decisions.**

4. **There are important questions to be answered about the role and status of the new forum for Heads of Schools with the SMT.** On the one hand this could be seen to give Schools a better voice than the current
faculty system allows, concerns remain about the extent to which the smallest – and hence weakest – Schools would be heard. This same concern would apply to small sub-units within Schools, which, under Faculty arrangements, have a voice on Faculty Board, but would have no direct mechanism for being heard under the proposed School structure. (See point 2 above).

5. Finally, what will happen to all the business currently conducted by faculties, and what will be the role of existing committees such as VCAC and BRC within the new structure?

The Management Committee
School of Education
10th May 2007