

REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY'S CORE BRIEF: FEBRUARY 2006

Priorities for the Administration

In last month's Core Brief, I set out six priority areas for 2006. At the Board of Governors' Conference on 13 and 14 February, referred to in last month's Core Brief, the President, in his commentary on his stock-take on the University's progress in 2005, set out five key challenges for the Administration. There is, of course, no substantive difference in his list and mine. He focused exclusively on challenges the Administration itself has to address, whereas I chose also to include the contributions we could make to the RAE 2008 and the Collaboration Audit.

The President's five challenges are set out verbatim for the record:

- 1 resolving potential administrative dysfunctions arising from the devolved structures of the University, including effectively apportioning authority, responsibility and accountability between Schools, Faculties and central Administrative Directorates
- 2 resolving the remaining human resource issues in order that the two legacy administrations are finally integrated
- 3 finalising a comprehensive body of administrative policies and procedures to replace those of the legacy universities
- 4 ensuring the effective delivery on time and within budget of a large and costly IT Management Systems Project covering Human Resource and Payroll, Finance and Student Administration and Support
- 5 delivering the largest capital programme in the UK higher education history on time and within budget.

The key challenges have to be considered within the context of the significant statement the President made in one of his papers for the Conference where he stated,

"Building a responsive, efficient, effective, high morale University Administration at all levels is a fundamental prerequisite for the success of the 2015 agenda."

That statement, coupled with the key challenges, will be the benchmarks by which we will be judged this year and one positive aspect of that is that at least we know what is being asked of us all and of the senior managers in particular. I am in the process of finalising my thinking about how we should respond systematically to all these requirements. It has not been possible for me to conclude the process in time for the circulation of this Core Brief. Therefore, rather than provide a piecemeal response at this stage, I propose to circulate an action-based response within the next few weeks which will set out the measures I intend to put in place to address directly the above issues.

Human Resource Matters

The Director of Human Resources has provided the following information.

Employee Relations

National Disputes

AUT

Following the outcome of the national ballot recently conducted, members of AUT have voted to commence a programme of industrial action. This will commence on Tuesday March 7, with a one day strike, to be followed the following day, March 8, with continuous action short of a strike, until the dispute is ended.

This letter will include a boycott of student assessment; of cover for colleagues; of call out; and of Performance and Development Review amongst academic and academic related staff. Please note that staff represented by UMAUT will continue to conduct P & DR for support staff.

Managers are requested to ensure the identification of those areas which are likely to be affected by any of the above action, especially where maintenance of service is critical. Where alternative arrangements cannot easily be made, please bring these instances to my attention.

Further guidance will shortly be circulated by the Director of Human Resources.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Trade Unions representing staff in the above pension scheme are presently balloting staff over the intention of the Government to remove access to existing rules relating to non-actuarially reduced pension provisions by members. This change, if carried through, may affect some staff who remain members of the UMIST support staff pension arrangements. Those staff have been invited to ballot on taking industrial action.

Again, further advice and guidance will be provided by HR when the outcome of the ballot, and what form the action is likely to take, becomes known.

Local

Staff represented by the AMICUS South branch have now also voted in favour of the Interim Pay and Grading Agreement proposed by the University, to transfer staff represented by AMICUS South to the new 51-point pay spine.

As with staff who are covered by the AUT Interim arrangements, already agreed, under the terms of this Agreement with AMICUS staff will be transferred to the new pay spine in one of the two ways previously briefed.

Staff will be notified during March of the precise point that they will transfer to on the new pay spine. The timing of any adjustments in salary and any back pay (calculated from 1 October 2004) will be determined shortly.

The letter to staff will be accompanied by a Frequently Asked Questions document, which will clarify many of the points of detail about the Interim Agreement and the transfer process.

The University remains committed to reaching an Interim Agreement on the same basis with UNISON and AMICUS North branch. The Interim Agreements are without prejudice to the outcomes of the Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) process, on which work is continuing. A further communication on this will be issued later this week

