

REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY'S CORE BRIEF: APRIL 2006

This month's Core Brief consists of seven items - the first four are items for information and the remaining three provide early notice on matters of importance.

Away Day: 6 April 2006

In last month's Core Brief I referred to an Away Day I was holding with the Heads of Faculty Administration, the Directors of Estates, Finance, HR and STARS and Dr Pat Sponder representing the Office of the Academic Registrar. By common consent, the event was very useful in addressing directly and openly the most intractable problems the Administration faces. These range from the need to break down barriers between the Centre/Faculties and Schools to the difficulties of measuring efficiency and effectiveness as well as raising morale, with a range of other issues in between. The agenda for the day was, inevitably, rather ambitious so a follow-up meeting has been arranged for 18 May after which a more detailed communication to colleagues will be issued. I believe we should seek the views of the Heads of School Administration and a proposal is under consideration on how best to achieve this.

STARS and liP

On 6 April, the Sport Trading and Residential Services Directorate (STARS) were informed that they had achieved liP recognition under the new more stringent qualification.

It is worth remembering that STARS operates with 750 staff in widely differing operational areas. It encompasses a limited company operating the Weston Conference Centre/Days Hotel and Chancellors; has absorbed Scolarest contract catering into an in-house catering operation; has consolidated the student residences into three operational campuses; operates Sport and manages a significant conference business.

The award of liP recognises the huge effort of all staff within STARS who were seen by the assessors as a seamless, integrated business notwithstanding the different operational areas. STARS were supported in seeking liP by the Finance, Estates and HR teams and the Director of STARS, Andrew Yates, wishes to acknowledge their contribution to the successful outcome.

On behalf of everyone, I extend my warm congratulations to Andrew and all colleagues in STARS.

Pay and Grading Update

The Director of HR reports as follows:

Introduction of interim arrangements for pay and grading continue to run to programme, with all staff in the AMICUS area of representation due to receive new rates in April, back pay in May. Staff covered by UNISON representation follow a month later in each respect.

Representatives of all campus trade unions and management are working together to give effect to finalisation of the pay and grading agenda by August 2006. It is jointly recognised that this is a very tight timescale. A plan will shortly be published to confirm dates for completion of milestones, and to identify areas of possible delay where managers would be asked to offer additional support.

Role Profiles are being developed from moderated HERA scores, and these will shortly be sent out to managers in draft form, with a request to work with colleagues from HR and trade unions to finalise the content. Later, managers will be enlisted to play an essential role in ensuring early return of role profiles when distributed to staff.

New Opportunities Programme

A 'New Opportunities' employment and training open day on 19 April for members of the local community, organised by HR, was a considerable success with over 150 attendees. It was voluntarily supported, prior to and on the day, by staff from HR and STARS. Building on that success, and a pilot programme which ran in the early part of the year, a six week 'Work Placement Programme' for unemployed people who live within the walk to work area around the north and south campuses is to be introduced. The first intake will be August/September of this year and cover a variety of roles in a number of Directorates. This is a significant element of the University's commitment to the NWDA on employing local people. If other managers are interested in offering a placement, they should contact Ray Lewis.

ERVS

The University is introducing its first early retirement and voluntary severance (ERVS) scheme, which is intended for use across all parts of the University. The scheme will be of particular assistance to the Administration as we realign resources and priorities to meet the Manchester 2015 agenda. Briefing sessions for managers are underway and full details of the scheme will be available in the next edition of the Staff Update and on the website. Anyone who is interested should consult the website:

www.manchester.ac.uk/staffnet/earlyretirementandvoluntaryseverance

which will provide details on how to make an informal enquiry and, if appropriate and suitable, a formal request for ERVS.

Staff Survey

The staff survey launches on Monday, 24 April and will be open/live until Friday, 19 May 2006.

The questionnaire is consistent with the first survey, but shorter (should take 15 to 20 minutes to complete). Some changes have been made to reflect feedback from staff and lessons learned from last time. The use of a different online survey tool with routing capabilities has enabled us to make the survey more user-friendly. The survey is available online at www.manchester.ac.uk/staffsurvey and is password protected. Staff may use their own log-in, or a specially created log-in which will be notified in an all staff email. Paper versions will be distributed in STARS and Estates to members of staff who do not have computer access and they are available on request from:

samantha.j.howarth@manchester.ac.uk

You are encouraged to take part in the survey so that the University is aware of the issues giving rise to levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction amongst its workforce. A higher response rate to the 2006 survey will also mean that the results are of more use to individual Faculties, Schools and Administrative Directorates, because we will be able to make valid comparisons across different groups of staff.

Hopefully, staff have begun to see improvements as a result of the first survey and believe that taking part in the survey will make a difference. For those yet to be convinced, the results and action plan from the first survey are available at:

www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/staffnet/staffsurvey

Queries, comments, or requests for further information should be emailed to:

staffsurvey@manchester.ac.uk

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

The University has a statutory general duty to promote disability equality. By early December this year, the University, in common with all public authorities, is required to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme. This is a significant piece of work because, in addition to eliminating discrimination and harassment, we must also have means to promote equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards disabled persons.

Potentially, the effects of this are far-reaching particularly for a University of our size. Colleagues from the Equality and Diversity Unit in Corporate Services, the Disability Support Office in Student Support and Services and in HR are currently working on the Equality Scheme and will be contacting a range of colleagues about the implications of the Scheme. Please give them your full cooperation and support because the University wishes to put in place, by the due date, the framework which is necessary to enable us to comply with the law.

Albert McMenemy
Registrar and Secretary

25 April 2006