

REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY'S CORE BRIEF: NOVEMBER 2006

Administration OPR

At the beginning of this month, the Administration Operational Performance Review (OPR) took place. This was the inaugural OPR at which the President and his Vice-Presidents quizzed me and some of my senior colleagues on the performance of the Administration over the past twelve months. Achievements were noted as were areas of under-performance for whatever reason. I am awaiting a letter from the President on the precise outcomes of the OPR meeting which will obviously help influence our priorities for next year. However, it was apparent that there were two areas where, as a single Administration, we fail to do ourselves justice. The first is communication. The OPR panel felt that key messages were not adequately conveyed across the University. Unfortunately, there were no tips as to how we can do better. The second, and more worrying aspect, was a perception that the Administration is not a seamless operation. There will, of course, be a connection between this and inadequate communication. The upshot is that I propose to convene a meeting of Directors, senior Heads of Office, Heads of Faculty Administration and Heads of School Administration on 31 January to examine both of these matters in greater detail so that we can identify remedial measures. An invitation to those concerned will be issued shortly by Marilyn Shone and I expect them to give priority to attendance at the meeting. The outcomes will be reported in a subsequent Core Brief.

Resource Mapping

Many of you will already be aware that I am chairing a Process and Systems Improvement (PSI) Group whose purpose is to eliminate unnecessary costs within the University as a whole and to reduce expenditure within the Administration in a manner which is consistent with improving quality. Many initiatives are underway but I want to draw one to your attention now. Kay Day, on my behalf, is leading a Resource Mapping exercise which is seeking to list systematically all administrative resource deployed in all administrative functions across the University in terms of FTEs and financial resource. The resulting information will enable the PSI Group to identify the level of resource dedicated to each function, for example, research administration, at School, Faculty and Centre level. It will also enable the Faculties to benchmark the administrative resources in each function across the Faculties and across Schools. If you have any queries about the operation of this important project please contact Kay directly.

Energy Saving

You will know from personal experience that the cost of energy has risen rapidly over the past few years. The University, as a high energy user, has incurred significant additional costs as a result and various steps are being taken now to reduce costs. A working group, chaired by Vice-President Professor John Perkins, and on which the Director of Estates will also sit, meets early next month to begin its work. Each of us will have to play our part in containing and reducing costs, so look out for further details from Diana Hampson.

HR Matters

The Director of Human Resources, Karen Heaton, reports as follows:

A review of the final stages of the project plan on pay and grading is underway to ensure that we have an accurate, transparent and robust process in place as we transfer staff into the final grade structure in the New Year. Balloting, via the trade unions, to secure final endorsement is expected to be completed in spring 2007. We will be writing to all staff in the next few weeks to outline the next steps in the project. We are aware that a small number of staff have yet to receive letters informing them of their interim placement and we are working to address this. We will begin to calculate "back-pay" on overtime payments in the New Year. We are currently looking at the number of staff this is likely to cover in order to estimate the amount of time this will take before informing staff of a likely timescale for payment.

In the meantime, negotiations on pay related terms and conditions are reaching their conclusion and it is anticipated that these will be finalised with the trade unions very shortly. We will then be in a position to write to all staff with a copy of their new contract and terms and conditions of employment.

Finally, a policy on Reward and Recognition for non-academic members of staff has been finalised and will be published as soon as discussions with the trade unions are concluded.

THES Awards 2006

Congratulations to colleagues in the Manchester Leadership Programme, Careers and Employability Division on winning a Times Higher Award 2006 last week for their website on Disability Toolkits. The site's aim is to "enhance the competitiveness of disabled students in the graduate labour market" and it was highly praised by the judges.

Albert McMenemy
Registrar and Secretary

20 November 2006

