

REGISTRAR AND SECRETARY'S CORE BRIEF: FEBRUARY 2007

In last month's Core Brief I referred to the five key challenges set by the President as the outcomes of last year's Operational Performance Review. In this month's Core Brief I want to focus on the first two of those challenges – the need for cost reductions and resolving administrative dysfunction.

When I spoke earlier this month at the Board of Governors' Planning and Accountability Conference I advised them that I had come to the conclusion that the current devolution model was unaffordable and unsustainable. That does not imply the abandonment of the concept of devolution but rather that we have to develop a more cost effective model that will contain and reduce administrative costs and, in the process, help to resolve real and/or perceived administrative dysfunction.

My preferred model would build on the premise of a single Administration working as a team on the basis that we provide shared integrated services. This means that we must be more explicit about priorities and more rigorous about locating and providing services where the greatest value is added. Establishing such a model will not be straightforward but to work out the detail of its implementation first of all we need to know what is currently provided, where it is provided and the level of resource expended. As I mentioned in a previous Core Brief Kay Day, working with Russell Ashworth, David Barker, Graham Robinson and Chad Ryan have been conducting a resource mapping exercise to identify these pieces of information. Kay is briefing me on their findings later this week and I hope that the data will provide pointers towards the preliminary steps we should take to re-define the optimum organisational model for the Administration.

What about priorities? These can be categorised under two broad headings:

(1) Meeting statutory and regulatory requirements:

This encapsulates areas like health and safety, returns to Government agencies and funding bodies and meeting legislative and regulatory measures relating to staff, students and infrastructure.

(2) Assisting in the delivery of the *Manchester 2015 Agenda*, most obviously as regards to research and graduate education, the totality of the student experience and revenue generation.

The next task is to be more precise about the priorities and in so doing begin to identify those areas of provision where activity will have to diminish or cease. Naturally, there will be discussion and debate about all of that which, incidentally, will involve the President's third and fourth key challenges of process re-engineering and benefits realisation.

To enable the necessary re-profiling of the Administration to take place and to secure the reductions in costs, that are being sought, which I referred to in my Core Brief last month, colleagues should be aware there is now much tighter monitoring of staff vacancies and approval to proceed to external advertisement will only be given sparingly. This will help us to utilise fully the talents of the existing workforce. After formal discussion with the campus trade unions have taken place further details will be available on the voluntary severance scheme. As for non-pay costs various measures on energy saving and other substantial non-pay budgets are in train but I would ask everyone to be sensible and responsible in their use of non-pay budgets. Please deal with the essential rather than the desirable.

Finally, one recommendation arising from the review of recruitment and admissions was that the home/EU activities should be united with the international in one Directorate. The new title will be Student Recruitment, Admissions and International Development. Dr Tim Westlake, who has been overseeing both Directorates since last summer, will become the overall Director on 1st March.

Albert McMenemy
Registrar and Secretary

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