



Corporate Planning Statement 2008-2009

September 2008

Mission and Strategic Objectives for 2008/09

1. The University College has recently developed a new Strategic Plan for the period 2008-2013. The Strategic Plan includes a full statement of the University College's mission, long-term vision and strategic objectives. Our mission has been slightly amended to reflect the latest understanding of the rural sector and its constituent economies. The University College's vision statement has also been slightly changed to reflect the developing position of Harper Adams in the university sector and its role in targeted international markets. The revised mission and vision statements are as follows:

Mission

Higher education for the delivery of a sustainable food chain and rural economies

Vision

To maintain a high-quality university institution made distinctive by:

- Activities closely related to the needs of the rural economies and industries reliant upon those economies, with a specific commitment to farming for sustainable environments, re-establishing connections between food producers and consumers, knowledge transfer to support the rural economies and the international dimension of environmental and food chain sustainability;
 - The development of new markets for students from a wider range of backgrounds supported by appropriate course and pedagogic developments;
 - The provision of a learning environment and promotion of a student culture that enhance employability and personal development;
 - Strong industry links that add business relevance to the College's role in higher education and encourage lifelong learning;
 - A central role for the College in generating and promoting innovation and the provision of higher education for the rural economies, during and beyond the planning period.
2. The strategic objectives of the University College for the five year planning period are at Annex A. These are articulated into more detailed goals and action plans in the University College's Strategic Plan and its suite of sub strategies that form its integrated planning system.
 3. The University College continues to play a distinctive and key role within the UK higher education sector. Our position with regard to the land-based sector, particularly in the support we provide for the agricultural industry and in the development of biomass-based renewable technologies, underlines the specialist nature of the institution and distinguishes it from other higher education providers of land-based subjects. However, our position within the higher education sector is also increasingly recognised for the quality of our provision and the contribution we are making to important higher education policy objectives. In 2007, our inclusion for the first time in the Sunday Times University League Table¹ was testimony to our position within the sector. With a rating above that of any other post-92 university institution, the award of the title of University College of the Year and shortlisting for the title of University of the Year, we were recognised as an institution with considerable academic strengths, despite our relatively small size.
 4. These results are the culmination of the successful implementation of the critical actions identified in our Strategic Plan for the period 2002-2007, and reflect a considerable amount of work on the part of all sections of the University College community. We have routinely reported on progress against those actions in our previous Corporate Planning Statements. The position for the last year is as follows:

¹ Sunday Times University Guide, 23 September 2007

'Critical Issues'	Actions to date:	Outcomes to date:
The introduction of variable fees and the new 'market' for higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive marketing activities to address new funding regime; • Continued investment in facilities and staff; • Fundraising to support new scholarship programme (via Development Trust); 	<p>Student recruitment has remained positive and is on target for 2008/09;</p> <p>We completed the Ross Survey to be eligible for the matched fundraising scheme for voluntary giving</p>
Structural changes taking place in the higher education sector as more institutions become universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued emphasis on 'positioning' the institution in the sector; • Research degree awarding powers, July 2006 	The University College remains highly regarded for the quality of its provision and its specialist position within the sector – see Sunday Times University Guide 2007
The review of the teaching funding methodology, and the method for allocating financial resources under the HEIF4 initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review of specialist funding criteria; • Development of our HEIF4 Institutional Strategy 	The HEIF4 Strategy has been submitted to HEFCE. We made several submissions to the review of the teaching funding methodology
Further embedding of Full Economic Costing and the introduction of new metrics to monitor institutional sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suite of institutional KPIs has been introduced and a review of CUC guidance has been completed; • FEC has been supported by the introduction of a contracts QA system and further work on TRAC for teaching 	The Board of Governors receive regular updates on progress with TRAC and the KPI system and agreed a statement on institutional performance for the 2006/07 financial year which is published on our website
Major reforms of the farming industry following on from CAP reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of reform has been supported with skills development, awareness raising and research for the land-based sector; • The University College has taken a lead by participating in environmental initiatives (eg the LEAF organisation); • The University College Farm has adapted its own systems and resources in relation to the new regulatory environment 	The economic outlook for the farming industry has improved in the last year but production cost increases will continue to provide new challenges. The University College continues to play a major role in supporting new business development, and the change process, for those seeking to develop new skills and approaches to their business
The restructuring of the delivery of rural policy and services, with increased regionalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University College continues to monitor and contribute to the work of the Commission for Rural Communities; • The University College is also contributing to regional rural, skills and economic policy developments 	WiRE has successfully completed its role as the lead organisation in the Regional Women's Enterprise Unit (RWEU). We are actively developing new initiatives with the RDA and are monitoring changes in the structure of economic development policy delivery
An increased emphasis on sustainability (in environmental, economic and social terms) within the rural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National finalists in the BITC Awards for Excellence for work on biomass energy production; • Support provided to 1,047 individuals and 246 business start-ups through the WiRE/RWEU programme in the period April 2006 to March 2008 	The University College has continued to play a major role in promoting and supporting new methods for farming, diversification opportunities for farm businesses and enterprise amongst other types of rural business. The University College is also a key contributor to national and regional rural policies
Continued difficulties in the regeneration of the rural economy that need to be addressed with the support of higher education, particularly through higher level skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Regional Skills Partnership and Sector Skills Council (Lantra); • Active participation in the Employer Engagement initiative 	The University College makes a significant contribution to the retention of graduates in the West Midlands Region, successfully addressing a problem identified in the Regional Economic Strategy ² . We have also successfully delivered the early stages of our employer engagement work

In addition, the University College has continued to make progress in addressing issues of financial sustainability and maintaining academic quality so as to ensure that it has a firm foundation on which to build developments in academic performance over the next few years.

² *West Midlands Economic Strategy: Consultation Draft*, Advantage West Midlands/West Midlands Regional Assembly, May 2007

Progress Against 2007/08 Objectives

5. Over the last year the University College has made significant progress against the objectives it established in its last Corporate Planning Statement (see Annex B for a full statement of progress). Some of our major activities have centred on the development of new proposals for the growth of the institution arising from the outcome of the HEFCE Land-based Studies Review. The University College has successfully applied for funding from the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund to grow employer engagement activities (under the Rural Employer Engagement Network (ReedNet) initiative, widen participation (under the Rural Outreach and Student Experience (ROSE) initiative) and develop its student support services with associated capital funding (under the Rural Employer Engagement Student Experience Project (RESEEP). We have also been pursuing our application for RDA funding to create a West Midlands Regional Food Academy over the last year, on which a funding decision is imminent. The Academy will focus on the delivery of higher level skills training for regional food businesses. The next year will see us focus on the implementation of these new developments.
6. The initiatives will have important implications for the future development of the *Aspire* CETL. The CETL has been enormously successful in enabling the University College to 'deepen the impact'³ of best practice in teaching and learning, but also in promoting collaboration with other land-based higher education providers and extending the reach of pedagogic practice into new technologies and new markets such as work-based learning. It has had a transformational role within the University College because the specialist nature of the institution has enabled it to relate to all parts of the academic community. We have already planned for the *Aspire* CETL to take on a greater role in addressing higher level skills development and the engagement of new learners over the next planning period, a direction consistent with the latest HEFCE Strategic Plan⁴.
7. We have also explored new areas for the development of activities beyond the expected funding period for the National Rural Knowledge Exchange. One of these is the creation of an innovative land-based library, which will provide a repository service for information of use to rural businesses and communities, and will act as an 'evidence resource' for policy making on rural issues. Funding for this initiative is currently being investigated, and the proposal is shortly to be discussed with, amongst others, senior figures within DEFRA.
8. The University College has been active in other aspects of its research and reach-out programmes. The Women in Rural Enterprise-led Regional Women's Enterprise Unit has reported substantial success in developing women-owned rural businesses in the last 2 years, with 246 business start-ups created with the support of this unique RDA-funded initiative. The University College doubled the number of staff it submitted in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008⁵, with significant improvements in research publications and income which have helped advance the research culture of the institution. External funding has helped increase our number of postgraduate research students and has led, in 2007/08, to two out of four Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA) nationally funded postgraduate bursaries being awarded to Harper Adams, a further indication of the relevance of our work to the industry.

³ 2005-2010 CETL Programme Formative Evaluation: Summary Report. Report to HEFCE by the Centre for Study in Education and Training/Institution of Educational Technology, HEFCE, June 2008

⁴ The HEFCE Strategic Plan 2006-11 (updated in May 2008) notes (p18) that, 'We are keen to explore the possibility of building on our initial investment in Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning to continue supporting excellence in learning and teaching in the HE sector, particularly in higher-level skills.'

⁵ *Research and Reach-Out Report for 2007*, Harper Adams University College, May 2008

9. The current debate about food security and the role of the agricultural sector in maintaining effective food supplies⁶ as well as tackling major environmental concerns has highlighted the global issues faced by rural economies and the need to take a balanced approach to their resolution. The University College has raised these issues with DEFRA and other sector agencies, including LANTRA, to help identify the requirements for higher level skills to be addressed within the industry and for the development of better linkages in public policy between food production and environmental activities.

New Academic Developments

Learning & Teaching

10. Student recruitment in 2007/08 was extremely positive, with an intake of 510 students. The University College has continued its work to monitor, promote and maintain recruitment levels and applications for the academic year 2008/09 have again been positive. The University College is expected to have a student intake at a similar level to the previous year, plus a third cohort of c60 students from Beijing University of Agriculture. Student satisfaction continues to be rated highly at the University College, both in our internal surveys and in the high position in the sector we achieved in the National Student Survey 2008⁷. For the second year running sector performance indicators published in 2008 placed Harper Adams as the top institution for access by students from lower socio-economic groups⁸. Sector student employment indicators for 2008 continue to highlight the University College's exceptional performance in this area of our work, particularly given the 99.5% participation rate by our students in the latest HE sector First Destination Survey. A major curriculum review is scheduled for 2010 and much of the initial work will take place in 2008/09.
11. The University College has continued to develop its partnership working with FE institutions over the last year. Reaseheath College was designated an Associate College, and will collaborate in the ROSE project on widening participation in higher education from rural communities. Our new partnership with Askham Bryan College in Yorkshire is developing well and we anticipate that the College will contribute towards the ReedNet project as this begins to be implemented. We have established a pilot Rural Skills Programme with North Shropshire and Walford College and this is to be extended to a wider range of our students in 2008/09. Information about our international collaborations is provided later in the Statement.
12. The ReedNet programme has been established in collaboration with the Royal Agricultural College and with the Landex Association of specialist FE and HE land-based institutions. We anticipate that this initiative will build upon collaborations begun, in part, through the National Rural Knowledge Exchange, and will help support the development of a widespread network for employer engagement that will be suited to the diverse needs of the rural economies.
13. The West Midlands Regional Food Academy (WMRFA) will address the higher-level skills needs of the food business sector within the West Midlands, with a particular focus on start-up and small food businesses. The WMRFA will work with other RDA-funded food sector initiatives across the region to provide a comprehensive business-support network that will enable employer engagement activities to be addressed in a sector where graduate level skills are currently expected to be in short supply in the period to 2014⁹.

⁶ 'NFU makes urgent call for new direction from Defra', Statement by the President of the NFU, 2 July 2008 at <http://www.nfonline.com/x28818.xml> (accessed 3 July 2008)

⁷ We were ranked 4th in the UK in the *Sunday Times University Guide*, 21 September 2008

⁸ Times Higher Education, 5 June 2008, p10

⁹ *Sector Skills Almanac for the UK 2007*, Sector Skills Development Agency, p40

13. The University College is also expecting to be involved in the forthcoming JCB Academy, which, after some delay because of planning considerations, is being actively pursued¹⁰. The initiative will support young people in developing a career in engineering and manufacturing, and is expected to be in operation by 2009.
14. We are reviewing our taught postgraduate course portfolio with the intention of developing this strand of our learning and teaching activity over the new planning period and growing our presence in this area. An internal review team has been advised by external consultants on our development strategy and their report will be considered by the University College early in 2008/09. We expect to take a twin-track approach based on additional overseas recruitment and postgraduate courses linked to our employer engagement programme.
15. The University College has, in the last two years, addressed the requirements of the HEFCE Land-based Studies Review and the subsequent Review of Specialist Premium Funding. It is expecting to deal with the current Review of Exceptional Funding (REFI) in the period to November 2008. The review programme is causing a degree of uncertainty around the planning of funding for learning and teaching that we hope will be resolved as quickly as possible. We anticipate, from 2009, further uncertainty around the issue of tuition fee levels and we need to have a degree of stability in our funding platform during the early stages of the new strategic planning period on which to develop the growth plans projected by the University College.

Third Stream Work and Research

16. As predicted in our last two Corporate Planning Statements, the move to a formula-based funding mechanism for HEIF4 has had negative real-terms impact for smaller institutions that were performing well in third stream activities. Our activities will therefore be reshaped to deal with the new funding level. Our plans were documented in our HEIF 4 Institutional Strategy submitted to HEFCE in May 2008.
17. The Strategy outlined the role of the three integrated research and third stream developmental themes we have adopted to 'frame' our work in these areas, namely:
 - Food Systems;
 - Sustainable agriculture, climate change, environment and energy;
 - Rural business and social enterprise

The purpose of these themes is ensure the synergistic integration and deployment of Business Related QR and Third Stream funding into key developmental areas, addressing not only the major issues facing the UK land based sector businesses and communities, but those also of global significance. New management arrangements for the themes will be implemented early in 2008/09.

18. Our major HEIF supported initiatives will be linked to relevant themes so that they are better integrated in the academic work of the University College. Women in Rural Enterprise (WiRE) and the National Care Farm Initiative will continue to receive HEIF4 funding, as they have a track record of delivering support for new business developments in the rural economy. WiRE in particular has c2000 business members - primarily micro businesses and SMEs - and is a major vehicle through which the University College will continue to market its broader services (such as environmental management advice) to SME businesses.
19. Our HEIF 4 Strategy also set out two 'flagship' projects that will be pursued in the course of the next year. These are:

¹⁰ See the Academy website at: <http://www.jcb.co.uk/jcbacademy/jcbacademy.aspx>

Holistic Approaches to Greenhouse Gas Reduction: Lessons for business and the community

Addressing the University College's theme of *Sustainable agriculture, climate change, environment and energy*, the work initiated through its Sustainable Technologies Network and Business Club will be extended. The University College campus and farm will be used as an exemplar for carbon footprinting and developing carbon reduction strategies, which will be rolled out into Carbon management consultancy to Midlands SMEs. Whole chain carbon life cycle analysis will also be conducted for farm enterprises, and development work undertaken to investigate how diet can be manipulated to reduce ruminant methane emissions, an important contributor to global warming.

Harper Adams Enterprise Academy

During the planning period the University College will use its strong track record in supporting business start-ups to develop features and services of an 'Enterprise Academy'. This will mean that the skills and experience of staff in working with their client businesses will be made available to the undergraduate and postgraduate student communities. These will include short courses in entrepreneurship and business planning through the WiRE project, associated with a College-wide Business Plan competition (based on successful models operating in the West Midlands and elsewhere). Consideration is also being given to sharing best practice in enterprise education in the land based sector, building on the success of the Aspire CETL in working with many other land based colleges. This links with the leadership provided by the College in developing the Land based Library initiative.

20. We expect, also, to continue our work to 'bridge' initiatives that develop from a rural setting into the urban economies. We note with interest, for example, recent research on 'high commitment-high performance' companies that began in rural communities and have developed to have a significant impact on the wider economic development¹¹. The University College's potential to draw upon research and third stream activities with rural businesses to investigate the potential for implementation elsewhere is being pursued in a number of ways, not least through the activities and results of the WiRE initiative. But, for example, our research also reaches into the Birmingham Science City programme (in biomass technologies), and will be developed with food businesses with an urban background as a result of the implementation of the West Midlands Regional Food Academy project. In this area, our primary agriculture research can be expected to have a bearing on the quality and nutritional aspects of food, as much as on the potential for developing new food products and markets. Examples currently include projects on pathogen contamination of field-grown salads, the hygienic quality of milk, an analysis of the benefits and risks in raw milk cheeses, the eating quality of beef and the marketing of fresh produce.
21. A Food Industry and Supply Chain Research Centre has been established as a joint initiative of the University College and Beijing University of Agriculture, in part to underpin our collaborative teaching programmes run at both institutions. Two research associates have been appointed, based in BUA and funded by BUA project income, to conduct joint research on the Chinese food business sector.
22. A further area where we see the potential for development is in the wider-scale adoption of biomass energy production and environmental management techniques. Amongst many other initiatives, Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) funding has been gained, in association with ARM Reed Beds, based in the West Midlands, to develop a machine to clean reed bed gravel, and a large scale trial of the prototype has been completed. The University College is the sole UK partner in a three-year multi stakeholder EU funded project covering 15 European countries that is developing training to prevent soil and water catchment pollution from point sources. We are also

¹¹ Examples include Cummins in the USA, Nokia in Finland and IKEA in Sweden, as noted in: Eisenstat, R.A., M. Beer, N. Foote et al, (2008) *The Uncompromising Leader*, Harvard Business Review, July-August 2008, pp51-57

developing a proposal for the transformational funding stream of the HEFCE Revolving Green Fund to create an anaerobic digestion system on the University College campus. Our submission will be made early in 2008/09.

23. The University College will engage with the new Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the Sector Companies as they implement their plans to relocate to Stoneleigh Park in the West Midlands by April 2009. We anticipate that our strong track record in applied research funding will continue through and beyond this transitional period. The University College welcomed the recent award of QR funding for business-related research, which has been used to underpin research activities. The outcome of the Research Assessment exercise (RAE) 2008 will provide an early external indication of the development of the University College's research profile. The implementation of the Research Excellence Framework will be monitored over the coming year to determine the approach to be taken towards research assessment and funding in the later stages of our planning period.
23. HEFCE research funding is essential for the future development of the University College's work, and, in particular, to provide the infrastructure necessary for the specialist activities in which we are engaged, and to ensure that high quality teaching continues to be underpinned by a strong research base. However, this aspect of the Land-based Studies Review has not progressed as quickly as we would have liked.
24. Whilst HEFCE-led stakeholder discussions noted the view that, 'Collaboration between industry and the monotechnics and multi-faculty universities could result in an increase in practical, excellent and innovative research...', that, 'greater connection between industry and research in higher education is needed, although the predominance of small and medium-sized enterprises in the land-based industry can be challenging', and that, 'Because of this the [Stakeholder] group looked to DEFRA to clearly articulate to the land-based research sector what was needed, both now and in the future'¹², progress has been slow. The stakeholder meeting reported that further work on this issue was to take the form of a research capability review led by DEFRA which was scheduled to begin in April 2008. We will monitor progress as the review develops and remain hopeful that it will lead to a proper appraisal of land-based research capabilities within the HE and wider research environment as soon as possible.
25. We hope, however, that the review, and any subsequent work on this issue, will also recognise that the University College is already fully engaged with industry and in collaborative partnerships with university faculties (for example, Bristol, Newcastle, BUA, Cornell etc). We also think it important to note that because DEFRA does not currently have a Public Service Agreement with the Treasury for productive agriculture it is unlikely that funding support for land-based research within the HE sector will be significantly increased, nor will it provide the 'well-found laboratory' required for our research activities to thrive. This was amplified in a post-meeting clarification requested by DEFRA after the Stakeholder Group meeting which noted that, 'DEFRA's research agenda is driven by policy needs. These tend to be short to medium term and could distort investment in other research activities particularly at the expense of longer-term more fundamental science'. We are concerned that fundamental science in productive agriculture, addressing vital issues such as food safety and food security, could fall through the policy gap if the forthcoming review is not backed up with an ongoing commitment for funding from within the sector, and hope that this issue can be explored further with HEFCE in the coming year.

¹² *Discussion to improve the co-ordination of research funding*, Notes of the HEFCE Land-Based Studies Review Stakeholder Meeting, 17 December 2007, at: <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/aboutus/sis/land/Research.doc>

Human and Physical Resources

26. The University College was successful in its reaccreditation by Investors in People in March 2008. A new HR Strategy is under development and will be considered by our Staffing Committee later in 2008. We will be continuing to focus on management and assessment of management performance over the next year as part of our new strategy. We will also need to address the implications of the Equality Bill to ensure that our policies reflect the new requirements for equality and diversity that this introduces.
27. The Local Development Framework (LDF) process has been further delayed but the University College continues to respond to relevant consultations as they take place. Relationships with the Local Authority are positive, and we aim to ensure that the University College continues to feature in the LDF as a major employer in the area, as well as in its role as a specialist national higher education institution.
28. In the meantime, the University College is pressing on with the implementation of its Estate Strategy for the period 2005-2015. The replacement of specialist poultry facilities and expansion of the Pig Unit (the latter with HEFCE funding support) signalled in our last Corporate Planning Statement have been completed. The construction of our new Dairy Unit is currently in hand and is scheduled for completion towards the end of 2008. The West Midlands Regional Food Academy project will begin construction in the summer of 2008, with an anticipated completion in the summer of 2009. A new Student Services Centre will begin construction in early 2009, with an anticipated completion at the end of the year.
29. Schemes at the planning stage include the Anaerobic Digestion system, for which a funding stream needs to be identified, and additional residences which are likely to be required from 2010. The University College has continued to invest in associated infrastructure developments in the last year to ensure that future developments on its campus can be adequately supported. One example includes a new borehole to provide additional capacity for water which the University College provides via its own supply infrastructure.
30. The University College's efforts to implement sustainable design practices in new building developments will continue with its planned programme of work. The West Midlands Regional Food Academy has been designed to achieve the BREEAM standard. The AD system will generate electricity and heat from farm and food waste streams, and, together with the current biomass unit, will supply much of the College's immediate energy needs. Our award-winning prototype biomass CHP system is being upgraded over the summer of 2008 to a 'production line' model to improve its efficiency and productivity. The University College has introduced other measures to improve recycling, encourage alternative forms of transport and provide demonstration facilities with new renewable technologies that will also support our core academic activities. A new Environmental Sustainability Strategy has been developed for the period 2008-2013 to guide this aspect of our work.
31. The University College's IT provision continues to be improved, with the introduction of new systems and improved network access and teaching room IT facilities. The University College is continuing to develop learning and teaching resources on the Moodle VLE and has used these successfully in offsite delivery for the AMTRA employer engagement programme. Further institution-wide system developments are planned in the areas of health and safety management and wireless access in halls of residence in addition to a programme of PC replacement and network upgrading that will take place over the next year.

Regional Activities

32. The University College will monitor closely proposals for the reorganisation of policy making within regional and local areas. We have noted in our Strategic Plan that it will

be important for the University College to act as an advocate for rural areas within the region both during and beyond this period of change. We expect, also to strengthen our ties with our Local Authority in a wider range of activities, to ensure that we are seen as a major contributor to skills and economic development within the Borough. At the regional level our work continues to map onto three main policy areas (food, environmental technologies and tourism) and we are working with the RDA, as noted earlier in this statement, on each of these areas. In addition, the University College has continued to make contributions to the region's work on skills development, through the activities highlighted earlier, to enterprise development via the WiRE programme and to wider network-building within the region's HE sector.

33. The University College has engaged with discussions with Shropshire County Council and other organisations, on the creation of a University Centre in Shrewsbury, as part of the 'New University Challenge' initiative. As the only 'home grown' HE institution within the county of Shropshire, and with our particular expertise in rural matters and in higher level skills provision, we feel that we can make a useful contribution to this potential development. The proposal is expected to be developed by the end of 2008.
34. The University College will continue to maintain an appropriate balance of regional priorities against its national role, recognising that the continued devolution of rural service delivery will mean that greater focus on certain regional issues will have to be addressed in the period of the Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan makes clear, however, that the University College must maintain its national focus in order to recruit sufficient students and to address the needs of widely dispersed rural industries and communities. The University College will continue to emphasise this national role during 2008/09, in terms of its specific national initiatives and in its general positioning in the higher education market.

International Activities

35. The University College has continued to focus international recruitment activities on its links in China, principally with the Beijing University of Agriculture (BUA). Other links have now been established in animal welfare with Jiangsu Animal Husbandry and Veterinary College. A new partnership arrangement to provide a joint Masters degree in Engineering with Huazhong Agricultural University (HZAU) in Wuhan is also under discussion. The University College has set a limit on the recruitment of students from China so as to ensure that the collaborative links remain manageable in the context of its other operating requirements and priorities.
36. The University College is nonetheless continuing to explore other overseas markets in a targeted way so that it can recruit international students for particular programmes. Current investigations include a further review of the student market, and the potential for institutional links, in India.
37. We are also seeking to develop opportunities for research into issues of agricultural sustainability and environment management within the Wuhan region, where intensive livestock production has created significant problems in surrounding lakes and watercourses. The Sino-UK initiatives of PMI2 Sustainable Cities, (of which Wuhan is one key participant), and the Sustainable Agricultural Innovation Network (SAIN) supported by DEFRA, DfID and the Chinese Ministry of Agricultural are both potential opportunities to develop closer research links between the two institutions.
38. Our research activities also have other international connections. Harper Adams is a major partner in an EU LIFE-Environment funded project on conservation tillage in seedbed cultivation systems and their impact on soil structure, invertebrate populations and crop production. A Nuffield Farming Trust Scholarship provided the opportunity for research to be conducted on the threat of agroterrorism and emergency and contingency planning for such an eventuality in the USA. Further international research work will be pursued as funding is identified.

Governance, Management and Finance

39. The University College will continue to pursue best practice in its approach to governance and management. We complied with the CUC Code of Governance Practice during the 2007/08 academic year, and the revised meeting schedule for the Board and its committees was once again tested to meet the requirements of the Code and to address the 'single conversation' system to be adopted by HEFCE later in 2008. The University College produced its annual accounts for 2006/07 by the end of November 2007, in advance of the scheduled change to the single conversation system, in order to pilot the new timetable. Our financial forecasts for the period 2008-2013 have been developed in parallel with the Strategic Plan for this period and the Corporate Planning Statement for 2008/09.
40. The CUC guidance on monitoring of institutional performance and the use of KPIs has been considered by the Board of Governors, and a statement of institutional performance was agreed for the 2006/07 financial year. The self-assessment element of guidelines was completed and reviewed by the Board during the course of the last year. Our Governance Review Group is to consider the latest work conducted by the CUC/LFHE on the implementation of KPIs during the course of the next academic year.
41. We have developed a contribution-related pay system in consultation with staff representatives that will be implemented in 2008/09. The system will involve contribution-related awards for individual performance and for meeting key institutional objectives.
42. The Audit & Risk Management Committee has been engaged in a full programme of work over the last year, including in specialist areas such as biosecurity requirements for the College Farm in the light of the risk of Bluetongue disease. Risk management systems have been reviewed during 2007/08 and will continue to be closely monitored during 2008/09.
43. Financial sustainability remains critical to the University College over the Strategic Planning period. The targets in our Financial Strategy have recently been reviewed by our Finance and General Purposes Committee. A full commentary on the major issues arising from the Strategy is provided with the University College's Financial Forecast, and the Corporate Planning Statement should be read alongside that commentary. The main features of the commentary are that the University College must:
- Continue to develop new income streams, and continue to work towards recovering full economic costs for these activities, to mitigate the risk presented by possible alterations to HEFCE and other public funding streams;
 - Continue to focus on student recruitment and retention as the major factor in its operational activities; particular attention will be required to the possible relaxation of the cap on tuition fees post-2009
 - Take steps to invest in key developments that will help attract students or provide other avenues for income generation. Of particular importance in this area is the focus on Employer Engagement and the opportunity this provides to generate a new academic market for the University College;
 - Deliver successfully the major initiatives for which it has received HEFCE funding;
 - Closely manage its cost base during the planning period to ensure that it remains financially sustainable;
 - Aim to achieve a surplus of 5% in its annual accounts in order to provide the resources required for reinvestment in its activities and to achieve financial sustainability. In 2007/08, the surplus is expected to be marginally above the 5% target, but in 2008/09, it is expected to reduce to c3.6% on current funding levels.
44. In risk management terms, the University College currently has concerns about the Review of Exceptional Funding. These represent a 'planning uncertainty' for Harper

Adams at the moment, which we hope will be satisfactorily resolved, as soon as possible, in the 2008/09 financial year.

45. The University College's long-term objective, over the last few years has been to secure a national model of provision to support the long-term needs of the land-based sector in higher education. We reported in our last Corporate Planning Statement that whilst the Land-based Studies Review was expected to provide a range of options to support such an approach, less radical conclusions were drawn. The University College is aware that it must continue to pay particular attention to its position within the sector and to the development of the institution in the longer term, particularly in the light of its anomalous position with regard to degree awarding powers. To this end, exploratory discussions about the criteria for university title have taken place during 2007/08 and the University College is currently preparing a submission for University Title that will be made early in the new academic year.

2008/09 Key Objectives

47. This Corporate Planning Statement forms the first stage in the implementation of our Strategic Plan 2008-2013. The table at Annex C provides a summary of the major operational objectives for 2008-09 that are detailed in this Statement.

Professor Wynne Jones
Principal
September 2008

Annex A: Major Strategic Objectives for the Period 2008-2013**Learning & Teaching and Widening Participation**

- a) A continued focus on our approach to student recruitment, student financial aid and the broader 'student experience' to help maintain and improve undergraduate student numbers, retention and outcomes
- b) The implementation of our plans to further promote widening participation in higher education from rural areas, and hence a diverse student population, using the approach established in our Rural Outreach and Student Experience (ROSE) project
- c) The implementation of our plans for developing appropriate and flexible learning opportunities for work-based learners, including the wider use of learning technologies, using the approaches established in our Rural Employer Engagement Development Network (ReedNet) and Rural Employer Engagement Student Experience (REESEP) projects
- d) A series of measures to ensure that the University College's research and third-stream programmes continue to inform the development of the taught curriculum and that the design of the curriculum will ensure that students are well prepared for employment, self-employment and career development that provides for later reengagement on higher education and higher-level skills-related activities
- e) The implementation of our plans to further develop postgraduate taught provision to build upon core strengths and exploit new learning opportunities geared towards new cross-institution research and third-stream themes
- f) Robust academic quality management, coupled with the continued implementation of professional teaching standards and an attractive and economically sustainable curriculum that will ensure that the University College's learning and teaching provision is of the highest academic quality, helps meet the aims of our Learning and Teaching Strategy, and delivers a successful outcome to the QAA Institutional Audit in 2010

Research and Third Stream Activities

- a) Successful implementation and operation of new cross-institution research and third-stream themes in Sustainable Agriculture, Climate Change, Environment and Energy; Food Systems; and Rural Business and Social Enterprise
- b) Development of an integrated research and third stream strategy that will underpin our undergraduate and work-based learning curricula and provide a robust framework for delivering research via appropriate knowledge transfer mechanisms to the food chain, the wider rural economy and their constituent businesses and communities
- c) Successful implementation of our HEIF4 Institutional Strategy, including, from mid-2009, successor collaborative projects to the National Rural Knowledge Exchange and other activities in enterprise promotion and climate change
- d) The implementation of the West Midlands Regional Food Academy project that will focus on access to continuing professional development and knowledge transfer for small food businesses as well as large-scale food producers
- e) A review of the University College's performance in the Research Assessment Exercise 2008 to inform its approach to the Research Excellence Framework in 2013/14
- f) Continued support and development of new researchers and new areas of research expertise that will enhance the University College's current strengths and contribute to the implementation of the research and third-stream strategy

Human Resources

- a) Implementation of the University College's HR Strategy for the period 2008-2011, including planned investment in new staff resources to meet the institution's key academic and financial objectives
- b) A focus on the continued development of management and assessment of management performance as key components in the delivery of the University College's core academic and institutional objectives
- c) Continued staff development to enable all staff to contribute to high quality academic and support service delivery

- d) Implementation of a comprehensive contribution-related pay system to reward exceptional performance in the delivery of individual and institutional objectives
- e) Continued attention to the delivery of appropriate measures of equality and diversity in the operation of the institution's activities
- f) A further HR Self assessment review in 2010 to benchmark the University College's progress in HR management midway through the planning period

Financial Sustainability and Physical Resources

- a) Continued generation of financial surpluses to reinvest in core activities and maintain financial sustainability, in accordance with the institutional Financial Strategy, together with a greater understanding of the cost base of the University College's activities via a focus on new methods of resource allocation and resource management
- b) Diversification of learning and teaching activities to deliver further work-based learning (via the ReedNet programme) that will help the University College address changing demographics and ensure financial sustainability during the planning period
- c) A focus on changes to the HEFCE funding methodology, the forthcoming review of student contributions to tuition fees, the promotion of voluntary giving and labour and operating costs that all have the potential to impact upon the University College's Financial Strategy and financial sustainability during the planning period
- d) The implementation of the University College's Estate and IS/IT Strategies, to provide facilities that will continue to be attractive to students in the rapidly developing HE market
- e) The continued development of high quality specialist facilities that will underpin the University College's strategically important role in the land-based HE provision, including related applied research and knowledge transfer activities
- f) The management of physical resources, including the University College farm and estate, in ways that will make a positive contribution to addressing climate change, energy use and environmental sustainability

Institutional Profile and Governance

- a) Continued enhancement of the University College's national profile via the successful delivery of major initiatives such as the ReedNet and ROSE programmes and the implementation of new strategies for marketing and corporate communications
- b) Continued enhancement of the University College's international profile via the implementation of its International Strategy and targeted overseas collaborations
- c) Collaboration with DEFRA and other agencies involved in rural and food chain affairs, and regional government, so as to ensure that the University College's activities are attuned to national and regional policy imperatives and continue to make appropriate independent academic contributions to policy development and implementation
- d) Implementation of the institution's Environmental Sustainability Strategy to establish the University College as a leading exponent, within the higher education sector, on issues of rural sustainable development
- e) Submission, early in the planning period, of an application for University Title
- f) Maintenance of high standards of governance, leadership and management to deliver the strategic objectives outlined above

Annex B: 2007/08 Objectives and Progress to Date

Area	Objective	Summary of 2007/08 Progress
Learning & teaching	Review performance of new academic year structure	Evaluation conducted from student feedback; New framework introduction complete.
	Launch of new marketing plan for 2008 entry	New marketing approach adopted for 2008 entry based on review of interviewing and emphasis on Open Day events. Conversion data showing positive impact.
	Submission of proposal for the Employer Engagement Development Network	ReedNet proposal submitted to HEFCE with successful outcome
	Establish Memorandum of Understanding with Jiangsu Animal Husbandry and Veterinary College	Memorandum of Understanding agreed by Board mid 2006 and now being implemented. 27 students recruited to first cohort in 2007-08.
	Establish programme for collaboration with the JCB Academy	HA identified as HE lead with the JCB Academy. JCB work on the Academy project in progress. Implications of 14-19 Diplomas being addressed.
	Development of new course areas for 2008 entry	APRC has approved 7 new courses that have since been validated
	Successful delivery of Year 3 of Aspire CETL	Year 2 report considered by Board in Nov 07. March 08 report considered by Academic Board. Successful annual conference held early April 08.
	Successful delivery of current EE activities	Delivery of AMTRA and other programmes in progress. College has met its funded EE student number target. Further courses under development on accrediting work-based learning with land-based employers
	Review and update the Learning & Teaching Strategy	Strategic aims updated and reviewed by College Executive and Academic Board in June 2008
	Conclude transitional arrangements with Warwickshire College	Final set of conventional students to be completed in 2008/09; distance learning students in 2010/11
	Creation of new programmes for CPD/EE delivery	Several new programmes have been developed during 2007/08 and further new courses are being planned as part of ReedNet.
Third Stream Work & Research	Successful progress with Year 2 of the Regional Women's Enterprise Unit	WiRE has exceeded RWEU targets. AWM funding extended to July 2008 and other funding streams secured to continue WiRE operations in 2008/09
	Implementation of new research/reach-out themes	Organisational structure now implemented and themes embedded in the Knowledge Transfer Strategy submitted to HEFCE
	Submission to RAE 2008	Submission made in November 2007.
	Successful progress with NRKE programme	Funding for NRKE established to mid 2009. Plans submitted to HEFCE for continuation of activities.
	Successful delivery of year 2 of HEIF3 programme	WiRE programme in progress. AWM Science City contracts for Sustainable Technologies Network projects agreed.
	Creation of further links to RDA and DEFRA sustainable technologies activities	AWM Science City awards for Sustainable Technologies Network agreed. AD proposal to be pursued via HEFCE Revolving Green Fund
	Creation of strong links to RDA and other organisations on higher level skills development	Being pursued via Landex, Regional Skills Partnership, LANTRA, RDA and other routes.
	Implementation of the Regional Food Academy development programme	Full bid submitted to AWM as reported on the Board agenda and announcement imminent
Physical resources	Implementation of new IT infrastructure developments	2007 programme completed.
	Preparation of Supplementary Planning Document for LDF	LDF programme further delayed, General Policies Development Plan consultation response completed. Watching brief being maintained by College Planning consultants
	Construction of new Dairy Unit	Contract in progress and on programme.
	Construction of Regional Food Academy and AD System	WMRFA full bid submitted and undergoing AWM appraisal. Funding for AD system being pursued.
	Completion of 2007/08 estate infrastructure renewal programme	Summer work programme in progress. New Development Plan agreed by F&GP Committee. Major infrastructure developments completed (eg electricity, heating and water supplies).
	Fundraising for new capital projects to secure development of new CPD/ Student Services Centre and other projects	HEFCE capital grant announcement and REESEP bid outcome have secured funding for the new Centre. Government matched funding scheme to be introduced later in 2008 and UC submission made to HEFCE for participation in the scheme.

Area	Objective	Summary of 2007/08 Progress
Regional Activities	Liaison with regional organisations to continue during year	Liaison has been maintained, particularly with the RDA during the development of the WMRFA project and other initiatives
	Pursue opportunities for higher level skills development initiatives with RDA and other regional partners	Being pursued via Landex, Regional Skills Partnership, LANTRA, RDA and through Landex involvement in ReedNet project.
International Activities	Development of programmes with institutions in China	Huazhong Agricultural University , Wuhan recently visited to continue discussions over link and joint MSc in Agricultural Engineering. Memorandum of Agreement for Chinese Ministry of Agriculture training courses agreed .
	Development of collaborative link with University College Fraser Valley, Canada	Exchange placement student arrangements agreed, but other forms of collaboration not being pursued.
Governance, Management and Finance	Self assessment against CUC guidance on institutional monitoring and KPIs to be completed	Complete
	Pilot for new accountability framework and 'single conversation' to be continued	All returns required prior to Christmas made on schedule. TRAC returns completed in January and February 2008.
	Contribution related pay system to be agreed with staff representatives	Consultation in progress with Staff Consultative Group
	IIP re-accreditation exercise	Successfully completed
	New HR Strategy to be produced	First draft reviewed by Staffing Committee May 2008. To be completed over the summer of 2008.
	New Strategic Plan to be produced	Complete
	Compliance with CUC Code of Governance to be monitored over 2007/08	Compliance complete and monitoring undertaken during the year. Governance Review Group has met and agreed a new work plan. Annual performance statement for 2006/07 published on web site.
	Continued development of new modes of collaboration for the HE Land-based sector	Collaboration being pursued via the ReedNet and Land-based Library proposals
Investigate options for the award of University Title	Submission for University Title in draft	

Annex C: 2008/09 Objectives

Area	Objective	Target date:	Led by:
Learning & teaching	Complete the review of the UC's taught postgraduate portfolio	November 2008	PGT Steering Group
	Maintain student intake in 2008/09 to meet current and ASN contract numbers	December 2008	Academic Registrar
	Implementation of international student recruitment plans for 2008/09	October 2008	Dean of External Liaison
	Extend the Rural Skills Programme	May 2009	Dean of Academic Affairs
	Maintain performance in major sector PIs	May 2009	Academic Registrar
	Implement the ReedNet initiative and meet EE student number targets for 2008/09	July 2009	Dean of External Liaison
	Implement the ROSE project initiative to meet ASN targets in 2009/10	July 2009	Academic Registrar
	Implement the WMRFA project with initial skills development activities	January 2009	Director of the WMRFA
	Develop the UC's role in the JCB Academy	March 2009	Dean of Academic Affairs
	Contribute to the Review of Exceptional Funding	November 2009	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Develop the approach to be taken to our major Curriculum Review in 2010	July 2009	HEDQE
	Manage the development of the <i>Aspire</i> CETL to work with the ReedNet programme on work-based learning initiatives	July 2009	HEDQE
	Third Stream Work & Research	Implement of new management arrangements for our research/third stream themes	September 2008
Implement first year projects outlined in our HEIF4 Institutional Strategy		July 2009	Dean of External Liaison
Develop a proposal for the HEFCE Revolving Green Fund for an AD System		October 2008	Director of Corporate Affairs
Engage with the AHDB on funding for applied research		Ongoing during 2008/09	Principal and Dean of Academic Affairs
Participate in the planned DEFRA review of land-based research capabilities		Ongoing during 2008/09	Dean of Academic Affairs
Review the UC's performance in the RAE2008 and monitor developments with the REF over the course of 2008/09		December 2008	Dean of Academic Affairs
Maintain recruitment of PG research students during 2008/09		Ongoing during 2008/09	Dean of Academic Affairs
Human and physical resources	Complete the development of the new HR Strategy	September 2008	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Implement a new needs-based management development programme	November 2008	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Implement a new contribution-related pay system	December 2008	Personnel Manager
	Review the requirements of the Equality Bill and amend relevant UC policies	December 2008	Personnel Manager
	Commence construction of the WMRFA project	September 2008	Estates and Facilities Manager
	Complete construction of the Dairy Unit	November 2008	Estates and Facilities Manager

Area	Objective	Target date:	Led by:
Human and physical resources (cont/...)	Commence construction of the new Student Services Centre	February 2009	Estates and Facilities Manager
	Plan the implementation of new student residences	December 2008	Directors of Corporate Affairs/Finance
	Plan the implementation of the AD system	March 2009	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Implement IT developments planned for 2008/09	July 2009	Head of IS/IT
Regional Activities	Continue discussions on the Shropshire New University Challenge proposal	December 2008	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Establish closer LA and regional links	Ongoing during 2008/09	Principal
	Implement the WMRFA project	Ongoing during 2008/09	Director of the WMRFA
International Activities	Develop our research programme with the HAUC/BUA Food Industry and Supply Chain Research Centre and investigate new environmental research opportunities with Huazhong Agricultural University	March 2009	Dean of External Liaison
	Continue the development of new international student markets	Ongoing during 2008/09	Dean of External Liaison
Governance, Management and Finance	Implementation of the first year of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy	Ongoing during 2008/09	Principal
	Complete submissions required for the REFI review	September 2008	Director of Corporate Affairs
	Submit an application for University Title	September 2008	Principal

Glossary:

AD	- Anaerobic Digestion
ASN	- Additional Student Numbers
HEDQE	- Head of Educational Development and Quality Enhancement
REFI	- Review of Exceptional Funding in Institutions
WMRFA	- West Midlands Regional Food Academy