Strategic Plan 2012-2017

January 2012
INTRODUCTION

Our Strategic Plan

Over the period from 2012 to 2017 we face unprecedented change, not only in the UK higher education system, but also in the global agri-food chain in which Harper Adams specialises and within which it operates. As a consequence the format and nature of this Strategic Plan is different. It will focus on the critical objectives we have established for Harper Adams, the means to ensure we can track our progress and the methods by which we will retain sufficient flexibility to work within a more volatile operating environment. The Strategic Plan will provide a framework for annual corporate plans that will set out more immediate objectives and provide the basis for establishing priorities for each academic year.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide: **Higher education and research for the delivery of a sustainable food chain and rural economy**

Our Vision

Our vision for 2017 is that Harper Adams will be: **A university working with the industries and professions that comprise the global agri-food chain and the UK rural economy to deliver a high quality learning environment that enhances personal development and employability; a centre of excellence in the application of science and technological advances; and a source of independent and authoritative commentary to inform the debate on agri-food, animal welfare, land, environmental and rural business matters.**

Our Values

Harper Adams has a strong set of values that have underpinned its development since its foundation more than 110 years ago. The four main values, identified in consultation with our staff, and which will be further developed in our operations and amongst our staff and students, are that we will be **outstanding, inspirational, distinctive and welcoming** in all that we do.

Summary of our Key Objectives

Over the planning period we will:
1. Secure a successful transition to the new funding and operating environment for higher education
2. Enhance the role of Harper Adams as a critical contributor to applied research and as a leading source of the next generation of those working in the agri-food chain and the rural economy as the UK addresses the challenge of global food security
3. Internationalise our academic activities so that our global reach is extended and strengthened
4. Maintain and enhance our performance in the provision of high quality teaching and learning
5. Achieve full university title
THE PLANNING ENVIRONMENT

The Challenge of Achieving Global Food Security

In early 2010, Food 2030\(^1\) a cross-Government strategy for food, and a related strategy for food research and innovation\(^2\) looked at ways to secure food supplies in the light of climate change, changing dietary patterns in developing countries and a world population anticipated to grow from 6 billion to 9 billion people by 2050. The emerging debate on securing sustainable future food supplies, otherwise known as ‘food security’, was later described by the Government’s Chief Scientific Adviser as the ‘perfect storm’ - a significant global challenge that would need to be addressed by harnessing science and technology to improve production techniques.

The UK’s food research and innovation strategy\(^3\) provided a comprehensive review of the multidisciplinary research themes that would be required to address the complexities of the agri-food supply chain, both within the UK and at the global scale of operation. It identified a need for a better understanding of soils, livestock and crop production systems, food supply trade and prices, consumer attitudes and behaviours, food safety and related areas such as the management of agricultural and food waste, energy production, novel uses for non-food crops and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. It concluded that, ‘The cross-cutting issues of skills, innovation and infrastructure will play a key role in the delivery of...research challenges’ (p38), not only in terms of supporting the expert base within academia, but also in industry and government agencies. A number of research gaps were identified across all aspects of the agri-food supply chain, and it was noted that, ‘To address these issues, the agri-food sector and research community will need to attract and retain the next generation of researchers, and up-skill the existing workforce’ (p51).

Other reports and policy statements from the UK\(^4,5,6,7\) and internationally\(^8\), have suggested that there should be a greater role for science and technology, and their translation into practice, in future food production and in the management of our natural resources, including water, soil nutrients and land supplies. The Foresight Panel report on Land Use Futures\(^9\) noted that there would be conflicting demands for land use in the UK, partly as a result of a potential growth in the UK population of 9 million people by 2031 and 15 million by 2051. The report concluded that, ‘Advanced information, engineering and biological sciences, including technologies such as precision farming and anaerobic digestion’ will need to become more widespread (p13).

The Foresight Panel Report on The Future of Food and Farming\(^10\) involved 400 leading experts and stakeholders from 35 countries. It suggested, amongst other recommendations, that, ‘Substantial change is required in the food system, including in the spread and implementation of existing knowledge, technology and best

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\(^3\) Ibid


\(^5\) BBSRC (2009) *Bioscience resources for food security*. Swindon: Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. 20p


practice and by investment in science and innovation and the social infrastructure that enables food producers to benefit from these factors, as well as in the reduction of food waste and improvements in the governance of food systems’. The report noted that there would be a need to ensure that, ‘food producers have the right incentives and are equipped with the necessary skills to meet current and future challenges’ (p170).

The Foresight Panel was firmly of the view that one of the most important drivers of future food supplies would be improving the rate of yield growth from the use of science and technology whilst protecting the natural environment through the process of ‘sustainable intensification’. It went on to add, however that, ‘Because of significant time lags in reaping the benefits of research, investment in new knowledge needs to be made now to solve problems in the coming decades. Investment needs to occur not only in the important field of biotechnological research, but across all the areas of the natural and social sciences involved in the food system’ (p170). Other commentators have suggested that a radical rethink of our current approach to agriculture by not only closing crop yield gaps, but also by increasing agricultural resource efficiency, altering future dietary demand, reducing food waste and preventing the expansion of agriculture into sensitive ecosystems would deliver increased food production whilst lowering greenhouse gas emissions which, in turn, impact upon climate change.

A further Foresight Panel investigation of the International Dimensions of Climate Change noted that beyond the 2040s, ‘the negative consequences of climate change on agriculture are expected to become increasingly significant, particularly the effects of extremes of heat and water availability…In the short term, climate change could affect the security of supply and price of some agricultural commodities more than others, and this may encourage some nations to protect their own agricultural markets through subsidies or export bans’. The report restated the view that climate change will shift patterns of food production, meaning that ‘traditional’ crop production regions will be forced to adapt and that livestock production regions will also have to cope with large variations in current levels in temperature and water supplies and changes in the distribution of agricultural pathogens, parasites and pests.

The convergence of signals provided by the Foresight work, together with earlier interventions from the scientific community, have led to the inclusion of food security in the UK National Security Strategy. The Strategy includes Tier 3 risks deemed to arise from the short to medium term disruption to international supplies of resources (eg food and minerals) essential to the UK, or the disruption to oil supplies to the UK, without which much of current UK agriculture could not continue. The Strategy also contains a Tier 1 risk associated with major natural hazards, including animal borne diseases. Furthermore, it notes (p17) the impact that climate change could have as a ‘risk multiplier’ exacerbating existing tensions around the world, not least in farming communities in developing countries.

More recently the EU has announced its proposed reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which, if agreed, are will alter not only the method of CAP payments made available to eligible farms but also the structure of environmental measures expected in return for these payments. The CAP reforms are already the subject of considerable debate, but they are likely to be settled during the period of this plan and could have considerable impact upon the operating environment for farming over the next few years.

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15 See http://www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/farm-manage/cap-reform/ (accessed 6 November 2011)
It is evident that the UK will need to adapt to radically altered, and more volatile, global production, economic and trading conditions within the agri-food supply chain. To address these changes the emerging policy environment suggests that agricultural research should be a high priority, but that we also need to do more to develop the skills base within the agri-food supply chain so that advances in our knowledge are more widely understood and more rapidly translated into practice. However, the Royal Society\textsuperscript{16} noted that, ‘UK scientists and agronomists have in the past played a leading role in disciplines relevant to agriculture, but training in agricultural sciences and related topics has recently suffered from a lack of policy attention and support’. Furthermore, a recent review by DEFRA\textsuperscript{17} concluded that expertise in agricultural sciences, and in specific technical areas (for example, soil science, weed science, ‘whole organism’ biology and agricultural engineering) was not being replaced and that many universities were no longer teaching relevant courses in these fields. The fact that these shortages were identified is not surprising. A 2007 study of university land-based provision\textsuperscript{18} noted the impact of the closure of at least two leading agricultural higher education colleges (Seale Hayne and Wye) and of the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001 which led to subsequent difficulties in recruitment to agricultural courses. Student recruitment has since improved, but departmental and course closures in the university sector have continued, sometimes without regard to their wider impact on our national labour requirements and scientific capacity.

The need to attract new entrants into the agri-food sector, particularly those with the ability to appreciate and adopt new scientific and technological advances, is all too clear. The UK food chain is reported\textsuperscript{19} to have a turnover of £412 billion, exports of £16 billion and employs more people than any other industry sector, so it is of vital economic importance. Nevertheless, a review by the Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land based sector\textsuperscript{20} concluded that there was a requirement to attract 60,000 new entrants over the next 10 years, with a particular focus on those with high-level (graduate) skills. The Sector Skills Council for the food industry identified a need for 104,000 new entrants in the period 2007-2017, and has more recently noted\textsuperscript{21} that progress is not yet meeting expected targets. Of these posts, 45,000 were expected to be at higher skills levels to provide the managers and professionals able to lead the sector in the future, requiring recruitment activity at 50% of current staff levels within the sector. The skills requirements include food scientists and technologists, engineers to manage complex automated systems and managers able to apply new manufacturing and processing techniques in food production\textsuperscript{22}.

The proposed CAP reforms include a new scheme to encourage new entrants into farming\textsuperscript{23}. The BBSRC, and the Government\textsuperscript{24} are also concerned to ensure that the UK applied science base in agriculture is not lost and that a way is found to encourage young and mature entrants with a systems background in agriculture into research and development careers and into the wider industry. Reporting on this matter the House of Lords European Union Committee\textsuperscript{25} concluded that lifelong learning amongst the

\textsuperscript{16} Op cit
\textsuperscript{17} DEFRA (2009) \textit{UK Food Security Assessment: Detailed analysis}. London: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. 117p
\textsuperscript{19} Improve Ltd (2011) \textit{UK Food Supply Chain}. York: Improve Ltd.
\textsuperscript{20} LANTRA (2009) \textit{A Skills Assessment for the Environmental and Land-based Sector: UK Report}. Stoneleigh: LANTRA. 87p
\textsuperscript{21} Improve (2011) \textit{The Food & Drink Manufacturing and Processing Industry in England: Labour Market Information Profile 2010/11}. York: Improve Ltd. 9p
\textsuperscript{22} Improve (2010) \textit{The Food and Drink Manufacturing & Processing Industry: United Kingdom Summary Report Sector Skills Assessment}. York: Improve Ltd. 40p
\textsuperscript{25} House of Lords (2011) \textit{Innovation in EU agriculture}. House of Lords European Union Committee, 19\textsuperscript{th} Report of Session 2010-12, HL Paper 171, London: The Stationery Office Ltd. 91p
agricultural community, food processors and retailers should be encouraged to help embed innovation. The Committee added that, ‘studying agriculture should be seen as a frontline activity of central importance to ensure that its relevance to the challenges of food security and sustainable intensification is clear’ (p24).

In late 2011, the Government published an Innovation and Research Strategy\textsuperscript{26} that featured the agri-food and the energy and water utilities sectors as priority areas. It noted (p43) that the Government would, ‘work with businesses, universities, the research base and the wider innovation ecosystem….to address the innovation barriers that the agri-food and utilities sectors face and will enable greater levels of innovation and growth across both sectors’. It identified the potential to develop the UK’s exports in farming, food and drink, which led to the publication of an export growth action plan early in 2012\textsuperscript{27}. The linking of the agri-food and energy and water utilities sectors is timely because of the potential for rural land resources to be used for renewable energy production, and the increasing importance placed on the issue of water security in the UK and overseas. The impact of water supply management on agriculture, and on the environment, has been addressed by the Government’s strategy, ‘Water for Life’\textsuperscript{28}, and has been identified as a critical factor in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment\textsuperscript{29}.

It is evident from the above review that Harper Adams has the potential, and opportunity, to help develop innovative approaches to the provision of high quality food, whilst at the same time minimising the impact of food production on the environment, at a time when there is considerable structural change and growing volatility in global food systems. The University College’s expertise in land management, agri-food production systems across the agri-food chain, agricultural engineering, animal health and welfare, environmental management and renewable energy production provide a resource that can be drawn upon to address some of the most critical challenges faced by the UK over the next few decades. By conducting applied research and educating future generations who will work within the agri-food chain and help manage our rural resources, Harper Adams will play a distinctive and important role in underpinning the UK’s response to achieving global food security.

\textbf{The Challenge of Adapting to the New Higher Education Funding and Operating Environment}

The UK higher education system is facing an unprecedented period of change and an increasingly complex operating environment. The Government’s immediate concern, to address the financial problems facing the UK economy, has resulted in radical proposals\textsuperscript{30}, building upon suggested changes in the Browne Report\textsuperscript{31}, for the way in which the English higher education system should be shaped and funded. However, many of the building blocks for the new operating environment have yet to be tested, so the early stages of the planning period will see a need for assimilation, adaptation and agility as institutions come to terms not only with changes to established methods of funding, but also with greater transparency in their operation, a more market-driven approach to student choice, shifting patterns of academic delivery and a focus on achieving value for money.

The major change in the Government’s proposals is that it should, for the most part, no longer fund universities directly for teaching, but that tuition fees should increase substantially to meet the cost of provision. Tuition fees, and in some cases, living costs, will be supported by the student loans system. Tuition fees will, however, be capped at a maximum of £9,000 per annum, with mechanisms introduced to attempt to keep average fee costs below this level, not least by maintaining student number

\textsuperscript{26} BIS (2011) \textit{Innovation and Research Strategy for Growth}. London: BIS. December 2011
\textsuperscript{27} DEFRA (2012) \textit{Driving Export Growth in the Farming, Food and Drink Sector: A plan of action}. London: DEFRA. January 2012
controls on recruitment. A further aspect of this approach is the removal of a proportion of student numbers from each institution to create a contestable pool to which institutions charging an average fee below £7,500 per annum can bid to win back student numbers (known as the core and margin system). In addition, institutions will face removal of student numbers for those in the ‘high achieving’ category (currently defined as grades AAB or above at A level, or the equivalent for a range of other qualifications) with the ability to win back or even increase those numbers through competition in the student market. The current signals are that these methods could be extended from their introduction in academic year 2012/13 to provide the capacity for a greater extent of competition within the higher education system. Importantly, a large proportion of student related income will transfer under the new funding mechanism to the Student Loans Company (SLC), with a significantly different payment profile and a much closer relationship between payments and students remaining in study at the time of the payment. This will require a greater focus on student retention and progression across the system in order to maintain income levels.

The Government’s proposals also include changes to the regulatory framework for higher education to enable access to the provision of higher education, taught degree awarding powers and potentially, university title, to a wider range of institutions including, importantly, those from the private sector. The information made available to future students will also undergo substantial change, with the introduction of the Key Information Set (KIS) from 2012 that will provide data for each course to help inform student choice. Further work is currently being conducted on the funding of postgraduate provision32 and the possible extension of the KIS to taught postgraduate courses33. Other changes to the regulatory environment for the higher education system include a recent consultation34 on the introduction of a Post Results System (PRS) for university admissions, a greater role for OFFA in the approving arrangements for institutional tuition fees and related financial support for students, the move towards a risk-based system for assurance within the higher education system35 and further reviews of quality assurance methods to meet the future needs of the system.

Government funding support is expected to remain for widening participation, high cost subjects, in which agriculture and engineering are included, and for meeting the additional costs of high cost specialist institutions36. Support for maintaining the scale of Strategically Important and Vulnerable (SIVS) subjects is currently under review, and is expected to focus more on methods to support a wider definition of vulnerability in the emerging HE market37. The changes to the funding of teaching have been matched by significant developments in other funding areas. The Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) was reviewed in early 2011, and led to the removal of HEIF funding for a range of smaller institutions. The ability of those institutions to engage in knowledge exchange activities has therefore been curtailed to some degree, though other entrepreneurial methods to continue to work with business are being exploited. A review of business-university collaboration38 and the Government’s Innovation and Research Strategy39 will provide further information on the role of the higher education system in knowledge exchange activities, including in the provision of work experience and sandwich degree provision within the system. Further concentration of research funding is expected to arise from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise now scheduled for 2014. The ability for applied research to benefit from the exercise may be assisted by the introduction of a research impact factor into the assessment method, but competition for resources in the REF is expected to be intense.

32 The reconvened BIS review is expected to build on the earlier report by Smith, A. (2011) One Step Beyond: Making the most of postgraduate education. London: BIS. March 2011
33 HEFCE Public Information Steering Group, October 2011
36 Letter from BIS to the HEFCE Chairman, 28 June 2011
38 Wilson Review of Business-University Collaboration, at http://www.wilsonreview.co.uk/ (accessed 6 November 2011)
39 Op cit
The University College’s response to these changes will be critical as it develops an understanding of how the new teaching, knowledge exchange and research funding mechanisms will work in practice. In particular, it will be important to keep a close track on the way in which the market for students will develop over the next few years. Further complexity in the market is expected because of the differing implications of changes in the funding and make-up of the HE sectors in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the impact of higher tuition fees in England on recruitment from other European nations, particularly in the Republic of Ireland and greater competition for overseas students as UK universities seek alternative sources of students and income. Furthermore, it is likely that increased competition will emerge from specialist land-based FE institutions wishing to develop their HE provision at lower tuition fee rates, and with the potential freedom, in the longer term, of moving to accreditation service providers outside the current university system because of regulatory changes that could allow non-teaching organisations to hold taught degree awarding powers. Other universities may also view the emerging profile of the food security debate as an opportunity to launch, or renew, their interest in the subject base. There are already signs that this is happening, and it will be important to ensure that the University College’s unique provision in production agriculture and agricultural engineering, for example, stand out in this market.

Importantly, it will be necessary to adapt to the new funding regime for higher education at the same time as retaining a focus on delivering academic activities in support of the rapidly developing policy environment for food security and further strengthening the reputation and ability of Harper Adams to address the global challenges that this presents. There are significant opportunities in this field for the University College, directly and in collaboration with other organisations, if the University College proves able to make a successful transition to the new HE environment over the next 2 to 3 years.

**OUR OBJECTIVES FOR THE PLANNING PERIOD**

In the light of the rapidly changing operating environment for higher education and the land-based sector in which we operate, the current planning period requires a strategic framework rather than a more detailed set of planning targets. In adopting a framework approach we will be able to respond with a degree of agility to the transition in the fees and funding system whilst keeping our longer-term objectives in clear sight. We have therefore determined that over the planning period we will set the following objectives, each of which has its own clear rationale:

1. **Secure a successful transition to the new funding and operating environment for higher education**

   Whilst it is self-evident that the future financial security of the University College will depend on making a successful transition to the new funding and operating environment for higher education, there are elements of the new funding system that are only now emerging, and a degree of institutional agility will be required to ensure that new approaches are fully assessed, modelled and acted upon. In the context of land-based higher education there are added complexities in terms of the high cost base in the subject area, the potential for growth and maintenance of market share and the possibility of increased competition from other providers given the current high profile of the food security debate. The University College will measure success in this objective in relation to its ability to maintain a healthy financial position and high quality academic provision in the planning period to 2017. The University College will also, through its academic and financial strategies, actively seek ways to innovate and grow its portfolio of academic activities to broaden its financial and operating base.

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2. **Enhance the role of Harper Adams as a critical contributor to applied research and as a leading source of the next generation of those working in the agri-food chain and the rural economy as the UK addresses the challenge of global food security**

There is a consistent message in the food security policy review outlined earlier in this plan, that the UK needs to address two aspects of delivery that have been given scant attention in the last 20 years. These are the need for applied/near market research together with the translation into practice of innovations in basic science and technology, and the need to secure new entrants to the land, food and farming sectors and to the rural economy more generally. In seeking to establish Harper Adams as a critical part of the ‘supply line’ for these requirements we aim to strengthen our position as a contributor to the health of the UK agri-food chain, as well as ensuring that the UK agri-food system can make a substantive contribution to addressing the challenge of global food security. Importantly, this will include a focus on closely related subject areas in animal health and welfare, land and environmental management and agricultural engineering. Our role in renewable energy production will be another key feature of our academic activities. An important strand of this objective will be to ensure that we continue to inform our curriculum with perspectives from industry, as well as near market research, and an awareness of the process of research that will be of direct relevance to students engaging in sandwich placements and as they enter their chosen career. We expect greater attention to be paid to renewing the higher level skills of those working in industry over the planning period, and we will retain a focus on this part of the student market through our close connections with industry partners. In addition, we will aim to play a greater role in acting as an independent and authoritative source of advice and comment on issues of concern to the agri-food supply chain and to the wider rural economy. We will measure success in this objective in terms of research income and outputs, the level of our engagement with industry, in a range of measures relating to our teaching, including those being developed as part of the higher education system’s Key Information Set and in periodic independent assessments by key stakeholders of the profile and contribution of the University College.

3. **Internationalise our academic activities so that our global reach is extended and strengthened**

To ensure that the University College can help address the objectives at 1 and 2, it will be essential for it to continue to build upon the strong international activities it has developed in teaching and, latterly, in international research activities. There will also be considerable merit in strengthening the ability of our students to take part in international exchange programmes, particularly because they may be expected to work overseas as part of the global food supply chain or in related areas of land and natural resource management. Our success in achieving University Title is closely linked to this objective, because we expect it to open up opportunities to work with a wider range of international partners, and secure new routes into collaborative activities that will enhance the UK’s contribution to global food security. We will measure success in this objective by achieving an increase in our international student recruitment from 11% to at least 15% of our total student population by 2017 and by the creation of a network of selected international land-based institutions with which we will partner in teaching, student exchange and applied research activities.

4. **Maintain and enhance our performance in the provision of high quality teaching and learning**

It will be essential that we maintain a high quality teaching and learning environment over the planning period in support of our work with students but also to ensure that we have high quality staff able to contribute to other institutional objectives in applied research and engagement with the agri-food, land-based and rural sectors. The reputational advantage created by high quality academic provision will be a significant element in generating and maintaining the confidence of important stakeholders, including students, alumni, industry and funding bodies, in the performance and management of the institution. The University College will ensure that its academic activities continue to achieve the highest possible levels of performance, including in periodic external assessments of the quality of its academic provision and standards. The University College will also build upon its existing measures, including related pedagogic developments and its performance in promoting graduate employability, in order to provide the best possible student experience, to continue to attract future generations of high quality students and to successfully deliver objectives 1, 2 and 3.
5. Achieve full university title

In achieving full university title we aim to continue our long term trajectory for academic independence, ensure that we are able to represent our specialist subject base nationally and internationally, thereby building upon our high quality and innovative academic provision and maintain a competitive position within the UK higher education market. We expect that University Title will also provide a new platform for growth across our academic portfolio. The criteria for University Title are currently under review and we will take account of the outcome of that review when considering the timing of our application.

BUILDING ON OUR ACADEMIC STRENGTHS

The University College has an enviable academic reputation\(^{41}\), but understands that it must both maintain and enhance its position within the UK higher education system if it is to secure its objectives and grow its reputation nationally and internationally. A recent exercise to refocus our academic departments on elements of the global food security debate has resulted in five key, but interrelated, areas of activity, each with a critical mass of academic staff able to support teaching and learning and applied research work. The departments are:

- Animal Production, Welfare and Veterinary Sciences
- Crop and Environment Sciences
- Food Science and Agri-Food Supply Chain Management
- Land, Farm and Agribusiness Management
- Engineering

The University College has a unique mix of agri-food, animal and land-based and rural subject provision, together with a thriving applied research programme, that is backed up by over 110 academic staff and high quality facilities that have been the subject of an investment programme totalling over £20m over the last 10 years. In the last 2 years the University College has made strategic appointments in crop science, horticulture and engineering, in some instances where other universities have reduced their provision and high quality applied researchers have become available for recruitment. This trend could continue as the Research Excellence Framework begins to focus the attention of universities on research outputs in the period to 2014. The University College will need to consider how best to respond to opportunities of this nature on a case by case basis. A research culture will continue to be essential in our drive to develop our students for the world of work, build our reputation with a wider group of audiences, promote collaboration with other universities and organisations and enhance our distinctiveness within the higher education sector. However, it will also be important to recognise the delicate balance between ensuring that our research base can continue to develop whilst maintaining high quality teaching and learning provision and an outstanding student experience. With this in mind the University College will explore, early in the planning period, ways to recognise and reward outstanding teaching staff so that this aspect of an academic career path at Harper Adams will carry equal weight with research.

Our academic model is based on the integration of our learning and teaching, applied research and knowledge exchange activities so as to create a ‘virtuous circle’ where one aspect of our work can support other parts of our academic delivery. Our connections with industry are a fundamental component of the model, and inform many aspects of our work.

\(^{41}\) University College of the Year for the fifth successive year in the Sunday Times University Guide 2012, and, in the same guide, top ten performance in graduate employment, student satisfaction and teaching excellence
In aiming to provide a high quality learning and teaching environment we will need to continue to invest in our academic infrastructure. In the current economic climate this will be more difficult than in the last planning period, but elements of our estate development plans are core to the UK’s ability to tackle the global food security challenge and therefore provide a helpful basis on which to secure investment in our work. Investment in our academic infrastructure will include a focus on a comprehensive range of IT services and innovative ways in which these can be used to support new learning methods.

We have developed cutting edge facilities on the University College Farm and in related areas such as our recently launched, multi-award winning, anaerobic digestion system, which produces energy for the University College and helps significantly to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. We will continue to investigate ways to develop the University College Farm as a centre for demonstrating innovation in farming practice. We will also continue to develop our carbon management plans with appropriate investment in renewable technologies and further work to link our innovative practice to the curriculum and our research and knowledge exchange programmes.

**BEING OUTSTANDING, INSPIRATIONAL, DISTINCTIVE AND WELCOMING IN THE NEW STUDENT MARKET**

Operating in the new student market will be a challenge for all providers of higher education. To succeed it will be vital that institutions both respond to the market and provide leadership in the development of a new form of relationship with students, and those who influence the choices of potential applicants. The early stages of the
planning period are expected to be transitional and potentially volatile in terms of student demand, and it is therefore important that the University College is able to be both agile in response, but also true to its core values. This will require a particular focus on clarity on the expectations of students, as well as their responsibilities in forging a learning partnership, as they enter their higher education career; a focus from all staff on providing a supportive and welcoming environment; and constant engagement with the market to reinforce the value of higher education, in its own right in addition to its ability to open up a wider range of options for employment.

The University College is of a scale which enables it to maintain a sense of community whilst also providing a wide range of opportunities for students and staff to contribute to the life of the institution. The University College will focus on planned growth beyond the transition to the new higher education funding system so as to enhance the financial viability of the institution, but will strive to maintain the spirit of community that is valued by students, staff and other stakeholders. An important part of developing that community spirit will be an ongoing commitment to engage with the Students’ Union, and the wider student body, in the joint development of the University College as a key, and increasingly influential, institution in the agri-food and land-based sectors.

We will aim, through new teaching and learning developments, high quality academic staff, working closely with industry and by maintaining a research informed learning environment, to inspire students to become self-motivated learners who are able to apply their knowledge and skills in a practical and professional manner in the workplace. An essential part of this aim will be the continued focus of the University College on the provision of sandwich degrees and the invaluable work experience over a full annual business cycle that sandwich placements provide. Our work with industry will be further strengthened by refocusing our continuing professional development programme to build on the experience we have gained through co-funded employer engagement activities over the last 5 years. Our range of clients means that our reach within the agri-food and land based sectors is unrivalled at present, and we expect this to contribute to our ability to make unique contributions to collaborative projects with other universities and businesses during the current planning period.

Measuring the features of an outstanding, inspirational and welcoming learning community is not straightforward, and to maintain a consistent approach we will endeavour to focus on measures that are comparable across the HE system. These will include the Key Information Set, the National Student Survey, graduate employment rates and other HE system performance measures that may be developed as a result of the new funding environment. Our extensive range of internal performance measures will also be adapted to be broadly consistent with the key annual external approaches so that we can gain earlier insights into the response of our students to the provision they are receiving. We will also have a particular focus on developing improved market intelligence so that we can better measure our performance at the pre-applicant stages of the student recruitment cycle and continue to improve our recruitment potential.

**BEING OUTSTANDING, INSPIRATIONAL AND DISTINCTIVE IN RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

The global food security policy debate has sparked an increasing interest not only in the generation of new knowledge to protect and improve future food supplies, but also in the translation of that knowledge into practice. As one of the few remaining centres in the UK with this capability, but also with the added advantage of a concentration of students who represent the next generation of users of new scientific and technological advances, Harper Adams will play a critical role in helping the UK address the global food security challenge.

In the last year the University College was part of a successful bid to the BBSRC to create an Advanced Training Partnership (ATP), in conjunction with the University of Nottingham, Cranfield University and Rothamsted Research, which will provide postgraduate education for those working in the agri-food sector. The University College’s unique ‘reach’ into the farming sector will contribute to the delivery of the ATP programme. The University College has also strengthened its applied research base and
has been successful in a number of large scale research funding bids, in particular with the constituent parts of the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) and a range of commercial research partners. Our aim is to build on our links with industry to create a number of novel research and knowledge exchange initiatives that, like the ATP model, will place Harper Adams in a position to collaborate with further industrial and academic partners on mutually beneficial terms. In the early stages of the planning period three initiatives will be launched, in precision farming, soil and water management and food production and supply chain management. Each initiative will be interdisciplinary, will build upon the expertise available within the University College but will also create a means to engage with external partners.

We expect that further concentration of research funding could result from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, despite the introduction of a research impact measure in the assessment process which we expect will reflect positively the applied nature of our work. It will be important to ensure that our participation in the REF is of the highest possible quality because it will underpin our objective to ensure that Harper Adams is recognised as a research-informed institution with a distinctive contribution to make to the UK research environment. Part of our objective in developing our research culture is to ensure that our students are exposed to cutting edge research, and importantly to the staff who undertake that research, as part of our curriculum, including our CPD programmes.

We have developed a formidable presence in employer engagement activities over the last 5 years, with sector leading recruitment levels. Our connections with industry have been further strengthened through this work and there have been consequential benefits for other academic activities. The funding climate for this type of provision is expected to change in 2012/13 but the indications are that the agri-food, land-based and animal welfare sectors have a continuing need to develop their staff to address the challenging business environment. We will aim to retain our links with as many of our CPD clients as possible, either through the continued operation of accredited programmes or the provision of CPD short courses.

**COLLABORATION FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT, WITHIN THE UK AND INTERNATIONALLY**

The University College has a wide range of partnerships with industry, academic and farming and food organisations. These include relationships in teaching, research and knowledge exchange and extend from individual collaborations to cross-institution initiatives such as the Advanced Training Partnership scheme. In addition, over the last two years, the University College has partnered the JCB Academy as a means to encourage and support aspiring young engineers to consider a higher education course and a career in land-based engineering. The University College values the opportunities presented by mutually beneficial collaborations and, where possible, will seek to maintain and extend such opportunities over the course of the planning period.

The University College has partnership arrangements with Reaseheath College in Cheshire (franchised provision) and Askham Bryan College in Yorkshire (accreditation of provision), both of which provide land-based higher education courses. The changes in the funding approach within England mean that we will need to closely monitor the impact of these relationships on the University College, particularly if there is a Government drive to further reallocate student numbers and extend competition within the higher education system from 2013/14. In the meantime, our principal objective will be to ensure that the quality and standards of provision in both centres is maintained at a high level and that the student interest is foremost in our planning of the future development of these relationships.

It is evident that given the rising importance of the global food security debate, that there will be a need to organise the response from UK academic institutions. A number of initiatives have been launched in the last year with this in mind, but further co-ordination of these efforts may be required if the system is to avoid duplication of effort and dissipation of scarce financial resources. In our last Strategic Plan we noted that we would consider the potential for collaboration with Aberystwyth
University, because of the significant investment made by the University, the Welsh Assembly Government and others in the creation of the Institute for Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences, and the need for the University College to continue to help meet the needs of the Welsh agricultural sector. The University, with the BBSRC, has encouraged a group of institutions to consider ways in which they might work together to tackle the global food security challenge. The University, together with the National Institute for Agricultural Botany (NIAB-TAG) and with the support of Waitrose have launched the Centre for Excellence for UK Farming (CEUKF) to assist the UK farming and food sector to address the future need for sustainable food production. Harper Adams has been encouraged to participate in early stages of the development of both initiatives and will continue to explore how best this might be achieved. This link will be of particular importance because of the emphasis placed by the Welsh Assembly Government on food and farming as a priority sector in the Welsh Government Economic Renewal Policy.

Our collaborations within the agri-food industry are extensive, supported in part by the sandwich placement years that form an essential component of our undergraduate degree programmes. There are other key organisations that we expect to work with over the course of the planning period, including the relevant Sector Skills Councils, the Royal Agricultural Societies, the National Farmers Union, DEFRA and its agencies. It will be important to strengthen these links to help position Harper Adams as an essential contributor to the provision of higher level skills requirements and applied research to the agri-food and land based sectors.

The interdisciplinary initiatives described earlier in this document will also rely upon our links across the agri-food sector, and our ability to harness expertise from a variety of sources in support of this work. Our plans for soil and water management are based on an industry-led model in which a number of key organisations will play a critical role. Similarly, our plans in precision farming have the broad support of the agricultural engineering industry. In both instances, we will operate not only as a centre of innovation but also as a facilitator and bridge between the wider agri-food sector and farm businesses. In all three initiatives, there are also benefits to be gained from our understanding of the small and micro-business environment that is prevalent in the rural economy.

The global nature of the food security challenge means that we must be able to work internationally to make an effective contribution. Our international teaching work is regarded highly, but this needs to be extended to build upon progress made against our previous strategic planning objectives, to internationalise our curriculum and to improve our international research performance. We have entered into discussions with selected Chinese institutions to build upon our successful collaboration with Beijing Agricultural College. Other recent developments include new student exchange initiatives with the University of Missouri and Cornell University, the only US Ivy League institution with a faculty of agriculture and which was placed in the top twenty universities in the 2011/12 Times Higher Education World University Rankings. Our research staff have been actively engaged in creating international networks and in submitting proposals for EU research funding, which will help develop our approach to funding calls under the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, to be implemented from 2013. The commitment under CAP reform to increase agricultural research funding in the latter part of the planning period will also be further supported by availability of established pan-European research networks. We have explored collaborative opportunities with Aarhus University in Denmark and expect to be able to develop our relationship over the current planning period, particularly in precision farming techniques and in renewable energy production. International collaborations are also under investigation in Brazil, Canada and New Zealand, amongst others, as part of a targeted strategy of institutional engagement with selected university partners.

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42 The Welsh Food & Drink Skills Project. Executive Summary. (2011) see www.foodanddrinkskills.co.uk (accessed 16 November 2011)
ADVOCACY FOR OUR SUBJECT BASE AND TO BUILD INFLUENCE

Certain gaps in the UK’s ability to address the global food security challenge have been highlighted in the earlier analysis of the external environment. These include the provision of a highly skilled workforce able to manage our land-based and natural resources and improve food productivity in a sustainable manner, and the generation and transfer of applied research that will help the agri-food and land based sectors achieve these objectives through the adoption of scientific and technological advances. The University College is ideally placed to act as a provider of both of these vital elements but also as a bridge between the broader scientific community, the agri-food and land based industries and the wider public. In aiming for this position it is clear that the University College must build on its potential to advocate and influence across a wide range of audiences.

In the last two years the University College has sought to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in industry, Government and representative bodies, to ensure that its contribution to securing sustainable future food supplies is better recognised. At the same time, Harper Adams has sought to highlight the need for the many food security initiatives being developed across the UK, and internationally, to be better organised and co-ordinated. We have identified a need for a UK university/industry campaign on the public understanding of agricultural science, and have begun discussions with leading industry partners about how such a campaign may be brought about, in collaboration with networks such as the CEUKF. We have also identified a requirement for high profile issues of importance to the scientific and industry community to be brought into an urban setting, in order to reach a wider audience, but also to help develop our potential to deliver academically against our key strategic objectives.

In the early stages of the planning period we will therefore investigate methods by which we can continue to develop our voice as an advocate for the need for a highly skilled workforce within the agri-food and land based sectors and for the role of applied research and knowledge exchange in supporting the UK’s efforts to address the global challenge of food security. We will seek to extend our influence with Government, industry and its related bodies and will measure our success through the way in which we are called upon to contribute to debate and problem solving in key areas of our work. We will be focussed in this approach so that we will enhance our prospects for success, but also so that we become recognised as an authoritative and independent source of advice and commentary to inform the public about agri-food and rural matters. Our approach will include consideration of our ‘reach’ into urban settings, and the way in which this might be extended.

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A recent assessment of our local economic impact demonstrated that the University College makes a significant impact on the UK economy, contributing, in 2009/10, nearly £40m in value added and supporting 1,290 jobs in the process. Furthermore, for every job created by Harper Adams a further 2 jobs were supported in other sectors in the UK. This compares favourably with the average of 0.9 jobs supported across the university sector, and 1.4 jobs supported elsewhere in the agricultural economy. The University College also has a high rate of retention of graduates in the region, helping to address the imbalance in graduate labour supply seen within the West Midlands regional economy. To maintain this performance, and our ability to help contribute to growth in the national and regional economies, the University College will need to maintain a strong financial performance in a time of increased turbulence within the UK higher education system.

Our financial modelling over the last two years has focussed, inevitably, on the fundamental changes taking place within the higher education fees and funding environment. Over this period we have also sought to strengthen our financial position by ensuring that we deliver growth in student numbers and research income, that

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we maximise external income generation from other sources, including through philanthropic donations and that we manage our cost base to ensure that we can continue to provide value for money in relation to Government investment in our activities. We have adopted a financial strategy that includes a number of key indicators of financial health that are monitored routinely by the senior management and the Board of Governors. Our financial position going into the planning period is sound, and we have sought to ensure that it remains in a strong position as we enter into more market based funding over the next few years.

The higher education system faces a number of challenges, including the new funding methodology via the Student Loans Company, which will emphasise the need for improved cash management, financial forecasting and student data management; the market response to the new funding regime, requiring institutions to be agile and responsive in terms of their academic portfolio, marketing, pricing and student support strategies; and cost control, as much in terms of maximising the value from strategic investments and ensuring that our staff are able to contribute effectively to the student experience as well as address a wider range of requirements, as to its bearing on managing operational costs. This will require a new, and more responsive, style of financial management with a clear understanding of the cost of provision and the financial impact of decision-making. To assist this approach, in the early stages of the planning period we will begin to roll out a system for real-time data analysis to help inform our decision making and to provide a better understanding of the cost drivers in our academic provision. We will need to aim for a balanced approach to income generation, long-term investment and cost management over the course of the planning period and our finance team will continue to develop its scenario-based models to take account of developments in the HE funding system, as they emerge over the next 12 months. We will aim to engage the Board of Governors in more routine assessment of the financial performance and health of the institution and to ensure that its decision-making is better supported by financial information and relevant options appraisals. We will also focus on cash management over the course of the planning period, to ensure that our systems are effective and efficient, and that we maintain a sustainable financial base to support the academic objectives established in this Strategic Plan.

To analyse our ability to address the rapidly changing external environment, and to have greater clarity in the management of our institutional performance, we have adopted a model proposed by Deloitte\(^{44}\). The model sets out four key drivers of educational institution value that should be considered, and acted upon, in establishing and managing a university’s strategic direction. These are funding and revenue growth; operating margins; asset efficiency; and expectations and strengths. The following table sets out the elements in each key driver, together with the current position of the University College, and identifies area where further action, or attention, is required in support our strategic objectives and the strategic activities and outcomes plan at Annex 6.

\(^{44}\) *Making the Grade 2011: A study of the top 10 issues facing higher education institutions.* Ontario: Deloitte & Touche LLP. July 2011, p28 (see www.deloitte.ca)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>Further Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding and revenue growth</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Incorporate an operational element into strategic planning to ensure a focus on the highest priority issues</td>
<td>Our sub strategies span the boundary between the Strategic Plan and our operational environment, enabling greater focus to be placed on more detailed planning matters, and monitoring by our Board of Governors and its committees and the Academic Board.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Streamline the governance process to empower stakeholders to quickly make informed budgetary and research allocation decisions</td>
<td>Over the last year we have sought to streamline our governance arrangements. In particular, our Academic Board structure has been reviewed. A relatively flat management structure allows for greater agility in decision-making. A review of key areas will be conducted by the senior management team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clearly define roles, responsibilities and accountabilities</td>
<td>Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined in academic terms and operational terms but some areas need greater clarity to enable more efficient time allocation and operation. A review of key areas will be conducted by the senior management team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improve information tracking to better measure and report on programme outcomes</td>
<td>Information tracking systems are in place but more attention is required to the timeliness of programme development and the understanding of our operating cost base. A review of key areas will be conducted by the senior management team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Explore innovative public-private partnership opportunities</td>
<td>Our work with industry is extensive and has resulted in a large number of partnership opportunities. Explore ways to improve our capacity to exploit new partnership opportunities.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Enhance institutional brands in an effort to attract additional private investment</td>
<td>Our work on fund raising has resulted in a growth of this income stream while Government assistance was available. Maintaining this level will require further attention. The University College has not yet encountered any difficulty in obtaining access to external lending. Consider with the Development Trust the future strategy for fundraising.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leverage social media and other online forms of ongoing communication to establish and maintain relationships with students, parents and alumni</td>
<td>New initiatives have recently been launched in social media applications with some early success. The Marketing and Communication team have been challenged to identify emerging social media trends to ensure we can respond to them at the appropriate time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Improve tracking of research funding</td>
<td>A post has been created with this objective in mind.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consider globalisation strategies</td>
<td>Work continues on our internationalisation strategy with recent success in securing partnerships with key international institutions. Key target partnerships to be pursued and objectives for growth in international student numbers outlined in the Strategic Plan.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating Margins</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Implement and/or leverage technologies designed to streamline core business processes, such as student services, research, finance, administration, human resources and procurement</td>
<td>Key systems are in place and have been extended to address new areas such as absence management. Further operational benefits, and possibly shared service arrangements need to be explored.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Engage in more sophisticated planning and forecasting</td>
<td>Planning mechanisms are in place, including financial modelling. Improvements in the provision of management information to assist decision making to be pursued. The impact of new funding systems on data management and reporting systems will need to be reviewed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pinpoint opportunities to share services and outsource non-core functions</td>
<td>The University College has already engaged in several recent initiatives to share services or procurement methods. A review of shared service opportunities will be conducted by the senior management team.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Eliminate programme redundancies and inefficient processes</td>
<td>A number of activities have been reviewed in the last year, but a systematic approach to streamlining needs to be assessed. A review of key areas will be conducted by the senior management team.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
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<td>Current Position</td>
<td>Further Action</td>
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<td>Asset Efficiency</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Engage in talent management strategies to attract and retain the highest calibre faculty</td>
<td>Recent work to attract high calibre staff has proved successful and will be continued as funding opportunities become available. Further work to engage industry support will continue in this area</td>
<td>Industry sponsorship of academic positions to be explored. Consideration to be given to recognition and reward strategies for teaching</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Streamline procurement and sourcing to optimize the supply chain</td>
<td>Work continues on this topic via our annual value for money plans and related initiatives.</td>
<td>A more systematic review of purchasing arrangements, and related shared services, will be explored</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Review regional delivery models to eliminate program duplication and pursue consolidation where it makes sense</td>
<td>The University College has a broadly unique academic portfolio, and work to determine ways in which academic resources can be shared, or joint provision can be introduced to better use our academic strengths, is continuing</td>
<td>Key inter-institutional opportunities will be explored</td>
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<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Extend access to their programs through initiatives like distance learning and online education</td>
<td>Whilst the University College's use of IT in a blended provision approach has strengthened over the last two years it has not yet embarked upon a full online learning model</td>
<td>The attractiveness of an online learning model will be reviewed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Identify and target optimal student populations</td>
<td>The Marketing Strategy assembled in early 2011 has better identified market segments, and methods to address these markets are now been developed</td>
<td>A review of key areas will be conducted by the senior management team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Engage in sustainability initiatives to improve energy utilisation, reduce waste and identify ancillary opportunities to cut costs and improve performance</td>
<td>The University College is a sector leader in this area of work, which is expected to result in significant energy cost savings and opportunities for new academic initiatives</td>
<td>New academic opportunities in conjunction with other universities to be explored</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rationalise IT and real estate portfolios</td>
<td>The University College continues to keep its estate and IT resources under close review and to seek to make strategic investments that will support core academic delivery</td>
<td>New IT and Estates strategies will be developed in the planning period to provide more focus on the current economic and development climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expectations and Strengths</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Improve information management and data analytics to identify areas of competitive differentiation</td>
<td>Work is in hand to introduce ‘real-time’ access to data to assist decision making. The institution is already distinctive within the UK higher education sector, but needs to continue to emphasise this, and maintain a distinctive position, in its external communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Solicit opinions from outside the education sector</td>
<td>Recent work has been conducted along these lines to inform the future development of the University College</td>
<td>The results of this review will be considered by the senior management team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Leverage technological innovation to better engage students and improve services</td>
<td>We have a comprehensive range of systems but these will need to be the subject of investment over the planning period to maintain our performance and range of cover in this area</td>
<td>Further work on the use of social media to enhance the student experience is under way and the results of this initiative will be monitored by senior management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Revisit existing strategies and processes with an eye towards identifying areas for improvement</td>
<td>The portfolio of sub strategies is closely monitored by the Board of Governors and will be updated in accordance with our normal planning schedule</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Benchmark against competitive institutions</td>
<td>Benchmarking in our specialist field remains problematic but relevant information is used where available, and sector wide data is also employed on a case by case basis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Share best practice</td>
<td>We aim to do this within the HE sector, with recent examples including our work on carbon footprinting and our initiatives in renewable technologies. Our best practice sharing with industry is extensive, and includes our CPD activities and relevant press articles in the farming press</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The University College Executive will monitor progress of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, through regular contact with staff responsible for the delivery of its constituent elements, and the identification of priorities expected of staff and in the use of other resources. The University College’s risk management approach involves key committees of the Board of Governors and the Academic Board, which will monitor progress with the identified risks associated with planning objectives. In particular, the Finance & General Purposes Committee will monitor and provide advice on the development of the underlying financial strategy.

Annual Corporate Planning Statements will be developed from the Strategic Plan, together with further external and internal developments that take place during the planning period, by the Principal and University College Secretary. The Corporate Planning Statements will identify specific cross-institution projects required to achieve strategic planning objectives.

Heads of Academic Departments, Line Managers and Project Managers will be expected to provide input to the development of the Corporate Planning Statements. Staff will be consulted during the preparation of the Corporate Planning Statements, through Staff Development Reviews and specific institutional planning sessions, and will be kept informed of progress with the University College’s Strategic Plan, and associated sub-strategy developments, through internal communications channels, including departmental meetings.

The Board of Governors will oversee the implementation of the Plan and will receive regular reports on its progress, together with the associated Corporate Planning Statements, over the planning period.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the University College’s Strategic Plan can be obtained from:

**Strategic Plan**
- Dr David Llewellyn
  - Principal
  - Tel: 01952 815240
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**Financial Forecasts**
- Mr Paul Rigg
  - Director of Finance
  - Tel: 01952 815267
  - e-mail: prigg@harper-adams.ac.uk

Dr Catherine Baxter
- University College Secretary
- Tel: 01952 815242
- E-mail: cbaxter@harper-adams.ac.uk
ANNEXES

1. Strategic Plan Summary Diagram
2. Strategic Planning Framework
3. Risk Analysis
ANNEX 2: Strategic Planning System

The University College has an integrated strategic planning system which ensures that the Strategic Plan is supported by a set of sub-strategies focussed on key areas of its operations. The sub-strategies are reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that they remain relevant to developments in the external environment, but that they are also consistent with the long-term direction established in the Strategic Plan. The relationship between the components of the planning framework is summarised in the following diagram.
ANNEX 3: Risk Analysis

The University College has an established risk management system that is overseen by the Board of Governors, its committees and the Academic Board, to which regular reports are made on actions taken to mitigate identified risks. Whilst the system addresses key institutional risks there are some that are related to the ability of the University College to successfully deliver against the strategic objectives in this Plan. The key delivery risks are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation Measures</th>
<th>Risk Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Changes to the funding regime for higher education have a destabilising effect on institutional finances</td>
<td>Close monitoring of external funding developments; lobbying for the subject base</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Student recruitment is impacted upon by changes in the higher education funding system and recruitment targets are not met</td>
<td>Implementation of marketing and communications strategy and student recruitment programme; particular measures in target markets</td>
<td>Senior Management Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cash management is impacted upon by changes to the higher education funding system</td>
<td>Financial planning and close monitoring of the financial strategy</td>
<td>Director of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Staff are uncertain of the priority to be assigned to activities that support the objectives established in the Strategic Plan</td>
<td>A clear internal communications strategy will be implemented with regular reviews of progress with the Strategic Plan by the University College Executive</td>
<td>Heads of Academic and Support Service Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The University College is unable to make adequate progress in winning external funding, including appropriate levels of overhead income, to conduct its research activities</td>
<td>Implementation of the research and knowledge exchange strategy; mentoring of staff in research grant application procedures; support for staff in identifying and completing research grant applications</td>
<td>Vice Principal with Research Co-ordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Inadequate data management systems expose the University College to the recovery of tuition income or HEFCE grant</td>
<td>Provision of systems and staffing to ensure that data management is seen as a priority issue; audit of data management by internal auditors; routine review by Audit &amp; Risk Management Committee</td>
<td>Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and University College Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The University College does not make adequate progress in improving international student recruitment</td>
<td>Allocation of link staff for international partnerships and oversight by Director of International Liaison</td>
<td>Director of International Liaison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Student satisfaction is not maintained to the extent that it begins to impact upon institutional reputation and student recruitment</td>
<td>Close liaison with the Students Union and the wider student community; routine monitoring of student satisfaction; close attention to the NSS and employability ratings</td>
<td>Academic Registrar and Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>CPD provision is impacted upon by changes in the higher education funding system</td>
<td>A managed transfer of some CPD provision to a commercial basis from 2012/13; continued lobbying on the need for CPD support with HEFCE; close liaison with industry contacts</td>
<td>Vice Principal with Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The University College does not make adequate progress in improving its ability to influence debate in its core subject areas</td>
<td>A full programme of public relations work will be established to support the delivery of the strategic plan</td>
<td>Principal with Director of Communications and Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>University title is not achieved</td>
<td>Continued lobbying via sector representative bodies; careful preparation of the case for University Title</td>
<td>Principal and University College Secretary</td>
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</table>