

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Staff Meeting

Minutes of the Staff Meeting held on 18 September 2017 in the Foulkes-Crowther Lecture Theatre

Attendance: a record of all staff who attended is held in the University Secretary's Office, together with a record of apologies received.

17/01 Welcome

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed new staff to their first staff meeting.

17/02 Minutes

Agreed: the minutes of the Staff Meeting held on 28 April 2017 (16/06-16/11).

17/03 Matters Arising

Noted: i) that there were no matters arising.

17/04 Presentation from the Vice-Chancellor

- Noted:
- i) that the Vice-Chancellor's presentation would be made available to all staff on the University Portal following the meeting;
 - ii) that the presentation focussed on Student Recruitment, recent institution performance, Finance, Institutional Specific Funding, BREXIT, HE/Other Government policies, progress with Estates development and strategic initiatives.
 - iii) that live applicants to Harper Adams for September 2017, were currently running at 621 was a reduction of 10% of the number of applicants received at the same point in 2016. . At national level, UCAS had indicated that the sector was about 5% down in terms of overall applications.
 - iv) that in light of the above, student recruitment remains key with a need to continue active in-cycle marketing and to identify and progress new ways to respond to the new market.
 - v) that UCAS data on 2017 entry continues to show that there is increased competition from higher and mid-tariff institutions and that in some cases, lower-tariff institutions may be losing candidates who wish to 'trade-up'.
 - vi) that the 2018 recruitment cycle was well under way with Open Days scheduled for 14 October, 18 November and 16 December 2017.
 - vii) that the recent University's institutional performance had been outstanding achieving 98% on DLHE results (joint second in England).
 - viii) that the student response rate to the National Student Survey had increased to 84% which was well above the national average of 68%. Thanks were expressed to all staff for their efforts in encouraging students to take part in the survey which remained

very important in respect of the Teaching Excellence Framework and overall communications with wider stakeholders.

- ix) that the UK population demographic dip was continuing until 2021 and it remained important for the University to seek well qualified international students, including those from the EU where possible, to help balance overall student numbers.
- xi) that relevant staff were working on an increased intake of students from Huazhong Agricultural University for 2018.
- xii) that student recruitment in the Dominican Republic remained challenging for a number of administrative related reasons. The Vice-Chancellor would be seeking to explore this during his visit in October.
- xiii) that the University would be renewing its agreement with Cornell University in the autumn.
- xiv) that a recent visit of 28 Indonesian University Rectors had proved to be interesting and successful. Thanks were expressed to Andy Jones for hosting the visit.
- xv) that links in India were being explored by Parmjit Chima and Kit Franklin. 'Hands Free Hectare' was particularly of interest to prospective .
- xvi) that new markets were being explored in Uruguay by Leticia Chico-Santamarta.
- xvii) that with respect to the University's finances a 1.3% surplus at the year end was currently anticipated .The University's goal remained to achieve 5% surplus annually, however this remained challenging.
- xviii) that further changes to the HE system were being introduced by Government including OfS and subject level TEF.
- xix) that there had been good uptake of new electronic teaching devices under the DELTA project with a second wave of applications currently being invited.
- xx) that an offer had been made for a second Chair in Agri-Tech Economics with an anticipated start date for the end of the year.
- xxi) that Edmore Mashatise, in his capacity as Lecturer with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, had recently visited Agco in Zambia to continue to develop links.
- xxii) that the second phase of the security infrastructure upgrade was being implemented.
- xxiii) that work was progressing around campus with improvements to Boughey Hall and roadworks having been undertaken over the summer.
- xxiv) that Brian Revell had been invited to present to a DEFRA session on New Zealand's experience of agricultural deregulation on 14 September.

- xxv) that the University had been approached by the New York Times over the summer to comment on BREXIT and agricultural policy.
- xxvi) that Justin McCarthy (Editor of Irish Farmers Journal) was due to visit on 30 November.
- xxvii) that Tom Tynan (European Commission) was due to visit on 1 December.
- xxviii) that the Office for Students was now expected to launch in January 2018 as opposed to the original date of April.
- xxix) that further developments with TEF were expected to include degree classifications and graduate earnings ensuring that LEO datasets will continue as the OfS will be analysing student outcomes. It was, therefore, important that we show we provide good value in return for public investment.
- xxx) that there had recently been a £25m call for bids related to off-road connected autonomous vehicles.
- xxxi) that work on the Newport Innovation Park was scheduled to begin at the end of 2017 and this would continue to be linked with Midlands Engine work and positioning of Centres for Innovation funded by the Agri-Tech Strategy.
- xxxii) that the work on the Elizabeth Creak laboratories was complete and fully operational.
- xxxiii) that the Agri-Tech building and dairy developments were nearing completion.
- xxxiv) that plans for an extension to the SU gym were almost complete. A wider sports development scheme was under discussion.
- xxxv) that the refurbishment to the Kaldi Café was almost complete.
- xxxvi) that the SMART project work continues with commissioning scheduled for next month.
- xxxvii) that the Principal of Easton and Otley College had recently left his post. There was a need to continue to develop links with East Anglia.
- xxxviii) that it had been announced that the merger between North Shropshire College and Reaseheath was not going ahead.
- xxxix) that the joint vet school proposal with Keele University, led by Peter Mills was ongoing.
- xxxxx) that an additional 235 acres of farmland had been purchased over the summer with a long term view to secure farming interests and manage issues around access to land.
- xxxxi) that Catherine Baxter and Becca Hayhurst were involved in ongoing discussion with local bus companies to improve transport provision.

xxxxii) that the Staff Survey was to be launched on 9th October with a closing date of 3rd November. All staff were encouraged to participate.

17/05 Questions

- i) in response to a question about the availability of the additional farmland for teaching purposes it was confirmed that discussions were ongoing with Scott Kirby. Staff were welcome to approach Scott with any queries.
- ii) In answer to a question about a possible January intake to boost 2017/18 student numbers it was noted that this was a complex issue but could possibly be an untapped market. Further discussions would take place.

17/06 Date of Next Meeting

20 April 2018 at 0915