

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 17 January 2019

Present: Mr P Nixon (Chairman)
Mr M Lewis
Dr D Llewellyn
Mr M Thomas
Mr S Vickers
Mr D Wong

In attendance:	Dr C Baxter	University Secretary
	Mrs L Furey	Director of Finance
	Professor P Mills	Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Part A

Members were reminded to update their entry in the register of interests as appropriate.

18/18 Minutes

Approved: minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held on 8 November 2019 (18/01-18/17).

18/19

- iv) that the performance of courses in attracting applicants remained variable. Agriculture was performing well and Land Management was keeping up with 2018 figures currently. Some improvement in Countryside, Animals, Vet Nursing and Vet Physio was evident, but more work was planned. Conversion rates in VN & VP were important as often there was a surplus of applicants compared to places available. Food remained very concerning. Course titles had been amended and a social media campaign was in hand to raise awareness. Plans for an apprenticeship and non-

donation from Mrs Tinneveld had been confirmed and it was agreed that the main lecture theatre would be named in recognition of this;

- xiv) that further work was in hand with respect to HEIF data. A claim for further funding was felt to be justified and had been submitted;
- xv) that the Minister is keen to see HE & FE links working effectively. The Director of Learning and Teaching continued to explore potential opportunities;
- xvi) that the outcome Hands-free expected shortly;
- xvii) that Westfield Cars were to run a pilot of driverless vehicles to/from Manchester Airport following the project with HAU and Manchester Metropolitan University;
- xviii) that TRAC & TRAC(T) remains very important and will feature in due course to ISF decision making. Details of the next ISF round are awaited during 2019;
- xix) that the Director of Access & Participation, Chris Millward will visit the University on 8 February 2019. The latest monitoring return had been completed and to date progress against targets looked positive with appropriate spend being achieved. There had been a slight improvement in the range of backgrounds identified by current students in their registration details. However, UCAS data was less positive due to issues such as a relatively large percentage of female applicants not being accepted overall given the predominantly female cohort of applicants for Vet Nursing which was oversubscribed;
- xx) that Writtle had achieved registration recently but had been fined for not meeting Access & Participation requirements. RAU remained very active with a strong market presence;
- xxi) that Harper Adams would be funding a prize at the Three Counties Show;
- xxii) that a review of the Marketing Department was due to commence shortly to ensure the team is able to respond to the increased need for press/PR communications and other key challenges;
- xxiii) that the Vice-Chancellor is continuing work on the review of the current Strategic Plan. It was intended to focus on the relationship between science and professional practice; the Government aim to achieve zero emissions for agriculture by 2040, and the need for data science to inform agricultural practice/decision/policymaking. The University was currently shortlisting for a replacement Data Analytics Lectureship;
- xxiv) that forthcoming visitors included Christine Tacon, the Chief Vet, the new Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire- Mrs Anna Turner, the lead for Forestry Research; Mr Ian Coates, Director of HE Policy (STEM) in DFE. The Vice-Chancellor had also been invited to a forthcoming British Veterinary Association (BVA) dinner;
- xxv) that the Vice-Chancellor continues to chair the Agri-Skills Initiatives Educational/Professional Framework Group. The group is currently focusing on competencies with a view to identifying how these might fit

within a professional body. AHDB/LEAF/NFU are represented in this work;

xxvi) that there had been some leaks from the Augar Review suggesting

Agreed:

- i) that members were supportive of the Grow Up proposal;
- ii) that the Chair may act on delegated authority to approve the surveyors report and confirm agreement subject to the following: **PN**

a review by the Director of Finance of the Grow Up business case to include evidence of capital grant funding and planned income streams and confirmation that the Heads of Terms/Lease ensure the lease cannot be assigned by the tenant and that the development phase has sufficient req
development stall before the building is completed;

commence this process she had asked that a report would be presented at F & GP in January 2019;

- vii) that the Director of Finance had suggested the inclusion of some useful comparative data, but other than this she had no issues to report. The cash balances were noted to be appropriate. The Chair agreed to update Debbie Winstanley; **MJL**
- viii) that the SU was continuing its search for a new full time Manager and had agreed the services of an Executive Search Agency which leads on SU recruitment across the UK. The consultant had asked to meet the University Secretary. There was also a vacancy for a Deputy President following the recent departure of the elected officer. This post would be filled until July 2019 for the 2019/20 academic year.

18/22 Transparency Review and Costing (TRAC) and Teaching (TRAC (T))

Received:

Noted:

- i) that the return remained very important especially with respect to research overhead costs ratios and any future bid for ISF funding;
- ii) that indirect costs had been calculated fully for research despite the completed by staff and verified by managers were used for this work and to review/evaluate the allocation of teaching and research costs;
- iii) that the outcomes indicated value for money was being achieved with a slight reduction to costs after ISF is included. This demonstrated the need for ISF was an ongoing if sufficient resources were to be available to properly deliver the subjects being taught. The University was also within benchmarks;
- iv) that Internal Auditors had reviewed the TRAC & TRAC(T) process and had made two recommendations relating to further documentation of

national policy environment with respect to RHI etc had changed as had costs such as wood chip and it was necessary to adapt.

18/26 Any Other Business

Members noted that funding to support delivery of Harper Adams of a Worshipful Company of Farmers Leadership Course focusing on technology had been secured from the NFU for three years. The delivery of the course was due to commence at the University during 2019.

18/27 Date of Next Meeting

21 March 2019

Part B

18/28 Risk Management

Received: a report by the University Secretary on risks monitored by the Committee.

Agreed: that the management of these risks remained appropriate.

18/29 Estate Developments

Received: a report by the University Secretary/Estates Consultant on progress with current estate projects.