10/01 A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Friday 22 January 2010 at 2.15pm.

Present: The President
The Treasurer
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor T A Downes)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor D C Berry)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor R L Robson)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor C M Williams)
Ms S Brennan
Mr R Buller
Mrs H M Dominick
Mr R Dwyer
Professor R H Ellis
Mr R E R Evans
Mr J D Fishburn
Mr T Gilchrist
Professor S Hawker
Dr J C F Hayward

In attendance: The Director of Academic Services
The Director of External Affairs
The Director of Facilities Management
The Director of Finance and Corporate Services
The Director of Student Services

By invitation: The Director of Human Resources

Apologies were received from Mr Bartlam, Professor Bones, Councillor Jones, Dr Reed, Mrs Scott, Sir John Sunderland and Mr Walsh. The President welcomed Mr Evans and Mr Gilchrist to their first meeting of the Council.

The President reported the death of Dr E H Dale. Hilda Dale had come to Reading as a student in 1928. She had obtained her first lecturing position in the French Department in 1934 and had retired in 1974. Dr Dale had celebrated her 100th birthday in August 2009.

10/02 The minutes (09/32-09/53) of the meeting held on 26 November 2009 were confirmed and signed, subject to the re-phrasing of the third sentence of Minute
09/42 to read “The Audit Committee had been particularly pleased with the progress that had been made in regard to severance payments (where the Remuneration Committee had taken a lead) and the environment (in relation to the management of which two posts had been established within the Facilities Management Directorate)” and the addition of new fourth sentence to read “A high priority for the coming months was a follow-up to the audit review of ‘blue claim forms’ which was to be led by a Working Party chaired by the Director of Finance and Corporate Services that was soon to meet”.

10/03 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 2(a))

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 26 November 2009 relating to items for report.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 26 November 2009 relating to items for report, now submitted, be received.”

10/04 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 2(b))

* The Council received a list of documents sealed and to be sealed.

Resolved:

"That the Council approve the action taken by the Officers and Members in affixing the University Seal to documents sealed since the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council and authorise the Seal of the University to be affixed to the documents to be sealed as now reported."

10/05 Freedom of Speech: Annual Report (Item 2(c))

The Council received the Annual Report on Freedom of Speech for 2008-09, prepared by the University Secretary.

At the invitation of the President, the Vice-Chancellor reported that Universities UK has established a working group to examine how universities might best protect academic freedom whilst taking appropriate action to prevent violent extremism. This group was to consider how universities could work with all relevant organisations, nationally and locally, to ensure the protection of freedom of speech and lawful academic activities whilst safeguarding students, staff and the wider community from violent extremism. At Reading, the Director of Student Services was routinely in dialogue with the local Commission for Racial Equality as was the University Secretary with the police and other specialised services. Together they stood ready to take forward the recommendations that were expected to emerge from the working group in discussion as appropriate with the Students’ Union.

Resolved:

“That the Annual Report on Freedom of Speech for 2008-09, now submitted, be received.”
10/06 Disclosures made under the University’s Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy (Item 7)

* The Council received a Report on Disclosures made under the University’s Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy. This had been prepared by the University Secretary who explained that the necessary investigations had been conducted by Internal Audit Services.

Resolved:

“That the Report on Disclosures made under the University’s Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy, now submitted, be received.”

Items for Discussion and Decision

10/07 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 3)

The Vice-Chancellor:

(a) reminded members of the Council that he had recently circulated to each of them a summary of the funding issues that were currently confronting the higher education sector. The University’s Financial Forecasts had, to some extent, anticipated the proposed reductions in the Teaching and Research elements of the recurrent grant but the suggested scale of the cut to be applied to the capital funding allocation had not been expected. Collectively, Vice-Chancellors were making strong representations to Government regarding the short-sightedness of this approach. Details of how HEFCE intended to distribute available resource to individual institutions would not be known until March and further perturbations to the funding model could be expected following the impending General Election;

(b) alluded to recent events at London Metropolitan University which had resulted in the resignations of the Vice-Chancellor and from the Governing Body. The President observed that the affair, which for the most part had been played out in public, provided a timely reminder of the importance of governing bodies taking seriously their fundamental responsibilities for oversight, scrutiny and challenge. As one result, HEFCE had initiated a review of the terms of its Model Financial Memorandum with institutions and the University’s response to this exercise was in course of preparation;

(c) expressed thanks to all those whose efforts had enabled the University to continue to function during the recent adverse weather conditions. Particular praise was due to those front-line staff in the Facilities Management Directorate who had borne the brunt of the physical work entailed in clearing snow.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, now submitted, be approved.”
The Council received the Reports of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 26 November 2009 relating to items for discussion and decision.

* In regard to item 4(i)(a) the Financial Report: October 2009, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that, in the period since this report had been produced there was, as yet, nothing to suggest that the budgeted surplus for the year ending 31 July 2010 would not be achievable. The level of surplus would, however, be reduced by the extent to which transitional restructuring funding provided specifically for the purpose by HEFCE were to be called upon within year. Further, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services was considering adjustments to the balance sheet to take account of the early effects of the reshaping process and of the proceeds from anticipated property disposals.

In response to a question from Mr Palmer, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services explained that the apparent surplus projected for the Corporate Learning Division within the Henley Business School would largely be applied to cross-subsidising the activities of the relevant Faculty Office. In response to a question from Dr Wilkins, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor explained that the shortfall recorded in respect of catering and residences was attributable largely to timing issues in relation to invoicing for conferences and similar activity. More recently, the Residences Management Committee had noted that the position was ahead of budget.

* In regard to item 4(i)(b) the Second Progress Report from the Project Board for the Reshaping of the University, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor explained that the interlinked Reviews of the School of Systems Engineering and the Centre for Advanced Computing and Emerging Technologies had now reported to the Senior Management Board and that the staff in both units had been informed of the resulting recommendations that were to be made by the Board to the Strategy and Finance Committee at its meeting on 1 March 2010. More generally, members confirmed that, on the basis of this and earlier reports, the Council was fully cognisant of the direction of travel represented by the Reshaping Project and had urged that progress be expedited wherever possible.

* In regard to item 4(i)(c) Major Capital Projects, the Director of Facilities Management reported that positive progress had recently been made in relation to the practicalities of both the Library Book Repository and the Whiteknights Utilities Infrastructure Projects.

Resolved:

“1. That the Financial Report: October 2009, now submitted, be received;”

“2. That the Second Progress Report from the Project Board for the Reshaping of the University, now submitted, be received;”

“3. That the Report on Major Capital Projects, now submitted, be received.”
10/09 Report from an additional meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 4(ii))

The Council received:

* (a) a proposal from the Senior Management Board that, in anticipation of likely recommendations for reductions in numbers of academic and other staff arising from the Project for the Reshaping of the University, a standing Restructuring Committee be established in line with Statute XXXIII Part II and the University’s Review and Restructuring Policy;

* (b) an accompanying paper from the Director of Human Resources entitled ‘The process for recommending and selecting for redundancy’ which had been commissioned by the Project Board for the Reshaping of the University and set out, informally, to demonstrate how a standing Restructuring Committee might go about its work given the scope of the reshaping exercise; and

* (c) a letter dated 21 January 2010 from the President of the Reading branch of the University and College Union (UCU) to the President of the Council, registering concerns at the nature, status and timing of what he understood to be the present proposals.

The President reported that, at its meeting earlier in the day, the Strategy and Finance Committee had been informed that progress to date by the Faculty Reshaping Groups and the Project Board for the Reshaping of the University suggested that the first proposals for reductions in the numbers of academic and other staff were likely to be recommended by the Senior Management Board to the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee on 1 March 2010. In this event, the Council could expect to receive the resulting recommendations of the Strategy and Finance Committee at its meeting on 19 March 2010, accompanied by any comment on those recommendations that the Senate may have determined to make at its meeting on 10 March 2010.

In anticipation of this, and particularly in order than the resulting Committee might initially be populated and ultimately be convened without further delay, the Strategy and Finance Committee had agreed to recommend to the Council that a standing Restructuring Committee be established in line with Statute XXXIII Part II and the University’s Review and Restructuring Policy. The President explained that this initiative represented an immediate response to the recommendation of the Restructuring Committee for the School of Health and Social Care that a means be found in the interests of those affected to reduce the elapse of time between any decision of the Council that there be a reduction in the numbers of academic and other staff and the resulting Restructuring Committee being in a position to begin its work.

Dr Mueller-Harvey questioned the congruence of this proposed course of action with Statute XXXIII and, in so doing, echoed the view expressed by the President of the Reading branch of UCU that, by failing to conduct prior consultation through the Joint University/UCU Committee, the University had contravened its recognition agreement with UCU. In response, the Director of Human Resources who was
attending the meeting by invitation of the President, reiterated that the recommendation upon which the Council was invited to resolve at this time was limited to the establishment of a standing Restructuring Committee in anticipation of likely proposals for reductions in the numbers of academic and other staff. This approach reflected both the urgency of the reshaping exercise as recognised by the Council and the experience of previous Restructuring Committees that undue delay was contrary to the best interests of the staff affected. The recommendation was in line with Statute XXXIII Part II and the University’s Review and Restructuring Policy and, as such, there could be no basis for any assertion that it contravened the University’s recognition agreement with UCU.

Professor Hawker, speaking as a member appointed by the Council to the Restructuring Committee for the School of Health and Social Care, welcomed the initiative, saw it as a direct response to concerns which he personally had heard expressed by staff, and shared with the Council his understanding that the present proposal represented a contingent arrangement which would only be energised were the Council to resolve on the recommendation of the Strategy and Finance Committee at any future meeting that there be a reduction in the numbers of academic and other staff. At the conclusion of the discussion, the President informed the Council of his intention that a full written response be made to the matters raised by the President of the Reading branch of UCU in his letter.

**Resolved:**

1. That in anticipation of likely recommendations for reductions in numbers of academic and other staff arising from the Project for the Reshaping of the University, a standing Restructuring Committee be established in line with Statute XXXIII Part II and the University’s Review and Restructuring Policy to conduct consultation with all staff affected and appropriate representatives;

2. That Mr R Dwyer (as Chairman) and Mrs J M Scott be appointed by the Council to that Committee;

3. That the President be authorised to appoint alternates to either member should, in his opinion, the need arise.

10/10 Overdraft Facility with Barclays (additional item)

The Council received a paper from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services which explained REDACTED S.43 with Barclays to fund Phase 1 of the Halls Redevelopment Project into which the Council had agreed the University might enter at its meeting in July 2009 could only be put in place following the passing of a suitable resolution by the Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That the borrowing by the University of up to the full amount of the Facility on the terms and conditions set out in the Facility Agreement is in the interests of and for the benefit of the University and is most likely to promote the success of the University for the benefit of the members as
whole and that such terms and conditions be and are approved and accepted;”

“2. That the Director of Finance and Corporate Services (Mr D C L Savage) and the Deputy Director of Finance (Ms C A B Wright) be authorised to sign the Facility Agreement on behalf of the University to indicate acceptance of the terms and conditions;

“3. That Barclays be authorised to act in all matters concerning the Facility upon instruction from the University signed in accordance with Barclays’ mandate for any of the accounts of the University held with Barclays current from time to time.”

10/11 Report of the Senate (Item 5)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 2 December 2009.

Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 1, under the provisions of Ordinance XXIV the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on Professor Peter Jay with effect from 1 January 2010;”

“2. That, with reference to item 2, Mrs M L Cottingham be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow from 1 November 2009 until her normal retirement date;”

“3. That, with reference to item 3, the following be accorded the title of Visiting Professor:

(a) School of Agriculture, Policy and Development
    Dr M Deadman for the period to 30 September 2012

(b) School of Humanities
    Professor H J Glock for a further period to 30 April 2013

(c) School of Mathematics, Meteorology and Physics
    Professor P Hardaker for a further period to 31 December 2012
    Dr S Solomon for the period to 31 December 2012

(d) School of Health and Social Care
    Professor C R Victor for the period to 30 September 2011.”

“4. That, with reference to item 4,

(a) alterations to Ordinance III (Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates) and Ordinance LIV (Degree of Integrated Master) to provide for the degree of Master of Environmental Science; and

(b) a new Ordinance to provide for the award of degrees of Master and Doctor by Thesis jointly with other institutions, be approved.”
“5. That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 2 December 2009, now submitted, be approved.”

10/12 **Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Honorary Degrees** (Item 6)
* The Council received the Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee.

**Resolved:**

“That the Report of the Honorary Degrees Committee, now submitted, be approved.”

10/13 **Presentation by President of the Students’ Union**

Ms Sinead Brennan, President of the Students’ Union, made a presentation to the Council (Minute 09/50 refers).