

THE UNIVERSITY OF READING

STAFFING COMMITTEE

16/18 A meeting of the Staffing Committee was held on Tuesday 11 October 2016 at 2.00 pm in G03, Henley Business School

Present:

Professor R Van de Noort (Chair)
Mrs C L Bennett
Professor D C Berry
Mr J J Brady
Mr B Cooper
Professor M D E Fellowes
Professor O B Kennedy
Dr R J Messer
Mrs J Pich
Mrs C Rolstone
Mrs J Rowe
Dr C Tissot

Mr A J Twyford (Secretary)

Apologies were received from Professor D Zaum

The Committee welcomed Dr Cathy Tissot, Head of School, Institute of Education, and Mr Ben Cooper, President of the Students' Union to their first meeting.

16/19 Membership, Terms of Reference and Disclosure of Interests

The Committee received a copy of its membership and Terms of Reference and a copy of a memorandum from the University Secretary in respect of Disclosure of Interests and the Committee's obligations in respect of the University's Risk Register.

16/20 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2016 were approved.

Arising from the minutes:

Minute 16/10 (16/01, 15/22, 15/11, 15/01, 14/25): Consultation in respect of proposed changes to USS and forthcoming pension changes

The Director of Human Resources reported on the changes to the USS pension scheme in respect of:

- The amount of retirement benefit a scheme member can build up each year (Annual Allowance);
- The total tax advantaged benefit a scheme member can build up in their lifetime (Lifetime Allowance).

He confirmed that the Pensions Office had sent a number of targeted communications to a select group of staff who might be impacted by these changes including useful information and guidance. He confirmed that there are various tax protections in place to allow a scheme member to retain a higher LTA but these came at a cost. Scheme members also had the option of capping salary or withdrawing from the USS pension scheme, and should this be the case the Director of Human Resources confirmed that they would not receive any compensatory remuneration.

It was acknowledged that given the complicated nature of pension matters it was difficult to easily engage with staff. As an example, the take up of the USS AVC scheme (Investment Builder) was anticipated as being 80% of scheme members but to date only 12% of scheme members had joined.

The Committee welcomed the update and asked the Director of Human Resources to keep them informed of progress.

Minute 16/12: National Pay Bargaining and UCU Industrial Action

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that on the advice of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), the University had decided to implement the proposed pay award of 1.1% “on account” to avoid colleagues experiencing any undue delay in receiving their pay increases. He confirmed the pay award was effective from 1 August 2016.

He indicated that there remained a possibility of further industrial action in the sector as part of the ongoing dispute and confirmed that the UCU Higher Education Committee (HEC) had yet to make a decision regarding future planned industrial action.

He reminded colleagues that the pay negotiations for 2017/18 would be commencing shortly.

16/21 People Strategy

The Director of Human Resources stated that the proposed People Strategy with the UEB had been discussed at its meeting on the 26 September 2016. The UEB had broadly welcomed the proposals contained in the Strategy, whilst acknowledging that the proposed programme was ambitious.

He set out the direction of travel for the proposed People Strategy, with its four broad aims:

- Agile People and Processes
- Excellent Leaders and Managers
- Engaging Employment Offer (“Me” at Reading)
- Thriving Working Environment (“We” at Reading)

He confirmed that these themes and associated sub-themes aim to develop and embed existing good practice, whilst recognising where the University needs to be.

He indicated that in light of the discussions at UEB the lead HR team will review the proposals with a view to:

- a) Identifying 6-8 key objectives we hope to achieve via the People Strategy;
- b) Prioritising the list of key projects, and in doing so identifying those that are essential and those that are pivotal to the achievement of high priority objectives.

He confirmed that HR would work closely with the Planning and Strategy Office (PSO) to map out a programme plan and would consult with individual members of UEB as well as across the University.

The Committee welcomed the paper from the Director of Human Resources and discussed the proposals at great length. A number of comments were made and these are summarised as follows:

- The People Strategy builds upon the success of the previous HR Strategy “Working Together: A Strategy for Success” where significant advances have been made, for example, with regard to *Celebrating Success* and the way we recognise and reward excellent performance;
- As the UEB have noted, this is ambitious. How realistic is to deliver on all the sub themes in five years?
 - There will be a need to prioritise and to have a carefully thought through programme of delivery, with timescales and identified resource requirements;
 - Some initiatives have to be undertaken, some will need to be completed before others can commence, whilst others may fall into the non-essential category;
 - The engagement surveys will help inform the development of action plans;
- Careful consideration will need to be given as to how the People Strategy will be presented to staff. It needs to appeal to staff and be

easily understood – the intention is to develop a roadmap and this will help with the communication of the Strategy;

- We need to be mindful that the University has just been through a period of significant change and upheaval. We also need to acknowledge the mood of staff, many of whom may still feel raw from their experiences with recent changes. This is particularly important given that part of the People Strategy is about behavioural and cultural change.

The Director of Human Resources thanked the Committee for their comments and agreed to keep the Committee informed of progress.

16/22 Campus Jobs

The Assistant Director of Human Resources (Operations) provided the Committee with an update on the Campus Jobs project, a collaboration between HR, Careers and Procurement to develop a new internal recruitment offering. She confirmed that once fully established, it would provide a suite of services connected with ad-hoc, temporary and student employment and would be fronted by the Campus Jobs recruitment gateway, a service capturing the recruitment manager's recruitment requirement and directing them to the most appropriate means of fulfilling it.

She confirmed that the intention was to develop a self-service online database which will hold details of candidates that have expressed an interest in casual work opportunities at the University, primarily students.

She indicated that from a candidate perspective, Campus Jobs will be a central team co-ordinating all non-substantive recruitment on campus. Candidates will be able to register once with the service and via the talent bank, manage their email alert preferences and access opportunities across all departments.

Whilst there was no “go live” date, she stated that it was anticipated that a formal launch would be held in September 2017. She confirmed that the intention was to pilot Campus Jobs across the University.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director of Human Resources (Operations) for the update and asked that she or relevant colleague(s) report back to a future meeting.

16/23 Academic Probation Process

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resource) informed the Committee that the UEB had asked him to review the current academic probation arrangements. He confirmed that he was working closely with

colleagues in the HR professional team and would be bringing forward proposals for improving the current process in due course. Professor Fellowes and Dr Tissot, the two Heads of School on the Committee, welcomed the review, arguing that there was a need for a more transparent and consistent process.

The Committee discussed the possible development of criteria that probationary academics would need to meet in order to pass probation - similar to the criteria developed in respect of the Personal Titles process. It was acknowledged that a fundamental review of the current process would take time and would require a project group to be established.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resource) agreed to keep the Committee informed of progress.

16/24 Promotion Route for Grade 6 Teaching Intensive staff

The University Secretary reported that the UEB had asked the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) to lead a review of the current arrangements for the promotion of Grade 6 Teaching Fellow/Teaching Intensive staff and to report back to the UEB.

The Committee thanked the University Secretary for the update and asked to be kept informed of progress.

16/25 Remaining dates of meetings for the 2016/17 Academic Session:

Tuesday 29 November 2016, 10.00 am (reserve)

Tuesday 14 February 2017, 2.00 pm

Tuesday 2 May 2017, 11.00 am (reserve)

Wednesday 21 June 2017, 2.00 pm