Freedom of Information: Open Business

Minutes of a Meeting of the Risk Management Committee held on Monday 12 April 2010 at 2pm in the Elder Room, Old College

Present: Mr Nigel Paul (Convener)
Mr Melvyn Cornish, University Secretary
Mr Jon Gorringe, Director Finance
Dr Bruce Nelson, College of Science and Engineering
Mr Frank Gribben, College of Humanities and Social Science
Mr Brian Gilmore, Information Services Group
Professor Jonathan Ansell, Academic Member
Mr Hamish McKay, Chief Internal Auditor (attendee)
Dr John Markland, University Court Member
Dr Tina Harrison, Director of Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Mr Hugh Edminston, Director of Operations, Roslin Institute (for LG)
Ms Helen Stocks (Secretary)

Apologies:
Mr Louis Golightley, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

1. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 January 2010**

The Minutes were approved as a correct record.

2. **Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

2.1 Risk 5: Development aspirations (action point from 11/1/10)

In the context of some of the University's development aspirations being deferred due to financial constraints, Angus Currie had responded to the RMC action point by reporting that in each college either the College Registrar or Deputy HoC acts as project controller on development projects within colleges, and they also attend Estates Committee which is the prime committee for assessing estates development priorities. More generally, we have our relatively new Gateway procedures in place and SPBs are mainly convened by senior college or SG staff and it was expected that they would take the lead in planning within each business area for the consequences of projects not providing to the preferred timeline.

2.2 Risk 14: Tenants' contingency planning (action point from 11/1/10)

It had been confirmed by Angus Currie that it is up to the individual tenant to have their own contingency plan. DBN reported that the specific issue that had raised this action point had now been addressed. It was suggested that E&B should be sensitive to this issue in drawing up future leases.

[Angus Currie]

3. **Convener's Business**

There was no business from the Convener.

4. **Risk Reviews 09/10**

The committee discussed the following risk reviews and were satisfied that, subject to the following comments, mechanisms were in place to appropriately manage each risk.

Risk 4: Performance or rate of growth in University's activities

It was suggested that the likelihood of growth of UoE falling behind competitors varied in different areas e.g. PGT was likely whereas other areas were less likely. It was noted that mergers would probably result in a step change to growth.

Risk 7: Inability to retain or attract sufficient leading academic staff

No significant comments were made on this review.

Risk 8.1: EUCLID

It was agreed that the review was quite inward-looking towards the project, particularly with regards the threats, rather than being focussed on the University business. DBN raised a view that the main issue is the de-scoping of the project and the extra effort required due to this. FG believed that the redefining of the scope was proceeding satisfactorily, but there was a significant issue around whether or not we would be able to deliver for our business needs as the University transitioned from project mode to ongoing operational mode. It was queried whether sufficient emphasis was being placed on communication and highlighted that there may be an expectation gap that needed to be managed. MDC stated that issues around communication were certainly recognised by SQAG. The group recognised that there continued to be significant business risks as the project moved to deliver its remaining implementations, and activity transitioned to operational units.

[Jeff Haywood]

Risk 8.2: Full Economic costing

No significant comments were made on this review.

Risk 8.3: Web Project

An issue was raised around this being a 5 year project, when during that time it would have been overtaken by the changes in technology. However, it was agreed that the project was also about corporate identity, brand management and content management, and indeed business and cultural change. It was noted that a review was planned to look at the progress of technology now available and how UoE could utilise it and take forward the future development of its web presence.

Risk 8.4: Major Estates Projects

The Group noted that in the context of estates projects the response to changes in the economic environment had been managed well.

Risk 9: Major failure of IT infrastructure etc

There was discussion around an institutional risk arising over the last 3 or 4 years of data being stored off-site through the use of third party web applications.

Risk 10: Major Health & Safety incidents

It was recognised that our contingency planning for pandemic flu was seen as exemplary, and was

also useful as a plan for a major incident affecting staff and students rather than affecting the buildings.

Risk 13: Academic collaborations fail

It was noted that as developments with eca progress the risks will continue to change.

5. **Risks identified in planning submissions**

Each of the extracts from the planning submissions was summarised very briefly. Whilst the Committee recognised that the paper only extracted the risk section from each Planning Submission and that the full submissions contained a fuller description of priorities, plans and activities, it noted that each Collge and Support Group had assessed its key risks over the immediate planning period, and that the risks identified were consistent with those seen by the Committee through its other processes

6. **Update of University Risk Register**

The discussion included the following:

- The funding environment still being the top risk (and reflected in risks 1, 2 and 3);
- Developments with eca and HGU;
- The need to keep the URR focussed and not too dense;
- Our estate not comparing favourably to other top 20 universities;
- The need to manage ELIR;
- Management of the transition from project mode to day-to-day service delivery;
- Legislative requirements

The URR will be updated and circulated for comment .

[NALP, JHS]

7. **Pattern and business of meetings for 2010/11**

This was agreed.

STANDING ITEMS

8. **In-Year Record of Events:**

8.1 It was noted that there were actions in progress to assess proposals and move forward toward implementation of mergers with Edinburgh College of Art, and the MRC Human Genetics Unit. It was recognised that structures were being established to take forward each project to ensure the effective implementation recognising both the benefits and risks. The project definition document for the UoE/eca proposed integration was presented and discussed, and it was noted that there was a risk of reputational damage should merger with eca not go ahead.

8.2 The Committee noted the potential reputational damage to the University arising from the actions of an aggrieved postgraduate student, and was informed that every effort was being made to resolve the student's difficulties so as to enable her to complete her PhD: this was rarely reflected in her public statements.

9. **Any Other Business**

No other business was raised.

10. Date of next meeting: **10 a.m. on 27 May 2010** in the Elder Room, Old College

Helen Stocks
13 April 2010