

SEC/2016/2/0665

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Notes of the Council Awayday:
Presentations by Faculty of Science and Technology
held on 19 May 2016

PRESENT: Pro-Chancellor (in the Chair); Professor A. M. Atherton; Mr D. Barron; Dr R. Boumphrey; Mr J. R. Carr; Mr M. J. Dormer; Professor J. Garside; Mrs R. Georghiou; Professor S. Guy; Mr W. Hedley; Mr I. Johnson; Professor N. Johnson; Professor K. C. Jones; Mr L. King; Baroness Neville-Jones; Professor J. F. O'Hanlon; Professor E. Ritchie; Dr J. Taylor; Mrs V. Young.

IN ATTENDANCE: Professor P.M. Atkinson; Professor P. Barker; Dr K. Davidson; Professor S. P. Decent; Professor P. Fielden; Dr J. Finney; Dr H. Hardie; Ms H. Hunter; Professor S. R. A. Huttly; Mr S. Jennings; Professor R. Jones; Professor A. Lazarev; Dr D. Lynott; Ms N. C. Owen; Professor C. Paoloni; Ms J. Prudence; Mrs S. J. Randall-Paley; Mr S. Reynolds.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Vice-Chancellor; Mr E. McLaughlin; Mr J. O'Neill; Mr A. Warriner.

CO.16/21 Faculty of Science and Technology: Presentations

Documents: SEC/2016/2/0583; SEC/2016/2/0485

The Council received presentations from the Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) Dean and Heads of Department, which detailed the current issues and challenges facing those departments, and the strategies in place to enable them to succeed and identify opportunities for growth. The Council discussed these presentations in detail; the following points were noted during the course of the discussion.

Members queried the extent to which departments interact with each other, and were informed that collaboration and sharing of good practice was enabled via the establishment of cross-disciplinary centres and departments, including the Data Science Institute, the Materials Science Institute (MSI), and the Lancaster Environment Centre (LEC).

The requirements placed on a department by accreditation bodies such as the Institute of Physics were not seen to be overly restrictive, as they ensured that students were provided with a solid educational base in their chosen subject, although it could sometimes be difficult to fit every required topic into the three or four year degree scheme.

The University had invested a significant amount in FST buildings and facilities in recent years, although there was a growing need for greater investment to keep up with potential student growth. This need would be articulated through the planning process, and the investment could come from the University or from external funders where relevant.

A large proportion of academic staff were in the early career stage, and it was important to develop the research grant application skills necessary in these staff. Several initiatives were in place to facilitate this, including a mentoring programme and the sharing of good practice between departments. It was noted that larger grants were often won by collaborative applications.

Each department in the Faculty had its own eight-strand strategy, covering all aspects of departmental activity, which underpinned the Faculty's overall strategy.

There was significant business engagement in the Faculty, including strong relationships with national and global businesses; the cTAP facility had been designed to allow increased collaboration between academics and businesses.

The Faculty's engagement with alumni was currently based around a few large projects, and was mainly managed through the central Alumni and Development office.

A strategy regarding the Global Challenges Fund was under development; a detailed report on this would be brought to the September meeting of Council.

Issues relating to the spinout of intellectual property from departments were managed by the IP Commercialisation Committee, which was a sub-group of Research Committee. It was suggested that more work was needed in this area to maximise the potential available in the Faculty.

The short-term plan for the Engineering department was to build on the strength of General Engineering, although the longer-term plan, at an appropriate point in time and an appropriate scale, may involve splitting Engineering into different departments within a larger School of Engineering.

The central Marketing team was providing departments with key market data which was enabling them to tailor the provision of postgraduate taught (PGT) and undergraduate (UG) courses to meet the demand of students, and to ensure that the teaching capacity within a department was used most efficiently.

The Council thanked the Dean and Heads of Departments for their presentations, and agreed that it had been a valuable and informative experience.