

**STUDENT RECRUITMENT TEAM**

**Notes of a meeting held on 7 June 2010**

**Present:** Morag Bell (Chair), Paul Byrne, Chris Carpenter, Ray Dawson, John Dickens, Wendy Ferguson, Martin Harrison, Jon Inegbedion, Howard Jones, Ruth Kinna, Jennifer Nutkins, Justine Sanders, Tony Westaway.

*The Chair welcomed to the meeting Chris Carpenter who would be joining the Student Recruitment and Admissions Section of the Registry on 21 June 2010 and Ray Dawson and Ruth Kinna who would be taking up their posts as Associate Deans (Teaching) for the Faculties of Science and Social Sciences respectively, on 1 August 2010.*

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1. **Apologies for absence**

An apology for his absence was received from Andrew Cooney.

1. **Notes of the meeting held on 26 April 2010**

These were approved.

1. **Matters arising on the notes**

* **University-wide admissions policy for elites athletes**

It was noted that the policy had been endorsed by the three Directorates and the Learning and Teaching Committee for recommendation to Senate.

* **UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor (HTS) status**

The Team was informed that a briefing meeting organised by Universities UK on 28 May 2010 had given universities a opportunity to hear from and question UKBA representatives on a wide range of aspects of the new Points Based System (PBS) for visa applications. Clarification of the new Government’s attitude to

PBS and the publication of a revised policy document and guidelines were still awaited. 30 June 2010 remained the deadline by which applications for HTS status had to be submitted. There was a possibility, however, that this would be extended if further time elapsed prior to a statement from the Government.

* **Comparator data on accommodation costs 2010/2011**

The Team was informed that imago had carried out further research into the weekly accommodation charges levied by competitor institutions for comparable let lengths. Two price ranges had emerged:

*Standard catered: £113.40 - £137.34 (Loughborough £127.10)*

*Self-catered: £104.72 - £112.91 (Loughborough £108.75)*

This information would be disseminated at the Admissions Tutors’ Forum in early July and imago would be asked to clarify whether it would be included in their Open Day presentation.

**Action: JS**

1. **University Open Days 2010: impact of campus civil engineering works**

The Team was advised that a positive and on-going dialogue had been established between Student Recruitment and Outreach and Facilities Management regarding the impact on this year’s University Open Days of the major heating system upgrade project which had just commenced on campus. It was clear that there was a willingness on the part of the contractors and FM staff to work with Security and SOAR staff to minimise disruption and explore ways in which adequate access to East Park departments in particular could be preserved. Signage which explained the purpose of the project would be displayed at a number of points and this would emphasis the benefits which would accrue from the upgrading. The SOAR Team was hoping to recruit additional student helpers to assist in directing visitors.

At least one further meeting between SOAR and FM was scheduled and close liaison would be maintained.

1. **International recruitment: joint funding opportunities**

A paper summarising current partnerships between the UK HE sector and international sponsors of students was presented by the Deputy Director, International Office. These partnerships created opportunities for universities to attract good quality students, gain promotional exposure and also diversify their domicile recruitment base. All the partnerships featured in the paper related to postgraduate recruitment and the majority focussed on research. A common feature of the partnerships was a tuition fee discount approved at institutional level.

The Team endorsed the principle of engagement in these types of collaborative initiatives. The significance of the partnerships to research recruitment was highlighted. It was agreed that the paper would be presented to the next round of Directorates, membership of which included the Associate Deans (Research). It was anticipated that the Research Team would also wish to consider the potential benefits to the University.

**Action: International Office**

It was reported that there were also partnerships which targeted undergraduate recruitment. These would be added to the paper.

**Action: International Office**

1. **Student recruitment from the United States**

Jon Inegbedion, Deputy Director, International Office, presented a report on his recent visit to the NAFSA Conference in Kansas City. This long-standing annual event now attracted delegates from across the globe and was impressive in its scale and scope. Many UK universities were represented (20 with actual stands), ranging from those which recruited strongly from the US, mainly through study abroad programmes, to those such as Loughborough which attracted small numbers currently (43 in 2009/2010). The conference provided an excellent opportunity to gain an impression of the key features and challenges of the US market and a basis on which to offer an initial assessment of its potential for Loughborough.

Overall, the market is a sophisticated one with high expectations and no particular evidence that institutions with well established links feel the need to expand these. HESA data indicates that recruitment to the UK has been static over the last four years at around 15,000 per year.

It needed to be acknowledged, therefore, that should Loughborough decide to give the US priority status as a market to develop, this would call for the deployment of significant resources over an extended period of time and the creation and implementation of a carefully researched and evaluated strategy. A realistic assessment of the likely benefits would be required. Key elements in such a strategy might be:

* Identification and development of existing links
* An invitation to academic departments at Loughborough to bid for involvement
* Targeting of new links based on thorough research
* Use of current students and staff from the US as sources of information and as ambassadors
* Promotion of Loughborough’s involvement n the 2012 Olympics
* Attendance at the NAFSA conference annually
* A review of the existing junior year abroad programme in order to increase its appeal in the US

It was drawn to the Team’s attention that one University – Leeds –was already exploiting the 2012 Olympics on its website and it was agreed to make both the Sport Strategy Group and the Internationalisation Advisory Group aware of this.

**Action: International Office**

It was accepted that a clear steer from the University regarding the US market would be desirable and that a way forward might be to re-draft the current paper into a cost benefit analysis for consideration by Operations Committee. Such an analysis ought not to under-estimate the challenges which would be involved not least in terms of the complexities of the US Federal Loans System, due for radical changes imminently.

The team expressed its appreciation to Jon for preparing his paper so soon after returning from the NAFSA Conference.

1. **Loughborough Students’ Union Project: “Student Cultural Shock and Safety”**

The Team was pleased to learn that a bid submitted by the Students’ Union for a grant from the Prime Minister’s Initiative Fund (Part 2) had been successful. This grant would be used to develop DVDs and videos on the two themes of student culture shock and student safety, as a resource for use by prospective international students. It was understood that the Union would be collaborating with one other university and that there might also be input from UKCISA. The International Office had offered to assist with the project.

1. **Intake targets for 2010 entry**

Minor modifications to UG and PGT international recruitment targets for 2010 entry within the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities were reported and noted. The revised targets would be presented to Operations Committee for approval.

1. **Impact of higher admission requirements for undergraduate recruitment**

The Team received a table which presented three sets of information as follows:

* those programmes which had been given higher entry requirements for 2010 entry than in the previous year
* the latest C to CF conversion rates for the programmes
* examples of the offers made by a sample of universities which had been made the CF choice ahead of Loughborough

There was some evidence to suggest that the raising of the entry requirements had reduced the C to CF conversion rate in certain cases. It was noted that this had been the objective of the change for at least some programmes (eg Economics and Mathematics and Sports Science). Any department expressing concern would be advised not to return the entry requirement to its previous level for at least another year to allow the position to stabilise. It was reported that Computer Science had concluded that its decision to reduce the number of permitted combinations for achieving its standard conditional offer, while maintaining the offer at the same level as previously, represented the only explanation for the decline in its C to CF conversion. When time permitted, further analysis would be carried out to extend the project to those programmes for which entry requirements had not changed and also to map the impact of varying offer levels across a period of three years.

1. **Undergraduate and taught postgraduate recruitment 2010 entry**

The latest admissions data were presented for undergraduate and taught postgraduate entry.

*Undergraduate (UK/EU)*

A first forecast suggested that, overall, the University would fill 75% of its available places prior to the need for any interventions. Only one department – Design and Technology – was predicted to exceed its target (modestly). There would be some scope for concessions, changed course offers and activity in Clearing. Once again, however, the process would require micro-management during Confirmation week in August to ensure that over-recruitment was avoided. The position of the School of Art and Design was noted. It now seemed very likely that the School would fall short of its target as a result of the admissions strategy agreed previously in good faith.

*Undergraduate (International)*

Current figures pointed to a substantial shortfall and departments would need to be encouraged to be flexible when taking decisions on applicants whose results did not meet the requirements of their offers. This applied particularly to English Language. The widely supported decision to increase the minimum acceptable score in the two principal English Language tests, IELTS and TOEFL had undoubtedly deterred some applicants but allowed greater scope for concessions. Missions to the Far East planned for July and August would provide an opportunity for some late recruitment.

*Taught Postgraduate (UK/EU)*

Applications had increased but to date offers and firm acceptances had fallen slightly. It was still a relatively early point in the process, however, in terms of applicants’ replies and there was no reason to suppose that the University’s target would not be met.

*Taught Postgraduate (international)*

A set of outcome scenarios based on the model which had been used in previous years suggested that the University was in line to meet its overall target assuming that the new points based visa application system did not exercise a negative impact. The Team received an oral report on the current position regarding the taught postgraduate admissions process. The considerable burden facing the staff and the efforts they were making were readily acknowledged. Temporary additional recruitment had been sanctioned by the University to boost the total resource and this was being deployed very flexibly in order to address pressure points at each and every point in the process. Concerns continued to be expressed by some departments, however, and the situation was being very closely monitored. Further increases in resources would be sought if necessary. The Team thanked Chris Carpenter for his work on modelling the outcomes.

1. **Dates of meetings for 2010/2011**

To be advised

*The Chair offered the grateful thanks of the Team to Paul Byrne, Martin Harrison and Howard Jones, retiring members, for their valuable contributions to its deliberations.*

Author: Howard Jones

Date: 8 June 2010