

JULY 2016

1. COREMUNICATE TOPICS ON VIDEO

This month's *CoreMunicate* video, which includes an introduction to the *Budget for 2016-17 and Improving our Efficiency* Discussion Topic (below) by Stephen Dauncey, Director of Finance, and a message from the President and Vice-Chancellor about the impact of the recent EU Referendum, can be seen at:

- <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/pss/coremunicate/>

2. REVIEW OF PSS PERFORMANCE AND PRIORITIES FOR 2016-17

Earlier this month, I gave a presentation to senior managers at the annual PSS conference about our performance over the past year and our priorities for the academic year ahead. I will repeat the presentation at an HEI seminar that will be open to all staff **on Friday, 8 July at 12.30pm in the Cordingley Lecture Theatre in Humanities Bridgeford Street**. We will be livestreaming the session on Friday and it will also be available to view at any time after that date at:

- <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/pss/structure/leaders/seminars/>

In the presentation, I take a look back at the performance and the many remarkable achievements of PSS colleagues in the course of the past 12 months in support of the University's core activities and delivering the ambitious *Manchester 2020* Agenda. I am pleased to report that in many fields, the work of our PSS colleagues is now judged by many external organisations to be sector-leading and, inside the University, we are seen by our academic colleagues to be operating increasingly as a single team and delivering an improving service.

I also acknowledge that there are many challenges on the horizon. Some of these will be presented by external events, such as the consequences of the recent EU Referendum and the forthcoming Higher Education Bill. Others will arise from internal circumstances, such as the financial situation and the analysis of PSS costs revealed in the UniForum data (outlined below).

We should be really proud of what we have achieved as a team in 2015-2016. In the academic year ahead, it is vitally important that we stay focused on delivering our key services and agreed priorities in the face of external challenges. We should also recognise that there will also be opportunities in the many changes that are coming.

3. DISCUSSION TOPIC - BUDGET FOR 2016-17 AND IMPROVING OUR EFFICIENCY

Later this month, the Board of Governors will be asked to approve the University's budget for 2016-2017. I would like to thank all of our colleagues in PSS and the wider University community, particularly Stephen Dauncey, our new Director of Finance, who have worked so hard to help us reach an acceptable position for 2016-2017 in a challenging financial environment.

The budget for 2016-2017 anticipates a £6 million shortfall in our surplus (compared to that expected in our five year plan). This is due to increased costs associated with pensions and National Insurance, the loss of research funding from the Higher Education Funding Council (so called QR) and research income and overhead recovery not meeting our aspirational target levels.

Colleagues have made tremendous efforts to mitigate the effects of these changes, but they will still have a big impact on our finances this year and going forward. Indeed, if we take no action, it is clear that our existing financial plans will not allow sufficient investment to enable us to deliver our strategic aims. The £6m shortfall grows across future years and presents a risk to our sustainability in terms of investment, infrastructure and ability to meet student expectations. These challenges are reinforced by the uncertainty created by the recent EU referendum result. The university sector was seen as one of those most at risk from a decision to leave the EU.

The Board is aware of the financial challenges which face the University. Our five year plans are being revisited in order to not just close the gap, but to create the headroom required to meet our aims as laid out in *Manchester 2020*. We already have five key areas where we are looking to increase income or make cost savings. These are:

- an increase in the number of International students;
- increased recovery of overhead costs on our grant income;
- efficiency gains;
- increased Philanthropy; and
- growing our Distance Learning provision.

Whilst many of you will be involved in delivering some of these activities, we all have a key role to play in the area of efficiency. In this month's *CoreMunicate* discussion, I would like you to discuss in your teams what could be done to improve our efficiency and drive forward continuous improvement across the PSS and the University. Please send your ideas through to your own Director or send them through to our email at coremunicate@manchester.ac.uk. We all have a role to play in delivering the improvements in effectiveness and efficiency. We can all make a difference.

4. UNIFORM BENCHMARKING EXERCISE – REPORT AND NEXT STEPS

Over the past few months, there has been significant work undertaken analysing and reviewing the information that we received from the UniForum Benchmarking Project, which gives us a rich picture of functional activities and costs across the whole PSS and how we compare with a sample of other Russell Group universities in the UK. We are confident that the data is robust and we are grateful to those who helped to collect the data last summer.

I shared some of the headlines of the findings from the data with colleagues at the PSS Conference earlier this month and I now want to share the outcomes more widely. The data is analysed at different levels of granularity but an overall analysis of core PSS operations shows that, not surprisingly, The University of Manchester has high absolute levels of cost and numbers of full-time equivalent staff compared to other Russell Group universities involved in the benchmarking. However it also shows that the University spends more, even when the figures are adapted to take into account the relative size and scale of each institution (normalised against revenue) – over 10% higher spending, in fact. This data can be broken down into function and activity areas (not PSS organisational units) and this shows a range of outcomes, from above normalised to below normalised cost.

It is important to remember that high cost is not necessarily a concern, especially where the resource is delivering effective outcomes, and a Service Effectiveness Survey is planned in the autumn to collect feedback on a number of PSS areas. However, given the University's current financial challenges and future uncertainty, it is crucial that the Professional Support Services responds constructively to this data and that we look for opportunities to deliver cost efficiencies for re-investment. We are currently developing an Action Plan to take this forward.

5. EU REFERENDUM

Further to the recent messages from the President and Vice-Chancellor about the impact of the referendum vote for the UK to leave the European Union, I wanted to reaffirm Nancy's assurance that The University of Manchester is, and will remain, not just a UK, but a global university that embraces staff and students, and academic and business partnerships from across the world.

Until we are informed about any detailed Government plans, it is very difficult to predict precise consequences or to offer any unambiguous assurances. The President and Vice-Chancellor has established a group of senior colleagues that will consider expert advice and explore all of the likely consequences in greater detail. That group met for the first time earlier this month. We have set up some web pages (www.manchester.ac.uk/EU) to keep you informed as the situation develops. We have also set up a special email address (EU@manchester.ac.uk) where you can send your comments and queries (recognising, of course, that we may not be able to answer all of your questions at the present time, but we will do our best).

It is particularly important at this time that we welcome and support our current and future colleagues and students from Europe and other continents and show them how much they are valued.

6. CYBER SECURITY TRAINING – ONLINE PHISHING

A phishing email is a malicious email which attempts to trick the recipient into giving out private information, or directs them to a fake website which has been designed to look legitimate. Being tricked by these emails puts the entire University at risk, because of the potential for scammers to gain access to University systems. Taking the short online phishing course could help us all protect the University. You can find the course in your course list at:

- <https://online.manchester.ac.uk>

Phishing and other IT security topics are covered in a series of short videos on the Cyber security website:

- www.manchester.ac.uk/cybersecurity

7. NEW STAFFNET

A new-look StaffNet has now been launched by the Division of Communications and Marketing. The new site gives you better access to the information and services that you need to do your job effectively; a new intuitive and responsive interface; and lots of informative and topical news content from around the campus. You can watch a film on how to use the all-new StaffNet at:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q28umRgFQLk>

Feedback is most welcome – contact staffnet@manchester.ac.uk.

8. CHECK YOUR EQUALITY DATA

I would like to encourage all PSS staff to ensure that their equality monitoring is up-to-date and complete by checking it through MyView at:

- <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/human-resources/current-staff/pay-conditions/online-payslip/>

We need accurate data so that we have a realistic picture of our university community and can channel activities and resources effectively. Updating your data will help us identify any issues we may have in relation to specific groups. The collection of this information is confidential; we don't use your individual information, only combined data to analyse patterns, for example, in our recruitment and current staff profile.

9. OFFICE MOVES – DATA PROTECTION GUIDANCE

Over the summer, some of you may be taking part in relocations and “clearing-out” offices or even buildings. The information security team have developed guidance notes to assist you in safely and securely transporting your data when organising an office move. Personal data can easily be left behind or mislaid, causing damage and distress to the individuals affected, and possibly resulting in a fine for the University. You can see the full guidance note at:

- <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=27134>

10. HAVE A GOOD BREAK

This is the last CoreMunicate of this academic year. We will be back in October. Can I thank you once again for all of your hard work over the past year. I hope that you all find some time over the next couple of months to enjoy a well-earned relaxing break or vacation.

Will Spinks, Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer