



University of Exeter

FACULTY OF ESE – STRATEGIC AWAY DAY MEETING

MINUTES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED BY COUNCIL

28 May 2025

13.10pm-3.15pm

South West Institute of Technology (SWIoT), Streatham Campus

NB text in BLACK for publication; text in BLUE redacted for publication

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COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Quentin Woodley	Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council
Sir Richard Atkins	Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair of Council
Sally Cabrini	Pro-Chancellor and Senior Independent Governor
Professor Lisa Roberts	President and Vice-Chancellor
Professor Dan Charman	Senior Vice-President and Provost
Professor Tim Quine	Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)
Dr Sarah Hodge	Senate Representative
Professor Karen Knapp	Senate Representative
Professor Sue Prince	Senate Representative
Damaris Anderson-Supple	Independent Member
Nicholas Cheffings	Independent Member
Andrew Greenway	Independent Member
Karime Hassan	Independent Member
Salam Katbi	Independent Member
Alison Reed	Independent Member

Malcolm Skingle	Independent Member
Tim Weller	Independent Member
Glenn Woodcock	Independent Member (<i>online</i>)
Sarah Matthews-DeMers	Independent Member
Elaine Cordy	Professional Services Representative
Alex Martin	Guild President, Exeter Students' Guild
Connie Chilcott	President Exeter, Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union

STANDING ATTENDEE

Professor Adrian Harris	Chief Medical Officer (Royal NHS Devon)
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SECRETARY

Mike Shore-Nye	Senior Vice-President and Registrar & Secretary
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STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Dave Stacey	Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Executive Divisional Director of Finance, Infrastructure and Commercial Services
Ali Chambers	Chief Executive Officer, Exeter Students' Guild
Dr Jeremy Diaper	Assistant Director, Governance (minutes)
Imelda Rogers	Deputy Registrar and Executive Divisional Director of Human Resources

APOLOGIES

Rebecca Boomer-Clark	Independent Member
Sarah Matthews-DeMers	Independent Member
Adrian Harris	Standing Attendee

FACULTY OF ESE: SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

Professor Alex Gerbasi	Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean
Steve Wood	Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Business School
Professor Dave Hosken	Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Professor Nicky King	Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Professor Angus Buckling	Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Impact)
Professor Stuart Bearhop	Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement)
James Hutchinson	Director of Faculty Operations

91. Chair's Welcome and Declarations of Interest

91.1 The Chair welcomed Council members to the Strategic Away Day for the Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy.

92. Introduction to the Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy (CNL/111/24-25 Strictly Confidential)

The Chair invited the Pro-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of ESE to deliver a presentation introducing the Faculty of Environment, Science and Economy. Full pre-reading and background information was circulated in advance and a condensed version of the presentation was delivered on the day which has been filed with the record of the meeting;

92.1 Council noted the following key achievements across the Faculty of ESE:

92.1.1 Top 25 in the UK for all disciplines within the Complete University Guide 2025;

92.1.2 Ranked 12th globally and 1st in the UK for Climate Action (Times Higher Education UK Impact Ranking);

92.1.3 Over 90% of research was internationally excellent across Business, Engineering, Environmental Sciences, Maths & Physics;

92.1.4 Triple Crown accredited Business School (EQUIS, AACSB, AMBA);

92.2 The Faculty was large and diverse including a total staff FTE of 762, over 13,000 FTE students and 3 Institutes, including: Institute for Data Science & Artificial Intelligence; Global Systems Institute; Environmental and Sustainability Institute;

92.2 In relation to the SWOT Analysis:

92.2.1 Key strengths included the diverse portfolio range and interdisciplinarity; top ranked subjects with Robust research metrics (eg Climate & Sustainability, metamaterials, Circular Economy); and Strong Departmental Culture, including focus on innovation and entrepreneurship;

92.2.2 Key opportunities included: Exeter Engineering 2030; enhancing Philanthropy, Reputation and Subject Expertise; TNE and expansion of online/executive education;

92.2.3 Key weaknesses included: International student recruitment challenges & reliance on tuition fees; NSS inconsistency in quality across departments; inconsistent QS rankings across departments;

92.2.4 Key threats included: Political and geo-political environmental, immigration and visa issues; increasing competition and declining international market; Faculty Scale as % of the University size and income;

92.3 In relation to NSS it was noted that there was a mixed performance, with a Faculty 2024 score of 79.7% vs a KPI of 81.3%. The highest areas of NSS performance were in relation to Mining and Minerals, Geology and Natural Sciences;

92.4 The Mining & Minerals score in Graduate Outcomes was 100%, with Computer Science, Engineering and Geology all scoring over 90%;

In Confidence – Closed Minute

93. ESE Faculty Roadmap and Strategic Priorities for 2030 (CNL/111/24-25 Strictly Confidential)

The Pro-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of ESE delivered a presentation on the ESE Faculty Roadmap and Strategic Priorities for 2030.

93.1. The major Initiatives being undertaken to support Strategy 2030 in the Faculty, included:

93.1.1 Accelerating Data Science & Artificial Intelligence (ADA);

93.1.2 Business 2030;

93.1.3 Exeter Engineering;

93.1.4 Penryn 2.0

93.2 It was recognised that each of these initiatives would be pivotal to the continued enhancement of the Faculty and overall success of the University as they would serve as key enablers to increase research income generation and help to deliver a financial surplus;

93.3 The following key Educational Priorities were noted:

93.3.1 In relation to Student Experience: building inclusive departmental communities, strengthening consistency in assessment and feedback, highlighting good practice in assessment and feedback;

93.3.2 In relation to Teaching Efficiency: Growing Degree Apprenticeships, online programmes and TNE; Reducing the number of PGT module credits (-905 over 3 years);

93.3.3 In relation to Graduate Outcomes: Re-embedding placement activity within departments and enhancing student confidence in skills acquisition and articulation;

93.4 QS rankings were driven by strategic investment, sustained quality focus, marketing and reputation management. The Faculty continued to carefully review competitor institutions to identify areas to learn from and emerging strategic opportunities;

93.5 The major research successes in the Faculty since October 2023 were noted, which included research income generation from UKRI, ARIA and EPSRC funded research projects. The Faculty was also focused on improving research cost recovery, with academics and professional service staff provided with guidance to support understanding of how improvements could be made and the importance of submitting applications to funders with the greatest levels of cost recovery as a priority.

94. Faculty Spotlight – Hub and Spoke Model (CNL/111/24-25 Strictly Confidential)

The Chair invited Professor Nicky King (Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education) to deliver a presentation on the Hub and Spoke Model.

- 94.1. The Faculty was developing a ‘hub and spoke’ model to share interdisciplinary core modules and to enable an efficient model for portfolio diversification, consolidation of similar module materials and repurposing core content to be utilised across different subject areas to reduce teaching load;
- 94.2. The ‘hub and spoke’ model would enable continuity across student experience and enable students to benefit from specific high-quality content developed by experts. The materials could also be utilised in other departments within a similar disciplinary context to enable efficiencies in delivery and to maximise educational portfolio diversification, including: online courses, micro credentials and Degree Apprenticeships;
- 94.3. That the approach to the ‘hub and spoke’ model would also resolve particular timetabling issues being encountered and help to minimize teaching load by enabling development of materials which could be utilised across different course structures and in both formative and summative assessments;
- 94.4. Initial pilots had been run across data science, statistics, coding and management and had been received enthusiastically by students and staff prior to a wider roll out. Staff were particularly excited to utilise this mechanism to teach in a more efficient way and recognised the wider opportunities it would enable in terms of interdisciplinarity and wider collaborations across the University;

Closed Minute – Commercial in Confidence**95. Spotlight on Research**

- 95.1. The Chair invited Professor Richard Betts (Chair in Climate Impacts at the University of Exeter and Head of Climate Impacts Research at the Met Office Hadley Centre) to deliver a presentation on Climate Impacts exploring the climate impacts and risks that needed to be adapted to and consideration of how future climate change may affect the rate of global emissions cuts needed to meet Paris Agreement Goals;
- 95.2. The Chair invited Professor Alistair Hibbins (Director of Exeter’s Centre of Metamaterials Research and Innovation) and David Wright (Chair in Electronic and Computer Engineering) to deliver a presentation on metamaterials and artificially-structured materials with extraordinary properties not found in nature and applied to multiple different sectors and industries, including: health, medicine, defence, Information and Communications Technology.

96. Research Showcase (CNL/111/24-25 Strictly Confidential)

- 96.1. The Chair thanked the Professor Alex Gerbasi for an engaging and informative faculty visit and extended his thanks on behalf of Council to all members involved. All members of Council were then invited to participate in a research showcase which involved a wide range of staff and students across Engineering, Ecology and Conservation, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Geography, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics and Statistics, Computer Science

and the Business School.