



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

The Senate, 22 June 2011

Report of the Vice-Chancellor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents a summary of key background information on recent developments, and is based on the Vice-Chancellor's report to Council on 11 April 2011.

The Vice-Chancellor will introduce the report at the meeting and will provide members of the Senate with the opportunity to raise questions on any aspect of the report.

1. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 Government policies

A number of recent speeches by David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, have outlined and emphasised aspects of developing government policy. The White Paper on higher education has been postponed, reflecting the fact that several areas of the government's plans for the reform of HE remain unclear. Themes from the speeches included:

- Universities and social mobility; arguing that the new funding arrangements, coupled with the new Access Agreements with OFFA, could enable greater social mobility. The role of the most selective universities (of which Sheffield is one), particularly as a route to the professions, was emphasised.
- By 2014-15, universities could have 10% more cash for teaching than at present, financed through loans and graduate contributions.
- Willetts noted that the funding reforms are 'scrupulously neutral between subjects', and rebutted the perceived threat from reductions in HEFCE teaching and research funding to the arts, humanities and social sciences.
- A reminder that charging fees of £9,000 should be exceptional; and that if average graduate contributions exceed £7,500, the government would have to find savings from elsewhere in HE.
- Opening up HE to new providers; and an emphasis on the role of FE colleges in delivering HE, possibly through an external awarding body. The government envisages a more flexible system, in which funding follows the student, and will seek to free up student number controls to create more of a market. Options are likely to be included in the White Paper.
- Improving student information; developing a Key Information Set of 17 standard pieces of information; and encouraging the use of a student charter or agreement in each institution.
- The impact on universities of schools and NHS reforms, and proposals for changes to student immigration rules.

- The impact of higher undergraduate graduate contributions on postgraduate study. Adrian Smith's Postgraduate Review Group (of which the Vice-Chancellor is a member) has been reconvened to examine this issue further.
- A 20% weighting on 'impact' in the new Research Excellence Framework (REF), which succeeds the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) in 2014 (see further 6.4 below).
- Employability of graduates, emphasising the value of a university degree, and the fact that the lifetime earnings of graduates remain over £100,000 higher than non-graduates.
- The importance of good information, advice and guidance for school students making curricula choices, and university students seeking jobs and careers.

The full text of the speeches is available at:

- Dearing Conference, Nottingham, 17 February 2011:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-universities-and-social-mobility>
- UUK Conference, 25 February 2011:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-uuk-spring-conference-2011>
- British Academy, 1 March 2011:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-arts-humanities-social-sciences>
- Guardian HE Summit, 16 March 2011:
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/speeches/david-willetts-guardian-he-summit>

1.2 Widening Participation: Guidance to the Office for Fair Access

In a guidance letter sent to the Office for Fair Access, Ministers have asked its Director to be more challenging and demanding of universities seeking to charge higher fees. The letter sets out how the Director of Fair Access should make his assessment of access agreements submitted by universities wishing to charge more than £6,000. The strengthened guidance requires that:

- Universities will have to show real measurable progress against benchmarks.
- They will also have to do more to reduce the number of students who drop out.
- The Director will require more investment in access measures from universities whose progress against agreed benchmarks is not sufficient.
- University Access Agreements will be reviewed annually instead of the previous five-year approval cycle.

The government has also announced details of the National Scholarships Programme that will provide help for students from disadvantaged backgrounds with the cost of attending university. Around 50,000 students a year could be awarded a scholarship from 2014. Scholarships will be worth at least £3,000 for individual students in tuition discounts and other benefits.

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/higher-education/students>

1.3 Support for part-time students

David Willetts announced on 4 February the details of how eligible part-time students in England will benefit from new loans for tuition from 2012-13. The loans replace a system of means-tested fee grant and study grant for part-time students and introduce for the first time a level playing field for full-time and part-time study in respect of tuition costs.

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=417812&NewsAreaID=2>

1.4 Freedom of speech on campus

Universities UK has published a report examining how universities can promote freedom of speech on campus, while protecting the welfare of staff, students and the wider community. Recommendations to institutions contained in the report reflect the University's current practice.

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Documents/FreedomOfSpeechOnCampusRightsAndResponsibilitiesInUKuniversities.pdf>

2. ACADEMIC STRATEGY

2.1 Academic and professional services planning

- The University Executive Board has considered updates to faculty strategies prepared following local planning round discussions. These provide an overview of activity undertaken during the previous year and highlight priorities for 2011-12. Similar updates from the cross-cutting Pro-Vice-Chancellors have also been considered.
- The professional services planning round is currently in progress and the resulting strategic update will be presented to the University Executive Board in May 2011.
- Faculties have updated their risk registers and these have been presented to Risk Review Group. The Group has thereby been able to gain assurance on the implementation of the University's risk management processes and better understand the risks faced by individual faculties. The Group will consider updated professional services risk registers in June 2011.

2.2 Student numbers

- Student number targets for 2011-12 to 2014-15 for Quota Controlled (QCT) and non-Quota Controlled (nQCT) categories of students have been agreed with faculties; the former are subject to HEFCE confirmation of student number control limits from 2012-13 (see also below).
- On 2 February 2011, HEFCE announced the 2011 entry Student Number Control Limit (SNCL) for institutions. A 2% uplift to the 2010 control number has been applied to all institutions, representing an increase of 86 places for the University. These have been provisionally allocated to faculties, with a significant proportion being allocated to the Faculty of Engineering to enable recruitment to new programmes involving nuclear engineering.
- Work has been undertaken to determine the corporate level student intake targets to be included in the University's financial forecast income projections. The resulting departmental intake targets will inform admissions for 2011-12 entry onwards. The difference between the more prudent assumptions for nQCT numbers used in the financial forecasts and the stretch targets used by departments encourages departments to achieve ambitious levels of intake without overstressing the financial forecasts.

2.3 Student recruitment

- Figures for applications for 2011 entry as at 1 March 2011 show increases and decreases on the previous year as follows:
 - Home undergraduate: -15%
 - Overseas undergraduate: -3%
 - Home postgraduate taught: +8%
 - Overseas postgraduate taught: +45%

- Home postgraduate research: +2%
- Overseas postgraduate research: +41%
- The decrease in the number of home applications to undergraduate programmes has been carefully examined, and reasons for this reduction include increases in entry requirements and the discontinuation of a range of programmes. The current decline should also be read in the light of the exceptional increase in the number of applications for 2010 entry (+17%).

2.4 National university performance metrics

- The 2011 Guardian Postgraduate Tables were published on 15 February 2011. The University appears in 27 of the 46 areas for which tables are provided. The tables do not rank institutions, but allow users to compare universities against a range of measures and rank them against these individual measures if they wish.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/series/postgraduate-subject-tables-2011>
- The Times Higher Education annual Student Experience Survey was published on 17 February 2011 and ranked the University second (compared with fourth in 2010). The Times Higher surveys over 13,000 undergraduates on 21 factors ranging from the quality of teaching to the social life on campus. Loughborough was ranked first in the survey in 2011 (for the fifth year running). Within the survey, Sheffield was ranked top for its Students' Union and joint top for its library and its social life.
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=415180>
- On 10 March 2011, Times Higher Education published its first World Reputation Ranking, based on the results of the Academic Reputation Survey undertaken during March-May 2010. Universities ranked in the top 100 include 11 in the UK, all of which are members of the Russell Group. Sheffield's position falls between 91 and 100 (institutions ranked 50 or below are banded and not shown individually).
<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=415429>

3. FINANCE

3.1 Financial results to 31 January 2011

The financial results to 31 January 2011 have been circulated. Headlines of the results for the six months ended 31 January 2011 are as follows:

- total income of £217.9m against a budget to date of £212.2m;
- total expenditure of £198.1m against a budget to date of 214.0m;
- operating surplus of £19.2m (after indirect contribution) against a budgeted deficit of £2.2m.

Key differences between the actual results and the budget are as follows:

- Based on the 1 December census of student numbers, tuition fee income is £3.8m higher than budget for the six months ending 31 January 2011, with high levels of recruitment for overseas undergraduate and postgraduate students, offsetting a small shortfall in the income from home undergraduates.
- Research income is £1.6m higher than budget, although this is matched by an equivalent increase in research expenditure.
- Residences, Catering and Conferences are reporting a breakeven position compared to a budgeted deficit of £0.4m, with occupancy being 99% compared to 93% in 2009-10.

- Expenditure across both academic and professional services departments is less than budget. Core expenditure in academic departments is £8.5m (12.9%) less than budget and in professional services departments is £1.3m (5.3%) less than budget. This is due to a combination of staff vacancies and tight cost control, but also suggests a cautious approach to expenditure commitments.
- Shared costs, which include utility bills, insurance, debt charges, scholarships and bursaries are £3.8m (8.4%) less than budget.
- Other income from external activities, such as services rendered, conferences, consultancy and short courses and donation income, is £1.6m higher than budget, whilst expenditure arising from these activities is £3.6m less than budget.
- Set against the positive differences, HEFCE grant income is £1.4m less than included in the budget. In part this is due to a reduction in the Teaching Grant from HEFCE (£0.3m for the year to date) notified to the University after the budget was set. Income from other grant funded activities is also less than budget, but is matched by reduced expenditure.
- It should be noted that, set against the positive position outlined above, a further reduction in the level of HEFCE grant is anticipated before the end of the year. The University forecasts assumed recurrent grant income would be £115.7m. In July 2010 HEFCE announced a reduction of £0.6m. The grant letter of 17 March 2010 (see 3.5 below) includes a further reduction in 2010-11 of £2.8m, reducing the 2010-11 recurrent grant income to £112.3m.

3.2 Tuition fee income

Following the 1 December student number census we compare our forecast income position against budget:

- Overall student fee income for 2010-11 is forecast to be £7.3m ahead of budget.
- Fees from overseas undergraduate and postgraduate taught students exceeded budget by £3.5m and £4.2m respectively following strong recruitment.
- Fees from postgraduate research students are forecast to exceed budget by £0.7m.
- Fees from home undergraduate students are forecast to be £1.2m under budget.

The forecast is currently being revised as part of the financial forecasting process.

3.3 Financial forecasts 2010-11 to 2014-15

- The financial forecasting process for 2010-11 to 2014-15 is underway. The forecasts will incorporate reductions to HEFCE grant income, and will reflect the introduction of higher home undergraduate student fees.
- Council will be requested to review the financial forecasts and approve the 2011-12 budgets at its meeting on 11 July 2011. The forecasts will be revised prior to submission to HEFCE, and Council will be requested to approve them at its meeting in November 2011.
- HEFCE has asked institutions that submitted full financial forecasts in December 2010 to confirm whether they will be resubmitting the forecasts or remain confident in the funding assumptions underpinning them and will therefore not be resubmitting. The University's response will indicate that it does not intend to resubmit its forecasts.
- A review of the financial forecast submitted in December 2010 against the resulting financial forecasts for future home undergraduate fee income will be undertaken and will be reported to Council as part of the Project 2012 report.

3.4 HEFCE grant letter

- The annual grant letter from HEFCE to the University was received on 14 March 2011.
- The total HEFCE recurrent grant funding for 2010-11 is £112.3m which represents a reduction of 2.3% from 2010-11.
- The total HEFCE provisional recurrent grant to the University of Sheffield for 2011-12 is £109.4m. This represents a 3.5% reduction in recurrent grant funding compared with a sector average decrease 4.1%.

	2010/11		2011/12		Increase / (decrease) in funding from 2010/11 %	Increase/ (decrease) in funding from 2010/11 for the sector %
	Provisional grant March 2010 £ '000	"Final" grant July 2010 £ '000	Amended as per circular letter 09/2011 £ '000	Provisional grant March 2011 (and 06/2011 re HEIF) £ '000		
Teaching funding	67,669	67,044	65,165	62,124	(4.67)%	(5.37)%
Research funding	45,977	45,977	45,185	44,412	(1.71)%	(1.07)%
HEIF	1,900	1,900	1,900	2,850	50.00%	
Total	115,546	114,921	112,251	109,386	(2.55)%	
Total excl. HEIF			110,351	106,536	(3.46)%	(4.08)%

3.5 Review of the University of Sheffield Pension Scheme (USPS)

- This is a separate item on the Council agenda.

4. CAPITAL PROJECTS

4.1 CIF programme 2008-11

- All projects are progressing satisfactorily. The HEFCE capital funding award for 2008-11 totalled £57.8m. The defrayment of CIF1 expenditure will meet the HEFCE deadline of 31 March 2011.

4.2 Future CIF funding

- The recent HEFCE announcement concerning Capital Investment Fund allocations indicates that the total capital funding (CIF2) award for the University is £18.3m, to be received over four years to 2014-15. This is a reduction of £10.6m from the current forecast figure of £28.9m, and a reduction of 68.3% compared to CIF1. The full value of the University's capital pipeline programme is £150m, of which external funding of £18.3m is confirmed, leaving the remainder to be funded by the University. A paper on the capital pipeline programme appears separately on the Council agenda.
- The CIF2 light touch status has been retained by the University. There are a number of conditions set by HEFCE, to which the University is responding by 31 March 2011. Subject to satisfactory resolution of the conditions, the CIF2 award will be awarded without restriction on an equal instalment basis.

4.3 Future Capital Pipeline 2011-12 to 2015-16

- The capital pipeline approval process is following a three phase approach:
 - Phase 1 – includes full business cases for certain projects which require an early start date and will form part of a separate report to Council on 11 April 2011.
 - Phase 2 – includes projects which will commence over a two year horizon and

will be presented to Council in July 2011.

- Phase 3 - thereafter annually in July, Council will be presented with capital cases which will commence over the next two year horizon to maintain a rolling programme of investment.

5. THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

5.1 Progress against KPIs

- Four Periodic Reviews have taken place during February and March 2011, in the Departments of History, Automatic Control & Systems Engineering, and Economics, and in the School of Education. These successful reviews highlighted a range of strengths and innovative practice, and a number of recommendations.
- The University has received student feedback collated for the International Student Barometer survey. It is notable that out of all the UK HEI participants, the University has made the most progress against student satisfaction with the quality of learning and teaching. Highlights from the results for the University include:
 - good feedback on the Students' Union, clubs and societies;
 - number one in the Russell Group for assessment and feedback;
 - an improvement against almost every measure of the survey compared with last year.
- The University's mid-cycle report to the Quality Assurance Agency, which provides an update on significant changes and any actions taken in response to our last Institutional Audit (2007), has been accepted.

5.2 Strategic developments in learning and teaching

- The development of the University's new Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy is continuing and will take account of the longer term issues arising from Project 2012.
- The Careers Service will deliver a new University-wide accredited Career Management Skills module from 2011-12. This aims to provide students with an understanding of the concept of employability, together with the opportunity to develop relevant career planning skills.
- A joint Master's programme in Global Politics and Law has been established with Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan. The programme, delivered over two years, will require students to spend time in Sheffield and at Doshisha University.
- The Sheffield Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) scheme, piloted by CILASS, is now established as a core activity, and 104 applications have been received this year. Successful applicants receive a bursary to enable them to undertake a significant piece of independent research or to contribute to a larger piece of research currently being undertaken by an academic in their discipline over the summer period. Previous participants have noted that the experience enhances their research skills, provides them with a greater insight into the practice of research in their field, exposes them to the possibility of further study, and enhances their CV in relation to applying for postgraduate study and funding.
- The use of A* grades in entry requirements has been considered but will not be introduced for the time being.

5.3 Other student-related issues

- Student Services has been leading two cross-institution teams in recent weeks to respond to the implications of the disaster in Japan and the political unrest in Libya. Support has been offered to our own students in Japan, and to Japanese and Libyan students on campus. There is a range of inter-connecting issues, such as funding; personal support; academic progression; visas/immigration; as well as community and security matters.
- Following a period of consultation which elicited more than 30,000 responses, the Home Office has set out firm plans for the future of the international student visa system ('tier 4' of points based immigration). The outcome is much less problematic than the original proposals, although there are continuing concerns around matters such as the removal of post-graduation working rights, where full details are yet to emerge. We shall continue to monitor closely the likely implications.
- Student Services has obtained grant funding from JISC to develop a new set of web-based resources to support students with mental health difficulties. This builds on a project led from Student Services over recent months focussing on those students with complex mental health needs. We are delighted to have obtained external funding which will enable us to further develop our student support systems, using innovative technologies.

6. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

6.1 Research awards

- New awards for the 12 months ended February 2011 totalled £103.1m, which compares favourably with £95m at the end of February 2010.
- The order book at the end of February 2011 for revenue research work yet to be undertaken is £186m.
- The total value of contract research with non-funding organisations decreased slightly to £22,039,000 in 2009-10 from £22,258,000 in 2008-09 against a KPI target of £25,034,700. The full sector results will be released in May, when a full competitive analysis will be completed.
- Recent new large awards include £2.9m in European Regional Development Funding via Yorkshire Forward to Professor Keith Ridgway as part of the development of the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre and £1m to Professor Terry Burke from the Natural Environment Research Council for ongoing provision of the NERC Biomolecular Analysis Facility.
- Research and Innovation Services have developed an EU Income Generation, Innovation and Engagement Strategy to improve the University's positioning for, and market share of, European research funding. R&IS are working with faculties to support implementation of the strategy's recommendations.

6.2 HEIF funding

- HEFCE has confirmed a budget allocation of £2.85m per annum for Sheffield for the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) for the period 2011-14. While this is the highest allocation possible (the budget is capped at £2.85m) and a significant increase on the 2009-10 budget of £1.9m, the University was towards the bottom of the ranking in terms of the income metrics used to determine the allocation.

6.3 Strategic developments and partnerships

- The first of the UK's new network of Technology Innovation Centres (TICs) was launched on 17 March at the University of Sheffield's Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) with Boeing. The Government is investing over £200m to create an elite network of TICs, as part of the government's Growth Review. This first TIC will focus on High Value Manufacturing, and will be jointly operated by the AMRC and Nuclear AMRC as part of a consortium of seven manufacturing and process research centres. The other centres are the Advanced Forming Research Centre, Glasgow; the Centre for Process Innovation, Teesside; the Manufacturing Technology Centre, Coventry; the National Composites Centre, Bristol; and the Warwick Manufacturing Group. It is expected that the Manufacturing TIC will secure £25m over five years and will be well placed to support progress in the areas of: high-performance batteries for electric vehicles; off-shore wind turbines; new nuclear power plant; and a new generation of fuel-efficient passenger aircraft.
- Vestas Technology, a wind turbine manufacturing company undertaking research in the UK, has chosen the Department of Automatic Control & Systems Engineering as its controls research partner. The decision was made following a competitive process involving five universities.

6.4 Research Excellence Framework 2014

- HEFCE has recently announced the full membership of the peer review panels for the Research Excellence Framework. The University has 13 members across a spread of panels, including two Sub-Panel Chairs: Professor Jon Nicholl (Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care), and Professor Colin Hay (Politics and International Studies).
- HEFCE has recently confirmed further details of the REF including the weightings for the three assessment elements which will be common across all units of assessment:
 - Outputs: 65% of the overall quality profile;
 - Impact: 20% of the overall quality profile;
 - Environment: 15% of the overall quality profile.

6.5 Research Council news

- Following the Chancellor's announcement of the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010, allocations for government-funded research bodies were published on 20 December alongside Delivery Plans outlining Research Councils' priorities for the period 2011-15. Overall, the settlement was less severe than originally anticipated, although there are variations between the individual Research Councils, with only the MRC and STFC receiving an increase in real terms, and many of the flat cash positions over the period representing a more significant cut when inflation is taken into account. The funding settlement requires efficiencies and/or cuts to be made and is committed to delivering significant policy objectives, including investment in strategic 'grand challenges' working with non-academic partners, and maximising impact. R&IS is working closely with the Faculty Directors of Research and Innovation to ensure continued competitiveness in the new funding climate.
- Research Councils UK have been considering in detail how to implement the efficiency savings recommended in the Wakeham Report as well as how to achieve the required additional savings announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement. The resulting report, *Research Councils UK Efficiency 2011-15: Ensuring Excellence with Impact*, sets out how the Research Councils intend to make these savings, which will include decreases in indirect costs as well as a more

constrained environment for equipment funding. The RCUK recognises that these changes are being introduced in a tight timeframe and may pose challenges for individual HEIs. The University is assessing the details and will agree with Faculties how best to implement them.

- The University was commended for the quality of its submission to the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's recent Shaping Capability exercise, in which universities were requested to provide details of their expertise and interactions in EPSRC programme areas. The Sheffield submission demonstrated the University's critical mass in areas such as energy, water and manufacturing, including areas where funding for activities does not come primarily from EPSRC, and it will therefore prove useful in raising the profile of our capabilities in these areas with the Research Council. Funding research based on capabilities will be a key theme of EPSRC over the next four years and beyond, focusing on the excellence of the research and its 'importance' to the UK economy and society.

6.6 Research student matters

- The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council has announced its new competitive Doctoral Training Programme scheme. The programme will fund a smaller number of larger, multi-institutional partnerships, compared to the previous Quota scheme, which primarily awarded training grants at departmental or Faculty level. These larger partnerships will enable greater coordination in the provision of specialist training. A total of no more than 15-20 DTPs are likely to be funded (compared to the current 89 separate Quota Doctoral Training Grants), and most will be multi-institutional. It is strategically important for Sheffield to host a DTP, and preparations for the bid are underway.

7. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 Project 2012

- Project 2012 appears as a separate item on the Council agenda.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES

8.1 Outstanding achievements

- Benjamin Henning (Geography), a postgraduate researcher, was named in the Institute for Public Policy Research North's list of the 50 brightest and most talented people in the North of England.
- Professor Bob Shoemaker (History), with a colleague from the University of Hertfordshire, won the Longman-History Today Awards, for his work on digital history projects including the Old Bailey's Proceedings Online and London Lives.
- The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Keith Burnett, was named in the Yorkshire Business Insider 100 Power Survey.

8.2 New key appointments

- Dr Fionn Stevenson has been appointed to a Chair in Sustainable Design in the School of Architecture with effect from 1 September 2011. Dr Stevenson is currently a Reader in Sustainable Design at Oxford Brookes University.
- Dr Steve Fotios has been appointed to a Chair in Lighting and Visual Perception in the School of Architecture with effect from 1 February 2011. Dr Fotios is currently Senior Lecturer at the University of Sheffield.

9. MEDIA COVERAGE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

9.1 External relations: regional and national

- Global Manufacturing Week was held in Sheffield during the week beginning 14 March. Various University departments were involved in City-wide events to encourage closer working between the University and local companies.
- The annual dinner for local MPs, jointly hosted by Professor Keith Burnett and Professor Philip Jones (Sheffield Hallam University) was held in early March. This was a useful event to ensure elected representatives were fully briefed on issues affecting the two Universities in Sheffield.
- The Secretary of State for the Environment and Climate Change, the Rt Hon Chris Huhne MP, visited the University in March as part of a wider visit to the Sheffield city region. He saw examples of the University's research in the areas of climate change and renewable energy, and met the team at the Siemens Wind Power Research Centre.
- The University and Sheffield Hallam University joined forces to provide a programme of lectures, exhibitions and hands-on activities as part of National Science Week (11-20 March 2011). The South Yorkshire programme was one of the largest in the UK, with more than 400 events taking place throughout the week.
- The University's annual meeting of Court was held on 2 March, to which guests from the city and region were invited, as well as members of Court. The meeting was followed by a 'University Highlights' event, which enabled guests to meet staff and students from across the University and learn about their work. The new format was well received, and the invitation list will be expanded further for the 2012 meeting.

9.2 External relations: community

- A major public engagement event was organised for half-term week in the Winter Gardens. Providing a week of fun educational activities, the event also showcased the positive contribution of students and staff to the wider city region. 'Dream Bigger Dreams' week featured over 40 sessions over 6 days, and was attended by 44,000 people (compared with 33,500 during the same week in 2010). A similar public engagement event is being organised for early summer in Rotherham town centre.
- The six Community Reps (students employed by the University to be involved in Community Groups and other local activities) continue to engage with local neighbours. Each is planning a community event in their area for spring/early summer:
- Various community meetings/events were attended and supported over the period including: Group of Groups, Broomhall; Crookes Residential Association; City Centre Community Forum; Broomhill Neighbourhood Action Group; Broomhill Ward Action Plan Conference; Walkley Community Forum; Broomhill Forum; Broomhill Forum Executive; Broomhall Welcome Club; Good Neighbours, great communities meeting; City Neighbourhood Action Group; Crookes Community Safety Meeting.
- External Relations hosted a visit to the University from the Dronfield 41 Club, an extension of the better known charitable organisation, Round Table.

9.3 Media coverage

- The University generated 1,351 articles in the press and media between 11 January 2011 and 17 March 2011. This amounted to £2,450,992 in AVE (the amount the coverage would have cost if paid in terms of advertising). This included coverage on *BBC Look North*, *BBC Radio 4*, *ITV Calendar*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Sun*,

Times Higher Education, New Scientist, Professional Engineering, Yorkshire Post and Sheffield Star.

- Research led by Dr Petra Meier (School of Health and Related Research) found that increasing the cost of alcohol resulted in reductions in crime, having carried out an assessment of all published studies on alcohol price and crime. This story was featured on *BBC News, BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio London, BBC Radio Leeds, The Guardian, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Politics.co.uk* and *Yorkshire Post*.
- Alex Baker and Chris Rose, two PhD students (Mechanical Engineering) sent a helium balloon up to the edge of space with video cameras attached, filming at heights of 37km and travelling over 160km from Derbyshire to Cambridgeshire. The video has been watched online over 200,000 times, and the story was featured on *ITV Daybreak, ITV Calendar, BBC News BBC Radio Sheffield, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Wired, Yorkshire Post and Sheffield Star*
- Benjamin Henning, a postgraduate research student (Geography) produced a map of the world showing earthquake risk and population, following the earthquake in Japan. This story received coverage on US public radio, *MSNBC, Press Tex (Austria), The Engineer, Click Green* and *Sheffield Star*.

9.4 Internal communications

- The Vice-Chancellor's Annual Address to Staff took place on 16 March. This was very well attended and received excellent feedback. The address focused on the University's achievements over the past year, an assessment of the current environment in the Higher Education sector, and a look forward at the challenges of the coming year.
- Communications from the Vice-Chancellor to all staff have continued over this period to reflect the rapidly changing external environment. A further round of Open Forums with staff have taken place this month.
- The University's Strategic Plan has been launched internally, and to external partners. Within the University, the Plan is being rolled out through Heads of Department, with the new Guiding Principles (our values) included for discussion in the staff induction process and the annual staff review and development process, as well as featuring in articles in Overview and other internal communications.

9.5 Awards

- The University of Sheffield has been ranked first in the country for its Students' Union, as well as joint first for its social life, library facilities and accommodation, according to the *Times Higher Education* student experience survey. The University was placed second overall, up from fourth place last year.

10. SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING

- In its role as principal regulator of HEIs as charities, HEFCE requires an annual declaration that serious incidents have been appropriately reported. This declaration is made on behalf of members of Council, and it is therefore appropriate that they should be informed on a regular basis about incidents reported to HEFCE. HEFCE defines a serious incident as 'one which has resulted in, or could result in, a significant loss of funds or a significant risk to a charity's property, work, beneficiaries or reputation'.
- Details of any serious incidents reported to HEFCE will be notified to Council through this report.
- During the period since 1 February 2011, no serious incidents have required report to HEFCE.