The University of Kent is a successful organisation which has developed and thrived due to the efforts and talents of its staff. The University values its very good employee relations and its excellent record of encouraging staff to achieve their ambitions. The University of Kent’s HR Strategy was launched in June 2010 and was written with a view to supporting our staff to continue to develop and excel and to ensure their contribution to the success of the University's Institutional Plan. A great deal was accomplished in 2010/11 and 2011/12 builds on those successes and expands its ambitions even further.

A report on 2011/12 accomplishments so far this year are outlined below according to the four themes of the HR Strategy:

### 1. Developing Leadership and Organisational Capabilities

#### Activity and Achievements since November 2011

- Two Deans have received sponsorship and are attending the external Leadership Foundation for Higher Education's (LFHE) *Top Management Programme (TMP)*.
- The 2011/12 *HLMP* is underway with a cohort of 14. Although the sessions have been well received by those who attend, consistent participation by all members continues to be a challenge. Although all dates were communicated as far as possible in advance, other work commitments tend to draw staff away regularly.
- The new pilot *Leadership for Areas of Significant Responsibility (LASR)* programme designed for senior managers in professional services and academic staff with leadership roles was launched in March 2012 following a line manager briefing in February with a full cohort of 24 participants. It has been encouraging to see a high level of interest in the programme from Humanities. This has meant that some have not been able to attend the pilot. Heads have been encouraged to stay connected directly with participants throughout the programme and to continue to work with those who have not been chosen to encourage their development in other ways.
- Another iteration of the well-received *Leadership Programme for Professional Services*
Managers (LPPSM) targeted primarily to G8 professional services staff was launched in March with a second full cohort of 30, bringing total participation to nearly 100 since 2010.

- Keith Mander hosted an event for newly promoted senior lecturers and G9 professional services staff in February. The event was well received but participation was somewhat disappointing with only 13 of 40 invitees in attendance.

- The Social Sciences Change Academy project is being used as a way to shape and expand existing initiatives to exemplify the benefits of collaboration between academic staff, administrative staff and students. Change Academy is also testing new communication methods to share information and improve dialogue with a dedicated blog site and twitter feed.

- The Learning & Development team have developed web-based pathfinders to support individual development and a feature article was included in the April issue of KENT magazine with a focus on the organisational and individual benefits of continuous learning.

- The redesigned Induction event that includes an information fair with over 22 participating departments has been extremely well received and professional services staff attendance is excellent. Academic staff still have only attended in small numbers despite good feedback from those who do and efforts to ensure relevance through participation of UELT, Research Services and beneficial services that are useful for all staff to be aware of. The Fair was opened to all staff at the event held on 1 June with a communications push to encourage senior staff to stop by, see the benefit for new staff in attending, and encourage others to do so.

- Academic Division launched its Service Excellence initiative with an internally hosted conference attended by over 220 professional services staff and which is being supported by action plans and further events throughout the year. The launch and check in May 2012 event was delivered in partnership with HR and drew on expertise from Commercial Services, IS, HR and others, including a keynote by the Kent Union President. The initiative has attracted great interest from other departments and elements will were used to inform the May Social Sciences Learning & Teaching Forum whose primary focus is academic staff.

- Requests for more customised support to Departments such as assisting with the facilitation of away days and provision of individual external coaches is increasing and HR
team members are working closely with senior leaders to provide the right interventions to the right audience at the right time.

- Cross-department collaborations include supporting the **Erasmus** staff exchange programme and an upcoming Estates employability initiative in partnership with the **Prince’s Trust**.

- Six members of the 2010/11 **Heads Leadership and Management Programme (HLMP)** cohort have continued to meet as a peer coaching action learning group following two facilitated sets in autumn 2011; the group’s first self-facilitated session was held in March 2012 and a second is planned.

- A **LPPSM Reunited** event is taking place on 4 July 2012 and will provide an opportunity for last year’s cohort to gather to discuss and refresh their learning since completing the programme late in 2011.

- Work on the **2012-15 L&D Strategy** has begun and will be completed by year end.

### 2. Enhancing People Management, Resourcing and Communication

#### Activity and Achievements since November 2011

- The pilot AUA CPD framework being used as part of the **PDP/appraisal process** is being broadened out into more Schools and Departments this year.

- David Nightingale has chaired a meeting with the Deans, the PVC for Research and members of HR to discuss some data that had been collated with regards to academic staff who had not been promoted for more than 5 years. The focus of the meeting was to discuss how we might improve **career development for academic staff**. Various actions were agreed from the meeting including sharing the information as part of the confidential part of each School’s planning meeting. It is recognised that staff will have a variety of reasons for not applying for promotion but more needs to be done to create opportunities and support staff to develop. A further meeting was chaired with the Vice-Chancellor to discuss this particularly with regards to issues of career management and appraisal.

- The Vice-Chancellor is leading a process of open forums across the three Faculties to which all female academic staff have been invited to discuss issues around **career development for women**. Meetings have already been held in Sciences and Humanities and will shortly be held in Social Sciences.

- Five meetings with the Trade Unions and Staff Representatives re Negotiation on the
University’s proposals with regards to the revision of Statute 7 and associated Ordinances and the abolition of Statute 8 (retirement) have now taken place. At the meeting in December a set of principles which will be incorporated across all the documents were agreed. We think we have identified the grounds for negotiation and the university is currently developing a new set of Statutes and Ordinances for the next meeting at the beginning of July.

- Twelve members of staff took part in the six day training for mediators in February. David Liddle, Chief Executive of Total Conflict Management, who is the University’s mediation partners and Keith Mander, launched the Service on 1 June. The team of mediators was presented with their certificates at the event which was attended by people from across the University. Further communication to staff announcing the launch of the service has gone out and the website (www.kent.ac.uk/mediation) is now live.

- An internal project team has been created to review the current probation arrangements for staff in Grades 1-6. An internal survey of staff and managers who have recently had experience of the process has taken place and results are currently being collated.

- A consultation with affected staff took place between January and March with regards to the changes proposed to SAUL (this is the pension scheme offered to staff in grades 1-6). In addition to the written consultation, three open briefings have been held to help ensure those staff who are current members of SAUL understand the implications of the changes and also those who are not currently members who may wish to join before the changes take effect. The proposals were agreed and will be implemented with effect from 1 July 2012.

- A consultant from EEC who own the proprietary software which is used for job evaluation (HERA) has visited the university and given us some support and advice to help improve our current use of the system. An internal project team has been set up and a project plan developed.

- The volume of staff recruitment has been very high, particularly because of strategic investment posts being brought in for the REF and replacement posts following the VR Scheme. Recruitment volumes have grown by 130% since 2008.

- An internal working group has been set up within HR to review our policies and procedures with regards to Immigration. The new Tier-based system has brought in additional demands and is also subject to change. We have asked Eversheds to write some documentation that will be used to support further communication with line managers and recruiters about their
- A guidance document has been developed for Heads of School to help them with any voluntary discussions around academic staff changing contracts from "Research and Teaching" to "Teaching and Scholarship (and vice-versa). A set of generic role profiles for Teaching & Scholarships roles have been developed to support this.

### 3. Promoting Equality and Diversity

**Activity and Achievements since November 2011**

- An external *Review of Equality and Diversity* has been completed. Focus groups took place with almost 100 staff as well as telephone interviews with key informants. The facilitators met in January with the University’s Equality Promotion Group and others who had participated in the Focus Groups so that the initial findings and recommendations could be shared. First next steps have begun with the advertising for two roles, one to support staff E&D and one to support student E&D and the student experience, underway in June 2012.

- The *REF Code of Conduct on Equality and Diversity* has been jointly written by HR and Research Services.

- Learning and Development are currently working in partnership with Research Services to deliver a number of *REF Equality and Diversity briefings/training sessions* for all the REF decision-makers as part of the launch of the Code of Conduct.

- The results of the *Stonewall Workplace Index* questionnaire were shared with members of the LGBT network. The University has moved up 46 places overall and finished in the top 30 of University employers. We are working with University of Christchurch to arrange a joint event for both LGBT Groups in Canterbury. The Group has also set up its own emailing list so that group members can communicate without using their Kent ID if they prefer.

- Equality and Diversity has started using twitter as a channel of *communication* particularly to raise awareness of specific events – this started with Gay History Month in February.

- The second phase of the *Athena Swan* project is being implemented. Each School is being asked to develop an action plan which is being put into the School Plans to help ensure it becomes a strategic priority. A meeting has taken place with Caroline Fox (one of the founders of the Athena Swan Charter) from Oxford Research and Policy to discuss how they might provide additional support to Schools in developing and taking forward their individual action plans.
Equality and Diversity funded an awareness-raising event for students to recognise and promote HE Mental Health and Well-Being Day on 22 February. On the same day we invited Matt Macmillan from the East Kent Early Intervention for Psychosis Service to give a talk on their work and issues relevant to the University at the Staff Disability Network meeting.

David Ruebain who is Chief Executive of the Equality Challenge Unit (the body which supports the sector in the promotion of equality and diversity) came to speak at the Manager’s Forum on March 20. The same event was used to launch the findings from the Equality and Diversity Review.

The University has agreed to be part of a qualitative research project that will examine issues of equality in academic research careers across three - four UK universities. The project is being led by the Diversity Research Centre at Oxford Brookes (who led the Review of Equality and Diversity). A briefing took place in April prior to individual confidential interviews with about 14 academic staff who volunteer to participate in the study. The project will conclude with a formal report and event to share the anonymised findings in January/February 2013.

4. Building Efficient & Effective HR Systems and Supporting Workforce Planning

Activity and Achievements since November 2011

More comprehensive staff profile reports and commentaries have been created for the Academic School 2011/12 planning round with the goal of creating opportunities for HR staff to have on-going discussions with University leaders about career management and development needs and the embedding of equality and diversity within Schools and Faculties. These have been extremely well-received by the Deans and the Schools.

Work on the procurement of a new HR/Payroll system continues on schedule supported by a dedicated project manager with significant previous experience in this area. Three suppliers tendered for the project and all have been short-listed for the second round of clarification meetings which are taking place at the University in week commencing 11 June. A dedicated project website http://www.kent.ac.uk/is/projects/hrpayroll will be used to communicate developments as the project progresses.

It is planned that the HR/Payroll System contract will begin in summer 2012 with implementation of the new system for parallel running with the current system from April 2013. Additional modules such as e-recruitment will be implemented following phase one.
Additional work underway includes planning for a data cleanse of basic data, an interfaces inventory, rules gathering, and process mapping for key processes including starters, leavers, absence, and e-recruitment among others.

Particular consideration is also being given to our E-Recruitment system which has been included within the PQQ/ITT for the HR/Payroll system as a desired element but is currently a stand-alone system. Our supplier has given notice to us that our current system will no longer be supported after 2014 and a decision will therefore need to be made whether to move to the new software provided by the current supplier, consider alternatives through the new HR/Payroll system supplier offerings, or create a separate tender process for a new e-recruitment system.

A REF technical group has been set up by Research Services which will support reporting decisions in relation to the REF as well as linkages to new HESA requirements in 2013.

HR is awaiting the results of its first time participation in the DLA Piper Workforce Performance Measures Survey and will report on initial findings once received.

Human Resources Management Team
June 2012