

In my report I summarise recent developments and note some of the particular issues that the university will encounter over the next few months. I shall, of course, welcome discussion in Council over these - or any other - matters.

Following the approval by the Privy Council of the revised Charter and Statutes, we are known by our new name of *Aberystwyth University*. Together with the new logo, this gives us an opportunity to emphasise our ambition and our confidence in the university's future, and enables us to present ourselves afresh to potential students and to the outside world. This highlights the importance of marketing – both in relation to student recruitment and to the marketing of the corporate identity of the institution – and of effective communications, both externally and internally. We plan to strengthen this side of our activities considerably over the next few months.

The preparations for RAE 2008 are now more or less complete. I particularly want to thank those who have been involved in the preparation of the submissions. While I am confident that the quality of the submissions themselves and of the outputs is higher than in previous Research Assessment Exercises, the funding implications will not be known until after the results are published in December 2008. The Funding Council (HEFCW) is currently engaged in an assessment of its research strategy, and the funding model has yet to be determined. We know some of the broad parameters but it is impossible to estimate the likely impact on funding at this stage.

We are, of course, aware that this is the last RAE in the present form and that the intensity of peer review which is required at present will be replaced by greater use of metrics and bibliographical measures. We do, however, know that the results of the current RAE will inform funding allocations in subject areas other than the in Science Technology, Engineering and Medicine (STEM subjects) for the period of about 6 years leading to the next RAE. In England the results will only fully determine funding for STEM subjects for 3 years, but it is far from certain that Wales will adopt the same pattern. Whatever the approach taken we do know that there will be greater emphasis henceforth on external research income – including research grant capture from Research Councils and contract research income – and on numbers of postgraduate research students. Hence the importance that we attach to improving our performance in relation to external research income. We are putting in place a range of measures to incentivise departments and to support the preparation and management of projects.

The importance of enhanced competitiveness in relation to external research funding is one of the drivers behind the Research and Enterprise Partnership with Bangor. The four subject centres are moving forward well and we are currently starting to discuss with colleagues in Bangor how we can extend and develop the current partnership to establish a wider strategic alliance between the two institutions. This will include several aspects of our research work but will also include a number of other activities – examples are Welsh Medium Teaching and Initial Teacher Training. We hope also to work together in the formulation of bids for European structural funds through convergence funding.

The merger of IGER into the university is a major potential influence on our research profile. Council has been kept informed of discussions over the last year or so and