Letter from the Registrary

Welcome to the latest annual report from the Unified Administrative Service. Over the next few pages you will be able to read about our current strategy, understand the progress that we as an organisation are making and find out more about our people, finances and future plans. On pages two to five you will find a high-level overview of our principal activities. On pages six to ten you can read a series of case studies focusing on a particular area of achievement from each of our divisions. And on page 11 we review some of our key appointments made since January 2015.

The UAS’s mission is to support Cambridge in remaining one of the world’s leading universities. We are a service organisation comprising the Academic Division, Estate Management, the Finance Division, the newly constituted Health, Safety and Regulated Services Division, the Human Resources Division and the Registrary’s Office. Explaining what we do, how and why is an important part of being accountable for the work that we do.

So what are the major issues facing the University in 2016? I think the key ones are philanthropy, people and capital.

As I write in early May, the collegiate University’s fundraising campaign has so far raised just over £676m. That is an impressive achievement in its own right, but it is important to remember that the considerable investment that has been put into philanthropy is part of a wider strategic effort to diversify our income streams. The University has always prized its ability to govern its affairs; establishing sustainable sources of non-reliant funding is vital if it is to retain the considerable level of autonomy that it enjoys at present. The recent review by Dr Anthony Freeling, President of Hughes Hall, of Cambridge Assessment and Cambridge University Press, and how Cambridge should manage its considerable commercial portfolio, is another important contribution in this regard.

This income is needed for two key things. First, to attract the best people to the University, whether leading professor, aspiring post doc, administrator or member of support staff. The second reason is to fund our ongoing capital plan, also vital if Cambridge is to compete with the best global universities and provide outstanding facilities to its research staff.

The ability to recruit, develop, retain and reward our people is currently being looked at by our HR Division, while Estate Management continues to play a crucial role in supporting the many capital projects across the University’s estate.

As with any other organisation, we in the UAS are dependent on the talent, hard work and dedication of our staff. One of the highlights of my working year is the employee recognition scheme that we run in December, where we acknowledge and celebrate just some of our outstanding individuals and teams. This opening letter gives me another opportunity to thank all of those who work so tirelessly for the UAS – in support of our mission, and that of the University.

Dr Jonathan Nicholls
Registrary
More than 400 UAS staff from across a number of key divisions moved into new office space at Greenwich House this year. Inside, the building has been refurbished to create a light, open and modern environment where people can interact easily. A new café and outside space are proving popular, as is a programme of wellbeing and social events. The move to Greenwich House was the first phase of the UAS’s accommodation programme. This will see the organisation’s activities centred around three professional hubs, also including the Old Schools and the Student Services Centre (due to be opened in 2018).
The UAS’s strategy

Helping the University to develop and support its people, stewarding key capital projects and developing an efficient and flexible approach to administration and professional services remain key priorities for the UAS.

The last year has been a challenging one for the University, the UAS and for the higher education sector. In our annual report for 2014, we spoke of “an environment that is becoming ever more challenging” and noted that “the state of the public finances remained a particular concern.”

That view remains largely unaltered. If anything, there are additional pressures for higher education institutions (HEIs) as the government’s change agenda starts to gather pace. On 19 May this year, the Higher Education and Research Bill (HER Bill) was introduced to Parliament. This will be the first higher education-dedicated legislation to be considered since the Higher Education Act 2004. The White Paper is largely based on the Higher Education Green Paper of November 2015, although it contains a number of revisions, including a more phased approach to implementing the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and a decision not to empower the Director of Fair Access to impose admissions targets on institutions.

Key provisions in the bill include: the dissolution of the HEFCE, with many of its functions to be assumed by a new Office for Students; new “high-quality providers” able to offer their own degrees on a probationary basis; a more measured approach to the TEF; and a significant reorganisation of the architecture overseeing research funding and strategy, drawing heavily on the recommendations made in Sir Paul Nurse’s review of the Research Councils.

The wider financial climate is also difficult. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated that the austerity approach to public finances may persist for some time. Closer to home, there is still work to be done to put the Universities Superannuation Scheme on a long-term sustainable footing, and there is dispute over the latest round of pay negotiations between employers and unions. All of this puts pressure on the University – not only to balance the books in the short term, but also to put in place the kind of structures and revenue streams that safeguard its finances well into the future.

The UAS’s priorities

The UAS’s mission is to support the University in its pursuit of excellence in learning, education and research in an increasingly competitive global environment. Our priorities remain unchanged from last year and are to:

- Help the University attract and retain the best people
- Support the University’s capital plan
- Develop a flexible and responsive approach to administration.

The rest of this summary will focus on each of these in turn.
1. Helping the University attract and retain the best people

Cambridge needs a modern, inclusive and participative approach to maximising the potential of its people if it is to reach its goals and fulfil its mission. We are starting to make real progress in the development of a new People Strategy under the leadership of Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Institutional and International Relations Professor Ellis Ferran and the supervision of the HR Committee. A number of workstreams have been set up – populated by academics and administrative staff from across the University – to look at issues such as academic career paths, professional career paths, recruitment, market pay, reward, induction, and health and wellbeing. The emphasis of these groups is on developing dialogue and feedback with the wider University to develop ready-to-go proposals that work in the Cambridge environment.

2. Supporting the University’s capital plan

Our report last year explained that the considerable expansion and refurbishment of the University’s estate was necessary to develop world-class research facilities, accommodate increasing numbers of graduate students and make the best use of existing buildings. This remains the case. Cambridge’s flagship development at North West Cambridge has had a difficult year, but it remains a landmark project – commonly referred to as one of the most important urban fringe developments in the country. It will deliver high-quality, affordable housing in a city struggling with rising house prices and rents, and create a vibrant community that will ensure that North West Cambridge is a destination as well as a place to live and work. The primary school opened in September 2015, and headteacher James Biddulph and staff have been widely praised for the excellent work they are doing.

Elsewhere across the University campus, important investments are being made in biofacilities and at Cambridge Assessment’s headquarters, while 2016 has seen the opening of the Maxwell Centre at West Cambridge and the renovation of the Arup Building, now called the David Attenborough Building. The UAS’s Estate Management Division plays a vital role in the stewardship and delivery of many of the University’s capital projects, and you can read about its role in the refurbishment of the David Attenborough Building on page nine of this report.

3. Developing flexible and responsive administration

Last year we described our ambition to create a flexible and efficient approach to the way we organised and ran our affairs, as well as engaging collaboratively with other administrative and professional service colleagues across the University. Our accommodation strategy, revolving around three key hubs, reached an important milestone at the beginning of this year when approximately 400 UAS staff moved into new accommodation in Greenwich House. For a look inside Greenwich House, turn back a couple of pages to page three. Moves to the Old Schools are currently underway, and the Student Services Centre is scheduled to open in 2018. Equally significant has been the creation of our new Health, Safety and Regulated Facilities Division under the leadership of Dr Martin Vinnell. Turn to page six for an overview of that Division’s work. We have also welcomed colleagues in the University Sports Centre into the UAS and saw Nick Brooking take up the position as the University’s first Director of Sport.

We are also making excellent progress in developing a suite of training programmes for staff across most professional grades. The Leadership Development Framework, run by our Personal and Professional Development team, covers a range of in-depth training courses for both administrative and academic staff – from the established Administrator Development Programme, to those for heads of institution and University senior leaders. This coming year will also see the UAS participating in the Ambitious Futures Graduate Programme for University leadership. This is a graduate training scheme run by the Association of Heads of University Administration. It will give a small number of Cambridge graduates a 15-month period of training in university administration, largely focused around the work of the Academic Division.

The UAS will also oversee the initial implementation of the UniForum benchmarking exercise, which has been adopted by a number of Russell Group universities. UniForum is a methodology that enables participating institutions to cross-examine areas of lower- and higher-than-average spend of different administrative services. It will allow us to take a closer look at specific areas of service delivery, by function and location, and will help the University, and individual institutions, make sound decisions in relation to planning and resource allocation. It is intended that future benchmarks will be overseen by the Resource Management Committee.

Finally, we hope to run a second UAS workplace survey with a view to assessing our mission and values – and to listen to the more than 1,000 members of staff who work so hard and effectively for our organisation.
The University has always placed good welfare at the centre of all animal research. Why? Because good animal welfare and good science go hand-in-hand. This was one of the things in mind when, in October 2014, the University commissioned an external expert panel to review its regulatory and operational framework for animal research. The panel made 19 recommendations it believed would strengthen the University’s reputation by further improving regulatory standards, streamlining services and providing the best career opportunities for staff.

One of the first changes made in response to this review was the formation of a new UAS division: Health, Safety and Regulated Facilities. This comprises the Occupational Health and Safety Service (OHSS) and the University Biomedical Service (UBS). For the first time, UBS became a single team responsible for providing a unified service by everyone involved in servicing animal research work. Headed by Dr Martin Vinnell, the division fosters the same overarching culture of care for people (OHSS) and animals (UBS).

Moving to a single UBS team demanded considerable consultation outside of the UAS as departments were concerned about the impact of the changes. To reassure everyone that the restructure was not about job cuts, Martin tried to speak directly to everyone affected. He did this through a series of roadshows, and is proud that the net result not only achieved 100 per cent staff retention but also ended up with a net headcount growth. Among the attractive factors arising from the changes were new opportunities for career progression provided by a larger, centralised team, and the ability to provide consistent advice and practices across the University.

Three new operational directors were appointed to manage UBS under Martin’s direction, including the new position of Welfare Director. Martin was delighted when the University’s former Home Office Inspector, Dr Anne-Marie Farmer, agreed to take on the role. Moving from the other side of the regulatory fence has meant Anne-Marie could bring her skills and knowledge to evolve University systems in a way she couldn’t have done as an inspector.

Anne-Marie has begun by introducing improvements designed to streamline project licence application processes. She has produced advice and tips on project licence writing, and recommends that, before every new project licence is drafted, the licence holder organises a meeting of all the people who will be involved in the project. This should include the project licence holder and relevant team members, the vet, all the named persons and, where appropriate, a biotech statistician and the technicians who will look after the animals on a daily basis. This should ensure that everyone understands what the research project is about and what it will entail.

She believes other improvements will follow as a result of this exercise. For example, the number of drafts needed for an application should drop from the current average of five or six to just two, and the overall licence drafting time should reduce from between 12 and 18 months to between six and nine.

All UBS staff actively promote new methods of research designed to replace animals, and University licences will only be considered where there is no viable alternative to the use of animals. The new systems being introduced mean there is better oversight and a greatly improved ability to manage risk. There is also a strong culture of openness, and whistle-blowing is encouraged. After a well-publicised infiltration by animal activists at the University, Martin encourages everyone in UBS to act as though they are being filmed. The possibility of future infiltrations holds no fear for him. As the University’s Establishment Licence Holder, he bears ultimate responsibility for the institution’s compliance.

“Nobody here gets pleasure out of the fact that we need to use animals to answer fundamental scientific questions in our quest for new medicines and treatments,” he says. “Our ultimate goal will always be to stop using animals. However, while animals are used in research, we all work to ensure that our practices go above and beyond the statutory standards and are committed to a culture of care. That is how I am able to sleep at night.”

Good animal welfare and good science go hand in hand – one of the guiding principles of the work of the University Biomedical Services.
Excellence in education

Providing an excellent education has been at the heart of University life for more than 800 years. But what ‘excellent’ looks like has evolved over the centuries. In recent years universities have been challenged to respond to social, technological and regulatory changes that, among other things, encourage diversity of intake, provide new tools for teaching and learning, and foreground value for money and student satisfaction.

To help respond to these challenges, members of the Educational and Student Policy team in the Academic Division, supported by the Head of Academic Practice in HR, set up the new Centre for Teaching and Learning. Prior to 2015, several good initiatives promoted the highest standards of teaching within the University, including the Pilkington Prize and the Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund, but efforts to stimulate educational excellence were fragmented. There was a compelling case to do more to raise awareness and engagement across the collegiate University.

The centre began by looking for ways to link existing programmes. The first phase of a new website has now brought these and other resources together online. Meanwhile, an annual teaching forum – the first of which took place in April this year – and a Directors of Teaching Network are designed to develop, share and disseminate best practice.

Following the success of this year’s teaching forum, future events will be open to anyone who teaches in departments and colleges, and will provide a stimulating environment in which to learn about innovative approaches, meet others with shared interests, and contribute to some of the big debates in higher education.

The Directors of Teaching Network offers shorter, bite-sized meetings and opportunities to network across departmental boundaries. In fact, the team that set up the centre feels that getting people to talk is likely to be its biggest impact. There is a wealth of outstanding practice across the University and the team hope that opportunities for teaching staff to share ideas will sustain educational excellence long into the future.

www.cctl.cam.ac.uk

The annual teaching forum provides a stimulating environment to learn about innovative approaches to teaching and share best practice

The Prevent duty: freedoms and safeguards

There has been much debate within the higher education sector and beyond about the relative merits and impact of what has come to be known as the Prevent duty.

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities – including most higher education institutions – to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The Act also makes clear that relevant higher education bodies must balance their duties under Prevent with their legal requirements in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom, as enshrined in other legislation.

Universities have considerable freedom in terms of how they implement their responsibilities under Prevent, and it is the University’s intention to take a proportionate and risk-based approach to these matters. But what exactly will our ‘duty to prevent’ mean?

“"The University will take a proportionate and risk-based approach to Prevent””

Among other things it will mean a sharpened focus on making sure that everyone in a pastoral role has a suitable level of understanding about Prevent as part of a wider portfolio of welfare services for students and staff. It will mean reviewing and, as necessary, revising safeguards and controls for speakers and events at the University. And it will mean liaising and reporting to HEFCE as the designated body charged with overseeing compliance with the duty across higher education institutions.

Above all, it means effective and sensitive engagement across collegiate Cambridge – within the University, with the 31 Colleges, and with other institutions including Cambridge Assessment and Cambridge University Press. A new Prevent Committee, a joint committee of the Council and The General Board, now oversees and guides key decisions in relation to Cambridge’s response to the duty, but the considerable administrative preparatory work over the past nine months has been carried out by the Registrar’s Office in the UAS.

The Registrar’s Office, various University officers providing specialist advice, and the Prevent Committee itself, will work collaboratively to ensure that Cambridge’s mission, values and core activities continue to thrive now that the Prevent duty has become law.
Outsourcing financial processes

Imagine that you could outsource a proportion of your department’s financial processes. Not the tasks that you need to monitor closely but the high-frequency, repetitive ones such as entering supplier invoices onto CUFS, gaining secondary approval and passing for payment. Imagine that the work could be done efficiently and reliably, and that the service wouldn’t cost a penny.

That is precisely what Shared Services Finance (SSF) now offers to every department and institution in the University. Responding to a growing burden of financial reporting requirements, the Finance Division created the service to free up departmental finance teams for the higher-level analytical work that requires their unique local expertise. Operating from Greenwich House, the SSF team offers an accounts payable service, and the processing of supplier invoices, expenses claims, international payment orders and new supplier set-ups for individuals. And they do it within an average turnaround time of just two days. At the end of 2015, 62 per cent of University departments and institutions had joined the service.

The SSF team takes the time to fully understand each institution’s unique requirements and, in some cases, it has been able to suggest process improvements that free up further time. The dialogue continues after sign-up, with follow-up meetings and a user survey planned for later this year. Feedback is positive. People report that the team is reliable, efficient and knowledgeable.

They value the shared ‘InBox’, which means there is always someone on hand to answer questions. Many departments are also using the Staff Bureau service, which provides Finance Division staff to cover absences in departmental finance teams.

Launching the service has required careful communication. The team has had to answer hard questions about security, accuracy and control. Every department is free to leave the service at any time and none has chosen to do so yet.

Financial statements and performance

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<th>Analysis of financial statements</th>
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<td>• The Chest position finished with a small surplus of £71k for the year.</td>
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<td>• The expenditure from Chest reserves includes both the planned spend-down of divisional reserves, aligned to the UAS strategic plan, plus central UAS reserves in the support of key departmental and operational activities.</td>
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<td>• The deficit on the non-Chest source of funds is predominately due to the spend-down of donation and trust fund reserve balances, plus the spend-down of central UAS trading reserves in support of key departmental and operational activities.</td>
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<td>• The UAS holds centrally £1.9m of unrestricted non-Chest (trading) reserves along with the majority of the Chest reserve shown above. This gives a total of £2.6m which can be used to support UAS strategic and development plans.</td>
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| Case studies |

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Self-opening windows that sense carbon dioxide levels, a living wall and bee hotels were all innovations in Estate Management’s “biggest ever refurbishment project”. That project – the renovation of what is now called the David Attenborough Building on the New Museums site – will provide a vibrant hub for the partners in the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI), a unique collaboration between the University, Cambridge-based conservation organisations and the Museum of Zoology. Its facilities accommodate more than 500 academics, practitioners and students, and their collaboration will help shape the future of the relationship between people and the natural environment on which we all depend.

One of the Estate Management Division’s current priorities is to support the University’s strategy to expand and upgrade teaching and research facilities. This has included constructing cutting-edge buildings on empty sites at the edges of the city, such as the £20m Data Centre (featured in last year’s UAS Annual Report). As departments have moved out of central Cambridge, new properties have become available for refurbishment, allowing the University to breathe new life into the heart of the city.

The team managing the refurbishment of the David Attenborough Building (formerly known as the Arup) recognised that it was a fine example of architectural brutalism. But it was also one of the worst-performing buildings on the University estate. Built at a time when it was acceptable to counter the effects of huge, south-facing windows by simply turning up the air conditioning, the building had become inefficient and uncomfortable for those who worked in it. It was also constructed on a raised podium as part of an unrealised vision for a network of elevated walkways in the city centre. That made it uninviting and difficult to access.

In conjunction with Nicholas Hare Architects and contractors Kier, the project team undertook a detailed assessment of the building’s performance, including an energy audit, a thermal imaging study and a user satisfaction study. They also consulted extensively with the building’s neighbours, developing good working relationships that have helped to minimise disturbance and will serve all parties well during future work on the New Museums site.

The Museum of Zoology had some quite specific requirements, including looking for new ways to preserve and display its outstanding collection of significant specimens – from Darwin’s finches, through to examples of extinct organisms such as the Dodo. Of particular concern was the conservation of the whale skeleton which, in recent years, had been displayed in the open air at the entrance to the museum and was beginning to show signs of damage. The 450-seat Babbage Lecture Theatre also needed to be retained and renovated.

Other improvements in the £55m project have included new insulation, double glazing, a greater emphasis on natural daylight and ventilation, a living green roof and rainwater recovery. There will also be a glass entranceway to the museum large enough to house the whale. A constant monitoring system will allow people to view the building’s energy performance at any given time, via fixed screens, or through their computers or mobile devices.

Going beyond the standards required by building regulations, the project team estimates that the renovation will deliver a 40 per cent reduction in annual operational carbon emissions, as well as saving 82 per cent of the building’s embodied carbon by refurbishing instead of demolishing and replacing it.

CCI members moved into the building at the start of 2016 and David Attenborough, a Clare alumnus and Vice-President or patron for several CCI partners, formally opened the building in April this year. The Museum of Zoology is due to reopen in 2017.

Over the course of the project, Estate Management has gained new knowledge and developed ground-breaking practices for assessing, redesigning and revitalising buildings from this era. Acquiring such knowledge is vital as the David Attenborough Building is just the first stage in a five-phase restoration project that will see the whole of the New Museums site regenerated over the next ten to 15 years.
According to mental health charity MIND, one in four people will face a mental health problem at some point in any given year.

It is a statistic that Caroline Newman, the UAS’s Senior HR Adviser for the Clinical School, is all too aware of. She and her team had grown increasingly attentive of the importance of helping people disclose mental health conditions, and then having access to structured, stigma-free support.

Bringing to life the UAS’s values of responsiveness, innovation, respect and support, Caroline and colleagues decided to act. Starting with the School’s senior leadership team, she secured a budget of £6,500 to implement a programme of mental health initiatives that signposted people to the right professional advice, helped managers give appropriate support and generally fostered a culture where mental health was discussed more openly.

They began with simple items, including wallet-sized cards with helpful contact numbers, noticeboards and a website with information, stories and advice. Looking beyond illness to health, they urged staff to undertake five actions that are known to promote wellbeing: connect; be active; take notice; keep learning; and give. By linking these actions to existing University benefits and services – such as making use of sports facilities and opportunities for continued learning, the 2,400 members of the School were encouraged to take simple steps to preserve their own wellbeing.

From here Caroline and her team progressed to arranging a series of half-day training events for managers, entitled Mental Health Lite. Run by MIND, these courses help people identify common mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression, recognise stigmatising language, and develop a range of skills – from active listening to handling a conversation about suicide. More than 90 managers have completed the training so far. In addition to this, more than 1,100 people have attended a series of lunchtime briefings on topics including psychosis, self-harm, depression and personality disorders that have drawn on the expertise of clinicians on the Biomedical Campus, as well as external speakers.

Results published by other organisations that have run comparable mental health programmes suggested that Caroline should not expect measurable results for at least three years, but early indicators are positive. A question in the latest Clinical School staff survey asked whether respondents knew where to find support services available for their wellbeing, and 71 per cent indicated that they did.

Absentee data is proving even more interesting. Initial figures show the number of people attributing their absence to mental health or stress had increased in March to October 2015, compared with the same period in the previous year. But overall absences had reduced, suggesting not only that the stigma of mental health had reduced, but also that overall wellbeing had improved.

The budget has now been doubled for year two of the programme. As well as continuing with current initiatives, the School hopes to train mental health ‘first aiders’ who can deal with crisis situations, as well as widening the lunchtime briefings to cover broader wellbeing topics such as diabetes and heart health.

The positive results are not confined to the Clinical School. The team is already talking to other partners on the Biomedical Campus to identify areas where they can pool resources, and Caroline has also shared her learning with the University Wellbeing Steering Group, which has been following her work with interest.

So what advice would she give to someone who was thinking about running a similar wellbeing programme? “Keep it simple, have a vision, know exactly what you want to achieve and focus on that.”

She also stresses the importance of using existing networks and engaging everyone you can. She has been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of people who have volunteered to help. The impact of the programme has other potential benefits. Already holding an Athena SWAN silver award for celebrating good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women in science, engineering and technology, Caroline’s work is likely to be listed as a ‘beacon activity’ to support the School’s renewal application.
Appointments made since January 2015

**Nick Brooking**

Nick Brooking was appointed the University’s first Director of Sport in January 2016. Mr Brooking was previously Director of Sport at the University of Hertfordshire, a post he held since 1998. Since joining Cambridge, he has been working with the new Sports Committee chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, Professor Graham Virgo.

**Warren Forsyth**

Warren Forsyth has joined the North West Cambridge Development project team as Operations Director. A former Director of Estate and Facilities at Middlesex University, Mr Forsyth has extensive experience of managing significant higher education estate development projects from inception through to delivery.

**Beverley Weston**

Beverley Weston was appointed Head of Estate Projects in June 2015. She is a Chartered Quantity Surveyor with a background in construction procurement, commercial management and project delivery in both the aviation and higher education sector. She has worked on a number of complex refurbishment and new builds in busy public spaces.

**Jason Matthews**

Dr Jason Matthews became Director of Estates Strategy on 1 June 2016. He is an internationally respected real estate strategist with more than 25 years, experience within international property development and investment companies across Europe, Asia Pacific and the Middle East and North Africa.

**Regina Sachers**

Dr Regina Sachers has taken over from Rebecca Simmons as Head of the Vice-Chancellor’s Office. Before coming to Cambridge Regina worked for the Presidential Board of the University of Göttingen. She took her PhD in Cambridge (St Catharine’s College) in 2009. She plays a key role in positioning and promoting the work of the Vice-Chancellor and his office to both internal and external audiences.

**Emma Stone**

Emma Stone became the University’s new Director of Human Resources on 1 April 2016. Previously both Deputy Director of HR and Assistant Director of HR, she has significant experience having led the HR Operations team, overseen policy development and acted as secretary to the HR committee.

**Emma Rampton**

Emma Rampton took up the post of Academic Secretary on the retirement of Graham Allen. Formerly Deputy University Secretary and Head of the Council Secretariat at the University of Oxford, Ms Rampton also worked as a lawyer before joining Oxford as Head of Administration in the Faculty of Law.

These are a selection of senior appointments made within the Unified Administrative Service. More regular divisional appointments are covered in the monthly UAS Bulletin.