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Organising for Success / Engagement Sessions

Proposed EG portfolios and professional services structure: rationale and approach

Purpose of today

- To share the rationale for the changes that are being proposed and the headline key changes
- To explore current thinking on the proposed revised EG portfolios in line with the three pillars of the Institutional Strategy
- To explore the approach to the professional services structure that will report to EG (note: detailed structures with posts will not be developed until at least the first quarter of 2020)
- To give you the opportunity to ask questions about the rationale and approach and identify weaknesses or opportunities in the proposal

Content

- Recap of why we need to make changes to the structure at Kent and how we do things
- Headline current thinking
- Overview of the rationale for change to EG portfolios and how this will be supported by professional services functions
- Time for questions and discussion
- How we are moving forward

Strategy Refresh

- The University strategy has been refreshed this academic year and has three key pillars:
  - Research and Innovation
  - Education and Student Experience
  - Engagement and Civic Mission

- Our strategy sets out a road map for change, development and sustained growth, but we need to do things differently if we are to deliver our ambitions in this volatile environment.

- To do this, we need to change how we are currently structured to ensure that they support academic activity and the delivery of our Strategic Plan

Organising for Success - key drivers

Addressing student and staff feedback. This includes:

- a need to improve our performance as a University, with better alignment of decision-making, accountability and resources
- a desire to improve communication and engagement
- bureaucracy and layers slows decisions and creates poor communications
- an inconsistent student experience across multiple schools and centres and services
- a strong ‘school identity’ is seen as key for student and staff recruitment and creating a sense of community
- a need for clear and streamlined work flows, digitisation of processes and single trusted data sources
- a greater sense of being ‘academically led’ within our core mission
- a need to be more agile and responsive, be bold and take some risks.

Organising for Success - key drivers

These changes are designed to:

- allow synergies to be developed quickly within cognate academic and professional areas that reduce duplication and diffusion of activity
- provide a consistent baseline service to students, sponsors and staff
- Provide greater value for money in a time of financial challenge
- Create more resilient and flexible academic units, able to adapt to a volatile environment
- Improve connections between academic units and senior management
- Deliver EG/Central PSD structures that fully support academic activity and the themes of the Strategic Plan

The Proposal

- A single layer of groupings of Schools
  - 6-8 to ensure more direct connection with EG, shaping policy and strategy
  - Greater financial autonomy and more local decision making
- School identity maintained (if wanted) within groupings
- Groupings led by a Director of Group – who will have ultimate responsibility for academic and financial success of grouping
- Group level will be responsible for administrative and student support to schools/departments/subjects via pooled resource
- Further central services to be devolved to grouping from centre subject to devolutions principles / discussions / costs
- Central professional services re-aligned to support EG portfolios and institutional objectives, with fewer units so that fixed costs can be reduced within and across units

Overview

- Project Board established
  - Co-sponsors Denise Everitt & David Nightingale
  - First four meetings held
  - Meeting weekly

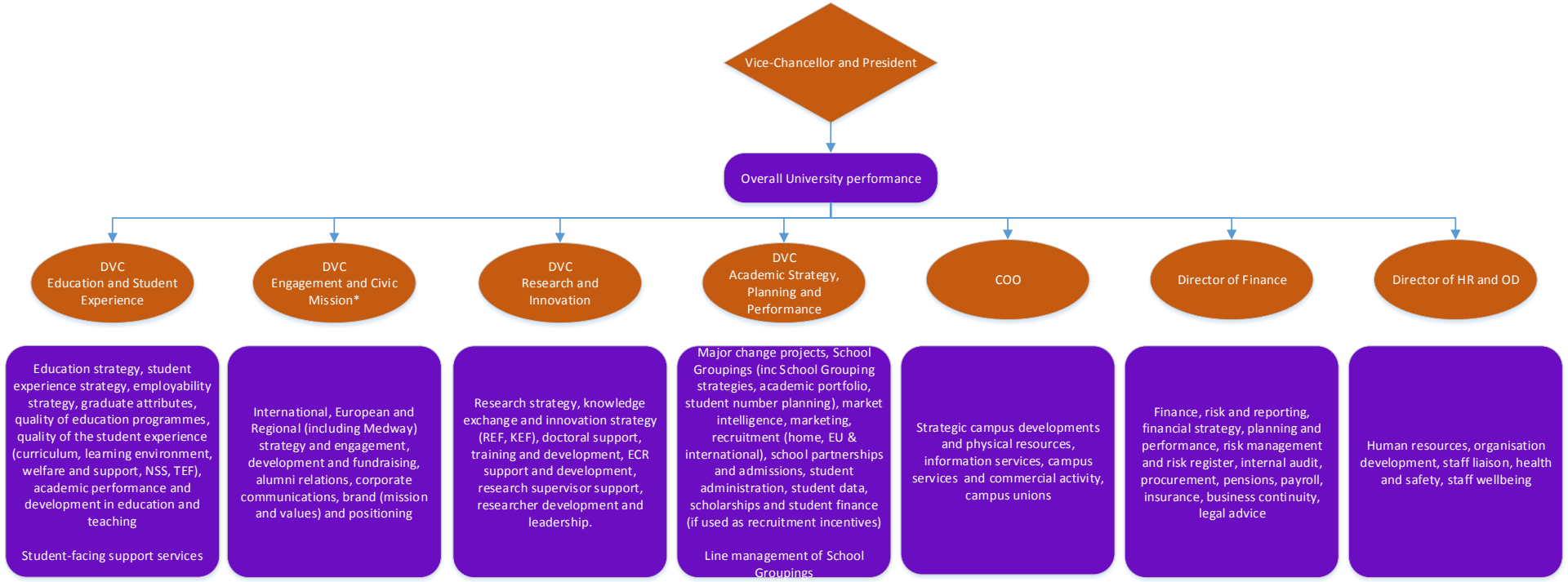
- Formal JSNCC sub-group established
  - All Union and staff reps involved
  - Currently meeting weekly to establish concerns and update on progress – also discussing other relevant issues such as Voluntary Severance Scheme

- Website launched
  - https://www.kent.ac.uk/organising-for-success
  - Information will be added as engagement ramps up

Revised EG portfolios

- Why revise? What does it aim to achieve?
- In May 2018, the Vice-Chancellor launched a strategy refresh consultation. Over 150 responses were received, with rich content.
- The revised strategy is set around three “pillars”
  - Education and student experience
  - Research and innovation
  - Engagement, impact and civic mission
- To deliver the strategy, some re-alignment of portfolios was felt in order to line up these “pillars” with EG responsibilities and accountabilities
  - 4 “academic” Deputy Vice-Chancellors, one heading our School Groupings and related planning and strategy, and one heading up each of the three “pillars”
  - 3 “professional” EG members supporting operations, HR and finance
- To reduce the number of operating units (as with schools) in order to minimise internal transaction and fixed costs

Revised EG portfolios



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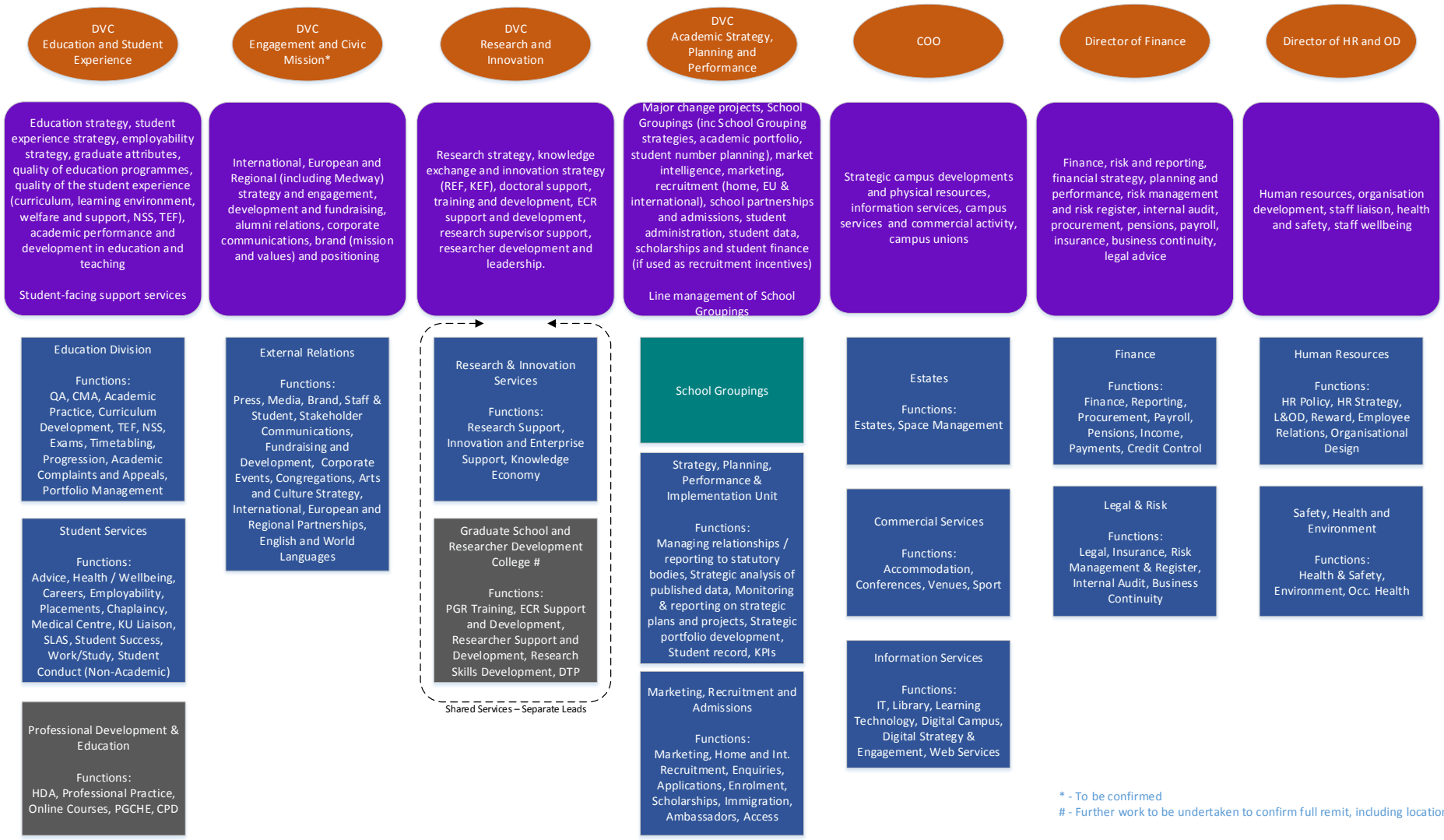
Re-alignment of PSDs and PSD functions

- With EG portfolios re-arranged to match the revised Strategy 2025 pillars, EG members will have oversight of the functions that can deliver against their objectives - providing a direct link between responsibility, resources and accountability
- This leads to re-aligning some PSDs to different EG members
- This is an opportunity to bring together functions where there are “splits” across PSDs to make processes easier
- In order to align with the EG portfolios and deliver effectively, some activities within PSDs have also been moved
- Work still ongoing in certain areas, partly as a result of feedback and discussions to date
- This is an opportunity to comment and flag issues/opportunities

Re-alignment of PSDs and PSD functions



* - To be confirmed
\# - Further work to be undertaken to confirm full remit, including location of PGT

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Expected benefits

- School Groupings will be empowered to deliver against the University strategic plans and their agreed objectives
  - The focus of all staff in School Groupings will be on the student and staff journey - problem solving and solution development will draw in the full of range of professional devolved expertise
- Relationships, understanding and joint working between professional disciplines and School Groupings will be strengthened
- Fewer PSDs and fewer School Groupings means fewer interactions and makes it easier to simplify processes
- Smaller units will have more resilience in terms of staffing and PSD support services (eg finance and marketing within existing units) can be brought together
- PSD units should have a clear understanding of the strategic objectives of their unit, aligned to those set out in the University Strategy

Questions?

Discussion on tables

Thought starter questions (or choose your own topics)

- How can we ensure we do not re-create silo working between the portfolio areas?
- Are there any obvious issues with the current thinking regarding the proposed realignment of professional service functions?
- Is there a better way to change the structure and still meet our objectives?
- What is of most concern about these proposals and how might we address these?
- What might be the most important transitional issues and/or risks?
- Anything missing?

Transitional and Implementation plans

- Implementation working groups will be established to look in detail at processes and specific areas of concern/ development
- This will include ensuring that the key functions and activities of the current professional service remits are transferred effectively and appropriately, whilst maintaining business as usual
- The intention is to establish an implementation team drawing on staff from across the University
- The work on devolution will need to dovetail with the revised structures at University level

Timeline

- Structured engagement activities with staff, Heads and other stakeholders (e.g. KU) will be ongoing in March/early-mid April
- Review and reflect on Feedback
- Discussion at SLF 16 May
- Proposals to Senate: 21 May and 12 June 2019
- Council Meeting 28 June
- It is anticipated that implementation work will start Summer 2019 with target implementation complete by end 2020

Engagement and Feedback

- In addition to providing feedback to line managers and via feedback@kent.ac.uk, JSNCC and other channels, this event is part of a series of engagement events.

- These thematic engagement events cover:
  - Devolution of professional services
  - Organisational structure - PSDs
  - School / group configuration and governance / management
  - Transfer of faculty accountabilities/responsibilities
  - New leadership model

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