Financial and other difficulties facing British universities were outlined by the Vice-Chancellor at the first address to faculty for the session.

Universities were caught in the uncertainties which faced Britain.

Professor Briggs said:

"We have not been given any guidance nationally about the way in which, between now and the end of the quinquennium in 1978, university income will be protected, or not protected, against inflationary rises of costs in university salaries and in their utility which is really prepared to offer alternatives of the kind that we offer in the School of Molecular Sciences - to take a few examples.

"I have reason to make people aware that what we can offer in Sussex can't really be offered at other places.

"The second point about admissions policy is that one aspect to be interesting and important is the relation between our current selection of student intake at student-wages rates at Sussex, I do myself believe that the academic success of the 'wastage' rate of students is very directly related to the admissions problem. I see the Business Progress Committee work at this university and the Admissions work being very directly related to each other.

"I think we ought to look at the significance of A level predictors in terms of students' performance on which there is a great deal of conflicting evidence.

"I have no feeling myself, and I want to make this absolutely clear, that the University of Sussex should lower its standards of admission. We have been very much a high aim moulded and we still are relative to most, however, this is the third point I would like to make on admissions is this. Are we satisfied that the quotas are right? There is a changing pattern of students in our side. There are some subjects for example for law or social psychology which are still in very considerable demand. We could also turn the university within the course of six months into a university where all of the students were doing English. It would be a disaster for the University, so, Are we satisfied that the very elaborately worked out quotas in terms of subjects produced over the years are the right quotas?

"Fourthly, ought we to re-examine the position of the Admissions Commission. As Vice-Chancellor, Professor Thompson about this. He is Chairman of this committee, as Vice-Chancellor I have had nothing at all to do with admissions. But I do believe that we have got to ask ourselves whether we have got to move into a totally different period in terms of admissions and whether we ought to re-examine the structure and composition of the Admissions Committee.

"This raises fundamental questions about the role of the subject group, the School and the University in the process. We have a new Admissions Officer with lots of ideas and a great deal of experience. I hope you will talk to him as much as faculty who are interested in those questions as soon as you can.

"So that is the first point that I want to make, admissions is an interesting and challenging problem, but I think we are still in not too bad a way compared with most universities.

"On finance generally, we have all been aware of the so called liquidity problems. In my experience, when enterprises will be able to meet their cash flow problems over the course of the next year. There are certain universities that are in exactly the same cash flow problems which are being faced by some other businesses around world.

"We won't run into this particular question in the present academic year. We may go into it in the following academic year. We have been given a limited amount of supplemental funding for the present year which is not enough. Time employed in the present year we will be doing by the end of the year.

"I think the question of whether we do involve finance or centralise it in the University is a very important issue that we ought to look to as a long-term rather than a short-term problem.

"The University is a long term institution and we have got to be sure that the arrangements that we make in terms of the financial distribution of resources are arrangements that will be maintained for a long time. We still have a lot of opportunity in the University. We have a vital community in west Sussex. We can arrange our external relations. I know nothing more than what you are told by last year, whether the college across the road will become part of this complex or not. We are involved in a whole set of negotiations about our future in terms of external relationships but I do hope that the University will manage to continue despite the present circumstances which are slightly better here than in some places.

"I hope we can still manage to give time to consider the curriculum. I think this is the last year about our relations between faculty and students and about the relation to the University and Community or Community and University, bearing in mind that there is no sharp division between academic course and community. I hope that this student is happy here just not because of what he is doing for his work, which is of fundamental importance, but by reason of the context in which he finds himself as a student. There is no water divide between the university and community. There is no clear cut and community as academic called and what is called Community and Community. I think we have all got to be very careful in mind if the University is going to make a particular point. We have a particular point of view.

"We are still involved in a number of very complicated problems in connection with this issue. The number of students in the University this year and therefore there has been no accommodation problem of the kind there was last year.

"We did have discussions about the rent levels. Rents are frozen for this term. We did have discussions about the rent levels at the end of last term with students involved in a small group. It is clear to me that the machinery that were drawn by that working group which are accepted as being realistic conclusions in the present situation are not acceptable particularly. We are not clear to the UNION and to UNIFA, that I am prepared to talk to any group at any time about these matters.

"We are forced to do two or three things which I would like to make of the fact of six must not collect the rents from students, however, we have not been on strike. We must ultimately collect the rents and the students are not in dispute with us about this. Secondly, they are in dispute with us about the level of rents. The level of rents as stated in the necessary level of rents and the rents that have been paid by the University and my own feeling is that last year we were able to budget as far as we could do against rents in rents.

"I think that the question of whether we do involve finance or centralise it in the University is a very important issue that we ought to look to as a long-term rather than a short-term problem.
Communication does seem to me to be very important at the present time. It will serve to underscore some stages during the course of the next year to come when open communication through the media inside the University, probably on the Tuesday or Wednesday, discussions when you can all come along if you would like to talk about these matters.

"I don't think that we will find ourselves growing in a really, impossible size. We will, I think, move forward now and the last 10% to be a very big university. What we do now, I think, will determine the future of the atmosphere will be like in the next ten years.

"It may well be that during the course of the year that, apart from the admissions question, which I would be able to look at length to be able to talk about it properly, we can also discuss some of the other problems about communications and growth in a sensible way hearing in mind, also, that the national policy as far as all of the questions are concerned is still as it was at the beginning of the summer.

"The question of how to present members of faculty to the University and said he would look forward next term to his next address faculty.

CASH CRISIS

University Planning

The Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals, Prof. A.L. Armitage, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Manchester, presented on October 15 to the Secretary of State for Education and Science drawing to his attention "the grave financial problems which the Institution faces in relation to the critical financial crisis of the Universities in general."

Accompanying the letter was a memo- randum which reflects the view of the Vice-Chancellors as a whole. It states that the financial situation earlier this year have now proved more than justified and which utilizes the "extremely serious" situation currently facing the University.

The Committee has requested an early opportunity of discussing with the Secretary of State the problems which the memorandum briefly describes.

The Chairman concluded:

"Earlier this year the Vice-Chancellors' Committee had the opportunity, which is rather uncommon these days, of meeting with the Secretary of State for Education and Science who is aware of the grave financial problems confronting the universities. The situation this year has improved at the point to which it is now giving rise to feelings of serious alarm in the protests against the Government's policy."

2. At a time of great national economic difficulties the universities have willingly accepted cuts in grants, and rising costs, fair share of costs in public expenditure. However, that even after taking full account of the £1m recently made available by the Treasury, the position as defined by the University Grants Committee was found to be in excess of £8m. This figure stands in sharp contrast to the average to public funds of not more than £1m with which the Government intended to achieve what it decided to December 1974, i.e., the supplementary of university recurrent grants in 1975/76 at a rate of 8p per annum. In fact, the evidence of the government index of university costs points to a rate of not less than 10p per annum for the coming academic year. It is this dramatic difference between the assumed and the actual increases in costs since 1972/73 that resulted in the imposition of a quite unacceptable penalty on the universities and placed them in a particularly unfavorable position among public authorities.

4. Within the general framework of rising costs and income reduced the "purchasing power" of the universities in particular features, arising directly from Government's measures, will be focused on universities. For example, the stabilization of the property market, the effects of national insurance contributions alone is expected to cost universities over £1m for 1975/76 and in addition that the publication of the Higher Education Unit index for July which universities have felt compelled to publish will cost for their non-academic staff, will cost as an additional £6m in a full year.

Moreover, these universities are currently negotiating pay settlements for their various groups of non-academic and professional staff. The specific guidelines to negotiators set down in the social contract - which are bound to raise to substantial additional costs. The Vice-Chancellors Committee of the universities and Government should grant full compensation to universities in recognition of these increases in their expenditure which arise as a direct consequence of Government decisions and policy.

5. Unlike commercial organizations which, when confronted by rapidly accelerating costs, cannot raise the charges they make for their "product", there is no considered in the possibility of an increase in the costs which they charge for their "product". In these circumstances the universities have made all possible savings that are consistent with their students and their students' responsibilities to maintain the pattern and quality of education which they were established to provide.

6. The universities have economized in the whole of their activity. They have cut to the minimum their expenditure on supplies and services - accounting for about a quarter of their total general expenditure - by introducing energy saving programs, postponing all but basic maintenance of buildings and plant and making all possible economies in their purchases. So far as the three-quarters of their total expenditure on student costs are concerned, the universities are re-examining their expenditure on in each new post, whether academic, administrative or supporting, and are deferring the recruitment of staff to the extent that is essential; they are restricting each post to the minimum filling only those which are absolutely necessary. In addition, the universities have reached an agreement with the Government that their expenditure has been pruned to no more than the maximum that is necessary.

7. Even so, the three-eighths of these universities will incur large deficits in the 1975/74. In some cases these deficits will be considerable, and for one year only; by summing modestly, it will be less than 2% of the university for the essential developments of the quasi-market as a whole, the deficit is expected to be exhausted by this time next year. The possible consequences to the gravity of the present situation is that unless the Government come to their aid, the universities will then reach the critical point at which they will be unable to perform their functions and their staff and their suppliers, in such a situation. The universities would not be able to resolve the problem by declining to give the deficit to their students and even if they could adopt such a policy would be completely repugnant to them. On these lines would certainly meet - and the Vice-Chancellors' Committee quite rightly - with the most strenuous opposition from the students and associations representing academic, administrative and technical staff.

Moreover, the compensation which would have to be made to staff who were declared redundant could be of an order that would remove any possibility of survival and in the context the cash-flow problems would remain understated.

8. The problems of the current year are greatly exacerbated by the firm knowledge of the level of the grants for 1975/76 and 1976/77. The original plans for 1974/75 (announced as part of the whole quinquennium approach to 1978/79) is now under review - an open indication that the rate of growth in full-time student numbers over the quinquennium is likely to be modified. The White Paper "Education: A Framework for Action" published in December 1972. In carrying out this review the Vice-Chancellors' Committee of the universities and the UGC to take full account of the need for the new grant levels for these two years to cover the growing prospective deficit of universities. Complementing this is the need for the fiercest possible guarantees that the real value of these new grants will be fully met by supplementation for inflation.

9. So far as student numbers are concerned we are now facing an increase over the whole quinquennium does prove to be lower than originally expected, it must be emphasized that any downward adjustment of the original target for 1975/76 cannot produce a pro rata reduction in recurrent costs. The fact remains that many of these students are undergraduate courses has been some 4,000, then the number of full-time students is also likely to be less than expected last; and the total number at the end of this quinquennium will be higher than the original plan.

Although this paper is concerned basically with university recurrent finance and not with the funding of their capital programmes, the Committee must call attention to this early review of the existing loan- financing arrangements as these are not providing in effective basis for the provision of additional resources.

11. The timetable for decisions by the Government is urgent since under the new arrangements need to be known by not later than the beginning of January 1975. It is clear that the level of their grants will be 1975/76 and 1976/77 if they are to be in a position to make sensible decisions in their planning for the academic year commencing the autumn term. Even more urgent is the need for the Government to give a firm assurance that they will not reach a situation in which, despite having been ready to move, they are unable to cover the costs of its essential commitments.
The paper reported that the UGC had asked the University to state, by the end of October, realistic figures for Arts and Science undergraduate students in 1976-77. This would be based on the student numbers given in the quinquennial allocation letter of January 1973. The UGC had suggested that the University should formulate its view in the context of the Government's likely reduction of the national target for universities in 1976-77 by 8 to 12%, and in regard to the available physical capacity (including residences) and experience of applicants for a reading rate of about 98% of the number of post-graduates in 1976-77. The UGC also asked to have the results of logitic FTE's for 1976-77.

The Committee was at some length to discuss the possibility that the University should reply to the UGC's request. Members felt that the paper was unduly pessimistic on the numbers of Arts undergraduate students who could be recruited in the next two years and furthered that teaching space could be more realistically estimated than the paper allowed. As a result, the Committee decided to change the numbers mentioned by the UGC to those of Arts and Science students to the UGC's request.

The Committee was asked to give serious thought to the scope for new academic developments in both teaching and research. It was emphasised that there would be scope for research only through a quickening transfer of resources from 'low demand' subjects, particularly in view of the uncertainty about capital grants.

The University's next quinquennium might or might not be better than that of the present, and it was thought that the marginal unit costs would be deteriorate, it would be necessary to keep a close watch on them. In the event that the marginal unit costs were to deteriorate, it would be better to calculate the price with a margin, and it is not, even though that might mean meeting the difference between a planned target and the actual student number in 1976-77 without additional capital in the next year.

After lengthy discussion, the Committee agreed that the figures which the University would submit to the UGC, allowing for the trade-off between Arts and Science, should be as follows and should be based on the student population of 4630 - 4760.

The Committee further agreed that the reply should contain three points of elaboration:

1. The University stated, and was able, to present the post-graduate numbers indicated in the quinquennial allocation letter.
2. The numbers of Arts based students in 1976-77 would create severe problems and were not necessarily realistic, especially in view of the extensive research activity at Sussex, and might only be tolerable if Arts and Science student numbers were available by October 1977; if it were not, it would have to be made clear that there were no student numbers to cut below their 1976 levels;
3. The University should be enabled to continue increased levels of student residences and associated facilities.

The Committee recommended that the population based on a total of 4650 - 4760 were not merely exceedingly optimistic but might prove to be unsustainable, and that the upper limit of 'realistic' student number targets would imply either a hastened redistribution of resources or changes in family working or both. The Committee noted that, when decisions had to be taken later on internal resource allocation, the Committee would have to decide on realistic targets on which those decisions could be based.

It was agreed that decisions on the size of the undergraduate intake in October 1973 could not be deferred until the outcome of the UGC's review was known, and it was therefore recommended that the target of 1000 students in Arts and Social Studies and 475 in Science should be provisionally adopted. The Arts and Science Planning Committee would be asked to submit proposals to the Admissions Committee for the academic year 1974-75 and to complete the general feasibility of the proposals to the faculty before the beginning of the academic year. Since it was agreed that the student numbers would have to be based on the numbers of staff, the Committee would hold a meeting on 23rd October to discuss and agree their detailed quinquennium on 27th November.

C. Faculty Legislation 1974-77

The Committee noted that, since the quinquennial submission had been made, a number of Grade promotions had been affected, though not uniformly in all areas. In Arts and Social Studies and in Education the same, that in Science had improved substantially. The University could not afford to allow such a state of affairs. If any, new academic faculty posts in the Arts and Social Studies were to be created, it was suggested that the Committee should discuss whether the realisation of all could be done on the basis of existing vacancies. The Committee suggested that the University should be informed of these new positions.

D. Building Programme and Space Planning

The Committee noted that the UDC's building programme for 1974-75 had not been announced, but that it was likely that it would be announced that Arts V was the only one of University's new buildings that would be an actual building, on the quinquennium, the Committee noted that space planning for 1975-77 was based on the best use of Arts IV and of the space reversion to pool. The Committee therefore agreed that the following issues should be examined:

1. The 'real' capacity of the Arts Building (Stages I-IV) and the Educational Development Building for teaching staff. An investigation should be made of the practical capacity of the Arts and the Planning Officer and his results fed into the mid-quinquennial review.
2. Whether the present policy, that the Mantell Building should be used only if the allocated teaching units, should be reviewed, given that the 1975-76 floor space had been considerably lower than otherwise as a result of Arts and the construction of Arts V been completed.
3. Whether the provision of general teaching space was the most efficient use for persons.

Student Accommodation

(a) The Assistant Chairman of Community Services introduced a report on accommodation for the present year and its development for future years. The Committee noted the report and the University's intention to take the following steps.

(b) To be presented at the next meeting of the Committee, had met seven times during the vacation, and had received reports, or co-ordinated work, on the following aspects:

1. The status of the teaching units, which had been completed on time and occupied by the beginning of term;
2. The progress of the student houses which had proceeded more slowly than expected and, with only two houses completed, and with a still small contribution to the stock of accommodation;
3. The progress of students accommodation and the general feasibility of various proposals to the faculty, including the building of the site of the staff housing block on the quinquennium.

IV. The supply of privately rented accommodation with regard to the effect of the Rent Act 1974.


(V) The supply of privately rented accommodation with regard to the effect of the Rent Act 1974.

(vi) The supply of privately rented accommodation with regard to the effect of the Rent Act 1974.

(vii) The supply of privately rented accommodation with regard to the effect of the Rent Act 1974.
October 30

Organic Chemistry Colloquium: "Post-Graduate Lab-Teaching Lecture" 2.15pm Mile Lecture Room

Low Temperature & Solid State Seminar: Dr. Paul Hessen (Research Dept, of Post Office Telecommunications) "Nuclear Refrigeration and Thermometry" 2.15pm A45 Physics Building

Human Evolution Courses: Cultural and Community Studies Film Programme: "Vocalization of the Wild Chimpanzee" 2.30pm A2 Art Building

Materials Science Colloquium: Professor C.W.A. Newby (Open University) "Materials Science in the Open University" 2.15pm A45 Applied Sciences Building

Centre for Contemporary Europe Seminar Research Seminars: Miss Jean Hall (Brighton Polytechnic) "The DDR, Eastern Europe and the West German Gaspolith" 4.45pm A16 Arts Building

Thursday, November 1

School of Cultural & Community Studies Film: "Young Torero" Schlondorff (Germany) 2.40pm A1 Theatre Arts Building

Science Policy Research Unit Seminar: Professor M. Lehmberg (Dept of Computing & Control, Imperial College) "High Technology Project Dynamics" 2.15pm A33 Mainland Building

Electrical Electronic Control & Computer Science Seminars: Dr. D.G. Gawk & Mr. L. Flynn (Blackett Laboratory Dynamics Lab) "Space Craft Attitude and Orbital Control System Design" 2.15pm A33 Applied Sciences Building

Theoretical Physics Seminar: Professor G. Hickson (Kendal) "Symmetry in one and two Dimensions" 4.45pm PB ILF Physics Building

Friends of the Library
Illustrated Public Lecture, in the University Library, 7.45pm Thursday October 31 1975. "15th Century Printers and their Books and Times" by Michael Travers.

Michael Travers has made a special study of early printers and book production, concentrating on German and black and white slides, will consider some of the first printers, from Gutenberg and his contemporaries 4.1460 to those operating around 1510, their personalities, productions and influence.

It will be preceded by a brief survey of the archival bands which influenced types faces, illustration and decoration used by the proto-printers and how they solved the technical problems involved in producing artificial writing.

The lectures which promoted the printers' choice of type and style will be discussed in detail. In general the printers will be considered in terms of their social, political and religious background, their patron and the economic requirements of the age.

Friday, November 2

Special Lecturer: The Engineer and Society: W. P. Perkins (Computer Science Laboratory, M.B.C. National Resource in Medical Research) "The place of the engineer in medical science and health care" 12.30pm Lecture Theatre A331

Mathematics Division Seminar: Joint Kent-Sussex Statistics Seminar (in Sussex) 2.15pm Separate notices to be issued.

School of European Studies Film: "The 7th Year of Glorious Mussolini's Rule" "Yellow Czar" "The Three Songs of Lenin" Decca Records 1975 2.15pm A2 Art Building.

South Asia Seminar: C.Manin Ali (Australian National University) "The Punjab Canal Colonies in the Twentieth Century" 4.45pm 6.45pm Illegally A331 Art Building

Sunday, November 3

Romantic Classical Mag: 16.30pm Meeting House Chapel Coffee

Sunday Morning Service: Rev. Anthony Fordyce "Christ is in the Man's Land" 11.30am Meeting House Chapel. Children's church and creche are held during the service. Light lunch served after the service 10-noon.

Monday, November 4

Contemporary Faculty - Graduate Seminar: DIana Hunt (Lecturer in Economics A.F.R.A.S) Talk on Field Work between 1.30pm and 2.15pm A331 Arts Building

Economics Faculty - Graduate Seminar: DIana Hunt (Lecturer in Economics A.F.R.A.S) Talk on Field Work between 1.30pm and 2.15pm A331 Arts Building

Chemical Society Lecture: Dr. Perrett (Metropolitan Police) "Chemistry in Crime" 5.15pm Mile Lecture Theatre.