We reproduce below the full text of
Of two letters dated July 1 from the
Chairman of the University Grants
Committee to the Vice-Chancellor.
The first letter is a general one and has been sent to all Vice-
Chancellors and principals in
Great Britain; the second is
specific to Sussex.
Copies of both letters have already
been sent to members of Senate and
Council and University officers are
currently assessing the implications
of the UGC's announcement for the
University.

GENERAL
LETTER

Dear Vice-Chancellor,

GRANT FOR 1981-82 AND GUIDANCE FOR
SUCCEEDING YEARS

1. I am writing to let you know the results of the University Grants
Committee's consideration of grant for 1981-82 and to give what guidance
is now possible for succeeding years. As you will be aware from my letters
of December 30, 1980 and May 15, 1981, the Committee has been grappling for
some months with the problems of how the present university system might
be reshaped within the financial
constraints determined by Government
for the period up to 1983-84 (as set
out in Cmd 8175). The aim of a
revised system should be to offer good
educational opportunities to students
of all ages who may enter it, as well as
career prospects and research
opportunities for its staff.

2. In its deliberations the Committee
has had to weigh many competing claims
for the diminished resources; for
example between subjects, between
institutions, between teaching and
research, between innovation and the
continuance of existing areas of work,
between provision of student places
and likely demand, and between student
numbers and quality of education.
There is of course no single
definitive solution to these problems,
partly because the rate at which
resources are being removed from the
university system necessarily leads
to disorder and dis-economy whatever
path of change is followed, and
partly because reductions in
resources are being imposed at a
time when demand for university
education is still rising.

3. The Committee has received much
useful information and advice from
its Sub-Committees, from individual
universities (where we have paid
particular attention to the response
to our letters of October 15, 1979
and December 30, 1980), from Research
Councillors and other funding bodies,
from the Royal Society and the
British Academy, from the Committee
of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
(CVCP), the AUT and the NUS, from
employers of graduates, and from many
other organisations and individuals.
We are very grateful to all of those
who have offered advice but for our
conclusions the Committee alone is
responsible.

4. Any estimate of the overall loss of
recurrent resources between
1979-80 and 1983-84 is subject to
numerous uncertainties but it
probably lies in the range 11 per
cent (a minimum estimate by the UGC)
and 15 per cent (as suggested by the
CVCP). It is the Committee's view
that the university system as a whole
should not be asked, with this
reduction in funding, to maintain its
home and European Community (EC)
student numbers at the 1979-80 levels,
and a reduction of about five per
cent is therefore assumed, although
this may not be achieved until
1984-85. The reduction in student
numbers by 1983-84 is expected to be
in the range three to five per cent. As
to the unit of resource, it will
be seen that the Committee envisages
an average worsening of about ten
per cent (including some decline at
all universities) and this figure
should be borne in mind when
considering the Committee's guidance
below on individual subject areas.

5. The guidance in this letter refers
to the system generally; there are
significant variations in the advice
to individual universities. I am
writing separately to each institution
to give specific advice and in some
cases to ask for further consultation.
In all the comparisons which follow,
the base year is taken as 1979-80.

6. Arts

For the arts generally, a slightly
greater than average cut in numbers
is proposed, but measures are
proposed for subject areas which require further
consideration by individual uni-
versities. The Committee has noted
for example that the teaching of
foreign languages is widely distributed
throughout the system, with only small
numbers of students in some cases.
The Committee wishes to preserve the
range of languages but is conscious
of the danger that, without co-
ordination, the study of some minority
languages might disappear entirely
under the pressure of adjustments
to reduced resources. In these and
similar circumstances, the Committee
hopes that universities will enter
into discussions among themselves and
with the Committee to consider how
provision might be sustained.

In social studies the Committee
recommends a substantial reduction in
student numbers with the aims both of
improving the student-staff ratio
which in many universities is dis-
proportionately low, and of strength-
ening the opportunities for and
quality of research.

For education the Committee
cannot give firm guidance in terms of target
numbers for PGCE and B.Ed. courses
until the Government has determined
total manpower targets. The Commit-
tee regards it as inevitable however
that there will be some reduction in
present numbers; universities are
advised to await further guidance
before determining their intakes for
1982-83. The Committee hopes that
higher degree work, research, and
courses of in-service training for
teachers can be maintained and has
made provision accordingly.
A small increase is envisaged in the
number of students reading business
studies.

7. Science

In physical sciences, numbers are
expected to grow slightly by making

(continued on next page)
fuller use of resources. The Committee proposes that important new development in biological sciences should be supported, including those with a high potential value for the economy, to some extent at the expense of other aspects of biology, and numbers overall may fall slightly.

The Committee has assumed a small increase in the numbers reading mathematical sciences.

It is suggested that numbers in engineering and technology should increase slightly but with some redistribution between institutions. It will be for universities to decide, within the total numbers, the extent to which the lengthening of existing courses can be justified.

It is proposed that numbers in agriculture should decrease, but it is hoped that numbers in veterinary science can be maintained with a less than average reduction in resources.

The Committee recommends significant reductions in architecture and town planning, since there is evidence that existing numbers are greater than the prospects for professional employment in these areas.

The Committee proposes a reduction of about one-quarter in the number of
places available for subjects allied to medicine, much of this reduction falling upon pharmacy.

8. Medicine

The Committee regrets that it is no longer able to include in grant funds to enable universities to offer to clinical medicine the protection which it has hitherto enjoyed in relation to the general decline in resources. There has been some funding ahead of numbers in the growing medical schools, and all schools should be able to maintain 1980 intakes (which implies a small increase in total numbers).

The Committee has for some time been concerned at the generally low level of research activity in dental schools which it believes is in part due to inadequate funding. Although it is not yet possible to improve this situation, the Committee has based its grant distribution on a less than average cut in the resources available to dentistry. The question of dental numbers is under review elsewhere; but for the present, intakes have been assumed to be unchanged.

9. These recommendations would lead to a change in the distribution of students, as among arts, science and medicine, from 50:31:9 in 1979-80 to 48:42:10.

10. As far as individual universities are concerned, the annex gives (a) the recurrent grant (excluding rates, on which I will write separately); for each institution for 1981-82, with tentative grant figures for 1982-83 and 1983-84 (all at the same price base); (b) the furniture and equipment grant for 1981-82; (c) the full-time home and EC student numbers (divided into arts, science and medicine), which provisional grant for 1983-84 has been based; and (d) the total student numbers as in (c), together with the corresponding total for 1979-80.

Some universities (and in particular those with longer courses as in Scotland) may prefer to treat the target numbers as applicable to 1984-85 rather than 1983-84. In addition, institutions have freedom of virement within the full-time student numbers for each of the three subject groups between home and EC students, undergraduates and postgraduates.

The tentative individual grant figures in (a) are based upon two assumptions: that there is an evident progression towards the subject targets in (c); and that the Committee will continue to contribute about their present proportion to university income. Grant would be re-assessed were either of these assumptions to be invalidated. The figures overall will depend upon provision by government.

11. Part-time, extra-mural and continuing education

The Committee has attempted, within the resources available, to provide for part-time study of all kinds: i.e. students taking degrees and diplomas, or on extra-mural courses, or in continuing education whether vocational or non-vocational. The numbers of students taken into account in determining grant, in terms of full-time equivalence, are given in my separate letter. Grants are also based on assumptions about fees, as follows:

(a) Part-time degree and diploma students

Fees for part-time students, when expressed as full-time equivalents, have been assumed to be half those appropriate to full-time students at the same level, undergraduate or postgraduate.

(b) Extra-mural students

Fees from full-time equivalent extra-mural students have been assumed to be one fifth of that of the same number of full-time undergraduate students.

(c) Continuing education students

The Committee considers that assistance for continuing education should be essentially of a pum-priming nature and that fees for such courses should in the longer term cover the attributable costs.

It will of course be open to institutions to adjust their fees to meet individual circumstances, but this will not affect the Committee’s assumptions on grant. There will be a reconsideration of these grant arrangements and estimated numbers after two years. The Committee should be consulted on any proposal for virement between part-time and full-time numbers.

12. The Committee is aware that very useful discussions are already going on between universities in order to ensure the more effective use of resources whether by concentration of studies, the sharing out of fields of specialisation or in other ways. The Committee will be willing, where there is a possibility of an effective merging of particular activities between two or more institutions, to consider claims for some modest increase in the recurrent grant for capital works and some contribution towards other associated costs.

13. As I foreshadowed in my letter of May 15, the Committee is anxious to sustain its share of the dual support system whereby the UGC provides both for a basic level of research activity, and for a research floor capable of sustaining specific support from Research Councils and elsewhere. In present circumstances, however, there must be selectivity in this process, and the Committee will continue discussions with Research Councils and other funding bodies in order to ensure that there is some linking of policies for supporting research at a time when further concentration of activity is inescapable. The Committee has taken into account the needs of research in its distribution of both recurrent and equipment grants. Because of the essential role of libraries in research, the Committee hopes that expenditure on library materials will receive some protection.

14. You will be aware that the Secretary of State’s announcement on March 13 on grants for 1981-82 included the earmarking of certain sums for special purposes. I deal briefly with each of these:

i. the £20m to assist in the adaptation of the system to a lower level of funding will be used both for new developments which assist restructuring and to help universities with costs of early retirement and redundancy. You are invited to make proposals by end of January 1982.

ii. £2.8m has been allocated to continue the scheme administered by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals to assist outstanding research students from overseas.

iii. The sum of £3m to assist postgraduate work of particular importance to this country which might otherwise suffer in the event of a further cut in the universities’ grants policy will be separately allocated.

iv. A sum of £7.99m has been transferred to recurrent grant for capital schemes under 1.2m. From within this amount, grants for projects programmed under the present interim arrangements will, as envisaged in my letter of February 19, 1980, be notified to the universities concerned at the appropriate time. Capital grant for schemes programmed in previous years and those over £1m. in the current year will be treated separately.

v. The grant includes provision for overseas students who began their courses prior to October 1980, and for EC students.

vi. Provision is also made in the grant for the financing of student unions in 1981-82 at the same real terms level as in 1980-81, allowing for part of the income to be received through fees, as described in my letter of March 12, 1981.

15. This letter and its annex are being made readily available to all who may be interested. The Committee hopes that Vice-Chancellors and Principals will feel able to discuss it fully and widely within their institutions.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) EDWARD PARKES

THE SUSSEX GRANT - SEE OVER
SENATE AND COUNCIL

Issues considered by Senate and Council at their meetings on June 24 and 26 respectively, included:

STUDENTS' UNION

Senate considered the proposal from the Students' Union for an additional sabbatical officer'ship for the post of Vice-President (Education). (The rejection of the proposal by the Council Group on Students' Union Financing had led to the recent disruptions on campus.)

After a long discussion of the background to the Council Group's decision on the proposal, the Senate voted, by 47 votes to 27, against the creation of the post of Vice-President (Education). The Council was informed of the Senate's decision and noted that the Council Group had been authorised to take a decision on Council's behalf. It therefore agreed that the issue had already been resolved and did not discuss the matter any further.

Council also considered other issues relating to the financing of the Students' Union. The 1981-82 Students' union subscription is to be £46.26; the Union's accounts will in future be subject to internal audit (in common with other units) and the office of Vice-President (Sport) will continue for 1981-82 but will be reviewed in that year.

In addition, the current University-wide freeze on vacancies and the creation of new posts will be applied to the Union from August 1, 1981. The Council has also given notice to the Union that in future it will be charged the full costs (direct and indirect) which result from militant action by its members.

HEALTH SERVICES

Senate and Council discussed the provision of health services for overseas students in the light of the Government's proposals to introduce charges for National Health Service care for persons from overseas.

Both Senate and Council expressed their concern at the government's proposals and recorded their disapproval. The Chairman of Counselling Services has been asked by Senate to report fully on ways of maintaining the current level of provision and if appropriate on insurance schemes for overseas students. Council authorised the Vice-Chancellor to make representations as appropriate against the proposals on the University's behalf.

SUSSEX LETTER

Dear Vice-Chancellor,

1. This is the separate letter for your institution which is referred to in my general letter of July 1. This letter deals with specific matters which are the direct concern of your institution, but it should be read in the context of my first letter. I begin with mainly factual matters, including the numbers of part-time, extra mural and continuing education students that the Committee has used in determining provisional grant for 1983-84. Paragraph 3 conveys the Committee's specific directive that the numbers of academic change which may be implied by the grant and student numbers set out in the annex to my first letter. All committees are with reference to 1979-80 figures.

We have been asked on behalf of the Chairman of the Education, Science and Arts Committee of the House of Commons whether we will supply the Committee with a copy of this letter and the equivalent letters to other institutions. I would be glad to know as soon as possible whether you are prepared to agree that this one should be provided. If so, copies of each letter will be laid in the Library of the House of Commons.

If not, it will be for the Select Committee to decide whether to ask you for the letter.

2. I reproduce below the information for your own institution given in the annex to my general letter, together with the additional figures referred to in paragraph 1 above. Details of the equipment and furniture grant for 1981-82 are also given in the annex to this letter.

3. The Committee's advice on particular subject areas is as follows:

ARTS
The Committee wishes to see Russian-based studies discontinued and invites the University to consider discontinuing Religious Studies.

SCIENCE
The Committee recommends a significant increase in the number of students in Physical Sciences and an increase in numbers in Engineering. The Committee invites the University to consider discontinuing the specialist teaching of Materials Science and recommends a decrease in numbers in Biological Sciences.

Yours sincerely,
(signed) EDWARD PARKES

GRANTS

(a) Recurrent grant for 1981-82 10.27
(b) Provisional grant for 1982-83 at 1981-82 prices 9.66
(c) Provisional grant for 1983-84 at 1981-82 prices 9.21
(d) Furniture and equipment grant for 1981-82 0.898

FULL-TIME HOME AND EC STUDENT NUMBERS FOR 1983-84 (or 1984-85)

(e) Arts 2,440
(f) Science 1,270
(g) Medicine 1,280
(h) Total assumed for grant 3,710

FTE OF OTHER STUDENTS ASSUMED FOR 1983-84 (or 1984-85)

(i) Part-time excluding extra-mural 120
(j) Extra-mural 240
(k) Continuing education 100

DRUG OFFENCES

On Saturday, June 20, several people from the nearby area were arrested for drug offences at or in the vicinity of the Shepton Mallet pop festival. One of the persons concerned was a postgraduate student of this University: following his arrest, his room on campus and the laboratory in which he worked were searched and substances removed by the Police.

The University is co-operating with the Police in the investigation. Over the past ten years, the local Police have treated the campus as not having a generalised drugs problem and the current enquiries are being treated as relating to a particular incident, not, as some press reports would indicate, as part of a campus-wide investigation.

However, members of the University and its staff are reminded that the University will not permit its premises to be used for unlawful purposes. A clause to that effect is included in all tenancy agreements and tenancies will be terminated if the tenant(s) concerned are shown to have participated in or consented to the unlawful use of University premises.

Furthermore, any member of staff who suspects that University premises are being used for an unlawful purpose should report the matter to the Security staff who will inform the Police. Failure to report unlawful activities can itself result in prosecution.