**John Canning 2013**

**Reputation scenarios**

1. You have just been appointed Head of Languages at Elgin City University at short notice, and rather sooner in your career than you expected. Your predecessor has left the university suddenly after less than a year in post; the exact circumstances of the departure are not fully clear. She had been brought in from outside the university to give direction to a department thought to be rudderless after two affable but ineffective HoDs. When in post she had come in for criticism for being aloof, managing by email and setting arbitrary and discriminatory individual research targets, yet her departure has come as a great shock. Although the Dean will be requiring a longer term plan he requires a short term plan to ‘steady the ship’ to start the process of rebuilding the department’s reputation within the university. Draw out a list of tasks you need to accomplish in the next three months in preparation for meeting the Dean.
2. The University of Solihull with its low proportion of state-education students, and lower numbers from low participation neighbourhoods , finishes bottom of a national newspaper’s league table of the most socially inclusive universities. To make matters worse the local newspaper does a feature on the university and compares the experiences of the students to those of children on a nearby estate who are among the most deprived in the country. The Vice-Chancellor defends the university publically, pointing to various outreach programmes run by the university, but orders an internal investigation into recruitment practices and the social mix of the university. It transpires that Modern Languages is the least socially inclusive department. The VC has now demanded that targeted departments (of which ML is one) review and revise their widening access action plans. This is awkward for you. You have long taken pride in being able to sustain student numbers against national trends through (largely unofficial) partnerships with local independent girls’ schools. Alumni of these schools form noticeable friendship groups amongst students in your department. Outline a plan to widen access while at the same time protecting your very reliable core market.
3. Your department at the University of Builth Wells runs a summer pre-sessional English language programme which is expanding every year, mainly thanks to students from China. The university is very proud of the programme, and the income generated benefits the reputation of the languages department within the university. As usual all went well smoothly over the summer, but in the autumn term it emerges that one of the temporary tutors (who was well-qualified for the job) was an undercover reporter for the local BBC TV network. He was wearing a hidden camera and microphone and has recorded classes, meetings and discussions with other staff. A documentary is about to be broadcast purporting to show that tutors are under pressure to pass students who, in the opinion of the reporter, do not have a sufficient level of English to be successful on their degree course. You are due to attend an emergency meeting first thing tomorrow morning at which representatives of the senior management and public relations teams will be present. Prepare a set of notes for these meeting. What facts might you need to establish before the meeting?