

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Board of the Faculty of Science

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 15 November 2017

- Present: Professor M Shipman (Chair), Professor R Ball, Professor G Brown, Dr F Camiletti, Professor L Frigerio, Dr M Gifford, Professor L Green, H Koestler, B Kynman, Professor D Leadley, Professor G Martin, Professor R Roemer, Dr D Rumynin, Professor T Mottram, Dr F Schlaghecken (Deputy Chair), Professor M Steel, Professor G Roberts, Dr H Toner, Professor M Ward, Dr J Warren, Dr D Wood.
- Apologies: Professor N d'Ambrumenil, Professor S Banerji, Dr D Britnell, Professor C Davis, Professor S Jarvis.
- In attendance: L Hasler (Secretary), Dr C Cochrane, Director of Research & Impact Services (for item 6 only), K Irgin, Research Impact Manager (for item 6 only).
-

01/17-18 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED:

That, should any members or attendees of the Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the CUC Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK, available from <http://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Code-Final.pdf>

02/17-18 Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

(a) Membership

REPORTED:

That following revisions to the University's academic governance processes approved by the Senate on 5 July 2017, Heads of Departments had been invited to nominate colleagues as members of the Faculty Board, and its new and existing sub-committees, (BFS.01/17-18); that thanks was extended to colleagues serving on committees; that due to the replacement of undergraduate and postgraduate studies committees with the newly established Faculty Education Committee, the Chairs of the dis-established committees had agreed to act as Chair and Deputy Chair respectively; and that a representative of Science on the Board of the Faculty of Arts was yet to be identified.

That when nominating colleagues to the Undergraduate Appeals Committee Panel, for the purposes of work load allocation, Heads of Department may wish to bear in mind that these colleagues are required to be heavily involved in appeals against the results of degree classifications over the summer period.

RESOLVED:

That Professor Laura Green would act as representative of the Faculty Board of Science on the Faculty Board of Arts.

(b) Terms of Reference

CONSIDERED:

That the report of the Academic Governance Review Group received by the Senate had included exemplar terms of reference for the Boards of the Faculties, but the Senate agreed to further scrutiny of the proposed harmonised Terms of Reference of the Faculty Boards. As the existing Terms of Reference were the same for all Faculty Boards, Faculty Chairs had collectively agreed terms of reference (BFS.02/17-18).

REPORTED:

That the wording 'In line with the University Strategy' had been proposed in order to reflect the breadth of scope of the Faculty Board, which had not been encompassed by the original wording, which was 'In line with the institutional Education Strategy and the University Education Committee.'

RESOLVED:

That the harmonised Terms of Reference be adopted, subject to inserting 'subjects' into (a) to '/.....teaching and research in the subjects and courses prescribed..../' and (b)/.....subjects and courses delivered within the Faculty.'

That the additional changes would be mooted with other Faculties, and that a further version of the harmonised Terms of Reference may need consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

03/17-18 Freedom of Information

REPORTED:

That the Steering Committee at its meeting on 29 October 2007 considered a paper outlining how the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies to the publication of minutes of University bodies together with the University Publication Scheme adopted by the Steering Committee in December 2003, paper SC.60/07-08, and resolved that a standard item be included on the agenda of the first meeting of each University Committee at the start of each academic year to inform new members and to remind continuing members of the University policy on the publication of minutes;

That all non-reserved minutes and agenda of the Board of the Faculty of Science are published on the University's Governance website at:
<https://warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/committees/bfs/minutes>

04/17-18 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 18 May 2017 (BFS.03/17-18) be approved.

05/17-18 Matters arising on the Minutes

a) University Review of Personal Tutoring

RECEIVED:

An oral report from Professor Robin Ball, the Faculty of Science representative on the Personal Tutoring Review Group, on the likely recommendations of the Review.

REPORTED:

That the Review Group had finished its scheduled meetings and the report was nearing completion; that the report was substantial in size; that the underpinning research indicated that the structured approach to personal tutoring offered by the Faculty of Science was relatively successful, but that the student perception of their experience of personal tutoring depended heavily on individual tutors.

That recommendations included the development of a Code of Practice, a department facing document that was yet to be produced; institutional commitment to providing resources for departments to deliver personal tutoring effectively; the recognition of work undertaken by Personal and Senior Tutors in workload credit models; and a limit to the number of tutees allocated to each tutor.

In response to a query from Professor Brown regarding possible flexibility on the upper limit of the number of tutors, that this would be possible if the workload credit allocated was sufficiently high, e.g. for staff on teaching only contracts.

That there was already an obligation for departments to produce an annual report on personal tutoring, but this had not been enacted.

b) Big Bang Fair (minute 3/17-18 referred)

REPORTED:

That Heads of Department had been asked for a view regarding whether the Big Bang Fair should be supported in 2018, and that feedback had been received from Chemistry, Engineering, Psychology and Statistics.

That the Faculty had been successful in securing £15k from the University's HEIF budget, to enable us to participate in the Big Bang again on the basis that the cost would be lower; that the Big Bang continued to be an attractive event for the Faculty to participate in as it was an opportunity to engage with groups of hard to reach students, to promote our work, and to generate media interest.

In response to a query from Professor Mike Ward, that the organisers would not enforce the proposed aerospace theme, and that the Faculty could make a decision to set its own theme.

06/17-18 Research Impact Coordinator Roles

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from Dr Catherine Cochrane (Director of Research & Impact Services), and Katie Irgin (Research Impact Manager, RIS), on the new Impact Coordinator roles.

That the concept of Impact Coordinator Roles had evolved from REG discussions which had focussed on research impact, and their intended purpose was to enable more comprehensive support for priority case studies as REF 2021 approached.

That it was hoped that as well as curating and collecting evidence for case studies, the Impact Coordinators would be able to help to communicate impact to non-academic audiences.

Professor Laura Green offered her strong support of the new roles, noting that she had observed a presentation of case studies at a recent meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine, and that collective learning might be a helpful approach.

In response to a question from Professor Mike Shipman, that the current structure was department facing, but that as the team evolved thought could be given to working more thematically.

In response to a question from Professor David Leadley about training for the new Impact Coordinators; that there was a healthy training budget; that training would be tailored to individuals; that training for writing for different audiences would be provided; and that there would be potential to spend time in different units.

That the posts might be of interest to newly graduated PhD students.

RESOLVED:

To cascade the advertisement for the posts to newly graduated PhD students via Board members.

07/17-18 Chair's Business

(a) Congratulations.

That congratulations were extended to Professor Laura Green (Life Sciences) on the award of an OBE for services to the health and welfare of farmed livestock; to Professor Hendrik Weber (Mathematics) on the receipt of a Philip Leverhulme Prize 2018; to Professor Nasir Rajpoot (Computer Science) and Dr Emma Pickwell-McPherson (Physics) on their receipt of Wolfson Research Merit Awards; to Professor Colin Sparrow (Mathematics) on his appointment as Academic Director (Graduate School); to Professor Stephen Jarvis (Computer Science) on his appointment as Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research); and to WMG on its involvement as a founding partner in the Faraday Institute, a £65M initiative focused on battery research and development.

(b) Subject Level TEF

That there had been a recent announcement about the subject level TEF pilots, and that the University would not be participating in this. Two models were to be tested that would include the disciplines of Nursing, Engineering, Creative Arts, History & Archaeology, Business and Management.

(c) Additional Marketing Advice

That a second Marketing Executive (in addition to Elise Bennett), with a remit to provide marketing advice and support for Science was to be recruited; that this colleague would be able to help with the development of web content.

08/17-18 Faculty Representation on the Senate

REPORTED:

That as a result of Professor Colin Sparrow being appointed as Academic Director (Graduate Studies), there would be one, three-year vacancy on Senate for a representative member of the Board of the Faculty of Science.

That nominations would need to be seconded, and to have received the consent of the nominee; that if there was more than one nomination a ballot would be held electronically; that it was hoped that a representative would be identified prior to Christmas.

In response to input from Professor Robin Ball, that the Secretary would seek clarification regarding which members of the Board could potentially be nominated, after which she would circulate a note to members of the Board inviting nominations.

09/17-18 NSS Results 2017

CONSIDERED:

The results from the 2017 National Student Survey: a paper received by Steering Committee on 9 October 2017, plus appendices (BFS.04/17-18).

REPORTED:

That student satisfaction was important for its own sake, but that TEF results also impacted recruitment; that departmental TEF meetings convened by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) in September and October had considered TEF metrics, including some NSS results; and that the student boycott this year had made analysis of results particularly problematic.

In response to an observation by Professor Gavin Brown, that the table included in the paper shouldn't be interpreted naively, that whilst results did fluctuate, recurrent patterns in negative responses should be attended to; and that the departments which had been more successful this year could be consulted for advice.

It was noted that in addition to having a particularly active student-facing team, Computer Science ran regular 'returners' meetings' for year 3 and 4 students which

enhanced their understanding of the meaning of NSS questions and encouraged them to view their student experience holistically, rather than being clouded by any one negative experience.

In response to an observation from a student member of the Board, Beth Kynman, that students put a high priority on knowing what they had to understand in order to pass their examinations, and that they were passionate about receiving appropriate feedback, that the Deputy Chair had found an open-access article which explained how the success of feedback could be optimised which could be circulated in due course.

That students had been invited to vote by 17 November on whether to boycott the NSS 2018.

10/17-18 Items from the Faculty of Science Education Committee

RECEIVED:

An oral report from Dr Dave Wood, a representative of the Faculty of Science Education Committee on the Faculty Board, from the inaugural meeting held on 25 October 2017, together with the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting (BFS.05/17-18).

(a) Warwick Welcome Week

SFEC had noted that success of Welcome Week was described as being 'contingent upon departments making a significant contribution to the operationalisation of the programme and for delivering activities and events', and it was felt that this was in excess of the level of contribution couched in the original proposal.

It had been noted that whilst attendance at Welcome Week was mandatory, this would not actually be enforced, meaning that departments may have to repeat information for late comers.

It had been agreed that the Secretary should feedback to the Head of Welcome, Arrivals and Induction concerns raised with respect to repetition of information to late comers; and the level of commitment expected of departments, noting that engagement on the Thursday/ Friday of Warwick Welcome was strongly preferred.

The Secretary had since met with the Head of Welcome to discuss Welcome Week. He had explained that there had been a series of meetings with stakeholders to agree operational detail, and that the emerging view was that the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Welcome Week should be dedicated to activities that supported students in their transition to living away from home; that it was likely that the Thursday and Friday of Welcome Week would have a completely academic focus to avoid a clash between the student and academic experience, that there would be no delivery of any teaching in Welcome Week; and that departments could choose which colleagues delivered the departmental content of Welcome Week.

The Head of Welcome had said there was an understanding that repeating information for those who had not attended Welcome Week would impact staff, but consideration of how to best manage this would be postponed until Spring 2018, as plans for Welcome Week were still evolving.

(b) Institutional Teaching and Learning Review

ITLR will be a standing item on the SFEC agenda. It was noted that many of the recommendations arising from the Faculty of Science ITLR engagement event related to assessment or employability; and that as a starting point, the Secretary would check the aspiration of the recommendations against current practice in departments.

The Faculty Chair had asked for a mechanism for departments to feed progress against ITLR objectives back to SFEC. It was agreed that value would best be added by considering recommendations thematically, as this would allow the sharing of good practice and the discussion of any difficulties encountered with respect to progress towards recommendations.

It was agreed that a report on progress towards University level recommendations should be sought.

(c) Review of Assessment

It was noted that there was to be a review of assessment at the University and that the Faculty of Science would be represented by two members of the Faculty of Science Education Committee: Professor Robin Clark (WMG) and Dr Phil Young (Life Sciences).

SFEC had submitted a number of areas of concern to Academic Quality and Standards Committee, including, concerns around the implications of any potential harmonisation of module credit frameworks, the lack of suitable opportunity for some groups of students to remedy failure, and the proximity of resits to the start of term.

(d) First Year Board of Examiners 17-18

It had been resolved to bring forward the date of the September meeting of the Faculty of Science First Year Board of Examiners in the Committee Timetable by one day (from Thursday 20 September to Wednesday 19 September 2018), in line with the other Faculties, to increase the length of time between students being made aware of the outcome of First Year Board of Examiners and the start of term. However, now the start of term is to be commensurate with the start of Welcome Week, this advantage had been eroded, but the timing of resits/ First Year Board of Examiners was likely to be a topic of consideration for the review of assessment.

(e) Draft University Education Strategy

There had been discussion around a draft of the evolving Education Strategy. The Committee was supportive of the emphasis on ensuring strong disciplinary identities. Overall it was felt that the strategy did not describe anything distinctively 'Warwick', although there was not any disagreement with any of the aims, but colleagues looked forward to receiving more detail.

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary would find out the likely timescale for implementation of any change to a review of the module credit framework.

That the Secretary would feedback the need for more specific advice on how departments could deliver Welcome Week without contravening the 'no academic content' rule, e.g. would diagnostic tests be considered academic content?

11/17-18 Faculty of Science Budget for 2016/2017 and 2017/18

RECEIVED:

A paper, together with an oral report from the Chair, outlining the 2017/18 budget allocation and commitments to date (BFS.06/17-18).

RESOLVED:

That the Chair would consider creating an award for early career researchers, similar to the thesis prizes awarded by the Faculty, which would be funded from the Faculty of Science budget.

12/17-18 Auditing of Departmental Quality Assurance Processes

RECEIVED:

Papers relating to an audit of departmental quality assurance processes in respect of module approval, received by the Science Faculty Education Committee on 25 October 2017 (SFEC.05/17-18 – SFEC.09/17-18).

13/17-18 Timeliness of Feedback

RECEIVED:

A composite report on timeliness of feedback on assessment submitted in the Summer Term 2017 across the Faculty, received by the Science Faculty Education Committee on 25 October 2017). (SFEC.10/17-18).

14/17-18 Scholarships

REPORTED:

a) Chancellor's International Scholarships

Applications for the Chancellor's International Scholarships to be considered for 2018/19 entry are now open. These scholarships are allocated annually via a combined postgraduate research scholarships competition and are open to all overseas students in any discipline offered by Warwick. The application deadline is 19 January 2018 and the deadline for uploading supporting documents is 2 February 2018:

<https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/scholarship/typesoffunding/chancellorsinternational/>

b) Warwick Collaborative Postgraduate Research Scholarships

The Faculty of Science is allocated six WCPRS scholarships, and further scholarships are sometimes obtainable due to lack of uptake in other Faculties. Funding should be secured for 50% of the studentship, plus the difference in fees between Home/EU and International rates:

https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/warwick_staff/scholarshipsinfo/wcprs. Applications should be submitted to SFEC@warwick.ac.uk by 5 February 2018 to allow consideration of applications by the Chair/Deputy Chair of SEC. Final approval of applications lies with the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies.

15/17-18 New University Appeals Regulation

REPORTED:

That the University has introduced a new Appeals Regulation governing academic appeals for all courses of study, noting that it is available online from Regulation 42 <https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/reg42academicappeals> ; that this Regulation supersedes and harmonises existing appeals regulations, so that all appeals will follow the same process; and that following the accepted sector model, and feedback from the OIA, a 'review' stage would now be incorporated into the appeals process; and that guidance on the appeals process was also available (BFS.07/17-18).

16/17-18 Dates of Future Meetings

REPORTED:

That the future meetings of the Board of the Faculty of Science in the academic year 2017/18 would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 14 February 2018 from 2.00 – 4.00pm, CMR 1.0 University House
Thursday 31 May 2018 from 10.00 – 12.00pm, CMR 1.0, University House

That the future Faculty of Science lunches in the academic year 2017/18 would be held on the following dates:

Wednesday 14 February 2018 from 12.30pm – 14.00pm, University House
Thursday 31 May 2018 from 12.00pm – 2:00pm, CMR1.0, University House