

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 28 May 2008.

Present: Professor K Lamberts (in the Chair), Professor S Bright, Professor J Davey, Dr A Dowd, Dr K Flint, Professor P Harrison, Professor J Hutton, Dr S A Jarvis, Professor T Jones, Professor M Keeling, Professor R MacKay, Professor C McConville, Professor G Medley, Mr S Padamsey, Dr AM Price, Dr J Robinson, Professor L Robinson, Professor P Sadler, Professor J Seville, Dr M Skinner, Professor C Sparrow, Professor B Thomas.

Apologies: Dr A Clark, Professor R Critoph, Professor A Easton, Professor R Green, Professor S Jacka, Mr D Morley, Dr G Raper, Professor M Smith, Professor R Wilson, Professor V Zammit.

In attendance: Professor D Grammatopoulos (for Professor V Zammit), Ms H Ireland, Dr K Leppard.

MINUTES

The Board noted the recent untimely death of Professor Peter Carpenter, and wished to recognise the significant contribution he had made to the School of Engineering, the Faculty of Science and the wider University.

44/07-08 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 13 February 2008 be approved.

45/07-08 Matters arising on the Minutes

(a) Constitution and Membership (minute BFS.1/07-08 refers)

REPORTED:

- (i) That Professor Jonathan Seville had been appointed as Dean of the School of Engineering and, accordingly, representative of Engineering on the Board of the Faculty of Science;
- (ii) That Professor Paul Harrison had been appointed as representative of the Department of Physics on the Board of the Faculty of Science.

CONSIDERED:

- (iii) A proposal from the School of Engineering to replace their members on the First Year Board of Examiners for 2007-08 with Dr YM Chung and Dr DJ Britnell.

RECOMMENDED (to the Senate);

- (iv) That the members of the First Year Board of Examiners for the Faculty of Science from the School of Engineering for 2007/08 be replaced by Dr Y M Chung and Dr D J Britnell.

- (b) Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (minute BFS.34/07-08 refers)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Board of the Faculty of Science, at its meeting on 13 February 2008 (minute BFS 34/07-08 refers):
- (A) reported that the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, at its meeting on 1st February 2008, considered a revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6 (revised)/07-08);
 - (B) considered the revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08); and
 - (C) resolved that the revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08) be referred to the Sub-Faculty of Science and the Graduate Studies Committee for detailed scrutiny, and that these committees should report their recommendations to the next meeting of the Board.
- (ii) That the Sub-Faculty of Science, at its meeting on 14 May 2008 (minute SFS 39/07-08 refers):
- (A) considered the revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08); and
 - (B) resolved that consideration of this paper be delegated to the Faculty of Science Enhancement Group meeting on Monday 19 May 2008.
- (iii) That the Graduate Studies Committee, at its meeting on 14 May 2008 (minute SGS 39/07-08 refers):
- (A) considered the revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08); and
 - (B) recommended that consideration should be given to the following points regarding the draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy:
 - (1) (page 3, para 4) Clarification on whether it was now possible to get promoted to Professor on the basis of teaching excellence;
 - (2) (page 4, para 1) Consideration of whether it is appropriate that all learning is research-led, noting that much learning in WMG is industry-led;
 - (3) (page 4, para 4) Consideration that this statement does not reflect most undergraduate teaching at Warwick, noting that degree courses may be influenced by research, but not necessarily done through research;
 - (4) (page 5, point 1 re: Breadth within curricula) Noting that four-year integrated Masters programmes in science were developed because they became required by professional bodies, rather than to provide a flexible alternative.
- (iv) That the Faculty of Science Quality Enhancement Group, at its meeting on 19 May 2008:
- (A) considered the revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08); and
 - (B) recommended that consideration should be given to a number of points regarding the draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy, as noted in the Quality Enhancement Group's report which would be circulated to Board members following the meeting.
- (v) That proposals to restrict funding for equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQ) would have implications for funding for students who had completed an integrated Masters programmes and went on to further postgraduate training.

CONSIDERED:

- (vi) The revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08).

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

- (vii) That the revised draft of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy (paper AQSC.6(revised 3)/07-08) be broadly supported in terms of what it was trying to achieve, but that it required substantial revision to take into account the points raised by the Faculty of Science's Graduate Studies Committee and Quality Enhancement Group.

46/07-08 Report from the Faculty of Science IT Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Science IT Committee held on 7 May 2008 and an oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science IT Committee.

REPORTED:

- (b) That the Chair of the Board had discussed the issue of unreliability of email services at weekends with the Director of IT Services (minute BFS.25/07-08 refers), and had been informed that there were currently insufficient resources within the support team, but that this was being addressed through a bid for additional resources through the 5 year plan.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Chair of the Board should write to the Registrar to emphasise the importance of the reliability of core services out of hours, noting for example that unreliability has caused problems for departments which require students to submit course work on-line.

47/07-08 Report from the Sub-Faculty

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Faculty of Science held on 14 May 2008 and an oral report from the Chair of the Sub-Faculty.
- (b) Fees for Intercalated Years (minute SFS.34(b)(ii)/07-08 refers)

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science had been informed that the Fees Working Group would be meeting in June.

- (c) University Credit Framework (minute SFS.38/07-08 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations of the Sub-Faculty of Science be approved and reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

- (d) Protocol for Assessing Student Participation in Seminars (minute SFS.41/07-08 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the resolutions of the Sub-Faculty of Science should be copied to the Chair of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, noting that the proposed protocol may have the effect of discouraging innovation, contrary to the aims of the draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement strategy.

- (e) Assessment Conventions and Degree Classifications

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Sub-Faculty of Science, at its meeting on 14 May 2008 (minute SFS 34(e)/07-08 refers) received the final proposals of the Assessment Conventions Working Group as set out in paper AQSC 60/07-08, it being noted that:
- (A) The proposed new 17-mark scale affected more Arts and Social Studies than Science Departments, as those Departments using a full 100-mark scale would continue to do so; and that the pilot of the 17-mark scale had been largely unproblematic;
 - (B) That further proposed changes included the adoption of a mean-based overall mark for final degree classification and the introduction of a uniform 40% pass mark;
 - (C) That it was unclear whether the 40% pass mark would apply to first-year exams or only to subsequent/final examinations, and if so, whether it would be a required pass mark for each individual module, each main subject or an overall boundary;
 - (D) That Annex B, Section 6, was not entirely clear with regard to how the proposals would affect the use of the Seymour formula for students not taking an overload;
- (ii) recommended (to the Board of the Faculty of Science and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):
- (A) That the principle of the 17-mark scale and the use of a mean-based overall mark be approved;
 - (B) That the full proposals would be acceptable for implementation in 2008-09, with the exception of the adoption of a uniform 40% pass mark, which should wait until Departments have been able to determine what impact this might have in practice, noting that:
 - (1) some Departments would be happy to introduce a uniform 40% pass mark;
 - (2) First Year Exam Board conventions treat groups of modules as "main subjects", and so it would not be acceptable to require students to pass each individual module at 40%;
 - (3) changing pass marks from 30% to 40% would have a considerable impact on those examinations which involve totalling of many small marks;
 - (C) That Annex B, section 6, should be re-worded to make clear that the current usage of the Seymour formula would not change;
- (iii) and resolved:
- (A) That Departments should send to the next meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science their initial assessments of how the introduction of a 40% pass mark would affect their Department in practice, including the possible number of re-sits and whether First Year Exam Board

Conventions would have to be substantially changed beyond the insertion of "40%" in place of "30%".

CONSIDERED:

- (iv) The final proposals of the Assessment Conventions Working Group as set out in paper AQSC 60/07-08.

REPORTED:

- (v) That the proposal for unified degree classification conventions, as described in Annex B of paper AQSC.60/07-08, did not describe usage of the Seymour Formula correctly and, in particular, consideration of cases where a student's mean mark falls just above a class boundary.
- (vi) That the introduction of a uniform 40% pass mark would increase significantly the number of first-year resits in most departments, but that departments would support the 40% pass mark and be able to adjust their marking conventions as necessary.

RECOMMENDED (to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee):

- (vii) That the principle of the 17-point mark scale and the use of a mean-based overall mark be approved.
- (viii) That the adoption of a uniform 40% pass mark be approved for implementation in 2008-09, on the assumption that this would apply to "main subjects" rather than modules within First Year Exam Conventions.
- (ix) That the final proposals of the Assessment Conventions Working Group, as set out in paper AQSC.60/07-08, not be approved until sections 2, 3 and 6 of Annex B are redrafted to reflect correct usage of the Seymour Formula and consideration of borderline cases.
- (x) That AQSC considers the efficiency of involving members of the Sub-Faculty of Science in the redrafting of sections 2, 3 and 6 of Annex B.

RESOLVED:

- (xi) That a Working Group, consisting of the members of the First Year Board of Examiners for the Faculty of Science, be formed to redraft the First Year Exam Conventions, to report to the autumn term meeting of the Sub-Faculty of Science, noting that a significant simplification of the current conventions would be beneficial.

48/07-08 Faculty of Science Quality Enhancement Group

RECEIVED:

- (a) An oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science Quality Enhancement Group on its meeting held on 19 May 2008, noting that:
 - (i) Chairs of SSLCs would be invited to future meetings;
 - (ii) A small fund of about £3k would be available to the Group for the next academic year;
 - (iii) People from other institutions and the Higher Education Academy would be invited to speak at future meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (b) The Quality Enhancement Group should report to the Board of the Faculty of Science, with relevant items being reported to the Sub-Faculty of Science and the Graduate Studies Committee;

- (c) The Quality Enhancement Group should include people with interests in graduate teaching in its membership.

49/07-08 Report from the Graduate Studies Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 14 May 2008 and an oral report from the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

Science Postgraduate Training Programme (minute BFS.32/07-08 refers)

RECEIVED:

- (b) Notes from the first meeting of the Science Postgraduate Training Programme Working Group held on 20 March 2008.

50/07-08 Report from the Faculty of Science Research and Innovation Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meetings of the Faculty of Science Research and Innovation Committee held on 5 March 2008 and 20 May 2008.

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science should request additional time for the submission of outline bids to the Capital Investment Framework (CIF) funds, in order that the possibility of co-ordinated bids from the Faculty could be investigated.

51/07-08 Report from the Capital Development Progress Group

RECEIVED:

A report from the Science Faculty Capital Development Progress Group (paper BFS.8/07-08).

52/07-08 Faculty Advisory Board

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A report from the meeting of the Faculty of Science Advisory Board held on 15 May 2008.

REPORTED:

- (b) That there were vacancies on the Advisory Board for external members, and that members of the Science Faculty were invited to suggest potential new members for appointment, noting that the Life Sciences were currently under-represented on the Advisory Board.

53/07-08 Life Sciences Strategy

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A discussion paper on the Future of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick (paper BFS.9/07-08).

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the discussion paper on the Future of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick (paper BFS.9/07-08) be approved as a basis for further discussions.

54/07-08 Faculty Elections

CONSIDERED:

The proposed constitutions and nominations for memberships of the following committees for the academic year 2008/09:

- (a) Board of the Faculty of Science (BFS.10/07-08).
- (b) Sub-Faculty of Science (BFS.11/07-08).
- (c) Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science (BFS.12/07-08).
- (d) Faculty of Science Information Technology Committee (BFS.13/07-08).
- (e) First Year Board of Examiners (BFS.14/07-08).
- (f) Undergraduate and Graduate Appeals Committee Panels (BFS.15/07-08).
- (g) Representatives of the Faculty on other committees (BFS.16/07-08)

RESOLVED:

- (h) That the proposed constitutions and nominations for memberships of the above committees be approved, with some amendments notified at the meeting, as set out in paper BFS.10-16 (revised)/07-08;
- (i) That the positions to be confirmed would be approved by Chair's action.

CONSIDERED:

- (j) The nomination of Professor Koen Lamberts to serve as the Chair of the Faculty of Science for the 2008/09 academic year, noting that he had served one year in office to date and that University Statute 21 on the Faculties states that the Chair is eligible for reappointment.
- (k) The nomination of Professor Tim Jones to serve as the Deputy Chair of the Faculty of Science for the 2008/09 academic year.

RESOLVED:

- (l) That Professor Koen Lamberts be elected to serve as the Chair of the Faculty of Science for the 2008/09 academic year.
- (m) That Professor Tim Jones be elected to serve as the Deputy Chair of the Faculty of Science for the 2008/09 academic year.

REPORTED:

- (n) That there were no vacancies for members of the Board of the Faculty of Science to represent the Board on the Senate.
- (o) That the continuing members of the Senate appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Science were as follows:

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Professor M J Cooper (2010) | Department of Physics |
| Professor A Easton (2010) | Department of Biological Sciences |
| Professor J Gardner (2009) | School of Engineering |
| Professor J Hutton (2010) | Department of Statistics |
| Professor C Sparrow (2010) | Institute of Mathematics |
| Professor R Wilson (2010) | Department of Computer Science |

55/07-08 Directorships of University Research Centres

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The appointment of Directors of University Research Centres whose terms of office have expired or will expire in 2008 (paper BFS.17/07-08).

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the appointment of Professor J Fenlon as Director of the Risk Initiative and Statistical Consultancy Unit until the end of July 2011 be approved.

56/07-08 QAA Institutional Audit

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A draft of key sections of the University's Institutional Briefing Paper, prepared by Professor K O'Brien (Senior Academic Coordinator for Audit and Enhancement) and Dr J Moss (Senior Assistant Registrar {Teaching Quality}), as part of preparations for the QAA Institutional Audit taking place during the Autumn Term 2008 (paper BFS.19/07-08), noting that the completed document must be with QAA by 1 September 2008.

RESOLVED:

- (b) That any comments on the University's Institutional Briefing Paper should be sent to Professor K O'Brien.

57/07-08 Environmental Sustainability

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A memo from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Campus and Community proposing "the environment" as a standing item for Faculty Board agendas (paper BFS.18/07-08).

RESOLVED:

- (b) That "the environment" should not be included as a standing item on future agendas of the Board of the Faculty of Science, as this would achieve little in itself, noting that this did not imply a lack of commitment from the Faculty to environmental issues;
- (c) That environmental issues which had relevance to the work of the Faculty Board should be brought to the Board in future;
- (d) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Campus and Community, or the University's Environment Officer, be invited to speak at a future Science Faculty Lunch.

58/07-08 Strategic Departmental Reviews

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A report on Strategic Departmental Reviews in the Faculty of Science (paper BFS.20/07-08).

REPORTED:

- (b) That the next Strategic Departmental Review for Computer Science, which had been omitted from the table in Annex A of paper BFS.20/07-08, would be held during 2011-12, and that this would be included in the revised schedule to be reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Senate later this term.

CONSIDERED:

- (c) The provisional lists of courses to be covered in the SDRs of the School of Engineering and the Institute of Mathematics, as set out in Annex B of paper BFS.20/07-08.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the School of Engineering and the Institute of Mathematics should submit any amendments to the provisional lists of courses to be covered in their SDRs, to be approved by Chair's Action and subsequently reported to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

59/07-08 Items to be brought to the Senate

CONSIDERED:

- (a) Whether there were any specific issues which the Board of the Faculty wished to refer to the Senate for consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (b) That there were no specific issues which the Board wished to refer to the Senate for consideration.

60/07-08 Dates of Future Meetings

REPORTED:

- (a) That dates for meetings of the Board of the Faculty of Science for the academic year 2008/09 had not yet been proposed by the University;
- (b) That dates for meetings of the Board of the Faculty of Science for the academic year 2008/09 would be circulated by the secretariat as soon as they became available.

61/07-08 Reserved items

See the separate minutes for academic members of the Board of the Faculty only.