

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

BOARD OF THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science on Wednesday 29th May 2002.

Present: Professor J D S Jones (in the Chair), Professor D Anderson, Professor R Ball, Mr A Boddison, Professor T D Bugg, Professor M J Cooper, Professor R Dupree, Dr K Flint, Dr L Frigerio, Dr E Heit, Professor W S Kendall, Dr A K Manning, Dr G Martin, Professor G Nudd, Professor M S Paterson, Dr A M Price, Dr C Sparrow, Professor P Stanfield.

Apologies: Professor J Gardner, Professor D Haddleton, Professor T J Kemp, Professor K Lamberts, Professor A Szczepura, Professor J Q Smith, Professor M Wills, Professor R Wilson.

In Attendance: Mr K Sloan (for item 33/01-02 only), Mr L Sanders and Prof R Dyson (for item 34/01-02 only), Mrs H Ireland

MINUTES

31/01-02 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 13 February 2002 be approved.

32/01-02 Matters Arising

REPORTED:

That Professor M Wills had given his apologies for the last meeting of the Board, though it was not reflected on the minutes.

33/01-02 Appeals Regulations

CONSIDERED:

A proposal for amendments to the appeals processes for undergraduate, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates to take account of the Human Rights Act and related legislation (paper BFS19/01-02).

RESOLVED:

That the amendments to the appeals processes as set out in paper BFS19/01-02 be approved.

34/01-02 Report on the Review of Continuing Education

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Academic Registrar and Professor Robert Dyson on the proposal for replacing the Department of Continuing Education with a new Centre for Lifelong Learning.

CONSIDERED:

A report from the working group of the Steering Committee on the Review of Continuing Education and its recommendation to establish the Centre for Lifelong Learning (paper BFS18/01-02).

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Review of Continuing Education as set out in paper BFS18/01-02 be approved.

35/01-02

Chair's Business

(a) Science Year Initiatives

RECEIVED:

- (i) A Universities UK circular I/02/19 dated 20 February 2002 regarding Science Year Initiatives (paper BFS20/01-02).
- (ii) An oral report from the Chair on issues raised regarding Science Year Initiatives in conjunction with the Student Recruitment Office.

REPORTED:

- (iii) That the Student Recruitment Office in conjunction with departments in the Faculty of Science plan to have 40 to 50 pre-GCSE students come on campus for an event on 2 July 2002, noting that Biological Sciences, Physics and Chemistry have already stated they would take part.

(b) External Advisory Boards

REPORTED:

That the Senate considered a composite report from the Boards of the Faculties on the proposals for introduction of Faculty Advisory Boards and clarification from the Steering Committee on four principle issues raised by the Faculty Boards on the introduction of Advisory Boards of the Faculties relating to their scope, constitution, reporting lines and the retention of existing Advisory Boards for University Research Centres (minute 38/01-02 refers), and resolved that:

- (i) That Faculty Advisory Boards be established for each of the four Faculties at the beginning of the academic year 2002/03 along the broad lines set out in paper S.31/01-02.
- (ii) That the Chairs of the Faculty Boards bring forward detailed proposals for the constitution and membership of their respective Advisory Boards for consideration by the relevant Faculty Board and approval by the Joint Council and Senate Strategy Committee in the summer term.
- (iii) That the operation of each of the Faculty Advisory Boards be reviewed after a period of three years.
- (iv) That separate steps be taken to review the operation of existing Advisory Boards of University Research Centres, in consultation with the relevant Faculty Boards, and to bring forward recommendations to the Senate for their continuation or abolition.

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the progress of consultation regarding the establishment of an External Advisory Board for the Faculty of Science.

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Faculty has been working to establish a draft constitution and terms of reference for the Faculty of Science External Advisory Board.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Faculty will meet with the Chairs of the departments within the Faculty to discuss the draft constitution and terms of reference, after which the proposal will be circulated to the members of the Board of the Faculty of Science for comment, noting that these comments would be considered and, where appropriate, be included in the final draft.

(b) Centre for Excellence in Science Teaching

REPORTED:

That the Institute of Education is considering taking a bid forward by the University and will attend the Heads of Science lunchtime meeting on 31 May 2002 to discuss this further.

(c) Parliamentary and Science Committee

REPORTED:

That the Chair attended the Parliamentary Science and Committee and recommended to the Faculty Board and to Steering that this Committee as well as Professor John O'Reilly of the EPSRC be invited to the University.

36/01-02 Report from the Sub-Faculty

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Faculty held on 13 February 2002.
- (b) An oral report from the meeting of the Sub-Faculty held immediately prior to this meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Board further emphasise to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee the continued difficulties resulting from the timetabling of lectures and exams.
- (d) That the concern regarding the overcrowding of teaching rooms raised by a significant number of SSLCs be referred to the Accommodation Committee.

37/01-02 Report from the Graduate Studies Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee held on 15 May 2002.

38/01-02 Report from the Faculty Information Technology Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Information Technology Committee held on 14 May 2002.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Dr E Heit and the Faculty Information Technology Committee be thanked for their monitoring of relevant issues affecting the Faculty and its reports to this Board.

- (b) That the following aspects of the report be noted in particular:
 - (i) That there was concern as to whether the implementation of the University's e-learning strategy would be a responsibility of individual departments or the University centrally.
 - (ii) That the Research and Development Services Office was notified that the Research and Teaching Development Fund (RTDF) provided a useful funding mechanism for department-based e-learning and provided good value-for-money.
 - (iii) That departments in the Faculty, and Computer Science in particular, need to be involved in the development of the University's network strategy and that it is requested that the draft proposal should be seen by the Faculty before approval.

39/01-02

Faculty Board Elections

(a) Committees of the Board of the Faculty of Science

CONSIDERED:

The nominations for membership and Chairs of the following committees:

- (i) The First Year Board of Examiners for 2001/02 (paper BFS21/01-02)
- (ii) The Examination Appeals Committee for 2001/02 (paper BFS22/01-02)
- (iii) The Sub-Faculty of Science for 2002/03 (paper BFS23/01-02)
- (iv) The Faculty Graduate Studies Committee for 2002/03 (paper BFS24/01-02)
- (v) The Faculty Information Technology Committee for 2002/03 (paper BFS25/01-02)
- (vi) The Board of the Faculty of Science for 2002/03 (paper BFS26/01-02)

REPORTED:

- (vii) That the nominations from the Department of Biological Sciences had been received immediately before the meeting, and therefore, are not reflected in the above papers.
- (viii) That Statistics requested to amend their nomination on the First Year Board of Examiners to be Dr J E Kennedy rather than DR E Riccomagno.
- (ix) That the Sub-Faculty nominations to serve on the Board were Dr G Martin and Dr A Price in addition to the Chair of the Sub-Faculty.

RESOLVED:

That the nominations for the above Faculty Committees as set out in papers BFS21/01-02 through BFS26/01-02 and including additions reported at the meeting be approved, noting that nominations not yet received would be sought and considered by the Chair, on behalf of the Board, under Chair's action.

(b) Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of Professor J D S Jones to serve as the Chair of the Faculty of Science for a further year, it being noted that he has already served 4 years in office.

RESOLVED:

That Professor J D S Jones be nominated to serve as the Chair of the Faculty of Science for a further year.

(c) Representation on Senate

CONSIDERED:

The nomination of Dr Andrew Easton to serve Professor Howard Dalton's remaining term of representation from this Board on the Senate through the Summer Term 2003, due to Professor Dalton stepping down as the Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences and thus the Faculty of Science requiring one further representative on Senate.

RESOLVED:

That Dr Andrew Easton be nominated to serve the remaining term of Professor Howard Dalton as a representative of the Faculty of Science on Senate.

(d) Other Board Elections

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Dr A Dowd be nominated to serve as one of the representatives of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Board of Graduate Studies for 2002/03 and that an additional representative be nominated outside the meeting.
- (ii) That a representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science to serve on the Board of Undergraduate Studies be sought outside the meeting.
- (iii) That a representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Board of the Faculty of Arts for 2002/03 be sought outside this meeting.
- (iv) That a representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies for 2002/03 be sought outside the meeting.
- (v) That Prof T D H Bugg be nominated as the representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Board of the Faculty of Medicine for 2002/03.
- (vi) That up to two representatives of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Board of Lifelong Learning be sought outside the meeting.
- (vii) That a representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Partnerships and Distance Learning Sub-Committee of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee be sought outside the meeting.
- (viii) That Dr K Flint be nominated as the one representative of the Board of the Faculty of Science on the Careers Advisory Board for 2002/03.
- (iv) That nominations for posts sought outside the meeting will be considered by the Chair, on behalf of the Board, under Chair's action.

40/01-02

Working Group on Non-Completion Rates and Marking Practices in the Faculty of Science

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Board of the Faculty of Science, at its meeting of 7th November 2001, resolved:
 - (i) that a Working Group be established to review the marking practices and degree classifications used in the Faculty of Science and whether they are in line with national levels

(ii) that the membership would be as follows:

Professor J Jones (Chair)	Mathematics
Professor K Lamberts	Psychology
Dr K Flint	Biological Sciences
Dr A M Price	Engineering

(b) That the Steering Committee, at its meeting of 26th November 2001, requested that the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and the Board of the Faculty of Science consider the upward trend in undergraduate non-completion rates, noted particularly amongst first year students in the Faculty of Science and that the Board resolved at its meeting of 13th February 2002 that this Working Group consider this issue.

(c) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee at their meeting on 27 February 2002 considered the following (minute 30/01-02 referred):

- (i) An oral report from Dr R Naylor, of the Department of Economics, on research undertaken to identify the underlying factors that may influence undergraduate non-completion rates together with brief data on non-continuation of first year students entering in 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/2000 (paper AQSC 20/01-02, tabled at the meeting).
- (ii) The upward trend in undergraduate non-completion rates (tables 2.8.1 to 2.8.10 of Academic Statistics 2001/2002).
- (iii) Data on undergraduate degree classifications [table 2.7 of Academic Statistics] (paper AQSC 15/01-02).

reported:

- (i) That while the first year non-completion rate for the 1998-99 entry in the Faculty of Science is higher than that for the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies, this correlates with HEFCE data on other UK universities, where on average the non-completion rate for the first year accounts for approximately 50% of the overall non-completion rate and that these rates are generally higher for the sciences.
- (ii) That there is considerable variation in non-completion rates for first year students entering in 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/2000 in departments within the Faculty of Science
- (iii) That the 1999-2000 non-completion rates reveal most departments within the Faculty of Science to be closer to the University average rate for non-completion.
- (iv) That HEFCE data indicated that 30-40% of first-year students not completing courses transfer to and complete courses at other HEIs.

and resolved:

- (i) That Dr Naylor be thanked for his work and that the data presented in AQSC 20/01-02 on non-completion rates and the University data contained in the Academic Statistics 2001/2002 be considered further by the Board of the Faculty of Science.
- (ii) That it was the view of the Committee that, while Dr Naylor's research indicated that the non-completion rates for undergraduate students at an institutional and subject level were comparable to other UK HEIs this was not an acceptable position and steps be taken to examine further the range of factors affecting non-completion of students and how these might be addressed, in particular the preparation of qualitative data on support and guidance provided for students.

- (iii) That the Senior Tutor and the Student's Union Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer be requested to prepare reports for consideration by the Committee on the trends on demands in the Senior Tutor's Office and the Students' Union Welfare and Advice for provision of student support and guidance.
- (iv) That the Academic Office be requested to provide actual figures for non-completion rates in tables 2.8.6, 2.8.7 and 2.8.8, as well as the percentage figures currently provided, since the percentage figures tended to present a distorted picture due to the often small numbers of students in specific categories.
- (v) That in view of the high proportion of students whose reasons for non-completion were unknown, the Academic Office in consultation with the Senior Tutor's Office be requested to formulate guidance to academic and support departments on the accurate collection of non-completion data, in particular, specific reasons for individual students leaving the University or taking temporary withdrawal.
- (vi) That the Academic Office be requested to establish whether comparable data on undergraduate degree classifications by Faculty or department in other institutions was available for consideration by the Board of the Faculty of Science.
- (vii) That the data on undergraduate degree classifications in the Faculty of Science be referred for consideration by the Board of the Faculty of Science.

CONSIDERED:

The minutes and recommendations of the Board of the Faculty of Science Working Group on Degree Classifications and Non-Completion rates (paper BFS27/01-02).

REPORTED:

That this Working Group will meet again to consider the further information requested and the responses of individual departments.

RESOLVED:

That the responses requested from the departments within the Faculty of Science as set out in paper BFS27/01-02 be submitted to the Secretariat before the start of the Autumn term 2002.

41/01-02 Roberts Review of Science

CONSIDERED:

A draft report from the Working Group of the Steering Committee on Roberts Review of Science and its recommendations and conclusions, noting that it will also be considered at the Heads of Science lunch on 31 May 2002 (paper BFS28/01-02).

RESOLVED:

That the report on Roberts Review of Science as set out in paper BFS28/01-02 be approved.

42/01-02 Visiting Part-year Students

REPORTED:

- (a) That at the meeting the Board recommended that the proposal for the allocation of credit and examination arrangements for Part-year Visiting students, as set out in paper BFS7/01-02, be approved, noting the following (minute 23/01-02 refers):

- (i) That it would not be possible for all courses or modules within the Faculty to set special methods of assessment for part-year students and that individual module tutors should be responsible for making this decision in the first instance.
 - (ii) That it was understood that if appropriate assessment methods could not be set, candidates should not be accepted to come for a part-year of study.
 - (iii) That the Board supported the proposal that all new and revised module proposals should indicate if part-year students can be considered and if yes, how they may be appropriately assessed and assigned credit when their visit does not include the traditional period of study for the module.
 - (iv) That the Faculty of Science does not have many modules that last for more than one term and therefore felt that the 40:40:20 split of CATS should not apply to all departments in the Science Faculty.
- (b) That the Academic and Quality Standards Committee considered a paper on arrangements for the allocation of credit and examination arrangements for visiting part-year students, together with the responses from the Faculty Boards and the recommendations of the Board of Undergraduate Studies, and resolved that 'The Boards of the Faculties be asked to consider current assessment loads in line with the 40:40:20 CATS model, for consideration by the Board of Undergraduate Studies.'

CONSIDERED:

A request from the International Office for clarification as to what should be done about the occasional full year course in the Science Faculty, namely Psychology, which is taken by part year students as well as on the occasion when a part-year student who will not be present for examinations in the summer is admitted by a Science Department, and therefore, in both cases, alternative assessment methods need to be arranged.]

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Department of Psychology submit to the Secretariat proposals for the assessment methods for part-year visiting students.
- (b) That the Board reaffirm its above resolutions that elsewhere in the Science Faculty individual module tutors should not accept part-year visiting students if appropriate methods of assessment cannot be established at the outset.

43/01-02

Periodic Reviews

- (a) Engineering

REPORTED:

That, in light of the consideration of the External Review of the School of Engineering this term, the Steering Committee has resolved that the Periodic Review of the School be postponed until the Autumn term.

- (b) Computer Science and Computer Systems Engineering

CONSIDERED:

The Computer Science and Computer Systems Engineering Review report (paper BFS29/01-02) and the formal responses from the Department of Computer Science (paper BFS30/01-02) and the Department of Engineering (paper BFS32/01-02).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Computer Science and Computer Systems Engineering Review report as set out in paper BFS29/01-02 and the Computer Science and Engineering departmental responses as set out in papers BFS30/01-02 and BFS32/01-02 be approved.
- (ii) That it be noted that there was concern expressed both by the Board and the Department of Computer Science regarding not having received previous external examiners reports.

44/01-02 Departmental Annual Reviews

REPORTED:

That the following Annual Reviews for 2000/2001 are yet to be received by the Secretariat: Chemistry (postgraduate) and Postgraduate Medical Education.

CONSIDERED:

The School of Engineering MSc in Advanced Engineering Annual Review (paper BFS31/01-02), it being noted that the Academic Quality and Standards Committee asks the Board to discuss them, consider points of best practice and identify areas for improvement.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Annual Review for the MSc in Advanced Engineering be approved.
- (b) That the above missing reviews should be submitted to the Secretariat by the end of the Summer Term.

45/01-02 Issues to be brought to Senate

CONSIDERED:

Whether there are any items which the Board wishes to report to Senate for discussion.

RESOLVED:

That the Board did not have any issues which it felt should be specially considered by Senate at this time.

46/01-02 to
48/01-02 Reserved Items

Please see reserved minutes for academic members of the Board only.

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