

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 6 June 2007.

Present: Professor M Smith (in the Chair), Professor RC Ball, Professor J Beynon, Professor S Bright, Professor MJ Cooper, Professor A Easton, Professor J Feng, Dr K Flint, Professor R Freedman, Professor J Hutton, Dr AM Price, Dr M Skinner, Professor C Sparrow, Professor R Wilson.

Apologies: Mr T Arnold, Professor SK Bhattacharyya, Professor P Carpenter, Dr A Dowd, Professor JW Gardner, Professor R Green, Professor S Jacka, Professor K Lamberts, Professor R MacKay, Dr G Raper, Professor L Roberts, Dr J Robinson, Professor PR Taylor, Professor M Waterson, Professor V Zammit.

In attendance: Ms H Ireland, Dr K Leppard.

MINUTES

38/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 14 February 2007 be approved.

39/06-07 Matters arising on the Minutes

- (a) Constitution and Membership (minute BFS.1/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Institute of Education to replace their representative on the Board, Dr R Beare, with Dr G Raper.

RESOLVED:

That the above proposal be approved.

- (b) Computer-Aided Assessment (minute BFS.23(c)/06-07 refers)

REPORTED:

That discussions with IT Services over space for Computer-Aided Assessment were ongoing, and that it was hoped to include something in the University's capital plan.

- (c) Study Leave for Teaching (minute BFS.27/06-07 refers)

REPORTED:

That no clarification of whether study leave could be taken for teaching purposes had yet been obtained, and that this was being discussed as part of the negotiations over harmonisation of terms and conditions.

- (d) International Strategy (minute BFS.28(c)/06-07 refers)

REPORTED:

- (i) That Vanderbilt University was being courted as a potential partner in the USA, and that the Vanderbilt's Chancellor would be visiting Warwick in November.
- (ii) That visits from members of the Faculty to Vanderbilt before November would be welcome.

40/06-07 Report from the Faculty of Science IT Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Science IT Committee held on 9 May 2007 and an oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science IT Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (b) That bids to the Education Innovation Fund from the Science Faculty should be encouraged (minute 7 refers).

REPORTED:

- (c) That the Information Policy and Strategy Committee had requested that IT and Library issues be included as a standing item for the autumn meetings of the Faculty Boards, in order to input into the five-year planning round (minute 8 refers).
- (d) That IT Services was not currently supporting videoconferencing, but that several departments are operating videoconferencing software in any case, without support from IT Services.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That there needs to be a system through which departments are able to influence what services will be supported by IT Services.

41/06-07 Report from the Sub-Faculty

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Faculty of Science held on 16 May 2007 and an oral report from the Chair of the Sub-Faculty of Science.

REPORTED (minute SFS.39(i)-(j)/06-07 refers):

- (b) That there was a review of Student Support ongoing which would report in the summer, and that the Director of Campus Affairs would be working with departments to:
 - (i) Increase awareness of available key contacts for support (including but not limited to Counselling);
 - (ii) Identify better ways to access immediate intervention when necessary;
 - (iii) Share the initial findings of the review of Student Support.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Board should re-emphasise the concern of the Sub-Faculty of Science over the waiting times being experienced by students in accessing the Counselling Service;
- (d) That academic departments do not have the expertise to make professional assessments of students with regard to welfare issues, and so the University should continue to provide a single service to which departments can make an initial referral.

REPORTED:

- (e) That some departments were concerned that there was a growing expectation that if students visited the Senior Tutor's office and obtained a letter asking for mitigating circumstances to be considered, then a favourable outcome would be automatic.

RESOLVED:

- (f) That departments should cooperate with the Senior Tutor's office to raise awareness of the context in which decisions regarding performance with mitigating circumstances are made.

42/06-07 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 16 May 2007 and an oral report from the Chair of the Board, on behalf of the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

CONSIDERED:

- (b) A memo from the Centre for Academic Practice and Development on a new Postgraduate Award in Research Management Skills (paper BGS.44/06-07), together with proposals for the new course and associated module (papers BGS.45-46/06-07) (minute SGS.48/06-07 refers).

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the views of the Graduate Studies Committee regarding the proposed CAPD Postgraduate Award in Research Management Skills be endorsed, and that the proposal does not meet the needs of researchers in the Science Faculty;
- (d) That the Award should be taught by people with more relevant skills and actual experience in research management;
- (e) That assessment should be based less on reflective accounts and more on relevant practical work, such as production of a fully costed research proposal.

43/06-07 Report from the Faculty of Science Research Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Science Research Committee held on 16 May 2007.

REPORTED:

That the aim to double the number of postgraduate students by 2014 refers to research students (minute 1 refers).

44/06-07 Chair's Business

(a) Science Faculty Advisory Board

RECEIVED:

Notes from the meeting of the Science Faculty Advisory Board held at the House of Lords on 26 April 2007.

RESOLVED:

That the discussion paper referred to in the minutes of the Advisory Board be circulated to members of the Faculty Board.

(b) Summer Bursaries

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on a proposal to encourage more undergraduate students to engage with research work in departments over the summer, by including the cost of bursaries in research grant bids.

(c) Awards and Prizes

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on attempts to nominate more colleagues from the Science Faculty for awards and prizes.

(d) Daphne Jackson Trust

CONSIDERED:

A paper on the Daphne Jackson Trust, which runs a returners scheme for science, engineers and technologists who have been disadvantaged by taking a career break (paper BFS.4/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That departments should encourage people to make use of this fund, noting that the Director of the Daphne Jackson Trust would be keen to visit the Faculty to help promote the scheme.

45/06-07 Faculty Elections

(a) Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science 2007/08

REPORTED:

- (i) That, should his appointment as Pro-Vice-Chancellor be approved at the meeting of the Council on 11 July 2007, Professor Smith would be obliged to

step down as Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science and a new Chair would need to be elected.

RESOLVED:

(ii) That Professor Mark Smith be re-elected as Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science for the 2007/08 academic year.

(b) Membership of the Board of the Faculty of Science and associated Committees 2007/08

CONSIDERED:

The proposed constitutions and nominations for memberships of the following committees for the academic year 2007/08:

- (i) Board of the Faculty of Science (BFS.5/06-07).
- (ii) Sub-Faculty of Science (BFS.6/06-07).
- (iii) Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science (BFS.7/06-07).
- (iv) Faculty of Science Information Technology Committee (BFS.8/06-07).
- (v) First Year Board of Examiners (BFS.9/06-07).
- (vi) Undergraduate and Graduate Appeals Committee Panels (BFS.10/06-07).
- (vii) Representatives of the Faculty on other committees (BFS.11/06-07)

RESOLVED:

- (viii) That the proposed constitution of the Board of the Faculty of Science be approved, with some amendments notified at the meeting, as set out in paper BFS.5 (revised)/06-07;
- (ix) That the proposed constitutions and nominations for memberships of the other committees above be approved as set out in papers BFS.6-11/06-07;
- (x) That the positions to be confirmed would be approved by Chair's action.

46/06-07 Election to Membership of the Senate

REPORTED:

- (a) That from 1 August 2007 there would be four vacancies for representatives of the Board of the Faculty of Science to membership of the Senate, to serve for three years until July 2010.
- (b) That according to Regulation 2.2, any member of the Board shall be eligible to represent the Board on the Senate, subject to the requirement that a majority of those appointed by the Board shall be both Professors and Chairs of Departments in membership of that Board, and that candidates for election must be proposed and seconded by members of the Board.

CONSIDERED:

- (c) Nominations received from members of the Board for election to the Senate (BFS.13/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (d) That Professors Cooper, Hutton and Sparrow be elected to represent the Board on the Senate, to serve for three years until July 2010.

CONSIDERED:

- (e) A proposal from Professor Freedman (seconded by Professor Hutton) to elect Professor Easton to the remaining vacant position on the Senate.

RESOLVED:

- (f) That Professor Easton be elected to represent the Board on the Senate, to serve for three years until July 2010.

47/06-07 Degree Classification Conventions

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The final report of the AQSC Working Group on Assessment Conventions, agreed at the meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on 17 May 2007 (AQSC.78/06-07 (revised)).
- (b) An additional question raised by the Faculty of Social Studies, asking whether those departments that currently use the full 0-100 marking scale for appropriate papers were confident that in all cases the marks produced would be compatible with the new descriptors (e.g. that a mark of 73% would broadly equate to a low first, and that 42% would equate to a low third).

RESOLVED:

- (c) That, in response to the additional question raised by the Faculty of Social Studies, the Science Faculty was confident that this was the case.
- (d) That the proposal from the Sub-Faculty of Science to change regulations relating to Year 2 re-sit students be included in the new conventions (minute SFS.36(d)/06-07 refers).
- (e) That the final report of the AQSC Working Group on Assessment Conventions be approved as set out in AQSC.78/06-07 (revised).

48/06-07 Module Restructuring

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A memo from the Senior Assistant Registrar, Planning and Management Information, concerning a review of how modules are managed within the Student Records system (BFS.12/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (b) That clarification should be sought over whether variants of a module with different CATS weightings would require separate module proposal forms.
- (c) That the Chair of the Sub-Faculty of Science should convene a small group to consider issues raised by the proposal in BFS.12/06-07 over the summer, on behalf of the Sub-Faculty.

CONSIDERED:

- (d) A comment forwarded by Mr T Arnold, the undergraduate student representative on the Board, concerning problems caused by the lack of communication between the module registration system used by the Warwick Business School (WBS) and the University's On-line Module Registration (OMR) system.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That WBS should be encouraged to ensure that its module registration system links in with OMR, noting that the lack of common registration data also affects the transfer of examination marks from WBS to other departments.

49/06-07 Strategic Departmental Reviews

REPORTED:

- (a) That a Quinquennial Review of the Department of Computer Science was undertaken during November 2006.
- (b) That a Quinquennial Review of the Department of Psychology was undertaken during November 2006.
- (c) That future departmental reviews will take place under the new process of Strategic Review of Departments and Courses, which merges the previous processes of Quinquennial Review and Periodic Review of Courses.
- (d) That a Strategic Departmental Review of the Department of Biological Science is due to be undertaken during the autumn 2007.
- (e) That Strategic Departmental Reviews of the School of Engineering and the Institute of Mathematics are due to be undertaken during 2007-08.

REPORTED:

- (f) That Periodic Reviews of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses in the Department of Psychology had taken place in 2004, and that the reports had been considered by the department in 2005, but these reports had never been considered by the Faculty Board.

CONSIDERED:

- (g) The Report of the Review of Undergraduate Courses in the Department of Psychology carried out in 2004 (BFS.15/06-07).
- (h) The Report of the Review of Postgraduate Courses in the Department of Psychology carried out in 2004 (BFS.16/06-07).
- (i) The response from the Department of Psychology to these reports (BFS.14/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (j) That the Board should express its concern over the timeliness of the process of carrying out these reviews, noting that the reports did feed into the Quinquennial Review of Psychology undertaken in November 2006.
- (k) That the reports be noted, and that Professors Smith and Sparrow be asked to examine the reports and report back to the next meeting of the Board.

50/06-07 Items to be brought to the Senate

CONSIDERED:

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

RESOLVED:

That the concerns regarding the Counselling Service (minute BFS.41(b)-(d)/06-07 refers) should be included in the Science Faculty's report to the Senate.

51/06-07 Dates of Future Meetings

CONSIDERED:

The following proposed dates for Board of the Faculty of Science Meetings in the academic year 2007-8:

- (a) Term 1 Wednesday 7 November 2007, 2pm
- (b) Term 2 Wednesday 13 February 2008, 2pm
- (c) Term 3 Wednesday 28 May 2008, 2pm

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the above dates be approved.
- (e) That Professor Smith be thanked for the contribution he has made as Chair of the Board over the past two years.

52/06-07 Reserved items

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