

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 8 February 2006.

Present: Professor ME Smith (in the Chair), Professor R Freedman, Professor C Dowson, Professor PJ Derrick, Professor M Paterson, Professor D Peled, Dr AM Price, Professor S Bright, Dr C Sparrow, Professor RC Ball, Professor J Hutton, Dr K Flint, Dr J Robinson, Dr N G Stocks, Mr T Arnold.

Apologies: Professor L Roberts, Professor D Haddleton, Professor PR Taylor, Professor R Wilson, Professor P Carpenter, Professor RJ Green, Professor JW Gardner, Professor SK Bhattacharya, Professor J Beynon, Dr D Rumynin, Professor Sebastian van Strien, Professor MJ Cooper, Professor K Lamberts, Dr S Joseph, Professor MF Steel, Dr G Martin, Professor M Wills, Dr D Morley, Dr RA Beare, Professor M Waterson, Professor D Singer, Miss L Slator.

In Attendance: Dr K Leppard

MINUTES

18/05-06 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 2 November 2005 be approved subject to minor amendments.

19/05-06 Matters arising on the minutes

(a) Faculty of Science: Seymour Formula: Formula Marking Scheme (BFS minute 3(a)(v)/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair clarifying the AQSC's understanding of the Faculty of Science's position with regard to formula marking schemes.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair should make clear to the AQSC that, although the Faculty of Science is not opposed in principle to formula marking schemes, it has not agreed to any specific proposal.

20/05-06 Chair's Business

(a) Changes to the Secretariat

REPORTED:

(i) That Jamie Darwen would replace Jonathan Wylie as Secretary to the Board of the Faculty of Science and its subordinate committees.

RESOLVED:

(ii) That Jonathan Wylie be thanked for the support he has given to the Faculty.

(b) Academic Staff Grading Structure

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on proposals for the grading structure for academic staff.

(c) International Strategy

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair requesting information on departmental international strategies, and discussing the possibility of the formation of a Faculty International Strategy Committee.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Chair would write to Heads of Department requesting information about departmental international strategies, and would articulate the information required from departments by the University, with reference to the University's international strategy.

(ii) That the Faculty of Science Research Committee would include International Strategy as a regular agenda item.

(d) Research Developments

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the University's proposals for large scale research activities, noting that four proposals worth over £3.5m each had come into Science departments since the last meeting, and that the University was developing a proforma system for costing such large scale bids.

RECOMMENDED:

(i) That some of these recent grants should be tested against this new model to examine its effect.

(ii) That large scale initiatives can have significant implications in terms of staff or new space requirements, and the University will need to develop systems to move quickly on these requirements.

(iii) That guidance should be given to departments in formulating such bids, and how to arrive at robust, common estimates of the crucial input parameters. It is important that as the University formalises such costings that consultation takes place before the guidelines are finalised, and that any proposed model is discussed by this Board.

(e) RCUK Fellowships

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the RCUK Academic Fellowship scheme, noting that the outcome of bids would be known in March.

(f) Vice-Chancellor's Education Innovation Fund

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the Vice Chancellor's Education Innovation Fund, noting that the first round awarded £129k for 8 projects including £30k for 2 projects in the School of Engineering.

(g) Faculty Advisory Board

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on forthcoming meetings of the Faculty Advisory Board, noting that the next meeting would be on 23 February and that members may try and visit departments if they arrive early.

(h) Centre for Scientific Computing

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the Centre for Scientific Computing, noting that the University had agreed that the additional £300k needed to fund the Centre would be recovered through a levy on grant bids from the Science Faculty, and that Chairs of Departments would receive a letter from the Finance Office asking for comment.

(i) Advantage West Midlands

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on developments regarding Advantage West Midlands, which has agreed to fund the Science Cities initiative, including Warwick and Birmingham, providing £60-80m of capital funding over three years in the areas of Translational Medicine, Energy and Advanced Materials.

21/05-06 Report from the Sub-Faculty

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Faculty of Science held on 24 January 2006 and an oral report from the Chair of the Sub-Faculty of Science.

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A revised proposal from the Chair of the Sub-Faculty of Science recommending adoption of a new Capped Seymour Formula (BFS.4/05-06).
- (b) A proposal to repeal the regulations which state that significant changes to modules or course regulations be submitted no later than the middle of term two (BFS.5/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the above proposals, as set out in papers BFS.4/05-06 and BFS.5/05-06, be approved.

CONSIDERED:

- (d) A proposal to change the dates of meetings of the Sub-Faculty of Science as follows, recognising that its business is heavily loaded in Term 2:

Term 1: no meeting
Term 2: two meetings
Term 3: one meeting

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the Sub-Faculty of Science be asked to consider the dates of its meetings at its next meeting.

22/05-06 Report from the Graduate Studies Committee

RESOLVED:

That, in the absence of the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, the minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 24 January 2006 be considered at the next meeting.

23/05-06 Report from the Faculty of Science Research Committee

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair stating that the Faculty of Science Research Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Board, but would be meeting during the following week, with Professor Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) attending to report on developments with Advantage West Midlands.

24/05-06 Report from the Faculty of Science IT Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Science IT Committee held on 18 January 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the draft policy regarding passwords for IT systems in the University should not be supported in its current form, and that IT Services should be encouraged to develop technical solutions for improving security in preference to introducing such a policy.

25/05-06 High Field Magnet Centre

CONSIDERED:

A revised proposal from the Directors of the Centre for NMR and the Institute for Mass Spectroscopy about their discontinuation and replacement by a new High Field Magnet Centre (paper BFS.3/05-06 (revised)).

RESOLVED:

That the revised proposal, as set out in paper BFS.3/05-06 (revised), be approved.

26/05-06 Integrated Masters Courses: Additional Award of a Masters qualification

REPORTED:

That the Board of Graduate Studies at its meeting on 12 January 2006 considered a briefing note from the Europe Unit on the implications of the Bologna agreement for undergraduate Masters Degrees (paper BGS.20/05-06), and the principle of awarding both a Masters qualification and a Bachelors qualification for integrated programmes noting that students would be required to complete 120 credits at M level; and resolved:

- (a) That, as the proposed award of an Master's degree on the basis of completing only 120 credits at M level was not consistent with Masters Degrees presently offered by the University, the Board did not wish to endorse this proposal on the basis of the information available, noting that the Board would appreciate input from the departments concerned before considering the matter further.
- (b) That there were no objections to the award of a Postgraduate Diploma for 120 credits at M level or the award of a Masters degree if students were to complete an additional 60-credit dissertation at M level.

REPORTED:

That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, at its meeting of 26 January 2006, considered:

- (c) A briefing paper from the secretariat summarising issues relating to double awards on integrated Masters programmes (paper AQSC.71/05-06);
- (d) Europe Unit Briefing Note E/05/12: 'The Bologna Process and UK's integrated Masters programmes' (paper BGS.20/05-06);
- (e) The desirability of allowing, where requested by Departments, the award of a Bachelors qualification in addition to a Masters qualification for students completing an integrated Masters course;
- (f) A proposal from Dr S Jacka, Department of Statistics, to award a BSc in addition to the award of an MMORSE (paper AQSC 73/05-06);

and resolved (unconfirmed minute AQSC 53/05-06 refers):

- (g) That it be noted that intentions in the Europe Unit Briefing Note went against the principles that initially informed the development of integrated Masters programmes;
- (h) That the Committee would support any response from the Russell Group Pro Vice-Chancellors expressing unease with aspects of this proposal;
- (i) That detailed consideration of the issue should be referred back to the Board of the Faculty of Science, with a view from the Faculty being brought back to the Committee later in the year.

RESOLVED:

- (j) That a group be formed, chaired by Professor Hutton, to consider issues regarding Integrated Masters courses and make recommendations to the Board.
- (k) That this group be empowered to report directly to the meeting of the AQSC on 11th May, having circulated its report to Board members for comment by 21st April.

27/05-06 Upgrade from MPhil to PhD

REPORTED:

That all other Faculties admit students to an MPhil/PhD with an upgrade process during the first 12-18 months for full-timers, whereas the Science Faculty admits students directly to a PhD.

CONSIDERED:

In the context of the QAA Special Review of Research Degrees, whether this pattern should be continued.

RESOLVED:

That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science would be able to take a more informed view, and should be invited to consider this issue at its next meeting.

28/05-06 Annual Course Review

CONSIDERED:

A composite report on the undergraduate course review reports from across the Faculty of Science (paper SFS.67/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be approved and welcomed.
- (b) That the non-submission of a report from Mathematics be noted.
- (c) That the comments on resource issues within the report should be particularly emphasised.

29/05-06 Co-option of Members of the Board

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Chair of the Physics Department recommending automatic co-option of a further representative from the home department of the Chair of the Faculty (paper BFS.6/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That automatic co-option was not necessary, as the intended result could be achieved through the current co-option arrangements.
- (b) That the Chair of the Physics Department be invited to nominate someone for co-option.

30/05-06 Items for discussion at future meetings of the Board

RESOLVED:

That the membership of the Board be encouraged to bring forward to the secretariat suggestions of any items for discussion at future meetings of the Board.

31/05-06 Items to be brought to the Senate

RESOLVED:

That the Science Faculty's successful large scale bids, and the opportunities these present for the University to evolve its procedures and to be flexible in resource allocation, be brought to the next meeting of Senate (minute 20(d)/05-06 refers).

32/05-06 Future Meetings and Deadline for Papers

REPORTED:

- (a) That the final meeting of the Board of the Faculty in the academic year 2005/06 would be held on Wednesday 24 May 2006, 2.00pm.
- (b) That the deadline for the receipt of papers is 12 noon six working days preceding each meeting of the Board of the Faculty.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That papers should be circulated to members by email, where possible, to ensure they are received before the weekend prior to the meeting.

33/05-06 Reserved Items

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