

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of the Faculty of Social Studies

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies held on 7th November, 2007.

Present: Professor T Ahrens, Professor T Allen, Professor C Aubrey, Professor S Breslin, Professor P Burnham, Professor R Burridge, Dr D Chung, Professor N Eilan, Dr F Griffiths, Professor M Harrison, Dr C Harrison, Professor C Hughes, Dr C Jones, Dr D Lamburn, Professor R Lindley, Professor G Lindsay, Mr M Lukic, Professor P Marginson, Dr F McKay, Professor A Neal, Professor S Rai, Professor A Reeve, Professor B Rosamund, Dr H Spencer-Oatey, Ms A Stewart, Mr E Stewart, Professor H Thomas, Professor M Waterson, Professor A Williams, Dr C Wright.

Apologies: Professor S Ali, Mr A Brewerton, Dr S Butterfill, Dr R Carter, Professor P Christensen, Professor P Edwards, Mr R Green, Professor P Huddleston, Professor D Joly, Professor R Naylor, Professor H Polemarchakis, Professor A Prout, Professor C Read, Professor E Robinson, Dr J Scholte, Dr R Smith, Professor N Thrift, Professor D Wilson, Dr R Wilson, Professor R Wilson.

In Attendance: Ms A Backhouse, Professor L Bridges (for item 13/07-08 (e)), Ms H Kinnear, Dr J Moss (for items 06/07-08 and 07/7-08), Mr P Ptashko (for item 07/07-08), Professor M Whitby (for items 06/07-08 and 07/7-08), Dr N Wolf.

01/07-08 Constitution, Membership & Terms of Reference

REPORTED:

- (a) That paragraph (4) of Statute 21 (on page 69 of the University Calendar 2006-07) states that the Board of each Faculty shall have the following powers and functions:
- (i) To regulate, subject to these Statutes and the Ordinances and Regulations and to review by the Senate, the teaching, research, curricula and examinations in the subjects prescribed for the Faculty.
 - (ii) To recommend to the Senate examiners for appointment. To make recommendations to the Senate for the award of Degrees (other than Honorary Degrees), Diplomas, Certificates and other distinctions in the subjects prescribed for the Faculty.
 - (iii) To recommend to the Senate Sub-Faculties and Departments to be constituted by the Council.
 - (iv) To delegate to the Sub-Faculties such matters as are deemed appropriate.

- (v) To appoint members of the Board of the Faculty to be members of the Senate as provided for under Statute 19.
- (vi) To discharge such other functions as the Senate may from time to time determine.
- (b) That, following a postal ballot held in the summer term 2007, Professor R Lindley was elected to the position of Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies for the Academic Year 2007-08.
- (c) That Professor M Harrison had been appointed as Deputy Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies for the Academic Year 2007-08.
- (d) That Ms H Kinnear, Assistant Secretary to the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, would be leaving the University at the end of December 2007.

RECEIVED:

- (e) Updated committee membership of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies and its sub-committees for the Academic Year 2007-08, including nominations to other University Committees, paper BFSS.21/06-07 (revised).

RESOLVED:

- (f) That paper BFSS.21/06-07 (revised) be approved.
- (g) That the Board record its thanks to Ms Kinnear for her time as Assistant Secretary to the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies.

02/07-08 Minutes

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th May 2007.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved.

03/07-08 Matters Arising

- (a) Assessment Conventions Working Group (minute 38/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Senate, at its meeting held on 4th July 2007, considered:

- (i) The Academic Quality and Standards Committee's report on its consideration of proposals from the Assessment Conventions Working Group of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on the introduction of new University marking scales and degree classification conventions.
- (ii) The Final Report of the Assessment Conventions Working Group of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and its proposals for

the introduction of new University marking scales and degree classification conventions, paper AQSC 78/06-07 (revised 3).

- (iii) The following recommendations of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee:
 - (A) That a new marking scale of seventeen grade points be introduced for the assessment of all undergraduate work at the start of the 2007-08 academic year, as proposed in paper AQSC 78/06-07 (revised 3).
 - (B) That academic departments be consulted on the outline proposals for the introduction of new degree classification conventions and invited to consider current practice in the operation of degree classification conventions.

And resolved:

- (iv) That the Senate was in favour of exploring the possibility of introducing changes to University assessment conventions if these were no worse than current practice in some departments and better than current practice in most departments.

(Following a vote: 33 in favour and 1 abstention)

- (v) That a trial, based upon the Assessment Convention proposals put forward by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, be piloted in those University departments who expressed a wish to participate in the pilot commencing in the Autumn Term 2007-08 as part of continuing discussions on moves towards the harmonisation of marking for implementation in the academic year 2008-09.

(Following a vote: 30 in favour, 2 against and 2 abstentions) (Senate minute 94/06-07 referred)

- (b) ESRC Research Centres Competition (minute 39/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

That following a request from Professor R Higgott, at the May 2007 meeting, to identify potential applicants to the September 2007 ESRC Research Centres Competition, a proposal from Professor M Salmon (Warwick Business School) was submitted to establish an ESRC-funded research centre entitled 'Centre for Financial Innovation and Public Policy', noting that the outcome of the competition would not be known for some time.

- (c) Postgraduate Study Space (minute 51/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That CELTE and Philosophy had been granted use of S2.82 as a dedicated postgraduate study space, following refurbishment of the room;

- (ii) That the School of Law had reconfigured S1.46 as a dedicated study space for its postgraduate students;
 - (iii) That the Department of Politics and International Studies, the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Sociology had been allocated extra rooms in B Block of the Social Studies Building, as dedicated postgraduate study space, following the move of Warwick Business School staff from B Block to the extension of the Scarman Road Building.
- (d) University of New South Wales (minute 52/06-07 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That the Board resolved, at its meeting held in May 2007, that it would welcome a briefing document from the University concerning the decision and implications of the University of New South Wales' closure of its Singapore campus for our international strategy;
- (ii) That the Steering Committee, at its meeting held on 2nd July 2007, received a paper prepared by the International Office on the impact on the University's Singapore interests of the closure of the University of New South Wales campus in Singapore, paper SC.420/06-07 (Steering minute 552/06-07 referred). (Paper was laid on the table for members of the Board).

04/07-08 Faculty Research Committee (this item was chaired by Professor M Harrison)

CONSIDERED:

A proposal to abolish the Faculty's Research Committee and establish a Research Forum in its place, paper BFSS.1/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal to abolish the Faculty's Research Committee and establish a Research Forum in its place, as set out in paper BFSS.1/07-08, be approved in principle, subject to Chair's action on:

- (a) Establishing interim arrangements following consultation with Heads of Departments, noting that the first meeting of the Research Forum, would take place in the spring term 2008, rather than during the summer term as in a normal year.
- (b) Establishing the administrative arrangements for the Forum, including who would be Chair of the Forum, and the administrative support.

05/07-08 Chair's Business

(a) Heads of Departments' meeting

REPORTED:

That a Heads of Departments' meeting had been held at the start of the Autumn Term and that it was intended that meetings with Heads of Departments and Professor Lindley, as Chair of Faculty, would be held twice per term.

(b) Faculty Profile-raising

REPORTED:

That at the Heads of Departments' meeting the issue of raising the Faculty's profile, via means of communication such as a Faculty website, was discussed, noting that web pages for the Faculty existed via Research Support Services' website, but they resulted from a one-off administrative project and were not regularly updated and their existence was not widely known; it is intended to create a dedicated Faculty website, bearing in mind that resourcing was an issue because the Faculty did not currently have its own budget.

(c) Buildings Committee

REPORTED:

That Heads of Departments had agreed that a Faculty Buildings Committee should be created, to address future buildings/space requirements and space management issues.

06/07-08 Strategic Departmental Review

REPORTED:

(a) That the departments in the Faculty of Social Studies which were timetabled to undergo a Strategic Departmental Review during the Academic Year 2007-08 were:

- (i) School of Law;
- (ii) Department of Politics and International Studies;
- (iii) Department of Sociology;
- (iv) School of Health and Social Studies.

(b) That the departments which were due to be strategically reviewed during 2008-09 were:

- (i) Warwick Business School;
- (ii) The Department of Philosophy.

RECEIVED:

(c) A paper from the Academic Quality and Standards Committee outlining proposals currently under development to adjust the new Strategic Departmental Review process, paper AQSC 95/06-07.

REPORTED:

- (d) That paper AQSC.95/06-07 had not yet been formally approved by the University Steering Committee, although it had received in principle approval from the University's Academic Quality and Standards Committee.
- (e) That Strategic Departmental Reviews were particularly important in the context of the forthcoming Institutional Audit of the University, which is to be conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency in the autumn term 2008.
- (f) That the new Strategic Departmental Review process, which has been undertaken for Warwick Medical School and the Department of English, had not worked as intended, and further dates were set in each case, independent of the original review, to consider teaching more fully.
- (g) That the Faculty was concerned that Strategic Departmental Reviews did not appear to have defined timelines, or dates set far enough in advance around which departments could plan.

RESOLVED:

- (h) That the Secretary to the Board consult the University Secretary's Office regarding timelines for Strategic Departmental Reviews in the Faculty, which were due to take place during the current academic year.

07/07-08 Items for Strategic Discussion

National Student Survey

CONSIDERED:

A paper (report plus Annexes A-B) regarding the 2006-07 National Student Survey, paper SC.507/06-07.

REPORTED:

- (a) That areas which had been identified in the Survey as in need of particular attention within the University were feedback & assessment and personal tutoring systems, noting that the Survey did not appear to raise new issues, but rather sharpened existing ones.
- (b) That Warwick's students were now participating in the National Student Survey and Warwick's overall position in the Survey, compared with other institutions, was middling.
- (c) That a website called unistats.com was to be launched on 26th November 2007, which should enable comparisons of National Student Survey results to be made with peer institutions.
- (d) That Professor M Whitby had sent a memo to Heads of Departments requesting them to respond in relation to the results of the National Student Survey; however he had received few responses from Faculties other than the Faculty of Science.

- (e) That the National Student Survey had introduced an increased onus on students, via Student-Staff Liaison Committees for example, to provide feedback on what they wanted in relation to areas which had been identified as in need of improvement.
- (f) That there was a need to share experience of approaches to teaching and learning issues at Faculty level and the formation of a Faculty-wide forum might be an appropriate means of facilitating this.

RESOLVED:

- (g) That as well as submitting a response to Professor Whitby's memo as a matter of urgency, Heads of Departments circulate their responses amongst each other, including the Chair of the Faculty.
- (h) That Professor C Hughes agreed to take forward discussions regarding the formation of a Faculty forum on teaching and learning issues, noting that student involvement in this type of activity would be important.

08/07-08 Report from the Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committee

RECEIVED:

The confirmed minutes of the Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committee meeting held on 17th October 2007, paper BFSS.2/07-08.

REPORTED:

- (a) That the issue of cheating in University tests had been raised at meetings of the University's undergraduate committees during the Academic Year 2006-07, and that the Social Studies Undergraduate Committee agreed at its meeting held on 17th October that it would welcome a University-wide discussion of plagiarism, which the Assistant Secretary to the Board would take forward with the Teaching Quality Team.
- (b) That the Undergraduate Studies Committee had requested the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) to take forward a request to produce guidance notes on the appropriate information that is required in module and course proposal forms.
- (c) That with regard to the proposed new undergraduate marking scale that was currently being piloted in some departments, it be noted that, whilst the matter was referred to Faculty Boards in the summer term 2007, the Undergraduate Studies Committees of the Boards of Faculties was not given the opportunity to discuss the issue.

RESOLVED:

That the Board endorses the view of the Undergraduate Studies Committee that a University-wide discussion of plagiarism would be welcomed and that the matter be referred back to the University's Board of Undergraduate Studies.

RECEIVED:

The confirmed minutes of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee meeting held on 23rd October 2007, paper BFSS.3/07-08.

REPORTED:

- (a) That at the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies on 8th November 2006 it was resolved:
 - (i) That in order to better process the Committee's business, the Board supported the resolution of the Graduate Studies Committee requesting departments to submit papers before the deadline;
 - (ii) That late papers should be rejected by the Secretariat;
 - (iii) That the Secretariat be permitted to reject course and module proposals which were completed incorrectly thus ensuring that the Committee scrutiny stage was primarily devoted to matters of academic principles.
- (b) That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, at its meeting held on 23rd October, considered a letter received by Vice-Chancellor, in which the ESRC had requested to visit the University, using it as a case study into the future role of the ESRC in postgraduate training, noting that the Assistant Secretary to the Board would be writing to departments to request nominations for two individuals from each department who could become involved in the visit, and that anyone else who wished to be involved should contact the Chair to the Graduate Studies Committee, Professor S Breslin.
- (c) That four members of the Faculty, including the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, were required to consider applications for Warwick Postgraduate Research Scholarships, before consideration of the applications by the Board of Graduate Studies, noting that:
 - (i) Faculty consideration of applications would contribute 50% of the applicants' scores in the selection process;
 - (ii) No member of a department would be permitted to consider an application to his/her own department;
 - (iii) Professor S Robinson and Dr R Carter had volunteered to be members of the WPRS Selection panel for the Faculty of Social Studies, therefore there was one vacancy remaining, regarding which the Assistant Secretary to the Board would be contacting departments to request a volunteer.
- (d) That there was an increasingly significant issue within the University with regard to the administrative burden placed on academic staff who chair faculty committees. Over and above dealing with the main committee business, this involves particularly a number of related committee meetings that the chair is expected to attend throughout the year and responsibilities in terms of taking chair's action over the four - five months of the summer during which committees do not meet. These

burdens need to be radically reduced if academic colleagues are to be willing to take up such roles.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That point (c) of the terms of reference of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies be amended as follows (additions are dotted-underlined):

“To consider ~~business matters~~ referred to it by the Board, including business referred to it by the Board of Graduate Studies and to respond to the Board of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Faculty Board.”

- (f) That a fourth point (point (d)), the equivalent of which currently exists in the terms of reference of the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, be added to the terms of reference of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, as follows:

“To advise and make recommendations to the Faculty Board on matters concerning postgraduate teaching and assessment in the Faculty.”

- (g) That issues of strategic relevance be considered by the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies before being referred to the Faculty Board for consideration.

10/07-08 Undergraduate and Graduate Committee Procedures

CONSIDERED:

A paper examining some of the procedural difficulties encountered in relation to the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, together with proposed suggestions for improvement, paper BFSS.4/07-08.

REPORTED:

- (a) That during the 2006-07 academic year 480 papers were submitted to the Faculty’s Undergraduate and Graduate Committees, for their consideration, noting that the Faculty accounts for 45% of the University’s students.
- (b) That 10,000 photocopies were made for the Autumn meeting of the Faculty’s Graduate Committee alone;
- (c) That new course proposal paperwork can often be considered at both the Undergraduate Committee and the Board of Undergraduate Studies, or the Graduate Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies, therefore the process of scrutinising and approving proposals is not efficient because the same paperwork is being considered twice by different committees, having already been considered within departments before submission.
- (d) That due to the format of module and course proposal forms it was often not clear whether a revised module or course was being submitted to a committee for consideration, or whether a new module or course was being submitted.

- (e) That some members of the Board were of the opinion that departments should be trusted to approve module proposals (revised or new) at departmental level and that only course paperwork should be submitted to committees for consideration, which would reduce the administrative load on the committees considerably, noting that quality assurance and consultation between departments and, where relevant, across faculties on both modules and courses would be important to maintain.

RESOLVED:

- (f) That bearing in mind the significant administrative load placed upon the Undergraduate and Graduate Committees, the Board would support the approval at departmental level of revised modules proposals where the amendments were minor, allowing the main business of the Committees to be concerned with new module proposals and matters relating to courses.
- (g) That the Teaching Quality Team be requested to consider revising the format of the forms on which revised or new modules and courses are to be submitted, in order to make clear differentiation between the different types of requests which are submitted to committees for consideration.
- (h) That paper BFSS.4/07-08 be approved in principle and that the Assistant Secretary to the Board revise the paper, in the light of comments made by the Board and in the context of comments made under item 09/07-08 above, for submission to the University Secretary.

11/07-08 Circulation of Papers for Board Meetings

REPORTED:

- (a) That papers were circulated electronically for this meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies, for short term administrative reasons.
- (b) That the Chair sought opinion regarding the possibility of using electronic circulation methods in future, as opposed to receiving papers in hard copy.

RESOLVED:

That papers for future meetings of the Board be circulated electronically, unless the Secretariat deemed them to be particularly substantial.

12/07-08 Report from the Faculty IT Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty IT Committee held on Monday 5th November 2007, paper BFSS.20/07-08.
- (b) An oral report from Professor A Neal, Chair of the Faculty IT Committee, regarding the Autumn Term meeting of the Committee.

REPORTED:

- (c) That a lack of resourcing out of hours for the University IT helpdesk had been raised as an issue at the Faculty IT Committee meeting held on Monday 5th

November, noting that this issue was particularly significant when systems crashed outside of the University working week.

- (d) That migration of Groupwise user accounts would be completed shortly, therefore access to the Groupwise facility would end on 22nd November 2007.
- (e) That in response to concerns raised about IT Services communications a series of ITS roadshows were to be held in the Autumn Term, as follows:

26th November, Warwick Medical School;
30th November, Ramphal Building;
4th December, University House;
5th December, Westwood Campus;
7th December, Ramphal Building.
- (f) That issues had been raised regarding the compatibility of University IT systems with non-University systems (notably Vista and files generated in Office 2007). The Faculty IT Committee wished priority to be given to ensuring that suitable converters were installed, and that 'backward compatibility' was ensured as far as possible.
- (g) That complaints had been raised amongst the student community about a lack of availability of computer open access desk spaces for academic purposes, due to some students using the facilities for online social networking purposes, and that the University's Information Policy and Strategy Committee would be considering the issue.

13/07-08 Report from the Faculty Advisory Board

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Advisory Board, held on 5th July 2007 in London, paper BFSS.5/07-08.
- (b) Current membership of the Faculty Advisory Board, paper BFSS.6/07-08, noting that:
 - (i) Academic departments would be requested during the Autumn Term 2007 to nominate additional external members who may be put forward for invitation to join the Faculty Advisory Board.
 - (ii) That there were currently two internal vacancies on the Faculty Advisory Board, as Professors M Luntley and A Harris were on study leave during the Academic Year 2007-08.

14/07-08 Matters Relating to Faculty Research Centres

- (a) Directorships of Faculty Research Centres

CONSIDERED:

Updated directorships of Faculty research centres within the Faculty of Social Studies, paper BFSS.33/06-07 (revised).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That updated directorships of Faculty research centres within the Faculty of Social Studies be approved, noting that Professor P Burnell and Dr R Doorenspleet had been appointed as Co-directors of the Centre for Studies in Democratisation, replacing Dr P Ferdinand.
- (ii) That it be noted that the Board encouraged the practice of proposals for new Faculty research centres being circulated amongst Heads of Departments for comment, before being submitted to the Board for consideration.

(b) Warwick Centre for Public Economics

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 4th July 2007 the Senate considered a proposal from the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies to disestablish the Warwick Centre for Public Economics and resolved that the Warwick Centre for Public Economics be dis-established (Senate minute 102/06-07 (d) (i) referred).

(c) Centre for the Study of Safety and Well-being

REPORTED:

That at its meeting held on 4th July 2007 the Senate considered a proposal from the School of Health and Social Studies and the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies to change the constitution of the Centre for the Study of Safety and Well-being and resolved that the proposal for Dr D Chung be appointed as the sole Director of the Centre for the Study of Safety and Well-being from 1 August 2007 be approved (Senate minute 102/06-07 (d) (ii) referred).

(d) Institute of Governance and Public Management

REPORTED:

That proposed changes to the constitution of the Institute of Governance and Public Management would be considered by the University Secretary's Office.

(e) Law School based Centre for Criminal Justice

CONSIDERED:

A proposal for establishing a Law School based Centre for Criminal Justice, papers BFSS.8/07-08 and BFSS.9 /07-08, which had been approved by the Law School Research Committee.

REPORTED:

That Professor L Bridges was currently in discussions with the University Secretary's Office regarding the appropriate mechanisms for approving and establishing the Centre.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal for establishing a Law School based Centre for Criminal Justice be approved in principle, subject to Chair's action on approving the detailed constitutional information required for submission to Senate (should that be appropriate).

(f) University Research Centres

RECOMMENDED: (to the Senate)

That research groups within or across departments of the University be discouraged from adopting the title 'centre', 'institute' or 'unit' without a Faculty recommendation and Senate approval.

15/07-08 Election of Board Members to the Senate

REPORTED:

- (a) That there were currently two vacancies on the Senate for the period to 31st July 2010;
- (b) That a By-Election would be conducted in accordance with University Regulation 2.2 (6)-(12), with a view to filling these vacancies, should the number of nominations received be greater than the number of vacancies to be filled.
- (c) That members of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies would be circulated a memo regarding the procedure for filling these vacancies.

16/07-08 Mathematics Support Across the University

RECEIVED:

A memo from Dr T Hawkes regarding models for providing mathematics support within universities, paper BFSS.10/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That the memo be considered by the members of the Faculty Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committees.

17/07-08 Date of the Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 13th February 2008 at 10am in the Council Chamber, University House.