

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 November 2007

Present: Mr J Leighfield (Chair), Professor L Bridges, Professor A Caesar, Professor Y Carter, Sir George Cox, Professor J Davey, Mr P Dunne, Mrs P Egan, Mr J Higgins, Professor R Higgott, Mr J Kirby, Professor R Lindley, Mr G Lyons, Professor S B Palmer, Mr A Rivett, Mr N Sanders, Professor Sir John Temple, Miss R Thorne, Professor N Thrift, Mr B Woods-Scawen, Professor V Zammit.

Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Mr R Chung, Ms D Foster, Mr M Greenlees, Mr D Holmes, Mr K Muthalagappan, Professor M Smith, Professor M Whitby.

In Attendance: Mr P Varney, Director of Finance, Registrar, University Secretary, Director of Campus Affairs, Director of Estates, Ms Y Salter Wright.

19/07-08 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 November 2007 be approved.

20/07-08 Review of the Effectiveness of the Council

REPORTED:

That it was expected that an external member of the Review Group for the Effectiveness Review of the Council would be identified in advance of the next meeting of the Council.

21/07-08 Pro-Chancellor's Business

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Chancellor)

That he had taken action on behalf of the Council to make the following appointments:

- (a) Mr Roger Leng of the School of Law to membership of the Research Ethics Committee as one of the three senior members of academic staff appointed to the Committee.
- (b) Ms Penny Egan to membership of the Art Collection Committee as the lay member of the Council appointed to the Committee.

22/07-08 Vice-Chancellor's Business

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the number of University staff who were categorised as highly cited researchers had increased to seven.

- (b) That the University had risen to 57th place in 2007 from 73rd in 2006 in the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) top 200 World University Rankings 2007 published on 8 November 2007.
- (c) That the following research awards represented significant recent successes for the University:
 - (i) Participation in three of the six large grants recently approved by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) in its SABR (Systems Approaches to Biological Research) initiative.
 - (ii) A grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) of £3.7m to the NMR Group in the Department of Physics for the development of the University's NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) facility.
 - (iii) A grant of £1.985m from the Medical Research Council (MRC) to the Warwick Medical School (WMS) for lung injury clinical trials.
- (d) That a special Honorary Degree Congregation was held in Venice on 10 November 2007 as part of the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Warwick in Venice Programme at which honorary degrees were awarded to Lady Frances Clarke and Mr Michael Mallett.
- (e) That the Director of Development and Alumni Relations, Mr Ron Gray, would be leaving the University to take up a position at Loughborough and that the process for identifying his successor had been set in train.

23/07-08 Membership of the University Council

RECEIVED:

A statement of the membership of the Council for the academic year 2007/08 (C.20/07-08).

REPORTED:

(by the Pro-Chancellor)

- (a) That the date of the expiry of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's term of office was 2010 and not 2008.
- (b) That the Senate would consider, at its next meeting on 5 December, nominations to fill the remaining vacancy in the appointees of the Senate to membership of the Council.

(by the Registrar)

- (c) That Mr Roy Chung had requested that he relay his singular appreciation to the Council in respect of his appointment to lay membership of the Council and that he had expressed his support for the University and its work in enthusiastic terms.

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Pro-Chancellor on the progress of the Nominations Committee in identifying new lay members of the University Council noting that a number of meetings with the Pro-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor and potential candidates for appointment were scheduled to take place in the immediate future and that he hoped to be in a position to make a further progress report at the next meeting of the Council in December.

24/07-08 University Management and Decision-Making Structures

CONSIDERED:

Proposed revisions to the University's management and decision-making structures (C.21/07-08).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Statutory position of University Secretary be abolished with effect from 31 January 2008.
- (b) That responsibility for the provision of secretarial services for all University committees, including Clerk to the Council, and for providing advice and guidance on governance and probity matters be invested in the position of University Registrar with effect from 1 February 2008.
- (c) That proposed changes to University Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations consequent upon the abolition of the position of University Secretary be brought forward for consideration by the Senate and the Council at their next meetings.

25/07-08 Strategic Topic for Discussion: Greater Warwick – Building Regional, National and International Relationships

CONSIDERED:

A discussion paper setting out current topical issues relating to building regional, national and international relationships (C.22/07-08) together with an introduction from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Development and Regional Engagement) and the Registrar.

REPORTED:

That the topic for the 2008 Warwick Commission would be on climate change and that Professor Andrew Sentence would be the Chair of the Commission.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University consider the potential for developing arrangements whereby lay members of the Council might be better equipped to support the forging of international links with potential key overseas partners on behalf of the University when travelling overseas on business.

- (b) That the proposal that the University seek to promote its work on the international stage through the development of a small number of key topics of international significance, in line with the model adopted via the Warwick Commission, be supported strongly.
- (c) That a paper outlining the University proposals and targets for increasing its international engagements and the University's brand image overseas in key markets be presented to a future meeting of the Council with a view to members of the Council providing comment and advice on the proposals.

26/07-08 Report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee

CONSIDERED and ADOPTED with the resolutions set out below a report from the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 15 October and 13 November 2007 (C.23/07-08 {Parts 1 and 2}) together with an oral report and presentation from the University Treasurer.

(a) University Consolidated Accounts 2007/08

RESOLVED:

That the University Consolidated Accounts for the year ending 31 July 2007 and the associated letter of representation be approved, printed and circulated as set out in the Report from the Finance and General Purposes Committee (C.23/07-08 {Part 1}), subject to any further non-material amendments agreed with the auditors.

(b) Proposed Purchase of Argent Court

RESOLVED:

On the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, that the building known as Argent Court on the University of Warwick Science Park be purchased at a cost of £4.05m plus VAT, with additional refurbishment costs anticipated of £2.25m, and that authority be delegated to the Vice-Chancellor and the Finance Director to conclude financial negotiations to secure the early termination of the tenancy of the current occupants, Schneiders, if it were considered advantageous for the University to secure this additional space.

27/07-08 Report from the Audit Committee

CONSIDERED and ADOPTED a report from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 12 November 2007 (C.24/07-08) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Audit Committee.

Annual Report from the Chair of the Committee

CONSIDERED:

The Annual Report from the Chair of the Audit Committee summarising the Committee's work for the year, including the re-appointment of the external auditors and the Committee's scrutiny of the external auditor's management letter, a range of reports prepared by Internal Audit and the Committee's conclusion that the University's audit arrangements and internal controls for the 2006/07 financial year were satisfactory.

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Report of the Chair of the Audit Committee be received and noted and submitted to the HEFCE.

28/07-08 Awards and Distinctions

RECEIVED:

A paper setting out the awards and distinctions that have been conferred on members of the University since the last meeting of the Council held on 4 October 2007 (C.25/07-08).

29/07-08 Strategic Discussion Topics for Meetings of the Council

RECEIVED:

A list of strategic items for discussion at future meetings of the Council (C.26/07-08).

REPORTED:

That topics on 'Building the University Community' and 'the Student Experience' identified at the last meeting of the Council as potential topics would be added to the list for presentations prior to the Council as set out in paper C.22/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That the list of strategic discussion topics would be circulated to members of the Council to solicit the views of members as to the priority of the potential topics already identified as well as any other topics that might be added to the list, with a view to the Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor considering the responses and identifying the topics in advance of each of the remaining Council meetings this year.

30/07-08 Future Meeting Dates of the University Council

RECEIVED:

A list of dates of future meetings of the University Council (C.27/07-08), noting that an alternative date to replace the meeting of the Council scheduled to take place on 10 December 2008 would be sought and proposed in a rolling programme of dates circulated for the next meeting of the Council.