

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

COUNCIL

Notes of the informal meeting of the Council held on 3 February 2004

Present: Mr J P Leighfield (in the Chair), Professor M Cooper, Mr C Foy, Professor J Gardner, Mr R Jones, Professor J Jones, Professor R Lindley, Professor M McCrae, Professor P Mack, Mr T Monnington, Professor A Mullender, Professor S B Palmer, Ms R Thorne, Professor VandeLinde, Ms Y Zhabina.

Apologies: Mr I Caulfield, Mr P Dodd, Professor R G Dyson, Mr M Greenlees, Ms V Gooding, Councillor R Grant, Mr J Higgins, Ms S J Hobson, Mr C Howgrave-Graham, Professor K Lamberts, Mr P Varney, Mr T E H Walker, Professor M Whitby, Mr B Woods-Scawen.

In Attendance: Dr I Nussey, Acting Registrar, University Secretary, Finance Director, Academic Registrar, Estates Officer, Miss E Clewlow.

University Strategic Plan

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The University's Mission Statement and Corporate Plan for the period 2003 to 2006.
- (b) Notes of the following three key themes and issues arising from discussion at the Joint Council and Strategy Committee Away Day held on 24 November 2003:
 - (i) Internationalisation of the University;
 - (ii) Research Strategy;
 - (iii) Residential Accommodation Strategy.
- (c) The Government Higher Education Bill.

Library Resourcing

Members of the Council received an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on the meeting of the Chair's Forum held on 23 January in the course of which the issue of library resourcing had been identified as an additional area for consideration during the University's strategic planning round, highlighting:

- (a) The challenges currently being faced by the Library in terms of the University's historic under-investment in library provision, effective management of existing resources and staff and student perceptions of the Library's role and performance.
- (b) The expectations of library provision in a research-led university, recognising the limitations imposed by the lack of a historical accumulation of research collections but also the potential benefits to be derived from targeted investment in electronic learning and research resources.

- (c) The progress already being made with regard to the establishment of a 24-hour access student resources centre in University House and the management of duplicate texts.

Internationalisation of the University

In the course of further discussion of the themes raised at the recent Joint Council and Strategy Committee Awayday, the following points were raised:

- (a) The importance of finding ways in which Warwick might differentiate itself in key markets, such as North America, by cultivating a distinctive and recognisable brand identity.
- (b) The opportunities which might arise from discussions with the Singaporean Government on potential links in Singapore.
- (c) The balance between increased international recruitment and the maintenance of a balanced University community in terms of cultural and disciplinary diversity.

Research Strategy

The Vice-Chancellor highlighted the need for the University to maximise its research impact, not only in terms of quality but also scale, noting the steps already being taken through the development of the Medical School, the acquisition of HRI, the partnership with the NHS University and the current review of Third Leg Activities, but recognising that additional work would be required in the following areas:

- (a) Increased emphasis upon interdisciplinary work to increase research volume.
- (b) Careful presentation of research proposals in accordance with Research Council priorities.
- (c) Investment in and support for the development of the next generation of research leaders.

Residential Accommodation Strategy

It was reported that work was continuing on the development of a strategy for residential accommodation which would be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee in the Spring Term.

Higher Education Bill

Members of the Council considered a presentation from the Vice-Chancellor outlining the main provisions of the Higher Education Bill, the new income potentially accruable to the University from student fees and the resulting options for investment in the student experience and structures for the relief of student hardship, noting that:

- (a) The introduction of a student fee of £3000 was expected to increase the level of teaching income available to the University.
- (b) It would be the University's intention to utilise any additional income generated from student fees to improve the University experience for students through investment in:

- A package of measures for widening participation and student support.
 - Infrastructure, such as teaching laboratories and library provision.
 - Staff, in order to improve staff-student ratios and to attract and retain high calibre academic staff.
- (c) The University was committed to attracting the most able students regardless of social or economic background.
- (d) The University would seek to develop a portfolio of measures for student support in acknowledgement of the full range of student need, encompassing Government assistance, University bursaries and discretionary hardship support, noting that any University measures for student support would need to take into account a range of factors for the assessment of entitlement while being sufficiently clear to be easily communicable to potential applicants.

In conclusion, Members of the Council:

- (a) Endorsed the incorporation of the following four themes into the development of the University's Strategic Plan:
- (i) Internationalisation of the University;
 - (ii) Research Strategy;
 - (iii) Residential Accommodation Strategy;
 - (iv) Library Resourcing.
- (b) Supported, in principle, the proposal that, should the Higher Education Bill be passed, the University would introduce student fees at the level of £3000 for all honours degree programmes, with further consideration to be given to the fees payable by mature and part-time students.
- (c) Noted the further work that would be required to develop priorities for investment of resulting fee income in the improvement of the student experience and development of appropriate student support structures.