

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 18 December 2017

- Present: Professor S Croft (Vice-Chancellor and Chair), Professor C Constable (Representative of the Senate), R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director and Chair), Professor C Ennew (Provost), Professor S Gilson (Chair of the Faculty of the Arts), Professor M Nudds (Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor M Shipman (Chair of the Faculty of the Sciences), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement)), Professor P Thomas (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)), Professor L Young (Academic Vice-President), R Sandby-Thomas (Registrar).
- Apologies: Professor A Clarke (Chair of the Faculty of Medicine), Professor C Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education)), Professor J Palmowski (Academic Vice-President), H Worsdale (President of the Students' Union).
- In Attendance: K Dixon (Administrative Officer (Governance) and Assistant Secretary), G McGrattan (Director, People Group), R Roke (Director of Strategic Programme Delivery) (Secretary), I Rowley (Director of Development, Communication and External Affairs), R Wooldridge Smith (Acting Academic Registrar).

Note: Some items are noted as "Exempt information not included" as they contain information that would be withheld from release to the public because an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies.

102/17-18 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open and restricted minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

[Additions underlined, deletions ~~struck through~~]

89/17-18 *HE-BCI Survey 2016-17

CONSIDERED:

The University's response to the HE-BCI Survey 2016-17 (SC.41/17-18) {restricted}.

[...]

- (f) That the data provided in Part B, Table 2 (Business and Community Services) had three instances of last year's data being restated due to further clarification having been issued regarding these areas; it was noted that more recent figures could potentially be higher and therefore would be reviewed and included as appropriate.

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103/17-18 Conflicts of Interest

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That, should any members or attendees of the Steering Committee have any conflicts of interest relating to agenda items for the meeting, they should be declared in accordance with the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance (2014).

NOTE: No declarations were made.

104/17-18 HE-BCI Survey (minute 89/17-18 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

- (a) That since the meeting of Steering on 4 December it had been further clarified that the 26th member of Council, as previously omitted from Part B of the HE-BCI Survey, had been categorised as being from a 'Public Sector Organisation'.
- (b) That categorisation had been based on current roles as detailed in Council Members' biographies and following guidance provided by HESA on the question.

105/17-18 Coventry wins City of Culture 2021

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

- (a) That on Thursday 7 December, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport announced that Coventry had won City of Culture 2021.
- (b) That it was noted that the Director of Development, Communication and External Affairs and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement), in addition to a large number of colleagues around the University, had contributed a great deal of time and energy into securing the positive result.

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (c) That the University anticipated that the result would have a positive impact on student recruitment, its conference centres, sports and culture, noting that its financial contribution to the bid would likely be recouped as Coventry enjoyed the benefits of City of Culture status. [Revised at the meeting on 15 January 2018].

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee extended its congratulations to David Burbidge, CBE, as Chairman of the Coventry City of Culture Trust, on being awarded City of Culture 2021.

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106/17-18 New Academic Registrar

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That Dr Chris Twine had been announced as Warwick's new Academic Registrar and would be joining Warwick in March 2018; it was noted that Chris had worked most recently at the University of Wolverhampton as Academic Registrar and had previously worked at the Universities of Cambridge, Warwick and Birmingham.

107/17-18 Assembly Election

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That an election for one non-Professorial member of Academic staff to serve as a representative of the Assembly on the Senate for a three year period through to 31 July 2020 had now concluded, with the successful candidate having been announced as Dr Jo Angouri from the Centre for Applied Linguistics.

108/17-18 Membership of Senate Committees 2017/18

CONSIDERED:

Recommended in-year appointments to Committees of the Senate 2017/18 (SC.52/17-18).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed changes to membership of committees of the Senate 2017/18, as set out in SC.52/17-18, be approved.

109/17-18 *Office for Students Consultation

CONSIDERED:

The University's response to the consultation on the new Office for Students (SC.53/17-18) {restricted}.

REPORTED: (by the Acting Academic Registrar)

- (a) That it was noted that the overall consultation comprised of five separate but related consultations on different aspects of the regulatory framework for Higher Education and that thanks were extended to the Teaching Quality team and colleagues across other areas of the University for their collaborative efforts in forming the response.
- (b) That there had been a change to the 2016 White Paper as it was proposed that Higher Education Providers would apply for degree awarding powers on a probationary basis without having to have a track record.

(by the Acting Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (c) That there had been a noticeable transition in tone compared to that of the HEFCE; it was noted that the Office for Students appeared to identify with a role of increased protection of students as consumers and of regulating Higher Education Providers.

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- (d) That there were specific areas that had enhanced regulatory detail under the OfS and a more interventional approach to regulation.

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (e) That the British Universities Finance Directors Group had reviewed the consultation and had a number of concerns around financial definitions and terminology; it was noted that the definition of financial sustainability included within the consultation was not particularly helpful or well-informed.

[Exempt information not included]

- (g) That it was recommended that the current draft consultation response helpfully emphasised the need for registration fees to be based on risk to the institution as opposed to the size of the institution; it was noted that established Higher Education Providers should not be expected to subsidise new entrants to the market.
- (h) That the requirement to ensure that 'the use to which funds received from the Students Loan Company was put was consistent with the purposes for which those funds were given' would endanger the autonomy of the University to spend incoming funds as it deemed necessary and should be strongly opposed in the response.

(by the Provost)

- (i) That the response to the Student Loan Company funding requirements might best be considered in terms of good teaching being dependent on a strong research base, and that institutions should retain the right to use funds in the ways which they deemed as necessary and appropriate.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (j) That there were a number of instances in the draft response that could be amended from 'slightly disagree' to 'strongly disagree', noting the need for the University to make a strong argument against certain aspects of the proposals.

(by the Senate Representative)

- (k) That the emphasis on the student as a consumer was of concern with regards to how to reconcile the University's charity status with the student/ Provider relationship being increasingly articulated as a commercial one.
- (l) That institutions would require more time to fully respond to the consultation, given the complexity of the document and the number of proposed changes that it raised.

(by the Registrar)

- (m) That the short timeframe in which to review such a lengthy and dense document was not conducive to facilitating constructive feedback; it was recommended that the draft consultation response should be synthesised to ensure very clear and direct communication of the key points.

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- (n) That the level of scrutiny of Higher Education salaries of £150k or more was disproportionate compared to that of other public sectors; it was noted that the requirement to disclose both total remuneration, and an explanation of how remuneration packages were decided and justified for staff with a basic salary in excess of £150k would risk identifying too much information about an individual.

(by the Director, People Group)

- (o) That the Russell Group was recommending that members restrict the publishing of information on salaries of £150k or more to executive staff only and not to disclose academic staff salaries in this category.

(by the Chair)

- (p) That provision of excessive detail regarding those staff in receipt of a basic salary of £150k or more may pose a threat to retention, with information regarding publically available salaries being exploited by competitor institutions internationally.
- (q) That it would be useful to have a brief summary of the key points of the University's response to share online with the wider University community and with other institutions, where appropriate.
- (r) That the response would benefit from being more emphatic and cogent to ensure that the University's concerns were fully articulated.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Registrar would liaise with the Acting Deputy Academic Registrar to further strengthen the response and respond to the points raised.
- (b) That the draft consultation response be approved, subject to the amendments above.

110/17-18 *Admissions and Recruitment Update

CONSIDERED:

The Autumn Term update on Admissions and Recruitment (SC.54/17-18)
{restricted}.

REPORTED: (by the Acting Academic Registrar)

- (a) That a new formal governance process had been successfully established for WP through the establishment of a Widening Participation Committee.
- (b) That the Student Recruitment, Outreach and Admissions Service had made a significant contribution to the University's Size and Shape project.

[Exempt information not included]

(by the Group Finance Director)

[Exempt information not included]

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(by the Chair)

[Exempt information not included]

RESOLVED:

That the Autumn Term update on Admissions and Recruitment (SC.54/17-18) {restricted} be noted.

111/17-18 Anti-Bribery Update

CONSIDERED:

An update on the University's anti-bribery arrangements (SC.55/17-18).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research))

- (a) That whilst coercion and corruption were legal matters in their own right, the Anti Bribery Policy could usefully include information on, or direction to, University policy on situations where pressure is applied externally to achieve a specific outcome.

(by the Assistant Registrar (Governance))

- (b) That information on coercion and corruption could be incorporated into the Anti Bribery Policy's 'Reporting Concerns and Incidents' section; it was noted that instances such as these should be addressed to the relevant member of the Executive Team.
- (c) That the risk rating was deemed appropriate for overseas agents, as planned future training and increased awareness was expected to mitigate this risk; it was noted that all agents would be expected to undertake training and that SROAS would be facilitating communication regarding this matter.
- (d) That the two main revisions to the Anti Bribery Policy related to: the inclusion of explicit reference to third parties being bound by contractual obligations relating to Anti Bribery, and clarification that the Policy related to both Staff and Students of the University.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Anti-Bribery update and risk register as set out in SC.55/17-18 be noted.
- (b) That the proposed revisions to the Anti-Bribery Policy, as set out in Appendix 2 of SC.55/17-18, be approved.
- (c) That consideration be given to the potential inclusion within the Anti-Bribery Policy of further information on coercion and corruption.

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112/17-18 Secretary to Council

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

[Exempt information not included]

113/17-18 Chair of the Faculty of Arts

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That Professor Simon Gilson would shortly be leaving the University, and that the sincere thanks and best wishes of the Steering Committee be extended to him for his work as Chair of the Faculty of Arts; his significant contribution to the Faculty of Arts Building was noted.

114/17-18 Academic Vice-President

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That it was noted that Professor Lawrence Young would shortly commence post as Director of the Warwick Cancer Research Centre and Vice-President (China), and that the sincere thanks and best wishes of the Steering Committee be extended to him for his work as Academic Vice-President; his significant contribution to the Faculty of Arts Building and the Oculus was noted.

115/17-18 Next meeting of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the Chair)

That the meeting of the Steering Committee due to be held on Monday 8 January was cancelled, due to lack of business.

As at 11 January 2018.