

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 5 October 2015

- Present: Professor Sir Nigel Thrift (Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair)), Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Professor S Gilson (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts), Professor Christina Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)), Professor Christopher Hughes (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor T Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine)), Mr I Leigh (President of the Students' Union), Professor J Palmowski (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education)), Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Social Sciences)), Professor M Shipman (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science), Professor C Sparrow (Academic Member of the Senate), Professor P Winstanley (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine), Professor L Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources)).
- Apologies: Professor A Coats (Academic Vice-President (Monash-Warwick Alliance)), Professor S Croft (Provost), Professor P Thomas (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Public Engagement)).
- In Attendance: Ms J Coleman (Director of Administration, Warwick Manufacturing Group, for item 10/15-16), Dr M Glover (Academic Registrar), Ms J Horsburgh (Deputy Registrar (Secretary)), Dr E Hough (Assistant Registrar (Governance) (Assistant Secretary)), Ms G McGrattan (Director of Human Resources), Mr J Phillips (Interim Director of Health and Safety, for item 10/15-16), Mrs R Wooldridge Smith (Deputy Academic Registrar).

1/15-16 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open and restricted minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2015 be approved.

2/15-16 Rankings Success

REPORTED: (by the Vice Chancellor and President)

That Warwick had achieved further success in university league tables, rising 23 places to 80th in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2015-16.

3/15-16 English Literature Award

REPORTED: (by the Vice Chancellor and President)

That Professor Catherine Bates, Department of English, had been awarded the Rose Mary Crawshay Prize by the British Academy, for her book 'Masculinity and the Hunt: Wyatt to Spenser'.

RESOLVED:

That the congratulations of the Committee be extended to Professor Bates on her achievement.

4/15-16 Warwick Arts Centre Awards Success

REPORTED: (by the Vice Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Warwick Arts Centre had received The Children and Families Award and The Culture Award at the Coventry and Warwickshire Tourism and Culture Awards last week.
- (b) That the Arts Centre had also been a finalist in the Best Venue for Music, Arts and Theatre category.

RESOLVED:

That the congratulations of the Committee be extended to the staff of the Arts Centre on their achievement.

5/15-16 Arrivals Weekend

REPORTED: (by the Vice Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the University had welcomed undergraduates to campus for the new academic year, with a range of activities taking place to help new students settle in.
- (b) That there had been a vibrant atmosphere on campus and in the new plaza area, noting that the Saturday had been particularly busy.
- (c) That the weekend had also seen the launch of the UniCycles scheme, an enterprise developed in collaboration between the University and BSc students Stan Jallot and Gal Israel, and run in partnership with nextbike.

6/15-16 In Memoriam: Fr W Dominic Round

REPORTED: (by the Vice Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the University had been saddened to hear of the death of Fr W Dominic Round, who died on 12 September 2015 aged 75.
- (b) That Fr Dominic was the Catholic Chaplain at the University of Warwick between 1983 and 1992, and would be fondly remembered by all those who were here at that time.

RESOLVED:

That the condolences of the Committee be passed to Fr Dominic's family and friends.

7/15-16 Steering Committee Terms of Reference – 2015/16

RECEIVED:

A presentation from the Deputy Registrar outlining the key changes to the Terms of Reference and modus operandi of the Steering Committee for 2015/16.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That as previously agreed by the Senate, the Steering Committee had a revised Terms of Reference with effect from 1 October 2015.
- (b) That these governance changes sought to provide a forum in which to bring together and steer matters of strategy and resourcing across the breadth of the University's activities, in order that decisions be as informed as possible.
- (c) That the Committee would consider all policies relating to staff and students on behalf of the Senate and the Council, except where: there was an explicit requirement to seek the approval of the Senate; or where adoption of the policy would have a significant financial or budgetary implication for the University.
- (d) That the Committee would provide assurance to the Senate and the Council that matters of risk management, control, compliance and governance were appropriately regulated, and that action was being taken to address any issues that had been identified.
- (e) That the Committee would receive termly reports on strategy implementation, noting that some reports that were previously considered by the Committee would no longer come directly but through composite reports from the relevant resourcing/strategy committees.
- (f) That the use of presentations and visual templates would be trialled, in order that members could consider the necessary breadth and volume of matters in an efficient and effective manner.
- (g) That meetings would continue to be held at least fortnightly, noting that the flow of business would be monitored and the overall effectiveness of the process reviewed.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (h) That a date for an effectiveness review should be agreed, noting that the review should also undertake to ensure the transparency of reporting from the Steering Committee to the Senate.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (i) That an Academic Governance review was scheduled to take place later in the year.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee for 2015/16 be noted.
- (b) That an effectiveness review of the Steering Committee be undertaken in the summer term 2015/16.

8/15-16

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Deputy Registrar, updating the Committee on information relating to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the guidance on the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act for Higher Education providers had now been passed through Parliament and was effective as of 18 September 2015.
- (b) That she was chairing a working group to consider the University's response to the guidance, noting that the Group were developing a risk assessment and an action plan, as requested by the guidance, which would come to the Steering Committee in due course.
- (c) That the requirements of the Act were being positioned within the University's existing frameworks for wellbeing and safeguarding.
- (d) That a risk assessment was being concluded, noting that this would likewise be brought to the Steering Committee.
- (e) That the University was mindful of the National Union of Students position on the Act, noting that dialogue was ongoing between the University and the Students' Union on its response.
- (f) That HEFCE had been confirmed as the regulatory body that would monitor compliance with the Act, noting that a draft response to the HEFCE's consultation on this matter would be brought to the Steering Committee before the submission deadline at the end of October.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (g) That the Act should feature as a substantive item on the agenda for the Senate meeting in January 2016.

RESOLVED:

That the update on progress relating to the response to the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act be noted.

9/15-16

Senate Business

CONSIDERED:

The items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 12 October 2015.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the HEFCE Quality Assurance Framework and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) were the main strategic items for discussion at the meeting.
- (b) That the report on the Teaching Excellence Framework reflected current information, noting that the report would be revised as necessary to reflect emerging understanding prior to the meeting of the Senate.

- (c) That the Senate would receive a presentation from the Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics on modelling undertaken to understand the University's possible positioning in the TEF.
- (d) That an item on a new regulation for the Foundation degree in Warwick Business School was to be added to the agenda.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (e) That in regard to item S.8/15-16 on Student Admissions, the most up-to-date global numbers of enrolments by category of students be made available to the Senate at its meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 12 October 2015 be approved, as set out in the papers circulated for consideration by the Senate Steering Committee.

10/15-16 *Manual Handling Incident, WMG

CONSIDERED:

A report on the manual handling incident that occurred in WMG on 12 June 2015 (SC.1/15-16 {restricted}), as reported at the last meeting of the Committee (minute 468/14-15 refers).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report on the manual handling incident be noted.
- (b) That a report on progress be brought to the Steering Committee in January 2016.

2/15-16 Accreditation of Placement Year in Industry and Year Abroad

CONSIDERED:

A report setting out the principles and proposals for the accreditation of placement years in industry, and years abroad (SC.2/15-16).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education))

- (a) That the Steering Committee had previously approved a proposal to introduce credit recognition for the year abroad and intercalated year from 2016/17, noting that this would allow further planning to be undertaken.
- (b) That further discussions with a number of academic departments had taken place.
- (c) That the proposals outlined in the paper were intended to provide equity for all students.

- (d) That it was proposed that a minimum threshold be applied to the development of a framework for credit recognition (namely that a student pass the year abroad), noting the requirement for a clear but flexible structure within which departments could recognise credits for study abroad, work abroad and work in the UK.
- (e) That in addition to passing the year, students would also be required to complete a reflective portfolio, noting that the proposed model for this (developed by the Centre for Applied Linguistics) was currently under consideration for a Times Higher Education award.
- (f) That work would be undertaken to develop the infrastructure for recording the credit gained on placement periods on students' Higher Education Achievement Report.
- (g) That extensive guidelines were available to departments regarding procedures for establishing the suitability of partner organisations, noting that this guidance was currently being refined and would be reconsidered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in due course.
- (h) That academic departments had recognised the need for a credit recognition framework and had been supportive of the proposals.
- (i) That the proposals might initially be tested with the British Council.
- (j) That given the inherent complexity of mark conversion across different academic systems, the proposals were intended to ensure that credit gained at institutions abroad could be recognised in an appropriate manner.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (k) That the guidance on partner institutions provided to academic departments should also include reference to the need for ensuring that appropriate welfare and pastoral support structures were in place.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (l) That it was important to recognise the diversity of structures and resources provided by institutions internationally, noting that not all provided the same level as the University, but that students could still gain significantly from experiences in different systems, so long as they were appropriately advised in advance about what they could expect and the risks of different contexts were understood.
- (m) That a file note should be created, clearly defining the University's understanding of the criteria for compliance with the Erasmus Plus Charter at this point in time.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning))

- (n) That it was important to give staff and students clear guidance and advice regarding what they could reasonably expect from year-abroad experiences, in what was a complex and diverse environment.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (o) That after careful scrutiny, it was believed that the proposals provided a sensible way forward that would both ensure compliance and enable students to continue to benefit from placement experiences, which were highly valuable in terms of students' employability.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the principles and proposals outlined in the report be noted and the views of the Committee be used to inform subsequent consideration of the matter by the Senate.
- (b) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education) ensure that a file note be created, as per (m) above.