

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 2 February 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bassnett,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley,
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Mr S Thomson,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Professor R Higgott,

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Estates, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy (until item 314/08-09), Acting Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), University Librarian (for item 311/08-09),

304/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2009 be approved, subject to the following amendment (deletions ~~struck through~~ and additions underlined):

292/08-09

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a) That work was underway to automate the tracking of the progress of research students, and eventually their wider staff research activities, within the student records system and that first facilities were to be available from Easter.

305/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/006: HEFCE Grant Letter for 2009/10 (minute 291/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

An information note from Universities UK highlighting the main points of the Secretary of State's letter to HEFCE regarding the grant allocation for 2009/10 (SC.207/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

That the University had submitted a bid to bring forward around £3million of capital projects comprising of Chemistry laboratory refurbishment and an extension to Millburn House.

306/08-09 Capital Investment Fund (CIF) 2010/11

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That there was no secure assumption that CIF funding would continue from 2010/11.

307/08-09 HEFCE Research Funding

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That early modelling suggested that the initial estimate of an overall reduction of £3million in quality related (QR) funding seemed less likely but some departments would face significant falls in funds, noting that the Academic Resourcing Committee would need to manage these cases carefully.

308/08-09 School of Life Sciences

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That a memo had been sent to relevant Heads of Department this week confirming the proposal to establish a School of Life Sciences which would integrate Biological Sciences, Warwick HRI and Systems Biology by the end of this academic year.
- (b) That the proposal would be taken forward in accordance with the University's Governance arrangements.

309/08-09 Vice-Chancellor's Newsletter

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That plans were being developed for a regular Vice-Chancellor's newsletter to the University community and that further information on its proposed contents and circulation would be reported at a future meeting.

310/08-09 Policy Update: Development and Alumni

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy updating the Committee on progress against pledged income targets and alumni developments (SC.224/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy)

- (a) That the inaugural Alumni Weekend to be held on 20 – 21 June 2009 was being supported by academic departments who planned to host break out events and departmental receptions.
- (b) That it was difficult to predict how the current economic downturn would affect pledged income, noting that figures were being carefully monitored but that progress was encouraging as income was slightly up on the same point last year.
- (c) That the Butterworth Hall appeal to bring in £2million of philanthropic donations was progressing well with the aim of achieving this target in the current financial year.
- (d) That the Development and Alumni Relations Office would be focusing on appeals activities to raise circa £1m a year for specific projects with likely appeals to include support for Warwick Medical School and Warwick Business School projects.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies)

- (e) That involvement at a Faculty level in alumni events could be of benefit to increase attendance and encourage a cross-departmental aspect.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.224/08-09.

311/08-09

Policy Update: Library

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the University Librarian considering potential changes in relation to how the Library might support research as a response to the University's strategic aims (SC.222/08-09).

REPORTED; (by the University Librarian)

- (a) That tension had been experienced when attempting to align University-level priorities and the needs of individual researchers with regards to research support.
- (b) That there had been an increase in approaches to the Library regarding e-journals at Warwick given that this was an area which was likely to see significant development nationally in the next two to five years.
- (c) That there was currently no evidence that supporting e-journals raised the research profile of an institution; however developing an e-journals portfolio at Warwick would develop skills which would benefit other areas of development.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (d) That it should be considered whether the resources needed to support areas for development as set out in SC.222/08-09 would be secured via networking or enhanced governance arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.222/08-09, noting that further consideration be given by the University Librarian and the Academic Registrar as to how to optimise the research support 'landscape'.

312/08-09

Policy Update: IT Services

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of IT Services detailing progress against key elements on the IT Services Strategy in the areas of management capabilities, IT organisation and methodologies and current challenges (SC.225/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University was about to appoint a strategic partner in the context of the Network Replacement Project representing a innovative approach which would incur regular budgeted spend rather than the historic unmanageable spikes in expenditure

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine))

- (b) That since the appointment of the current Director of IT Services, the number of major incidents reported at Information Policy and Strategy Committee (IPSC) had reduced and the response time for front line services, such as account set up, had improved, noting that this had allowed the nature of discussions at IPSC to become more strategic.
- (c) That a paper on mobile computing support would be considered at the next meeting of IPSC at the request of the Director of IT Services.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (d) That the Capital Investment Fund allocation for IT Services needed to be spent and consideration should be given to how the recent decline in the value of sterling would affect the purchasing resources available.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.225/08-09.

313/08-09

Effectiveness Review of Non-Departmental University Governance

CONSIDERED:

A paper proposing an effectiveness review of the University's non-departmental governance arrangements and outlining potential timeframes, target groups for involvement, areas for exploration and proposed membership of an Effectiveness Review Consultative Group (SC.230/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the proposed purpose of the first stage of the review would be to undertake an evidence gathering exercise particularly to identify issues acting as barriers to making progress towards the aims of the University strategy, noting that issues arising which were not directly relevant to the scope of this review would be passed to the appropriate body/bodies for consideration.
- (b) That communication would be crucial in order to secure participation from an appropriate proportion of each target group.
- (c) That a paper regarding the review of governance arrangements for devolved departments as commissioned by the Council at its last meeting would be considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting to be held on 9 February 2009.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies)

- (d) That following the session with the Deputy Registrar at the recent Faculty of Social Studies lunch, colleagues may be concerned about the short timeframe, the timing in the term where most willing participants had heavy workloads and a perceived lack of clarity at that time regarding the precise arrangements for the review.
- (e) That the proposed membership of the Effectiveness Review Consultative Group was not representative of the University community in terms of adequate representation from all Faculties and experience of governance issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Effectiveness Review of Non-Departmental University Governance be formally commissioned by the Steering Committee as set out in SC.230/08-09, subject to the inclusion of an additional member of the Effectiveness Review Consultative Group from each of the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies.

314/08-09

HEFCE Circular 03/2009: Economic Challenge Investment Fund

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE inviting applications to the new Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) intended to galvanise resources and expertise from the higher education sector in countering the impact of the economic downturn (SC.221/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That colleagues in various areas including Careers had been asked to consider how the University could support already planned activities with this new fund, noting that criteria would need to be devised in order to determine which project(s) the University might wish to submit as a ECIF bid.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a call be circulated later today for potential projects with a deadline of 6 February 2009 stating that potential applications be sent to the Director of Research Support Services in the first instance.
- (b) That bids be prioritised by a group including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) and the Registrar and that successful bid(s) be brought to a future meeting of the Steering Committee for consideration prior to submission by 27 February 2009.

315/08-09 HEFCE Circular 02/2009: New Years Honours 2010

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE seeking nominations for the New Years Honours list for 2010 (SC.204/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University needed to devise a systematic approach to nominating for this type of award.

RESOLVED:

That nominations be sent to the Deputy Registrar in the first instance.

316/08-09 CBI Report: Reaching Further – Workforce Development Through Employer – FE Partnership

RECEIVED:

A report from the CBI outlining links between Further Education and employers (SC.223/08-09).

317/08-09 Support West Midlands

RECEIVED:

Information from Advantage West Midlands launching their new website www.supportwm.co.uk which aimed to support businesses in the current economic climate by signposting regional and national support available (SC.229/08-09).

318/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/005: Re-skilling for Recovery After Leitch Implementing Skills and Training Policies

RECEIVED:

A Universities UK note summarising the main findings of the House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee report on the implementation of the Leitch Review of Skills published on 16 January 2009 (SC.226/08-09).

319/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/003: Researcher Mobility

RECEIVED:

Information from UUK regarding changes in the Home Office Points Based Immigration system with regards to researchers (SC.218/08-09).

320/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/002: White Paper on Social Mobility

RECEIVED:

A note from UUK summarising the key measures arising from the New Opportunities White Paper published on 13 January 2009 (SC.219/08-09).

Kms/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Feb09/02Feb09