

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bassnett,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor R Higgott (except for item 384/08-09),
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley (until item 389/08-09),
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Mr S Thomson,

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Director of Estates, Finance Director, Director of Development, Communication and Strategy, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies (for item 384/08-09), Director of the Language Centre (for item 386/08-09), Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling) (for item 387/08-09), Director of HR and Director of HR and Commercial Services (for items 389/08-09 and 390/08-09),

378/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2009 be approved.

379/08-09 Effectiveness Review of Non-Departmental Governance (minute 346/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Professor Robin Wensley (Warwick Business School) had been appointed as the second Social Studies representative on the Effectiveness Review Consultative Group which would meet for the first time on 5 March 2009.

380/08-09 HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund Bid (minute 362/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University application to the HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund (ECIF) had been submitted to HEFCE on Friday 27th February 2009 requesting £500,000 from HEFCE (the maximum allowed) to support Manufacturing and Technology businesses; individuals currently in employment in a range of companies including Manufacturing and the Service Sector and students and Graduates of the University.
- (b) That Advantage West Midlands had confirmed their support for this application and may provide matched funding.

RESOLVED:

That a copy of the University's application be circulated to the Committee for information at its next meeting, noting that the University would be notified in early April 2009 whether the application had been successful.

381/08-09

AHRC Block Grant Partnership

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

That the University had been awarded 53 out of the 65 PhD scholarships requested and 46 out of 60 Masters awards, noting that the scholarships would be available over the next five years.

382/08-09

School of Life Sciences (minute 369/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

That the principles underlying the proposed School of Life Sciences had been discussed at a meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 27 February 2009 and a further paper would be considered at the extraordinary meeting of the Board to be held on 4 March 2009.

383/08-09

National Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Programme Consultation (minute 365/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the deadline for responses to the consultation into how the HEFCE National STEM Programme might be developed and implemented had been extended should colleagues who had yet to do so wish to contribute.

384/08-09

Strategic Departmental Review of Politics and International Studies: Departmental Response (minute 272/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The departmental response to the Strategic Departmental Review of the Department of Politics and International Studies held on 12 to 15 October 2008 and the action plan, together with an oral report from the Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies (SC.272/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Politics and International Studies)

- (a) That the recommendations of the Review Panel were aligned with developments already underway within the Department and that the Review Report was being taken forward as a catalyst for further change.
- (b) That the FTDL5-funded Scholarship of Engagement for Politics which enabled students to undertake research-based placements as a formal dimension of the PAIS undergraduate curriculum had been well received by students and that the Department were keen to retain the scheme despite the cost and resources involved in its administration.
- (c) That the use of PhD students in teaching and training within the Department was in line with the University guidelines even though the guidelines were not specifically referenced within the SDR response.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies)

- (d) That, whilst welcoming the School's proactive work in taking forward the potential Public Policy programme at postgraduate level, there remains a benefit promoting engagement in this as a Faculty-wide initiative because of the strengths in the Warwick Business School and other research groupings in this area.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus and Community))

- (e) That the Department should consider engaging with the intercultural agenda being pursued by the Centre for Applied Linguistics as a potential income generating activity.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the departmental response and action plan be approved as set out in SC.272/08-09, noting that the Report would be amended as discussed in the meeting following approval of the change by the Review Panel prior to the Report being circulated further.
- (b) That the Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies be invited to provide the Steering Committee with a progress report in the Spring Term 2010.

385/08-09 HEFCE Recurrent Grant Letter for 2009/10

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the University had today received notification from HEFCE of the recurrent grant for t2009/10 with comparative data for different institutions being made available from 5 March 2009.
- (b) That the University's overall grant had increased by circa £3m compared to the 2008/09 allocation with the increase coming largely from the T-Grant, noting that the Research stream had been slightly below expectations.
- (c) That the University's overall grant was approximately at the level forecast in the Financial Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the HEFCE letter and available comparative analysis for other Russell Group institutions be considered at the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

386/08-09 Review of the Language Centre

CONSIDERED:

The report of the Review of the Language Centre held on 30 and 31 October 2008 and the action plan, together with the departmental response and an oral report from the Director of the Language Centre (SC.271/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the Language Centre)

- (a) That the Review Panel had recognised the main constraints under which the Language Centre was working, namely issues around physical infrastructure, technology and resources.
- (b) That the Language Centre was keen to develop income generating activities, such as online and blended learning packages, but felt unable to do so adequately until the infrastructure issues had been resolved.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That overall language provision needed to be reviewed at an institutional level to develop a cohesive approach to the teaching of languages at Warwick.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (d) That the Strategic Departmental Reviews for the Departments of French, German and Italian Studies were due to be held in the Summer Term 2009, noting that this presented a timely opportunity to inform the institutional discussion of language teaching provision.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Review Report and departmental response be approved as set out in SC.271/08-09.
- (b) That the Senior Management Team of the University give consideration to the alignment of strategies of language teaching across all departments.

387/08-09

Policy Update: Capital Developments, CIF Funding and Space Management

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Estates and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling) updating the Committee on current capital and space developments and spend against the HEFCE Capital Investment Fund (CIF) allocation (SC.270/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the University was currently undertaking 40 capital projects totalling circa £35m.

(By the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling))

- (b) That the business plan for the Translational Medicine 2 (TM2) building had been approved by the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group at its meeting held on 26 February 2009, noting that the project could not progress until it had been determined what activity was to be housed within the building.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs))

- (c) That the standard of teaching accommodation across campus should be reviewed before the deterioration in some areas impacts negatively in student experience surveys, such as the National Student Survey.

(By the Registrar)

- (d) That the University had received a request from the HEFCE to identify additional capital projects to bring forward from 2010/11 as there were outstanding funds to allocate, noting that the letter would come a future meeting of the Steering Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be approved as set out in SC.270/08-09.
- (b) That the Director of Estates identify potential additional projects to bring forward from 2010/11 for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

388/08-09

Report from the Faculty of Social Studies

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies informing the Committee of activities in the areas of research, teaching and learning and the Centre of Excellence for Workforce Strategy and Planning (SC.277/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies)

- (a) That the Faculty recognised the need to achieve significant research income.
- (b) That in order to allow for greater Faculty-level deliberation around teaching and learning, the work of the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies should be further streamlined.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.277/08-09.

389/08-09

Policy Update: Human Resources and Learning and Development Centre

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of HR updating the Committee on the progress of key activities within HR and the Learning and Development Centre, including 2009 National Pay Negotiations Process, the Pulse Staff Survey and the Career Management Board (SC.269/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR and Commercial Services)

- (a) That the ACAS talks regarding pay negotiations would conclude later this week and that the matter would be discussed at the meeting of the Russell Group HR Directors to be held on 5 and 6 March 2009.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (b) That practical difficulties were being experienced within the Faculty of Science in completing Annual Reviews for Heads of Department and senior academic colleagues by the deadline of April 2009.

(By the Director of HR)

- (c) That while it would be advantageous to work to the schedule, it was important to take the exercise forward in a meaningful way with the key objective being to engage colleagues fully in the process.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.269/08-09.

390/08-09

Policy Update: Equality and Diversity

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining recent developments in the area of Equality and Diversity including the Single Equality Scheme, Dignity at Work, the Athena SWAN Charter and data cleansing (SC.266/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.266/08-09.

391/08-09 Wellcome Trust: Open Access Policy

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Wellcome Trust notifying the University that it would be monitoring compliance with its Open Access Policy whereby all original research papers funded in part or wholly by the Wellcome Trust should be made available on PubMedCentral or UKPMC repositories within six months of publication (SC.264/08-09).

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

That the University had reminded all principal investigators to adhere to the policy but there were inherent issues with policing such a policy.

392/08-09 Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 11 March 2009 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, noting that the Report to the Senate from the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies (S.34/08-09) would be revised to include amendments to the membership of the RCN RI Joint Advisory Board and the dissolution of the Centre for the Study of Sport in Society which the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies approved subsequent to the Faculty Board meeting held on 24 February 2009.

393/08-09 Advantage West Midlands: Celebrating Success

RECEIVED:

A report from Advantage West Midlands (AWM) providing a summary of the successes and achievements of the European Structural Funds Programmes which AWM had administered (SC.265/08-09).

394/08-09 UK HE International Unit Annual Report

RECEIVED:

A report from the UK HE International Unit detailing its activities in the start-up phase (1 January to 31 July 2007) and through its first operational year (1 August 2007 to 31 July 2008) (SC.267/08-09).

395/08-09 University Response to ESRC Consultation on the Review of the ESRC Research Ethics Framework

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the recent Economic and Social Research Council consultation on its research ethics framework formally introduced in January 2006 (SC.275/08-09).

396/08-09 UCEA Review of Higher Education Pay and Data

RECEIVED:

A report from UCEA reviewing finances and remuneration in higher education published in December 2008 (SC.268/08-09).