

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 9 March 2009

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

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor S Bruzzi, Professor M Smith, Professor H Thomas,

In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Finance Director, Director of Development, Communication and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance)

401/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2009 be approved.

402/08-09 HEFCE Circular 05/2009/: Bringing Forward Capital Spending from 2010/11 – Round 2  
(minute 387/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the HEFCE requesting additional applications from universities to bring forward capital projects from 2010/11 to enable HEFCE to allocate the remaining £50million from the original budget of £200million (SC.286/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the conditions of the funding required that any allocation would need to be spent by March 2010 but the projects need not be completed by that date.

(By the Director of Estates)

- (b) That the University had already brought forward capital projects under the HEFCE programme and that the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group (CPARG) had considered potential additional projects to submit to the HEFCE, noting that it was unlikely to find any new build which could be brought forward though major refurbishments may be considered.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Estates identify appropriate projects, noting that if any were forthcoming, these would be considered by the Steering Committee at a future meeting.

404/08-09

Risk Status Summary

CONSIDERED:

A report updating the Committee on the status of University risks, including those to be reported to the next meeting of the Council to be held on 18 March 2009 (SC.291/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That risks F1 (Slower than planned increases in University surpluses) and risk F5 (Significant unplanned increases in University pensions) had been upgraded to the maximum levels in the Autumn Term 2008.
- (b) That risks F6 (Inability to meet AWM agreed outputs) and risk S3 (Not sustaining a climate of good employee relations) had been increased to reflect current University concerns with regards to targets contained within Advantage West Midlands' contracts and the continued uncertainty over the national pay negotiation process.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (c) That it might be premature to increase the risk against S3 given that the discussions with the unions were still to be concluded.

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

- (d) That the University should consider upgrading risk T5 in the light of the discussions at the Steering Committee regarding the standard of teaching accommodation in some areas of the University and its impact on the institution's ability to provide an exceptional teaching and learning experience.
- (e) That a letter from the Student-Staff Liaison Committees of the Faculty of Arts, supported by several Heads of Department, had been sent to the Vice-Chancellor outlining their concerns over the standard of teaching accommodation available to the Faculty.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update Risk Status Summary be approved as set out in SC.291/08-09, subject to the status of risk S3 being retained at a score of 5.
- (b) That risks F3 and F6 be included in the report of key University risks to the Council at its meeting to be held on 18 March 2009 in addition to those marked with an asterisk in SC.291/08-09.
- (c) That a paper be prepared by the Director of Estates together with Professors Whitby and Bassnett outlining the quality of teaching rooms across the University campus for consideration by the Steering Committee at a future meeting.

405/08-09

Report from the Fees Working Group

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Fees Working Group detailing non-standard tuition fees for 2009/10, fees for visiting research students and a review into the level of tuition fees (SC.278/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the Income Generation Group had recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken with regards to increasing fee levels, particularly for overseas students.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (b) That there were issues regarding visiting research students arising from the Government's new Points Based Immigration scheme, including:
  - (i) The need for students' attendance to be monitored
  - (ii) that, as registered students, individuals could work up to 20 hours per week and that this could benefit departments with regards to teaching assistance
- (c) That a letter would be sent to all Heads of Departments this week with a view to clarifying the status of visiting research students.

RESOLVED:

That the paper and the non-standard tuition fees in Annex A be approved as set out in SC.278/08-09.

406/08-09 Quarter 2 Report: Warwick Medical School

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School outlining the financial position of the School at the end of Quarter 2 (SC.289/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That the financial position as set out in the paper showed an increase in gross surplus compared to the Quarter 1 forecast.
- (b) That there was potential slippage of expenditure for a significant grant to 2009/10 which would impact on the research income forecast for the 2008/09 year.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 2 report from the Warwick Medical School be approved as set out in SC.289/08-09.

407/08-09 Quarter 2 Report: Academic Resourcing Committee

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Academic Resourcing Committee (ARC) detailing the financial performance of non-devolved departments in Quarter 2 of 2008/09 (SC.295/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the report would be considered by the Academic Resourcing Committee at its meeting to be held on Thursday, 12 March 2009.
- (b) That the gross surplus was £2.4 million below the adjusted budget due in part to the higher than anticipated pay award and the increase in student numbers, together with associated costs.
- (c) That there were a number of departments which had significant variances against plan at the gross surplus level and that ARC would be meeting with and monitoring these departments.
- (d) That the full year operating deficit was forecast to be £3.7 million below plan.

(By the Finance Director)

- (e) That there had been significant movement in the central service charge relating to the Library which was running a significant deficit due mainly to the cost of journals in light of the changes in the Pound-Euro exchange rate.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 2 report from the Academic Resourcing Committee be approved as set out in SC.295/08-09.

408/08-09 Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the additional 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 HEFCE Recurrent Grant paper (S.35/08-09) would include revised tables incorporating the amendments made to the covering paper as tabled at the meeting of the Steering Committee.

409/08-09 QAA Audit of Overseas Partnership Arrangements

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the Quality Assurance Agency notifying the University that it intended to review arrangements that UK institutions had with partner providers in Malaysia (SC.288/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) co-ordinate the response to the QAA confirming or amending the information provided on the University's Malaysian partners by the deadline of 1 April 2009.

410/08-09 HEFCE Circular 04/2009: Revolving Green Fund – Second Round of Institutional Small Project Strand

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the HEFCE inviting institutions to submit applications to the second round of the institutional small project (ISP) fund of the Revolving Green Fund (SC.285/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the University had been allocated funds from the first round of the ISP and was therefore not eligible to apply to the second round.
- (b) That the University was one of seven institutions shortlisted for the larger transformational fund, noting that the University would be notified in March 2009 as to whether its application had been successful.

411/08-09 IUSS: Web Forum For Students' Views on University

RECEIVED:

A press release from the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee announcing the launch of a web forum to gather students' experiences of university (SC.282/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the forum appeared to bypass recognised channels for student feedback, namely the National Student Survey and the National Student Forum.
- (b) That the first report from the National Student Forum had been received and would be considered at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (c) That the Students' Union was broadly supportive of engaging with the IUSS Forum but recognised the risks attached.

412/08-09 Students' Union Update on Widening Participation Initiatives

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the President and the Education Officer of the Students' Union updating the Committee on progress in encouraging access to higher education and providing the key findings of the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee Widening Participation Report (SC.294/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

- (a) That this academic year the Students' Union had prioritised engagement with the University's widening participation agenda.
- (b) That the Students' Union and Teach First had launched the 'Inspire' access scheme taking Warwick students into schools in the region to showcase their university experience.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its congratulations to the Students' Union on the success of its 'Inspire' Scheme.

413/08-09 University Bid to the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme

RECEIVED:

The University's Bid to the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme for the 'Open Space Learning (OSL) in Real World Contexts' initiative (SC.280/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs))

- (a) That the University's prospects of being awarded funding were good.
- (b) That the University had submitted three individual nominations for the National Teaching Fellowships, namely Dr Paul Raffield (School of Law), Dr Sean Allen (German) and Dr Sue Bridgewater (Warwick Business School).

414/08-09 Science and Innovation Speeches

RECEIVED:

A package of speeches delivered by the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Minister of State for Science and Innovation focussing on science and innovation in the United Kingdom (SC.293/08-09).

415/08-09 University Application to HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund

RECEIVED:

The University's application to the HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund to support Manufacturing and Technology businesses, and individuals currently in employment in a range of companies including Manufacturing and the Service Sector, together with students and Graduates of the University (SC.279/08-09).

- 416/08-09 University Application to HEFCE Higher Education – Schools Link Grant Programme
- RECEIVED:
- The University's application to the HEFCE Higher Education – School Link Grant Programme to explore links between higher education institutions, schools, colleges and academies (SC.296/08-09).
- 417/08-09 HE Focus Quarterly Journal Vol 1: The Great NUS Feedback Amnesty
- RECEIVED:
- The first in a series of Education Quarterly publications from the National Union of Students (NUS) focussing on assessment and the NUS Feedback Amnesty (SC.284/08-09).
- 418/08-09 HEFCE Publication: Higher Education in England
- RECEIVED:
- A HEFCE publication detailing how Higher Education in England had taken on new challenges and had become a key aspect of social and economic framework of England (SC.281/08-09).
- 419/08-09 New Chairman of Advantage West Midlands
- RECEIVED:
- A press release from Advantage West Midlands announcing the appointment of Sir Roy McNulty as its new chairman (SC.283/08-09).

Kms/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Mar09/09Mar09