

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 15 March 2010

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor R Higgott
Professor C Hughes,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Smith,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby
Professor D Wilson,
Mr A Bradley.

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Estates, Director of Development, Communication and Strategy, Professor S B Palmer, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 378/09-10), Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for items 379/0910 and 380/09-10), Director of the CAPITAL Centre and Dr N Monk (for item 381/09-10).

372/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2010 be approved.

373/09-10 Oppenheim Lecture

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University would host an open guest lecture from Professor Charles Oppenheim on 16 March 2010 entitled, 'The REF, bibliometrics and research impact' and that the lecture would be held in the Ramphal Building at 6.15pm, preceded by a drinks reception at 5.30pm.

374/09-10 HEFCE Recurrent Funding 2010/11

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the University had received notification from HEFCE of its recurrent funding settlement for 2010/11, noting that the letter was embargoed until 18 March 2010.
- (b) That the University's research funding had increased by £684k from the previous year's allocation and that the teaching grant had decreased by £419k, a £265k reduction on the estimated allocation within the 2009 Financial Plan.

375/09-10

Students' Union Constitution

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

- (a) That following the introduction of the Charities Act (2006), the Union could no longer retain its legal status as an exempt charity and that it would be required to change its legal status in order to continue to be registered with the Charities Commission.
- (b) That the motion to change the Union's legal status to a company limited by guarantee had been passed by referendum.

376/09-10

Route of High Speed 2 Rail Link

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

That the proposed route of the High Speed 2 rail link between London Euston and Birmingham would pass through university land on an elevated track for about 1 km at the very South of Warwick's holdings.

RESOLVED:

That the University consider its options and perspective of the proposed infringement of its boundary at this early stage to minimise potential disruption and negative implications of this development.

377/09-10

Summary of Feedback and Discussion Relating to the Harris Report

RECEIVED:

A report of the feedback and discussion within the institution relating to the recommendations of the Harris Report into the current constitutional structures of the University for consideration by the Senate at its meeting to be held on 17 March 2010 (S.19/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That balance of opinion derived from discussion and feedback received to date from the University community was in favour of Model B (Strong Centre – Strong Departments), acknowledging also that change would still be required within the framework of Model B.
- (b) That the areas of broad consensus set out in Section 3 of S.19/09-10 would act as a working agenda for the discussion at the forthcoming meeting of the Senate, together with consideration of other key issues, such as the role of the Faculty Boards and their Chairs and the role and remit of the Academic Resourcing Committee.

378/09-10

Admissions and Recruitment Update

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment updating on developments in admissions, recruitment and widening participation (SC.247/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (a) That the University's performance in the HESA Widening Participation key performance indicators evidenced encouraging progress.
- (b) That undergraduate offer-making had improved and was now ahead of the comparable point in the previous year, noting that the position would be closely

monitored moving towards August 2010 to ensure that internal targets and those set by HEFCE were met.

- (c) That, whilst positive overall, there remained some variation in acceptance of the new postgraduate admissions system within the institution, with those departments who had been engaged with the implementation from an early stage being very positive.
- (d) That refinements to the process and changes to local working practices were being undertaken to meet the needs of those departments which had engaged at a later stage.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to colleagues involved in the successful implementation of the new postgraduate admissions process.

379/09-10

Teaching Quality Update

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Acting Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) providing an update on teaching and learning issues, together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing) on the topic of undergraduate contact hours (SC.248/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing))

- (a) That the draft statement on undergraduate contact hours had been considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee in consultation with departments to reflect local practice and expectations.
- (b) That in publishing an institutional statement, departments whose undergraduate contact hours fell outside the proposed minimum number would be required to make the necessary adjustments to meet University expectations in that regard.

(By the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (c) That the current response rate to the National Student Survey (NSS) 2010 was significantly lower than at the comparable point last year (40.80 percent compared to 50.71 percent), noting that there were only two weeks of the survey period remaining.
- (d) That, in conjunction with the Students Union, effort would be made to increase participation in the remaining survey period, acknowledging however that the potential causes of the current low response rates were somewhat unclear.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft statement on undergraduate contact hours be revised as follows prior to publication:
 - (i) Inclusion of information regarding contact hours for intermediate years of study;
 - (ii) Statement of other types of contact as presented in AQSC.30/09-10 (revised) to be annexed to any published statement;
 - (iii) Acknowledgement within the statement of contact hours with non-academic support services, such as counseling, disability and welfare services; and
 - (iv) Inclusion of relevant information relating to joint courses.
- (b) That the revised final statement on undergraduate contact hours be published and provided to departments to inform local publication of course-specific expectations.

380/09-10

QAA Circular Letter 04/10: Evaluating the Academic Infrastructure

CONSIDERED:

A circular letter and supporting documentation from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regarding an evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure (SC.253/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the QAA Academic Infrastructure represented a sector-wide agreed framework relating to the definition and evaluation of the quality of the learning experience and standards of HE programmes.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing))

- (b) That the Academic Infrastructure documentation was very technical in nature and that it was, in its current state, inaccessible to applicants and academics who it was designed to inform.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee prepare a draft response to the evaluation with a view to the Steering Committee considering the response prior to submission by the deadline of 7 May 2010.

381/09-10

Evaluation of the CAPITAL Centre

CONSIDERED:

The final evaluation report for the Creativity and Performance in Teaching and Learning (CAPITAL) Centre (SC.251/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the CAPITAL Centre)

- (a) That the CAPITAL Centre had been established as a HEFCE-funded Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and that the five year funding period would end in July 2010.
- (b) That the Centre and its work had received extraordinary support from colleagues at Warwick and that a future challenge would be to embed creative and innovative teaching within the institutional teaching and learning strategy, acknowledging that the proposed Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning would be a possible vehicle for this.

(By Dr N Monk)

- (c) That the Centre had been successful in encouraging collaboration, with engagement to date from 17 university departments and circa 10,500 individuals (staff, students and members of the public).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee record its thanks to colleagues within the CAPITAL Centre for their work and congratulate them on their achievements.
- (b) That the evaluation report be revised, prior to submission to HEFCE in line with the discussion at the meeting and to ensure that the significant achievements of the

CAPITAL Centre to date were appropriately highlighted within the report, together with the minor corrections discussed at the meeting.

382/09-10

UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor Status

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That it was expected that the UK Border Agency (UKBA) would announce shortly a differentiating scheme within the Points Based Immigration System to accredit certain Band A-rated Institutions with 'Highly Trusted Sponsor Status'.
- (b) That institutions accredited with the new status could benefit from reduced requirements with regards to student monitoring and reporting but that the proposal created risk and bureaucracy.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee be updated on the details of the proposed Highly Trusted Sponsor Status at a future meeting.

383/09-10

University Application for ESRC Doctoral Training Centre Accreditation

RECEIVED:

The final University application to the ESRC for Doctoral Training Centre Accreditation inclusive of attachments relating to collaboration with other institutions and supervision ethics (SC.249/09-10).

384/09-10

Warwick Arts Centre Annual Report and Accounts 2008/09

RECEIVED:

The Warwick Arts Centre Annual Report and Accounts for 2008/09 (SC.250/09-10).

385/09-10

I/2010/012 – UUK Response to HEFCE Consultation on Revisions to the Financial Memorandum

RECEIVED:

The UUK response to the recent HEFCE consultation on proposed amendments to the HEFCE Financial Memorandum with institutions (SC.256/09-10).

386/09-10

Royal Society Report - The Scientific Century: Securing Our Future Prosperity

RECEIVED:

Announcement of a report by the Royal Society, published on 9 March 2010 setting out its public position on the actions needed to ensure that the UK remained at the forefront of the research endeavour for the next 15-20 years (SC.254/09-10).

387/09-10

The Dyson Review 'Ingenious Britain'

RECEIVED:

The executive summary of the recently published report by James Dyson into how the UK might become the leading high tech exporter in Europe, together with a summary of the key points prepared by the Russell Group (SC.255/09-10).