

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 16 February 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bassnett,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor R Higgott
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Professor K Lamberts, Professor R Lindley, Mr S Thomson,

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Acting Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Director, International Office (for item 351/08-09), Acting Director, Careers and Employability (for item 352/08-09)

344/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2009 be approved, subject to the following amendments (additions underlined and deletions ~~struck through~~):

336/08-09

Policy Update: Teaching Quality

(...)

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

(a) That ~~in response to one of the QAA Institutional Audit recommendations,~~ a significant project was underway regarding the management of joint honours and cross-departmental degree courses with Professor Karen O'Brien convening a Working Group to develop a Good Practice Guide.

(...)

(c) That there was a focus on assessment and feedback to students following examinations as part of the Teaching Quality agenda, noting that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) had engaged with other Russell Group institutions establishing that all bar Oxford and Cambridge felt students were entitled to formal ~~written~~ feedback on examinations ~~forming a basis for Warwick's approach.~~

345/08-09 Strategic Departmental Review of Warwick HRI (minute 337/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That consideration of the departmental response to the recent Strategic Departmental Review of Warwick HRI would be postponed until the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

346/08-09 Effectiveness Review Consultative Group (ERCG) on Non-Departmental University Governance (minute 329/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Sir Martin Harris, Director of the Office for Fair Access, would act as the external member of the Effectiveness Review Consultative Group for non-departmental University governance.

347/08-09 Queen's Anniversary Prizes (minute 328/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University had contacted the Queen's Anniversary Prizes team and established that the preferred submissions to date would not find favour as projects needed to have been active for several years prior to submission, noting that alternative suggestions were being sought this week.

348/08-09 HEFCE Economic Challenge Investment Fund Bid (minute 330/08-09 refers)

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

(a) That from the six projects considered, the Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) Rapid Response to Address the Economic Challenge for Businesses and Individuals in the UK was the preferred submission, noting that it was expected that it would absorb some of the proposed activities from the Careers and Warwick Business School bids to optimise the chance of success.

(b) That the WMG bid was deemed to be the most appropriate fit for the HEFCE Fund given its region-wide agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the final bid be considered at the next meeting of the Steering Committee prior to submission by 27 February 2009.

349/08-09 Strategic Departmental Review Report: School of Health and Social Studies

CONSIDERED:

The final report from the Strategic Departmental Review for the School of Health and Social Studies held between 17 and 19 November 2008, together with proposals as to the delegation of the recommendations included within the report (SC.248/08-09).

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

(a) That the report failed to highlight the issues in the area of student support within the School as experienced by several central University functions.

(b) That a reference to the University's review of Fitness to Practise should be added to the action plan.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies))

(c) That the Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations (CRER) should be encouraged to engage with other related areas of research across the University.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (d) That the Strategic Departmental Review process would be reviewed this year and that one aspect to consider was the provision of specific issues to be addressed by the Panel in order to focus the review on key areas.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (e) That the review should also consider the timeliness of the reports being considered by the Steering Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report, its recommendations and action plan be approved as set out in SC.248/08-09, subject to the inclusion of a reference to the University's review of Fitness to Practise.
- (b) That Dr Harrison, Head of the School of Health and Social Studies, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to present the departmental response to the report and its recommendations.

350/08-09

Strategic Departmental Review Report: Department of Politics and International Studies

CONSIDERED:

The final report from the Strategic Departmental Review for the Department of Politics and International Studies held between 12 to 15 October 2008, together with proposals as to the delegation of the recommendations included within the report (SC.249/08-09).

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

- (a) That the use of graduate teaching assistants appeared to be outside University guidelines, noting that this would be explored with the Head of Department in due course.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That the number of administrative staff FTEs within the Department was large in comparison to other departments, noting however that some of these posts were externally funded.

(By the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (c) That the interest from the student body to "overload" their degrees, whereby students could take additional modules, offered an opportunity to pilot overloading outside of the Faculty of Science where the practice was well established.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report, its recommendations and action plan be approved as set out in SC.249/08-09.
- (b) That details of the administrative staff - by grade, FTE, title and funding source – in the Department be available for consideration alongside the departmental response.
- (c) That Professor Rosamond, Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies, be invited to attend the meeting of the Committee to be held on 23 February 2009 to present the departmental response to the report and its recommendations.

351/08-09

Policy Update: International Issues

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of the International Office and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) presenting activities undertaken in the areas of developing an International Quarter, reviewing representative offices and safety of staff travelling abroad on university business, and students on outward exchanges (SC.245/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

- (a) That scoping for the development of the International Quarter as a key component of the University's internationalisation strategy would continue despite no concrete funding being available so that a concept paper would be available for visits to potential overseas partners and/or donors.
- (b) That the development of representative offices was continuing with the International Office hosting a week for the representative office teams to encourage engagement with each other and colleagues on campus.
- (c) That the question of safety for students and staff travelling abroad on University business or as part of their course of study raised the issue of duty of care by the University, noting that staff were required already to complete a full risk assessments before departure and work was underway between the International Office and Student Services to update and re-issue advice given to students travelling aboard with discussions beginning on a code of conduct for students.

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

- (d) That the consultants to conduct a scoping project on the Research Hotel had been asked to consider the potential for elements of international sources of funding within the Research Hotel.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.245/08-09.

352/08-09

Policy Update: Careers and Skills

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Acting Director of Careers and Employability and the Director of Student Development and Diversity presenting the activities undertaken in the areas of teaching and learning, income generation, international affairs and responding to the current economic climate, together with a booklet for student entitled 'Recession-Proofing Your Career' (SC,244/08-09).

REPORTED: (Acting Director of Careers and Employability)

- (a) That the University was named as one of the three most-often targeted institutions by Britain's top graduate employers in 2008/09 together with Manchester and London, noting that this information would be published on the University website shortly.
- (b) That the Careers Centre was working with the International Office, the Warwick Graduate Association and Warwick Business School's Alumni team to harness alumni support to provide a global perspective on career planning.

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

- (c) That although current funding had ceased, the role of International Student Development Manager within the Careers Centre should be retained as an integral part of the internationalisation strategy.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (d) That Postgraduate Admissions should be encouraged to scrutinise applications for further study to ensure that applicants were undertaking the courses for appropriate reasons rather than as a 'knee-jerk' reaction to the jobs market.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Careers Centre be congratulated on the quality and timeliness of the 'Recession-Proofing Your Career' booklet available to students.
- (b) That the report be approved as set out in SC.244/08-09.

353/08-09 IUSS Announcement: Subjects for Scrutiny

RECEIVED:

Information from the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Select Committee announcing a call for topics for an oral evidence hearing (SC.250/08-09).

354/08-09 IUSS Science and Society Report

RECEIVED:

The final summary report of the recent Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Select Committee's consultation on a new vision and strategy for science and society (SC.242/08-09).

355/08-09 HEFCE 2009/03: Updated Sustainability Development in HE Strategic Plan

RECEIVED:

An updated strategic statement and action plan on sustainable development in the higher education sector following consultation by HEFCE (SC.243/08-09).

Kms/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Feb09/16Feb09