

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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

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, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office) Administrative Officer (Governance), Professor S B Palmer, Director of Management Information and Planning (for items 101/09-10 and 102/09-10), Assistant Registrar, Deputy Registrar's Office (for item 101/09-10), Senior Assistant Registrar, Space Management and Timetabling (for items 103/09-10 and 104/09-10), Director of Student Careers & Skills (for item 105/09-10).

94/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2009 be approved.

95/09-10 I/2009/109: Postgraduate Review (minute 57/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

Information from Universities UK relating to the recently announced Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) review of postgraduate provision in the UK (SC.70/09-10).

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

- (a) That the Board of Graduate Studies would be establishing a sub-group to consider the review and to prepare the University's response by the deadline of 14 December 2009.

(By the Registrar)

- (b) That the Government Fees Review announced last year stated that it would take account of the outcome of this postgraduate review.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That the level of debt incurred by undergraduate students might be acting as a deterrent to continuing into postgraduate study.

96/09-10 Russell Group Response to HEFCE Review of Teaching Funding (minute 892/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

The Russell Group response to the HEFCE review of teaching funding including proposals to withdraw targeted allocations to reflect changing policy and strategic priorities (SC.71/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That he had written to the Chief Executive of HEFCE Sir Alan Langlands, regarding the proposed withdrawal of targeted allocations for postgraduate taught subjects in price band D and in particular, the significant reduction in teaching funding this would incur for the University and that a non-committal response had been received.

97/09-10 HEFCE: Additional Student Numbers 2010/11 – Update (minute 15/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That a hardcopy of the HEFCE email updating institutions on the competition for additional student numbers (ASNs) for 2010/11 would be circulated to members for the next meeting, noting that an electronic copy was available at the Steering Committee files.warwick site.
- (b) That HEFCE had received bids for significantly more than the ASNs available.

98/09-10 Group of 13 (minute 81/09-10 refers)

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

- (a) That feedback from King's College, London suggested that Warwick and King's were being excluded from parts of the Group of 13's ongoing deliberations as they were not engaged in the proposal to offer reduced admissions tariffs for widening participation students who completed a specific extra module or project.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That he had been in contact with a number of Vice-Chancellors from institutions involved in the Group of 13 and that King's and Bristol shared Warwick's concerns regarding the reduced offer approach.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing) update the Committee following the meeting of Group of 13 Pro-Vice-Chancellors to be held on 26 November.

99/09-10 Extraordinary Meeting of the Senate

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That, as previously notified, an extraordinary meeting of the Senate would be held at 2pm today, 16 November 2009, to consider the proposals regarding the implementation of a School of Life Sciences.

100/09-10 Visit to India

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That he had recently attended a successful and well received Warwick Business School conference in India.

- (b) That the Warwick alumni who had attended the conference had stated that they would like to retain their status as students of the University 'for life' with the prospect of further study.

RESOLVED:

That consideration be given to how the University might facilitate a process by which alumni could be granted 'continuing' student status as means of engaging more fully with the University after graduation.

101/09-10 University Key Performance Indicators Summary Report

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Management Information and Planning and the Assistant Registrar (Deputy Registrar's Office) presenting a summary of the University's Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) prior to its consideration by the Council at its meeting to be held on 27 November 2009 (SC.80/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Management Information and Planning)

- (a) That many of the indicators had remained unchanged since they were last considered by the Council at its meeting held in December 2008, noting that the indicators for IT and Estates had been separated on the request of the Council at the meeting.

(By the Registrar)

- (b) That individual KPIs had been considered by the relevant University Committee responsible for each area.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University Key Performance Indicators be approved as set out in SC.80/09-10, subject to adding a note that it was the view of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that the Teaching and Learning KPI status should be green.
- (b) That consideration be given to the inclusion of a "sustainability" aspect to the Teaching and Learning indicator in future reports as the Committee noted that there might not be sufficient resource to grow or maintain the level of activity in this regard.

102/09-10 National and International League Tables

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Director of Management Information and Planning outlining the results and analysis of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) Academic Ranking of World Universities, the Sunday Times Good University Guide league table and the THE-QS World Ranking of Universities (SC.69/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Management Information and Planning)

- (a) That the University had performed well in international league tables this year rising 20 places in the SJTU and 11 in the THE-QS.
- (b) That there would be a new international league table developed by the THE as it had ended its partnership with QS and would be working with Thomson Reuters/Evidence Ltd to produce the new rankings and that he would be consulting with Russell Group colleagues to advise on the new ranking methodology.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That the University would need to improve its citation scores, particularly in Science and Medicine, if it was to continue to improve on its position, acknowledging that the new THE – Thomson Reuters/Evidence Ltd rankings was likely to also emphasise citations within its criteria.

103/09-10

HEFCE: Monitoring the Metrics under the Capital Investment Framework and Capital Funding 2008-11

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE highlighting the Capital Investment Framework methodology used to inform the basis on which the University's capital funding would be provided over the period 2008-11 (SC.72/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That, based on the data presented, HEFCE considered the University's revenue generation and space efficiency to be causes for concern, it being noted that if the costs incurred by Wellesbourne were removed from the dataset, the University's total income per m² would be increased significantly resulting in Warwick being ranked in the middle of its TRAC group.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That HEFCE had previously indicated that it wished to link funding allocations to space efficiency and income generation and that, in light of this, the University should act quickly to improve its position.

(By the Finance Director)

- (c) That the metrics used appeared to favour institutions with a large science base as this type of activity had a higher income generation potential than other disciplines, noting that the University was in a comparison group which may not be the most appropriate one.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Director of Estates and the Finance Director undertake further investigation on the analysis provided by HEFCE and the appropriateness of the comparison group in which the University was currently placed for this purpose.
- (b) That the University's plan to address the issues highlighted in SC.72/09-10 be considered at a future meeting of the Committee prior to submission by the deadline of 31 December 2009.

104/09-10

Capital Developments and Space Management

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Estates and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling) providing information on recent capital projects and space management issues (SC.81/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

That the decant space identified on the Science Park could be made available relatively quickly.

105/09-10

Centre for Student Careers and Skills

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Student Careers and Skills updating the Committee on recent developments, including the restructuring of the Centre, the King's Warwick Project, student development and external relations amongst others (SC.73/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Careers and Skills)

- (a) That there were issues around the sustainability of aspects of the Centre's work which were currently supported by funding from external bodies, such as the TESS and HEIF 4 allocations and that the Centre was developing clear priorities to ensure the best use of available resources.
- (b) That the Warwick Advantage scheme had been introduced last year as an extracurricular activity but that there was a desire within the Centre to make it as co-curricular as possible.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (c) That he wished to express his thanks, and those of the student body, to the Careers Centre for its thoughtful and accessible approach to the provision of careers guidance.

106/09-10

University's Corporate Planning Statement

CONSIDERED:

The draft University Corporate Planning Statement to be considered by the Council at its meeting to be held on 27 November 2009 prior to submission to the HEFCE on 30 November 2009 as part of the 'Single Conversation' (SC.83/09-10).

RESOLVED:

That the draft Corporate Planning Statement be approved as set out in SC.83/09-10, subject to the amendments discussed at the meeting, noting that further comments should be received by the Head of Governance Support Services by 18 November 2009 for inclusion prior to consideration by the Council at its meeting on 27 November 2009.

107/09-10

Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the item of business for the extraordinary meeting of the Senate to be held on 16 November 2009 be approved as set out in the paper circulated for the meeting of the Senate, noting that the paper had been circulated to members and attendees only.

108/09-10 Appointment to Committees of the Senate

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the appointment of Professor Stella Bruzzi to the Graduate Appeal Committee as a replacement for Dr David Lines (Italian Studies) during his period for study leave in Term 1 be approved on behalf of the Senate.
- (b) That the appointment of Dr Cathia Jenainati (English and Comparative Literary Studies) to the Board of Undergraduate Studies as a replacement for Dr Alison Cooley (Classics) who is on study leave for 2 terms be approved on behalf of the Senate.
- (c) That the appointment of Ty Beetseh (Students' Union Postgraduate Forum Co-ordinator) to the Board of Graduate Studies as one of two the co-opted students on the Board be approved on behalf of the Senate.

109/09-10 HEFCE 24/2009: Update on Teaching Funding Method and Plans for Review

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE outlining plans to review over the next two years the way learning and teaching was funded, with a view to implementing possible changes to the funding policy and method from 2012-13 at the earliest (SC.79/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the timescale proposed for the review would result in the sector being engaged in the consultation process at the time of a potential general election with potentially limited time for subsequent implementation.

110/09-10 HEFCE: Evaluation of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE announcing an independent comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and a consideration of its future role (SC.74/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University would be contacted if it had been selected as part of the review sample but colleagues were welcome to respond directly should they wish to do so.

111/09-10 I/2009/111: Student Engagement – New HEFCE Funded Project

RECEIVED:

Information from Universities' UK highlighting a HEFCE funded project to support students' unions and institutions to engage students in shaping their learning experience (SC.75/09-10).

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

That Warwick was already heavily involved in student engagement via, in particular, the Reinvention Centre and the Students' Union.

112/09-10 Science and Technology Select Committee: Dismissal of Professor David Nutt

RECEIVED:

A press release from the Science and Technology Committee detailing letters from the Chair of the Committee to various officials to seek their accounts of the events leading up to the dismissal of Professor Nutt as Chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (SC.76/09-10).

113/09-10 I/2009/110: The Impact of Universities on the UK Economy

RECEIVED:

The summary fourth report from Universities UK demonstrating the direct financial worth of the UK's universities as businesses and major employers, and their employment and expenditure benefits to the wider economy (SC.77/09-10).

114/09-10 I/2009/112: Higher Ambitions: The Future of Universities in the Knowledge Economy

RECEIVED:

Information from Universities UK regarding the Government's recently published new Framework for Higher Education (SC.78/09-10).

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