

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 21 December 2009

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

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Professor C Hughes.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Director of Strategy, Communication and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Professor S B Palmer, Head of Student Finance (for item 207/09-10).

194/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2009 be approved, subject to the minor amendments discussed at the meeting.

195/09-10 Group of 13 (minute 165/09-10 refers)

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

- (a) That the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment had attended a Group of 13 meeting on 15 December 2009 and had presented Warwick's work on developing the extended project initiative, which remained an option for the Group of 13, although it was not currently the preferred option.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That the limited HEFCE funding allocated to the University for the project was not guaranteed to continue beyond this year and the additional funding required to support the work would be drawn away from other 'widening participation' activities at the University.

196/09-10 UUK I/2009/122: Pre-Budget Report

RECEIVED:

An information note highlighting the announcements in the Pre-Budget Report relevant to Higher Education (SC.139/09-10).

197/09-10 UUK, GuildHE, HEFCE and DEL NI Consultation: Future Arrangements for Quality Assurance in England and Northern Ireland (minute 178/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That he had submitted a nomination for Dr David Lamburn (Centre for Lifelong Learning) as a potential member of the Quality Assurance Systems Group, acknowledging, however, that the application was unlikely to be successful as the consultation requested nominations at Pro-Vice-Chancellor level but that the application was written to allow consideration for membership of any sub-groups which might be established.

198/09-10 Strategic Departmental Review of Mathematics (minute 509/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That he had approved a request from the department of Mathematics to postpone the Strategic Departmental Review until the Autumn Term 2010, it being noted that the Review was scheduled to be conducted in the Summer Term 2009 as resolved by the Committee in April 2009.

199/09-10 Withdrawal of HEFCE Band D Postgraduate Taught Funding and Allocations for Historic Buildings

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That HEFCE had confirmed that it would be withdrawing targeted funding streams for Band D postgraduate teaching and historic buildings and, to an extent, for foundation degrees.
- (b) That it was estimated that the Band D funding would result in a £600-700k loss of income for Warwick based on last year's allocation.

200/09-10 Knowledge and Innovation Centre

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the establishment of a joint Knowledge and Innovation Centre led by Imperial College and Advantage West Midlands had been approved.

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

- (b) That there would be some Science City involvement with the Centre in the longer term, noting that there were very few centres of this type in Europe.

201/09-10 Coventry Design Awards 2009

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

That the Digital Laboratory had been awarded two Coventry Design Awards, including the People's Choice award voted for by Coventry residents.

202/09-10 Pay Negotiations 2009

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) had confirmed that the pay negotiations had concluded with the acceptance of a 0.5 percent increase by the unions (although the Educational Institute of Scotland remained in dispute).

- (b) That the University aimed to include the increase in the January payroll for University staff.

203/09-10 Removal of Guarantees of Campus Accommodation

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Student Services proposing the removal of guarantees of campus accommodation with effect from 2010/11 (SC.149/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the proposals sought to formalise what was already the current framework of 'priorities' for applications for campus accommodation.
- (b) That the University would review the position when new student residences became available in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals to remove guarantees of campus accommodation with effect from 2011 be approved as set out in SC.149/09-10, subject to the inclusion of MBChB students within the category of 'new first year home and EU postgraduate students' for whom no priority would be given.

204/09-10 Winter Degree Congregation 2010

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Head of Governance Support Services outlining the arrangements in relation to the Winter 2010 Degree Congregations which would be held on 20 and 21 January 2010 (SC.158/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Governance Support Services)

That members of the Steering Committee were welcome to attend the ceremonies, and related events, noting that confirmation of attendance should be sent to her at the earliest convenience.

205/09-10 Draft Response to Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Postgraduate Review

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills review of postgraduate provision in the UK (SC.155/09-10).

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

- (a) That it had been difficult to compile a response to the review as the scope had been presented somewhat vaguely in the documentation circulated.

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

- (b) That the response should be strengthened with regards to sustainable funding as the current funding levels for postgraduate research students, particularly in science and medicine, were not sufficient to cover the full cost of provision for these students.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That the University could include details of its policy relating to access to postgraduate taught courses on the basis of experiential learning.

RESOLVED:

That the response set out in SC.155/09-10 be revised in line with the discussion at the meeting prior to submission by 21 December 2009 by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies.

206/09-10 Draft Response to HESA – HEBCI Survey 2008/09

CONSIDERED:

The draft response to Part A of the HESA Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey 2008/09 (SC.156/09-10).

RESOLVED:

That the response be approved as set out in SC.156/09-10 prior to submission by the deadline of 23 December 2009, subject to the minor revision discussed at the meeting.

207/09-10 OFFA 2008-09 Monitoring Statement

CONSIDERED:

The University's annual monitoring statement regarding its Access Agreement with the Office of Fair Access (OFFA) (SC.151/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Student Finance)

- (a) That the University estimated that around 100 students had yet to receive their loans from the Student Loans Company and that if the position had not been rectified by February/March 2010, Warwick would not receive the fee income for those students who had not received loans.
- (b) That the University was contacting the Student Loans Company on behalf of individual students to resolve delays as far as possible.
- (c) That, despite the notified delay to the launch of Student Finance England for 2010/11, the service had in fact opened on 17 December 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the implications of the projected overspend under the Access Agreement be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

208/09-10 HEFCE Letter: Changes in Full-Time Undergraduate and PGCE Entrants in 2009/10

RECEIVED:

The preliminary assessment from HEFCE of the extent to which the University might have increased its full-time undergraduate and PGCE entrants beyond permitted levels (SC.153/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the assessment from HEFCE and initial internal verification indicated that the University had not over-recruited full-time undergraduate and PGCE entrants in 2009/10.
- (b) That it was not yet clear whether the HEFCE restrictions on recruitment would continue to apply in the next academic year.

209/09-10

Independent Review of Funding and Student Finance

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A UUK information note summarising the call for evidence issued on behalf of the Independent Review of Funding and Student Finance on 7 December 2009 (SC.140/09-10); and
- (b) The draft Russell Group response to the Independent Review of Funding and Student Finance (SC.150/09-10).

Note: Paper SC.150/09-10 was circulated in hardcopy to members and attendees of the Steering Committee only.

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the Russell Group response to the review of funding and student finance had been derived from a case for continued and enhanced investment to Russell Group institutions.
- (b) That it would be beneficial and appropriate for Warwick to set out in due course its position regarding funding and student finance for internal use.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That it was difficult for the University to clearly express its position regarding the current system of funding and student finance within the very loose framework of the initial questions posed by the review.

RESOLVED:

That the University would input, as appropriate, into the Russell Group response to the Independent Review of Funding and Student Finance for submission by 31 January 2010.

210/09-10

SFTC Science Programme Prioritisation 2010-2015

RECEIVED:

An announcement from the Science and Technology Facilities Council regarding cuts in grant funding and studentship/fellowship places from 2010/11, amongst other prioritisations (SC.154/09-10).

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

- (a) That it was unlikely that the sector would experience cuts to this extent from other Research Councils.
- (b) That, although the initial impact for Warwick of the reduction in funding would be negative, there might also be opportunities for the University to engage in newly

prioritised areas, such as neutrinos, neutron sources and high powered laser research.

211/09-10 HEFCE 26/2009: Leading Sustainable Development in Higher Education

CONSIDERED:

Announcement from HEFCE of an additional route for bids to the Leadership, Governance and Management (LGM) Fund related to sustainable development (SC.141/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the University was planning various activities in the area of carbon management which could be eligible for submission to the HEFCE scheme.
- (b) That HEFCE were experiencing a low volume of applications to the Revolving Green Fund, jointly funded with Salix, and that the University was considering submitting a further application.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Estates identify potential projects for submission to the Leadership, Governance and Management Fund for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting, noting the deadline for applications was 26 February 2010.

212/09-10 HEFCE Consultations: Revisions to Financial Memorandum and Regulating HEIs as Charities

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The consultation document on proposed changes to the Financial Memorandum between HEFCE and higher education institutions (SC.152/09-10)
- (b) The consultation on proposals on how higher education institutions would provide information to HEFCE to enable it to fulfil its new statutory role as principal regulator of higher education institutions as charities (SC.145/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the consultations could be interpreted as a direct attack on the autonomy of the higher education sector.

(By the Registrar)

- (b) That the proposals to revise the financial memorandum between HEFCE and institutions were in part a response to recent events at London Metropolitan University and the changes contained within the documentation, if implemented, would result in a re-writing of universities' constitutions.
- (c) That the short timescales presented for each of the consultations suggested that this was not intended to be a full and transparent consultation with institutions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Vice-Chancellor write to the Chair of the Russell Group to raise the University's concerns over the HEFCE consultation documents.
- (b) That the consultation documents be considered at the next meetings of relevant University bodies prior to producing a response by the submission deadlines of 5 March 2010 (Financial Memorandum) and 12 March 2010 (Regulating HEIs as Charities).

- 213/09-10 E/09/11: Request for Case Studies Regarding UK Engagement in the Bologna Process
- CONSIDERED:
- A request from the Europe Unit to submit case studies for inclusion in a UK HE sector publication celebrating the Bologna Process in the UK and European Higher Education Area (SC.157/09-10).
- RESOLVED:
- That the University would not respond to the request.
- 214/09-10 UUK I/2009/124: Immigration Update – HEIs as Employers and Post Study Work
- RECEIVED:
- An information note advising of adjustments to the advertising requirements for employers wishing to use the Tier 2 general route and notification of recommendations from Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) on Tier 1 with potential implications for universities as employers and also as recruiters and advisers of international students if implemented (SC.148/09-10).
- 215/09-10 Responses to the REF Consultation
- RECEIVED:
- The University response to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) consultation as submitted on 16 December 2009, together with the draft Russell Group and CBI responses (SC.146/09-10).
- 216/09-10 Launch of Student Finance England 10/11
- RECEIVED:
- An email from the Association of Heads of University Administration (AHUA) informing members of the delay to the launch of Student Finance England 10/11 and also that the Student Loans Company intended to pursue collection of course information and funding data from institutions prior to the launch (SC.137/09-10).
- Note: As reported in minute 207/09-10, Student Finance England 2010/11 was launched on 17 December 2009, despite the notification of a delay as set out in SC.137/09-10 issued on 8 December 2009.
- 217/09-10 UUK I/2009/123: Review of the Delivery of Financial Support to Students in England
- RECEIVED:
- Information note providing a summary of the key findings and recommendations arising from the review of the delivery of financial support to students in England during the 2009/10 applications cycle (SC.138/09-10).
- 218/09-10 Science and Technology Committee: Principles on Independent Science Advice
- RECEIVED:
- A press release from the government's Science and Technology Committee announcing its contribution to the Government's review of the principles that should apply to the treatment of independent scientific advice provided to government (SC.147/09-10).