

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 22 March 2010

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor R Higgott
Professor C Hughes,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby
Professor D Wilson
Mr A Bradley.

Apologies: Professor A Caesar, Professor K Lamberts, Professor M Smith.

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).

390/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2010 be approved.

391/09-10 UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor (minute 382/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the UK Border Agency (UKBA) would hold meetings on 22 and 23 March 2010 to discuss the arrangements for the Highly Trusted Sponsor route with guidance being issued to universities in due course.
- (b) That the Academic Registrar's Council, along with other representative groups, had raised concerns with the UKBA regarding the lack of consultation on these proposed changes to the points based system.
- (c) That it was anticipated that accreditation to the Highly Trusted Sponsors route would move institutions from a reporting capacity to one of accountability, which the sector had resisted previously.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar report the arrangements for the Highly Trusted Sponsors route to the Committee when available with a view to deciding at that point whether the University wished to apply for accreditation.

392/09-10 Visit of Sir Alan Langlands

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That Sir Alan Langlands, Chief Executive of HEFCE, had visited the University on 17 March 2010 and had met with senior representatives of the University and had undertaken a tour of facilities on campus which had recently benefited from HEFCE funding, including the Chemistry undergraduate teaching laboratories and the NMR suite.

- (b) That the visit had led to comment in public and print.

393/09-10 Appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That, as reported to the Senate at its meeting held on 17 March 2010, the Search Committee for the Appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor had recommended to the Council that Professor Mark Smith be appointed as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- (b) That the Council had voted by correspondence in favour of the recommendation and that the appointment of Professor Mark Smith as Deputy Vice-Chancellor would be formally confirmed to the University community in due course.

394/09-10 Joint Unions National Pay Claims 2010

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the pay claim for 2010 from the joint trade unions had been submitted to the Universities and Colleagues Employers' Association (UCEA) on 19 March 2010 and contained several proposals including:
- (i) An increase on all pay points equivalent to the difference between the 0.5% increase paid for the period 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010 and the higher RPI rate expected over the same period, to ensure that HE staff did not suffer a real-terms pay cut for that year; and
- (ii) A minimum increase of 4% on all pay points in light of expectations for RPI at the point of claim,
- (b) That the UCEA Board would meet on 26 March 2010 to consider university responses to the request, it being noted that Warwick had previously stated that the 0.5% increase was the limit it would consider.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee be informed of developments relating to the joint trade unions' pay claim for 2010.

395/09-10 HEFCE Recurrent Grant 2010/11

RECEIVED:

A report detailing the HEFCE recurrent grant settlement for the 2010/11 academic year, together with the HEFCE grant letter received on 12 March 2010 (SC.269/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University's grant settlement was as positive as could be expected in the current financial climate and that the outturn was in line with the Financial Plan with a small increase in the research funding allocation.

(By the Registrar)

- (b) That HEFCE stated in the grant letter that the allocations received in March 2010 were provisional and would be finalised in July 2010.

(By the Finance Director)

- (c) That whilst the grant letter contained details of cuts to capital allocations, the level of capital funding available had yet to be confirmed including whether there would be a second round of the Capital Investment Framework (CIF).

396/09-10 Independent Review Group Review of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of HEFCE

RECEIVED:

The executive summary of the recently published independent review of the effectiveness and efficiency of HEFCE for the period 2004 to 2009, together with the schedule of resulting recommendations (SC.258/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the review, including the input from HEFCE staff and universities, had been conducted prior to the consultation on the HEFCE financial memorandum.
- (b) That one of the recommendations implied an increasing level of direct correspondence with university governing bodies.

397/09-10 Changes to TRAC and Invitation to Participate in Management Information Projects

CONSIDERED:

A letter from Professor Stuart Palmer, Chair of the TRAC Development Group, advising institutions of changes to the TRAC process and inviting participation in management information projects (SC.261/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Interim Chair of the School of Life Sciences)

That the changes to TRAC and the proposed management information projects were designed to increase the usability and usefulness of TRAC for institutions.

RESOLVED:

That the Finance Director confirm with the TRAC Development Group the University's willingness to participate in the management information projects on:

- (i) Sustainability metrics
- (ii) Workload planning method and academic time allocations, and;
- (iii) Course costing, noting that the University was pursuing a similar exercise internally.

398/09-10 Strategic Departmental Review Report: Department of French Studies

The final report and related action plan from the Strategic Departmental Review for the Department of French Studies held between 8 to 10 December 2009 (SC.268/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts)

- (a) That the report was generally positive in its assessment of the department but that it highlighted a number of areas requiring urgent attention, such as the need to develop a broader and more collaborative departmental research culture and to include a dissertation for undergraduate programmes.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (b) That the Department would need to think about the sustainability of its Masters programmes and should give consideration to developing potentially a four-year PhD programme, inclusive of taught elements.

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

- (c) That the sustainability of expanding the size of the department as suggested in the report would need to be assessed carefully, particularly in relation to the collaborative approach that will be required in future to obtain the necessary levels of research income.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Head of the Department of French Studies, Professor Hand, be invited to present the departmental response to the report and its recommendations at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 10 May 2010.
- (b) That the action plan as set out in SC.268/09-10 be forwarded to Professor Hand, together with a summary of the initial comments from the Steering Committee, to inform the departmental response.
- (c) That any additional issues to be considered by the Head of the Department of French Studies in the drafting of the departmental response be communicated to the Head of Governance Support Services.

399/09-10

Development and Alumni Relations Update

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy highlighting key progress in development activities including proposals relating to endowed scholarship funding and the disbursement of unrestricted funds (SC.266/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy)

That, in addition to those activities contained in the report, the University had secured an award of up to £1m from the Wolfson Foundation towards the cost of the new Centre for Mechanochemical Cell Biology.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to use unrestricted matched funding (attached to gifts of less than £1,000) to meet the shortfall in endowed scholarship funding in opposed to spend against capital within the endowment be approved as set out in SC.266/09-10.
- (b) That the proposal to establish a Disbursement Group to make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor on use of remaining unrestricted funds in 2010/11 and beyond be approved as set out in SC.266/09-10, noting that the University of Warwick Foundation Trustees would retain formal authority for the use of funds received by donation.
- (c) That the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy and the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies explore the idea of creating a specific Global Scholars

Fund to attract targeted donations in support of this area.

- (d) That the Finance Director further explore potentially transferring the University's endowments to a charities fund as a means of attracting a higher rate of interest than available under current arrangements.

400/09-10 Quarter 2 Reports – Warwick Business School

CONSIDERED:

A report on the financial performance in Quarter 2 of the Warwick Business School (SC.262/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Dean, Warwick Business School)

- (a) That public sector income for executive training had increased but that this was not currently included within the financial reporting on Executive Education which was showing higher than forecast downturn.
- (b) That research income as reported in SC.262/09-10 was disappointing but that the School was working towards several large scale collaborative bids which would assist in progressing the School's research strategy.

RESOLVED:

That the possibility of scenario planning be explored for the anticipated downturn in public sector training spend which would affect primarily the Warwick Business and Medical Schools and the Institute of Education.

401/09-10 Quarter 2 Reports – Warwick Medical School

RECEIVED:

A report on the financial performance in Quarter 2 of the Warwick Medical School (SC.271/09-10).

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

- (a) That the School was on track to meet its budget targets including the requisite savings of 5%.
- (b) That research income was projected to have increased by 35% compared to the previous year.

402/09-10 Quarter 2 Reports – Academic Resourcing Committee Departments

RECEIVED:

A report on the financial performance in Quarter 2 of the departments overseen by the Academic Resourcing Committee (ARC) (SC.263/09-10).

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

- (a) That the overall variance against budget for ARC departments was positive with a growing surplus despite the substantial deficits shown in Warwick HRI and the Department of Biological Sciences.
- (b) That there were concerns regarding the use of increased fee income to cover research shortfalls, increased departmental funded costs and slippage against vacancy savings for 2009/10.

403/09-10 University Application for HEFCE Undergraduate Internships

RECEIVED:

The University application to the HEFCE pilot initiative to provide new undergraduate internships linked to the professions submitted on 16 March 2010 (SC.260/09-10)

404/09-10 University Response to HEFCE Consultation on Assessment Process for CIF2

RECEIVED:

The University response to the HEFCE consultation on the proposed assessment process for the second round of Capital Investment Funding (CIF2), together with a covering letter from the Vice-Chancellor highlighting specific concerns (SC.259/09-10).

405/09-10 "Science and Trust – starting a National Conversation About Good Science"

RECEIVED:

The executive summary of a report considering public confidence in the sciences and, within that, how the network of relationships across the wide science and society landscape might be built on and developed to strengthen both the content of scientific evidence and its application (SC.267/09-10).

JFB/jf/steersshare/minutes2009-10/Mar10/22Mar10