

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 26 January 2009

- Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor S Bassnett (until item 299/08-09),  
Professor L Bridges,  
Professor S Bruzzi,  
Professor K Lamberts  
Professor R Lindley,  
Professor R Higgott,  
Professor M Smith,  
Professor H Thomas,  
Mr S Thomson,  
Professor M Underwood,  
Professor M Whitby
- In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Estates, Acting Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Deputy Academic Registrar for item 292/08-09, Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) for item 293/08-09, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions for item 294/08-09
- 288/08-09      Minutes  
RESOLVED:  
That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2009 be approved.
- 289/08-09      HEFCE Letter: Bringing Forward Capital Spending from 2010/11 (minute 271/08-09 refers)  
REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)  
(a)    That confirmation had been received that the 2010/11 allocation was secure, even if the University did not bring forward any of the allocation for capital projects despite being encouraged to do so.  
(By the Director of Estates)  
(b)    That the refurbishment of the Undergraduate laboratories in Chemistry to be considered by the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group this week was a project which could be brought forward, noting that the total amount the University may bring forward by March 2010 was £5m.
- 290/08-09      Winter Degree Ceremonies 2009  
REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)  
That the Winter Degree Ceremonies held on 21 and 22 January 2009 in the Big Space were successful.  
RESOLVED:  
That the Committee record its thanks to colleagues who supported the Winter Degree Ceremonies.

291/08-09      HEFCE Grant Letter 2009/10

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) to the HEFCE outlining the funding allocation and priorities for 2009/10 (SC.217/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a)    That the primary focus of the DIUS' priorities has shifted to universities supporting the economy through the period of recession.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b)    That student recruitment targets were being closely monitored to ensure that the University re-entered the HEFCE contract range whilst remaining fair to applicants, noting that departments would be provided with further guidance to clarify their individual targets and the actions required to ensure that, as far as possible, they were not exceeded.
- (c)    That the Quality Assurance Agency had been commissioned to undertake a quality review, which might include reviewing quality issues in relation to overseas students in HEIs and the standard of english language provision.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (d)    That it was clear that it would be extremely difficult for HEFCE to achieve the full range of objectives given to them with respect to the RAE and that funding reductions in some cases seemed inevitable.

292/08-09      Policy Update: Postgraduate Issues

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Deputy Academic Registrar and the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies updating the Committee in relation to developments concerning postgraduate students (SC.214/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a)    That work was underway to automate the tracking of the progress of research students, and eventually their wider research activities, within the student records system and first facilities were to be available from Easter.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (b)    That whilst 14 students had started or were continuing their PhDs under the Warwick Collaborative Postgraduate Research Scholarships, there was concern around the distribution of the awards across departments, particularly given the small number of Life Sciences students.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.214/08-09.

293/08-09      QAA Institutional Audit Draft Report

CONSIDERED:

The draft report following the QAA Institutional Audit (SC.210/08-09).

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

- (a) That there were some additions which the University would want to include in the final report particularly in Section 6: Institutional Arrangements for Postgraduate Research Students.
- (b) That a working group chaired by Professor Karen O'Brien had developed a number of recommendations with regards to the management of joint honours courses, noting that many of these would be presented to the relevant Committees this academic year for implementation for the start of the next academic year.

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

- (c) That particular consideration would be given to including a number of new areas in our response as well as to clarifying issues concerning the University's e-learning provision.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (d) That the use of the Seymour formula raised issues for the management of some joint honours programmes and that the matter would be discussed at the next meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the draft report be considered by the Committee at its meeting on 9 February 2009, prior to submission to the QAA by 13 February 2009.

294/08-09      HEFCE: Request for Widening Participation Strategic Assessments

CONSIDERED:

Information for HEFCE informing the University of the requirement to submit a widening participation strategic assessment (SC.208/08-09).

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

- (a) That the requirement to submit such an assessment had been on HEFCE's agenda for some time given the recommendation from the National Audit Office for institutions to develop strategic widening participation documents.
- (b) That it was difficult at this stage to gauge the full resource for widening participation across the University, particularly as it has been part of the University's strategy to embed widening participation wherever possible, but work was underway with the Finance Office to quantify the level of related resource.

RESOLVED:

That a draft Widening Participation Strategic Assessment be considered by the Committee at a future meeting prior to the submission deadline of 30 June 2009.

295/08-09      OIA Pathway Project

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) consultation on the development of the OIA scheme (SC.213/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University and other institutions were not in favour of the OIA broadening its remit to include the admissions process.

RESOLVED:

That the response be approved for submission by 29 January 2009 as set out in SC.213/08-09, subject to the minor amendments discussed at the meeting.

296/08-09      HEFCE Letter: University Additional Student Number Bid for 2009/10 and 2010/11

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE confirming that the University's bid for an additional 40 FTE for the 2009/10 and 2010/11 academic years had been unsuccessful due to the restriction on growth in student numbers (SC.211/08-09).

297/08-09      Quarter End Report: Warwick Medical School

CONSIDERED:

A report on the Quarter 1 performance of Warwick Medical School, together with an oral report from the Acting Dean of WMS (SC.202/08-09).

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

- (a)      That the School was optimistic that it would meet research income targets for this financial year, despite the current projected shortfall.
- (b)      That WMS aimed to return to its original budget as recommended by Budget Steering Group by the end of Quarter 2.

(By the Finance Director)

- (c)      That the Financial Plan Sub-Committee would review the percentages used to calculate internal tax and whether they were still set at an acceptable level.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.202/08-09.

298/08-09      Quarter End Report: Warwick Business School

CONSIDERED:

A report on the Quarter 1 performance of Warwick Business School (WBS), together with an oral report from the Dean of WBS (SC.203/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (a)      That there was signs of a potential reduction in demand for the Executive MBA and other Executive Programmes, noting, for example, that IBM had delayed an intake of their specialist MBA programme this year.

- (b) That the new Energy MBA would commence in May 2009 with a cohort of 20-25 or failing that, in September 2009.
- (c) That efforts were being made to control costs but there was more work to undertake.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (d) That the Postgraduate Awards and Diplomas in WBS' public sector portfolio had been strengthened and provision to upgrade to a Masters degree was now available.

(By the Finance Director)

- (e) That she and the Dean would be meeting later today and relevant outcomes would be reported to the Budget Steering Committee in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.203/08-09.

299/08-09      UUK Annual Report 2007/08

RECEIVED:

The annual report from Universities UK for 2007/08 outlining the developments and contributions made by UUK (SC.212/08-09).

300/08-09      UUK I-Note I/09/001: 14-19 Update

RECEIVED:

An Information Note from Universities UK updating on the recent developments in the government's 14-19 curriculum reform programme (SC.209/08-09).

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