

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 6 April 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bassnett,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor Y Carter
Professor R Higgott
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley,
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Mr S Thomson,
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor L Bridges,

In Attendance: Registrar, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Assistant Registrar (Deputy Registrar's Office)

453/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2009 be approved.

454/08-09 HEFCE Contract Range Action Plan (minute 247/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

The Action Plan stating how the University intended to move back into its HEFCE contract range, as submitted to HEFCE on 27 March 2009 (SC.331/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That it was anticipated that the Action Plan would be accepted by HEFCE without comment.

455/08-09 OFFA Report on Access Agreement Monitoring (minute 443/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

UUK I-Note I-2009-021: OFFA Report on Access Agreement Monitoring (SC.329/08-09)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the OFFA Report acknowledged that institutional performance would be monitored against actual levels of expenditure, rather than predicted levels.

456/08-09 Times Higher Education Awards

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That nominations for the Times Higher Education Awards 2009 were encouraged, and that the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy would be co-ordinating nominations, which would close on 5 June 2009.

457/08-09 Royal Society Inquiry into Science and Innovation

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Royal Society had launched an inquiry into the long term prospects for UK science and innovation, with the report entitled "Fruits of Curiosity: Science, Innovation and Future Sources of Wealth" being published in March 2010.
- (b) That the study would be led by Professor Sir Martin Taylor FRS, Vice President of the Royal Society, and would involve a high-level advisory group including:
 - (i) Professor Sir Paul Nurse FRS
 - (ii) Professor Sir Martin Evans FRS
 - (iii) Dr David Roblin
 - (iv) Paul Mountford
 - (v) Lord Sainsbury FRS
 - (vi) Dame Ann Dowling FRS
 - (vii) Professor Sir Mark Walport
 - (viii) Professor Helga Nowotny

458/08-09 HEFCE Higher Education – Schools Link Grant Programme (minute 416/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University's application to the HEFCE Higher Education – School Link Grant Programme, to explore links between higher education institutions, schools, colleges and academies, had been unsuccessful.

459/08-09 EPSRC Funding Awards

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

- (a) That the University would this week receive a letter from the EPSRC detailing a number of academic colleagues who would be 'yellow-carded' or excluded from applying for EPSRC awards due to what the EPSRC deemed to be an unacceptable number of unsuccessful applications.
- (b) That the academic colleagues concerned would also receive an individual letter from the EPSRC informing them, noting that he was going to be writing to reassure the staff that they had the support of the University.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That the University regarded this practice as undesirable, and that other faculties should be aware of the situation in case the practice spread to other Funding Councils.

Note: The letter from EPSRC was not received in the week commencing 6 April 2009 as stated above due to the EPSRC reconsidering its planned exclusion strategy.

460/08-09 National Centre for Involvement (minute 366/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the two groups established to manage the end of the contract for the National Centre for Involvement had met and were dealing with all of the necessary issues appropriately.

461/08-09

Vice-Chancellor's Letter to Staff

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That he had recently written an open letter to all staff concerning the University's position in light of the current economic climate.
- (b) That the letter had been published on the University intranet the previous week.
- (c) That he had received a number of emails supporting the decision to temporarily suspend awards under the Senior Staff Salary Review and Merit Pay processes.

462/08-09

Strategic Departmental Review: History of Art

CONSIDERED:

The final report from the Strategic Departmental Review for History of Art held between 2 and 4 February 2009 (SC.401/08-09)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That some of the recommendations in the report, including those for extra student numbers and extra academic appointments, were potentially unrealistic in the current climate.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report of the Strategic Departmental Review of History of Art and related Action Plan be approved as set out in SC.401/08-09.
- (b) That Professor Paul Smith, current Head of Department of History of Art, and Professor Michael Hatt, incoming Head of Department, be invited to attend the meeting on 11 May 2009 to present the departmental response to the report.

463/08-09

HEFCE National STEM Programme

RECEIVED:

The final HEFCE STEM Programme Proposal from the University of Birmingham (SC.402/08-09).

464/08-09

EPSRC Bid for Mathematical Science Doctoral Training Centre

CONSIDERED:

A draft bid for the Mathematical Science Doctoral Training Centre (SC.400/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the bid required further work in order to make it sufficiently distinctive.

RESOLVED:

That the final bid, following further work along the lines discussed at the meeting, be approved by Chair's Action in time for submission to the EPSRC by the closing date of 17 April 2009.

465/08-09

National Student Forum

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the recommendations from the first National Student Forum, and the resulting government response (SC.308/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That it was still unclear as to how much influence the National Student Forum would have.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (b) That although the University performed well in terms of information, advice and guidance before students arrived, it was the view of the Students' Union that there was more that could be done once they arrive.
- (c) That there was an increasing disparity between the level of student loans and the actual cost of being a student.
- (d) That the National Student Forum was currently looking for students for the next round of the process.

RESOLVED:

That relevant points of concern arising from the National Student Forum would be discussed between the University and the Students' Union in the relevant fora.

466/08-09 NUS Student Experience Survey

RECEIVED:

The executive summary of the NUS Student Experience Report (SC.339/08-09), noting that issues relating to written and verbal feedback discussed at the meeting would be taken up in the relevant groups by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs).

467/08-09 NHS Next Stage Review - A High Quality Workforce Action to Develop HIECs

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Department of Health outlining the application process for the proposed Health Innovation and Education Clusters (HIECs), with a deadline of the end of July 2009 (SC.330/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

That Warwick would be submitting an application and, although it was acknowledged that the University of Birmingham would be in a strong position, the preferred outcome would be a Coventry and Warwickshire HIEC.

468/08-09 UUK-Note I-2009-019: Informal Adult Learning White Paper

RECEIVED:

UUK-Note I-2009-019, inviting the University to submit a response to a survey following the publication by DIUS of a White Paper on informal adult learning (SC.328/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning was drafting a response which would be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee before the submission deadline of 25 May 2009.

- 469/08-09 EPSRC International Review of Chemistry – Provision of RAE 2008 Data
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from HEFCE requesting approval for the University's RAE data for relevant units of assessment to be provided to the EPSRC International Review of Chemistry (SC.325/08-09)
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That the University had sent its approval on 30 March 2009.
- 470/08-09 HEFCE 2009/07: A New University Challenge - Proposals for New Higher Education Centres
- RECEIVED:
- A publication from HEFCE outlining the proposal process for a new HE centre or university campus.
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the University had recently been approached by the University of Bedfordshire in relation to their plans in Milton Keynes and that exploratory talks had been established.
- 471/08-09 HEFCE 2009/11: Aimhigher Summer Schools
- RECEIVED:
- A publication from HEFCE providing analysis following the first national review of AimHigher Summer Schools (SC.321/08-09).
- 472/08-09 UUK I-Note I-2009-018: Immigration Changes for Employers
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK I-Note outlining proposed changes to the new system of immigration arrangements for employers (SC.326/08-09).
- 473/08-09 UUK I-Note I-2009-017: New Student Immigration Route – Initial Analysis
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK I-Note providing initial analysis on the new student immigration route (SC.327/08-09).
- 474/08-09 UUK I-Note I-2009-023: Ethnicity and Degree Attainment
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK I-Note providing information about the programme of activity to take forward the recommendations of the Ethnicity and Degree Attainment report published in January 2008, including a summit programme involving fifteen institutions to look at how they are working to address the recommendations.
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That the University would send representation to one or more of the summits, noting that all of the universities involved in the summit programme were post-'92 institutions.

- 475/08-09 UUK I-Note I-2009-022: Future Fit – Preparing Graduates for the World of Work
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK I-Note announcing the publication of UUK and CBI's joint report 'Future Fit: Preparing Graduates for the World of Work' (SC.336/08-09).
- 476/08-09 Higher Education Academy Annual Partnership Report 2007-2008
- RECEIVED:
- The University's Higher Education Academy Annual Partnership Report 2007-2008, outlining the work undertaken between the University and the Higher Education Academy over 2007/08 (SC.322/08-09).
- 477/08-09 University Submission to Queen's Anniversary Prizes
- RECEIVED:
- The University's Submission of the Warwick Manufacturing Group to the Queen's Anniversary Prizes (SC.338/08-09).
- 478/08-09 HEFCE Research Excellence Framework Workshop Presentations
- RECEIVED:
- A presentation entitled The Research Excellence Framework: Policy Context, given by David Sweeney, Director (Research, Innovation and Skills) in HEFCE (SC.337/08-09).
- 479/08-09 Higher Education Academy Annual Report 2007/08
- RECEIVED:
- The Higher Education Academy Annual Report 2007/08 (SC.323/08-09).
- 480/08-09 Europe Unit Update 54
- RECEIVED:
- Issue 54 of 'This Month in Europe', a publication from Europe Unit (SC.324/08-09).