

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bassnett,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor K Lamberts
Professor R Lindley,
Professor M Smith (from item 713/08-09),
Professor H Thomas,
Professor M Underwood.

Apologies: Professor M Whitby, Mr S Thomson.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Development, Communication and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), University Librarian (for item 710/08-09), Director of HR (for items 711/08-09 and 712/08-09), Director of Safety and Occupational Health (for items 713/08-09 and 714/08-09)

703/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June be approved.

704/08-09 UK Border Agency Visit

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the University had retained its A rating as a sponsor on the register of sponsors.
- (b) That the UK Border Agency (UKBA) had visited the University on 3 July 2009 to discuss the implementation of the new Points Based Immigration System, noting that it appeared that the UKBA representatives who were responsible for making decisions regarding universities' ability to sponsor international students were not knowledgeable of the specific issues facing higher education.

705/08-09 Group of 11

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Group of 11, a group of research-intensive institutions developing a proposed common collaborative scheme for fair access across the sector, had been increased to 13 as the Universities of York and Essex had joined.
- (b) That the University might wish to reconsider its position in the Group in light of decisions regarding how its work would be taken forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Vice-Chancellor be authorised to withdraw the University from the Group of 13 should the need arise over the Summer.

706/08-09

New Chair of STFC

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Professor Michael Sterling, until recently Vice Chancellor of Birmingham University, had been selected as the preferred candidate to become Chairman of the Science and Technology Facilities Council.

707/08-09

Degree Congregations 2009

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University's summer Degree Congregations would take place between 13 to 17 July 2009 with 15 Honorary Degrees being awarded, noting that members of the Committee would receive further details in due course.

708/08-09

UUK Board Discussion with Lord Mandelson

RECEIVED:

Notes from the recent Universities UK Board meeting with Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, discussing the core role and challenges for higher education (SC.541/08-09).

709/08-09

Additional Student Numbers 2009/10 – Further Options

CONSIDERED:

An email from the Chief Executive of Universities UK requesting the University's view on potential options for securing additional student numbers, together with the University's response (SC.550/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That in its response, the University had stressed that any additional student numbers for 2009/10 should be fully funded by the Government and protected against clawback in cases where additional targets were not achieved, noting that the next steps in this process were unclear given the short timeframe.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That it was unlikely that there would be a bidding process for any additional student numbers given the short timeframe and that a pro-rata allocation to institutions based on intake would be more likely.
- (c) That the University would consider representation at the UUK 'talking shop' to be held on 23 July 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee be updated on developments as necessary, noting that decisions to be taken over the Summer in this regard would be delegated to the Vice-Chancellor to be taken on the Committee's behalf.

710/08-09

Library Staff Restructuring

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the University Librarian outlining a proposed restructuring of library staff following a memo to Chairs of Faculties, Heads of Department and departmental representatives sent on 29 June 2009 and discussion at the meeting of the Senate held on 1 July 2009 (SC.547/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Librarian)

- (a) That the proposals were being developed with input from colleagues within in the Library in the first instance to be followed by consultation with the academic community, noting that due to the potential implications for individual members of staff, it had not been appropriate to announce the proposals publicly at an earlier time.
- (b) That the important direct academic liaison role played by subject librarians had been acknowledged under the proposed changes whilst recognising that the role also brought inefficiencies with it which needed to be addressed, together with a rebalancing between teaching & learning and research support.
- (c) That a series of meetings had been scheduled to begin on 7 July 2009 with the affected staff, followed by consultation with representatives of the Faculties, noting that the formal consultation period would end at the end of July 2009 under current proposals.
- (d) That it might be possible to ring fence areas of the proposals concerning subject librarians to ensure a fuller consultation but that this would need to be discussed with colleagues and departments affected.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (e) That academic colleagues within the Faculty were concerned that the unique and close relationship which departments enjoyed with subject librarians would be lost and that this would affect the library provision at subject level which assisted in placing the University ahead of its competitors in this regard.

RESOLVED:

That the Librarian provide a paper updating on progress and impact of the proposed restructuring at a future meeting of the Committee.

711/08-09

Policy Update: HR and LDC

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of HR updating the Committee on progress in key activities within HR including the Learning and Development Centre (LDC), HR objectives, harmonisation of terms and conditions, national pay negotiations, PULSE: Staff Survey 2009, pensions, academic processes and resourcing (SC.536/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That since the paper had been circulated to members of the Committee, 233 requests for estimates under the Enhanced Leavers Scheme and 41 formal applications had been received and of these 23 had been authorised by Heads of Department and 12 had received final approval from either the Registrar or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

- (b) That the Pulse Action Team was finalising the Action Plan which highlighted several interesting themes for further consideration, including the extent to which individuals feel valued by the institution.
- (c) That a meeting of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) would be held on 15 July 2009 to further the national pay negotiations 2009/10.

RESOLVED:

That the report on HR and the LDC be approved as set out in SC.536/08-09.

712/08-09

Policy Update: Equality and Diversity

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of HR outlining developments in the Equality and Diversity agenda at the University including the annual report on Equality and Diversity, the launch of the Dignity and Work and Study policy, training and the publication of the Equality Bill (SC.537/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That the government single Equality Bill was published at the end of April 2009 with the main provisions coming into force in Autumn 2010 and general public duty in 2011.
- (b) That the University had undertaken work in advance of the publication of the Bill including the development of a Single Equality Plan, noting that the Equality and Diversity Committee would consider the implications of the Bill on the University as the various provisions come into effect.

RESOLVED:

That the report on Equality and Diversity be approved as set out in SC.537/08-09.

713/08-09

Policy Update: Health and Safety

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Safety and Occupational Health reporting on progress in the areas of strategic planning, injuries and incidents, development of a University Stress Management policy, relationships with enforcement agencies and insurers and progress made in the commercial areas, Estates and Warwick HRI (SC.538/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Safety and Occupational Health)

- (a) That the high level of injuries reported in the past year was concerning although the number of injuries had started to decline.
- (b) That the progress made in terms of Health and Safety planning and management at the University should be emphasised, including the adoption of a strategy and action plan in March 2009 and the consolidation of policies and procedures, in particular the incoming Stress Management policy.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (c) That under the national guidelines regarding Swine Flu, management at the University had transferred to the usual illness procedures and individual cases would no longer be monitored.
- (d) That the Emergency Group handling the management of the outbreak would continue to meet over the Summer to consider business continuity and would be contacting Heads of Department to identify business continuity plans within departments.

RESOLVED:

That the report on Health and Safety be approved as set out in SC.538/08-09.

714/08-09

UCEA 09:068 – Government Consultation on Medical Notes

CONSIDERED:

Information from the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) regarding a Government consultation on replacing the current 'sick note' with a 'fit note' focusing on what an individual with a health condition could do rather than on what they were unable to do, together with a simplified process for GPs and employers (SC.548/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Safety and Occupational Health)

- (a) That the consultation was an outcome of the Dame Carol Black Review into the health of Britain's working age population.
- (b) That the proposals appeared to allow occupational health departments to work more effectively with GPs to get staff back to work with employers determining the tasks an individual could undertake, noting that this assessment would only be possible if accurate information was provided by GPs.

(By the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (c) That there were issues around student medical notes which would require different procedures and documentation.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Safety and Occupational Health in consultation with the Registrar compile a response to the consultation to be submitted prior to the deadline of 10 August 2009.

715/08-09

Policy Update: Development and Alumni Relations

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Development, Communication and Strategy updating the Committee on year on year fundraising progress, the future fundraising strategy and restructuring of the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) (SC.544/08-09).

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

- (a) That development income had increased and the University should comfortably break through the £4m target set for 2008/09.
- (b) That members of DARO would meet with other colleagues on 7 July 2009 to discuss priorities and resourcing for the University's Case for Support.

- (c) That there were issues around the accounting procedures required by HEFCE for matched funding given the delay between institutions submitting a claim and receipt of funding, noting that the University would receive its first allocation (a percentage of the full entitlement) in March 2010.

RESOLVED:

That the report on Development and Alumni Relations be approved as set out in SC.544/08-09.

716/08-09

Faculty of Arts Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair of the Faculty of Arts outlining the Faculty's research applications and awards position, the disestablishment of the Centre for Translation and Comparative Cultural Studies and changes in Heads of Department for 2009/10 (SC.533/08-09).

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

- (a) That the Faculty research income was lower than 2007/08 due to a large award received in 2007/08 by the Centre for the History of Medicine.
- (b) That an electronic journal, *The WISH List: Warwick Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, had been approved by the faculty research committee and would be published by Bloomsbury Academic Press.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Faculty of Arts be approved as set out in SC.533/08-09.

717/08-09

Faculty of Medicine Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School outlining the Faculty's progress in areas including the Health Innovation and Education Cluster proposal, the Science City Experimental Medicine project, the involvement with the School of Life Sciences initiative, the proposal to create a Clinical Trials Institute and a review of the MB ChB curriculum (SC.534/08-09).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report on the Faculty of Medicine be approved as set out in SC.534/08-09.
- (b) That proposals regarding the creation of a Clinical Trials Institute be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

718/08-09

Faculty of Science Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair of the Faculty of Science updating the Committee on the review of the Centre for Scientific Computing and strategic research issues (SC.535/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

That consideration of how best to support joint appointments across departments and Faculties should be undertaken by the Constitutional Advisory Group.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report on the Faculty of Science be approved as set out in SC.535/08-09.
- (b) That the Chair of the Faculty of Science liaise with the Head of Governance Support Services to ensure that the outcomes of the review of the Centre for Scientific Computing were linked to the ongoing Research Centre review.
- (c) That an investigation be undertaken to identify mechanisms employed at other institutions for supporting joint appointments to inform the Constitutional Advisory Group's consideration.

719/08-09 Quarter 3 Report: Warwick Medical School

CONSIDERED:

A report detailing the financial position of Warwick Medical School at the end of Quarter Three (SC.543/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Quarter Three financial position of Warwick Medical School as set out in SC.543/08-09 be approved.

720/08-09 Quarter 3 Report: Warwick Business School

CONSIDERED:

A report detailing the financial position of Warwick Business School at the end of Quarter Three (SC.542/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (a) That the gross surplus generated by Warwick Business School was forecast to exceed the initial target by 3.5%.
- (b) That the economic downturn had affected the income flow to Executive Programmes, noting that this had been mitigated by cost savings.

RESOLVED:

That the report on the Quarter Three financial position of Warwick Business School as set out in SC.542/08-09 be approved.

721/08-09 University Centre Milton Keynes Proposal

RECEIVED:

The Statement of Intent responding to HEFCE's New University Challenge initiative to establish a University Centre in Milton Keynes, noting that the University had acted as one of the education partners in the preparation of the bid (SC.540/08-09)

722/08-09 NTU – Warwick Collaborative Double MA

CONSIDERED:

The course outline and proposal documentation for a double MA course recommended by the Department of Politics and International Studies between Warwick and Nanyang Technical University in Singapore (SC.539/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That, on behalf of the Senate, the proposal from the Department of Politics and International Studies for a new double MA course to be delivered in collaboration with the Nanyang Technical University, Singapore, be approved as set out in paper SC.539/08-09.

723/08-09 CIHE: Valuing Knowledge Exchange

RECEIVED:

A publication from the Council for Industry and Higher Education summarizing recent research into business – HE knowledge exchange (SC.545/08-09).

724/08-09 UUK I-Note I-2009-057: Information Legislation and Management Survey

RECEIVED:

A UUK I-Note reporting on the 4th annual JISC InfoNet/ UUK/ GuildHE Information Legislation and Management Survey 2008, noting that the survey found that there had been a significant increase in requests under FOI, and points to the resources that institutions had devoted to ensuring continued compliance (SC.546/08-09)