

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 6 September 2010

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Taylor.

Apologies: Professor P Winstanley.

In Attendance: Registrar (until item 789/09-10), Deputy Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Estates, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), HR Services Manager (for item 791/09-10).

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Professor Labbe and Professor Lamberts and Ms Nicola Owen to their first meeting of the Committee as Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) and the Deputy Registrar respectively.

784/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2010 be approved.

785/09-10 Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (minute 764/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the draft bid to establish a Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as received by the Committee at the previous meeting had been discussed at a meeting of the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Board (CSWP) held on 31 August 2010.
- (b) That the Chair of the CSWP Board had been granted permission to finalise the document on behalf of CSWP and that the bid had subsequently been submitted to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.
- (c) That the Vice-Chancellor and his counterpart at Coventry had been invited to sign the bid prior to submission.
- (d) That initial information from Government suggested that there had been a greater number of bids submitted than expected which might lead to the consolidation of bids at a later stage.
- (e) That the Committee would be kept updated on the outcome of the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP bid.

786/09-10 University HESES Audit (minute 755/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That HEFCE had notified that the University would receive the outcome of the recent institutional HESES audit by or on 17 September 2010 and that the Committee would be updated at a subsequent meeting.

787/09-10 International Programme in the Leadership and Management of Higher Education (IPLMHE) 2010

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University was holding the second Warwick IPLMHE, a two week programme for university leaders and senior managers from outside the UK, from 6 to 17 September 2010.
- (b) That he wished to extend his thanks in advance to those Warwick colleagues who were contributing to the programme.

788/09-10 Forward Look

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That he wished to thank colleagues for their efforts in the previous academic year and that due to these significant endeavours, the University had not only a stable platform on which to build in 2010/11 but on which to face the national challenges ahead, including a difficult financial environment leading up to and beyond the Spending Review in October 2010 as well as potential industrial action over pay and job security.
- (b) That, in his view, it would not be possible for the University to improve fast enough in some league table metrics to rise in the rankings for 2010/11, particularly with regards to citations.
- (c) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was establishing a working group to consider how the University might further increase its citation count.
- (d) That the University needed to maintain and enhance its distinctiveness and that the refreshed University strategy would include distinctive components when it was published in the coming weeks.
- (e) That the University continued to consider ways to improve the student experience at Warwick.

789/09-10 National Student Survey Results 2010

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Senior Assistant Registrar and Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) regarding the University's headline results in the National Student Survey 2010 and setting out how the results would be disseminated internally (SC.522/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience))

- (a) That there had been a marginal increase of around 1 percent in the University's overall response rate (61.3 percent to 63 percent) and a corresponding 1 percent rise in the satisfaction rate (88 percent to 89 percent).

- (b) That the University's scores were above the average for Russell Group institutions and that Warwick had experienced an upward trend over the past three surveys in terms of satisfaction.
- (c) That, despite the work undertaken over the previous academic year, the overall satisfaction score for assessment & feedback remained static at 61 percent and that the University needed to continue to liaise with students to identify the underlying issues.
- (d) That the recently created Warwick Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning would be investigating the area of assessment & feedback in liaison with the Students' Union and Student:Staff Liaison Committees.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (e) That he wished to congratulate the University on the proactive nature in which it was seeking to address issues relating to student satisfaction, in particular in relation to assessment & feedback.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That the buoyant student numbers might have an effect on student satisfaction in larger classes and perhaps there were more effective mechanisms for delivering feedback to larger numbers.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience) and appropriate colleagues investigate the issues relating to assessment & feedback from a student perspective.
- (b) That the University publicise assessment & feedback policies to students at the start of the academic year, noting that consultation had commenced with departments about expected turnaround of feedback on assessed work.
- (c) That the University continue to monitor the situation regarding the student experience on joint degrees.

790/09-10

Higher Education Academy Consultation: Future Work and Structure (minute 729/09-10 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) position paper, 'Future Work and Structure' (SC.523/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience))

- (a) That, as well as the submission of a formal University response, the University would have further opportunity to comment directly on the proposals when the new Chief Executive of the HEA visited the University in September 2010.
- (b) That the University's draft response urged the HEA to focus on its useful core business of pedagogic developments.

RESOLVED:

That the University response to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) position paper be approved for submission by the deadline of 9 September 2010, subject to the amendments discussed in the meeting.

791/09-10 University Response to Government's consultations on Immigration (minute 688/09-10 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft responses to the UKBA consultation on the limits of non-EU migration and the Migration Advisory Committee's consultation on the level of an annual limit on economic migration to the UK (SC.530/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the HR Services Manager)

- (a) That the two consultations sought views on potential limits for non-economic and economic migration to the UK (Tier 1 and Tier 2), the application of such limits and the arrangements for renewal of work permits or Certificates of Sponsorship.
- (b) That it was anticipated that further consultations would be undertaken regarding Tier 4 (students) and the current post-study work scheme.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (c) That the University had invited Jeremy Oppenheim, National Lead on Temporary Migration at the UKBA, for an informal visit to discuss the operational and strategic issues surrounding international students and staff.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University responses be approved for submission by the published deadlines as set out in SC.530/09-10, subject to the removal of references to specific disciplines.
- (b) That the Director of HR and appropriate colleagues consider guidelines for recruitment and selection in the context of the immigration system.

792/09-10 I/2010/07: Publication of Longer-Term Strategy Group Seminar Report

RECEIVED:

A UUK I-Note and report from the recent UUK Longer-Term Strategy Group seminar on universities and education in the post-recession economy (SC.527/09-10).

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

- (a) That the statements presented in the report appeared without any supporting evidence base.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That there was a risk to the sector to have such unsupported statements and recommendations in the public domain in a climate where higher education was subjected to an unprecedented level of scrutiny.

- 793/09-10 Employers Pensions Forum Response to Hutton Commission on Public Sector Pensions
(minute 757/09-10 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- The Employer Pensions Forum submission to the Hutton Commission on Public Sector Pensions, it being noted that the University contributed to this response (SC.526/09-10)
- 794/09-10 Employers Pensions Forum Response to HMRC/Treasury Consultation on Changes to Pension Tax Relief (minute 761/09-10 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- The Employers Pensions Forum response to the HMRC/Treasury consultation on changes to pension tax relief (SC.526/09-10).
- 795/09-10 University Response to Regional Growth Fund Consultation (minute 764(c)/09-10 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- The University response to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills consultation on the proposed Regional Growth Fund allocation process submitted by the deadline of 6 September 2010 (SC.529/09-10).
- 796/09-10 University Response to EPSRC Request for Feedback on Framework Agreement (minute 767/09-10 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- The University draft response to the EPSRC recent request for feedback on the university framework agreement to be submitted by the deadline of 13 September 2010 (SC.531/09-10)
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
- That, should members wish to contribute to the University's response to the EPSRC recent request for feedback on the university framework agreement, comments should be forwarded to him by 7 September 2010.
- 797/09-10 I/2010/068: Social Work Reform Board
- RECEIVED:
- Information on and letter to Ministers regarding the work of the Social Work Reform Board (SC.524/09-10).
- 798/09-10 I/2010/067: Student Loans
- RECEIVED:
- Request from the Student Loan Company (SLC) to universities to disseminate a further message encouraging students who have not yet applied for their student loans to do so as soon as possible, noting that specific attention is drawn to those students who may obtain a place through Clearing (SC.525/09-10)