

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 6 October 2008

Present: Professor M Whitby (Chair),
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor Y Carter,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley,
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Mr S Thomson

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Registrar

In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Vice-Chancellor's Executive Officer (Acting), Administrative Officer (Governance), Interim HR Director for item 4/08-09 and Director of Warwick HRI for item 5/08-09.

The Committee welcomed Professor Stella Bruzzi to her first meeting as Chair of the Faculty of Arts.

1/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2008 be approved.

2/08-09 Access Agreement Monitoring - OFFA (minute 755/07-08 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That following the extension of the original deadline granted by OFFA due to difficulties obtaining data from the Student Loans Company, the University had submitted its revised Access Agreement by the extended deadline of 3 October 2008.
- (b) That any feedback received on the University's Access Agreement would be reported to the Steering Committee.

3/08-09 New West Midlands Minister

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That a new Regional Minister for the West Midlands, Ian Austin MP for Dudley, had been appointed following the promotion of Liam Byrne to Minister for the Cabinet.

4/08-09 Pulse Action Team Report

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Pulse Action Team, detailing the action plan and the operation of the next Survey in January 2009 (SC.03/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Interim HR Director)

- (a) That the report and related action plan provided a considered approach, linking to other action plans already in operation around the University in response to the outcomes of the Pulse Survey 2008.

- (b) That the issue of perceived deficiencies in communication within the University had been recognised and would be addressed both centrally and within departments.
- (c) That the next Pulse Survey was currently planned for January 2009 and that, while the University was aiming to make the questions and results more directly applicable to the University, it was also important to increase rate of completion and integrity of information to increase the response rates to the survey.

(by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Regional Engagement))

- (d) That the latest Equality and Diversity Network event was heavily attended by Equality and Diversity Representatives requesting further guidance and support on bullying and harassment procedures.
- (e) That it was important to ensure that progress had been made in key areas of the action plan prior to conducting the next survey.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (f) That there had been some negative feedback on the new Annual Review scheme and its relevance for academic colleagues, noting that he received feedback that the training did not clearly explain why the scheme had been introduced and what benefits were for colleagues.

(by the Registrar)

- (g) That the Annual Review training was being reviewed continually to ensure its effectiveness, noting that it was a significant undertaking to train all relevant staff on prior to the implementation of the scheme in January 2009.
- (h) That it would be wise to fully consider timing issues relating to the next survey.
- (i) That significant consideration continued to be given to the Stress Action Plan and that the new Director of Health and Safety Services would continue to liaise with departments in this regard.

RESOLVED:

That a paper be submitted to the Steering Committee by the Pulse Action Team at the meeting of 20 October 2008 detailing the potential issues and benefits of conducting the Survey in January 2009 versus potentially postponing it to later in the Spring Term.

5/08-09

Year End Budget: Warwick HRI

RECEIVED:

A brief paper together with an oral report from the Director of Warwick HRI outlining the financial year end position of the department (SC.10/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Warwick HRI)

- (a) That Warwick HRI faced a number of significant challenges that negatively impacted their bottom line including the significant cost of the Wellesbourne Campus and the supplemental bidding process to secure the Defra 'core' funding.
- (b) That the forthcoming Strategic Departmental Review would facilitate a comprehensive review of the Department's academic organisation and structural issues.

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

- (c) That there were issues with spend on the Defra core grant, noting that projects under this provision had to fit Defra's research agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) continue to take up the discussion with Defra regarding to the difficulty in securing the allotted funding and that this issue be considered within the SDR of the department.

6/08-09 Year End Budget: Warwick Medical School

RECEIVED:

A paper together with an oral report from the Dean of Warwick Medical School providing a summary of the year end accounts of WMS (SC.08/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That gross surplus of 2007/08 was £284k above the original budget at £5,287k, resulting in a net surplus of £402k.
- (b) That for the first time, research grants and contracts income for the Warwick Medical School exceeded £7m, an increase of 21.4% on 2006/07.

7/08-09 Year End Budget: Warwick Business School

CONSIDERED:

A paper together with an oral report from the Dean of Warwick Business School outlining the year end statement (SC.09/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (a) That an incentives paper was being finalised to increase research grants and contracts within the School with a view to increasing the expectations of academic staff to apply for grants as a core part of their role.
- (b) That the variance in spend for the Executive Programmes was due to external resources being used until Client Directors were in place.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Dean of the Warwick Business School and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies) revise the WBS research data presented to the Committee to utilise a similar format to that considered by the Academic Resourcing Committee.
- (b) That the Dean of Warwick Business School circulate to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies) a final version of the WBS incentives paper.

8/08-09 Year End Budget: Academic Resourcing Committee

CONSIDERED:

A paper together with an oral report from the Academic Registrar presenting the financial performance of ARC departments in quarter 4 2007/08 (SC.11/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That ARC departments had an operating surplus of £2.4m higher than the original plan.
- (b) That the reasons which contributed to a number of departments showing significant variance between Quarter 3 forecasts and their year end outturn would be scrutinised further during the Autumn Term.

- (c) That research data relating to awards and applications for ARC departments would be presented within the next Research update to the Committee.

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

- (d) That the graph showing the positions of ARC departments on page 2 were useful but would be complemented by the addition of a further graph normalised by FTE.

9/08-09 ESRC: Large Grants Competition

CONSIDERED:

A draft proposal to the ESRC for a project entitled 'The Transformation of International Organisation (TRIO)' (SC.16/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved for submission as set out in SC.16/08-09, noting that the Director of Finance should review any changes to the financial information prior to submission.

10/08-09 UUK: Invitation of Interest in Partnerships with New Indian Institutions

CONSIDERED:

A invitation from Universities UK for expressions of interest of 'mentoring' or developmental partnerships with new Indian HEIs (SC.12/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the potential institutions set out in the invitation may not be natural partners for Warwick; however, it could be beneficial for the University to express an interest for general engagement so as not to unnecessarily limit any further opportunities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) write to UUK by the deadline of 17 October to express a general interest in a partnership.
- (b) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies) pursue discussions of a potential Indian collaboration with Kings' College, updating the Steering Committee when further information is available.

11/08-09 University Response to the Consultation on the NHS Constitution

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the consultation on the NHS constitution (SC.14/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

That in a recent meeting of the Council of Medical Sciences, the consultation was discussed and the need to embed research in the constitution arose as a key sector issue.

RESOLVED:

That the response be approved for submission by the deadline of 17 October 2008, subject to amendments to be made by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School to bring the response in line with discussions of the Council of Medical Sciences as noted above.

12/08-09

Academic Health Science Centres Update

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That, as previously discussed at Steering Committee, a small number of Academic Health Science Centres would be established across the country further to the findings of the Darzi report action.
- (b) That following informal feedback received, it would appear unlikely that the University would secure an AHSC without collaboration with the University of Birmingham (even with Birmingham, such designation was unlikely).
- (c) That an open workshop at the Department of Health on 15 October 2008 would clarify the criteria and metrics to be used to consider applications prior to the deadline for written application at the end of December.
- (d) That a meeting would take place with a lead from the Department of Health to discuss the new Health Innovation and Education Cluster (HEIC) and the potential for a number of pilots which may enable Warwick to proceed without collaboration.

RESOLVED:

That the Dean of Warwick Medical School update the Steering Committee following the workshop and subsequent meeting with the University of Birmingham.

13/08-09

CETL External Evaluation

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) outlining a proposed external evaluation of the University's two Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs), namely the Reinvention Centre and the CAPITAL Centre (SC.15/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs))

- (a) That the funding for the University's CETLs would end in March 2010, noting that the proposed external evaluation would consider the sustainability of the CETLs after this point.
- (b) That the review would be funded from the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (c) That a discussion was required to take place between the CAPITAL Centre and the Department of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies to increase engagement in these areas.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed evaluation take place within the 2009 calendar year as set out in SC.15/08-09, and that the report from the review be considered by the Committee.
- (b) That the Chair of the Faculty of Arts take forward discussions with the CAPITAL Centre and the Department of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies.
- (c) That consideration be given to having two rather than a single reviewer.

- 14/08-09 UUK I-Note I/08/083: HEFCE Consultation on Future Support for Teaching Enhancement and Widening Participation
- RECEIVED:
- An information note summarising HEFCE's consultation on refocusing funds for teaching enhancement and widening participation (SC.07/08-09).
- 15/08-09 University Response to Wolfson Foundation Consultation
- RECEIVED:
- The University response to a call from the Wolfson Foundation for feedback on its laboratory refurbishment grants (SC.13/08-09).
- 16/08-09 University Response to The Business and Enterprise Committee Inquiry into the Role of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to the call for evidence on the role of regional development agencies (SC.02/08-09).
- 17/08-09 UUK Booklet: HE in Facts and Figures – Health Education and Research
- RECEIVED:
- A booklet from UUK summarising statistics on health staff and students in UK universities and health-related education or research (SC.04/08-09).
- 18/08-09 CIHE Report: Influence Through Collaboration
- RECEIVED:
- A report from the Council for Industry and Higher Education on employer demand for Higher Learning and Engagement with Higher Education (SC.17/08-09).

ysw/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Oct08/6Oct08