

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 7 October 2013

- Present: Vice-Chancellor and President,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor S Croft,
Professor Christina Hughes,
Professor Christopher Hughes,
Mr B Sundell,
Professor S Swain,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley.
- Apologies: Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Professor T Jones, Professor J Palmowski,
Professor L Young.
- In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Group Finance Director, Director of
Development and External Affairs, Director of Estates, Director of Human
Resources, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Administrative Officer
(Governance), Director (Research Support Services) (for item 6/13-14).

1/13-14 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2013 be approved.

2/13-14 Tom Jagger

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Warwick Mathematics student Tom Jagger was declared missing whilst climbing in the Peruvian Andes in August 2013.
- (b) That students and staff who knew Tom were invited to gather with his family in the Chaplaincy on Wednesday 23 October 2013, to share readings and positive memories of his life.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's sincere condolences would be conveyed to the student's family.

3/13-14 Athena SWAN

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the University had been successful in achieving an Athena SWAN Silver Institutional award.
- (b) That only three other universities currently hold this award, and that Warwick was the only university to achieve the award in the latest submission round.
- (c) That the Warwick Mathematics Institute and the Department of Statistics had achieved Bronze Athena awards, meaning that all of Warwick's STEM departments either held or had submitted for an award.
- (d) That WMG had recently submitted for the Research Institute Athena award, the outcome of which would be known later in 2013.

- (e) That the Warwick Business School had been selected to take part in a pilot of the new Equality Challenge Unit Gender Equity Charter Mark scheme, and would be working on a submission for April 2014.
- (f) That the Charter would be rolled out to all non-STEM disciplines in October 2014, and that a number of Warwick departments had already expressed an interest in working towards the accreditation.

4/13-14 Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya had been recognised by the Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar, with an honorary award which was presented to him by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee.
- (b) That Professor Lord Bhattacharyya was conferred with the degree of D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) during the 2nd Convocation of the Institute held on 7 September 2013.

RESOLVED:

That the congratulations of the Committee be extended to Professor Lord Bhattacharyya.

5/13-14 Appointment of the Provost

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That the University Council had appointed Professor Stuart Croft to the post of Provost, and that Professor Croft would take up the role with effect from Thursday 10 October 2013.

RESOLVED:

That Professor Croft be congratulated on his appointment.

6/13-14 Research Strategy Update

RECEIVED:

A report on the progress of the University's Research Strategy (SC.1/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Director (Research Support Services))

- (a) That the University Financial Year 2012/13 had been very successful in terms of applications submitted and grants and awards won, with the total value of awards attained representing a significant achievement, exceeding the previous record performance in 2007/8 by 34%.
- (b) That the proposed top-level budget allocations and timetable for the EU's Horizon 2020 Programme had been published by the European Commission for the period 2014 to 2020, and that the University's strategy to respond to the opportunities presented by the programme was currently under development.
- (c) That preparations for the University's submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) were progressing well.
- (d) That the University's provisional accounts for 2012/13 indicated a research income of £83.6 million, representing a decrease of 2-3% since the previous financial year, and that analysis of the issues behind this performance was currently in progress.

- (e) That whilst the University's income performance was not as strong as forecast, recent benchmarking demonstrated that Warwick's research income per capita of academic staff spend was the third highest in the Russell Group, behind only the University of Oxford and Imperial College, London.
- (f) That record funding performances had been achieved with a number of competitive funding agencies, including the EPSRC, European Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Leverhulme Trust, and that good performance had been achieved with other key funding agencies, such as the ESRC, the European Commission and the Wellcome Trust.
- (g) That the Faculty of Science had achieved funding in excess of £100 million, whilst the faculties of Arts and Social Sciences had both achieved record levels of applications submitted and awards achieved.
- (h) That the Warwick Medical School had achieved its target for value of grant won in 2012/13, and that a number of major awards achieved in 2012/13 and not yet announced indicated that significant improvement was likely in 2013/14, which would be essential in the increasingly challenging funding environment.
- (i) That medical charity funding remained comparatively low, and that future activity should focus on charities that would generate gearing funding through Charity QR, noting that cost recovery was relatively low from charity sponsors.

(by the Dean of the Warwick Business School)

- (j) That obtaining research funding should be a priority for all departments, and that it was important for Research Support Services to engage and support research staff at all levels in the pursuit of funding.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (k) That research support workshops were taking place across the University, but there was scope for priorities to be communicated more effectively to ensure that all academic staff were informed.
- (l) That opportunities existed to maximise funding from under utilised sources.
- (m) That recent activity had focused largely on obtaining research funding, and that it was important for work to be done to ensure expenditure targets were achieved, as this was also a critical measure.

(by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School)

- (n) That whilst departments were keen to fully exploit research funding, there were often challenges inherent in areas such as contracting and recruiting research staff, leading to delays in expenditure.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (o) That a review of the contracting process, as commenced by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer in the 2012/13 academic year, was currently in progress.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (p) That the achievement of the 2013/14 research income target of £102 million was a key strategic objective, and that the significant cohort of new staff appointed during preparations for the 2014 REF should be instrumental in securing this.

7/13-14 Open Access Proposals for the Post-2014 Research Excellence Framework

RECEIVED:

A consultation paper from HEFCE on proposals for the implementation of an open access requirement in the post-2014 Research Excellence Framework (SC.3/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That the Librarian was co-ordinating the University's response to the consultation, and that the final version would be brought to the Steering Committee for consideration prior to the submission deadline of 30 October 2013.

8/13-14 Membership of Senate Committees

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine had approved the appointment of Dr Fiona Dean of University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire, as the external member of the Undergraduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine.

9/13-14 Research Technology Platforms

RECEIVED:

A paper updating the Committee on the development of the research technology platform strategy (SC.2/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That in the context of decreasing government and RCUK funding, it was essential for the University to plan and invest in its research infrastructure strategically, sustainably and transparently, to ensure that it could continue to carry out world-class scientific research.
- (b) That the implementation plan for the University's research technology platform had been approved in principle by the Academic Resourcing Committee (ARC) in July 2013, and was similar to that operated by Monash University, which currently had more than 15 successful platforms.
- (c) That the user groups of identified facilities wishing to set up a research technology platform during 2013/14 would prepare a business case to be considered by ARC in December 2013.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (d) That whilst the move towards research technology platforms would represent a significant culture change for some departments, there was potential for the project to be advantageous for research at Warwick in terms of both reputational and efficiency gains.