

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 7 February 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor R Higgott (until item 378 (f)/10-11),  
Professor C Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor M Taylor,  
Professor P Winstanley,  
Mr D Stevens.

Apologies: Professor S Bruzzi, Professor K Lamberts.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 377/10-11).

373/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011 be approved subject to the following amendments (deletions struck through):

360/10-11 (...)

- (a) That there would be advantages in changing the nomenclature from Chairs of Faculty to ~~Deans of Faculty~~, particularly relating to recognition externally.

(...)

374/10-11 University Risk Register and Risk Status Summary Report (minute 141/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A report on the University's Risk Identification and Assessment for Spring 2011 from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk and Continuity) (SC.261/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That there had been changes made to the University's Risk Status Summary Report since it was last presented to Steering in November 2010, particularly to Risks F4, SA1 and S3.
- (b) That the status of Risk F4, concerned with the University's financial stability and integrity of its financial systems, had been raised to 6 overall to reflect the financial risks associated with increasingly demanding bank covenants.
- (c) That the status of Risk SA1 (disaster or calamity significantly impairing key University work or its reputation) had been increased to 7 overall, due to the increased threat of local industrial action.

(by the Registrar)

- (d) That responding to the volume of change in higher education both centrally and within departments, was a complex process, and therefore presented high risks.

RESOLVED:

That a review of the methodology would be undertaken in an effort to present Risks in the University Risk Status Summary report in a more positive manner.

375/10-11 OIA Pathway Report - second round of consultation (minute 263/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the second round of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Pathway consultation on developments of the OIA Scheme (SC.262/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the OIA Pathway consultation focussed on three issues, including the publishing of OIA Formal Decisions, appointment of an additional student "voice" to the OIA Board, and the acceptance of complaints for students studying for degrees at FE colleges.
- (b) That, overall, the response took a stance of concern over the proposed changes, but that a "least worse" option was presented under each consultation point.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the second round of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Pathway consultation on developments of the OIA Scheme be submitted before the deadline of 14 February 2011.

376/10-11 Pay Negotiations (minute 355 /10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That the two formal notifications from UCU of ballots for industrial action (the first concerning issues around pay and job security, and the second concerning the changes to the USS Pension Scheme) had been rescinded due to errors within the notifications.
- (b) That the University was expecting to receive updated formal notifications from UCU of ballots for industrial action, with the ballot process still expected to end on 2 March 2011.

377/10-11 Teaching Quality update

RECEIVED:

A report on Teaching Quality from the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (SC.264/10-11), together with an oral report.

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the overall response rate to the National Student Survey (NSS) was greater than at the same early stage in last year's survey and Computer Science had already achieved the required 50% response rate.

- (b) That initial feedback had been received for the new course and module approval processes, with further progress expected with the introduction of IT developments.
- (c) That the "What is Feedback?" event, organised by Teaching Quality, IATL and the Students' Union, had been well attended and generated a number of ideas on how feedback and assessment could be improved, to be considered by AQSC in March 2011.
- (d) That the implementation schedule for the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) had been delayed nationally until October 2011, but that a hard-copy document would be developed in the first instance at Warwick before progressing to an electronic version.
- (e) That work was underway on refreshing the Teaching and Learning Strategy in line with the refreshed University Vision 2015 Strategy, and in the rapidly changing external context.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (f) That it would be valuable to learn from Computer Science's experience in encouraging students to respond to the NSS and to share this with other departments.
- (g) That there was the need to measure the impact and effect of the revised course and module approval process, both centrally and within departments.

378/10-11

H/EU Undergraduate support and Widening Participation Activities for 2012 Entry

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Academic Registrar and Head of Student Finance, about the consideration and decision making process for H/EU Undergraduate Support and Widening Participation Activities for 2012 entry (SC.270/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the paper highlighted the uncertainty in the current climate, with significant questions and issues still to be considered.
- (b) That fees would need to be set for the duration of the course and not just the first year of study.
- (c) That the genuinely additional income from increased fees would need to be established to inform Widening Participation (WP) resource investment.
- (d) That OFFA had indicated the need for more focussed and targeted bursary provision.
- (e) That consideration should be given to maintaining a different fee structure for programmes that already attract a large number of WP students, for example 2+2 degree students

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That he was meeting the Deputy-Prime Minister the next day to discuss WP strategies, but that it was likely that legislation for the Government's White Paper would not be expected until March 2012.

(by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (g) That there should be discussion with departments about differential offers, to ensure that the implications were more fully understood.
- (h) That the University may consider the option of holding WP funding centrally and asking departments to make bids, perhaps as part of the planning process, enabling measurement of WP activity and impact within departments.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science)

- (i) That it may be more effective to have a smaller number of well resourced individuals working across a number of departments in a faculty on outreach activities.

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

- (j) That she was soon to attend a Realising Opportunities Group meeting, and the University was the only institution in the Group that does not make differential offers.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (k) That he would welcome the option of differential offers and supported the continuation of a national WP scheme.

379/10-11 Liberating the NHS: Developing the Healthcare Work Force (minute 294/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Dean and Pro Dean of Warwick Medical School, summarising the key points of the consultation paper "Liberating the NHS: Developing the Healthcare Work Force" (SC.263/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That there was a lack of clarity on key issues and future NHS funding, posing high risks for the income streams of Warwick Medical School, particularly for Masters programmes, MBChB, and CPD.
- (b) That a drop in Service Increment for Teaching (SIFT) would have a significant impact on the WMS budget.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the "Liberating the NHS: Developing the Healthcare Work Force" consultation paper would be considered by the Committee prior to the deadline of 31 March 2011.

380/10-11 Student Number Control and ITT allocations for 2011/12

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Academic Registrar outlining the Student Number Control (SNC) limit and ITT allocations for the academic year 2011/12 (SC.273/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the University had been notified by HEFCE of a 2% uplift to the SNC limit for 2011/12.

- (b) That the University had received its ITT allocations from the TDA, with cuts having potential implications for the viability of teaching certain subjects, although the Institute of Education were exploring the opportunity of trading allocations with other regional providers.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Science)

- (c) That the Institute of Education should consider where subjects align with the Teach First provision that had already been confirmed.

381/10-11 Undergraduate provision in Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects (SIVs)

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE outlining the next steps in the monitoring of funding provided to support institutions shifting the balance of their provision towards SIVs (SC.274/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University was in line with recruitment expectations to SIVs programmes.

382/10-11 HEFCE funding for universities and colleges in 2010-11 and 2011-12

RECEIVED:

Correspondence from HEFCE regarding funding for universities and colleges for 2010-11 and 2011-12 (SC.271/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That pro-rata in-year reductions to the grant for the 2010-11 academic year had been confirmed, and that analysis was underway of the impact of these cuts and those for 2011-12.
- (b) That prudent decisions had already been made in the budget planning process, with no assumptions made about future capital funding.
- (c) That the University welcomed the more selective funding of research in the 2011-12 academic year, with high quality research expected to attract an increased share of funding.
- (d) That the language used in the HEFCE circular and Sir Alan Langlands' press comment reinforced the repositioning of HEFCE as a body to represent the student interest.

(by the Finance Director)

- (e) That while the cuts were slightly worse than included in the plan, they were not expected to be destabilising, due to confirmation of income not budgeted for, such as HEIF.

383/10-11 Higher Education Innovation Fund 2011-2015

RECEIVED:

Correspondence from HEFCE regarding Board decisions on the method and total funding for Higher Education Innovation funding (HEIF) for 2011-15 (SC.266/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That it was hoped that the University would receive the maximum allocation of £2.85 million.

384/10-11 Teacher Education Advisory Group

RECEIVED:

Correspondence from UUK regarding the work of the Teacher Education Advisory Group (TEAG), in light of the significant proposals for change in the Government White Paper for schools "The Importance of Teaching" (SC.275/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That UUK had acknowledged that they were reviewing the potential implications of the significant proposals for change in the Government White Paper for schools "The Importance of Teaching".

385/10-11 One World Week

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

That he wished to extend his thanks to all who supported One World Week.

386/10-11 Students' Union Elections

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

That Student Union elections were taking place this week, with 9 candidates standing for President, and that results were expected next week.

387/10-11 Students' Union survey

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

- (a) That a survey of approximately 650 students had been undertaken by the Students' Union regarding higher tuition fees, with improvements in contact time emerging as the main issue.
- (b) That the outcome of the survey would be provided to student representatives to share with the Faculty Boards and to members of the Committee.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That, while the Students' Union was legitimately expressing concern at the increase in tuition fees, there was concern over the lack of recognition of the quality of the University's teaching offer, which in his view was at this time already providing better value than other institutions' overall offer.

388/10-11 BIS EU Framework Programme (minute 237/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A note from the UK HE European Unit and UUK, on the UK HE sector position on the future of the Framework Programme (SC.269/10-11).