

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 7 September 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley,
Professor M Smith (until item 844/08-09),
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby,
Mr A Bradley

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor L Bridges, Professor H Thomas

In Attendance: Registrar (from item 834/08-09), Finance Director, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 842/08-09), Associate Dean (Biomedical Research) Warwick Medical School (for item 843/08-09)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Professor Ann Caesar to her first meeting of the Committee in her new role as Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience.

832/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2009 be approved, subject to the following amendments (additions underlined, deletions ~~struck through~~):

794/08-09

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (d) That ~~he had concerns that~~ the new arrangements would not disincentivise students from bringing their car onto campus to the extent that the University anticipated under the proposals but that it would ~~just~~ reduce the numbers of students able to afford either a permit or the new daily charge.

799/08-09

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the University had been approached by four organisations to join bids to develop the Centre for Workforce Intelligence and that it had resolved ~~not to engage with the initiative that Warwick would not be formally involved at this stage of the commissioning process and would not be a partner in any of the proposed bids, noting that this did not, however, preclude the University from participating in the initiative when opportunities for research arise.~~

833/08-09 Times Higher Education Awards 2009

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University would be visited today by the Times Higher Education Editor, Ann Mroz and that she would meet with himself and other colleagues to gain an overview of the institution as Warwick had been shortlisted for University of the Year 2009.
- (b) That details of the shortlist for this and other categories would be published in this week's edition of the Times Higher Education on 10 September 2009 and that the University's shortlisting should be kept confidential until then.

834/08-09 Group of 13 (minute 792/08-09 refers)

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

- (a) That as previously reported to the Committee, the University had submitted a letter of qualified support regarding the Group of 13's 'Realising Opportunities' project.
- (b) That the Group of 13 had been notified that HEFCE had awarded funding for the project over three years to pilot widening participation activities around Year 12 students and collaborative work on additional modules, on completion of which students would be eligible for a reduced offer from institutions, noting that it was the latter activity about which Warwick had highlighted specific reservations.
- (c) That the University would receive a limited amount of the funding allocated to extend its widening participation activities as part of the project.

RESOLVED:

That, in light of the reservations of the Committee, the University continue to review its engagement with the project and that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) update the Committee following the next meeting of the Group of 13 to be held on 2 October 2009.

835/08-09 Sutton Trust Report on Applications, Offers and Admissions to Research Led Institutions

RECEIVED:

The summary and key findings of a recent joint report by the Sutton Trust and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on applications to HE and to the 'Sutton 13' group of research led institutions from different post-16 institutions (SC.640/08-09).

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

- (a) That the findings of the Sutton Trust report indicated that applicants with similar attainment who had applied to one of the more academically demanding degree courses were as likely to receive an offer regardless of the type of post-16 institution they had attended, noting that this was converse to the Group of 13 opinion that students from backgrounds with less participation in HE should be subject to lower offers from the leading institutions.
- (b) That the Sutton Trust report had also emphasised the importance of support, advice and guidance to pre-GSCE students in order to engage them with HE participation, noting that the University had significant widening participation activities for this age group.

836/08-09 Health Innovation and Education Cluster (HIEC) – Pre-Qualifying Questionnaire (minute 801/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

The University's pre-qualifying questionnaire for a HIEC bid submitted to the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority on 28 August 2009 (SC.641/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School)

That it was understood that two further bids from West Midlands institutions had been submitted and that the University would be notified shortly of whether it had been shortlisted to prepare a full bid to the Department of Health.

837/08-09 Changes to the University's OFFA Access Agreement (minute 802/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

The University's revised Access Agreement for 2010/11 entrants submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) by 18 August 2009 (SC.624/08-09).

838/08-09 HEFCE 25/2009: Review of Teaching Funding (minute 806/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A HEFCE consultation document outlining proposals to withdraw the targeted funding allocations for old and historic buildings, foundation degrees and accelerated and intensive provision of Postgraduate Taught subjects in price band D from 2010/11 (SC.646/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University should respond strongly against the proposals, particularly with regards to the proposed withdrawal of funding for Price Group D postgraduate provision as the withdrawal of this stream might threaten the sustainability of programmes in the Arts.
- (b) That the withdrawal of funding for Foundation Degrees should be opposed as a matter of principle, as the University had engaged with the qualification to a more significant degree than other Russell Group institutions through the Centre for Lifelong Learning and the withdrawal of funding for these was contradictory to the Government's own emphasis on widening participation and retraining.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (c) That a group chaired by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies would meet on 16 September 2009 to discuss the implications for the withdrawal of targeted funding.

RESOLVED:

That the Group chaired by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies provide a draft response for the consideration of the Steering Committee in advance of submission by 14 October 2009.

839/08-09 Strategic Partnership Funds

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University's strategic partnership funds, which had been developed to support strategic research collaborations with key overseas institutions, had opened and would remain open for applications until 30 October 2009.
- (b) That in 2009-10 two funds would be available to colleagues:
 - (i) a general partnerships fund prioritising collaboration with key partners
 - (ii) a fund run jointly between Monash and Warwick.

840/08-09 Constitutional Advisory Group: Call for Evidence

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Constitutional Advisory Group had begun its work and had launched an open call for evidence in August 2009.

(By the Registrar)

- (b) That members were reminded that responses were welcome from all members of the University community, noting further information about the Call was available on the University's website (www.warwick.ac.uk/governance/cag)

841/08-09 International Programme in Leadership and Management in Higher Education (IPLMHE)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University was holding the first Warwick IPLMHE, a two week programme for university leaders and senior managers from outside the UK, from 7 to 18 September 2009.
- (b) That the first cohort consisted of 17 academic and administrative managers from around the world.

842/08-09 Policy Update: Admissions and Recruitment

CONSIDERED:

A report by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment summarising the undergraduate admissions position following confirmation and clearing (SC.639/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (a) That the Home/EU intake was circa 150 to 160 students over the assumed level in the financial plan due to strong automatic conversion of offers.
- (b) That the overshoot had implications for the University's action plan to return to within the HEFCE contract range and that the methodology for setting intake targets would be reviewed to ensure positive movement towards the target range.

- (c) That the University continued to occupy a very strong market position with a high level of conversion and acceptances including the admission of significant numbers of Insurance choice candidates and that to reduce the potential for over recruitment, offer making would need to be tightened as well as targets for the next admissions cycle.
- (d) That the number of unconditional firm overseas applicants was ahead of the increased target of 727 in the financial plan, noting that the University was continuing to factor in a high rate of “no-shows” due to the impact of external factors, such as the new Points-Based Immigration system which could result in more applicants than usual not enrolling or significant levels of delay in arriving.
- (e) That departments should be aware of the potential for overseas students to be late arriving on campus and that provision should be considered for “catch-up” for those arriving late.
- (f) That the proposal received from the Warwick Mathematics Institute to include an A* at A-Level in offers to simplify the selection process would have implications potentially for widening participation but that Maths generally was moving towards A* offers in the leading institutions and the Warwick Mathematics Institute took very seriously its outreach and raising attainment activities.

(By the Registrar)

- (g) That the overshoot had resulted in circa 98 undergraduates presently without accommodation and that consideration was being given to communicating which student groups would have priority to on-campus accommodation in future rather than guaranteeing this for several categories of student.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals from the Maths Institute to include A* at A-Level in offers be approved as set out in SC.639/08-09 for 2010/11 entry.
- (b) That the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment explore within other appropriate departments the feasibility of including A* in offers for other courses to maintain the University’s market position, noting that this would be for 2010/11 entry at the earliest.

843/08-09

Recruitment of Marie Curie Research Groups: Case-for-Support

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Associate Dean (Biomedical Research), Warwick Medical School (WMS), to transfer four research groups from the Marie Curie Research Institute to WMS (SC.628/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Associate Dean (Biomedical Research), WMS)

- (a) That the proposal had come to light following the decision by Marie Curie Cancer Care (MCCC) to close its research institute and that the scientific value of the research conducted by the institute’s teams needed to be transferred to the best possible institutions to ensure its longevity.
- (b) That the areas of research conducted by the four teams would fit well within WMS’ strategy and would provide potential links to internationally leading groups in the UK and in Europe.
- (c) That transitional funding had been secured from MCCC to cover salaries and research costs for three years from 1 October 2009, noting that MCCC had also

indicated that they might consider additional funding once the transfer of staff to Warwick had taken place.

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

- (d) That the transferring research groups were clear that they would be required to secure funding for sustainability of their activities once at Warwick.
- (e) That the imaging facilities available to the University via these groups was key in progressing the Life Sciences agenda and that the facility which would be in place following the groups' initial relocation to Warwick would be made available to the wider community once the groups had settled.

(By the Finance Director)

- (f) That further work was being undertaken to evaluate certain financial aspects of the proposal, in particular relating to the QR funding eligibility of the researchers and cover for redundancy costs.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals as set out in SC.628/08-09 be approved in principle, noting ongoing financial work.

844/08-09

National Student Survey Results 2009

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the University's headline results in the National Student Survey 2009 and how the results would be disseminated to departments (SC.637/08-09).

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

- (a) That the University's overall satisfaction score for 2009 was 88 percent, the same as in the previous year.
- (b) That the response rate for the University had reduced by 5 percent from last year's rate but matched the sector response rate of 62 percent.
- (c) That it was difficult but not impossible to increase scores from the high 80s into the 90s and would require effort from all areas of the University.
- (d) That good practice and engagement activities from departments where scores had increased in 2009 would be disseminated.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (e) That consideration must be given to how to improve the assessment and feedback scores as there was a perceived difference between students' expectations of feedback and some current practice.

RESOLVED:

That the aim of achieving an overall National Student Survey satisfaction score of 90 percent or higher next year be supported.

845/08-09 HEFCE 24/2009: HEFCE Grant Adjustments 2009/10

RECEIVED:

Information from HEFCE explaining the action that would be taken should institutions not meet their targets for 2009/10 regarding intake within contract range, funding conditional on growth and contract full-time equivalent numbers for undergraduate medical and dental students to which a quota applied (SC.625/08-09).

846/08-09 HEFCE 27/2009: Consultation on a Carbon Reduction Target and Strategy for HE

CONSIDERED:

A joint consultation document by HEFCE, Universities UK and GuildHE on developing a carbon reduction target and strategy for higher education in England (SC.626/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That a group of colleagues including the Director of Estates were currently reviewing the consultation document which presented several complex issues for higher education.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That the sector should anticipate challenging targets to be set by HEFCE which did not reflect what institutions could realistically achieve within the timeframe.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Estates prepare a draft response to the consultation for consideration by the Committee prior to submission by 16 October 2009.

847/08-09 I/2009/082: Consultation on Proposed Intellectual Property Office Fee Changes

CONSIDERED:

An I-Note from UUK advising of a consultation by the Intellectual Property Office on proposed changes to fee levels (SC.635/08-09).

REPORTED:

That the Registrar had consulted with the Director of Warwick Ventures to establish whether the University should respond to the consultation.

RESOLVED:

That no response be submitted.

848/08-09 HEFCE 20/2009: Student Data Audits

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE notifying of changes to the student data audit cycle, in particular accelerating the current cycle to conclude in 2010 rather than the initial completion date of 2013 (SC.627/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the acceleration of the audit cycle came as a consequence of the Government not pursuing a national inquiry into student data quality following issues at a number of institutions.

(By the Finance Director)

That several institutions were currently subject to significant clawback of funding from HEFCE following audits.

849/08-09 UUK and UK Border Agency Meeting

RECEIVED:

An email from the Chief Executive of UUK informing members of discussions between the UK HE sector and the UK Border Agency at a meeting held on 10 August 2009 (SC.644/08-09).

850/08-09 UKRIO Code of Practice for Research

RECEIVED:

A summary from the UKRIO collating all the responses received to the recent consultation on the draft Code of Practice for Research, together with details of the Code of Practice's publication from UUK (SC.629/08-09).

851/08-09 Europe Unit: EU Research Policy

RECEIVED:

An update from the Europe Unit including the findings of a recent UUK and Europe Unit visit to Brussels to explore the EU research policy (SC.638/08-09).

852/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/079: Changes to Points-based Immigration System – Tiers, 2, 4 and 5

RECEIVED:

An I-Note providing institutions with an initial analysis of the recently announced changes to the points-based immigration system for students (Tier 4) (SC.630/08-09) and skilled and temporary workers (Tiers 2 and 5 respectively) (SC.636/08-09).

853/08-09 E-Note E/09/08: European Commission Green Paper – Mobility of Young People

RECEIVED:

A E-note informing members of the European Commission Green Paper published in July 2009 for a new strategy to promote the learning mobility of young people and encouraging UK HEIs to respond to the Green Paper by the deadline of 15 December 2009 (SC.634/08-09).

854/08-09 Europe Unit: UK HE in Europe – Engagement and Partnership

RECEIVED:

A leaflet from the Europe Unit detailing the levels of engagement of UK HEIs in European education and research initiatives and the sector's priorities in the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (SC.645/08-09).

855/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/078: Launch of New Office of Life Sciences

RECEIVED:

An I-Note updating members on the recent launch of the Office of Life Sciences (OLS) Blueprint and its implications for the HE sector (SC.631/08-09).

856/08-09 NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement Annual Report 2008-09

RECEIVED:

Extracts from the 2008/09 annual report from the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement which is based on the University campus (SC.633/08-09)

857/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/080: UUK Response to DCLG Consultations

RECEIVED:

An I-Note presenting the final Universities UK response to the Department for Community and Local Government (DCLG) consultations on houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and possible planning responses; and the Rugg review of the private rented sector (SC.632/08-09).

YSW/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Sept09/07Sept09