

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 10 September 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor S Croft,
Professor Christina Hughes,
Professor Christopher Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor S Swain,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr N Swain.

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance/Academic Registrar's Office), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for items 625/11-12 and 626/11-12), Senior Assistant Registrar (Planning) (for items 627/11-12 and 628/11-12). Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 632/11-12).

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Mr N Swain to his first meeting as President of the Students' Union and Professor Christopher Hughes to his first meeting as Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

623/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2012 be approved.

624/11-12 West Midlands Academic Health Science Network (minute 604/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University had been invited to complete a full application following its submitted expression of interest.

625/11-12 Response to Ofqual Consultation on A-Level Reform (minute 576/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Ofqual consultation on A-Level Reform (SC.440/11-12).

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

- (a) That the response had been drafted by the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office following a request for input from academic departments.
- (b) That the response was in line with the Russell Group's response with particular emphasis on the importance of: limiting the number of module re-sits A-level students can take; clarity on the meaning of "institutional sign-off"; and ensuring clear advice and guidance to students whilst the reforms are taking place.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That he had been appointed as the Chair of a Russell Group Committee charged with reviewing the robustness of A-Levels as an entry point into Higher Education.

RESOLVED:

That the University's draft response to the Ofqual consultation on A-Level Reform be approved as set out in paper SC.440/11-12 for submission by the deadline of 11 September 2012.

626/11-12

Undergraduate Recruitment Update

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

- (a) That whilst the anticipated Home/EU undergraduate intake for 2012/13 was lower than the institutional target, it was expected that the national picture would show a larger proportional decrease in student numbers and that Warwick may have performed comparatively well to its peers.
- (b) That the performance of peer institutions within the Russell Group was at present unknown, however it was expected that this information would be available over the coming weeks.
- (c) That Warwick had performed favourably through the new UCAS Adjustment service, gaining more students than had transferred elsewhere, although the numbers involved were relatively small.
- (d) That the University, alongside a number of other Russell Group institutions, had entered UCAS Clearing for a selected range of courses which had attracted a significant number of highly qualified applicants.
- (e) That the University had not exceeded its Student Number Control (SNC) limit.
- (f) That there had been a technical malfunction with the UCAS service on A-Level Results Day resulting in all institutions nationally not being able to access applicant data for a number of hours, and that he would be talking up this issue with UCAS to ensure better resilience in future.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (g) That the University would not plan for reductions in entry criteria for courses as this would not be reflective of the University's strategic vision around academic excellence, exceptions would only be considered on a case by case basis.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment submit a paper providing further detail regarding the final 2012/13 undergraduate recruitment position and an analysis of the competitive benchmarking data for consideration at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

627/11-12 HESA Performance Indicators 2012 (minute 611/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper detailing the University's performance against the HESA performance indicators which were published on 29 March 2012 and 05 July 2012 (SC.425/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Planning))

- (a) That the figures presented related to the 2009/10 and 2010/11 academic years.
- (b) That there had been some positive increase in the two main areas of concern from the previous year (Non-continuation of studies and Employability Indicators).
- (c) That the Employability Indicators, which were derived from the DLHE survey, were among the data most relevant for league tables.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (d) That the Employability Indicators remained a cause for concern and that significant action would be required to realise the desired improvement in this regard.
- (e) That the Socio-Economic Indicators remained unsteady and potential reparative actions were restricted by the reduced Student Number Control (SNC) limit for students who did not achieve AAB or equivalent.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (f) That the instability of the Research Indicator 'PhDs awarded per academic staff costs' was a correlation and potential actions that might be taken to improve the position in future.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies would submit a paper to a future meeting of the Steering Committee detailing PhDs awarded compared to investment, highlighting any areas of concern.

628/11-12 HEFCE Recurrent Grant - July Update

RECEIVED:

A paper detailing the changes in the HEFCE Recurrent Grant funding agreement (SC.441/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the update letter from the HEFCE provided greater clarity on over-recruitment penalties for the 2012/13 undergraduate intake and that, whilst an unlikely occurrence, exceeding the SNC limit still continued to be a significant risk to the University.
- (b) That further changes to the funding agreement were expected next year, with the standard for unlimited recruitment of students lowered to ABB from the current level of AAB.
- (c) That it was expected that there would be further changes to the HEFCE Financial Memorandum in the near future.

629/11-12

UKBA Update

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That a scheduled visit to the University by the UKBA had taken place on 17 July 2012.
- (b) That the visit had gone well and it was recommended that the University retain its Highly Trusted Sponsor (HTS) Status, with another inspection visit scheduled to take place in twelve months time.
- (c) That the University has subsequently been invited to take part in a pilot for a premium sponsor status which would result in a sponsor period lasting for four years, rather than the current annual renewal basis.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (d) That the suspension of London Metropolitan University's HTS status had imposed significant reputational damage on the UK Higher Education Sector.

(by the President of the Student's Union)

- (e) That the Students' Union had contacted all current international students to survey for instances of severe complication or issue as a result of UKBA changes and procedures as part of a National Union of Students (NUS) International Student campaign.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That the University shared much of the Students' Union's viewpoint on student immigration and that there was the potential for cooperation on responding to the issue.

630/11-12

The Olympic and Paralympic Games

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University was grateful to all those staff and students who had been involved in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, whether their involvement was through maintaining on-campus facilities used by Olympic and Paralympic athletes for training; volunteering at local or national venues; in other organisational capacities; or as a competitor at the Games.

631/11-12

Key Areas of Departmental Activity for 2012/13 at Warwick

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the QAA Institutional Audit, response to the NSS results, preparation for the REF, review of the online teaching strategy, further expansion on the internationalisation strategy and continuing work on postgraduate issues were all large, resource and time intensive projects which would feature heavily in the coming academic year.
- (b) That departments would have to review their ability to respond quickly and effectively to these issues and where appropriate agree steps to ensure that institutional needs could be met.
- (c) That further work was required on the University's marketing and communications strategies to ensure that the University's successes were being appropriately promoted and conveyed.

National Student Survey Results

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the University's headline National Student Survey (NSS) results and the plan for dissemination of this data to departments (SC.447/11-12).

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

- (a) That the data was embargoed for publication until 27 September 2012 and should not be circulated outside of the institution until after that point.
- (b) That the overall satisfaction rating for the University had fallen by 1% and that nationally there had been an average rise in satisfaction rating.
- (c) That when conducting four year trend analysis, there was some significant fluctuation in some areas.
- (d) That there was some significant variation in overall satisfaction ratings between different departments.
- (e) That NSS data would now be published on a course rather than subject level as part of the Key Information Sets (KIS).

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

- (f) That the full data for peer institutions had not yet been received, however, it was suspected that there was not the same degree of fluctuation in results between different subject areas in other comparable institutions.
- (g) That there would be benefit in including this data in the remit of considerations of the Academic Resourcing Committee (ARC) so that this performance could be taken into account in resource allocation.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (h) That there were a number of areas in which effective change could be made within a relatively short time period.
- (i) That the University's quality of teaching was extremely strong, however the satisfaction rate seemed to be negatively impacted overall by a number of organisational issues.

RESOLVED:

- (j) That further analysis of the results be conducted by the Teaching Quality Team to identify target areas for improvement which would be reported to a future meeting of the Steering Committee.
- (k) That the Vice-Chancellor would write to departments which had performed strongly within the NSS, thanking them for their efforts.

633/11-12 HEFCE Circular Letter: Collaborations, alliances and mergers in higher education

RECIEVED:

A circular letter from the HEFCE setting out the outcomes from their recent consultation on collaborations, alliances and mergers in Higher Education (SC.455/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the document arose from considerable work from the HEFCE following an increase in a variety of organisation models and collaborations.
- (b) That it was felt that Warwick's existing strategic partnerships and alliances were not sufficiently mature to allow a meaningful contribution to be made to case studies as invited by HEFCE.

634/11-12 Capital Investment Framework 2 Metrics

RECIEVED:

A letter from the HEFCE detailing the University's performance against monitoring metrics under the Capital Investment Framework (CIF) 2 (SC.442/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the data presented related to the 2010/11 academic year.
- (b) That whilst there were some areas highlighted as a cause for concern, the University's results sat between the median and 75% quartile for the TRAC Group in the majority of cases.
- (c) That the University had continued to perform poorly against the total income per square meter measure, although this may be improved as a result of plans to decommission under-utilised space at the Wellsbourne Campus.
- (d) That the Space Management and Timetabling team were still receiving an increasing number of requests for additional space from academic and administrative departments.
- (e) That the University's expenditure on capital refurbishment was lower expected as the HEFCE recommended figure of 4.5% (of replacement value) as expenditure for just non-capital works and that the figure of 5.1% for Warwick represented both capital and non-capital works.

635/11-12 Call for nominations for the Queen's Birthday 2013 Honours List

RECEIVED:

A paper detailing the criteria for nominations for the Queen's Birthday 2013 Honours List (SC.437/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University aimed to collect data and nominate individuals in a more systematic way.
- (b) That should anyone have a nomination to put forward, they should be returned to the Deputy Registrar in the first instance.

- 636/11-12 Membership of Senate Committees
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That he had taken Chair's Action on behalf of the Senate to approve the following changes to the First Year Board of Examiners for the Faculty of Science:
- (a) School of Engineering: Drs Britnell and Chan were replaced by Dr AM Price and Mrs KS Bradbury for the First Year Board of Examiners meeting on 20 September 2012.
 - (b) Department of Psychology: Dr Wade was replaced by Dr E Blagrove for the First Year Board of Examiners meeting on 20 September 2012.
- 637/11-12 Submitted Response to the HEFCE Consultation 'A Risk-Based Approach to Quality Assurance' 2011-12
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to HEFCE's consultation on proposals to introduce a risk-based approach to Quality Assurance as outlined in the BIS White Paper, 'Students at the Heart of the System' (SC.422/11-12, Revised).
- 638/11-12 Submitted Response to the QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to the QAA's consultation of chapter B3: Learning and Teaching of its new UK Quality Code, launched in December 2011 (SC.423/11-12, Revised).
- 639/11-12 Submitted Response to UK HE International Consultation on a National Strategy for Outward Mobility
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to UUK's consultation on the development of a national strategy for outward student mobility (SC.443/11-12).
- 640/11-12 Submitted Response to Department of Health Consultation on Reforming the Social Work Bursary
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to the Social Work Bursary consultation conducted by the Department of Health (SC.444/11-12).
- 641/11-12 Submitted Response to Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy: Public Consultation
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to the public consultation on the draft Warwickshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy (SC.438/11-12).
- 642/11-12 Submitted Major Research Bid: Full Proposal for the ESRC Enterprise Research Centre
- RECEIVED:
- A copy of a submitted major research bid to the Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC) for an Enterprise Research Centre (SC.445/11-12).

- 643/11-12 Report of the "What works? Student Retention and Success programme"
- RECEIVED:
- Report from the Higher Education Academy's 'What Works?' programme which sought to analyse and evaluate best practice skills to ensure high student retention in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), with a particular focus on students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- NOTE: The full report is available online at:
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/what-works-student-retention/What_Works_Summary_Report
- 644/11-12 OIA Annual Letter
- RECEIVED:
- A draft of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Annual Letter containing the annual statistics for the University regarding complaints to the OIA (SC.439/11-12).
- 645/11-12 Completion of the e-Procurement Implementation Project (minute 745/09-10 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- A report to note the successful conclusion of the OPeRA (Online Purchasing electronic Requisition Automation) Project and the lessons to be learned for future projects (SC.432/11-12).
- 646/11-12 Justice Committee report on Post-legislative Scrutiny of the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- RECEIVED:
- A paper regarding the Justice Committee report on Post-legislative Scrutiny of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The report recommends the research exemption that the Russell Group had requested and the committee's recommendations are likely to inform subsequent legislation (SC.434/11-12).
- 647/11-12 UUK Survey Results: Higher Education Engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships
- RECEIVED:
- The results of the UUK's survey of Higher Education Engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships which were introduced in June 2010 (SC.436/11-12).
- 648/11-12 Submissions on behalf of the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP to the Warwick District Council's Local Plan Consultation
- RECEIVED:
- The submission made by Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to the Warwick District Council's (WDC) Local Plan consultation (SC.435/11-12).
- REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)
- That the University had submitted its response to the Warwick District Council's Local Plan Consultation concerning the University's land which sits within the Warwickshire border.
- NOTE: Copies of the submission are available from the Director of Estates upon request.