

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 10 May 2010

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi (from item 499/09-10),
Professor A Caesar,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Smith,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor M Whitby,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr A Bradley.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Professor S Palmer, Director of Estates, Finance Director, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Assistant Registrar (DRO)

The Vice-Chancellor welcomed Professor P Winstanley, Dean of Warwick Medical School, to his first meeting of the Steering Committee.

491/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2010 be approved.

492/09-10 Establishment of the Committee on the Appointment of Pro-Vice-Chancellors for 2009/10

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That a proposal to establish the Committee on the Appointment of PVCs for 2009/10 had been circulated to members for their consideration by correspondence on 30 April.
- (b) That, on the basis of the responses received by 5 May, the establishment of the Committee had been approved on behalf of the Senate with the following membership:

Chair: Vice-Chancellor

Three members of the Senate,
appointed by the Senate: Professor Bruzzi
Professor Faundez
Professor Sparrow

One lay member of Council: Viki Cooke

493/09-10 Potential Closure of Gibbet Hill Road (minute 477/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

That it had been confirmed that there would be gas works affecting Gibbet Hill Road and the vicinity in the coming months:

- (a) Temporary traffic lights on Stoneleigh Road for 6 weeks from 31 May;
- (b) Closure of Gibbet Hill Traffic Lights for 3 days from 5 July;
- (c) Closure of Gibbet Hill Road between the traffic lights and the entrance to WMS for three weeks from 9 August, during which time access to WMS would only be possible via main campus.

494/09-10 University Open Day

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University Open Day held on 8 May had gone well and that the Park & Ride scheme had been successful.

RESOLVED:

That all those involved in the organisation and running of the Open Day be thanked for their efforts.

495/09-10 National Pay Negotiations (minute 437/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the national pay negotiations continued and that at the most recent meeting held on 5 May 2010 employers had made an increased offer of 0.4 percent, non-consolidated, and that a further meeting was scheduled for 28 May 2010.

496/09-10 USS Pensions Review

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the USS Joint Review Group had been unable to agree a single set of proposals for consideration by the JNC.
- (b) That employers had published a list of proposals that they viewed as essential, and that UCU had written to all Vice-Chancellors outlining their final proposals, noting that there remained a distance between the two.
- (c) That there was a meeting of the JNC scheduled for July and that the outcome was unpredictable.

497/09-10 Elections

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the outcome of the General Election, and the implications arising from it, remained very unclear.

(by the Registrar)

- (b) That Coventry City Council had changed from Conservative to Labour control, and that the implications of this also remained unclear.

498/09-10 Human Tissue Authority Conference

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) was consulting regarding its licence fees for 2011/12, and that Kate Hughes and Professor John Davey would be attending a workshop on the consultation this week.

- (b) That the HTA Phase 2 Inspection of the University's licenced premises, CSRI and Biological Sciences, would occur on 21-22 July.

RESOLVED:

That the draft University response to the consultation would be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the deadline for submission of 16 June.

499/09-10

UK Border Agency

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That UUK had written to institutions urging caution with regard to accreditation to the UKBA Highly Trusted Sponsor Scheme, and that the University was monitoring the evolving situation whilst continuing with procedural matters in the meantime.

500/09-10

Strategic Departmental Review Report: Department of Chemistry

CONSIDERED:

The final report and related action plan from the Strategic Departmental Review for the Department of Chemistry held between 16-18 February 2010 (SC.335/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the report and action plan contained an unusually large number of recommendations, some of which were extraordinarily detailed in nature.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That in his view the report contained very little about the major strategic issues that were currently facing the Department of Chemistry.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (c) That the report did contain some relevant recommendations, including those concerning management structure, staffing complement and vision for the future, and that these should be reflected upon and considered further.
- (d) That the report had been written at a transitional point and that the department should be asked to respond to the Review recognising the appointment of a new Head of Department.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (e) That the Report implied that the management and administrative structures within the department were satisfactory, which was not her understanding from feedback from elsewhere.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the prioritised recommendations and a revised action plan be forwarded to Professor Sadler, together with a summary of the initial comments from the Steering Committee, to inform the departmental response.
- (b) That the Head of the Department of Chemistry, Professor Sadler, be invited to present the departmental response to the report and its recommendations at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 24 May 2010.

- (c) That any additional issues to be considered by the Head of the Department of Chemistry in the drafting of the departmental response be communicated to the Head of Governance Support Services.

501/09-10

Review of Strategic Departmental Review (SDR) Process

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Head of Governance Support Services outlining the purposes and aims of the current SDR process and requesting consideration of relevant issues in order to inform any proposals for revision (SC.334/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (a) That the establishment of a formal Review Group was not being proposed, but that a process of consultation with key individuals would be undertaken by the Governance Team in the Deputy Registrar's Office.
- (b) That the Review would also be informed by the considerable amount of feedback on the existing process that had been received through the undertaking of recent SDRs.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That although the information currently provided to external Review Panel members was clear in terms of the purposes and aims of the process, thought should be given to prioritising those purposes and aims in order to provide Panel members with appropriate guidance.
- (d) That consideration should be given to training provision for internal members of Review Panels.

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

- (e) That, in light of the increased focus on interdisciplinarity and cross-collaboration between departments throughout the University, a single-department focused review model may no longer be appropriate.

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

- (f) That it would be beneficial for there to be a degree of consistency in those members of the University who attended Reviews.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing))

- (g) That the difference in focus on quality assurance in teaching in different SDRs put the University in a position of risk in external quality audit, and that consideration should be given to separating out the quality assurance and strategic themes of the process.

(by the Registrar)

- (h) That there would be two cross-functional ASDARs undertaken in the coming months which would look at sustainability and corporate relations.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee approve the proposals for the review of the SDR process, as set out in SC.334/09-10, subject to the points made at the meeting.

- (b) That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies and student representatives be added to the list of those to be consulted.

502/09-10 Review of Higher Education Funding and Finance

CONSIDERED:

The draft University submission to the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (SC.337/09-10)

RESOLVED:

That the draft response be approved and submitted to the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance prior to the deadline of 14 May 2010, subject to the minor changes discussed at the meeting.

503/09-10 Sector Financial Indicator Comparisons

RECEIVED:

A report detailing HE sector financial indicators, as published by HEFCE, and Warwick's relative position against those indicators (SC.345/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the figures were based on individual institutions' forecasts, therefore some comparisons were more reliable than others.
- (b) That Warwick had been more conservative than some institutions and had already reflected anticipated cuts in HEFCE funding in the figures reported.

504/09-10 University Risk Identification and Assessment for Spring 2010

CONSIDERED:

Two papers from the incoming Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk & Continuity), together with oral reports by the Head of Governance Support Services, presenting:

- (a) The Risk Status Summary Report together with the full University Risk Register (SC.343/09-10).
- (b) A summary of the SWOT Analyses and Risk Assessments undertaken and submitted by departments, as considered by the Operational Risk Management Group at its 29 April meeting (SC.344/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That a reference to the anticipated increase in the level of VAT, which would cost the University approximately £1m per year, would be added to risk F1.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University Risk Register and Status Summary as set out in SC.343/09-10 be updated in the light of discussion, in particular relating to the updating of the "Key future plans to mitigate risk" section, prior to consideration by the Council on 19 May 2010.
- (b) That, subject to the minor changes discussed at the meeting, the Departmental Risk Assessment Returns Summary (SC.344/09-10) be circulated to the Financial Plan

Sub-Committee, the Academic Resourcing Committee, the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group and the Commercial and Related Activities Group.

505/09-10 Summer Degree Congregation

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Head of Governance Support Services updating the Committee on degree-congregation related issues, in particular the co-ordination of events with the Teach First Summer Institute activities (SC.338/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (a) That considerable work had been undertaken to coordinate departmental events, particularly those of WMS and WBS, to ensure value for money was achieved whilst maintaining quality.
- (b) That Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence would be presented during the degree ceremonies noting that, until the winners were known, it would not be possible to confirm at which ceremonies they would be awarded.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supported the proposals for the forthcoming Summer Degree Congregations as outlined in SC.338/09-10, including the co-ordination of activities in Rootes Building.

506/09-10 The Future of Higher Education Subject Centres

RECEIVED:

Correspondence from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Russell Group, along with an update from the Directors of the University's two current Higher Education Subject Centres, concerning the future funding of Higher Education Subject Centres (SC.331/09-10).

507/09-10 HEFCE Funded Undergraduate and Graduate Internship Schemes

RECEIVED:

An update from the Head of Careers concerning the University's successful bid for HEFCE funded Undergraduate and Graduate Internship Schemes (SC.332/09-10).

508/09-10 I/2010/030: Update on the Development of the Higher Education Achievement Report

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/2010/30, providing an update on the Development of the Higher Education Achievement Report (SC.336/09-10).

509/09-10 Muslim Chaplain

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the newly appointed Muslim Chaplain, Imran Sulaman, would be taking up his position this week.

510/09-10 JISC Inform Issue 27

RECEIVED:

The latest edition of the JISC newsletter which explores how universities and colleges' use of digital technologies enhances the student experience and research process (SC.339/09-10).

511/09-10 Russell Group and UUK Draft Responses to the Browne Review
RECEIVED:

The executive summaries of the draft Russell Group (SC.340/09-10) and Universities UK (SC.341/09-10) responses to the Independent Review of HE Funding and Student Finance, chaired by Lord Browne, noting that the University would prepare its own response (minute 503/09-10 refers) and would comment on the Russell Group and UUK responses as necessary.

512/09-10 University Bids to HEFCE University Modernisation Fund (minute 472/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

The University's bids to the two student number-related initiatives within the HEFCE University Modernisation Fund (SC.342/09-10).

JFB/jf/steersshare/minutes2009-10/May10/10May10