

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 10 November 2008

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bassnett,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley (from item 116/08-09)
Professor R Higgott,
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Mr S Thomson,
Professor M Underwood,

Apologies: Professor Y Carter, Professor M Whitby

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Acting Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions for item 119/08-09, Acting Director, Careers and Employability and Director, Student Development and Diversity for item 120/08-09

113/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2008 be approved, subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~, additions underlined):

98/08-09

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

99/08-09

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, in the view of the Committee, the scores on the revised Risk Status Summary ~~accurately~~ reflect the current level of risk faced by the University.

114/08-09 Arrangements for Warwick Medical School Representation at Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That, with immediate effect, Professor Underwood would be attending meetings of the Steering Committee as Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School until Professor Carter returns.

RESOLVED:

That the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School be permitted to attend meetings of the Committee until further notice.

115/08-09 QAA Institutional Audit

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the Institutional Audit by the QAA would take place this week.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to all staff and students involved in preparing for the audit.

116/08-09 RCUK Review of Physics

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the RCUK commissioned review of Physics in the UK conducted by Professor Bill Wakeham, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Southampton, was published on the RCUK website.

117/08-09 Visit by the President of the Dominican Republic

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the President of the Dominican Republic was visiting the University today.

118/08-09 Warwick Wellcome/EPSRC Centre for Clinical Systems Innovation

CONSIDERED:

A draft proposal to the EPSRC/Wellcome Trust compiled by the Director of Warwick Systems Biology to establish a Medical Engineering Centre for Clinical Systems Innovation (SC.92/08-09).

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

That the initial bid had been shortlisted and represented an opportunity to transform Warwick's approach to the exploitation and commercialisation of research.

RESOLVED:

That an update on the status of the following issues arising from the draft proposal be considered by the Committee at its next meeting:

- (i) That the Finance Office verify the financial statement with regards to the potential to increase the projected gross surplus.
- (ii) That the conditions regarding the use of the Digital Laboratory be checked as to whether the Centre, if awarded, could be located within it.
- (iii) That the Director of Communication and Strategy take forward discussions with the Director of Warwick Systems Biology regarding the appropriateness and potential confusion in using the acronym WSB.

119/08-09 Policy Update: Admissions and Recruitment

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment updating the Committee on activities including IT solutions for the postgraduate admissions process, developments relating to undergraduate admissions, recruitment and marketing and widening participation (SC.90/08-09).

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

- (a) That the workflow developments in postgraduate admissions would allow for more effective tracking and monitoring of applications throughout the process.
- (b) That a demonstration of the new enquiry management package would take place at the Warwick Network event on 10 December 2008, noting that specific sessions with departments would follow this.
- (c) That the University's widening participation strategy was under review, noting that HEFCE had proposed a 'strategic assessment' approach to widening participation to be launched in March 2009.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (d) That, if HEFCE would impose a control mechanism for funding for undergraduate students, the University would need to be aware of its conditions and implications as soon as possible to incorporate any restrictions into the 2009 cycle, noting that several departments wished to increase their projected undergraduate intakes in both the Home/EU and Overseas categories presenting potential issues around the HEFCE student number contract.
- (e) That the proposed increases in undergraduate numbers might affect the balance between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

(By the Registrar)

- (f) That a letter from Baroness Warwick, Chief Executive of Universities UK, had been received calling for responses from HEIs regarding the proposed changes to student funding and the allocation of additional places.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be approved as set out in SC.90/08-09.
- (b) That a letter be sent to HEFCE requesting a rapid assessment and decision on the proposed control of student numbers and funding.

120/08-09

Policy Update: Careers Centre and Student Development and Diversity

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Acting Director, Careers and Employability and the Director, Student Development and Diversity on developments including the Warwick Advantage scheme, engagement with academic departments and funding and income generation (SC.86/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director, Student Development and Diversity)

- (a) That the introduction of the Warwick Advantage scheme and Award to be launched next term, which were developed in collaboration with the Careers Centre and the Students' Union, presented students with a structured and systematic way to reflect on their University experience, noting that the scheme was an area to be explored by the QAA audit team.
- (b) That the Warwick Skills Certificate had been highlighted explored in the previous institutional audit as an area of good practice.

(By the Acting Director, Careers and Employability)

- (c) That resources allocated under the HEIF 4 strategy were being employed to engage with academic departments with regards to increasing work experience opportunities and skills/career management programmes more generally.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (d) That sustainability would be affected by HEFCE's withdrawal of some special funding streams.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.86/08-09.

121/08-09 UUK I-Note I/08/095: NCEE Report on HE Engagement with Schools

CONSIDERED:

An information note from UUK providing information on the report of the National Centre for Educational Excellence (SC.96/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That it would be beneficial to include additional details of the University's engagement with schools as well as the response to the UUK request I/07/118 in October.

RESOLVED:

That a revised response be submitted to include details of the activities in which the University engages with schools by the deadline of 14 November 2008.

122/08-09 HEFCE Circular 29/2008: HE-Business and Community Interaction Survey 2007/08

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE providing details of the arrangements for the 2007/08 annual survey of interactions between HEIs and business and the wider community to be completed online by 26 January 2009 (SC.93/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar co-ordinate the preparation of the response in order that it can be considered by the Committee prior to the submission date of 26 January 2009.

123/08-09 HEFCE Letter: Promoting the National Student Survey 2009

CONSIDERED:

Information from HEFCE on the National Student Survey 2009, including guidance on appropriate promotion of the survey within Universities (SC.94/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the guidance be communicated to Heads of Department by the Teaching Quality team to ensure that the University as a whole was aware of appropriate promotion approaches, noting that Ipsos MORI should be notified of certain activities, such as prize draws and opt-in incentives.

124/08-09 Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills: New Inquiry into Students and Universities

CONSIDERED:

An announcement from the IUSS Select Committee of a new inquiry into Students and Universities including admissions, teaching and research, degree completion and classification and mechanisms for student support and engagement (SC.95/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus and Community))

- (a) That it would be challenging to summarise a response to such large and fundamental topics into a submission of no more than 3000 words.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That the areas within the inquiry appeared to overlap with the series of reports into different aspects of Higher Education commissioned by John Denham, Secretary for State at DIUS this year.

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar explore the possibility of a Russell Group response in preference to a University response.

125/08-09 Research Fortnight League Table

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That Research Fortnight had launched a web-based consultation across the sector regarding how to weight research outputs (recorded in grade point averages) in their research league table based on RAE 2008 scores.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Management Information and Planning undertake modelling to see which method would show Warwick in the best light based on expected scores, noting that results will be published in December 2008.

126/08-09 UUK I-Note I/08/094: UUK Response to RCUK Research Code of Conduct Consultation

RECEIVED:

The UUK response to the RCUK consultation into a Code of Conduct and Policy on governance of good research conduct (SC.97/08-09).