

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 10 March 2011

- Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S. Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar (until item 464 (e)/10-11),
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Winstanley.
- Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor K Lamberts, Mr D Stevens.
- In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic, Registrar, Finance Director (until item 465/10-11), Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy (until item 467/10-11), Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance).
- 458/10-11 Minutes
RESOLVED:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2011 be approved.
- 459/10-11 HEFCE Consultation on Public Information about HE (minute 436/10-11 referred)
REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
That a letter had been sent to Professor Janet Beer, Chair of the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group setting out concerns on the quality of the research that informed the recommendations set out in the HEFCE, Universities UK and GuildHE consultation on the provision of information to the public about higher education and the process of consultation.
- 460/10-11 USS Pensions (minute 437/10-11 refers)
REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)
(a) That the two UCU ballots for Industrial Action closed on 2 March 2011, and returned results in favour of both strike action and Action Short of a Strike (ASOS).
(b) That the University had been informed that strike action related to USS reforms was scheduled for 17 and 24 March 2011.
(c) That notification was yet to be received with regard to action as a result of the ballot on pay and job protection.
(d) That UCU was seeking to reopen negotiations on the USS reforms through ACAS, having failed to attend the USS JNC meetings held on 2 and 9 March 2011.
- 461/10-11 Capital Development and Space Management Update (minute 438/10-11 refers)
REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
That the University had submitted an expression of interest to acquire a legacy tank for a 50m pool from the 2012 Olympics, by the deadline of Wednesday 2 March 2011.

462/10-11 University of Warwick Science Park

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University was in the latter stages of acquiring full ownership of the University of Warwick Science Park from Coventry City Council and other shareholders.

463/10-11 OFFA Guidance for Producing an Access Agreement for 2012/13 (minute 441/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

Guidance from OFFA for producing an Access Agreement (Paper SC.346/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the document had been received on 7th March and there had therefore been limited opportunity for developing the University's proposals in light of the guidance issued.
- (b) That institutions wishing to charge tuition fees of more than £6000 from 2012/13 were requested to provide the following information in their Access Agreements:
 - (i) Level of fee to be charged;
 - (ii) Additional access measures to be introduced, both in terms of student support and outreach, and projected levels of expenditure on access;
 - (iii) Targets relating to access;
 - (iv) Details on how information on access measures and tuition fees would be provided to existing and prospective students.
- (c) That the expected levels of expenditure on access would be determined by the University's current performance on widening access in relation to the sector generally.

(by the Vice-Chancellor):

- (d) That the deadline for submission of the Access Agreement had been moved to 19th April, which would now allow for further development (if necessary) of the detailed proposals contained within the Agreement following the meeting of Council on 23rd March, subject to the agreement of Council that it was supportive of such further work being undertaken and that delegated authority to approve the final version of the Access Agreement be granted to the Steering Committee.

464/10-11 Tuition Fees and Access Agreement (minute 441/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining emerging principles for the setting of tuition fees, student support arrangements and outreach activities from 2012/13, to be included in the University's Access Agreement (Paper SC.347/10-11)

REPORTED (by the Vice-Chancellor):

- (a) That the President of the Students' Union had provided a written submission and was broadly supportive of the proposals for investment in the student experience, notwithstanding the Students' Union's formal position that it was opposed to higher tuition fees being introduced.
- (b) That the paper would be amended in light of discussions, further analysis of data and the potential impact of proposals, for consideration by the Steering Committee at its

meeting on 14th March, prior to circulation to the Senate for consideration at its meeting to be held on 16th March.

(By the Deputy Registrar):

- (c) That there was likely to be dialogue between OFFA and institutions on Access Agreements between submission in April and final approval of Agreements in July, which may involve some negotiation on proposals.
- (d) Fees

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (i) That discussions on tuition fees and outreach activities had been held with a number of representative fora across the University, including the Council, and there was a wide consensus that the level of tuition fee charged from 2012/13 should be at the upper end of the permissible range, to reflect the University's standing within the sector, its future ambitions and the need to invest further in the student experience to ensure that it remains of a quality commensurate with the University's market position.

(by the Registrar):

- (ii) That the revised funding arrangements for undergraduate study posed particular challenges to the Centre for Lifelong Learning, which also made a significant contribution to the University's fair access activities, and the impact of proposals on the Centre's taught offering would therefore need to be considered carefully.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That further analysis be undertaken of the impact of the potential higher standard fee on recruitment to the final year of integrated Masters degrees and of alternative mechanisms for supporting affected students.
- (ii) That further consideration be given to the fee to be charged for the PGCE when details are released on TDA funding.
- (iii) That further consideration be given both to the fee to be charged for the intercalated year and the year abroad and to the structures and support arrangements for the intercalated year and year abroad, noting that there may be scope for adjusting the existing model to provide for enhanced interaction between students and departments during the placement period.
- (iv) That an additional factor to be considered in relation to the fee to be charged for the year abroad on some courses would be the future level of support available through the ERASMUS scheme which has yet to be announced.
- (v) That further analysis be undertaken of the impact of charging a reduced tuition fee for part-time undergraduate students and of the proportions of students on such courses classified as being from low participation backgrounds.
- (vi) That a decision on the level of fee to be charged for the MBChB be deferred pending further announcements from Government on the level of NHS bursary to be made available to students in the clinical stage of their course and on the availability of loans to such students.
- (vii) That the principle that a tuition fee of £6000p.a. be charged for the 2+2 degree and Foundation degree courses from 2012/13 had general support, noting that

it is the current practice to charge a reduced fee, and that the majority of students on these courses were on low incomes.

- (viii) That the paper receive further consideration in light of the Committee's comments and further analysis on 14th March 2011.

(e) Fair Access and Outreach Activities

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (i) That further work would be undertaken to identify appropriate targets and the extent to which specific activities might contribute to achieving those targets, noting that there may be little evidential data in some areas.

(by the Academic Registrar):

- (ii) That the University's performance on the majority of fair access performance indicators placed it within the lower quartile in relation to the sector, although it performed favourably in comparison with Russell Group institutions.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the proposed activities set out in paper SC.347/10-11 be supported, noting that investment would need to be prioritised on those activities likely to contribute most significantly to the University meeting its access targets.
- (ii) That information on current departmental access activities and their effectiveness be disseminated to academic departments.

(f) Bursaries and Student Support

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the current proposals provided for a mix of bursaries and fee waivers; based on the guidance available it was likely that the University would be expected to include fee waivers as an element of its support package for students.

RESOLVED:

That further consideration be given to the proposal that students from families on incomes of less than £25k be eligible for fee waivers to a specified sum, noting that the financial commitment of such a measure could vary significantly over time.

(g) Enhancing the Student Experience

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the President of the Students' Union had reported that he considered that the University had been responsive to the issues raised in relation to the student experience.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals set out in paper SC.347/10-11 relating to the enhancement of the student experience be supported in principle, noting that prioritisation of the proposals would need to be undertaken once the level of funding available for investment was known.

465/10-11 Consultation on Higher Education Innovation Fund 2011-15 methodology

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE inviting responses to a consultation on the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) 2011-15 methodology, and the introduction of an external income threshold for HEIF allocations, with a UUK summary note (SC.329/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University's indicative HEIF annual funding for 2011-15 was £2.85m.
- (b) That the development of a mechanism for the distribution of funds and the oversight of distribution would be led by Professor Tim Jones, as incoming Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer and Business Engagement, with the Registrar and the Head of Business Relations.
- (c) That the majority of the funding was likely to be distributed through allocation to priority areas aligned with the University Strategy, although a smaller proportion may be open to a competitive bidding process.

RESOLVED:

That a positive response to the consultation on the final part of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) 2011-15 method be submitted prior to the deadline of 15 April 2011.

466/10-11 Final report of the Student Charter Group

RECEIVED:

The final report from the Student Charter Group (SC.334/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That it was assumed that the Student Charter would need to be published to the same timescale as that set for the publication of the Key Information Set, although this was not specified in the report.

467/10-11 OFFA workshops on access agreements

RECEIVED:

Notification from UUK of two workshops on access agreements (SC.335/10-11).

468/10-11 Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 16 March 2011 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, subject to revisions as agreed in the meeting.

469/10-11 Evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure (minute 419/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the QAA consultation on the Academic Infrastructure, and the proposal to restructure it into a UK Code of Practice for standards, quality and enhancement in higher education (SC.294/10-11, revised).

470/10-11 QAA "Outcomes" papers (minute 323/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

Notification from the QAA of the publication of two Outcomes from Collaborative provision audit papers; "Use of the Academic Infrastructure" and "External Examining Arrangements" (SC.331/10-11).

471/10-11 Advantage West Midlands: Assets and Liabilities Transition Plan (minute 443/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

An email from the Chief Executive of Advantage West Midlands, regarding the transfer of Agency assets and responsibility for administering European Funding in the region (SC.333/10-11).

472/10-11 Capital Investment Framework (CIF) 2 (minute 426/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE acknowledging the University's letter of 16 February 2011 that outlined intention to fulfil the necessary conditions by 31 March 2011 (SC.344/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Mar11/10Mar11