

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 11 May 2015

- Present: Professor N Thrift (Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair)), Professor R Ball (Chair of the Faculty of Science), Professor S Croft (Provost), Professor M Freely (Chair of the Faculty of Arts), Professor Christina Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)), Professor Christopher Hughes (Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Social Sciences)), Professor M Taylor (Dean of the Warwick Business School), Ms C Turhan (President of the Students' Union), Professor P Winstanley (Chair of the Faculty of Medicine).
- Apologies: Professor A Coats (Academic Vice-President (Monash-Warwick Alliance)), Professor T Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine)), Professor J Palmowski (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education)), Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer), Professor P Thomas (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Public Engagement)), Professor L Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources)).
- In Attendance: Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Dr M Glover (Academic Registrar), Ms J Horsburgh (Deputy Registrar (Secretary)), Ms G McGrattan (Director of Human Resources), Mr D Pearson (Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School), for item 281/14-15), Mrs C Silvester (Assistant Registrar (Resilience) (Assistant Secretary)).

272/14-15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open and restricted minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2015 be approved.

273/14-15 General Election 2015

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the Conservative Party had been elected to government following the General Election held on 7 May 2015.
- (b) That in their Election Manifesto, the Conservatives had pledged to abolish the cap on higher education student numbers, to introduce a national postgraduate loan system for taught masters and PhD courses, and to introduce a framework to recognise universities offering the highest teaching quality.
- (c) That further Manifesto pledges included the offering of more two-year undergraduate degree courses, and the introduction of a requirement for universities to make more data openly available to potential students to enable their decisions to be informed by the career paths of past graduates.
- (d) That prior to the meeting it had been announced that Sajid Javid had been appointed as Business Secretary, and thus would be responsible for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

274/14-15 Times Higher Education 100 Under 50

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Warwick had been ranked in the top ten of the world's young universities and was the leading such university in the UK, according to the Times Higher Education 100 Under 50 league table, published on Wednesday 29 April 2015.
- (b) That Warwick had climbed the list by four positions to ninth position, compared to its previous ranking at thirteenth in both 2014 and 2013.
- (c) That as the University was in its fiftieth year, this would be the last time it was eligible for inclusion in the table, hence it was commendable to exit with such a positive score.

275/14-15 QS World University Rankings by Subject

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That ten subjects at Warwick had been declared to be in the world's top 50 in The QS World University Rankings by Subject, published on Wednesday 29 April 2015, with a total of 15 subjects at Warwick appearing in the top 100.

276/14-15 Chair of the Faculty of Arts

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Professor Simon Gilson had been appointed to the role of Chair of the Faculty of Arts, and would take up the position on 1 September 2015.
- (b) That Professor Gilson had served as Head of the Italian Department from 2006-09 and Head of the Sub-Faculty of Modern Languages from 2012-14.

RESOLVED:

That Professor Gilson be congratulated on his appointment to the Chair of the Faculty of Arts.

277/14-15 Professor Mark Achtman

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Professor Mark Achtman from the Warwick Medical School had been admitted to the Royal Society alongside 47 new fellows.
- (b) That Professor Achtman was recognised for the important contributions he had made to many fields within bacteriology.
- (c) That Warwick now had a total of 16 academics appointed as fellows to the Royal Society.

RESOLVED:

That Professor Achtman be congratulated on his achievement.

278/14-15 Professor Sébastien Perrier

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That Professor Sébastien Perrier from the Department of Chemistry had been awarded a €1.7 million Consolidator Grant by the European Research Council for his work on tubular supramolecular polymers.

RESOLVED:

That the congratulations of the Steering Committee be extended to Professor Perrier.

279/14-15 Appointment of New Anglican Chaplain

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the Reverend Kate Pearson was formally licensed to become Anglican Chaplain to the University in a ceremony held at Coventry Cathedral on 5 May 2015.
- (b) That the service had been jointly led by the Right Reverend Dr Christopher Cocksworth, Bishop of Coventry, also licensing the Reverend Rosie Deedes as Anglican Chaplain to Coventry University.
- (c) That Reverend Pearson was an excellent addition to the existing multi-faith and interdenominational team at the Chaplaincy.

280/14-15 Campus Developments

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the project to remodel the top of Library Road as a social environment which would eventually be connected to the public space in front of the new WBS building, had been completed.
- (b) That the new roundabout at the top of Gibbet Hill Road had opened two days ahead of schedule, providing an enhanced capacity for traffic in this busy part of campus.

281/14-15 Festival of Social Sciences

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That as part of the ten-day Festival of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Social Sciences had hosted a day of activities at Coventry's new creative hub, Fargo Village, on 9 May 2015.
- (b) That the theme of the day was 'Is Coventry a Sustainable City?', with a programme allowing attendees to explore and understand why social sciences matter within the local community and to discuss topics such as the politics of football to Coventry's future developments with speakers from the Faculty.
- (c) That the event had been very well received by delegates, and was an excellent example of public engagement on behalf of the University.

- (d) That the Festival would run until 16 May 2015, with a variety of events including interactive theatre, films screenings and lectures.

RESOLVED:

That thanks be extended to all colleagues involved in the organisation of the day; notably Mr Martin Mik (Assistant Registrar (Teaching and Learning)) and Ms Charlotte Lewis (Undergraduate Student Experience Officer).

282/14-15 Integration Summit 2015: What Makes a Global Student?

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That on 6 May 2015 Warwick had welcomed delegates from universities and students' unions across the country to a summit hosted jointly with the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA).
- (b) That the summit examined how universities and students' unions could best work together to encourage integration between international and domestic students; with keynote speakers including Professor Dr Juliana Roth from Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich and Professor Helen Spencer-Oatey, Director of Warwick's Centre for Applied Linguistics.

283/14-15 *BIS Consultation on Support for Postgraduate Loans

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Consultation on Support for Postgraduate Loans (SC.132/14-15 {restricted}).

RESOLVED:

That the draft response to the BIS Consultation on Support for Postgraduate Loans be approved for submission as set out in paper SC.132/14-15 {restricted}, subject to the inclusion of the comments from the Steering Committee.

284/14-15 The Sustainability of Learning in Higher Education in England

RECEIVED:

A report outlining the findings of a Financial Sustainability Strategy Group (FSSG) study into the sustainability of learning and teaching in higher education (SC.133/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Group Finance Director)

- (a) That the FSSG, a high-level HEFCE forum that considers strategic and policy issues concerning the financial sustainability of the higher education sector, had conducted a study into the sustainability of learning and teaching in higher education.
- (b) That the FSSG concluded that since the production of its last comparable study in 2008, the sector had responded positively to challenges and the student experience had largely been protected and enhanced, noting however that the impact of the 2012 funding changes may not yet be fully apparent.

- (c) That whilst universities were largely found to have effective management and governance and were financially sustainable, the report noted that as new risks emerged and existing risks became more acute due to the funding changes, a continuation of 'more of the same' may not be adequate to ensure future sustainability.
- (d) That in addition to recommendations to universities around innovation in their approaches to facing the challenges within the sector, recommendations were made to the Government and funders regarding the importance of funding activity at full economic cost and the need to adopt a nuanced approach to regulatory burdens.
- (e) That the findings of the report were in line with Warwick's expectations and confirmed that the challenges the University was facing were replicated across the sector.

285/14-15 Annual Sustainability Assessment by Institutional Governing Bodies

RECEIVED

A report outlining the conclusions of the FSSG evaluation of the pilot of the Annual Sustainability Assurance Report (ASSUR) and the Margin for Sustainability and Investment (MSI) (SC.134/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Group Finance Director)

- (a) That the FSSG had devised the ASSUR process to support institutions in their annual consideration of sustainability and to provide a common reporting mechanism for communication of these considerations to HEFCE.
- (b) That Warwick had submitted an ASSUR statement to HEFCE for the first time in December 2014 as part of its Annual Assurance Return.
- (c) That institutions had also been encouraged to report a "Margin for Sustainability and Investment (MSI)" in their Annual TRAC return, noting that Warwick had complied with this request in January 2015.
- (d) That the MSI was an average of the institution's EBITDA (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation) as a percentage of income, over a six year period incorporating three past results and three future forecasts.
- (e) That under the existing rules for calculating approved overhead recovery rates for government-funded research projects, universities were required to supplement the costs reported in their statutory accounts by two TRAC adjustments: the 'Infrastructure Adjustment' required to reflect the replacement cost of assets and the 'Return for Financing and Investment', which ensured institutions were provided with an appropriate return on investment.
- (f) That the FSSG evaluation had concluded that the MSI should be adopted as a replacement for the two TRAC cost adjustments for purposes of both sustainability assessment and calculating the full economic cost of activities.
- (g) That in line with other institutions, Warwick considered the MSI to be an appropriate measure of financial sustainability.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (h) That the University's ASSUR report and MSI figures were important indicators of its financial sustainability.

286/14-15

Consultation Response: Equality Challenge Unit Subscription Beyond 2015

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) consultation on subscription beyond 2015, as submitted on 8 May 2015 (SC.135/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Human Resources)

- (a) That HEFCE had announced it would no longer be in a position to provide core funding to the ECU for its support to English higher education institutions in advancing equality and diversity and in meeting the requirements of equality legislation.
- (b) That as such, from 1 January 2016, English HEIs would need to subscribe directly to the ECU to continue to access its services, resources and advice, and to take part in equality charters such as Athena SWAN.
- (c) That the consultation responses would inform the composition of a defined package of services and benefits.
- (d) That in line with many other Russell Group institutions, Warwick was of the view that a sliding scale of charges should be implemented, which would enable universities to opt out of any services they did not require.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (e) That as the University wished to maintain its Charter Marks and Athena SWAN status, it would have no choice but to subscribe to the ECU, and as such, Warwick's request for 'accreditation only' to be a clear and optional offer was helpful.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (f) That there would be an additional administration fee of £500 for departmental applications for ECU equality charters, which the Russell Group would continue to make representations against on the grounds that if a subscription model were to be introduced, all costs should be encompassed in that model.