

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 14 February 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr D Stevens.

Apologies: Professor M Taylor.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Director of the International Office (for item 357/10-11), Deputy Director of HR (for item 358/10-11).

394/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2011 be approved subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~, additions underlined):

378/10-11 (...)

- (j) That she was soon to attend a Realising Opportunities Group meeting, and the University was the only institution in the Group that did not ~~offer~~ make differential fees offers.

(...)

379/10-11 (...)

- (b) That a drop in Service ~~Income~~ Increment for Teaching (SIFT) would have a significant impact on the WMS budget.

395/10-11 Universities That Count (minute 56/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A letter from Universities that Count notifying the University of changes in the UtC index (SC.278/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That it was disappointing that the proposed changes may reduce the usefulness of the index with respect to benchmarking the University's activities with business and industry.
- (b) That further details of the changes were expected in due course.

396/10-11

HEFCE Funding for Universities and Colleges in 2010-11 and 2011-12 (minute 382/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A briefing paper on Higher Education Funding Council Grants for 2010/11 and 2011/12, summarising details of the adjustments to the 2010/11 grant to the University and the projected impact on the University of reduction in grant income for 2011/12, by the Group Accountant, Finance Office and the Director of Management Information and Planning (SC.290/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the University's Five Year Plan had been revised in light of recent announcements to show a £1.7m reduction in HEFCE grants for the current year and an expected shortfall of an additional £6m in grant income in 2011/12.
- (b) That the reduction in grant income for 2010/11 would be covered by the safety factor held in the Plan and the projected reductions for 2011/12 would be manageable although would impact on cash flow.
- (c) That HEIF funding for the sector would total £113m for 2011/12 and the University hoped to receive the maximum allocation.
- (d) That no adjustments had been made to the 2010/11 grant based on the HESES student number return.
- (e) That there was concern in the sector at the potential impact of the cuts on some institutions and particularly with respect to the impact on cash flow with the change in funding arrangements in 2012/13.
- (f) That the funds held aside by the HEFCE for transitional funding may not be sufficient to meet the significant shortfall to be experienced by some institutions in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

(by the Academic Registrar):

- (g) That modelling indicated that fourteen units of assessment within the University may experience a reduction in QR funding given the proportion of research rated at 2* or lower, which would no longer be funded.

(by the Vice-Chancellor):

- (h) That, whilst many institutions would find the reductions in HEFCE income to be applied prior to the introduction of the revised fee regime extremely difficult to manage, it was of concern that the HEFCE may propose redistributing funds to support such institutions at the expense of the rest of the sector.

397/10-11

Royal Shakespeare Company and Warwick Business School Collaboration

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the proposed collaboration between the RSC and the Warwick Business School had been approved by the RSC Board.

398/10-11

Nursery

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That congratulations be extended to the Nursery for its achievement in gaining an OFSTED rating of outstanding in a recent inspection.

399/10-11

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Appointment

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That a recommendation would be made to the Council at its meeting on 17 February 2011 that Professor Margot Finn be appointed as a Pro-Vice-Chancellor with her portfolio yet to be confirmed.

(by the Registrar):

(b) That the appointment had been made arising from the 2009/10 Pro-Vice-Chancellor recruitment cycle, noting that the interview with the Appointing Committee had been deferred given Professor Finn's absence on study leave.

(c) That any consideration of Pro-Vice-Chancellor appointment arrangements for 2011/12 would commence later in the Spring Term.

400/10-11

Industrial Action

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

(a) That the UCU had reissued two revised ballot notices, one based on job security and pay and the second on the proposed changes to the USS pension scheme.

(b) That the ballot would run from 17 February to 2 March 2011.

401/10-11

Students' Union Elections

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

(a) That the following individuals had been elected to serve as sabbatical officers for 2011/12:

- President: Leo Boe
- Union Development: George Whitworth
- Democracy: Chris Luck
- Welfare: Izzy John
- Societies: Matt Rodgers
- Sports: Chris Sury

(b) That the election for Education Officer had been postponed given the current Education Officer's recent illness, noting that he intended to stand for re-election.

RESOLVED:

That the Education Officer of the Students' Union be wished a speedy recovery.

402/10-11

International Issues

RECEIVED:

A report on international issues from the Director of the International Office (SC.279/10-11), together with an oral report.

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

- (a) That the British Council had announced that they were to cease subsidising the Education UK Partnership and that the University was awaiting details of the new range of services to be offered by the Council.
- (b) That it was concerning that the UKBA was intending to reduce the numbers of overseas students remaining in the UK via post-study work visas following graduation at a point when the USA was looking at increasing numbers of overseas students permitted to work in the USA after graduation, in recognition of their contribution to the national economy.
- (c) That the University was committed to increasing student mobility but that the additional costs both in terms of central and departmental administrative support and travel costs to the student needed to be recognised. Consideration would need to be given to the fees to be charged for periods of study overseas from 2012.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Sciences):

- (d) That the report drew out examples of the ongoing activities in relation to China, noting that there were a number of additional activities being undertaken by the International Office which were not included in the report.

403/10-11

UKBA Update on the Points Based System

RECEIVED:

A briefing paper from the Deputy Director of Human Resources and the HR Officer (Immigration) (SC.277/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Director of HR)

- (a) That the Deputy Director of Human Resources and the HR Officer (Immigration) had attended a meeting convened by UCEA at which a UKBA representative had updated the sector on measures to be introduced from April 2011 to manage immigration, noting that the proposals have not yet been laid before Parliament.
- (b) That it was confirmed that Tier 1 would be closed to all except very small numbers of "persons of exceptional talent".
- (c) That the cap of 20,700 visas to be awarded under Tier 2 for 2011/12 would not apply to those employees already holding visas and working in the UK nor to applicants from EU member states.
- (d) That Tier 2 visa applicants with shortage skills, holding a degree and receiving a salaries over a stated minimum level would be prioritised and that the proposed process would therefore be likely to favour the HE sector.
- (e) That applications would be reviewed on a monthly basis with any remaining being carried forward to the following month.

404/10-11

BIS Guidance Letter to OFFA

RECEIVED:

Guidance to the Director of Fair Access issued by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and further information on the National Scholarship Scheme (SC.291/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the coalition government were concerned at the potential numbers of institutions which appeared to be intending to charge the maximum £9000 tuition fee from 2012/13 and were attempting to use the requirements relating to widening participation to limit fees charged.
- (b) That the details of the proposals remained unclear and it was hoped that the guidance expected from OFFA later in February would provide greater clarity.

(by the Deputy Registrar):

- (c) That the timetable for submission of Access Agreements had been deferred to "early/ mid-April" with guidance from OFFA now expected towards the end of February.
- (d) That the letter was strongly worded and sanctions were threatened if institutions did not respond appropriately.
- (e) That additional statistics on admissions would be required in the Key Information Set (KIS).
- (f) That BIS were encouraging institutions to take a collaborative approach to access activities.
- (g) That the National Scholarship Scheme would be phased in and that the documentation indicated in general terms what measures would constitute an institutional contribution to the Scheme.

(by the Academic Registrar):

- (h) That institutional targets on access were expected to be proportionate to the level of fee charged.
- (i) That some additional data required was expected to be provided to institutions by UCAS.
- (j) That it was possible that the University would be required to invest the same proportion of additional fee income in access activities from 2012 as has been invested since 2006, which for the University would be approximately 25%.

405/10-11

EPSRC Doctoral Training Grant

RECEIVED:

A pre-announcement letter from the EPSRC notifying the University of its 2011 Doctoral Training Grant allocation (SC.276/10-11) together with an oral report by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies.

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (a) That in the official offer letter the EPSRC would set out in detail its requirements relating to postgraduate research training but it was clear that expectations would be enhanced.

- (b) That the EPSRC would now support overseas students on studentships but that departments would need to fund the differential between the Home/EU and overseas fee.
- (c) That the EPSRC Doctoral Prize would be continued but would be funded through the main DTG allocation.
- (d) That the University had achieved its CASE conversion targets.

(Note: In response to a query raised in the meeting it has since been confirmed that the DTG allocation for 2011 has increased by approximately £300k on the 2010 allocation.)

406/10-11 Capital Investment Framework (CIF) 1 and 2

RECEIVED:

A report from the HEFCE providing metrics generated under the Capital Investment Framework (CIF) 1 and 2, together with an oral report by the Director of Estates (SC.284/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the metrics for CIF1 data did not account for all commercial income for the institution.
- (b) That, while some of the most recent metrics based on data for 2009 showed the University to be an outlier in comparison with the TRAC Group and Sector values in some areas, more recent calculations showed that performance was improving, particularly for carbon reduction and affordability.
- (c) That high levels of water consumption were likely to be due to the significant number of residences on campus, in comparison with other institutions, although it was noted that water consumption was likely to become an increasingly important metric and thus consideration needed to be given to this issue.
- (d) That the HEFCE was continuing to monitor metrics on capital investment while significantly reducing its capital funding for institutions.

RESOLVED:

That a formal response to the HEFCE be drafted by the Director of Estates on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor outlining concerns about the accuracy of the measurements used for CIF.

407/10-11 HEFCE Funding for Universities and Colleges in 2010-11 and 2011-12 (minute 382/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

A UUK summary of the provisional allocation of HEFCE funding for English HEIs in 2010-11 and 2011-12, and the ITT allocations for 2011-12 (SC.282/10-11).

408/10-11 EC Consultation on Promotion and Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (minute 321/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the European Commission's consultation on promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning (SC.280/10-11).

409/10-11 HEFCE Public Information and Graduate Salary Data (minute 362/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

The University's responses to HEFCE's plan to include subject-level graduate salary information on the Unistats website from summer 2011 plans (SC.281/10-11).

410/10-11 Russell Group Publication "Informed Choices"

RECEIVED:

A Russell Group guide for students making decisions about post-16 education (SC.283/10-11).

411/10-11 HEFCE Review of JISC (minute 102/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

A report setting out the findings and recommendations of the HEFCE Review of the strategy, activities and effectiveness of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) (SC.292/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Feb11/14Feb11