

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe (except for item 491 a)/10-11),
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Winstanley (except for items 488 a) and b)/10-11),
Mr D Stevens.

Apologies: Professor A Caesar.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR (from item 480/10-11), Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Co-Directors of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (for item 488/10-11), Director of the Institute of Advanced Study (for item 489/10-11), Acting Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 490/10-11), Director of Student Careers and Skills (for item 491/10-11).

479/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2011 be approved.

480/10-11 Tuition Fees and Access Agreement (minute 464/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A paper summarising the issues raised at the meeting of the Steering Committee on 10 March 2011, regarding 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, revised).

REPORTED (by the Academic Registrar):

- (a) That the paper had been amended in light of discussions by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 10th March, setting out recommendations to the Senate for consideration at its meeting to be held on 16th March and identifying areas where further consideration of proposals was required.
- (b) That it was unclear whether HEFCE Teaching grant for students enrolled on an intercalated year or a year abroad may be reduced under the new funding arrangements and this would need to be considered in relation to the level of the fee.
- (c) 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 compared favourably with other Russell Group institutions.

- (d) That it was proposed that the University retain the framework of the current bursary scheme, although extending the support available to students with annual family incomes of up to £42k.
- (e) That the National Scholarship Scheme required match funding from the University and this could include fee waivers and other forms of maintenance support.
- (f) That further work would be undertaken to identify and prioritise specific outreach activity that might contribute to achieving participation and access targets.

(by the Registrar)

- (g) That changes in funding mechanisms for the sector would have a particularly significant impact on the Centre for Lifelong Learning.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (h) That the Students' Union was opposed in principle to the increase in fees, and had hoped for collective decision making by institutions to charge fees at the lowest possible level.

RESOLVED:

- (a) Fees

The proposals as set out in paper SC.347/10-11 (revised) be approved and recommended to the Senate.

- (b) Student Support and Access Expenditure Principles

- (i) That the proposal that the University set aside 30% of the additional fee income from fees above £6k to fund student support, fair access and outreach expenditure be supported;
- (ii) That consideration be given to a range of maintenance options in addition to proposals for fee waivers in relation to the National Scholarship Programme.

- (b) Access

That the proposal that targets be linked to low socio-economic class, state school education, mature entrants and numbers of students from low participation neighbourhoods be supported, noting that more detailed work would need to be carried out to ensure that the level of targets was achievable with reference to current performance against benchmarks..

481/10-11 HEFCE Annual Accountability Returns Requirements (minute 464/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the HEFCE setting out their requirement for the submission of annual accountability information (SC.355/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the University had submitted its Five Year Plan to the HEFCE in December 2010 and would now be sending a revised "light touch" version.

(by the Registrar)

- (b) That the revised financial plan would be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 18th March.

482/10-11 Liberating the NHS: Developing the Healthcare Work Force (minute 379/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Dean and Pro Dean of Warwick Medical School, with the University's draft response to the Department of Health's consultation "Liberating the NHS: Developing the Healthcare Work Force" (SC.326/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That postgraduate deaneries in the UK were responsible for the commissioning of medical education post-graduation and also for commissioning of salaried placements.
- (b) That it was important to take advantage of any local opportunities that arise and that discussions with the West Midlands Postgraduate Dean would continue, noting that the Deanery drew on three medical schools in the West Midlands.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the "Liberating the NHS: Developing the Healthcare Work Force" consultation paper be approved for submission prior to the deadline of 31 March 2011.

483/10-11 Consultation on Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation (minute 388/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A Europe Unit note providing details of the European Commission's Green Paper on the proposal for a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation (SC.349/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the EU was consulting on the amalgamation of the administrative processes for its research funding streams.

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

- (b) That the University's response should acknowledge support for the improved efficiencies the proposals would generate, but note that a separate stream of funding for the social sciences should be maintained and that research excellence should be a fundamental criterion of the funding mechanism.

RESOLVED:

That the International Research Development Officer (Research Support Services) draft the University's response to the Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation consultation, for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to the deadline of 20 May 2011.

484/10-11 Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (minute 315/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Technology Strategy Board regarding the proposed changes to the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) (SC.354/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the Technology Strategy Board (TSB) had decided that their core funding for the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) programme should continue to be broadly based, rather than focussing on the TSB's key priority areas.

(by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That the move was welcomed, although there remained concern over the remaining focus on supporting SMEs.

485/10-11 QAA: Recruitment of Student Reviewers for the Institutional Review Process

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the QAA regarding the nomination of student reviewers for Institutional Review (SC.356/10-11).

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Registrar would discuss the potential nomination of candidates for the role of student reviewer for the QAA Institutional Review process further with the President of the Students' Union and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience.

486/10-11 Students' Union Update

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

- (a) That Sean Ruston had been re-elected to serve as the sabbatical Education Officer for 2011/12.
- (b) That following two referenda, the Students' Union had not voted for the introduction of a no platform policy, and had agreed to lift the restriction on sponsorship for student societies from a banned list of companies.

487/10-11 Future meetings of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the two "if required" meetings of the Steering Committee on 11th and 18th April 2011 would be held.

488/10-11 IATL update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Co-Directors of the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) on current activity (SC.328/10-11).

REPORTED: (by Professor Carol Rutter)

- (a) That Dr Paul Taylor had been appointed as Director of IATL for one year in the first instance, and that the recruitment process was underway for the appointments of an Assistant Professor and a Teaching Fellow/Practitioner from 1 August 2011.
- (b) That the Institute had run a survey of students on student engagement which had had a 50% response rate; further qualitative research would be undertaken and an initial analysis of the results would be published by June 2011.
- (c) That a number of themes emerged from the "What is Feedback?" event hosted by IATL, grouped in the areas of new practice, timetabling and procedures, and training and support and that the Institute was working with colleagues to develop an action plan to take these outcomes forward.
- (d) That IATL were working with colleagues in the Warwick Business School and the Department of English to develop and pilot interdisciplinary modules.

489/10-11 IAS Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of the Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) on current activity (SC.352/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the Institute of Advanced Study)

- (a) That the deadline for the Postdoctoral Research Fellowship competition was 8 March 2011, and approximately 150 eligible applications had been received, noting that the duration of the Fellowships had been extended to two years.
- (b) That the Visiting Fellowships scheme had been extended to enable a stay for up to three months, without any significant additional costs.
- (c) That a set of Key Performance Indicators had been developed to assess the impact of IAS on research across the University since 2007.
- (d) That accommodation for IAS Fellows remained a potential issue in light of future expansion of the scheme.

490/10-11 Admissions and Recruitment update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office, providing an overview of developments in admissions, recruitment and widening participation, together with an oral report from the Acting Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (SC.345/10-11).

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

- (a) That applications to postgraduate research courses had increased, noting that the establishment of additional Doctoral Training Centres, the launch of the Chancellor's International Scholarships and the amalgamation of the admissions and postgraduate funding application forms were expected to have contributed to this increase.
- (b) That the decline in applications for undergraduate study was considered to be largely due to the increase in grade requirements for popular courses, although the quality of the applicant pool was high.

- (c) That the 2012 undergraduate prospectus had now been published, and had been delivered two months earlier than the previous year's edition, in time for the first UCAS fairs.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (d) That further analysis would be undertaken to assess whether the more demanding offer levels made for some courses may impact on recruitment of under-represented groups of students.
- (e) That the entire marketing package for prospective students was to be reviewed in conjunction with the Communications Office.

(by the Registrar)

- (f) That the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office had been nominated for a Times Higher Education Leadership and Management award.

491/10-11 HESA DLHE Consultation Results

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Student Careers and Skills, summarising the recently published update from HESA on the outcome of the review of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey (SC.353/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Careers and Skills)

- (a) That the inclusion of two questions seeking students' opinions on the extent to which their courses prepared them for work was of particular concern, given that this represented a move away from a purely factual survey.
- (b) That the census point would remain at 6 months after graduation, which was felt to be a poor indicator of long-term employability following graduation.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the Vice-Chancellor would write to the Chief Executive of HESA to express concern about the inclusion of the questions on students' opinions, particularly that relating to entrepreneurship.

492/10-11 Qtr 2 End - ARC and Devolved Departments

RECEIVED:

A report setting out the 2010/11 Quarter 2 financial position for academic departments, including WMS and WBS, together with an oral report by the Academic Registrar(SC.342/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the Gross Surplus showed a favourable variance although there had been adjustments to the Central Service Charge and therefore to the Operating Surplus.
- (b) That where adverse variances in gross surplus against budget were observed, discussion between these departments and ARC would continue.

- 493/10-11 GMC Quality Assurance Regional Visit 2011/12
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from the General Medical Council (GMC) noting that the Warwick Medical School had been chosen to be visited as part of the GMC's cycle of quality assurance visits in 2011/12 (SC.340/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)
- That the visit would be held between October and December 2011 and, although this constituted a pilot visit, the GMC would still utilise full statutory powers.
- 494/10-11 Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS)
- CONSIDERED:
- A note from UUK inviting institutions to participate in both the Careers in Research Online Survey (CROS) and Principal Investigators and Research Leaders Survey (PIRLS) (SC.330/10-11).
- RESOLVED:
- That further consideration would be given the completion of the PIRLS survey by the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Research) and the Director of Research Support Services.
- 495/10-11 Costing Study of Two-Year Accelerated Honours Degrees
- RECEIVED:
- A report on the outcomes of the HEFCE commissioned study of the costs to higher education institutions of delivering honours degrees intensively over two years (SC.337/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)
- That the costings had not taken into consideration research intensive institutions and were based on speculative assumptions at course level.
- 496/10-11 An Evaluation of the HEFCE Leadership, Governance and Management Fund
- RECEIVED:
- A report summarising the findings from a review of the HEFCE Leadership, Governance and Management Fund (LGM Fund) (SC.338/10-11).
- 497/10-11 School for Public Health Research – Call for Applications
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK note regarding the opening of a new call to invite applications for a new School for Public Health Research, established by the national Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (SC.339/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)
- That Warwick Medical School would be submitting a bid.

- 498/10-11 EC Consultation on Priorities for Modernisation of HE in Europe
- CONSIDERED:
- A Europe Unit questionnaire to assist the development of a sector-wide submission to the European Commission's consultation on policy priorities in the development of a new Communication on the Modernisation of Higher Education (SC.351/10-11).
- RESOLVED:
- That the Academic Registrar would draft the University's response to the European Commission's consultation on policy priorities for modernisation of higher education in Europe, prior to the deadline of 15 March 2011.
- 499/10-11 Memberships of Senate Committees
- RESOLVED:
- That Professor Victor Zammit be recommended to the Council as one of the two co-opted internal members of the Research Ethics Committee.
- 500/10-11 University Nursery Ofsted report (minute 398/10-11 referred)
- RECEIVED:
- The University Nursery's Ofsted inspection report for early years provision (SC.343/10-11).
- 501/10-11 National Curriculum Review - Call for Evidence
- RECEIVED:
- The Department of Education's Call for Evidence in the first phase of the review of the National Curriculum for 5-16 year olds in England (SC.350/10-11).
- 502/10-11 HEFCE: Financial Health of the Higher Education Sector
- RECEIVED:
- A report from HEFCE on the Financial Health of the Higher Education Sector, with 2009-10 financial results and 2010-11 forecasts (SC.359/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Mar11/14Mar11