

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 14 May 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor S Croft,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor S Swain,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr L Bøe (from item 495(e)/11-12).

Apologies: Professor M Finn, Professor T Jones.

In Attendance: Registrar (except for items 498 (a) and (b)/11-12), Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of Estates (from item 495(d)/11-12), Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Assistant Registrar (Institutional Review) (for items 495/11-12 to 497/11-12), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 498/11-12).

494/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 2012 be approved.

495/11-12 Institutional Teaching and Learning Review: Outcomes of the Faculty Engagements and Consideration of the Faculty Engagement Reports (minute 297/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A summary paper on the outcomes of the Faculty Engagements following the Institutional Teaching and Learning Review (SC.339/11-12).
- (b) A report on the outcomes of the Faculty Engagement for the Faculty of Arts held on 16 March 2012 (TLR.96/11-12).
- (c) A report on the outcomes of the Faculty Engagement for the Faculties of Science with the Faculty of Medicine held on 22 March 2012 (TLR.97/11-12).
- (d) A report on the outcomes of the Faculty Engagement for the Faculty of Social Sciences held on 19 March 2012 (TLR.98/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the Steering Committee's role was to provide an institutional perspective on emerging issues and themes identified in the Faculty Engagement, to enable the Chairs of the Faculties to prioritise issues and items for further consideration through the Faculty Boards (and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience through the Academic Quality and Standards Committee).
- (b) That consideration by the Steering Committee was intended to ensure an appropriate level of institutional scrutiny and review in line with both the objectives of the

Teaching and Learning Review and the expectations within the national quality framework.

- (c) That the topics introduced by the Chairs of the Faculties in this meeting were to report the content of discussions at the Faculty Engagements, noting that some opinions expressed were not necessarily those of the Faculty or the Chair of the Faculty.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience)

- (d) That discussion at the Faculty Engagements had been open and constructive, noting that some individual opinions expressed were not necessarily those of the University or departments.

- (e) The role, rights and responsibilities of Teaching Fellows

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (i) That views relating to Teaching Fellows had arisen across a number of the Faculties' discussion.
- (ii) That the Human Resources website contained information on role profiles for Teaching Fellows, together with the procedure for promotion and requisite levels of pedagogic research to be reached, but that optimal communication of these procedures had not yet been achieved.
- (iii) That it had been recommended that the University explore further the extension of career development opportunities for Teaching Fellows, to help raise their profile and improve perceptions of the critical role that they play.
- (iv) That many Teaching Fellows were committed to innovation in teaching, typically working closely with Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning, but that Heads of Departments had variable expectations regarding the role and contribution of Teaching Fellows.
- (v) That the nomenclature of Teaching Fellow could be reviewed in the light of the range of activity undertaken.
- (vi) That an element of flexibility had been suggested, to enable Teaching Fellows to move between a teaching-specialist and combined teaching and research route as their career progressed.
- (vii) That Teaching Fellows might be able to contribute to the research impact profile of the University in some circumstances.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (viii) That the Academic Resourcing Committee continued to consider each case for teaching and learning resources on its own merits with balanced and holistic decisions, based on department and University strategic objectives, made as a result.

(by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (ix) That he would exercise caution in the provision of flexibility between the teaching-specialist and combined teaching and research routes given the University's ambitions and aspirations.
- (x) That there were good recent examples of the career progression route for Teaching Fellows being utilised with appointments through to the rank of Professorial Teaching Fellow.

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

- (xi) That departments were addressing strategic issues within their bids to ARC for Teaching Fellows and that this was demonstrated by the variety of aspects being incorporated into the roles.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (xii) That there was already a clearly defined career structure for Teaching Fellows, and that all Teaching Fellows should be demonstrating teaching excellence and innovation as a matter of course, which was also an expectation for all academic staff.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience)

- (xiii) That work was being undertaken to provide opportunities for greater visibility for the work of Teaching Fellows outside their own department.

(by the Registrar)

- (xiv) That any contribution made by an individual in a department, be it teaching, research, or administrative, should be driven by the pursuit of excellence.

(f) Consideration of teaching and learning resources by the Academic Resourcing Committee (ARC).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (i) That it was recommended that further thought be given to whether additional weight should be given to consideration of teaching and learning in the development and implementation of a department's strategy by ARC.
- (ii) That there were several common resource requests received by ARC, for example in Widening Participation, and that a clear University position and associated level of potential funding available to address these resourcing requests would be beneficial.
- (iii) That the Faculty Engagements had perhaps placed slightly more emphasis on the issues facing the undergraduate student population given the current external context, but that teaching and learning issues for the postgraduate student population were of equal importance to the University.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (iv) That the broad cases brought to ARC and Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group meant that it was neither possible nor desirable to separate teaching and learning issues from other areas of academic activity.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (v) That the ARC planning process had been enhanced over the past two years to provide a more holistic and strategic view of the full range of a department's activities.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (vi) That the Steering Committee and ARC should continue to communicate clearly to all colleagues that teaching and learning excellence was a key

strategic objective of the University and was not subordinate to research excellence.

(g) The role of the Faculties and Faculty Boards in the promotion of the enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning provision

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Social Science)

- (i) That there had been broad discussion regarding the appropriate split of responsibilities between Faculty Chairs, Heads of Department, Faculty Boards and University teaching quality bodies regarding the promotion of the enhancement of teaching and learning provision across the University, and also how to continue monitoring issues for feedback to Faculty Boards.
- (ii) That there was the need for the enhancement of the capacity of the Faculty Board and its sub-committees to focus on strategic developments and that further consideration needed to be given to ensure that devolution of some teaching quality responsibilities to departments was functioning effectively.

(by the Registrar)

- (iii) That it would be important to capture discussion from the Faculty Boards on inclusion in teaching and accessibility of teaching, including disability.

(h) The University's internationalisation strategy

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience)

- (i) That departments had demonstrated considerable interest in internationalisation, but sought clarification regarding the University's key objectives in relation to its internationalisation strategy.
- (ii) That further work was planned to define more precisely what "every student is an international student" means in practice.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the three Faculty Engagement reports (see papers TLR96/11-12 (Arts), TLR97/11-12 (Science with Medicine) and TLR98/11-12 (Social Sciences)) be disseminated to the Faculty Boards and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for further consideration, noting that there were a number of comments and recommendations which did not align with current University policy or expectations and that factual inaccuracies would be fed back to the relevant committees.
- (b) That the Faculty Boards would consider the three Faculty Engagement reports for factual accuracy, and provide further comment on the recommendations included in the reports, for recommendation to the Senate.
- (c) That the request for an update on progress on action taken in response to any agreed recommendations be made in November 2012, with progress to be reviewed by the Faculty Boards at regular intervals thereafter.
- (d) That the Steering Committee consider further the outcomes, including the specific recommendations within the reports, of the engagements subsequent to their scrutiny by the Faculty Boards and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, before being considered by the Senate by the end of the 2011/12 academic year.

496/11-12 Open Day

RESOLVED:

That the University Open Day held on Saturday 12 May 2012 had been a success, and the thanks of the Steering Committee be extended to all staff and students involved in the organisation of the day.

497/11-12 Format of Future Reviews of Departments

CONSIDERED:

A paper highlighting the recommended format of future reviews of departments, as recommended by the Institutional Review Steering Group (SC.340/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Assistant Registrar (Institutional Review))

- (a) That the University's Strategic Departmental Review (SDR) process had been suspended since the Harris Review in 2010, and the review of the SDR process had been put on hold whilst the Institutional Review took place.
- (b) That the Institutional Review Steering Group invited the Steering Committee to provide views on the format of future reviews to inform subsequent detailed consideration by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, the Boards of the Faculties and the Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies.
- (c) That the Institutional Review Steering Group recommended that the current teaching and learning review model be continued, so that the institution's teaching and learning provision was fully reviewed at the same time on a periodic basis, with an interim review process taking place in the middle of the cycle.
- (d) That the Institutional Review Steering Group also recommended that a department's other activities be reviewed through existing mechanisms covering research review and business planning, nothing that where concerns were raised about the performance of a particular department, ARC would convene an external review panel as required as at present.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (e) That there was a need to consider and define a separate, yet proportionate, review of departmental research strategies and priorities in addition to that undertaken in relation to REF, as exceptional reviews undertaken by ARC would only address specific issues of concern, rather than proactively strengthen performance and positioning.

(by the Registrar)

- (f) That a periodic review of the administration in academic departments could supplement the review of central administrative units.
- (g) That further consideration should be given to the reporting and decision making lines outlined in the paper.
- (h) That the University should aim to have appropriate strategic planning in place to prevent departments requiring an exceptional review by ARC.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the future approach to teaching and learning review recommended by the Institutional Review Steering Group be supported as set out in paper SC.340/11-12,

subject to the amendments discussed in the meeting, noting that following the consideration of the proposals by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee at its next meeting, the revised proposals will be brought forward for consideration by the Senate.

- (b) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Academic Registrar consider further any supplemental processes required to ensure that effective strategic review and development of the full range of a department's activities is undertaken and communicated to key stakeholders, inclusive of teaching, research and administrative elements.

498/11-12 Admissions and Recruitment Update

CONSIDERED:

An update on the current application figures and developments in admissions, recruitment, outreach and widening participation (SC.341/11-12).

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

- (a) That some departments were likely to need to admit Home/EU applicants below the AAB+ threshold to achieve their specific target numbers.
- (b) That, contingent on the precise pattern of conversion and entry profiles across the overall portfolio, careful management would be necessary to ensure that the student number control core of 703 (comprising HEU students who do not satisfy the HEFCE-designated AAB+ or equivalent threshold) was not compromised.
- (c) That total postgraduate applications had increased overall, although this increase was driven primarily by more overseas postgraduate taught applicants.
- (d) That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting held on 3 May 2012, resolved not to introduce an annual deadline for taught postgraduate applications.
- (e) That the Board of Graduate Studies also resolved to consider the impact of the introduction of a deposit for self-funding international students at a future meeting.
- (f) That Outreach and Widening Participation activities included support of the Talent 2030 initiative with a trip to take twenty female Year 9 students to the CERN facility in Geneva, and development of the Realising Opportunities programme.
- (g) That there had not been strong take up of the Russell Group's Dux scheme, which encouraged top achievers in secondary schools to visit a Russell Group institution.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (h) That, following discussion by the Steering Committee and in-principle agreement, the potential to run two back-to-back open days on a Friday and Saturday in June 2013 was being explored, to increase capacity and help avoid the clash with AS level examinations associated with the current May date.
- (i) That a margin would be built into the admissions process to ensure that the Student Number Control was not exceeded.
- (j) That the HEFCE recently announced that, following the removal of controls from AAB+ students for 2012-13, the Government have broadened this approach for 2013-14 to include ABB+ students.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (k) That consideration should be given to a postgraduate open day held in spring, in order to capture final year undergraduate students at an optimal time.
- (l) That it was critical that the conversion rate of postgraduate students did not fall.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (m) That, while an 8% drop was seen in the number of Home/EU postgraduate taught applications, it would be helpful to understand how many of these students were from the UK.
- (n) That he would support the introduction of a postgraduate open day held in spring.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (o) That raising offers was an institutional position and, unless there was a clear case within a department's strategic plan, there was no expectation that the offer level should be lowered.

RESOLVED:

That a draft of the University's 2012-13 Access Agreement, revised to cover Initial Teacher Training provision, be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 31 May 2012.

499/11-12

Research Strategy Update

RECEIVED:

An update report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and the Director of Research Support Services on research strategy activity within the University (SC.343/11-12).

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

- (a) That research income in the sector has been growing year-on-year and therefore while the external environment is in some respects challenging, it is not true that there is less research income available.
- (b) That the Research Committee had approved two further outline Global Priorities Programmes, with working titles of Materials and Cities, with opportunities to tie-in with the University's partnership with Boston.

(by the Registrar)

- (c) That there had been recent discussions regarding the resourcing and advanced monitoring of business engagement within Science City, and that proposals would shortly be shared with those involved.

500/11-12

Fees Working Group Report

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Fees Working Group, with recommendations for changes to standard fee levels for 2013/14 (SC.342/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the Fees Working Group had requested that the Students' Union submit their view on the recommendations, and that the issues raised were taken into account.
- (b) That it was thought unlikely that the Government's position on no inflation increases to the Home/EU undergraduate fee would change in subsequent years of the financial plan and that this assumption had been applied, with a significant negative impact on income in later years of the Plan.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (c) That it would be helpful if departments that requested higher fee levels could be asked to consider the Students' Union policy position as outlined to the Fees Working Group.
- (d) That the Students' Union would monitor the effect of changing fee levels on the diversity of the student cohort, regarding the number and background of international students in particular.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (e) That, given the postgraduate taught Home/EU fee level was higher at Warwick than other institutions in the sector, trends in application levels should be monitored over time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed inclusion of a zero fee inflation assumption in the plan for 2013/14 for 2+2 and part-time undergraduate fees, and that these fees be kept inflated in line with the rate applicable to standard full-time undergraduate fees from 2014/15 onwards as set out in paper SC.342/11-12 be approved.
- (b) That the proposed fee inflation rate for 2013/14 of 4.5%, to be applied to Overseas undergraduate fees (for both new and continuing students), be approved.
- (c) That the proposed fee inflation rate for 2013/14 of 4.5%, to be applied to Home/EU postgraduate taught fees, be approved.
- (d) That the proposed fee inflation rate for 2013/14 of 4.5%, to be applied to Overseas postgraduate taught fees, be approved.
- (e) That the proposed realignment of the University's PGR fee with the RCUK recommended fee from 2013/14, bringing the standard PGR fee to an estimated £3,925 for 2013/14, be approved.
- (f) That the proposed fee inflation rate for 2013/14 of 4.5%, to be applied to Overseas postgraduate research fees, be approved.

501/11-12

RCUK Consultation on a Capital Investment Roadmap (minute 478/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

The University's submission to the RCUK Consultation on a Capital Investment Roadmap (SC.349/11-12).

502/11-12

HEFCE Consultation on Improving quality assurance in higher education

REPORTED:

That the University's response to the HEFCE Consultation on Improving quality assurance in higher education on the introduction of a more risk-based approach to quality assurance, would be overseen by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), and be considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 31 July 2012.

KMS/KP/steershare/minutes/201112/May12/14May12