

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 14 June 2010

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr A Bradley.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Professor S Palmer, Director of Estates, Finance Director, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of the International Office (for items 592/09-10 and 593/09-10), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 595/09-10), Director of RSS (for items 596/09-10 and 597/09-10).

588/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2010 be approved, subject to the following amendment (deletions ~~struck through~~, additions underlined):

576/09-10

That the recommendation had been reached following considerable due diligence and evidence gathering across the Faculty of Science given the sensitive and strategic nature of the proposal, noting that it was believed by the working group that the recommendation was the preferable option for teaching and learning research, as well as for the development of a strategy for Engineering at Warwick.

589/09-10 HEFCE University Modernisation Fund (minute 568/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

Letters from HEFCE confirming that the University had been awarded a) recurrent funding of £144k to support the movement of full-time undergraduate numbers into strategically important and vulnerable subjects for 2010/11 and b) additional support for 60 additional new entrants in Biological Sciences and Economics for 2010/11 (SC.393/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the award of additional numbers was subject to the £82M of additional savings announced by the Chancellor on 24 May 2010 which had not been taken into account in determining the amounts allocated and that final funding for institutions would be confirmed in July 2010.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That, in order to realise the additional savings, it was expected that HEFCE would impose a pro-rata reduction to institutions' teaching grant allocations.

590/09-10

Guardian League Table

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the league table, released by The Guardian on 8 June 2010, ranked the University of Warwick 3rd overall in the UK.
- (b) That the table also ranked Warwick as top in the UK for Business and Management, American Studies, Theatre Studies and Film Studies, 3rd in the UK for Sociology, 4th for Classics, Mathematics and Economics and 5th for English.

591/09-10

Speech by the Minister for Universities and Science

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That he had attended a speech given by David Willetts, the new Minister for Universities and Science, at Oxford Brookes University and that, amongst other things, the Minister had encouraged universities to consider the notion of externally validated degrees, whereby the University would establish the curriculum and examine the degree but the teaching would be franchised to, for example, Further Education colleges or other bodies, as a means of cutting costs.
- (b) That it was anticipated that this idea would not receive widespread support in the sector.

592/09-10

OFFA Report on Widening Access

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Academic Registrar summarizing the conclusions and recommendations of the recent report on widening access to highly selective universities published by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), together with Warwick's response to the recommendations (SC.400/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

- (a) That the University welcomed the report on widening access, noting that, whilst the University was already undertaking activities which addressed many of the OFFA recommendations, there were also interesting challenges with regards to mechanisms for analysing the impact of Warwick's widening access activities and for engaging schools at an earlier stage.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (b) That consideration should be given to exploiting IGGY as a widening participation activity for younger pupils.
- (c) That there had been resistance to the notion of universities making a decreased offer to prospective students from lower participation backgrounds in Coventry and Warwickshire in order to ensure that young people were aiming to reach their full potential.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience))

- (d) That, in light of the difficult discussions around the HEFCE Realising Opportunities project previously reported to the Committee, it was encouraging that the OFFA report encouraged institutions to develop their own methodologies for widening participation.

593/09-10

Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Participation

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of the International Office providing members with an overview of developments in admissions, recruitment and widening participation (SC.392/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

- (a) That at undergraduate level, the allocation of the additional new entrants for 2010 by HEFCE and the reforms of most A-Level curricula, had increased the complexity of the recruitment position but, overall, the University was set to meet its targets for 2010/11 entry.
- (b) That there had been significant increases in applications at postgraduate taught and research levels.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That the University would continue to monitor developments relating to the UK Border Agency's Highly Trusted Sponsor scheme and its potential impact on the admission of international students.
- (d) That it was clear that several departments had made significant efforts in recruitment for 2010/11, including a number for which recruitment had been difficult in recent years, noting that changes had been effected in some departments to achieve these positive recruitment figures.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee congratulate those academic departments who had made significant efforts in the recruitment process for 2010/11, resulting in improved positions compared to the previous years.

594/09-10

Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy providing an update on fundraising in 2009/10, the recording of philanthropic activities outside of DARO, the disestablishment of the Warwick Graduates' Association and the 'Lifetime Academy' (SC.398/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy)

- (a) That the fundraising income from DARO was predicted to be between £3.6M and £4.6M for 2009/10, noting that the lower estimate would be below the previous year's record income of £4M.
- (b) That the recruitment to the three currently vacant fundraising posts in DARO would have a significant impact on the ability of the office to raise funds, noting that 1.5 FTE would be funded by Warwick Business School.

(By the Finance Director)

- (c) That the proposal to report all philanthropic income as a total rather than separated by the responsible office (DARO, Research Support Services or other) would bring Warwick inline with other institutions and would not affect the institution's ability to fulfill its statutory accounting requirements.

(By the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (d) That the Warwick Medical School was supportive of the proposed 'Lifetime Academy'.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (e) That consideration should be given to adopting the US 'class system' which would help create specific networks (online or physical) for graduates and might engage them in alumni activities at an earlier stage.

RECOMMENDED: (to the Council)

That the proposal to disestablish the Warwick Graduates' Association as set out in SC.398/09-10 be approved, noting that revisions would be necessary to the University's governing instruments.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee note the many achievements of the Warwick Graduates' Association and record its thanks to the Executive Committee members for their stewardship and counsel.
- (b) That the Committee record its congratulations to the Warwick in Africa team for its progress and increasing coverage of its achievements.

595/09-10

Teaching Quality Update

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) providing an update on teaching and learning issues, including the review of the course and module approval process, the Kings-Warwick project and the National Student Survey (SC.382/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the Teaching Quality team was working with the Students' Union to identify the factors and activities which led to an increased institutional response rate to the National Student Survey (63.34 per cent compared to 61.65 per cent in 2009), with a view to expanding these for the next survey.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (b) That it should be acknowledged that, should the proposed delegation to departments for course and module approval be implemented, the quality assurance processes, internal and external, would focus on departments and the University need to seek assurance that the processes would be consistent, robust and appropriately recorded, noting that the future form of the quality assurance of teaching and learning nationally was unclear.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience))

- (c) That an internal audit of all undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision would take place in the Autumn Term 2010 to access information relating to modules across the institution with a view to identifying areas of overlap or possible options for streamlining course offerings.
- (d) That a Festival of Learning, celebrating teaching at King's and Warwick, would take place on 14 September 2010 and that good representation from Warwick was expected.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (e) That the Working Group reviewing the University's course and module approval process noted the request from the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences regarding the urgent development of an electronic system to support the process; it being noted, however, that the forthcoming audit of provision was the immediate priority and the consideration of technical developments would follow in due course.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (f) That the Board of Graduate Studies felt it was important for the guidance and revised module and course approval forms to be considered and circulated to departments in advance of the next academic year.

596/09-10 Proposal for an EPSRC Doctoral Centre in High Value, Low Carbon Manufacturing

CONSIDERED:

A draft proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group to EPSRC for a Doctoral Centre in High Value, Low Carbon Manufacturing (SC.401/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the strategic and competitive case for securing an EPSRC Manufacturing Doctoral Centre at Warwick was important.
- (b) That the commitment of three Warwick Collaborative Postgraduate Research Scholarship Scheme (WCPRS) per annum would represent a formal University contribution to this proposal.

RESOLVED:

That the draft proposal for an EPSRC Doctoral Centre in High Value, Low Carbon Manufacturing be approved for submission to EPSRC by 24 June 2010 as set out in SC.401/09-10, subject to reassurance by Warwick Manufacturing Group that the industrial funding proposed in the application could be secured.

597/09-10 Proposal for an EPSRC Centre in Innovative Manufacturing in Lightweight Vehicles

CONSIDERED:

A draft outline proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group to EPSRC for a Centre in Innovative Manufacturing in Lightweight Vehicles (SC.399/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (a) That the Warwick Manufacturing Group was exploiting its strengths in low carbon vehicle development.

(By the Finance Director)

- (b) That, even though the presence of £600k per annum from Advantage West Midlands would not affect the viability of the bid, it would be preferable if the funding was not derived from ERDF as this would tie the other resources to complex and limiting ERDF terms.

RESOLVED:

That the draft outline proposal for an EPSRC Centre in Innovative Manufacturing in Lightweight Vehicles be approved for submission to EPSRC as set out in SC.399/09-10, subject to the following:

- (a) That the proposal indicate that that discussions were ongoing regarding the means by which the University would fund the academic and administrative posts, as well as the studentships contained within the proposal with a view to this being resolved prior to the final bid stage; and
- (b) That reassurance be given by Warwick Manufacturing Group that the industrial funding proposed in the application could be secured.

598/09-10

HEFCE Review of Teaching Funding: UUK Draft Response

RECEIVED:

The draft Universities UK response to the HEFCE consultation on the review of teaching funding (SC.394/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University had been invited to comment on the draft UUK response by 14 June 2010 and to forward the institution's response by 21 June 2010.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That the questions posed by HEFCE were not robust as a means to adequately consult the sector on the proposals presented and that in light of this, the University would seek to present a general response to the proposals rather than specifically address each question.
- (c) That the University might wish to respond strongly to the suggestion that those institutions able to raise significant amounts of private funding might subsequently receive a reduced core grant and that the Committee would be invited to consider the University's draft response at its next meeting.

599/09-10

Proposed Increase to WMG Full-Time Masters Courses Fees

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That, at its meeting on 26 May 2010, the Academic Activities Sub-Committee of the Academic Resourcing Committee had considered a financial proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) for the establishment of a new MSc in Cyber Security and Management and that the proposal was approved, but WMG was requested to give further consideration to the fee levels that should be levied for the course, specifically the potential for the Department to depart from the University's standard postgraduate taught fee.
- (b) That, subsequent to this, WMG proposed that the fees charged for all the Group's full-time Masters courses be raised to £7,500 for entry in 2011/12, noting that this represented a departure from the standard University PGT fee and that the increased fee would be reviewed in the light of the impact on recruitment in 2011/12.

RESOLVED:

That, further to the Registrar's approval, on behalf of the Fees Working Group, the proposal to increase the WMG full-time Masters courses fees for 2011/12 entry be approved.

600/09-10

HEFCE Circular 09/2010: 2010 National Student Survey – Publication of Data

Information from HEFCE regarding the publications of institutional National Student Survey 2010 results (SC.395/09-10), including the timescales as follows:

- (i) Preview of institutional results from 23 July 2010
- (ii) Phase 1 publication of high-level NSS data to institutions with sector wide comparisons on 6 August 2010
- (iii) Data made available for public access on Unistats website from 18 August 2010 and HEFCE press release of sector summary data
- (iv) Phase 2 launch by Ipsos MORI (custom analysis) available to institutions from 30 August 2010

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