

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 16 January 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor S Croft,
Professor M Finn,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor S Swain,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Professor C Hughes, Professor M Taylor.

In Attendance: Acting Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 243/11-12 to 244/11-12), Director of IT Services (for item 245/11-12).

242/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2012 be approved.

243/11-12 UCAS Admissions Process Review Consultation (minute 235/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the UCAS consultation on the Admissions Process Review, and proposed text for an accompanying letter (SC.177/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That the University's response would relate to the proposed reforms to the admissions process specifically, rather than to the issue of reform per se.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

(b) That the University should question the assumptions underpinning the presumed efficiency benefits of a post qualifications system.

(by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

(c) That the application process to the MBChB differed to other undergraduate courses at Warwick through the use of nationally recognised aptitude tests, and that this should be acknowledged within the University's response.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the UCAS consultation on the Admissions Process Review be approved as set out in paper SC.177/11-12, subject to the revisions discussed in the

meeting, and submitted to UCAS with an accompanying letter prior to the deadline of 20 January 2012.

244/11-12

Admissions and Recruitment Update

CONSIDERED:

An update on the current application figures and developments in admissions, recruitment, outreach and widening participation (SC.178/11-12).

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

- (a) That the Academic Resourcing Committee had approved a modest increase of 89 to the overall Home/EU undergraduate target for 2012 entry.
- (b) That undergraduate applications to the 2012 intake were currently down by 11% overall, as anticipated within the current climate, but that the 15 January 2012 deadline for applications would produce a clearer view of the level of applications.
- (c) That there was sufficient volume and quality of applicants to ensure that most departments would achieve their intake target.
- (d) That no formal offers had been made to PGCE applicants while discussions were ongoing with the Training and Development Agency regarding final intake targets.
- (e) That the number of Home/EU postgraduate research applications had fallen, noting that it was still the early part of the postgraduate admissions cycle.
- (f) That the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office would be liaising closely with departments on their individual open day activities, to assist in the conversion of applicants to students.
- (g) That the possibility of an additional undergraduate open day in June was being considered.
- (h) That the 2013 undergraduate prospectuses had been revamped in line with some rebranding, and was on schedule for production at the end of February.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (i) That consideration should also be given to an additional postgraduate open day in spring, to attract undergraduate and postgraduate taught students considering further study at a suitable point in their current studies.

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

- (j) That an additional open day would help to offset the competitive pressure from some universities looking to expand their intakes.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (k) That the decreases in applications from mature students or those from low participation groups were proportional to the overall decrease.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (l) That increasing the entry requirements would inevitably cause a drop in applications, but that the process would always be reviewed to mitigate any risks.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee approved in principle the proposal to investigate the feasibility of introducing a third open day in June 2012.

245/11-12

IT Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of IT Services, highlighting progress on major projects and strategy updates (SC.186/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of IT Services)

- (a) That core service performance was broadly satisfactory and stable.
- (b) That IT Services would be collecting data on individual user satisfaction to improve the non-technical aspects of their services.
- (c) That IT Services were currently engaged in a number of large scale projects, mainly addressing risk issues.
- (d) That the new Data Centre was nearing completion and that this should move the burden of payment away from those making individual requests, by delivering increased capacity and reduced costs through more efficient use of data storage and power.
- (e) That staff email migration was a complex project and that IT Services would endeavor to keep disruption to a minimum.
- (f) That the future projects listed within the report would require additional resource, together with the support and input from academic colleagues to identify priorities.
- (g) That the proposed policy of "Bring Your Own Device" would involve IT Services providing support for individuals wishing to access standard services using their own device, rather than providing unlimited support for issues experienced when using their own device.
- (h) That IT Services would be submitting a bid during the current planning round to introduce a University wide Virtual Learning Environment, noting that the technological elements of such a development would proceed more rapidly than the capacity to exploit the technology.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (i) That the intention to extend the wireless network coverage to student residences was welcomed.

246/11-12

Appointment of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Acting Registrar, outlining the required process for selecting and approving the appointment of the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor (SC.192/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Registrar)

- (a) That broadly the same process used for the appointment of the previous Deputy Vice-Chancellor was being proposed, and that the Ordinance had not changed.

- (b) That approval from the Council to commence the appointment process would be sought via correspondence, should Steering approve the process set out in SC.192/11-12.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That consideration could be given to student involvement in the future appointment process for senior posts, subsequent to the conclusion of the proposed appointment process.

RECOMMENDED: (to the Senate)

That the process for selecting and approving the appointment of the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor be approved, as set out in SC.192/11-12.

247/11-12

Anti-Bribery Policy

CONSIDERED:

A paper on the introduction of a new Anti-Bribery Policy, together with the associated Risk Assessment, following the introduction of the Bribery Act 2010 (SC.187/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (a) That the UK Bribery Act that came into force on 1 July 2011 was significantly broader in scope than previously, and covered the activities of UK institutions, including their agents and any other third parties acting on their behalf.
- (b) That, while the existence of a formal University Anti-Bribery Policy was important, it alone was not sufficient for the purposes of the Bribery Act, noting that the University was also expected to:
 - (i) Take a firm stance against bribery at the most senior level,
 - (ii) Undertake proportionate risk assessments and due diligence, and
 - (iii) Clearly communicate the requirements under the Act and the University's related policies and procedures to all staff and individuals acting on behalf of the University.
- (c) That a Working Group was established to consider the key risks to the University and how best these could be mitigated, and undertook a significant amount of groundwork in the preparation of a draft Anti-Bribery Policy.
- (d) That the draft Anti-Bribery Policy required consideration and approval by the Senate and the Council as the trustees of the University.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Anti-Bribery Policy be approved as set out in paper SC.187/11-12, subject to minor revisions, before being formally considered at the meetings of the Senate and the Council to be held on 25 January and 23 February 2012 respectively.

248/11-12

Proposal to Block Certain Websites

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Information Policy and Strategy Committee recommending a proposal from IT Services and the Deputy Registrar's Office to restrict access to certain websites (SC.181/11-12).

RESOLVED:

That the proposal from the Information Policy and Strategy Committee to restrict access to certain websites be approved as set out in paper SC.181/11-12, noting that appropriate wording for the 'Stop' page and the Information Security Policy be prepared in liaison with the Acting Registrar and University Child Protection Officer, and that revisions to the Information Security Policy be subsequently approved by Chair's Action (IPSC and Steering Committee).

249/11-12

Innovation: Health and Wealth (accelerating adoption and diffusion in the NHS)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Dean of Warwick Medical School regarding the new NHS strategy "Innovation: Health and Wealth (accelerating adoption and diffusion in the NHS)" (SC.182/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That significant reorganisation of the NHS was expected, and innovation was seen to be key in reducing costs and improving quality.
- (b) That ten Academic Health Science Networks (AHSN) would be established in England, and that these were expected to be mandated as regional networks.
- (c) That the University of Keele (and its partners) had already indicated a desire to collaborate with the University within an AHSN, and that discussion with the University of Birmingham would be vital.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University consider in principle the establishment of an Academic Health Science Network.
- (b) That the Vice-Chancellor discuss the potential collaboration within an Academic Health Science Network with his counterpart at the University of Birmingham.
- (c) That the Pro Dean (Research) in Warwick Medical School coordinate the University's response to the establishment of Academic Health Science Networks via the GPP forum for 'Science and Technology for Health'.

250/11-12

QAA Consultation on the UK Quality Code: Section C - Information about Higher Education Provision

CONSIDERED:

A circular from the QAA inviting responses to a consultation on a new reference point within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision (SC.183/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the Teaching Quality team would respond to the consultation and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) would attend the consultation event in Birmingham on 20 January 2012.

RESOLVED:

That a response to the consultation on the UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision be drafted by the Senior Assistant Registrar

(Teaching Quality), and considered by the Steering Committee prior to the submission deadline of 24 February 2012.

251/11-12 Major Research Proposals: EU FP7 Synergy Grant Applications

RECEIVED:

An outline of applications currently in preparation for submission to the European Research Council's new Synergy Grant scheme (SC.185/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

That only ten grants would be awarded within the EU, but there was no requirement for matched funding.

252/11-12 Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 25 January 2012 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, subject to revisions as agreed in the meeting.

253/11-12 Students' Union Activity

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

- (a) That a survey of students was being undertaken regarding the cancellation of lectures and seminars, and that results would be shared with the Steering Committee at a future meeting.
- (b) That the Union Council would be putting forward new Sabbatical Officer positions for approval at the meeting later today.
- (c) That One World Week would commence from 20 January 2012, with a forum in the WMG Lecture Theatre from 6 – 8 pm entitled "The Student Movement Across the UK: International Perspectives".

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

- (d) That as much forewarning as possible should be provided before the cancellation of lectures or seminars.

254/11-12 2011/12 Pay Negotiations – Concluding Position of Unions (minute 230/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

A UCEA update with the conclusion of the 2011-12 pay round and advice for HEIs on implementation of a consolidated £150 increase on all pay spine points, together with the final settlement document including the 2011-12 pay scales, effective from 1 August 2011 (SC.184/11-12).