

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 17 October 2011

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

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor M Taylor.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Research Support Services (for item 46/11-12).

39/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

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

40/11-12 National Student Survey Institutional Results (minute 898/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Teaching Quality Office including departmental responses to the NSS data (SC.17/11-12).

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

- (a) That the departmental responses to the results from the National Student Survey (NSS), along with the resultant action plans, demonstrated each department's intent to address the issues identified.
- (b) That departmental progress against action plans would be monitored in-year and that the value of the contribution of departmental SSLCs to this monitoring was recognised.
- (c) That a benchmarking exercise on contact hours would be undertaken, prior to the publication of Key Information Sets.

(by the Director of Human Resources)

- (d) That the reference in the paper to a limit of a 37.5 hour working week under the European Working Time Directive (1993) was erroneous; it being noted that UK legislation enacts the provisions of the EWD through the National Working Time Regulations 1998 ("Regulations"), which refer, amongst other elements, to average working time not exceeding 48 hours for each 7 day period over a 17 week reference

period, the possibility of an opt out from the Regulations and also reference within the Regulations that they do not apply to workers where, on account of the specific characteristics of the activity in which they are engaged, the duration of their working time is not measured or predetermined or can be determined by the worker.

- (e) That she would liaise with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Education and Student Experience to respond to the relevant Head of Department to clarify the position, noting that there should be no impediment to Heads of Department managing their staff or prioritising the balance of resources to improve teaching contact time in this context.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (f) That clear departmental action statements in response to the results from the NSS were welcomed.
- (g) That there were concerns regarding the balance within departments on the time dedicated to REF preparations compared to teaching, as well as space pressures within the Library and the Humanities Building.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (h) That all departments were expected to achieve the appropriate balance between REF preparations and teaching.
- (i) That the University was aware of the pressures on Library space and proposals to extend such space were being reviewed.
- (j) That the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group had formed a sub-group to discuss options to address issues relating to the Humanities Building in the medium term.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee ensure that the good practice outlined in the departmental strategic plans in response to the NSS results be disseminated to academic departments.
- (b) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee monitor departmental progress against action plans and report the results to the Steering Committee at a future meeting.

41/11-12 Revolving Green Fund (minute 26/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the University would bid for the first strand of the HEFCE Revolving Green Fund (RGF) 2, relating to a small scale energy efficiency programme.
- (b) That the University had reviewed options for a bid to the second strand of the HEFCE RGF2, for a small number of exemplary retrofit projects with a value of up to £1.0m.
- (c) That no options had proved financially viable and so the University would not be submitting a bid to the second strand of the HEFCE RGF2.

- 42/11-12 QAA Expertise Database (minute 22/11-12 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience)
- That the nomination to the QAA Expertise Database for Ms Rebecca Freeman, School of Life Sciences was for the "Student Engagement" area of expertise, and had been submitted by the deadline of 15 October 2011.
- 43/11-12 Higher Education White Paper - BIS Technical Consultation document (minute 920/10-11 refers)
- CONSIDERED:
- The Russell Group Response to BIS Technical Consultation, 'A new, fit-for purpose regulatory framework for the higher education sector' (SC.33/11-12).
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That, at its meeting on 13 October 2011, the University Council had reinforced the importance of drafting a letter to BIS, to accompany the University's response to the consultation.
- RESOLVED:
- That a letter be sent to BIS, in addition to the University's consultation response, to emphasise key issues discussed by the Council at its meeting on 13 October 2011.
- 44/11-12 NHS Commissioning Board
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
- That Professor Malcolm Grant had been named the preferred choice to chair the NHS Commissioning Board.
- 45/11-12 Registrar
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
- (a) That, it had been confirmed by Council at its meeting on 13 October 2011, that after over seven years with the University, the Registrar Jon Baldwin would be leaving Warwick at the end of 2011.
- (b) That while the Registrar would remain in post until the end of December, he would step back from his internal Registrarial duties from 1 November 2011.
- (c) That Nicola Owen, Deputy Registrar, would step up from 1 November 2011 to become Acting Registrar during this period of handover and until such time as a substantive appointment of a new Registrar was made.
- 46/11-12 Research and Innovation Update
- CONSIDERED:
- A Research Strategy Update report from the Director of Research Support Services (SC.31/11-12), together with an oral update.
- REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Science and Medicine))
- (a) That the University continued to develop Global Priority Programmes (GPPs) as potential strategic initiatives for the coordination of research activities across the University.

- (b) That funding had been allocated to support the work of the GPP teams from a combination of Research Council funding and the University Research Development Fund, and that the Research Committee would review progress on the development of the GPPs in 2012.
- (c) That the University's performance in 2010/11 in terms of applications submitted and awards won had declined relative to recent years, reflecting both the increasing competitive environment for research funding and a significant decline in activities by some key funders, for example ESRC, noting that the University continued to increase its success rate in European funding.

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

- (d) That, at its meeting on 13 October 2011, the Council had reinforced the need to benchmark research income generation against other institutions.

(by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (e) That the exercise of benchmarking research income generation against other institutions could be undertaken where funders provide detailed information on the nature of their grants.
- (f) That GPPs would be critical to the University's research income generation, with each of the ten identified areas aligned to core external funding priorities and the University's key research strengths.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resourcing)

- (g) That the Russell Group Pro-Vice-Chancellors had discussed the possibility of undertaking a benchmarking exercise into research income generation among the Russell Group universities.

(by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (h) That the Warwick Medical School had increased both its submission and award rate for applications for research funding.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Research Support Services produce an additional paper with detailed analysis of applications and awards by Research Council, including comparative data from previous years, to be considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 24 October 2011.

47/11-12

Appointments to Committees of the Senate

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That Claire Martin (Undergraduate Clerical Assistant, Department of Chemistry) and Stephanie Smart (~~Admin Support in Health Sciences PA to Professor Nigel Stallard,~~ Warwick Medical School), were appointed to serve as the two members of non-academic staff grades 1a – 5 on the Equality and Diversity Committee, as approved by the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee, Professor Koen Lamberts on behalf of the Committee.
- (b) That Lucy Hayton (Admissions Officer, Student Admissions and Recruitment Office) and Anna Preston (Senior Careers Consultant), were appointed to serve as the two members of non-academic staff grades 6 – 9 on the Equality and Diversity Committee, as approved by the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee, Professor Koen Lamberts on behalf of the Committee.

- 48/11-12 QAA Review of Higher Education in Further Education Colleges in England
- RECEIVED:
- A circular from the QAA regarding the process that will replace Integrated quality enhancement review from September 2012, and to request responses to the operational description for the new process (SC.30/11-12).
- 49/11-12 Peer Review in Scientific Publications
- RECEIVED:
- An email from the Science & Technology Committee announcing the publication of a Special Report on Tuesday 18 October at 11.00am, containing responses from the Government and Research Councils UK to the 'Peer review in scientific publications' Report produced by the Committee on 28 July 2011 (SC.36/11-12).
- 50/11-12 QAA Consultation on Draft Guidance on Experiences of International Students (minute 19/11-12 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- The University's response to the QAA consultation on draft guidance for UK Higher Education institutions on international students studying in the UK, which sets out minimum expectations of support for international students, amended following consideration by the Steering Committee at its meeting held on 10 October 2011 (SC.13/11-12, revised).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201112/Oct11/17Oct11