

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 17 November 2008

- Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor L Bridges,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley (from item 134/08-09),
Professor R Higgott,
Professor M Smith,
Mr S Thomson,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby (from item 136/08-09 and until item 142/08-09)
- Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Professor H Thomas
- In Attendance: Registrar (until item 140/08-09), Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar until item 142/08-09, Director of Finance, Director of Estates, Director of Communication and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Acting Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Head of Biological Sciences Department and Professor G Medley for item 137/08-09, University Librarian, E-Repositories Manager and Director of Management Information and Planning all for item 139/08-09

132/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2008 be approved.

133/08-09 Additional Student Numbers in Healthcare Science (minute 93/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That, subject to further consultation with the HEFCE, the University might continue the bid for ASNs in Healthcare Science under the Science City project, noting that HEFCE had notified the University that it could not be considered through existing routes following the recent cap on ASNs for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

134/08-09 QAA Institutional Audit (minute 115/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the visit from the QAA Audit team last week had gone as well as the University could have expected.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks for Professors O'Brien and Whitby, the Teaching Quality Team and the Students' Union for all their work in preparation for and during the audit process.

135/08-09 Warwick Wellcome/EPSRC Centre for Clinical Systems Innovation (minute 118/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A revised proposal to the EPSRC/Wellcome Trust to establish a Medical Engineering Centre for Clinical Systems Innovation (SC.92/08-09, revised).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Finance)

- (a) That the cost projections from Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) made up the majority of the gross surplus on the proposal, noting that it might be beneficial to explore how WMG had costed their contribution as the method might be adopted by other departments to increase gross surplus.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine))

- (b) That the Centre would not require additional space other than that set out in SC.92/08-09 (revised).

RESOLVED:

That the proposal be approved as set out in SC.92/08-09 (revised) for submission later today, noting that there were some intellectual property issues to be resolved within the contract should the University be taken through to the next stage.

136/08-09 Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills: New Inquiry into Students and Universities
(minute 124/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University would be providing comments to the Russell Group for incorporation into its response.

137/08-09 Departmental Response to SDR: Biological Sciences (minute 645/07-08 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The departmental response to the Strategic Departmental Review of Biological Sciences held in May 2008 and the revised action plan, together with an oral report from the Head of the Department of Biological Sciences (SC.105/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Head of the Department of Biological Sciences)

- (a) That the organisation of the review had not allowed sufficient time for the panel to consider the documentation prior to the review visits and that the teaching component had been conducted by a sole member of the panel.
- (b) That the Department felt that it was important to recruit the best candidate for future Heads of Department, be that an internal or external appointment.
- (c) That the remit of the Departmental Research Committee had been revised to incorporate a strategic forward view alongside oversight of current resources.
- (d) That target setting for individual academic staff members would be addressed as part of the Annual Review process, noting that targets would be set based on career stage and history as well as future aspirations.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (e) That the financial plan presented to Academic Resourcing Committee to take the Department out of deficit was commendable, noting that research grant and contract income was the largest challenge to be overcome to bring the Department in line with other departments.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the departmental response be approved as set out in SC.105/08-09.
- (b) That the Head of the Department of Biological Sciences be invited to provide the Steering Committee with a progress report in the Summer Term 2009.

138/08-09

Warwick Prize for Writing

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the long list had been announced for the Warwick Prize for Writing, noting that the list was very diverse and would provide an interesting challenge for the judging panel in reaching its decision.

139/08-09

Warwick Research Archive Project and Bibliometrics

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A live demonstration of the Warwick Research Archive Project by the E-Repositories Manager, together with an oral report from the University Librarian.
- (b) A paper from the Director of Management Information and Planning on the use of bibliometrics as a measure of the University's research activity (SC.110/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Management Information and Planning)

- (a) That bibliometrics data would be used in the preparations for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment of science and medicine subjects, and that furthermore a number of parties in the University had suggested that these data could be used as one tool to inform internal performance discussions.

(by the University Librarian)

- (b) That once the JISC funding ends on 1 March 2009, the WRAP team would explore the optimal balance between reducing the extent and quality of the metadata record whilst maximising search engine hits and protecting future discoverability requirements.

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar, the University Librarian and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) identify potential members for a working group on how the University might maximise its use of the research archive and bibliometrics for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

140/08-09

Faculty of Arts Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair of the Faculty of Arts updating the Committee on the Faculty's research activities, the impact of the reduced fees for MA courses, AHRC Block Grant Partnership progress and refurbishment of Humanities and Millburn House (SC.102/08-09).

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

- (a) That research activity within the Faculty of Arts had increased 40% on previous years in terms of awards.
- (b) That the University would be notified if it had been awarded a AHRC Block Grant Partnership scheme in February 2009 which would be too late for the MA/PhD recruitment cycle, noting that the Graduate School planned to recruit alongside the

Warwick Postgraduate Research Scholarship to be selected in February 2009 to ensure potential students were identified.

- (c) That the refurbishment of Millburn House had had more of an impact on departments, both those relocating and those remaining in the Humanities Building, than expected, noting that a reduction in CIF monies to fund the proposed Humanities Building refurbishment might impact further but could still make significant improvements if managed well.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs))

- (d) That an external review of the University's Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, such as the CAPITAL Centre, was scheduled, noting that any discussions relating to these within the Faculty of Arts should be co-ordinated to contribute to this.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.102/08-09.

141/08-09

Faculty of Medicine Update

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Acting Chair of the Faculty of Medicine on progress in a number of areas including the proposed Academic Health Sciences Centre bid, Science City, Life Sciences review, new senior academic appointments and research grant awards (SC.106/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Chair of the Faculty of Medicine)

- (a) That the criteria for the award of AHSC status with their focus on research metrics would make it difficult for new medical schools such as Warwick, noting that a bid from the University as opposed to solely the Medical School in isolation may be more successful.
- (b) That a bid for an Health Education and Innovation Centre (HEIC) was still being pursued, noting that the criteria and timetable for bids would not be released until early December 2008.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That it might be beneficial to have representation from the central University at the next meeting with the University of Birmingham to encourage further momentum in support of the potential collaborative bid between the two universities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be approved as set out in SC.106/08-09.
- (b) That Professor Thornalley be congratulated by the Committee for his significant research awards as set out in the report.

142/08-09

Faculty of Social Studies Update

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies informing of matters relating to governance, management, administration of Faculty business and space issues (SC.114/08-09).

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

From the Faculty perspective, it was sometimes difficult to see where an issue was being handled, given the different sets of (sometimes overlapping) deliberations taking place at meetings of Steering, F&GP, the Senior Management Team and Senior Officers.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the resourcing issues at Faculty level as set out in the report had been addressed within the revised Five Year Plan for 2008/09.
- (b) That the issues relating to the appointment of Heads of Department reflected last year's practice, noting that the process for the current year started at the beginning of the academic year.
- (c) That, as had been reported previously to the Committee, the review of University Governance to be conducted in the Spring Term 2009 would consider the issues raised in the report within scope, noting that there would be significant discussion to include wide ranging groups across the University community.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.114/08-09.

143/08-09 UUK Letter: Student Numbers in 2009-10

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Chief Executive, Universities UK, bringing attention to the impact the changes to student funding and ASN allocations might have on institutions, together with the HEFCE confirmation letter announcing that there will be no additional ASNs for 2009/10 and 2010/11 (SC.101/08-09).

144/08-09 DIUS Higher Education Debate

RECEIVED:

- (a) A compendium of summaries from reports into various aspects of Higher Education commissioned by the Secretary of State (DIUS) (SC.108/08-09).
- (b) The Universities UK's contribution to the DIUS Higher Education debate (SC.109/08-09).

145/08-09 Letter from Secretary of State (DIUS) on Payment Practice

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the Secretary of State (DIUS) calling for HEIs to review their existing payment practices to comply with the 10 day payment commitment adopted by Government departments wherever possible.

RESOLVED:

That, whilst the University acknowledged the request, it was the Committee's view that it was not within the remit of DIUS to propose such practices to universities.

146/08-09 HEFCE Circular 30/2008: National Higher Education Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Programme

CONSIDERED:

A call from HEFCE for bids to host the National Higher Education Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Programme from 2009/10 to 2011/12 (SC.98/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the programme would be of a similar size in funding terms to the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY).

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That the University has experience and sustainability in the subjects requested in the letter as well as the links to the organisations running the pilot projects.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor contact HEFCE to clarify the bidding process given the short submission deadline of 28 November 2008.
- (b) That, subject to further information provided by HEFCE, the Deputy Registrar and Academic Registrar undertake further work with a view to preparing a bid to be considered by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the Committee prior to submission on 28 November 2008.

147/08-09 UUK I-Note I/08/096: Quality and Standards in UK Universities

RECEIVED:

UUK's new publication explaining how quality is managed and assured in UK universities, and the differences between the systems in different parts of the UK (SC.99/08-09).

148/08-09 UUK I-Note I/08/098: Universities and the Community

RECEIVED:

An information note updating members on recent developments in the area of community relations work and plans for a professional network of university staff (SC.112/08-09).

149/08-09 UUK I-Note I/08/097: Publication of Tier 4 Implementation Plan

RECEIVED:

Universities UK Information note detailing their initial analysis of the implementation plan of the new student immigration route (SC.113/08-09).

Addendum:

Appointments to Senate Committees

RESOLVED:

That Professor J Seville (Engineering) be appointed by the Steering Committee on behalf of the Senate to serve on Academic Resourcing Committee as a representative from the Faculty of Science replacing Professor J Davey (WMS).