

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 20 January 2014

- Present: Vice-Chancellor and President,
Provost,
Professor A Coats,
Professor Christina Hughes,
Professor Christopher Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Mr B Sundell,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Winstanley,
Professor L Young.
- Apologies: Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, Professor A Caesar, Professor J Palmowski,
Professor S Swain, Professor P Thomas.
- In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Group Finance Director, Director of Human
Resources, Deputy Academic Registrar, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office),
Assistant Registrar (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management
and Timetabling) (for item 117/13-14).
- 111/13-14 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2013 be approved.
- 112/13-14 CERN Visit
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- That he had recently returned from a visit to CERN with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science,
Engineering and Medicine), where approximately 20 Warwick colleagues were currently
working; including PhD students, post-doctoral research fellows and staff members.
- 113/13-14 Degree Congregations: January and July 2014
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- (a) That the University's Winter Degree Congregations would be taking place on
Wednesday 22 to Friday 24 January 2014, with honorary degrees to be awarded to a
number of key figures, including Warwick Visiting Professor, Dr Oliver Sacks; and
director of the Motionhouse dance company and Warwick alumnus, Kevin Finnan
MBE.
- (b) That he had taken Chair's Action on behalf of the Steering Committee to approve an
additional degree ceremony for Saturday 19 July 2014 to accommodate the large
number of students scheduled to graduate, most notably from the Department of
Economics.
- (c) That this arrangement was exceptional for July 2014, noting that projections for
graduand numbers in July 2015 were not as large; although arrangements for 2015
would be determined at a later date.

- 114/13-14 Appointment of Vice-Chancellor: Monash University
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- (a) That Professor Margaret Gardner AO had been announced as the ninth Vice-Chancellor of Monash University following an extensive international search.
 - (b) That Professor Gardner was currently Vice-Chancellor and President of RMIT University and had previously held a range of senior academic roles, including serving as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at The University of Queensland.
 - (c) That Monash University had been awarded almost AUD74million in funding from the Australian Research Council to lead three new national Centres of Excellence, and that two of these Centres were directly supported by activity within the Monash-Warwick Alliance: the ARC Centre of Excellence in Convergent Bio-Nano Science and Technology and the ARC Centre of Excellence in Advanced Molecular Imaging.
- 115/13-14 Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- (a) That Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya had been presented with a Coventry Award of Merit at a special ceremony on 11 January 2014, an honour established in order to highlight the efforts of local people in raising the profile and reputation of the City.
 - (b) That Professor Lord Bhattacharyya was chosen as a recipient of the prestigious award for his outstanding personal achievement as the founder of WMG, raising the status of engineering and manufacturing in the UK, and for his service to the promotion of the University and the City of Coventry.
- 116/13-14 Student Rents
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- That the University offered a wide range of rental options for its student accommodation, and that comparative research into 2013/14 rent levels undertaken by the Student Rents Working Party demonstrated that Warwick currently had one of the lowest rent levels amongst its Russell Group competitors.
- 117/13-14 Timetable Remodel Progress Update
- CONSIDERED:
- A paper updating the Steering Committee on the progress of the project to improve the central teaching timetable (SC.65/13-14).
- REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management and Timetabling))
- (a) That work had begun in October 2012 to consider how the University might redevelop the central teaching timetable, with priority given to improving the student experience.
 - (b) That analysis of current restrictions and issues presented to the Central Teaching Timetable Remodel Steering Group (CTTRSG) showed that many of the constraints on the current timetable may only be released through significant capital development, changes to wider academic processes, investment in additional resource, and achievement of academic buy-in to the benefits of a student-focussed timetable.
 - (c) That the central objectives in remodelling the timetable were focused on: the prioritisation of the student experience, the optimisation of the utilisation of centrally-

timetabled teaching rooms, and the equitable distribution of preferred teaching rooms between academic departments.

- (d) That given the significant scope and potential risk of the project, the CTTRSG recommended that the redesign should be delivered through a programme of annual year-on-year improvements rather than a single major redevelopment, and that an action plan for annual improvements for the forthcoming three years had been developed.
- (e) That elimination of over-capacity teaching would be a key method of optimising the student experience, preventing classes from being scheduled into rooms too small to hold the total student cohort.
- (f) That work had already begun to integrate timetabling considerations into student number planning for future academic years, noting that in previous years, over-capacity had resulted from increasingly large module cohorts, and that the connection of timetable intelligence with the student number planning process could highlight where an increase in numbers was likely to place significant pressure on the timetable.
- (g) That the timetabling of joint degrees required timely consideration, noting that given the small size of some joint honours cohorts, the balancing of these requirements against those of large single-honours cohorts needed to be judiciously managed.
- (h) That a programme of meetings with heads of academic departments would be extended throughout the 2013/14 Spring term in order to gather details of specific timetabling challenges, and that termly updates on the progress of the project would be provided to the Faculty Boards.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (i) That the redesign of the timetable would require the establishment of a policy to set out common principles for the equitable use of teaching space, and that commitment to the student experience would necessitate the consideration and resolution of a number of contentious issues relating to the allocation of teaching spaces.

(by The Dean, Warwick Medical School)

- (j) That the allocation of teaching space at Gibbet Hill primarily to WMS and Life Sciences was welcomed, although it should be noted that for the following two years, there would be two WMS curricula running in tandem, which would increase the demand for rooms.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning))

- (k) That it was important for any new timetabling system to co-ordinate with existing student administration systems such as module registration and examination scheduling, to mitigate the potential for errors which could lead to student complaints.

RESOLVED:

That the objectives, action plan and improvements timetable for the remodel project be approved as set out in paper SC.65/13-14.

118/13-14

Education Report

CONSIDERED:

A paper briefing the Committee on matters relating to education (SC.66/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the development of Tabula as a tool to underpin and assist academic departments with key academic processes such as coursework management and personal tutoring was progressing rapidly, and as such, it would be helpful for a more strategic approach to be considered in identifying the relationship between Tabula and SITS.
- (b) That the Working Group established by the Steering Committee in the Spring Term 2013 to review the structure of the academic year, had recommended that the Chancellor's Suite and the former Rootes restaurant be integrated into the suite of facilities available for examinations in order to deliver a further 250 places for each examination sitting.
- (c) That the Working Group had also recommended that the start of the Summer term undergraduate examination period be brought forward to the start of week 4 with effect from the 2013/14 academic year, with a view to easing congestion in the examination timetable for students, and to allow more time for the marking, moderation and exam board processes.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning))

- (d) That further consideration should be given to the establishment of Tabula, noting that as a number of IT platforms were already utilised across the University, there was scope for the rationalisation of all student related systems.
- (e) That the revised timing of the summer examination period was likely to impact on the 2014 National Student Survey round, and as such, the communication of any decision affecting the commencement of this period would need to be carefully managed.

(by the Group Finance Director)

- (f) That due to the demand for additional flexible study space in the centre of campus, consideration was being given to the utilisation of the former Rootes restaurant for this purpose.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (g) That noting the potential impact on the student experience of significant changes to the commencement of the 2013/14 examination period, this proposal should be given further consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to bring the start of the 2013/14 examination period forward to week 4 of the Summer term, as set out in paper SC.66/13-14, not be approved, but be given further consideration.
- (b) That the Academic Registrar, the Deputy Academic Registrar and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) establish a focus group to explore possibilities for the rationalisation of student-focused IT platforms.

119/13-14

Adonis Growth Review: Submission from the University of Warwick

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft submission to the Adonis Growth Review (SC.67/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the Adonis Growth Review submission presented an excellent opportunity for the University to showcase the many ways in which it supported economic growth locally and nationally.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine))

- (b) That section 6.0 regarding funding innovation in higher education should include reference to the revenue generated by the University as an outcome of innovations enabled by receipt of Science Capital Funding.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (c) That the 2012 BIS report 'Strength and Opportunity' highlighted the West Midlands as having the largest number of medical technology companies, and as such, there was potential for the response to refer to the opportunities for interaction with these companies, particularly in areas such as clinical trials.

(by the Dean, Warwick Medical School)

- (d) That such interaction could be facilitated through the Academic Health Science Network (AHSN), and that it would be useful for a section on the AHSN to be included in the submission.

RESOLVED:

That the University's submission to the Adonis Growth Review be approved as set out in paper SC.67/13-14, subject to the additions recommended by the Committee.

120/13-14

Revision to the 2014/15 Access Agreement

RECEIVED:

A paper outlining the revisions made to the University's access agreement in light of the significant reduction in HEFCE funding to support the National Scholarship Programme (NSP) (SC.74/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the University would protect awards to those students with the lowest family incomes, and that all awards would be made as cash bursaries rather than tuition fee waivers.
- (b) That the University had received notification that OFFA had approved the revisions to its access agreement on 9 January 2014.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning))

- (c) That the Development and Alumni Relations Office was working on the establishment of widening participation bursaries for students who had progressed to undergraduate study at the University following participation in its outreach programmes.
- (d) That the University would be able to provide some support to eligible students on the final year of an undergraduate masters programme, under the government's new scheme to widen participation in postgraduate study.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (e) That it was important for the University's response to the changes in the NSP to be communicated effectively to current and prospective students, noting that the reduction of funding had been imposed by HECFE, and that the University would be investing approximately £0.5million into the NSP in 2014/15.

121/13-14 Summer Degree Congregation 2014 Schedule

RECEIVED:

A paper outlining the degree congregation schedule for July 2014 (SC.73/13-14).

122/13-14 Senate Business

RECEIVED:

That the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 29 January 2014 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for that meeting, subject to the revisions as agreed by the Steering Committee.

123/13-14 UCAS End of Cycle Report 2013

RECEIVED:

The UCAS End of Cycle report for undergraduate admissions in 2013 (SC.68/13-14).

KS/CS/Steering/Minutes/2013-2014/01-20-2014