

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 20 April 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor S Bassnett,  
Professor S Bruzzi,  
Professor Y Carter  
Professor R Higgott  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor M Smith,  
Professor H Thomas,  
Professor M Whitby,

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor R Lindley, Mr S Thomson

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance)

485/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April be approved, subject to removal of Professor M Underwood from the list of members present at the meeting.

486/08-09 NHS Next Stage Review – A High Quality Workforce Action to Develop HIECs (minute 467/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Regional Engagement))

That the Department of Health had not published the national prospectus outlining the Health Innovation and Education Clusters concept, development support and selection process on 9 April as set out in SC.330/08-09, noting that the Committee would be updated on the application process as soon as information became available.

487/08-09 EPSRC Bid for Mathematical Science Doctoral Training Centre (minute 464/08-09 refers)

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

That the University's bid for a Mathematical Science Doctoral Training Centre led by the Mathematics Institute and the Department of Statistics had been submitted to the EPSRC on 17 April 2009 following the incorporation of the Committee's feedback.

488/08-09 Students' Union – Sound Environmental Impact Award

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Warwick University's Students' Union had been awarded silver standard in the Sound Environmental Impact Awards 2009 run by the National Union of Students to encourage students' unions to demonstrate good environmental practice.

489/08-09 Strategic Departmental Review Report: Department of Sociology

CONSIDERED:

The final report and related action plan from the Strategic Departmental Review for the department of Sociology held between 7 and 9 January 2009 (SC.409/08-09).

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

- (a) That the report was less detailed than other reports considered by the Steering Committee, particularly in areas where the recommendations and comments of the Review Group were potentially in conflict with the University's strategic objectives.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies))

- (b) That the report presented the Review Panel's general assertion of the department's position within the wider discipline of Sociology and that this should provoke reflection in the areas of teaching and research within the department.

(By the Director of Estates)

- (c) That, with regards to the recommended review of the Ramphal Building, the University had commissioned an independent review of the building in recent years and its recommendations had been implemented.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report of the Strategic Departmental Review of Sociology and related action plan be approved as set out in SC.409/08-09, subject to the following changes to the action plan:
  - (i) that the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies be included in the review of the process for up-grading research students (recommendation 9.1 (c));
  - (ii) that the Registrar's Office be involved in discussions as to whether to continue the post of Academic Administrator in the department (recommendation 9.1 (h));
  - (iii) that the Information Policy and Strategy Committee pursue the development of a University-wide Virtual Learning Environment (recommendation 9.2 (i));
  - (iv) that the Academic Resourcing Committee be involved in the strategic review of CRED and CRER with particular consideration being given to the timing of this and other reviews (recommendation 9.2 (l));
- (b) That Professor Christina Hughes be invited to attend the meeting on 18 May 2009 to present the departmental response to the report and its recommendations.

490/08-09

Teaching Enhancement and Student Success – Options for Allocation

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining potential options for the allocation of the new HEFCE Teaching Enhancement and Student Success (TESS) funding stream which would replace the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) from 2009/10 (SC.410/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs))

- (a) That the discontinuation of the TQEF had implications for the University's activities and related posts funded under this allocation and within its wider teaching and learning activities, including the two successful Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs).

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That under the current methodology, Improving Retention and Widening Participation funds had been allocated to departments.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (c) That given that the TESS allocation had only been confirmed for one year, the University would not have clarity on its use to secure the sustainability of the CETLs

until receipt of the HEFCE grant letter next year and should also consider alternative scenarios to ensure the activity could be maintained.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee record its support for allocation option B for the distribution of TESS funds as set out in SC.410/08-09;
- (b) That the establishment of the proposed sub-group of the Steering Committee be approved as set out in SC.410/08-09 to take forward the development of a process and criteria for the allocation of TESS and the identification of activities to be prioritised/preserved under TESS, noting that the recommendations of the sub-group be considered at its meeting of the Committee at the end of May.

491/08-09 Science City Interdisciplinary Alliance (SCIRA) Monitoring Report

CONSIDERED:

The final draft of the Science City Interdisciplinary Alliance Monitoring Report to be submitted to HEFCE by 24 April 2009 detailing progress on the Science City project (SC.413/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the monitoring report for the Science City Interdisciplinary Alliance be approved as set out in SC.413/08-09 for submission to HEFCE by the 24 April 2009 deadline.

492/08-09 HEFCE Letter 07/2009: Leading Transformational Change

CONSIDERED:

Details from HEFCE of an additional route to accessing high value awards from its Leadership, Governance and Management (LGM) Fund (SC.414/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the new stream was in addition to the existing application process to the LGM, presenting an option for the University to consider should it have an eligible project in development.
- (b) That the Russell Group HR Directors were considering a bid concerning the development of the Head of Department role.

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar be contacted with potential projects in the first instance, noting that the deadline for expressions of interest was 15 May 2009.

493/08-09 EPSRC Knowledge Transfer Accounts

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Russell Group of Universities to the Chief Executive of EPSRC raising concerns about the outcomes of and the application process for Knowledge Transfer Account (KTA) funding (SC.404/08-09).

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

That he had met with two EPSRC directors on 17 April 2009 and that the directors were concerned that, of the 12 Framework Universities, only three had been awarded KTAs.

494/08-09 Research Fortnight Article: Benchmarking Research Awards

CONSIDERED:

A recent Research Fortnight article utilising data from the ten largest research agencies in order to rank universities' awards over the last three financial years (SC.408/08-09).

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

- (a) That the results should be regarded as extremely positive, noting that it would be useful to normalise the data as this might improve Warwick's ranking in some areas.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Sciences))

- (b) That the low ranking of Warwick in terms of AHRC awards was a consequence of Warwick's Faculty of Arts securing a wider range of funding than other institutions.
- (c) That, whilst the University's success with the Leverhulme Trust was commendable, it posed implications for the institution given that the Trust funding did not cover full overhead costs.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Management Information and Planning be asked to normalise the data set out in SC.408/08-09.

495/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/024: Taught Postgraduate Students and ASNs

CONSIDERED:

UUK I-Note I/2009/024 clarifying the current policy of recruitment and funding of Home/EU postgraduate taught students in the light of HEFCE's restriction on recruitment for 2009/10 of full-time Home/EU undergraduate and PGCE students (SC.405/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions continue to monitor recruitment of postgraduate students especially given the lack of clarity surrounding HEFCE's plans for monitoring and potentially penalising over-recruitment.

496/08-09 HEFCE 2009/13: Request for HE Strategies from FE Colleges

RECEIVED:

A HEFCE report requesting further education colleges to submit higher education strategies to HEFCE by 11 January 2010 and providing guidance of expectations of a college's HE strategy (SC.406/08-09).

497/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/025: Update on UK Research Integrity Office

RECEIVED:

UUK I-Note I/2009/025 updating members on the work of the UK Research Integrity Office hosted by Universities UK (SC.411/08-09).