

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor S Bassnett,  
Professor S Bruzzi,  
Professor R Higgott,  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor R Lindley,  
Professor M Smith,  
Professor H Thomas (until item 738/08-09),  
Mr S Thomson,  
Professor M Underwood,  
Professor M Whitby.

Apologies: Professor L Bridges

In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Development,  
Communication and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative  
Officer (Governance), Mr A Bradley, University Librarian (for item 732/08-09), Head of  
the Department of German Studies (for item 736/08-09), Director of Student Services  
(for items 737/08-09 and 738/08-09), Mr D Mullins (for item 739/08-09).

728/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July be approved.

729/08-09 Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (minute 654/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE confirming that the University's Widening Participation Strategic Assessment (WPSA) had been received and that as a result, the University would continue to receive the widening participation allocation, noting that specific feedback on the WPSA would be received early in the autumn 2009 (SC.566/08-09).

730/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/063: Update on Student Immigration Route (minute 704/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

An information note from Universities UK providing details of the actions taken by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) in response to concerns raised by UUK at a meeting held on 30 June 2009 between UUK and the Chief Executive of the UKBA (SC.568/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the update did represent some areas of progress, noting that there was still considerable risk present within the student immigration system.

731/08-09 Group of 13 (minute 705/08-09 refers)

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

- (a) That the Group of 13 intended to submit a bid to the HEFCE Strategic Development Fund on 21 July 2009 and that he, the Registrar and the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment had had the opportunity to review the bid.
- (b) That the project still comprised elements which the University found concerning, for example, the agreed currency for offer making and the requirement for applicants to take an extra research skills module.
- (c) That either he or the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of the University would be requested to submit a letter in support of the proposals to demonstrate the University's commitment to the project.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (d) That, given the University's strong commitment to widening participation (WP), we would not wish to give the opposite impression by withdrawing from the Group of 13, particularly given the current focus on WP by Lord Mandelson and the new Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) draft a letter of support for the Vice-Chancellor for the Group of 13 Project for submission when required, noting that the University would include its specific reservations on the approach in its response.

732/08-09 Library Staff Restructuring (minute 710/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the University Librarian)

- (a) That the discussions representatives from each of the Faculties regarding the impact of the proposed staff restructuring within the Library were continuing in parallel with the consultation with the affected staff members.
- (b) That the consideration of potential ring-fencing of specific areas of the proposals relating to subject librarians had commenced, however, it was too soon to present firm proposals to the Committee.
- (c) That meetings were scheduled with the Deputy Registrar to consider the wider communication of the restructuring to the Senate and the University community generally, noting that it needed to be appropriately timed.

RESOLVED:

That, in consultation with the Deputy Registrar, the University Librarian communicate the latest developments to members of the Senate, ideally by no later than early August 2009.

733/08-09 UCEA Final Pay Offer

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That, at the national pay negotiations meeting held on 15 July 2009, the Universities and College Employers Association (UCEA) made a final offer to increase all points on the national pay spine by 0.5 % and to work with the trade unions on a range of issues through three joint working parties.

- (b) That the Unions had declared themselves disappointed with the offer.

734/08-09 Retirement of Professor Yvonne Carter

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Dean of Warwick Medical School and University of Warwick Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Regional Engagement, Professor Yvonne Carter, had decided to take early retirement and would step down at the end of the month due to ill health.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee extend its best wishes to Professor Carter and thank her for her service to the University.

735/08-09 Summer Degree Ceremonies 2009

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University's Summer Degree Ceremonies held between 13 and 17 July 2009 in the refurbished Butterworth Hall had been very successful due to an extraordinary amount of hard work from colleagues.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks and congratulations to all colleagues involved in the ceremonies.

736/08-09 Strategic Departmental Review Response: German Studies (minute 675/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The departmental response to the Strategic Departmental Review for the Department of German Studies held on 12 to 14 May 2009 and the Action Plan considered at a previous meeting of the Committee, together with an oral report from the Head of the Department, Professor Rob Burns (SC.569/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Head of the Department of German Studies)

- (a) That, in the immediate post-RAE period, the Annual Review process had been targeted as a means for addressing individuals' research performance and planning for the REF period but that this had subsequently been found an inappropriate mechanism.
- (b) That a REF Planning Group had been established in line with the recommendations of the Review Group to follow through on robust planning at individual and departmental level in terms of outputs, funding opportunities for early career researchers and management of study leave for the entire REF period currently estimated up to 2012.
- (c) That the Department recognised the importance of the research environment and the role that postgraduate research students played in the REF criteria, noting that it was endeavouring to recruit a larger PhD cohort, however, attracting UK students was challenging.
- (d) That consideration was being given to how the undergraduate programmes might be better designed to support research quality within the Department, including consideration of modules based on research specialisms and management of hours of language teaching to ensure colleagues' research time was protected.

- (e) That a joint MA in European Studies that was being discussed to pool expertise across the three language departments but, depending on agreement from all departments, the course would not be offered until 2010/11 and that additionally, the existing Taught MA in German could be restructured this year.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That market research should be undertaken prior to launching any new postgraduate taught course to ensure that the course would be sustainable and have the desired outcomes of increasing student numbers and as a recruitment stream for a PhD.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the departmental response and action plan be approved as set out in SC.569/08-09, noting the Head of Department was encouraged to delegate responsibilities for activities set out in the Action Plan where appropriate to do so.
- (b) That the Director of Management Information and Planning provide the Head of Department with the recent analysis of the Department's research profile compared to other departments in the sector to inform departmental planning.
- (c) That the Head of the Department of German Studies be invited to provide the Steering Committee with a progress report in the Summer Term 2010.
- (d) That the Departmental Response to the Strategic Departmental Review of Italian Studies be considered at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 27 July 2009.

737/08-09

Community Strategy

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Community and Campus), the Deputy Registrar and the Director of Student Services outlining a framework for a strategic statement on the University as a community including its values, activities and development (SC.565/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Services)

- (a) That the Community Strategy aimed to articulate the diversity of people and spaces on campus, their successes and the future plans for its development including the impact of 'cyber' or virtual communities.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus and Community))

- (b) That the document had been substantially and helpfully modified since it was last presented and that it formed a good basis on which further communication could be made.

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

- (c) That pilots for technical options to make the campus more accessible in virtual terms were underway and that the Community Strategy might include preferred options for this interaction.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies)

- (d) That the University might wish to consider the notion of 'community' at a Faculty-level.

(By the Registrar)

- (e) That the Constitutional Advisory Group (CAG) established by the Vice-Chancellor would be considering the academic and administrative structures, noting that a call for evidence would be issued to all members of the University community in due course.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Community Strategy as set out in SC.565/08-09 be approved subject to the revisions as discussed in the meeting.
- (b) That the Director of Student Services, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) and the Director of IT Services discuss the technical options for the University's virtual accessibility.
- (c) That the Director of Student Services and the Director of Development, Communication and Strategy discuss the wider internal and external communication of the Community Strategy.

738/08-09

Car Parking – Proposals for 2009/10

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Student Services detailing proposals to address a range of issues raised by stakeholders with regards to car parking arrangements to take effect from 2009/10 (SC.572/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Services)

- (a) That the proposals for changes to car parking arrangements on campus should be considered as part of a larger, longer term Transport Strategy to include an integrated public and campus transport plan, capital development plan for the future development of car parking on campus and improved facilities for colleagues and students travelling by foot or bicycle.
- (b) That the proposals set out in SC.572/08-09 focused on the following aspects to improve the management of the existing car parking resources and infrastructure:
  - (i) Limited student permits, acknowledging that certain student groups would require permits for medical/disability reasons
  - (ii) A new charging scheme including more flexible options for staff
  - (iii) Provision of a limited number of guaranteed spaces at a premium price on a trial basis
  - (iv) Replacement of clamping in favour of ticketing as the main method of enforcement, delegating the administrative work to an external body working in partnership with the University.
- (c) That the new infrastructure and barriers would allow for enhanced data collection which would inform consideration of potential future charges based on working patterns and understanding of peak usage times, however this type of data was not currently available.

- (d) That work had already begun to ensure an appropriate communication strategy to new and returning students in relation to the new arrangements for car parking.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (e) That he did not feel that the public transport to and from campus was not of sufficiently high quality for a University of Warwick's standing and that there were issues to address around safety for cyclists and facilities for them once on campus.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That communication to colleagues on the changes to car parking should emphasize the re-investment of car parking revenue into improving the infrastructure and resources in this area in the medium to long term.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals set out in SC.572/08-09 be approved in principle, subject to the following:
  - (i) Further consideration be given to a reduced differential rate for Grades 1-5.
  - (ii) Reduction in number of days for the proposed flexible parking scheme, noting the Committee's concern that certain types of staff (e.g. staff who have to be on campus most days) should not be discriminated against.
- (b) That the Vice-Chancellor approve on behalf of the Committee the final proposals.

739/08-09

Major Bid Proposal: International Institute for Product and Service Innovation (IIPSI)

CONSIDERED:

A draft proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) to enable the creation of a new 2330m<sup>2</sup> building on campus to house a facility providing access to new opportunities in plastic electronics, service design including digital media and translating creative industries expertise across sectors, and user-focussed product design (SC.574/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Finance Director)

- (a) That the assumed £4m of the University's HEFCE Capital Investment Funding allocation had already been committed to alternative projects and that the £4m would need to be sourced from the University's own funds.
- (b) That the potential residual value of the building under the terms of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was a cause of concern as it might be clawed back from the funding, noting further investigation into this was being undertaken.
- (c) That the Project Manager in Estates had estimated a 30 month design and build programme, noting that the current proposal had this at 18 months although slippage might be permissible.
- (d) That careful interpretation of the ERDF guidelines with regards to the period of spend was required to ensure the University was not put at risk.

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

- (e) That there were issues to be addressed around the use of the space in the DigiLab and other WMG buildings and whether the proposed activities could be accommodated without the need for a new capital project.

- (f) That the proposed outputs from the IIPSI were unclear and as yet unapproved by AWM, noting that it was difficult to assess whether these outputs could be achieved alongside the existing DigiLab outputs with the resources identified.

RESOLVED:

That the Finance Director, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) and Mr D Mullins continue to refine the proposal in light of discussion at the meeting, noting that the Vice-Chancellor be authorised to consider a revised proposal on behalf of the Steering Committee prior to its submission.

740/08-09

School of Life Sciences Timeline

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Chair of the Faculty of Science outlining the next actions to be taken to establish a School of Life Sciences (SC.573/08-09).

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

- (a) That the Senate and the Council had approved the establishment of a School of Life Sciences within the University's governance framework at their meetings in July 2009, noting in particular:
- (i) The Committee on the Appointment of Heads of Department would be considering the appointment of an Acting Head of School
  - (ii) The Operational Planning Group already established would be retained and that the Academic Group would be replaced by the Life Sciences Advisory Group.
- (b) That once the main procedural steps have been agreed, a detailed project plan would be developed for consideration by the relevant University committees.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed process and timelines for the establishment of a School of Life Sciences be approved as set out in SC.573/08-09.

741/08-09

Quarter End Report: ARC

CONSIDERED:

A paper detailing the financial performance of ARC departments at the end of Quarter 3 2008/09 (SC.575/08-09).

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

That there had been little movement between Quarter 2 and Quarter 3, noting the following:

- (i) That the uncertainty around School of Life Sciences initiative had led to an underperformance in the Department of Biological Sciences' research awards and grants.
- (ii) That the Department of Computer Science had started to show a decrease in research income across the year to date compared to the full 2007/08 position.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report on the financial performance of ARC departments following Quarter 3 2008/09 be noted as set out in SC.575/08-09.

- (b) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) contact the Departments of Biological Sciences and Computer Science to address issues around research income.

742/08-09

Financial Sustainability Strategy Group and Launch of TRAC Development Group

RECEIVED:

The final letter from Professor Steve Smith, Chair of the Financial Sustainability Strategy Group (SC.557/08-09), together with a letter from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor as Chair of the TRAC Development Group announcing the launch of a TRAC Development Group programme (SC.567/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the purpose of the TRAC Development Group programme was to embed the TRAC methodology through the HE sector and to ensure that it was fit for purpose.
- (b) That a series of events and conferences were being held for senior offices and managers over the coming months with details to follow in due course.

743/08-09

Centre for Workforce Intelligence – Supplier Briefing Note

CONSIDERED:

Information from the Department of Health outlining the process for submitting expressions of interest to act the service provider for the Centre for Workforce Intelligence to be established by the end of 2009 (SC.563/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That at a previous meeting the Steering Committee had resolved not to participate in the market testing phase of the Centre for Workforce Intelligence.
- (b) That in discussions with a Department of Health consultant, it was clear that the Department would welcome Warwick's engagement via the Institute for Employment Research and, where relevant, the Warwick Medical School.

(By the Chair of the Faculty of Social Studies)

- (c) That the Institute for Employment Research had been approached by AEA (the former government Atomic Energy Authority now acting as a consultancy) as a potential academic partner involved at the Board, research activity and external research levels should the bid be successful.
- (d) That AEA had requested that the University sign a non-disclosure agreement in order to take the discussions forward.

RESOLVED:

That the University sign the non-disclosure agreement with AEA once the final technical details on the agreement had been resolved, noting that should the University wish to feature in the AEA's bid, it would need to be included in its initial expression of interest to be submitted by the deadline of 3 August 2009.

744/08-09 Forthcoming HEFCE Consultations

RECEIVED:

Details of two forthcoming HEFCE consultations, namely consultations on proposals to reduce or phase out targeted allocations for teaching funding and the development of a carbon reduction target and strategy for HE in England (SC.555/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the proposals to reduce the targeted allocations within the mainstream teaching grant allocation were a cause of concern, particularly the potential loss of funding for postgraduate taught course in HEFCE price band D, which would affect Arts and a limited number of Social Studies programmes.

745/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/061: Survey on Credit Practice in England

CONSIDERED:

An Information Note from UUK requesting responses from HEIs to the QAA consultation on current credit practice and the adoption of the QAA guidance on the higher education credit framework for England (SC.564/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) and the Academic Registrar prepare the University's response for submission by 31 July 2009.

746/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/058: Universities and the Community – DCLG Consultations

CONSIDERED:

An Information Note from UUK informing members of two current Department of Community and Local Government (DCLG) consultations on multiple occupancy rented housing and planning responses, and encouraging institutions to contribute to a UUK response. (SC.558/08-09)

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar consider whether the University wished to submit a response by the deadline of 24 July 2009.

747/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/060: Student Recruitment 2009/10

RECEIVED:

An Information Note from UUK updating members on the main issues regarding student recruitment and Additional Student Numbers for 2009/10 (SC.552/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That a representative of the University would be attending the UUK 'talking shop' to be held on 23 July 2009.

748/08-09

Marie Curie Institute

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the University was in negotiations with the Marie Curie Institute to relocate initially 3 Principal Investigators and their research groups to Warwick over the Summer 2009 with potentially other colleagues to follow.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) co-ordinate the negotiations with colleagues from Warwick Medical School, the Department of Biological Sciences, Professor Sir J Beringer, as well as the Finance Office and Human Resources.
- (b) That the Steering Committee be updated on progress as necessary.

749/08-09

Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That a meeting of the Committee might be scheduled for 27 July 2009, noting that there was provision for a meeting in August 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee extend its thanks to Professor Susan Bassnett for her contribution as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus and Community).

750/08-09

University Response to Higher Education and Community Sport Partnership Plan Consultation

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the Sport England Higher Education and Community Sport Partnership Plan Consultation submitted on 3 July 2009 (SC.576/08-09).

751/08-09

Statement from DBIS on Student Support Arrangement 2010/11

RECEIVED:

An email from the Chief Executive of Universities UK informing of a statement from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) on students support arrangements for 2010/11 (SC.554/08-09)

752/08-09

AWM Corporate Plan and Project Review

RECEIVED:

An update from Advantage West Midlands (AWM) on the review of the organisation's corporate plan and projects between AWM and the University (SC.553/08-09)

753/08-09 Europe Note 09-04: Updated Higher Education Description for England, Wales and Northern Ireland

RECEIVED:

Information from the Europe Unit on the background to the updating of the Higher Education description for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, together with the updated text and diagram of the Higher Education Description (EWNI) (SC.561/08-09).

754/08-09 UUK Annual Benefits Statement

RECEIVED:

A statement from Universities UK providing information on the benefits which UUK brought to HEIs in the period January 2008 to March 2009 (SC.562/08-09).

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