

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 20 October 2014

Present: Professor N Thrift (Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair)), Professor Stuart Croft (Provost), Professor Christina Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)), Professor Christopher Hughes (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor T Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science and Engineering)), Professor J Palmowski (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education and Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Social Sciences)), Professor M Taylor (Dean of the Warwick Business School), Professor P Thomas (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science), Ms C Turhan (President of the Students' Union), Professor P Winstanley (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine), Professor L Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources)).

Apologies: Professor A Coats (Academic Vice-President (Monash-Warwick Alliance)), Professor M Freely (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts), Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer (Secretary)).

In Attendance: Ms S Bennett (Director of Student Careers and Skills, for item 35/14-15), Mr J Breckon (Director of Estates), Ms S Crookes (Head of Student Support Services, for item 36/14-15), Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Mr S Lamb (University Senior Tutor, for item 36/14-15), Ms J Horsburgh (Deputy Registrar (Acting Secretary)), Mr I Rowley (Director of Development, Communications and External Affairs), Mrs C Silvester (Assistant Registrar, Governance (Assistant Secretary)).

25/14-15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open and restricted minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2014 be approved.

26/14-15 *Proposal to Develop a Pre-University Programme for Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan (minute 345/13-14 refers)

RECEIVED:

An update from the Deputy Registrar on the proposal to develop a pre-university programme for Nazarbayev University.

27/14-15 Enhancing the Governance of Strategy Implementation, Resourcing, Capital Planning and Institutional Performance (minute 341/13-14 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the Senate and the Council had considered and approved the proposals for enhancing the governance of strategy implementation, resourcing, capital planning and institutional performance, at their respective meetings in October 2014.
- (b) That an implementation structure was being developed following feedback from these committees, noting that the revised terms of reference of the Steering Committee would be considered by the Senate at its meeting in January 2015.

- (c) That in the interim period prior to approval of revised terms of reference, the Steering Committee would begin to consider strategic business on a trial basis.

28/14-15 *Update on Developments Regarding California

RECEIVED:

An update from the Provost on developments regarding California.

29/14-15 Professor Ann Caesar

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Professor Ann Caesar had been appointed to the role of Alumni Ambassador following the end of her term as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (50th Anniversary).
- (b) That as Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Caesar led on a number of key strategic projects for the University which included a successful QAA audit and an instrumental role in planning an exciting and distinctive programme of activities for Warwick's approaching 50th anniversary.
- (c) That in her role as Warwick's first Pro-Vice-Chancellor with responsibility for alumni relations, Professor Caesar made significant progress working with the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO) and academic departments to develop and deliver Warwick's alumni engagement strategy in the UK and internationally.
- (d) That as Alumni Ambassador, Professor Caesar would continue this important work; her primary responsibility being the provision of academic leadership for the development of Warwick's global alumni community, working closely with the Director of Communications, Development and External Affairs in developing institutional and departmental alumni relations strategies.

RESOLVED:

That the thanks of the Steering Committee be extended to Professor Caesar for her invaluable contribution to the University during her time as Pro-Vice-Chancellor, along with its best wishes for her new role as Alumni Ambassador.

30/14-15 Warwick MBA

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Warwick Business School (WBS)'s full-time MBA had climbed 19 places to be ranked 37th in the world, 10th in Europe and third in the UK by The Economist's 'Which MBA?'.
(b) That only five UK schools were listed in the world's top 50 and of these WBS was the only one to improve its position.
- (c) That the Warwick MBA was also ranked 13th in the world for post-MBA salary increase, with students seeing an average rise of 122 per cent on their salary before they started their MBA.

(by the Dean, WBS)

- (d) That in the Financial Times 2014 global ranking of Executive MBAs, published on the morning of the meeting, WBS had risen two places to 19th in the world, and was now top in the UK for stand-alone Executive MBAs.

RESOLVED:

That all colleagues in WBS be congratulated for their contributions towards these significant achievements.

31/14-15 Fellows of the Academy of Social Sciences

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Professor Richard Hastings (Centre for Educational Development) and Professor Simon Williams (Department of Sociology) had been announced as Fellows of the Academy of Social Sciences, an award which recognises leading social scientists who have made a substantial contribution to the field.
- (b) That Professor Hastings and Professor Williams were among 34 leading social scientists to receive the honour in 2014/15.
- (c) That the Academy of Social Sciences was the National Academy of Academics, Learned Societies and Practitioners in the Social Sciences; its mission being to promote social sciences in the UK for the public benefit.

RESOLVED:

That the congratulations of the Steering Committee be extended to Professors Hastings and Williams.

32/14-15 Global School for Gifted Young Scientists

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That IGGY, Warwick's educational social network for bright young people, had partnered with the New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS), as part of the Global STEM Alliance, to deliver a distinctive global residential school for gifted 11-18 year-old students from around the world.
- (b) That the residential school, to be held at Warwick from 7-20 December 2014, would benefit 100 young people through two weeks of intensive academic study, introducing them to real world issues and projects to develop them as young researchers.
- (c) That NYAS would be delivering a challenging course designed to inspire the next generation of scientists, and on which students would be encouraged to think about their future career options in science, as well as learning the skills scientists need to be successful in their chosen field.

33/14-15 Harbin Institute of Technology

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the School of Engineering had signed four agreements with Harbin Institute of Technology, China which would create new exchange opportunities for undergraduate engineers at Warwick and allow Harbin students to access

final-year undergraduate and Masters-level courses in Engineering at Warwick.

- (b) That Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT), based in Heilongjiang province, Northern China, was founded in 1920 and had been a member of China's elite 'C9' league of its top nine universities since 1999.
- (c) That HIT was the major constructor of the micro-satellite 'Testing Satellite No.1', the first satellite to be fully developed and launched by a Chinese university; and that other notable HIT research achievements included the development of China's first simulation computer, the first intelligent chess-playing computer, the first arc-welding robots and the first world advanced-level system radar.
- (d) That the agreements were signed on Thursday 25 September 2014 by Harbin's Vice-President Professor Nanqi Ren, an Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and Professor of Harbin's School of Municipal and Environmental Engineering, and Warwick's Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources), Professor Lawrence Young, whose international focus was to develop Warwick's links with China, in the presence of Professor Nigel Stocks, Head of Warwick's School of Engineering.

34/14-15 *The Alan Turing Institute

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) had invited Expressions of Interest (Eoi) from UK universities to join a consortium to establish an internationally-recognised Institute to lead in research, education and knowledge transfer in the data sciences: the Alan Turing Institute.

35/14-15 Annual Employability Report 2013/14

RECEIVED:

A paper updating the Committee on key employment outcomes and a proposed series of interventions to improve graduate employability and league table performance (SC.8/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Careers and Skills)

- (a) That the two key measures of employment outcomes for 2012/13 graduates, derived from the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey: the Employment Performance Indicator and the Graduate Prospects score, had been published in July and September 2014.
- (b) That the University's performance in both measures has declined compared to the previous year and although the decreases were small (0.6% and 0.2% respectively), they had affected rankings against other institutions.
- (c) That Student Careers and Skills (SCS) continuously reviewed how the DLHE survey was conducted, to ensure that the highest response rates possible could be achieved and that all legitimate sources of data on graduate employment circumstances were maximised; it being noted that its processes were subject to internal audit in 2012/13 and were found to be compliant with HESA requirements and best practice.

- (d) That a number of areas were the focus of intervention to enable Warwick graduates to progress into jobs or further study, and thus have a positive effect upon employability, including: current undergraduate students, disciplinary support in academic departments, recent graduates who were under-employed or unemployed, and the use of systems and data.
- (e) That SCS had set out its targets for DLHE up to 2016/17, which aimed to place the University in the top ten amongst Russell Group institutions by 2015/16.
- (f) That the granularity of the data used by DLHE resulted in very small changes in scores having a significant effect on the survey rankings, it being noted that it would be very difficult for the University to achieve above 94% without making changes to its subject offer.
- (g) That it was crucial to raise awareness of the deadlines for graduate trainee schemes amongst final-year students, noting that many had closing dates early in the Autumn term.
- (h) That SCS wished to capitalise on the University's presence in London once the premises at the Shard were established, in order to create stronger links with employers and graduates based in the City.
- (i) That SCS would provide the Students' Union with DLHE data broken down by widening participation status, gender and ethnicity.

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

- (j) That SCS was working closely with Strategic Planning and Analytics in the development of enhanced data analysis, noting that this would enable colleagues to better identify and address areas of concern.
- (k) That work on the enhancement of employability at departmental level would be incorporated into that being done on National Student Survey performance, it being noted that it would be essential to achieve buy-in from all departments to improve employability scores.
- (l) That some departments' scores were affected by the highly competitive nature of the industries targeted by their graduates, and that it was important for students' expectations to be managed with regards to the challenges they may face in securing graduate-level employment in such sectors.
- (m) That the findings of Futuretrack, a longitudinal survey exploring the relationship between higher education, employment and career planning carried out by the Warwick Institute of Employment Research, suggested that the undertaking of a specialist masters degree improved employment prospects in the respective industry, and that holding a more general masters qualification had a positive impact on securing graduate-level employment.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (n) That it was imperative that departments within the Faculty of Science worked to enhance their employability scores, noting that some Russell Group institutions at the upper end of the DLHE tables specialised in subjects allied to science.

RECEIVED:

A paper to brief the Steering Committee on matters relating to student support and wellbeing (SC.9/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Student Support Services)

- (a) That a key theme for Student Support Services in 2013/14 and going forward into 2014/15 was for services to scrutinize their effectiveness and efficiency in order to continue to provide the high level of service that had been delivered in previous years, despite the continued rise in numbers of students using the services and an increase complexity of issues.
- (b) That the service areas within Student Support Services were working to promote the management of change and of new life experience, through self-help tool kits, information and advice giving and workshops to assist students in developing resilience to university life.
- (c) That it was anticipated that proposed changes in the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) would present significant challenges for Student Support Services, noting that it was likely that there would be substantive reductions in the number of students eligible for the DSA, along with a 'rebalancing of responsibilities' from the government to institutions, particularly in the area of non-medical helpers and assistive technology.
- (d) That whilst some of the changes to the DSA had been deferred to 2016, others had already commenced, and Student Support Services were giving consideration as to how best to manage the impact, it being noted that government guidance on the responsibilities of HEIs was being revised on a regular basis.
- (e) That benchmarking against data held by national professional bodies on wellbeing issues such as mental health problems, suggested that the number of cases reported at Warwick in 2013/14 was parallel with national trends.
- (f) That Student Support Services had carried out analysis of support requests based on academic department, noting that whilst some departments had higher occurrences of students requiring support, the anecdotal nature of evidence meant that it was difficult to determine whether this was indicative of issues within such departments or merely coincidental or reflective of department size.

(by the University Senior Tutor)

- (g) That the University Senior Tutor was working closely with colleagues in academic departments to facilitate prompt, informed and appropriate responses to student and staff concerns, and in ensuring consistency in the handling of academic-related issues whilst accounting for individual circumstances.
- (h) That it was crucial to continue to ensure that academic staff were aware of when and how to signpost students to specialist areas of student support in accordance with the principles specified in the University Guidelines for Personal Tutors.

- (i) That Student Support Services provided advice and guidance to all academic staff who held Personal Tutor roles.
- (j) That all academic colleagues acting as Personal Tutors had received relevant training, noting that the training sessions remained open for those who wished to refresh their knowledge.
- (k) That the new post of Wellbeing Advisor was instrumental in signposting students to the most appropriate service, and a number of developments made by this colleague had been well-received; noting particularly that the introduction of Wellbeing Assessment and drop-in sessions had encouraged more males to access support.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (l) That there was an increasing trend of multiple complexities in student support cases, and as such, the development of resources to promote self-help and resilience amongst students was essential to enable Student Support Services to continue to provide the dedicated support required by particularly vulnerable students.
- (m) That from 1 August 2014, Student Support Services had been incorporated into the Deputy Registrar's Office, and would work closely with other wellbeing services at the University towards Goal 4 of the University Strategy: Engage Our Communities; it being noted that pastoral support should be accessible to all members of the University community, both on and off campus.
- (n) That part of a refocus of the Deputy Registrar's Office comprised the creation of a Wellbeing Directorate within which these, and other community services would sit with the intention of holistically supporting the wider wellbeing of staff and students in the future; the first step being the recruitment of a Wellbeing Director.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (o) That the number of students accessing support indicated that there was increasing awareness of the availability of services amongst the student community.
- (p) That there remained some discrepancies in the level of support and the nature of advice given by Personal Tutors in academic departments, and that as such, it was crucial that colleagues acting as Personal Tutors undertook up-to-date training.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine)

- (q) That he was grateful for the quality of advice and guidance that staff and students in Warwick Medical School had received from Student Support Services in relation to Fitness to Practise cases.

37/14-15

Erasmus+ Budget Allocation for 2014/15

RECEIVED:

A paper updating the Steering Committee on funding allocations for the Erasmus+ mobility scheme (S.10/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education))

- (a) That the Erasmus+ mobility grant allocation for 2014/15 was confirmed in July 2014, with significantly reduced funding.
- (b) That Warwick had traditionally bid for 10 months funding for each student, with an average of 8.5 months being taken up, and as such, had received fewer funded places for 2014/15 than in previous years.
- (c) That the funding allocated for 2014/15 was likely to be sufficient given the lower than anticipated number of students requiring grants, noting however that placement allowances for 2015/16 would need to be carefully managed to ensure receipt of adequate funding.

38/14-15

University Policy on Communicable Diseases

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That following a serious outbreak of the Ebola virus in some regions of West Africa, the University was in the process of updating its policy on communicable diseases, with support from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine and Dr Mark Bailey from Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham.
- (b) That a working group was currently meeting weekly to develop the policy, noting that its recommendations would be brought to a future meeting of the Steering Committee.
- (c) That there were currently no full-time students from the affected regions at the University, although as a precaution, all first-responders had received advice on handling a suspected Ebola case and dealing with bodily fluids.
- (d) That the University was currently restricting travel on University business to the affected areas of Africa in line with the travel advice issued by the Foreign Commonwealth Office, noting however that the University was consulting with the Insurance team in the Finance Office to develop a strategic, risk-based approach to overseas travel requests to areas of high risk more generally.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (e) That whilst it was highly unlikely that the University would experience any cases of Ebola, it was essential that it was fully prepared to respond to a suspected incidence.

39/14-15

BBSRC Portfolio Analysis

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) providing an update on the University' success rates in competitive funding it being noted that: in 2013/14 the overall success rate was 31% based on a total of 55 responsive mode or initiative grant applications. The overall success rate by value was 21% based on a total of £43,470k applied for. These figures compare with overall average institutional success rates of 27% by both number and value (SC.11/14-15 online only).