

# THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 16 February 2015

**Present:** Professor Sir N Thrift (Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair)), Professor S Croft (Provost), Professor M Freely (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts), Professor Christina Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)), Professor Christopher Hughes (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor J Palmowski (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education and Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)), Professor M Taylor (Dean of the Warwick Business School), 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:** Mr J Breckon (Director of Estates), Professor A Coats (Academic Vice-President (Monash-Warwick Alliance)), Dr M Glover (Academic Registrar), Ms J Horsburgh (Deputy Registrar), Professor T Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering & Medicine)), Mr I Rowley (Director of Development, Communication and External Affairs), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Social Sciences)), Professor P Thomas (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Public Engagement)).

**In Attendance:** Ms C Ahearne (Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor), (Mr P Blagburn (Senior Assistant Registrar (Outreach)) (for item 182/14-15), Ms C Cochrane (Director of Research & Impact Services) (for item 180/14-15), Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Ms K Gray (Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality)) (for item 183/14-15), Dr D Lamburn (Chair of the Quality Assessment Working Group) (for item 183/14-15), Ms G McGrattan (Director of Human Resources), Ms E Peak (Assistant Registrar, Governance (Assistant Secretary)), Mr D Pearson (Senior Assistant Registrar (Graduate School)) (for item 181/14-15), Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer (Secretary)).

**Note:** *Items marked with an asterisk {\*} are classified as restricted, noting that all restricted business is confidential to members and attendees of the Steering Committee.*

173/14-15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open and restricted minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 9 February 2015 be approved.

174/14-15 Warwick in California

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair)

- (a) That at its meeting on 11 and 12 February 2015, the Council had resolved to adopt the proposal recommended to it by the University Senate to pursue the development of teaching and research activities in California alongside the University Development Trust.
- (b) That a significant amount of work had already gone into exploring this opportunity, noting that the Council had expressed its gratitude for the contributions made by colleagues from across the University and the Students' Union.

175/14-15 Visit of Monash University's President and Vice-Chancellor

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair)

- (a) That the University had hosted its first visit last week of the President and Vice-Chancellor of Monash University, Professor Margaret Gardner.
- (b) That during her visit Professor Gardner had attended a meeting of the Monash-Warwick Alliance Board along with Monash University's Chief Operating Officer and Senior Vice-President, Peter Marshall, attended a dinner with the University Council and with Heads of Department, and met with a range of colleagues from across the University, as well as with SU sabbatical officers and Monash students currently based at Warwick.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's thanks be extended to all colleagues who were involved with the visit.

176/14-15 Warwick Taught Masters Scholarship Scheme 2015

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair)

- (a) That the University had launched over £1.2million of scholarships for Taught Masters students in 2015-16, noting that 125 awards of £10,000 per student would be available to eligible Home/EU students from under-represented groups who wished to progress from an undergraduate course for which they had been charged the higher tuition fees applying since 2012-13, to a postgraduate taught masters course starting in 2015-16.
- (b) That these scholarships would be co-funded by the UK Government and the University and presented a one-off opportunity for 2015 entrants to obtain funding before a proposed loan scheme for postgraduate study was to begin in 2016.

177/14-15 Official Opening: WMG Academy for Young Engineers

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair)

- (a) That on 3 February 2015, Mr Ratan Tata GBE, Chairman of Tata Trusts and Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons, had officially opened the WMG Academy for Young Engineers in front of an audience of over 300.
- (b) That the WMG Academy had opened its doors to over 230 students in September 2014 and was already proving to be a huge success.
- (c) That the Academy had promised, from its inception, to blend business and education and to prepare students for the world of work, offering a unique curriculum which would teach engineering and business skills alongside standard qualifications.

178/14-15 Fourth Warwick/UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) Integration Summit: Call for Proposals

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair)

- (a) That the fourth Warwick/UKCISA Integration Summit, organised by the International Office, Centre for Linguistics and Warwick Students' Union, would be held on campus on 6 May 2015 with the theme 'What makes a global student?'.
- (b) That the conference would look at ways to encourage greater integration between home and international students for the enhancement of the student experience during study and the world after university and how to equip students with the necessary outlook, self-awareness, communication and intercultural skills to thrive as global citizens and in a global workplace.
- (c) That the call for proposals had been released, noting the deadline of 27 February 2015.

179/14-15 Go Green Week – 9 -15 February 2015

REPORTED: (by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (a) That during 'Go Green Week' between 9 to 15 February 2015, a number of events and campaigns had taken place across the University, noting that this was an annual national week of climate action in schools, colleges and universities.
- (b) That on Friday 13 February 2015, the Deputy Registrar had received a petition signed by academic staff from across the Faculties, in support of the Fossil Free Campaign.
- (c) That open engagement was continuing with sabbatical officers regarding the 'Fossil Free Warwick' campaign, it being noted that University discussions were being held within the Finance Committees, including the Investment Sub-Committee, and University Estate Committee.

180/14-15 Research Update November 2014 – January 2015

RECEIVED:

A paper providing a research update for the period November 2014 to January 2015, encompassing research strategy and performance, the external research environment and key internal developments which are pertinent to the support of research across the University (SC.85/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Research & Impact Services)

- (a) That at the mid-point of the financial year research applications stood at 737 applications with a value of £176m (representing an increase of c.£18m compared to the same period last year).
- (b) That research awards were slightly lower at the mid-point of this financial year compared to last year, but noting that there were £19m of award offers currently in process.
- (c) That the above figures reflected a shift towards larger, longer term research projects.

- (d) That the new Research Development and Strategy team, headed by Ms N Muckle, would be looking at the University's EU research strategy in more detail (including holding workshops to share knowledge to improve success across the University), planning for the post-REF period and engaging more with analytics to target specific research areas.
- (e) That the department was undertaking work with academic departments under the 'Simplify, Collaborate and Deliver' theme to improve processes across a research project life-cycle, noting that a process review workshop had been held with the School of Life Sciences in February 2015 to improve the process for staff recruitment on Research Council UK grants, enabling income to be realised more efficiently.
- (f) That a clear strategy and renewed sense of direction was being developed for 'research impact', noting that the Research Committee was guiding the strategy and had received and considered a draft 'Research Impact Strategy & Action Plan'.
- (g) That following the University being named as a founder member of the Alan Turing Institute (ATI), an internal project team had been established to negotiate and agree the Joint Venture agreement, noting the short deadline of mid-March for finalisation of this agreement as set by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).
- (h) That the allocation of HEIF 6 for the period 2015-16 had been confirmed in the 2015 Higher Education Funding Letter, noting that the letter appeared to confirm earlier indications from HEFCE that HEIF would continue for 2015-16 at similar levels to the present allocation, with the status of HEIF beyond 2015-16 being uncertain.
- (i) That the M5 partnership required a clear strategy to set its direction and key priorities, noting that the University should consider how to bring leadership into the partnership.
- (j) That there may be scope to consider the University's strategy in relation to the Newton Fund, noting the need to ensure a balance between the time invested to successfully attract such funding and the financial returns received.
- (k) That opportunities to build on the success of Dr Deirdre Hollingsworth's grant with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation should be considered.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University's strategy in relation to the Newton Fund would be discussed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education and Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies).
- (b) That the research update for the period November 2014 – January 2015 be noted as set out in paper SC.85/14-15.

181/14-15 \*Report from the Warwick Graduate School

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Graduate School providing an update and detailing developments regarding postgraduate education across the University (SC.86/14-15 {restricted}).

RESOLVED:

That the Graduate School update be noted as set out in paper SC.86/14-15 {restricted}.

182/14-15 National Networks for Collaborative Outreach

RECEIVED:

A paper providing an update on the recent outcome following the HEFCE circular letter 20/2014, National Networks for Collaborative Outreach, including the context of the scheme and the rationale and benefits for a local approach (SC.87/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Outreach))

- (a) That the University had been awarded funds through the HEFCE National Networks for Collaborative Outreach scheme to lead the Coventry and Warwickshire network.
- (b) That the network would facilitate and strengthen engagement with local secondary schools and colleges and embed a long term strategic approach with the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to improve progression rates to Higher Education (HE).
- (c) That the University would appoint a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) (anticipated to be within the next month) and build a web presence to help teachers and advisers find out about the outreach activity which universities and colleges deliver in the area and provide general advice about progression into HE.
- (d) That the University had good access with many schools in the Coventry and Warwickshire region, noting that access was not however universal and, further, that there was some duplication of outreach in schools owing to the range of interests across the University.
- (e) That the aim was to ensure all secondary schools had the opportunity to engage with HE, noting that HE need to deliver what secondary schools need to facilitate this.
- (f) That HEFCE were changing their monitoring structures in the short to medium term, noting that HEFCE want to see outputs and measure impact.
- (g) That the University's priority was on access for widening participation students, noting that there was scope to consider how best to support these students during their time at the University.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (h) That consideration should be given as to how long-term, sustainable relationships could be established with schools, noting that schools are constant whilst infrastructure funding in this area is not.

RESOLVED:

That the outcome of this funding call and the benefits the network would have on the University's local engagement work with schools and colleges and the wider connections with strategic mapping through the Coventry and Warwickshire LEP be noted as set out in paper SC.87/14-15.

183/14-15

HEFCE Discussion Document on the Future of Quality Assessment in Higher Education

CONSIDERED:

A paper detailing the University's draft response to the HEFCE Discussion Document on the Future of Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SC.88/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the HEFCE were reviewing how quality in teaching and learning was assessed in the UK, recognising that the global HE sector is developing rapidly and that systems need to adapt accordingly, noting that this was with a view to retendering for the services that the QAA currently provide.
- (b) That the paper had been compiled by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) and the discussion document had been considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and the Quality Assurance Working Group, it being noted that contributions to the paper had been made by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), the Chair of the Quality Assurance Working Group and the Deputy Academic Registrar.
- (c) That any quality assessment process would need to take into account different types of institution, noting that one single process applied to all institutions would not be appropriate.
- (d) That quality assessment was focussed on the quality and assessment of processes rather than the excellence of teaching and learning, noting that if there was a move to assessing the latter the review mechanisms would require further substantial changes.
- (e) That the assessment of quality in teaching and learning should be based on dialogue, rather than a compliance checklist approach.

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

- (f) That at an event she had attended on 13 February 2015, it was reported that the HEFCE were open minded about how quality in teaching and learning would be assessed in the UK in the future, noting that the discussion focus during the event has transitioned from quality assessment to student experience.

(by the Vice-Chancellor and Chair)

- (g) That the Russell Group had recommended a tiered approach to quality assessment.

(by the Chair of the Quality Assurance Working Group)

- (h) That the focus of quality assessment should be on academic quality rather than on policies and procedures and noting that there were other measures to assess student experience.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft response to the HEFCE Discussion Document on the Future of Quality Assessment in Higher Education be approved, as set out in paper SC.88/14-15.
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) to approve a final version of the University's response outside of the Steering Committee meeting, noting the deadline for response of 27 February 2015.

184/14-15 HEFCE Business Plan 2015-2020 launched

RECEIVED:

The HEFCE Business Plan 2015-2020, setting out the HEFCE's aim to create and sustain the conditions for a world-leading system of higher education which transforms lives, strengthens the economy, and enriches society (SC.89/14-15).

185/14-15 Which? Investigation – Higher Education: A Review of Providers' Rights to Change Courses

RECEIVED:

A report from Which? into university terms concerning changes to courses based on responses received by Which? to Freedom of Information requests submitted to 142 universities in November 2014, noting that Warwick was one of 49 universities categorised as providing 'inadequate information' to determine whether or not the terms were fair and in line with the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 and that the Academic Registrar has been remitted to co-ordinate a response which will come back to a future Steering Committee meeting (SC.90/14-15).

As at 12 March 2015