

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 30 March 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)), Ms C Turhan (President of the Students' Union).

Apologies: Professor A Coats (Academic Vice-President (Monash-Warwick Alliance)), Professor Christopher Hughes (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor T Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering & Medicine)), Professor J Palmowski (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education and Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)), Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer (Secretary)), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Social Sciences)), Professor M Taylor (Dean, Warwick Business School), Professor P Thomas (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Public Engagement)), Professor P Winstanley (Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine), Professor L Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources)).

In Attendance: Ms C Ahearne (Executive Officer to the Vice-Chancellor), Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Ms J Horsburgh (Deputy Registrar), Mr C Key (Group Accountant, Finance Office) (for item 240/14-15), Mr I Rowley (Director of Development, Communication & External Affairs), Ms B Lees (Senior Assistant Registrar Governance Risk and Continuity (Assistant 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.*

231/14-15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 16 March 2015 be approved.

232/14-15 In Memoriam: Andrew Sprowson

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair)

- (a) That the University had been saddened to hear of the death of Andrew Sprowson in a road traffic accident near his home in Kenilworth, on Friday 13 March 2015.
- (b) That Mr Sprowson had been an Associate Clinical Professor at Warwick Medical School, having joined the University in April 2012, and a consultant trauma and orthopaedic surgeon at the University Hospitals of Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust (UHCW).

233/14-15 Faculty Chair Elected as Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair)

- (a) That Professor Christopher Hughes, Professor of International Politics and Japanese Studies in PAIS, was recently announced as a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences, an award which recognised leading social scientists who had made a substantial contribution to wider social science.
- (b) That Professor Hughes be congratulated on this achievement.

234/14-15 Budget 2015

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair)

That the Chancellor of the Exchequer had delivered the Budget 2015 on Wednesday 18 March 2015, noting the following points which were particularly of interest to the HE Sector:

- (a) The introduction of income contingent loans of up to £25,000 to support PhDs and research masters in addition to existing funding, and designed to minimise public subsidy, noting that the scheme lacked detail at the current time.
- (b) £60m for a new energy research project in the Midlands, the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA), a multimillion research hub which would build on the expertise of six leading midlands universities including Warwick, the British Geological Survey and the surrounding industrial base to deliver a step change in energy research and development, securing the UK's leadership position in the sector.
- (c) A UK-wide £400m competitive fund for new cutting-edge science facilities, with funding available up to 2020-21.
- (d) A cut in the lifetime pension cap to £1m, which would significantly impact HE staff among others.

235/14-15 Alan Turing Institute

REPORTED: (by the Group Finance Director)

That the University had signed the final documentation relating to the Alan Turing Institute, with a number of completion notes requiring resolution over the coming months prior to the commencement of the formal operation of the Institute.

236/14-15 National Automotive Innovation Centre

REPORTED: (by the Group Finance Director)

- (a) That the construction contract for the National Automotive Innovation Centre had recently been awarded with the project due to complete in 2017.
- (b) That a large workforce was being mobilised by the contractor, noting that entrance to the site would be from the Science Park to minimise the effect on campus users.

237/14-15 University Rankings: Warwick Third in '100 under 50'

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair)

- (a) That the University had been named third fastest rising university under the age of 50 years old in the world by the Times Higher Education Young Universities Summit, and the fastest rising university in the UK.
- (b) That this was the highest Warwick had ever been ranked in this league table and the last time it would be eligible for inclusion.

238/14-15 TATA Steel UKRPIF Bid

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair)

That the University's bid in relation to the Advanced Steel Research Hub had been granted by the HEFCE, noting that this was the third UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRPIF) bid won by the University.

239/14-15 Car Parking

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President and Chair)

That departments planning department-level open days were urged to communicate the intended dates via the appropriate channels, in order to mitigate against the potential effects on campus traffic and campus parking facilities.

240/14-15 \*HEFCE Recurrent Grant 2015-16

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Group Finance Director and the Group Accountant, Finance Office, following initial analysis of the HEFCE Recurrent Grant Letter 2015-16, received on 25 March 2015.

241/14-15 \*HEFCE Financial Health of the Higher Education Sector and Russell Group Comparison

CONSIDERED:

A report from HEFCE on the Financial Health of the HE Sector, together with information on the University's financial position compared with that of its peers in the Russell Group (SC.112/14-15 {restricted}).

242/14-15 UUK Report: Quality, Equity, Sustainability: the Future of Higher Education Regulation

CONSIDERED:

The Universities UK report on 'setting out proposals for the future of higher education regulation (SC.113.14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the report was the outcome of a task and finish group chaired by Professor Simon Gaskell, President and Principal of Queen Mary University of London, highlighting the challenges facing the current approach to regulation in the sector and setting out a series of proposals for how these could be addressed.
- (b) That the report argued for a greater emphasis on promoting and protecting the student interest.
- (c) That recommendations included the establishment of a register of approved higher education providers and a new Council for Higher Education for England, evolved from HEFCE, that would lead and coordinate sector regulation.
- (d) That implementation of the proposals would require changes to primary legislation, together with further discussions.
- (e) That the report would be further considered and in what timescale was not articulated.

RESOLVED:

That the Universities UK report on Quality, Equity, Sustainability: the Future of Higher Education Regulation' be noted.

243/14-15

Alternative Providers of Higher Education: Improving Quality and Value for Money - Notice of Public Consultation

RECEIVED:

A consultation document from the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills on proposals to improve quality and value for money at alternative providers, noting that BIS had written directly to all alternative providers inviting views on the proposals, including on any practical implications around their implementation (SC.114/14-15).

244/14-15

Students' Union Societies Federation Newsletter – Term 2

RECEIVED:

The Societies Federation newsletter from the Students' Union, as compiled by the SU Societies Officer, showcasing information on student society activity at Warwick, noting the record number of balls, conferences and summits which had taken place (paper SC.118/14-15).

RESOLVED:

That the Students' Union be congratulated on the range and breadth of activities showcased.