

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 21 February 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor S Bruzzi,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor R Higgott,  
Professor C Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor M Taylor,  
Professor P Winstanley,  
Mr D Stevens.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Director of HR, Director of Estates, Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 373/10-11), Education Officer (Students' Union) (for item 375/10-11), Director of Student Careers and Skills (for item 378/10-11), Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management & Timetabling) (for item 379/10-11).

418/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2011 be approved.

419/10-11 Evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure (minute 319/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the QAA consultation on the Academic Infrastructure, and the proposal to restructure it into a UK Code of Practice for standards, quality and enhancement in higher education (SC.294/10-11).

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

- (a) That while the proposal to restructure the Academic Infrastructure was generally welcomed, given the repetitions and inconsistencies in the existing framework, there were concerns over the attempt to address simultaneously two very different audiences (the public and institutions).
- (b) That at a round table discussion relating to the HEFCE consultation on Public Information on Friday 18 February 2011, it had been stated that there were no plans to proceed with round two of the consultation to incorporate the concerns collated and that, despite the current consultation, there were many elements of the proposals that would not be revised.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (c) That several agencies appeared to be attempting to position themselves to take on the role of student champion with respect to Public Information.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Vice Chancellor would send a letter of objection to Professor Janet Beer regarding the manner in which the HEFCE consultation on Public Information was being undertaken, and would copy this letter to the Russell Group.
- (b) That the draft response to the HEFCE consultation on Academic Infrastructure be approved subject to any revisions proposed by members of the Steering Committee following the meeting.

420/10-11

Student fees

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That there had been recent media reports that, were a significant number of institutions to wish to charge tuition fees of £9000, various penalties may be applied, for example, up to 10 percent of student numbers may be withdrawn for which other institutions may bid.

421/10-11

Students' Union Survey on Student Satisfaction

CONSIDERED:

A report on the Student Experience Post-Browne, compiled by the Students' Union following a survey on student expectations in an environment of increased graduate contributions. (SC.295/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

- (a) That 648 student had completed the survey, but no responses had been received from international students or from students in the Faculty of Medicine.
- (b) That students from all Faculties expected an increase in the amount of contact time with staff, and that there was also a strong request for consistency in personal tutoring, lower additional course costs and more workspaces.
- (c) That in terms of social provision on campus, the majority of students indicated they would like to see Student Societies and Warwick Sport subsidised to a greater extent with a reduction in joining fees.
- (d) That with regard to the campus experience, students predominantly wanted more work spaces, cheaper and greater variety of eating facilities, and more social spaces.
- (e) That the rebuild of the Students' Union had reduced the amount of social space available and therefore, the Library was becoming the main social space on campus.

(by the Education Officer (Students' Union)):

- (f) That the quality and quantity of contact time, with a strong emphasis on the introduction of smaller and longer seminar groups was desired by students, along with more opportunities to benchmark academic progress throughout their degree.
- (g) That common themes emerged throughout the survey, including the lack of a process to feed back concerns regarding poor teaching quality.
- (h) That the Personal Tutor System was valued and students considered it had much potential for further development.

(by the Vice-Chancellor):

- (i) That this was a useful document to encourage discussion among members of the committee and more broadly.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)):

- (j) That the SSLC system provided an opportunity for students to feed back on poor quality teaching, but that SSLC representatives needed to be undertaking this role properly in order for the system to function.
- (k) That a debate was needed to consider the range and forms that contact hours could take, given that the current discussions focussed purely on face to face contact and direct teaching.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Science):

- (l) That the University and the Students' Union needed to communicate to students that education was a developmental process, and not a consumer product.

(by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts):

- (m) That there was the need to better explain to students the role of independent study, and consideration needed to be given to further investment in the Library.

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

- (n) That caution should be taken if factoring in additional costs, as for some subjects the costs are much greater than currently funded by HEFCE, for example the cost of research projects of the final year of integrated masters degrees.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Students' Union would clarify the footnote featured on page 8 of the Student Experience Post-Browne report, as Warwick was not the lowest scored institution in the Times Higher Education Survey for "Cheap shop/bar/amenities".
- (b) That the Dean of Warwick Medical School would work with the President of the Students' Union to establish reasons for the lack of responses from the Faculty of Medicine to the Student Experience Post-Browne survey.
- (c) That the Deputy Registrar would discuss with the President of the Students' Union a method for disseminating the findings of the Student Experience Post-Browne survey to departments.
- (d) That the President of the Students' Union and the Education Officer (Students' Union) would investigate whether other institutions were also undertaking similar surveys.

422/10-11

Feedback from the Faculty Boards on Fees, Outreach and Student Experience

RECEIVED:

An update on the views emerging from the Faculty Boards regarding the setting of fees, financial support, Outreach and the Student Experience (SC.303/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the paper setting out initial proposals and scenarios that was due to be considered by the Steering Committee on 21 February 2011, would now be considered at the meeting of 28 February 2011.

- (b) That a number of common themes had emerged from the various forums, including the approach to differential fees for courses already targeted to increase access, the need for departments to have contextual data to inform decision-making and a lack of consensus on differential offers for students from low-participation backgrounds.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)):

- (c) That work placements were key to enhancing employability prospects and that the fee for intercalated years would need to be considered further.

423/10-11 UUK Update on Access Agreements and the National Scholarship Scheme (minute 359/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

A UUK update on the publication of the final Ministerial guidance to OFFA on the new access agreements and the design of the National Scholarship Programme (SC.305/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice Chancellor)

That the Higher Education White Paper provisionally due to be published on 8 March 2011, may not now be published until later in March 2011.

424/10-11 Centre for Student Careers and Skills Update

CONSIDERED:

A briefing paper from the Director of Student Careers and Skills with updates on the activities of the Centre for Student Careers and Skills (SC.296/10-11).

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

- (a) That the re-structure of the Centre for Student Careers and Skills and its re-configured services positioned the Centre to contribute to the refreshed Strategy, and to the actions and decisions that arise, especially in relation to employability, student engagement and enhancement of the student experience.
- (b) That further clarity was being sought on why recent graduates were reported as unemployed, and that work experience and early engagement with the Centre were of critical importance in increasing employability on graduation.
- (c) That work was underway to support departments in actively encouraging students to engage with the Centre, as well as to maximise attendance at recruitment fairs.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)):

- (d) That provision of employment data by department, with a competitive context from other institutions, would be useful.

RESOLVED:

That a paper on the results of analysis on those students still unemployed six months after graduation would be considered at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

425/10-11 Capital Development and Space Management Update

RECEIVED:

A paper providing information on recent capital and space developments (SC.297/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That some major projects, including “Bluebell” Residences and the Materials and Analytical Sciences Building, had been delayed due to exceptionally adverse weather conditions.
- (b) That one block of “Bluebell” Residences was at risk of non-completion in time for the start of term in October 2011, but that the financial penalties on the contractor for non-completion should cover the appropriate additional costs.
- (c) That the refurbishment of a number of areas within the School of Engineering was due for completion and that occupation would resume from 14 March 2011.
- (d) That commencement of work on the Radcliffe MBA Centre was scheduled for 21 March 2011, and that work had commenced on the modular data centre at Argent Court.
- (e) That future projects for new student residences, planned for completion in 2013, would need to be approved as soon as possible to be ready for occupation on time.
- (f) That Estates were developing a business case for the development of a new CHP plant to enable further carbon reduction.
- (g) That the application for an expression of interest for a 50m Olympic Legacy pool would be considered later this week by the Financial Plan Sub-Committee.

(by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management & Timetabling)):

- (h) That a paper identifying the strategic research priorities for Life Sciences was expected to be available in March, and a recent Anshen and Allen Architects presentation suggested that the concept/design of a new Life Sciences building could form an important part of the fundraising campaign.
- (i) That at its December meeting, the CPARG had approved a paper from the Academic Registrar detailing the proposals for the future use of Coventry House.
- (j) That bid forms would not be distributed to departments until confirmation of CIF2 funding had been received.
- (k) That the 09/10 EMS data had been submitted to the HESA and the metrics derived from these data were expected to improve.
- (l) That there was an issue around the under-utilisation of teaching space at Westwood and that strategic consideration would need to be given to the future of the site as a whole, noting the recent White Paper on the future of teacher training.

426/10-11

Capital Investment Framework (CIF) 2

RECEIVED:

A letter confirming compliance requirements with CIF2 with institutional allocations expected to be announced in March 2011 (SC.298/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)

- (a) That the University’s Carbon Management plan will be discussed through the Committee structure for approval before 31 March 2011, along with confirmation of the University’s improving annual environmental performance indicators.
- (b) That, since 2005, the University had achieved a 1% reduction in carbon emissions in real terms, although that could be considered up to a 15% reduction when factoring in the growth of the University.

- (c) That communication had been received indicating that the HEFCE's focus would be likely to broaden with the commissioning of two studies into Scope 3 emissions, one on procurement, water and waste and another on commuting and business travel.

(by the Registrar)

- (d) That a letter of concern would no longer be sent to HEFCE regarding CIF2.

427/10-11

Statement of Intent on Tier 2 of the Points Based Immigration System (minute 358/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

Statement of Intent from the UKBA on Tier 2 of the Point Based Immigration System issued on 16 February 2011 (SC.304/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Feb11/21Feb11