

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 22 September 2008

- Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair),
Professor L Bridges,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor Y Carter,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley (from item 758/07-08)
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Mr S Thomson
- Apologies: Professor M Whitby, Director of Communications and Strategy
- In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Vice-Chancellor's Executive Officer (Acting), Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) for item 748/07-08, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions for items 751/07-08 and 752/07-08, Director of Research Support Services for item 753/07-08, Head of Student Finance for item 756/07-08 and PA Consulting for item 758/07-08.
- 747/07-08 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2008 be approved.
- 748/07-08 National Student Survey 2008 (minute 729/07-08 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- A report providing further analysis of the University's results in the recent 2008 survey and comparisons with the sector-wide results (SC.575/07-08).
- REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)
- (a) That the use of subject classifications posed difficulties in disaggregating the results for departmental distribution as there was no clear correlation between subjects as included in the NSS and University departments.
- (by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)
- (b) That it was good to see the University's ERASMUS, Year Abroad and Venice opportunities had been singled out for praise in the report.
- (by the President of the Students' Union)
- (c) That the areas of teaching and assessment, as well as the impact of the library disruption were of some concern to the Students' Union.
- 749/07-08 Professor Michael Mallet (minute 724/07-08 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the funeral of Emeritus Professor Michael Mallet would take place later today and that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor would attend on behalf of the University.

750/07-08

HEFCE Consultation on Proposals for New Higher Education Centres (minute 722/07-08 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That in response to the Government's 'University Challenge' to create new HE centres, the University was considering involvement in a project to be based in Milton Keynes.

751/07-08

Fees Income Forecast

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment providing an initial estimate of in-take numbers for the 2008/09 cohort and the implications for the University's fees income (SC.585/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (a) That the Home/EU undergraduate numbers were finalised and were over target; overseas undergraduate numbers were projected to be slightly below target.
- (b) That postgraduate taught figures were positive against the plan compared with the same point in previous years but still overall below target. The Warwick Business School and the Economics department should achieve target in both independently funded and government supported courses.
- (c) That a significant undershoot in the overseas independently funded postgraduate taught intake was possibly given undershoots in the order of around 5-10 students in the main target groups beyond WBS.
- (d) That the postgraduate research figures showed the largest undershoot; however, the difficulty of modelling in-year enrolment means that the figures should be interpreted with caution.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Arts)

- (e) That projected postgraduate taught figures in the Faculty of Arts showed an increase.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Regional Engagement))

- (f) That the number of overseas students on the MB ChB course was above target, a consequence of effective collaboration partnership between the Medical School and the centre.

752/07-08

University Open Day

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Open Day held on 20 September had been a great success.

(by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (b) That a Warwick Visit had been planned for 24 September for circa 1400 people who had applied for the Open Day but could not be allocated places

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to the Student Recruitment and Admissions team and academic departments for their work on the Open Day.

753/07-08

Draft Response to RCUK/UUK Review of Full Economic Costing of Research

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the RCUK/UUK review exploring the fEC of research activities in Higher Education (SC.586/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (a) That the response was a collation of inputs from the Finance Office and Research Support Services with the recurrent theme commenting on the RCUK's expectation for institutions to provide substantial financial support for large proposals.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (b) That the fEC coverage of postgraduate studentships should be reviewed.

RESOLVED:

That the response to the RCUK/UUK Review of fEC of Research be approved subject to minor amendments as discussed in the meeting for submission by the Director of Research Support Services by the deadline of 22 September 2008.

754/07-08

Draft Response to Consultation on Postgraduate Medical Education

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the UUK consultation regarding postgraduate medical education opportunities and developments (SC.586/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School)

That the consultation led by UUK aimed to consider the implications for universities of the Tooke and Darzi reports with its recommendations being considered by UUK and the Medical Schools Council.

RESOLVED:

That the response for the UUK consultation of postgraduate medical education be approved for submission by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

755/07-08

Access Agreement Monitoring 2007/08 – OFFA

CONSIDERED:

The University's return to OFFA for the 2007-08 academic year detailing spend on bursaries, outreach and take up rates for bursaries against targets (SC.587/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the University had spent 90% of the funds set aside under the Access agreement, meeting the target set by OFFA and the bursary take up rate reached 90% against a target of 95%.
- (b) The figures represented a substantial increase on the 2006/07 return where the University spent 56% of the funds and had a take up rate of 65%.
- (c) That the University had been granted an extension of 1 week as OFFA were unable to extract the University's information from the SLC.

(by the Head of Student Finance)

- (d) That 0.5% of the total spend comprised of 11-16 bursaries which were not included in the agreement but OFFA had confirmed that the University could spend in this area.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar provide an oral update on the University's final position at the next meeting of the Steering Committee prior to submission by the deadline of 3 October 2008.

756/07-08

New Financial Procedures 1 (Conflicts of Interest) and 10 (Private Outside Work)

CONSIDERED:

The revised Financial Procedures regarding Conflicts of Interest and Private Outside Work (SC.579/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the new financial procedures 1 and 10 had been brought to the attention of the Steering Committee in light of questions being raised by colleagues at recent roll-out events around the University.

(by the Director of Finance)

- (b) That the regulations had tidied up the existing guidelines in the areas of private outside work and conflicts of interest and formed the basis of good practice to ensure annual returns of such information from departments.

(by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (c) That it might be beneficial to consolidate forms 1a and 1b into a single document to facilitate responses from colleagues.
- (d) That, whilst the validity of the updated procedures was recognised, any changes to procedures and how they are implemented should not result in staff being encouraged to be less engaged with business and industry.

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

- (e) That activities such as chairing an RAE panel could be added to the exclusions list to Private Outside Work under Procedure 10.2.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Finance consider additional revisions to the procedures along the lines of the discussion at the meeting of the Steering Committee.

757/07-08

Senate Business

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 1 October 2008 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, noting that the membership of Committees of the Senate (S.4/08-09) would be revised to include the representatives of the Student's Union.
- (b) That the membership of Committees of the Senate not be read out in the meeting of the Senate as per previous practice as the format of the paper allows for comparison with 2007/08 appointments.

758/07-08

HEFCE Accountability Review: PA Consulting Visit

RECEIVED:

A paper detailing the purpose and format of the visit from PA Consulting who were undertaking the HEFCE Accountability Review and visiting the University during the week commencing 22 September (SC.574/07-08) together with a discussion between representatives from PA Consulting and the Steering Committee.

REPORTED: (by Mike Boxall, PA Consulting)

- (a) That the review sought to cover the whole range of public accountability faced by HEIs, as well as comparing the burden with that measured in previous studies to discover whether HEFCE had succeeded in reducing the accountability burden by the target 20%.
- (b) That the review would explore the perceptions and experiences of institutions to establish whether the intended reduction of accountability burden had indeed alleviated the situation.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the general feeling of the Steering Committee was that a perceived reduction in the accountability burden did not reflect the experiences of the University, in particular with regards to increases in consultations, complex research applications and multiple initiatives from different government/public bodies with potentially contradictory objectives.

759/07-08

Summary of Recent DTC Bids

RECEIVED:

A summary report from Research Support Services updating the Committee on recently submitted bid for doctoral training centres to the EPSRC (SC.571/07-08).

760/07-08

HEFCE Letter: Confirmation of Cap Level for Matched Funding Scheme

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE informing the University of the final cap level of £2.75m for Tier 3 of the matched funding scheme (SC.584/07-08).

761/07-08

Russell Group Response to the HEPI Report on Proposed National Bursary Scheme

RECEIVED:

The Russell Group response raising concerns about HEPI's report on a proposed national bursary scheme (SC.588/07-08).

762/07-08

British Council: UK Team of Bologna Experts

RECEIVED:

A letter from the British Council introducing the UK team of Bologna experts for the forthcoming year and bringing the University's attention to the services they could provide (SC.572/07-08).

- 763/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/076: Mental Health Policies and Practice in UK HE
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK Information note requesting responses from HEIs to update UUK/Guild HE Working Group's knowledge of developments in this area (SC.576/07-08).
- 764/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/74: Public Universities and Public Funding
- RECEIVED:
- A UUK information note summarising the main findings of a recently published policy commentary on private providers and public funding (SC.568/07-08).
- 765/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/075: Misconduct in Research
- RECEIVED:
- Information on UKRIO's Procedure of Investigating Allegations of Misconduct in Research launched on 10 September 2008 (SC.569/07-08).
- 766/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/079: Publication of OECD ' Education at a Glance 2008'
- RECEIVED:
- UUK Information note informing the University of the recent publication of OECD's annual document comparing HE in the UK with other OECD countries (SC.582/07-08).
- 767/07-08 HEFCE Circular 23/2008: Review of Subject Price Groups using TRAC (T) Data
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from HEFCE outlining the 2008 review of the subject price groups using 2006/07 TRAC(T) data (SC.570/07-08).
- 768/07-08 HEFCE 27/2008: HE's Contribution to Meeting the 2004 Spending Review Targets
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from HEFCE reporting the efficiencies achieved by the English HE sector and HEFCE against the annual Government target to be delivered by 2007/08 (SC.583/07-08).
- 769/07-08 New Chief Executive for Coventry City Council
- RECEIVED:
- A press release announcing Martin Reeves as the new Chief Executive of Coventry City Council (SC.581/07-08).
- 770/07-08 AWM's International Business Action Plan
- RECEIVED:
- A document outlining the Advantage West Midlands' International Business Action Plan which aimed to advance key strategic objectives of the West Midlands economic strategy (SC.577/07-08).