

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 22 November 2010

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

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor C Hughes.

In Attendance: Registrar (until item (i)166/10-11), Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR, Director of Estates (from item 155/10-11), Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Health & Safety (for item 165/10-11).

154/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2010 be approved.

155/10-11 Higher Education Academy subject centres (minute 134/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

Correspondence from the Higher Education Academy regarding grant funding for the UKCLE and History subject centres (SC.110/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

(a) That the University was invited to discuss the implications of the HEA's decision to withdraw grant funding for the UKCLE and History subject centres.

(b) That the HEA had stated they would offer a range of services built around three aspects of the student learning experience – teaching excellence, the development of academic practice and institutional strategy.

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

(c) That the University should ideally agree a common position on HEA subscription renewal with the Russell Group.

(by the Director of Human Resources)

(d) That consideration of the implications of the HEA's decision to withdraw grant funding for the UKCLE and History subject centres had begun.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Academic Registrar and Director of HR would continue to review the implications of the HEA's decision to withdraw grant funding for the UKCLE and History subject centres.
- (b) That the Academic Registrar would be the University's representative in discussions over the implications of the HEA's decision to withdraw grant funding for the UKCLE and History subject centres.

156/10-11 QAA Consultation on the Proposed Successor to Institutional Audit (minute 129/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft Russell Group response to the QAA consultation on the proposed successor to Institutional Audit (SC.117/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the draft Russell Group response to the QAA consultation on the proposed successor to Institutional Audit was clear and to the point.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and Student Experience))
- (b) That the University's response had not yet been sent, and that she recommended consistency with the Russell Group's support of simple "pass/fail" review judgments.

RESOLVED:

That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) liaise with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education and the Student Experience) to reflect the Russell Group's support of simple "pass/fail" review judgments in the University's response, prior to the deadline of 26 November 2010.

157/10-11 West Midlands Regional Observatory (minute 126/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That no bid was compiled by the University to acquire the West Midlands Regional Observatory assets and Marketing Birmingham had not confirmed their position.

158/10-11 Vision 2015 – 2010 update (minute 136/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the revised Vision 2015 strategy document would be made available within the University later today and tabled for discussion at the meeting of the Council on 26 November 2010.

159/10-11 REF sub-panel chairs

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That there was a need to establish why there were no REF sub-panel chairs appointed from the University.

- 160/10-11 Warwick Arts Centre – Transform funding
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- (a) That the Director of the Arts Centre, reported on Thursday 18 November 2010 that the Arts Council had awarded the Arts Centre £1,365,000 in response to their application for Transform funding, a one-off lottery funded programme.
 - (b) That the funding would mean the Arts Centre could progress with the Artists in the Academy programme and the purchase of all equipment outstanding for the Butterworth Hall.
 - (c) That the Arts Council requested confidentiality on this award, pending a press release.
- 161/10-11 Helen Martin Studio
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the Warwick Arts Centre's new studio would be named the "Helen Martin Studio" in an official ceremony at 6pm today.
- 162/10-11 Professor Adrian Smith
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That Professor Adrian Smith, previously Director General for Science and Research, had been confirmed as the new Director General for Knowledge and Innovation, in the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
- 163/10-11 Fees debate
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the fees debate was expected to take place in the House of Commons on 15 December 2010.
- 164/10-11 Teacher training provision
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That Michael Gove had announced plans to improve initial teacher training, with proposals to "diversify" routes into the profession including moving teacher training from universities into national schools of teaching.
- 165/10-11 Health and Safety update
- RECEIVED:
- A report from the Director of Health and Safety, outlining the current position and priorities for 2010/11, including an oral report (SC.113/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)
- (a) That constructive discussion with Unite had occurred the previous week, with agreement reached on communications to be shared with Unite members.
 - (b) That fire safety and asbestos management policies and procedures were clarified and simplified on the University website.

- (c) That the number of RIDDORS (The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) had continued to reduce, although the annualized total this month had increased.
- (d) That staff absence figures were now within normal incidence, with a fall in absences since December 2009.
- (e) That health and safety priorities needed to be focused on the most significant risks, for example fire safety, GM and biological safety, chemical safety, in line with the University's good regulatory compliance system.
- (f) That the highest risk departments, given the type and scale of activity undertaken, were assessed as Estates, Chemistry, Physics, Life Sciences, Engineering and the Warwick Manufacturing Group.
- (g) That targeted health and safety training for fire safety was to be rolled out.
- (h) That University-wide forums for highly technical and regulated topics would be established to discuss issues in the following areas:
 - (i) Radiation safety (with users)
 - (ii) Laser safety (with academics leading in area)
 - (iii) Electromagnetic fields
 - (iv) Project management of new installations and refurbishments.

166/10-11

Academic Statistics Yearbook

CONSIDERED:

The Academic Statistics Yearbook for 2010/11, with an oral report from the Academic Registrar (SC.119/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That growth in undergraduate and postgraduate student numbers was visible, and that consideration should be given to whether or not this trend should be continued.
- (b) That 15% of the total staff population consisted of non-EU nationalities, with the potential for new immigration rules to impact on proportions going forward.
- (c) That non-residential University income by square metre had fallen away from the Russell Group average over the previous 3 years.
- (d) That there was greater efficiency in the use of centrally timetabled rooms than for locally timetables rooms.
- (e) That University energy emissions were declining.
- (f) That the University performed better than the Russell Group median in obtaining research income from research councils and UK government bodies, however there was potential to increase research income from charities.
- (g) That the University's number of academic staff had increased overall, but the University's Science staff FTE remained behind the majority of Russell Group institutions.
- (h) That the majority of department's NSS scores were on a positive gradient.

(by Professor T. Jones)

- (i) That lower levels of research income sourced from charities could be attributed to the relative size of the Warwick Medical School in comparison to the Russell Group, with charitable donations for research common in medicine.

(by Professor J. Labbe)

- (j) That, while the number of Warwick students in employment within 6 months of graduation was below the Russell Group average, this was balanced by strong performance in the number that were undertaking further postgraduate study while in employment.

(by Professor K. Lamberts)

- (k) That 2009/10 data was available for the University's research income by source and that this could bring the University more in line with the Russell Group median.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar would ensure that contextual information in relation to the first destinations within the Academic Statistics Yearbook was available to report at the meeting of the Council on 26 November 2010.

167/10-11

Human Resources update

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of HR, outlining the key activities within Human Resources, including the Learning and Development Centre (SC.107/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That the UCU special conference on 25 November 2010 would be likely to include a number of motions, including concerns over the outcomes of the Browne Report and the Comprehensive Spending Review, as well as initiating two parallel ballots regarding pay offers and pensions.
- (b) That any ballots would probably commence after the USS board meets on 25 January 2011, and so any resultant (strike) action would probably take place in the spring term.
- (c) That 54 staff responses had been submitted to the consultation on future USS benefit provision, with a variety of positions taken.
- (d) That the University had offered further consultation meetings with each of the Trade Unions.
- (e) That the final meeting of the consultation committee for staff affected by the implementation of the School of Life Sciences would take place on 15 December 2010.
- (f) That legacy discussions on the harmonisation of terms and conditions would continue.
- (g) That the inclusion of a formal mediation stage in the Grievance procedure was proposed, and that colleagues were being trained to achieve a certificate in mediation.
- (h) That the level of tribunal cases was low.

- (i) That proposals on the future of reward are being developed, including non-consolidated merit pay and the implementation of local reward schemes e.g. voucher rewards.
- (j) That, due to the reduced number of Certificates of Sponsorship allocated to the University for the period to 31 March 2011, only three Certificates of Sponsorship remained for this period.
- (k) That the University had requested seventy Certificates of Sponsorship for the next period, and an announcement on numbers was expected this week.
- (l) That, once all the University's Certificates of Sponsorship were used, the University would need to make a special case to receive more, and that this process was not straightforward or without significant cost.
- (m) That she was engaging with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Science and Medicine) over the lack of Robert's funding, in order to take a holistic view in line with the Vision 2015 strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee noted the issues raised within the Human Resources Update report.
- (b) That the Director of HR would inform the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Science and Medicine) about the process for making special cases for additional Certificates of Sponsorship.

168/10-11

UUK report on Delivery of Financial support to students in England

RECEIVED:

A UUK report on Delivery of Financial support to students in England (SC.109/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the report confirmed information already received regarding fee levels and the transfer of student finance responsibilities from Local Authorities to Student Finance England.
- (b) That the report discussed implications of the Browne Report, with the intention for a single application gateway to enable students to apply for finance at the same time as applying to study.
- (c) That Student Admissions had already begun contacting students applying in the current cycle who wished to defer entry to 2012, to highlight the increase in fees.

(by the President of Student's Union)

- (d) That he had thought that some other institutions would continue to offer the lower fee level to students who deferred entry.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (e) That other institutions may have assumed that they would continue to offer the lower fee level to students who deferred entry, based on practice following the last increase in fee levels.

169/10-11 UUK Independent Review into Intellectual Property

RECEIVED:

A UUK report on the launch of new independent review into intellectual property (SC.114/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the Government had published a blueprint for technology, outlining how it planned to support high-tech innovation with the initiation of funding.

(by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research (Science and Medicine))

- (b) That the University would contribute to the UUK's call for evidence by the deadline.

170/10-11 HE STEM Midlands & East Anglia - Development of a Regional Action Plan for Higher Level Skills

CONSIDERED:

A document from HE STEM Midlands & East Anglia regarding the development of a Regional Action Plan for Higher Level Skill (SC.118/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the University should seek to bid into the call from HE STEM Midlands & East Anglia, despite the lack of clarity in the documentation received to date.

(by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research (Science and Medicine))

- (b) That academic staff in relevant departments had already been encouraged to engage with the National Higher Education STEM Programme.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Science and Medicine) would liaise with the Director of Student Careers & Skills to coordinate an expression of interest before the deadline of 3 December 2010.