

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 23 January 2012

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor S Croft,  
Professor M Finn,  
Professor C Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor S Swain,  
Professor P Thomas,  
Professor M Taylor.

Apologies: Professor K Lamberts, Professor P Winstanley, Mr L Bøe.

In Attendance: Acting Registrar (from item 267/11-12), Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Research Support Services (for item 265/11-12).

262/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2012 be approved.

263/11-12 Ofsted Consultation on Changes to the Framework for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Education (minute 112/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Ofsted Consultation on proposed revisions to the framework for the inspection of initial teacher training (SC.194/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That Ofsted proposed to change the inspection regime to a more risk based approach in light of the changes to the provision of initial teacher training.
- (b) That the University had noted within the draft response that a proposed reduction in the notice period prior to inspections would create difficulties in ensuring the availability of staff required for the inspection.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the Ofsted Consultation on proposed revisions to the framework for the inspection of initial teacher training be approved as set out in paper SC.194/11-12, subject to the revisions discussed in the meeting, and submitted to Ofsted prior to the deadline of 31 January 2012.

264/11-12

David Willetts Speech

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Universities and Science Minister had announced that new rules scrapping VAT on shared services for universities would come into immediate effect.
- (b) That David Willetts also reported that with the state contributing only 40 per cent of the sector's costs from this autumn, as opposed to the current 60 per cent, institutions would escape EU rules governing public bodies, which were defined as those funded by at least 50 per cent public money.
- (c) That that the Information Landscape project launched last month would consult with stakeholders across the sector in order to produce a feasibility study on a new system designed to deliver timelier and more relevant data.
- (d) That David Willetts also announced a review of philanthropy in the higher education sector following the end of the government's match funding scheme.

265/11-12

Research Strategy Update

RECEIVED:

An update report from the Director of Research Support Services on research strategy activity within the University (SC.195/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

- (a) That "Food Security" was the most developed of the Global Priority Programmes (GPPs).
- (b) That "~~Social~~ Public Policy" had been dropped from the portfolio of GPPs, leaving nine areas for potential research activity.
- (c) That Professor Chris McConville, Department of Physics, had replaced Professor Pam Thomas as Director of the Science City Research Alliance.
- (d) That Research Council funding was expected to be maintained for the next year, but that the maintenance of funds at current levels beyond that point was unlikely.

(by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (e) That the cumulative value of awards during 2011/12 was better than previous years in the Faculty of Arts, broadly in line in the Faculty of Science, and lower in the faculties of Social Sciences and Medicine.
- (f) That, given the difficult climate in obtaining government research funding, the University should aim to retain its market share with Research Council funding.
- (g) That a fall in grant applications submitted to the EPSRC was evident across the Russell Group.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (h) That the success of the Faculty of Arts in increasing their year-on-year cumulative value of awards during 2011/12 was to be commended.
- (i) That the number of grant applications remained at the same level during the last six months, but that there were a number of large applications to be submitted shortly.

- (j) That it was likely that the number of awards in the Faculty of Social Sciences would be lower than anticipated in 2011/12.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (k) That the decline in Research Council funding was a significant concern, but that the increase in industry funding was pleasing.
- (l) That the University's EPSRC and ESRC grant performance should be better given the quality of research being undertaken, and that strengthening the engagement of academics with the priorities of research councils and the application process should be a priority.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Access, Widening Participation and Development)

- (m) That grant performance per capita and a benchmark for each department, as required for REF, would assist in making like-for-like comparisons and subsequently encouraging further applications where necessary.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences)

- (n) That there was an action plan in place within the Faculty of Social Sciences to encourage greater volume of grant applications.

266/11-12

Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 25 January 2012 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, subject to revisions as agreed in the meeting.

267/11-12

Student Number Control Limit

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the University's student number control limit had been reduced from 3259 to 701, noting that there was no limit on the recruitment level of AAB students, and that the non AAB+ entry in 2011 was approximately 600 students.

268/11-12

Undergraduate Applications

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That overall undergraduate applications to the University had fallen by 8%, a level better than expected, and that a 13.6% fall in Home/EU applications had been moderated by a 11.6% increase in overseas applications.

269/11-12

Higher Education Academy Strategic Plan 2012-16

RECEIVED:

The Higher Education Academy's Strategic Plan for 2012-16, explaining its purpose and priorities in enhancing learning and teaching in higher education in the UK (SC.196/11-12).