

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 24 October 2011

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

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor P Thomas, Mr L Bøe.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Research Support Services (for item 57/11-12), Director of the International Office (for item 60/11-12), Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk and Continuity) (for item 61/11-12).

56/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2011 be approved, subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~, additions underlined):

47/11-12 Appointments to Committees of the Senate

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That Claire Martin (Undergraduate Clerical Assistant, Department of Chemistry) and Stephanie Smart (Admin Support in Health Sciences ~~PA to Professor Nigel Stallard~~, Warwick Medical School), were appointed to serve as the two members of non-academic staff grades 1a – 5 on the Equality and Diversity Committee, as approved by the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee, Professor Koen Lamberts on behalf of the Committee.

(...)

57/11-12 Research Funding Update (minute 46/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

A Research Funding Update report from the Director of Research Support Services (SC.39/11-12), together with an oral update.

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That, at the meeting of Steering on 17th October 2011, it was resolved that a follow up report to the Research Strategy Update (paper SC.31/11-12) be brought to the next meeting of the Steering Committee, with a more detailed analysis of applications and awards by key funders, including comparative data from previous years.

- (b) That consideration would be given to the setting of research income targets, together with reflection on the University's recruitment strategy to attract staff with high grant earning capacity.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resourcing)

- (c) That the report provided a breakdown of the value of grants and awards won from the University's major research sponsors by year since 2006/07, and included an indication of the relative performance of the University in 2010/11 against average annual funding won over the five year period.
- (d) That the data indicated that large research grants, typically in larger departments, were obtained sporadically and therefore meaningful trends should be considered over a number of years.
- (e) That an analysis of applications submitted to and awards won from the Research Councils by year in the period 2006/07 – 2010/11 indicated that application numbers from the University were relatively stable across the major sponsors.

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

- (f) That the decline in research income was in part caused by the lack of regional development funding.
- (g) That applications for EU funding were increasing, where overall success rates for all institutions bidding to the EU were less than 10%, whilst there was a trend for applications to Research Councils for lower award values, based on a perception of reduced funding although success rates remained stable.

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

- (h) That it was important to retain focus on applications to the Research Councils, in addition to EU funding.
- (i) That the number of applications to ESRC nationally had declined by 30%, and that the University's relative position among other institutions had been maintained.
- (j) That, in some departments, a focus on REF outputs had potentially reduced grant applications in the last year, and that there were a limited number of individuals with potential to consistently be awarded large research awards.

(by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (k) That alignment of the University's strategic research priorities assisted in the continuation of funding from major sponsors, such as EPSRC, ESRC and BBSRC.

(by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (l) That the Warwick Medical School recognised that the majority of research income could be attributed to a minority of staff members, and that the School was seeking to broaden grant earning capacity.

(by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (m) That the Warwick Business School had initiatives in place to address the fall in external research funding.
- (n) That the Warwick Business School prioritised the quality of research in its recruitment strategy, not solely the potential for research income generation.

58/11-12 Higher Education White Paper - BIS Technical Consultation document (minute 43/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A draft letter from the University to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), together with the University's response to the Technical Consultation document (SC.52/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That it may have greater impact for the University's response to be by letter only rather than with the submission of responses to the technical consultation questions.

RESOLVED:

That the letter emphasising the key issues of importance, as discussed in outline by the Council at its meeting on 13 October 2011 and included in paper SC.52/11-12, be sent to BIS from the Vice-Chancellor and that the institutional response to the specific technical consultation questions previously considered by the Committee (paper SC.663/10-11) be not submitted.

59/11-12 Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University had not achieved a Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for the Warwick in Africa project.

60/11-12 International Issues

RECEIVED:

A report on international issues from the Director of the International Office (SC.40/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

- (a) That the International Office responded to the National Audit Office's consultation on the efficiency of the UKBA in its introduction of and changes to Tier 4 of the Points Based System, which would result in a report to Parliament in early 2012.
- (b) That an Erasmus Site Visit on Friday 21 October 2011 carried out on behalf of the European Commission by the British Council had reviewed the operations and finances of the Erasmus Programme.
- (c) That it was understood that the visit was positive and that there would be no process exceptions reported as a result.

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

- (d) That work had been undertaken to proactively assist students who may not have considered undertaking an Erasmus placement previously.
- (e) That the increase in students and staff visiting the University on a short-term basis had made the lack of appropriate short-term accommodation particularly acute.

61/11-12 University Risk Management Procedure

CONSIDERED:

A report on the University's Risk Management Procedure for 2011/12, together with the outcome of a review of the Risk Management process undertaken over the period July-August 2011 (SC.41/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk and Continuity))

- (a) That the University was undertaking a wider review of the effectiveness of its risk management procedures, and that in the interim, proposals for changes to the University Risk Management Procedure had been developed, to produce a more streamlined process for academic departments with which to engage.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That the risk management process would aid each departments' approach to their strategic planning.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Risk Management Procedure for 2011/12 be approved as set out in SC.41/11-12, and recommended to the Audit Committee.

62/11-12 HEFCE Student Number Controls for 2012/13

RECEIVED:

- (a) A document from HEFCE, setting out student number control limits for 2012-13, together with an invitation to bid for a share from the "margin" of up to 20,000 student places (SC.42/11-12).
- (b) An email from UUK, summarizing the key points of HEFCE's document "Student number controls for 2012-13" (SC.43/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That bids for up to 20,000 student places had been invited from all publicly funded HEIs or FECs that committed to charging an average full-time undergraduate fee (after tuition fee waivers), under the new regulated fee regime from September 2012, of no more than £7,500 net.
- (b) That an assessment of the University's eligibility to bid had been undertaken and Warwick's average fee level would be above this maximum level, therefore rendering the University ineligible to participate in the bidding process.
- (c) That the key issues raised in the University's response to the student number control-related aspects of the consultation had been accounted for by the HEFCE, and would apply for 2012/13.

63/11-12 Review of Research Cost Relativities based on the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC)

RECEIVED:

The Executive Summary of a study carried out by J M Consulting that designed and implemented a costing method (TRAC-RCR) for calculating research costs relatives (RCR) using Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) data (SC.54/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the cost relativities for all research activity indicated a difference from the cost weightings currently used in the HEFCE's research funding models.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resourcing)

- (b) That the new fee and funding regime from 2012/13 would not reflect higher teaching cost relativities for Science, and therefore high cost subjects would be underfunded if the QR funding weighting was not adjusted.

64/11-12

OIA Pathway 3 Consultation

CONSIDERED:

The Executive Summary of the OIA Pathway 3 Consultation document, as requested in the Higher Education White paper, seeking views on issues relating to the goal of early resolution of student complaints (SC.44/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the creation of campus ombudsmen was suggested, and interaction with the OIA was proposed via regional networks, as opposed to the maintenance of a direct reporting link.
- (b) That additional standard framework targets were proposed by the OIA, for example, response time targets.

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

- (c) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee was considering improvements to the student complaints procedure, and would review this in the light of the proposals in the OIA Pathway 3 Consultation.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (d) That the majority of cases sent to the OIA were those where students had not achieved their desired ~~degree~~-outcome from the University's appeals process, and that there was uncertainty over whether an additional layer of mediation with an ombudsman would assist in reducing the number of complaints to the OIA.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Registrar would formulate a response to the OIA Pathway 3 Consultation for consideration at a future meeting of the Steering Committee, prior to the deadline of 16 December 2011.

65/11-12

The Independent Taskforce on Student Finance Information

CONSIDERED:

A letter from Martin Lewis, Chair of the Independent Taskforce on Student Finance Information, requesting institutional support for Student Finance Day on 14 November 2011 (SC.46/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the proposed activity for Student Finance Day on 14 November 2011 coincided with the University's institutional review process, and therefore this may not be the most appropriate

timing for an event, notwithstanding that many other initiatives were taking place to provide information to prospective students on finance arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That the University would not seek to engage directly with the Student Finance Day.

66/11-12 Appointments to Committees of the Senate

RESOLVED:

(a) Research Committee

That the recommendation from the Research Committee that Professor Stephen Jarvis (Department of Computer Science) serve as one of up to three academic members of staff of the University, appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the Research Committee, be approved on behalf of the Senate.

(b) Intellectual Property Committee

That the recommendation that Professor Richard Dashwood (Warwick Manufacturing Group) serve as one of up to three academic members of staff appointed by the Senate covering intellectual property matters in relation to research and teaching, be approved on behalf of the Senate.

(c) Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine

That the recommendation from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School, on behalf of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine that the constitution of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine be amended so that the Chair was "Pro Dean (Education) or his/her nominee as approved by the Board of the Faculty of Medicine", be approved on behalf of the Senate.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

(b) That Dr Jane Kidd (Warwick Medical School), was appointed to serve as Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine, as approved by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Medicine, on behalf of the Committee.

(c) That Dr Susan Burrows (Department of Physics) was appointed to serve as one member of contract research staff on the Equality and Diversity Committee, as approved by the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee, on behalf of the Committee.

67/11-12 CASE Europe: Ethical Principles Behind the Acceptance of Gifts

RECEIVED:

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) guidelines for UK Higher Education institutions on the ethical principles behind the acceptance of gifts (SC.45/11-12).

68/11-12 HEFCE Consultation on Teaching Funding and Student Number Controls (minute 851/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

The UUK response to the HEFCE Consultation on Teaching Funding and Student Number Controls (SC.47/11-12).

69/11-12

QAA OFFA: Revisions to Access Agreements for 2012/12 – Core and Margin

RECEIVED:

Guidance note from the Office for Fair Access regarding revisions to access agreements 2012/13, in respect of 'core' and 'margin' (SC.55/11-12).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201112/Oct11/24Oct11