

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 25 July 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor M Finn,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor P Winstanley.

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor C Hughes, Professor T Jones, Professor M Taylor.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Assistant Registrar (Governance), Administrative Officer (Governance), Incoming President of the Students' Union (until item 819/10-11), Head of Business Relations (Research Support Services) (for item 804/10-11), Senior Assistant Registrar (Management Information and Planning) (for item 812/10-11), Director of the International Office (for item 813/10-11).

803/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2011 be approved.

804/10-11 Higher Education Innovation Funding 2011-12 to 2014-15: Institutional Strategy (minute 668/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A draft of the University's Institutional Strategy to enable HEIF5 funding for 2012-15 (SC.579/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Business Relations (Research Support Services))

- (a) That the first year of HEIF funding was already agreed, but that this document would enable the release of the remainder of funding for 2013 to 2015.
- (b) That the Institutional Strategy was to be revised to strengthen the references to students.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to further minor revisions, the University's Institutional Strategy to enable HEIF5 funding for 2012-15 be submitted to HEFCE prior to the deadline of 29 July 2011.

805/10-11 HEFCE UUK Draft Response to DfE ITT Improvement Strategy (minute 780/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A draft of the UUK/GuildHE Teacher Education Advisory Group response to the DfE Initial Teacher Training (ITT) improvement strategy (SC.572/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the UUK response to the DfE ITT improvement strategy was broadly in line with the University's response considered by the Steering Committee on 18 July 2011 (SC.563/10-11).
- (b) That the UUK supported the requirement for potential teachers to hold a 2:2 degree as a minimum.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar would submit a response to UUK regarding the DfE Initial ITT improvement strategy, to highlight exceptions in consistency with the University's response.

806/10-11

Review of Teaching, Learning and the Student Experience (minute 714/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

An update report with further details of the arrangements for an institution-wide Teaching and Learning Review (SC.585/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That governance responsibility for the Institutional Review would rest with the Steering Committee.
- (b) That a Steering Group and Operational Group for the Institutional Review had been established, and that Dr Jocasta Gardner had been seconded to lead the central administrative team supporting the Institutional Review Process.
- (c) That most reviews were expected to take place over 1-2 days, but that the complexity of provision from some departments may require a 3 day review.
- (d) That the circulation of guidance to departments was expected shortly to aid preparation.

(by the Incoming President of the Student's Union)

- (e) That the Sabbatical Officers for 2011/12 offered their assistance with the recruitment of students onto the Institutional Review panels, and the provision of training similar to that provided to those on SSLC.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee approved the governance and reporting arrangements for the Institutional Review.

807/10-11

HR Update (minute 778/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That she had investigated the reasons for the increased headcount of administrative staff between 1 June 2010 and 31 May 2011.
- (b) That the majority (57) of the increased number of "new" administrative posts (78) related to vacancies that had arisen in the previous year and were thus replacement not new posts.
- (c) That 14 maternity covers were identified, with backfilling accounting for an increase in head count.

- (d) That a number of posts relating to academic activity, including 3 new Junior Research posts in the Institute for Advance Study, were included in the administration head count due to the location of the organisational budget.

808/10-11 Summer Degree Ceremonies

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks and congratulations to all colleagues involved in the successful Summer Degree Ceremonies held between 18 and 22 July 2011.

809/10-11 Forensic Sciences Service

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Home Office recently announced the planned closure of the Forensic Sciences Service (FSS), and that criticism included the loss to the UK of significant R&D activity.
- (b) That the University had started discussion with the FSS R&D division in Solihull to consider the possibility of establishing a new Warwick Centre for Forensic Science Research.
- (c) That the University would engage with the Home Office to investigate the potential for bridging funding for the transfer of any FSS activity.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Faculty of Science would prepare a paper on the potential Warwick Centre for Forensic Science Research for consideration by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 22 August 2011.

810/10-11 Japanese JYA Programmes

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That he had taken Chair's Action on behalf of the Steering Committee to approve the fees for the University's Japanese JYA programmes with the Universities of Waseda and Kansai in 2012/13, as proposed by the Fees Working Group.

811/10-11 Norwegian Massacre

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its sympathy to the Norwegian people, following the events of Friday 22 July 2011.

812/10-11 HESA Performance Indicators

CONSIDERED:

Analysis of the HESA Performance Indicators published on 31 March 2011 and 15 July 2011, with key outcomes of relevance to the University (SC.576/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Management Information and Planning))

- (a) That the University's performance was broadly favourable, with strong scores for research outputs, participation of students in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance,

and rates of resumption of study for students who took a year out of Higher Education.

- (b) That the University's performance with regard to participation of students from under-represented groups and projected learning outcomes was mixed.
- (c) That there was a slight improvement in the University's performance in relation to the graduate employment indicator.
- (d) That further analysis of non-continuation rates (which include academic failure) was required to understand any underlying issues.
- (e) That the number of academic failures was falling, but that students dropping out for "other personal reasons" were increasing at a disproportionate rate to the increase in the student population, with initial evidence suggesting concentration amongst the Science subjects.

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

- (f) That the work undertaken by the Centre for Student Careers and Skills, in addition to effort in departments to identify placement opportunities, would contribute to further improvement in the University's performance in relation to the graduate employment indicator.

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

- (g) That further engagement with alumni could increase the provision of work placement opportunities for students.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Management Information and Planning) would send the analysis of the HESA Performance Indicators in paper SC.576/10-11 to the Senior Tutor.
- (b) That further analysis be undertaken by the Management Information and Planning Office regarding non-continuation rates, to be reported at a further meeting of the Steering Committee.

813/10-11

Highly Trusted Sponsorship for Tier 4 Sponsors

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to form part of the UUK coordinated response to the UKBA's proposed new criteria for Highly Trusted Sponsorship (HTS) (SC.578/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

- (a) That the University's re-application for HTS Status would be submitted under the current criteria before 27 September 2011, with the new criteria introduced from November 2011.
- (b) That the University would respond to the UKBA's consultation on the proposed HTS criteria with concerns regarding measurement against criteria, which lay outside the University's control.
- (c) That the University's website included pages that clearly set out what students are required to do to meet their visa requirements, and that University immigration advisers were well briefed.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the UKBA's proposed new criteria for Highly Trusted Sponsorship be amended as discussed in the meeting, and submitted to both UUK and the UKBA directly, prior to the submission deadline of 5 August 2011.

814/10-11

BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans

CONSIDERED:

The BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans (SC.581/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the consultation introduced a number of new ideas regarding early repayments within the new fee regime.

(by the Finance Director)

- (b) That the proposals were complicated with potential to confuse those applying to universities.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Academic Registrar draft a response to the BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans prior to the deadline of 20 September 2011.

- (b) That early repayment mechanisms be raised at meeting of the Russell Group universities, and other appropriate forums.

815/10-11

Financial Sustainability Strategy Group Management Information Portfolio "Achieving Academic and Financial Sustainability"

RECEIVED:

A report from the Financial Sustainability Strategy Group (FSSG) regarding their Management Information Portfolio on "Achieving Academic and Financial Sustainability" (SC.582/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the report would be circulated to the Audit Committee and to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (b) That there was to be consideration of an institutional financial sustainability assurance report to be approved annually by the Council.

816/10-11

The Hughes Report from the Advocate for Access to Education

RECEIVED:

A report from Simon Hughes, the Advocate for Access to Education, to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, proposing a series of measures and interventions for promoting access to education (SC.583/10-11).

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

- (a) That while some recommendations appeared contradictory, positive aspects included the strengthening of link with schools, given the University's groundwork in this area through Aim Higher.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That the Assistant Registrar (Outreach) would consider the report in further detail.

817/10-11 HEFCE Strategy Statement: 'Opportunity, choice and excellence in higher education'

RECEIVED:

A strategy statement setting out the principles, priorities and practices of the HEFCE (SC.574/10-11).

818/10-11 Equality and Diversity Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of HR, providing an update on Equality and Diversity, together with an oral report (SC.577/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty were now expected in September 2011 rather than July 2011.
- (b) That universities may be required to gather more information than is currently requested, to adhere to these duties.

819/10-11 HEFCE Equality Scheme 2011-2014

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the HEFCE's consultation on how it is planned to meet the statutory duties required to promote equality and diversity (SC.575/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That the University would be mindful of the HEFCE Equality Scheme when refreshing the institutional Single Equality Plan to ensure alignment with the specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

(by the Registrar)

- (b) That, while HESA intends to extend its data collection on staff in 2012/13 to include sexual orientation and religion, it should be noted in the response to the consultation that the University had declined to participate in the LGM funded project, 'Religious Literacy Leadership in Higher Education'.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of HR would submit a response to the HEFCE Equality Scheme 2011-2014 consultation prior to the deadline of 29 July 2011.

- 820/10-11 HEFCE Assessment of Institutional Risk
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from the Chief Executive of HEFCE, confirming that the University was not at higher institutional risk based on the annual accountability returns submitted to the HEFCE for 2009-10 (SC.571/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That the letter would be circulated to the Audit Committee and the Council.
- 821/10-11 Clustering of Strategic Health Authorities
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from the NHS Chief Executive to confirm the arrangements for clustering Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) (SC.584/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)
- (a) That SHA's would be clustered under the new arrangements from 3 October 2011.
- (b) That nationally consistent processes, aligned to PCT processes at PCT cluster level was relevant to the Warwick Medical School and its key partners.
- 822/10-11 School of Engineering
- CONSIDERED:
- A report from the Deputy Registrar regarding consideration of the use of the title of School of Engineering (SC.588/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)
- (a) That, at its meeting on 6 July 2011, the Senate resolved that the title of "Dean" of the School of Engineering be amended to "the Head".
- (b) That, at the same meeting, the Senate delegated the discussion of the proposal to re-title the School of Engineering to the Department of Engineering to the Steering Committee.
- (c) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor had met with staff in the School of Engineering, and while the response was mixed, the majority wished to maintain the title as "School".
- RESOLVED:
- That the title of the School of Engineering be retained at this time, noting that it may be appropriate to review the use of nomenclature to describe academic departments at a future date.
- 823/10-11 Steering Committee Dates
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- That the next meeting of the Steering Committee would be held at 10am on 22 August 2011.

824/10-11

Open Public Services White Paper

RECEIVED:

The Government's White Paper on Open Public Services, outlining a programme of modernising public services (SC.573/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Jul11/25Jul11