

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 26 August 2008

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor S Bassnett
Professor Y Carter
Professor K Lamberts
Professor M Smith
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor R Higgott, Professor R Lindley, Professor H Thomas, Mr S Thomson.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) for items 691/07-08 to 693/07-08, Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment for items 694/07-08 to 695/07-08, Director of Management Information and Planning for item 696/07-08

689/07-08

Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2008 be approved subject to the following amendments (deletions crossed through and additions underlined):

(a) Apologies

CONSIDERED:

As now.

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor L Bridges, Professor A Caesar, Professor Y Carter, Professor K Lamberts, Professor M Smith, Professor M Whitby, Director of Estates

(b) Minute 672/07-08

CONSIDERED:

As now.

RESOLVED:

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus Affairs and Community))

That it was an excellent review report but that further attention might be given to succession planning.

690/07-08

Equivalent and Lower Qualifications (ELQs)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That a letter had been received from HEFCE detailing the following movements to funding allocations for 2007/08 with regards to ELQs:

(a) The initially deducted amount of £240k had been reinstated but the strategically important and vulnerable subjects (SIVS) targeted allocation had been reduced by £80k as a result;

- (b) The University lost the safety net funding of £111k but additional widening participation funding of £58k resulted in an overall positive movement of circa £113k.
- (c) Funding for the Lifelong Learning Network additional student numbers (targeted for the Centre for Lifelong Learning and Institute of Education) had been granted at a total of £135k.
- (d) It was not felt appropriate to pursue the specific appeal further.

691/07-08

New Directors of the International Office and Research Support Services

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the new Director of the International Office, James Kennedy and the Director of Research Support Services, Peter Hedges, would join the University on 1 September 2008.

692/07-08

QAA Institutional Briefing Document

CONSIDERED:

The proposed final version of the institutional briefing document to be submitted to the QAA by 1 September 2008 (SC.526/07-08)

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the majority of amendments highlighted since members of the Steering Committee had reviewed the document on 19 August 2008 had been made.

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

- (b) That the final report was positive and reflected well the qualities of the institution.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be submitted to the QAA subject to the minor amendments discussed at the meeting.
- (b) That the Committee record its thanks to the Teaching Quality team, Professor O'Brien and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/ International Affairs) for their considerable work on the document and preparations for the audit itself.

693/07-08

HEFCE Circular 17/2008: Outcome and Publication of 2008 NSS Results

CONSIDERED:

Details from HEFCE regarding the outcome and publication of the NSS results for 2008 (SC.521/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

That the University's results would be available on 28 August 2008, with access to other institutions' results from 4 September 2008.

RESOLVED:

That a paper summarising the University's results including, if possible, information regarding results across the sector be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

694/07-08

HEFCE Response to the Report of the Quality Assurance Framework Review Group:
Phase 3

RECEIVED:

Information from HEFCE reporting on the outcomes of Phase 3 of the Quality Assurance Framework: Assessment of the impacts of reviews of collaborative provision (SC.523/07-08)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That overall the Group, chaired by Dame Sandra Burslem, was perceived to have produced a good review of the QA Framework and Higher Education Regulation Review Group had reflected that sentiment and its final report was forthcoming.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs))

- (b) That if the recommendations contained within the report with regards to a more institutionally tailored audit process were carried through, the HE sector stood to benefit.

(by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (c) That the risk-based approach to collaborative provision proposed by the QAA should, in time, be integrated with the University's own risk management processes.

695/07-08

Admissions 2008 Update

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment and the Academic Registrar updating the Committee on the undergraduate admissions position for 2008/09.

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

(a) Home/EU Undergraduates

- (i) That, through strong Clearing applicants and change of course offers, Chemistry had reached its target.
- (ii) That the Faculty of Arts had exceeded its targets, with the exception of Film and Television Studies.
- (iii) That the Faculty of Science had reached or exceeded departmental targets, including Computer Science where approximately 15 students would form a cohort on the new Discrete Mathematics course.
- (iv) That Mathematics had significantly overshot their target and that the department would be looking to implement the inclusion of performance in the STEP examination as a requirement within offers for entry 2009.

(b) Overseas Undergraduates

- (i) That the position for overseas undergraduates was more difficult to judge at this stage and would not be fully clear until students enrolled.
- (ii) That more conditional firm offers had been made and acceptances received compared to last year.

- (iii) That a confirmation campaign had been successful in contacting around 60% of offer holders.
- (iv) That Law had recruited well, that WBS might make target but that Economics would be under target.
- (v) That the impact of not entering Clearing for Engineering was worthy of investigation as it appeared to have reduced the level of speculative interest from eligible overseas candidates compared to previous years.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That an increase in projected numbers was highlighted to Warwick Accommodation early in the planning cycle and additional off-campus rooms had been secured in Liberty Park.
- (d) That the Space Management and Timetabling team were addressing the capacity issues surrounding overshoots in selected departments.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (e) That the student experience in Liberty Park had been monitored through the last academic year and that the introduction of residential staff similar to those located on campus had aided significantly, noting that staff would also be in place again for 2008/09.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment and his team for their efforts in Confirmation and Clearing.

696/07-08

HEFCE Report on Summer Schools 2008/11

CONSIDERED:

A report from HEFCE providing guidance to Aimhigher partnerships and inviting HEIs to apply for matched funding for summer school provision (SC.527/07-08).

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

- (a) That the report outlined two strands:
 - (i) Institutional bids for further summer school provision
 - (ii) Bids from Aimhigher partnerships
- (b) That the University's current summer school provision for 2008/09 would be impacted by the planned Westwood refurbishment.

RESOLVED:

That the response to the call for funding be considered by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 8 September prior to submission to HEFCE by the deadline of 12 September 2008.

697/07-08

National and International League Tables

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Director of Management Information and Planning summarising the University's position in current national and international League Tables (SC.538/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Management Information and Planning)

- (a) That it was recognised that the Shanghai Jiao Tong league table was biased in favour of long established institutions with large medical schools and science departments but, despite this, the University had the third largest year-on-year increase in the rankings.
- (b) That the University had climbed one place in the Times league table due to an improvement in the staff/student ratio but had dropped in two of the subject tables (Biological Sciences and Psychology) because of weak NSS and graduate prospects scores.
- (c) That steps were continuing to be taken to get Warwick Medical School into the Times league table.

698/07-08

The Wolfson Foundation

CONSIDERED:

A letter from the Wolfson Foundation requesting comments regarding its laboratory refurbishment programme which would end during 2008 (SC.520/07-08).

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Estates co-ordinate the drafting of a response to be considered by the Steering Committee prior to submission by the deadline of 30 September 2008.

699/07-08

HEFCE Circular 18/2008: Changes to Funding Priorities 2008-2011

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE detailing changes to funding priorities which have resulted from the January 2008 grant letter from the Secretary of State (SC.522/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That additional recurrent funding for chemistry and physics as high cost and vulnerable science subjects would be extended to 2010/11.
- (b) That the Overseas Research Student Awards Scheme (ORSAS) would be phased out from 2011/12 and that this might impact on the University's ability to increase postgraduate research student numbers as part of the Strategy.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That the Academic Services Manager had written on behalf of the University to HEFCE regarding the withdrawal of ORSAS without due consultation.

700/07-08

OECD GSF Guidance for International Research Agreements

CONSIDERED:

A consultation on the OECD GSF Guidance for International Research Agreements (SC.529/07-08).

RESOLVED:

That the University would not respond as the current institutional process included the guidance points raised.

701/07-08

UUK I-Note I/08/66 RCUK Consultation on Research Governance

CONSIDERED:

UUK Information Note informing of a RCUK consultation on Research Governance (SC.525/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the new Director of Student Services had contributed to this consultation prior to leaving Research Support Services and would continue lead on the submission with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies) and the new Director of Research Support Services.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed University response be considered at a future meeting of Steering Committee prior to submission by the deadline of 15 October 2008.

702/07-08

HEFCE Consultation on Proposals for new Higher Education Centres

CONSIDERED:

The executive summary from a HEFCE consultation document inviting debate on the approach taken to support the development of new higher education centres (SC.539/07-08).

RESOLVED:

That the full report be considered by the Steering Committee at a future meeting.

703/07-08

HEFCE Revolving Green Fund: Outcomes of Consultation and Invitation for Applications

CONSIDERED:

A HEFCE circular letter updating on the outcomes of the consultation on the aims and operation of a Revolving Green Fund and inviting HEIs to submit applications for funding (SC.540/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That two types of funding were available from the total value of £30million:

- (i) An institutional small projects fund (ISP) of £20million where financial savings from the project would be reinvested into further projects.
- (ii) A transformational fund of £10million for larger projects to transform the institutions energy management and emissions reduction.

(by the Director of Estates)

(b) That it would be likely that the transformational fund would only make two to three awards as the maximum amount HEIs could apply for would be £4million.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Estates provide a list of potential ISP projects for consideration at the next meeting of the Steering Committee with a view to submitting an expression of interest to HEFCE by 12 September 2008, and that full set of bids be considered at a future meeting prior to submission to HEFCE by 17 October 2008.

704/07-08

Birthday Honours List 2009

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE requesting nominations for the 2009 Birthday Honours list (SC.541/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That it was clear from published honours lists that the University was not promoting staff for honours as readily as other institutions.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

(b) That it would be beneficial to adopt a systematic approach to such nominations to ensure details of potentially eligible staff and lay members were readily available.

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

(c) That clarification would be required as to which categories or attributes might be viewed more positively to ensure effective nominations.

RESOLVED:

That potential nominations be sent confidentially via email to the Deputy Registrar by 29 August 2008 for review.

705/07-08

HEFCE Letter: Matched Funding Scheme 2008-2011 Tier Allocation

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE to the University confirming that the University would be adopting Tier 3 status within the Government's matched funding scheme (SC.542/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That in order to receive the £2.6million available under Tier 3 the University would need to raise £7.8million over the next three years.

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

(b) That this target was challenging but achievable and that the scheme was already being received positively by donors.

706/07-08

University Response to UUK Innovation Index Project

RECEIVED:

The University response to the UUK consultation on Innovation (SC.533/07-08)

707/07-08

University Response to Royal Society Call for Evidence on Innovation in Services

RECEIVED:

The University response to a call from the Royal Society for evidence of innovation in services, in particular the role of science, technology, engineering and maths in the service areas (SC.543/07-08).

- 708/07-08 Medical Research Council Bid for Centre of Excellence in Virology
- RECEIVED:
- The final proposal to the Medical Research Council to establish a Centre of Excellence in the field of Virology, noting that any commitments made would be subject to approval of the full bid before submission in November 2008 (SC.537/07-08).
- 709/07-08 PBS Tier 4 Statement of Intent: Students
- RECEIVED:
- UUK information note informing on the release of the Tier 4 (Students) statement of intent by the Home Office, together with observations thereon by the International Office (SC.528/07-08).
- 710/07-08 HEFCE Report on HE – Business and Community Interaction Survey 2006/07
- RECEIVED:
- A report analysing the results of the 2007 HE – Business and Community Interaction Survey (SC.524/07-08).
- 711/07-08 HEFCE Circular 15/2008: Single Conversation Accountability Process for 2008
- RECEIVED:
- A letter outlining the accountability process between HEFCE and HEIs for 2008 (SC.531/07-08).
- 712/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/067: 14-19 Curriculum Reforms Update
- RECEIVED:
- Information on the developments relating to 14-19 Curriculum reforms by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (SC.533/07-08).
- 713/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/65: Delivery Partnership – Consultation Outcomes on Admissions
- RECEIVED:
- UUK update on outcomes of the consultation on a single admissions system and options for process improvements (SC.530/07-08).
- 714/07-08 UUK I-Note I/08/071: Variable Tuition Fees in England – Impact on Students and HEIs
- RECEIVED:
- A report on the impact of variable tuition fees on students and higher education institutions in England (SC.544/07-08).
- 715/07-08 UCEA Update 08/72: Leadership Actions
- RECEIVED:
- A guide from the Universities and Colleges Employers Associations regarding leadership actions for Vice-Chancellors and members of university governing bodies in the area of health and safety (SC.532/07-08).

716/07-08

Corrections to Advantage West Midlands Annual Review 2007/08

RECEIVED:

A letter notifying of corrections to the AWM Annual Review report (SC.545/07-08).

KMS/jf/steersshare/minutes200708/Aug08/26Aug08