

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 26 September 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy 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,
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Professor P Thomas.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of HR (except for items 926 (c)/10-11 to 926 (g)/10-11), Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 918/10-11).

916/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2011 be approved.

917/10-11 REF 2014: Assessment Framework and Guidance on Submissions (minute 832/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Management Information and Planning setting out plans for managing the University's preparations for the Research Excellence Framework 2014 (REF) and outlining the key strategic issues and considerations that had emerged following the recent publication of the Funding Councils' Guidance on Submissions (GoS) document (SC.632/10-11).

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

- (a) That assessment of impact accounted for 20% of the overall assessment components of the REF outcome.
- (b) That the issue of contradictory criteria concerning the category A staff definition that existed for the RAE had been resolved.
- (c) That significant changes were proposed to the methods by which data on research students and research income would be returned in submissions, comprising of research doctoral degrees awarded and research income by primary funding source.
- (d) That staff would only be eligible for submission in relation to impact if institutions demonstrated that the primary focus of their research on the census date was directly connected to the submitting unit: however, the individuals' research outputs could be included should the staff member be eligible.

- (e) That there were clearly defined new rules on the inclusion of staff members as early career researchers.
- (f) That the replacement of esteem with impact as an assessment component of the REF emphasised the need for further discussion on acceptable performance levels across the University.

(by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (g) That the balance between volume and quality of submissions to the REF needed to be approached with comparisons to other institutions where possible.
- (h) That half of the Warwick Business School's ten research groups had undergone external review.

(by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (i) That the paragraph concerning Data on Research Income should be amended to enable a subsequent addition regarding income from academics who have led research within NHS Trusts.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the membership and terms of reference of the REF Steering Group and REF Operations Team be approved, as set out in paper SC.632/10-11.
- (b) That the recommendation that the University produce an institutional support strategy for research impact to address medium and long term requirements for information collation and provision, be approved.
- (c) That the recommendation that the University determine a target for percentage staff submission be approved, noting that further adjustment was possible if required.
- (d) That the recommendation that the University adopt a targeted approach to investment in new staff posts for the REF be approved.

918/10-11 The Hughes Report from the Advocate for Access to Education (minute 816/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A paper from the Assistant Registrar (Outreach) summarising the key points of interest for the University in The Hughes Report, which proposed a series of measures and interventions for promoting access to education (SC.647/10-11).

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

- (a) That there was a lack of clarity about how the Hughes Report would be used by the Government.
- (b) That the view of post-qualification applications within the Student Admissions and Recruitment Office was that the system was perhaps not as beneficial as outlined in the Hughes Report, as such a system could potentially deter applicants from underrepresented groups to universities such as Warwick.
- (c) That negotiations with UCAS regarding the schedule for receipt of contextual data were continuing and therefore this was not available for analysis, noting that approximately one third of institutions were unwilling to sign the schedule as proposed by UCAS, but that a revised schedule had been recently agreed and provided for the Vice-Chancellor to sign.

- (d) That regional collaborations with other Universities and local schools as part of widening participation were already in place.

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

- (e) That data from the Management Information and Planning Office showed that students joining the University from underrepresented groups (or Widening Participation categories) were predominantly from the Coventry and Warwickshire area, and that this data would be shared with departments.

919/10-11 University Open Day

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to colleagues, both in academic and administrative departments, who attended and organised the successful University Open Day held on 24 September 2011.

920/10-11 Higher Education White Paper - BIS Technical Consultation document (minute 847/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the BIS consultation on the technical aspects of the proposals set out in the White Paper "Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System" (SC.663/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the University's draft response to the BIS consultation on the technical aspects of the proposals set out in the White Paper "Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System" highlighted key risks to the University and the higher education sector.
- (b) That the potential impact on the University's relationships with Further Education colleges was noted in the draft response.
- (c) That the legislation supporting the regulatory framework for the changes set out in the White Paper was being drafted, and would likely be revised following this consultation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University's final response to the BIS Consultation on the technical aspects of the proposals set out in the White Paper "Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System" be recommended for consideration by the Senate and Council, with a view to the final response being submitted prior to the submission deadline of 27 October 2011.
- (b) That a letter be sent to BIS, in addition to the University's consultation response, to emphasise key issues.
- (c) That, given the partnership with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), the Academic Registrar work with the Dean of Warwick Medical School to determine how best to offer support in identifying the potential impact on LSTM as a result of the White Paper "Higher Education: Students at the Heart of the System".

- 921/10-11 Lighting on Campus
- REPORTED: (by the Vice Chancellor)
- That a letter would be written to Martin Reeves, Chief Executive of Coventry City Council regarding the progress of lighting improvements being made on campus.
- 922/10-11 MRC Doctoral Training Grants
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That, in conjunction with the School of Life Sciences, Warwick Medical School had been awarded a number of MRC doctoral training grants for take up from October 2012.
- 923/10-11 Labour Party Tuition Fee Level Proposal
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That Ed Milliband had pledged that the Labour Party would support a policy that capped the tuition fee level at £6000 per year, together with scrapping plans to reduce corporation tax.
- 924/10-11 BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans (minute 875/10-11 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the Academic Registrar had received correspondence from BIS, confirming that payment of tuition fees up front would not incur a penalty.
- 925/10-11 Update on UCU Ballot
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the University expected to receive details from UCU regarding the response to the positive ballot for strike action and action short of a strike, and that the University would prioritise the students' interests in making arrangements to respond to any period of action.
- 926/10-11 Fees Working Group report (minute 848/10-11 refers)
- CONSIDERED:
- A report from the Fees Working Group, with International Fee Recommendations for UG and PGT Students for 2012/13 (SC.646/10-11).
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- (a) That the Steering Committee had considered the scenarios proposed in the Fees Working Group report from the meeting held on 22 August 2011 (SC.598/10-11).
 - (b) That the Fees Working Group highlighted a number of principles which supported the recommendations, including:
 - (i) That there remained a commitment to widening participation in the University's student recruitment strategy.
 - (ii) That there was a need for the University to provide a clearly-articulated explanation for its fees decisions, as well as the strategy for using additional income raised through increased fees to contribute towards an improved student experience, in terms of the quality of both academic and non-academic provision.

- (c) That there was a need to move towards greater fee differentiation, in order to allow for greater responsiveness to market demand.
- (d) That data suggested that applications to Warwick had not been affected by fee levels, but external factors such as the restrictions imposed by the UKBA and the social unrest that was reported internationally may have more of an impact on demand across the sector.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (e) That the review of international fee setting would bring the University's fee levels broadly in line with competitors over time.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (f) That it was unfortunate that market position was a determining factor in setting fees and that international fee levels would increase above inflation, noting that there were concerns regarding the potential impact on recruitment.
- (g) That the proposal to reinvest any surplus into high quality academic and non-academic provision was welcomed by the Students' Union.

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

- (h) That while clearly-articulated explanations for the University's fees decisions were welcomed in advance, the University could also provide a clear record of initiatives undertaken or completed at the end of each academic year to demonstrate achievements as a result of the University's fees decisions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Fees Working Group's recommendation that, for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught continuing students, a fee increase of 6% on both Bands 1 and 2 be applied for 2012/13, bringing fee levels to £13,065 for Band 1 and £16,960 for Band 2 (an increase of £740 / £960 against fee levels for 2011/12), be approved.
- (b) That the proposal that the fees for undergraduate Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) be set at the Band 2 equivalent rate from 2012/13 onwards be approved, noting that the change in fee band would apply only to new entrants from the 2012/13 academic year.
- (c) That the Steering Committee approve the proposals set out in the Fees Working Group's first scenario that provided for a clear differentiation between the fee levels to be charged for undergraduate versus postgraduate taught provision, and that an uplift of 10% to 12% was recommended for new undergraduate entrants from the 2012/13 academic year.
- (d) That the Steering Committee approve the proposed uplift of 16% to 18% for new overseas postgraduate taught entrants from the 2012/13 academic year.
- (e) That the proposal that departments be encouraged to consider greater fee differentiation at undergraduate level, varying their fees above the Band 1 or Band 2 rate as applicable, where this is appropriate and where volume and quality of demand permits, be approved.

927/10-11 Taught Postgraduate Funding and Finance

RECEIVED:

A briefing note from UUK providing an analysis of trends and characteristics of the taught postgraduate market, with a particular emphasis on the current funding mechanisms and financial support available (SC.650/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the report identified trends in the growth in overseas numbers on full-time postgraduate taught programmes, and significant home/EU growth on part-time postgraduate taught programmes.
- (b) That the report also identified that postgraduate taught numbers were concentrated in a relatively small number of disciplines linked to professional areas such as business, professions allied to medicine and law, and that the most frequent reasons for pursuing postgraduate taught study were to enhance employment prospects or for career development.

928/10-11 Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education

RECEIVED:

A report by the Universities UK Efficiency and Modernisation Task Group regarding efficiency and effectiveness in higher education (SC.648/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the report identified markers for roll-out of policies over the next 12 to 24 months, with a strong focus on more efficient procurement.
- (b) That the University was well relatively positioned given the work undertaken in benchmarking and with Tribal, noting areas of the University such as jobs.ac.uk and Unitemps were good models to consider and that a short case study referencing this was included in the report.

929/10-11 Innovation and Transformation Fund

RECEIVED:

A press release from HEFCE announcing a £1 million Innovation and Transformation Fund, for innovative projects to improve efficiency in higher education over the next two years (SC.652/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That Senior Officers would consider whether a bid to the Innovation and Transformation Fund, to sponsor innovative projects to improve efficiency in higher education, was appropriate in taking forward any future initiatives planned within the University.

930/10-11 Review of Business-University Collaboration

CONSIDERED:

A letter from Professor Tim Wilson, inviting input into the Review of Business-University Collaboration (SC.649/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the proposed timescale was not aligned with those for the White Paper, and therefore there was a lack of clarity around the intention to influence teaching and/or research.

RESOLVED:

That the University submit some case studies in response to Professor Tim Wilson's invite to input into the Review of Business-University Collaboration.

931/10-11 Senate Reserved 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 5 October 2011 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, subject to revisions as agreed in the meeting.

932/10-11 Lecture to be given by Paul Nurse

REPORTED: (by the Dean of Warwick Medical School)

That, following an invitation from the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Nurse had agreed to give one of the lectures in the University's Distinguished Lecture Series in late April 2012.

933/10-11 Russell Group Responses to Consultations (minute 906/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

The Russell Group responses to the Consultation on the Government's White Paper "*Students at the Heart of the System*", the HEFCE's consultation on teaching funding and student number controls in 2012-13, and the BIS Consultation on potential early repayment mechanisms for student loans (SC.651/10-11).

934/10-11 UUK Response to Consultation on the White Paper

RECEIVED:

The UUK response to the Consultation on the Government's White Paper "*Students at the Heart of the System*" (SC.656/10-11).

935/10-11 BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans (minute 875/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

- (a) The University's response to the BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans (SC.657/10-11).
- (b) UUK response to the BIS Consultation on Potential Early Repayment Mechanisms for Student Loans (SC.658/10-11).

936/10-11 UCEA Update on Specific Public Sector Equality Duties

RECEIVED:

An update from UCEA summarizing the specific public sector equality duties that came into force on 10 September 2011 (SC.659/10-11).

JFB/KP/steersshare/minutes/201011/Sep11/26Sep11