

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 26 October 2009

- Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor L Bridges
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes (until item 54(e)/09-10)
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor H Thomas,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby
- Apologies: Mr A Bradley, Professor Bruzzi, Professor M Smith.
- In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Professor S B Palmer (until item 52/09-10), Associate Dean (Teaching), Warwick Medical School (for item 53/09-10), Incoming Acting Dean of Warwick Business School (for item 54/09-10)

Note: The Reserved and Restricted business was taken at the beginning of the meeting.

49/09-10 Professor Yvonne Carter

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Professor Yvonne Carter, who served as Dean of the Warwick Medical School from 2004 to 2009 and as a Pro Vice-Chancellor from 2007 to 2009, had passed away on 20 October 2009 following a long battle with cancer, noting that her funeral would be held on 28 October 2009 in St Francis of Assisi RC Church in Kenilworth.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee send its sincere regrets and condolences to Professor Carter's family at this sad time.

50/09-10 Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE) (minute 34/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the contract for the ERSC-funded Centre for Competitive Advantage in the Global Economy (CAGE) had been signed with a funding value of £3.38m.

51/09-10 Government Changes to Teaching Grant Allocation

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That it was expected that the Government would announce plans to remove £400m from the HEFCE Teaching Grant allocation and that this amount would become contestable for "high employment rate" courses.
- (b) That, although the plan appeared to serve the post-92 institutions well, Warwick could make a good case for some of its courses to receive funding under any such scheme.

52/09-10

Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2009 be approved, subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~ additions underlined):

~~32/09-10~~

~~Santander – Abbey Research Grant Fund Strategy Bites – Widening Participation~~

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

(...)

~~33/09-10~~

(...)

(By the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science)

- (j) That he had grave concerns for the sustainability of a specific department within the Faculty of Science should the proposed intake reduction be implemented.

53/09-10

HIEC – Final Proposal (minute 884/09-10 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Associate Dean (Teaching), Warwick Medical School, outlining the contents of the final submission to the Department of Health to establish a West Midlands (South) Health Innovation and Education Cluster (HIEC) (SC.35/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Associate Dean (Teaching), Warwick Medical School)

- (a) That the proposal represented a significant volume of activity to be carried out by the Medical School and its proposed partners but that it was, in part, a case of re-emphasising and shaping work already being undertaken, presenting it as a co-ordinated and thorough package.
- (b) That the governance of the HIEC had been presented within the final proposal in such a way as to allow for scaling back to a lighter touch approach during the contract negotiation and implementation stage should the bid be successful.

(By the Acting Dean of Warwick Medical School)

- (c) That the Academic Health Science Centre and HIEC scheme had acted as a catalyst for activity across the sector, noting that the debate had provided a stimulus for the potential University and GE Healthcare partnership.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the final submission to the Department of Health be approved as set out in SC.35/09-10 by the deadline of 26 October 2009.
- (b) That the Committee record its thanks to the Associate Dean (Teaching), Warwick Medical School for the work undertaken to prepare the HIEC proposal.

CONSIDERED:

The departmental response to the Strategic Departmental Review of the Warwick Business School (WBS) held on 3 to 5 June 2009 and the Action Plan considered initially at the meeting held on 12 October 2009, together with an oral report from the Dean of the School, Professor Howard Thomas and the incoming Acting Dean, Professor David Wilson (SC.42/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Incoming Acting Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (a) That the merging of the School's development and fundraising activities had facilitated more appropriate level events to be pursued and for specific staff to focus entirely on fundraising activities aiming for donations of £100k or above for capital projects and for research funding.
- (b) That a small number of poorer performing staff and research areas had been identified in preparation for the REF and that attention to these was a current priority.
- (c) That it was the intention to appoint Teaching Fellows to resolve any shortfall in teaching duties once the research strategy and priorities had been finalised within the School.

(By the Registrar)

- (d) That the reference to the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy within recommendation (vii) was intended to ensure that he was involved in the discussion around the development and fundraising activities in WBS and not a request for further posts in WBS.
- (e) That the inclusion of the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy on the recruitment panel for the post of Director of Marketing and Communications in the School was helpful.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing))

- (f) That whilst the decision not to pursue the Phase 3B building was disappointing to WBS, it should not act as an inhibiting factor for actioning other recommendations, such as those designed to enhance the School's research and quality profile.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Sciences))

- (g) That the University and all its departments, including the Business School, should ensure they follow the correct probation criteria and processes, noting that there were significant implications for the REF if procedures were not followed.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (h) That he had concerns regarding the use of postgraduate research students for teaching duties and that he wished to meet with the colleagues appointed to monitor supervisors within the School, noting that there was a more general need within the University to provide additional support and training for supervisors.
- (i) That there was very little scope for postgraduate taught students on WBS' programmes to take modules from other departments and that there was some perceived over-assessment in the postgraduate taught portfolio in general.

- (j) That any proposal to reduce the size of the PhD programme given its position as a loss leader would work in opposition to the University's strategy to double the number of postgraduate research students by 2015.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (k) That it would be useful for the School to communicate the details and findings of the work undertaken to enhance student feedback procedures and quality.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the departmental response and action plan be approved as set out in SC.42/09-10, subject to the amendments to the action plan discussed at the meeting.
- (b) That the incoming Acting Dean of Warwick Business School provide the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Sciences) with a list of identified poorer performance areas and/or individuals for the REF meeting to be held on 15 March 2010.
- (c) That the incoming Acting Dean of Warwick Business School attend the Steering Committee with effect from the next meeting replacing the outgoing Dean.
- (d) That the Dean of Warwick Business School be invited to provide the Steering Committee with a progress report on the Strategic Departmental Review and general issues within the School in the Autumn Term 2010.

55/09-10

Student Intake Targets (minute 33/09-10 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the ARC target-setting sub-group presenting reductions in student intake targets for the 2010/11 admissions cycle (SC.41/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the paper required some further work to clarify to colleagues that the situation had resulted (in large part) from external factors and that the University had to act swiftly to guard against possible punitive action by HEFCE.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing))

- (b) That the initial proposals presented to the Steering Committee on 19 October 2009 had been revised in light of the comments of the Committee, with the most notable changes applied to the Departments of Computer Science and History of Art and the Philosophy, Politics and Economics course.
- (c) That, of the 20 departments faced with intake reductions, 15 would lose HEFCE Teaching grant funding and of those, two thirds would only lose between less than 1 percent up to 2 per cent, noting that the most significant penalty would be the loss of tuition fees.
- (d) That it was important to stress to departments that the University would restore recruitment numbers once it had returned (or was close) to the permitted HEFCE contract range.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (e) That consideration should be given to internal penalties for over recruitment against intake targets.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (f) That the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment was reviewing the impact of the reduction in recruitment targets in widening participation-focused programmes and the impact this might have on HEFCE Key Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the intake targets for the 2010/11 academic year be approved as set out in SC.41/09-10.
- (b) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Resourcing) and the Chairs of the Boards of the Faculties meet with the affected departments as soon as possible to explain the external and internal factors which had led to the need to constrain their recruitment targets for 201/11, noting that the Department of Computer Science would be the priority given the significant reduction in its target.
- (c) That proposals be brought forward for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting regarding the implementation of internal penalties for over-recruitment.

56/09-10

Audit of HESES 2009

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE confirming that the University would be audited in 2010 with a focus on the Higher Education Students Early Statistics Survey 2009 (HESES09) which was due to be submitted in December 2009 (SC.36/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the Audit Committee had been alerted to the forthcoming audit via a paper prepared by the Academic Registrar and that the Committee wished to write to HEFCE to explore the precise nature and purpose of the audit.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That the audit would involve a great deal of work in terms of preparation and would in part consider the application of regulations.

57/09-10

DBIS Postgraduate Review

RECEIVED:

A press release from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills announcing a review of postgraduate provision in the UK (SC.37/09-10).

58/09-10

Community Infrastructure Levy Consultation (minute 36/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University would not be responding directly to the Department of Communities and Local Government consultation on the community infrastructure levy as it had given its support to a number of sector collaborative responses.

59/09-10 Students' Union Council Meeting

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That a motion (amongst other things) calling for the immediate resignation of the University Chancellor, Richard Lambert, was intended to be raised at the Students' Union Council meeting to be held later today.

JFB/jf/steersshare/minutes2009-10/Oct09/26Oct09