

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 27 April 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor R Lindley,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Smith,
Mr S Thomson,
Professor M Whitby,

Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Professor Y Carter, Professor R Higgott, Professor H Thomas

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Assistant Registrar (Deputy Registrar's Office), Director of Management Information and Planning (for item 506/08-09)

501/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April be approved.

502/08-09 Pensions

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That it was anticipated that decisions about the future shape of the USS pension scheme resulting from the worsening deficit in the scheme would be made in the Autumn of 2009.

503/08-09 National Pay Negotiations (minute 428/08-09 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the UCU would shortly be balloting its members over industrial action, and that although there was a lack of clarity over the exact issue being balloted on, it appeared that there was a move away from promoting the 8% pay claim towards the issue of redundancies in the sector.

504/08-09 QAA Institutional Audit

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University had this week received the final report from its Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) audit, which had highlighted a significant number of areas of good practice in teaching and learning.

505/08-09 Budget 2009

RECEIVED:

An information note from UUK analysing the outcome of the Budget for the HE sector, including a letter from the Secretary of State at DIUS (S.423/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the headline was a requirement for additional efficiency savings of £400m from DIUS in 2010/11.
- (b) That the existing commitment to increase the science budget by 6% had been maintained.

- (c) That it was important for the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences communities to work together to provide a strong, coherent national message in order to best protect themselves from any future threats to funding.

506/08-09 Research Excellence Framework Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper updating the Steering Committee on the development of the Research Excellence Framework (SC.415/08-09).

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

- (a) That although the Research Excellence Framework remained in development, it appeared to be becoming more like the RAE process,
- (b) That at the time of the meeting it appeared that:
 - (i) Assessment using bibliometric data remained likely.
 - (ii) The cut off for the assessment process would be December 2012.
 - (iii) Research impact would be a new assessment component to replace esteem, although it remained unclear how influential it would be or how it would be measured.
- (c) That the panel structure had yet to be decided.
- (d) That the University would be contributing to a consultation on the process that would take place in Autumn 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That paper SC.415/08-09 be circulated to Heads of Department with a covering note from the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Research and the Director of Management Information and Planning.
- (b) That steps be taken to secure engagement with staff in departments, beyond Heads of Department and Directors of Research, on the issues and implications emerging from the paper.

507/08-09 Research Hotel

Note: a revised version of paper SC.418/08-09 was tabled at the meeting

CONSIDERED:

Extracts from a feasibility study commissioned by the University on the concept of establishing a 'Research Hotel' (SC.418/08-09 {revised})

RESOLVED:

That, once finalised and edited, the feasibility study should be supplied to AWM.

508/08-09 Senior Officers' Visit to US Universities (January 2009)

CONSIDERED:

A paper updating the Steering Committee as to the findings and resulting objectives arising from the visits made by members of the Senior Officer team to private US universities in January 2009 (SC.419/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the lack of a defined HE 'sector', as existed in the UK, enabled US institutions to move very quickly, accurately and with legitimacy in terms of management decisions.

(by the Finance Director)

That awareness of cost drivers was not as prominent as in the UK.

RESOLVED:

That the report from the Senior Officers be welcomed.

509/08-09

Strategic Departmental Review (SDR) Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining the forthcoming schedule for SDRs, and containing proposals to defer reviews scheduled for 2009/10 until the next academic year to allow for a review of the SDR process to be undertaken during the first term of the 2009/10 academic year (SC.417/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That requests for specific items to be considered by the SDRs for the School of Engineering and WBS would be brought forward to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following SDRs scheduled for 2009/10 be deferred until 2010/11 to allow for a review of the SDR process to be undertaken:
 - (i) Centre for Applied Linguistics
 - (ii) Institute of Education
 - (iii) Department of Economics
 - (iv) Department of Classics & Ancient History
 - (v) Department of Psychology
 - (vi) Department of Physics
- (b) That SDR Follow-Up Reports should be provided to the Steering Committee during the Summer Term by the Heads of Departments of Film & Television Studies, History and Theatre Studies as well as the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning.
- (c) That the following issues be considered by the SDRs of the Departments of German Studies and Italian:
 - (i) Whether language teaching should be provided in departments or in the Language Centre.
 - (ii) Support arrangements for year-abroad students.

510/08-09

Appointment to Senate Committees

RESOLVED:

That on behalf of the Senate, the Committee approved the appointment of Dr Catherine Constable to the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Arts for the remainder of the academic year, to replace Dr John Gilmore.

511/08-09

Mercia Fund

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That permission had been received from Government to increase the amount of funding able to be awarded by Mercia Fund 2 to a specific company from £250k to £500k.

512/08-09 CBI Skills Survey 2009

RECEIVED:

A copy of the Executive Summary of 'Emerging Stronger', the CBI Skills Survey 2009, along with a covering letter from Richard Lambert, Director-General of the CBI and University Chancellor (SC.416/08-09).

513/08-09 UCEA Strategic Plan 2009-2011

RECEIVED:

A copy of the UCEA Strategic Plan 2009-2011, along with a covering letter from the Chief Executive and the Chairman (SC.421/08-09).

514/08-09 UK Universities and Europe: Competition and Internationalisation

RECEIVED:

A copy of the Executive Summary and Recommendations from the Europe Unit Report 'UK Universities and Europe: Competition and Internationalisation', along with a covering letter (SC.407/08-09).

515/08-09 QAA Information Bulletin 2009: HE Strategies in FE Colleges Pilot 2007-08

RECEIVED:

A copy of QAA Information Bulletin 2009: HE Strategies in FE Colleges Pilot 2007-08 (SC.422/08-09).

Kms/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Apr09/27Apr09