

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 28 February 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor R Higgott,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Labbe,  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor M Taylor,  
Professor P Winstanley,  
Mr D Stevens.

Apologies: Professor C Hughes.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy (from item 436 b)/10-11), Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 436/10-11), Director of Health and Safety (for item 443/10-11), Head of Business Relations (Research Support Services) (for item 444/10-11).

435/10-11 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2011 be approved.

436/10-11 HEFCE Consultation on Public Information about HE (minute 215/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the HEFCE, Universities UK and GuildHE consultation on the provision of information to the public about higher education, through a proposal to develop a Key Information Set (KIS) (SC.309/10-11).

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

- (a) That the HEFCE were consulting on the provision of sixteen items of information about higher education courses that were deemed useful for the formation of a KIS.
- (b) That the timing of the proposed publication date of September 2012 to inform decision making by prospective students for the 2013 entry to HE was not considered helpful as most students would have made their decisions by that point.
- (c) That pilots were ongoing and expert groups, considering specific aspects of the proposed data sets, had reported following the publication of the consultation.
- (d) That one institution from the pilot group had reported to a meeting of the Academic Registrars Council Quality Practitioners Group (ARC QPG), indicating that there would be extensive resource implications, particularly in relation to determining what constitutes a course and what data should therefore be presented, given the levels of optionality on many courses.
- (e) That the University's response highlighted the need to ensure that the diversity of the sector and its teaching provision was reflected in the data sets.

(by the Registrar)

- (f) That Professor Janet Beer had indicated at a recent UUK meeting that the KIS would incorporate information already held by institutions.

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

- (g) That this was the final opportunity to articulate the University's views on the development of the KIS and therefore the response should be robust.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft response to the HEFCE, Universities UK and GuildHE consultation on the provision of information to the public about higher education be approved and submitted prior to the deadline of 7 March 2011.
- (b) That concerns about the research conclusions had been raised by the Committee previously and the letter from the Vice-Chancellor to Professor Janet Beer, Chair of the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group regarding the consultation process, as discussed by the Committee at its meeting of 21 February, should refer to the earlier correspondence on the issue to Professor Beer from the Registrar (minute 419(a)/10-11 refers).

437/10-11 USS Pensions (minute 356/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

An update from the Employers Pensions Forum (EPF) on the progress of the USS reform process (SC.315/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That the letter provided an update on the outcome of the USS reform consultation, including the aspects being recommended for modification following significant expressions of concern from members, namely the caps on inflationary increases to pensions, the rejoining period for members, and staff promoted into USS eligible roles.
- (b) That these proposals would be put to the USS Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) on 2 March 2011, and if approved, would be implemented on 1 April 2011.

(by the Registrar)

- (c) That approval of modifications may not be forthcoming on 2 March 2011.

438/10-11 Capital Development and Space Management Update (minute 425/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University had been invited to submit an expression of interest to acquire a legacy tank for a 50m pool from the 2012 Olympics, by Wednesday 2 March 2011.

(by the Director of Estates)

- (b) That a feasibility report had been completed and that a subsequent bid for an Iconic grant would be submitted to DCMS were the tank to be acquired.

- (c) That the provision of a 50m pool would be financially challenging, but that the expression of interest did not constitute a commitment on the part of the University to proceed and further consideration would be given to the financial case.

439/10-11 REF Panels (minute 333/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A report setting out the University's main and sub-panel members and secretaries for the Research Excellence Framework (REF) (SC.303/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That there were additions to those noted in paper SC.303/10-11, namely;
- (i) That Professor Laura Green was a member of sub-panel A6 (Agriculture, Veterinary and Food Science).
  - (ii) That Rebecca Lambert was secretary to sub-panel C20 (Law).
- (b) That Professor Dendy, a visiting professor in the Department of Physics, had been appointed to the sub-panel for Physics (C9).
- (c) That he had written to all Heads of Departments with regard to compensatory arrangements for departments with members of staff serving as REF panel members who were not also senior officers of the University.
- (d) That regular meetings of panel members would be instigated to ensure that information was appropriately disseminated but that, in the interim, the Director of Management Information and Planning should be informed of any particularly relevant developments.

(by the Dean of Warwick Medical School):

- (e) That Professor Garret FitzGerald, Chair of the Advisory Board of the Faculty of Medicine, had been appointed to main panel A.

440/10-11 QAA: Recruitment of Reviewers and Review Secretaries for the Institutional Review Process (minute 292/10-11 referred)

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

That the nomination of Dr Amanda Dowd, WMG, to QAA as an institutional review team member had been accepted (noting Professor David Lamburn was also an appointed reviewer).

441/10-11 Access agreement and HE White Paper (minute 358/10-11 referred)

CONSIDERED:

A UUK report on developments relating to the forthcoming higher education (HE) White Paper, and correspondence regarding OFFA Guidance for Access Agreements in 2012-13 (SC.317/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the detailed guidance from OFFA on access agreements was expected to be issued on Monday 7 March.

- (b) That, at a meeting of UUK, it had been reported that the deadline for submission of access agreements would be 11 April with OFFA confirming acceptance or rejection of proposals by 11 July.
- (c) That, in the context of this timescale, the paper setting out proposals for future student support arrangements and tuition fees would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting.
- (d) That the publication of the White Paper had been delayed until May.
- (e) That it had also been reported that the upper band of investment in access / widening participation would be expected to be approximately £900 per student, and the lower band approximately £200 per student, depending on the level of fee to be charged and institutional social inclusivity.
- (f) That, were too many institutions to charge fees towards £9000, the government intended to take action to offset the additional loan costs, and a series of options for achieving this were being considered, including further cuts to the HEFCE T Grant.

442/10-11

Health and Safety Update

RECEIVED:

The University's Annual Health and Safety Report for 2010 and Action Plan for 2011 (SC.319/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That the reduced level of serious incidents reportable to HSE (RIDDORs) would be difficult to reduce further, but that further analysis would now be undertaken on all incidents.
- (b) That a greater understanding of health and safety practices had been developed across all areas of the University, reducing wider risk and making an improved contribution to business continuity and emergency planning.
- (c) That significant progress had been made in stress management, by using the Pulse survey to identify issues, noting the particular importance of leadership, communication and change management.
- (d) That legislation was becoming more stringent, which would lead to additional costs and the need for appropriate management systems to ensure compliance.
- (e) That UCEA had discussed the potential for a national focus on student safety in residences, particularly in relation to fire alarm incidents.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That students needed to be conscious of the courts' lack of tolerance regarding malicious fire safety incidents, especially in light of a recent case involving students in residences.

(by the Registrar)

- (g) That the first successful prosecution for corporate manslaughter had taken place recently.

443/10-11 Advantage West Midlands: Assets and Liabilities Transition Plan

RECEIVED:

An update on the Advantage West Midlands (AWM) Assets and Liabilities Transition Plan (SC.318/10-11).

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

- (a) That AWM had been requested to submit the Plan to the Government, who would take the final decision on the distribution of assets.
- (b) That there did not appear to be any risk to the University with respect to the ownership of intellectual property arising from AWM funded projects.

444/10-11 HR Update

RECEIVED:

A report updating on key activities within HR including the Learning and Development Centre (SC.316/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (a) That a joint communication from the Registrar and Deputy-Vice-Chancellor had been posted on Insite regarding the UCU ballots for industrial action.
- (b) That UCEA had commenced consultation with HEIs regarding the 2011 Pay Bargaining process, and a more detailed questionnaire to determine the UCEA mandate for the 2011 round was expected to be received shortly.
- (c) That increases in employee contributions for those in certain public sector pension schemes had been announced, including the National Health Service Pension Scheme (NHSPS).
- (d) That in light of the Harris Report, a number of minor changes to recruitment and selection processes had been introduced.
- (e) That the more focused Pulse survey would be launched on 28 March 2011.
- (f) That co-ordination of the Warwick International Programme in the Leadership and Management of Higher Education continued, and members were encouraged to pass publicity material to overseas institutions when on University business.

445/10-11 UUK report "Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities"

RECEIVED:

A report from the UUK on "Freedom of speech on campus: rights and responsibilities in UK universities", focusing primarily on the legal and regulatory context in which institutions operate (SC.314/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the full report would be considered by the Students' Union Liaison Group.
- (b) That for most recommendations, the University had the necessary arrangements in place, but other arrangements may need to be reviewed in light of this report.

- (c) That the University's (and Students' Union's) strategies towards academic freedom and freedom of speech must not compromise their status as charities.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (d) That the Students' Union currently had a policy of no "no-platform", but that this would be reviewed as part of a referendum next week.

446/10-11 Memberships of Senate Committees

RESOLVED:

That, on the recommendation of the Board of the Faculty of Science, the appointment of Dr Jim Robinson from the Department of Physics to the Panel for the Committee on the Admission of Students to Courses of Study, to serve as one of the two full time members of academic staff from each Faculty, be approved on behalf of the Senate.

447/10-11 Technology Strategy Board consultation on broad areas for Technology Innovation Centres

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the Technology Strategy Board's (TSB) invite for comments on the currently identified broad areas for Technology Innovation Centres (TICs) in the UK (SC.310/10-11).

448/10-11 Technology Innovation Centres (minute 181/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

The results of the Science and Technology Committee inquiry examining the Fraunhofer model as a model for Technology Innovation Centres (TICs) in the UK (SC.311/10-11).

449/10-11 European Higher Education in Facts and Figures (Winter 2011)

RECEIVED:

UK HE Europe Unit publication including data from the majority of UK Higher education sector (SC.312/10-11).

450/10-11 Launch of Student Finance England service for returning students

RECEIVED:

UUK note on the launch of student finance services for 2011/12 and an update on the Student Loans Company Stakeholder Forum (SC.313/10-11).