

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 28 September 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor R Lindley,
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby
Mr A Bradley

Apologies: Professor R Higgott

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Finance Director, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Professor C Hughes, Professor S B Palmer, Associate Dean (Teaching), Warwick Medical School (for item 884/08-09), Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment (for item 890/08-09)

The Committee welcomed Professor C Hughes to her first meeting of the Steering Committee as incoming Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

883/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2009 be approved.

884/08-09 Health Innovation and Education Cluster (HIEC) (minute 862/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Associate Dean (Teaching), Warwick Medical School (WMS), updating the Committee on the progress of the University's bid for a Health Innovation and Education - Cluster (SC.662/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Associate Dean (Teaching), WMS)

- (a) That the University's proposal for a Health and Innovation Cluster (HIEC) was one of three bids from within the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority (SHA), noting that it was likely that only one would be selected from within any one SHA area.
- (b) That the SHA recognised that it was too late to develop a single bid from the three West Midlands proposals as they were all distinctive.
- (c) That the Department of Health appeared to have very high, yet vague, expectations of the deliverables of potential HIECs but was providing a very modest amount of central funding to establish them.
- (d) That the University would align its bid with the Department of Health's criteria but seek to retain the distinctive nature of the initiative, noting that there were several risks presented by the process, namely:

- (i) Limited financial input from the Department of Health and the University's need to invest resource for long term strategic return
- (ii) the potential role for postgraduate medical and dental education in HIECs, noting that this would not impact on current postgraduate provision in WMS; and
- (iii) the potential withdrawal of partners during the tender process

(By the Acting Dean (WMS))

- (e) That the areas of activity contained within the HIEC bid would be taken forward by WMS regardless of whether the bid was successful.

RESOLVED:

That the final proposal be considered at a future meeting of the Committee prior to submission to the Department of Health in late October 2009.

885/08-09 University Open Day

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the Open Day held on 26 September 2009 had been a great success.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to the Student Recruitment and Admissions team, academic departments and support departments for their work on the Open Day.

886/08-09 Collin Ferguson Memorial Event

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the memorial event for Collin Ferguson, former Estates Officer (1973 – 1997) held on 26 September 2009 went well with over 90 attendees including former Registrars and Vice-Chancellors.

887/08-09 Role of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor would be vacant for the 2009/10 academic year following Professor S B Palmer's appointment as Interim Chair of the School of Life Sciences.
- (b) That he was grateful to Professor Palmer for agreeing to take on the role.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee formally thank Professor Palmer for his contribution and wish him every success with the Life Sciences project.

888/08-09 Opening of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That he had attended the opening of the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Saudi Arabia on 23 September 2009.
- (b) That the university had spent significant sums on the launch event.

889/08-09 Major Bid Proposal: Low Carbon Vehicle Technology Project

CONSIDERED:

Supporting documentation regarding the full application for the Low Carbon Vehicle Technology Project led by Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) including briefing papers from WMG and Research Support Services, the Major Proposals Checklist and the project budget (SC.673/08-09).

Note: The Full Application document was made available to members and attendees electronically via the files.warwick/steeringcommittee page.

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the project was of strategic importance to the University both because of the funding it would provide, the positive impact it would have on the University's reputation in the low carbon field and, potentially, the research impact agenda.

(By the Finance Director)

- (b) That it was likely that the overheads would be nearer the new EU capped 20 per cent rate than the 5 per cent currently included in the budget, noting that the recovery and additional direct cost forecasts were very low.
- (c) That the University needed to ensure it did not have to absorb the contractual risk for partners.

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

- (d) That consideration should be given to the terms on which staff would be recruited, for example whether it was advantageous to appoint staff to the University or to second from elsewhere.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (e) That sufficient space had been identified to house the project.

RESOLVED:

That the Full Application be approved for submission to Advantage West Midlands, noting that the risks to the University needed to be considered and resolved prior to signing the negotiated Funding Agreement.

890/08-09

Course Fee Income Projection

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment presenting an initial projection of fee income against the financial plan for 2009/10 (SC.670/08-09).

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

- (a) That the overall recruitment position was very healthy against the increased targets within the Financial Plan.
- (b) That undergraduate recruitment could be even higher than projected in SC.670/08-09 given the large number of accommodation applications received.
- (c) That the postgraduate research student picture was the most fluid at this stage of the cycle as a significant proportion of students would enrol during the academic year.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (d) That departments had acknowledged the risks imposed by the new immigration system with regards to offer making and that the risks were being managed locally, noting that the immigration system, and to a lesser degree Swine Flu, were not anticipated to have the impact that was predicted by some earlier in the year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.670/08-09, subject to revisions discussed at the meeting.

891/08-09

Tuition Fees 2010/11

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Fees Working Group proposing the standard tuition fees for the 2010/11 academic year (SC.669/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That extensive work was underway to ensure that fee setting could be better informed by, for example, data on the costs of educating students alongside market data and the University's strategic objectives.
- (b) That fee income was used to support the institution's general academic activities and that there were opportunities for consideration to be given through the financial planning process to specifically consider the levels of bursaries and scholarships.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That the proposed increases for overseas postgraduate taught and undergraduate students of 5.5 per cent for Band 1 and 7.5 per cent for Band 2 were moderated in terms of impact due to the currently advantageous exchange rates.
- (d) That the recent International Student Barometer (ISB) highlighted that a very high proportion of overseas students would recommend Warwick to others and found studying here to be good value for money.

- (e) That consideration of the fee levels for students on a year abroad or sandwich placements was ongoing by the Fees Working Group but that the fee had been retained at the current level for 2010/11 pending the review.

(By the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (f) That competitor institutions were becoming more differentiated with regards to fee levels and that the proposed changes at Warwick would bring the University in line with other leading institutions.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (g) That the ISB results had indicated that 54 per cent of overseas students felt that the financial support available at the University was insufficient and that a raise in fees without the corresponding financial support was unwelcome.

(By the Finance Director)

- (h) That departments should be encouraged to consider expanding their range of overseas recruitment markets to reduce the risk of over-dependence on a limited number.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed increases in standard overseas tuition fees for undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses for 2010/11 be approved as set out in SC.669/08-09.
- (b) That the recommendations relating to proposed PGR and Home/EU PGT fees for 2010/11 and any changes to subject locations within overseas fee bands 1 and 2 be brought forward for consideration by the Committee in the Autumn Term 2009/10.
- (c) That further details on the work being undertaken with regard to the University's overall fees-setting processes and the data used to inform fees-setting for 2011/12 and beyond be reported to the Committee in due course.
- (d) That a consultation on the level of postgraduate taught fee for the Faculty of Arts beyond the end of the current reduced fees pilot be carried out to include: data already provided to the Fees Working Group, the outcome of the HEFCE review of targeted allocations for Band D postgraduate taught courses, and a possible further survey of MA students to identify the impact and/or effect of the fees reduction.

892/08-09

University Response to HEFCE Review of Teaching Funding

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the HEFCE Review of Teaching Funding to be submitted to the HEFCE by 14 October 2009, together with the draft Russell Group response (SC.668/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (a) That the impact to the University as a result of the withdrawal of funding for the three targeted allocations would vary widely across departments with the following estimated loss of income:

School of Health and Social Studies and the Institute of Education - £300k
Department of Economics and Warwick Business School - £200k
Faculty of Arts departments - £100k

- (b) That the withdrawal of funding would further increase financial pressure in some departments.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That the Russell Group response was poor and that it was potentially not representative of all the institutions in the Group.

(By the Registrar)

- (d) That the University's response should be strengthened so as to make it clear to HEFCE that institutions would not be in a position (given other reductions in funding) to mitigate the impact of the proposed cuts.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the University response be approved for submission to HEFCE as set out in SC.668/08-09, subject to the revisions discussed at the meeting.
- (b) That the Vice-Chancellor contact the Russell Group to raise the Committee's concerns over the Group's draft response.

Note: At the meeting of the Senate held on 7 October 2009, the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies confirmed that the School of Health and Social Studies would not be impacted by the proposed Band D funding cuts as the MA in Social Work was within Fee Band C.

893/08-09

School of Life Sciences: Progress Report and Update on Process and Timescales

CONSIDERED:

A report from Professor S B Palmer, Interim Chair of the School of Life Sciences, updating the Committee on the progress and revised timescales of the establishment of a School of Life Sciences (SC.672/08-09 (revised), attached).

REPORTED: (by the Interim Chair of the School of Life Sciences)

- (a) That the Life Sciences Advisory Group had begun to meet weekly and an Away Day had been scheduled for early October 2009 to consider the vision for the School.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience))

- (b) That she had concerns that the membership of the Advisory Group and its related sub-groups was not representative with the vast majority of the members being male.

RESOLVED:

That the progress report and revised timescales be approved as set out in SC.672/08-09, subject to the revisions discussed at the meeting.

894/08-09

CBI Report: Stronger Together – Businesses and Universities in Turbulent Times

CONSIDERED:

The executive summary and introduction of a report from the Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) Higher Education Taskforce on how business, higher education and government could contribute to the UK's economic recovery and sustainable international competitiveness (SC.634/08-09).

Note: The full report was made available to members and attendees electronically via the files.warwick/steeringcommittee page.

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the report appeared to be pro-universities and that it would be considered in the appropriate channels within the institution.
- (b) That the debate around the ability to pay for a university education led to consideration of a model similar to that operated in the US with a significant level of bursaries available.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (c) That the timing of the report was ill-conceived given the issues around the delay in student finance allocations from the Student Loans Company and the shortfall of University places for 2009/10.
- (d) That whilst he welcomed the more targeted approach to student support set out in the report, there were real concerns regarding cuts to what was perceived to be inadequate existing student support and that the report did not present any alternatives to raising tuition fees.
- (e) That the idea of business sponsorship of universities and market-driven research were problematic as they would benefit only a small number of departments at most universities.
- (f) That a small segment of the Warwick student community was uncomfortable with the Chancellor's relationship with the University given his role as Director-General of the CBI in light of the report.

(By the Registrar)

- (g) That an event between the Chancellor and members of the student community might be a means of resolving the issues outlined and that this would also provide an opportunity for students to ask questions of the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar explore the feasibility of an event with the Chancellor.

895/08-09

Senate 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 7 October 2009 be approved as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate, noting that further appointments to Senate committees for 2009/10 would be incorporated into paper S.5/09-10 for the consideration of the Senate at its meeting.

896/08-09

Professor Robert Lindley

RESOLVED:

That the Committee record its thanks to Professor Lindley as outgoing Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences for his contribution to the Committee and the University in this regard.

- 897/08-09 HEFCE Financial Memorandum Part 2
- RECEIVED:
- Notification from HEFCE of the terms and conditions of the funding agreement between HEFCE and the University for 2009/10 and the targets relating to student numbers (SC.663/08-09).
- 898/08-09 UUK Longer Term Strategy Group Report: Patterns in HEIs in the UK
- RECEIVED:
- The ninth annual report from the Universities UK examining the trends in UK higher education at both sector and institutional level, together with presentation slides from the recent UUK conference on the report and its findings (SC.665/08-09).
- 899/08-09 UUK Report: Developing Future University Structures
- RECEIVED:
- A policy commentary published by UUK presenting future trends in the development of university partnerships and business models in the short, medium and long term (SC.666/08-09).
- 900/08-09 Universities Europe Seminar Report: Longer Term Developments in European HE and the Implications for UK HE
- RECEIVED:
- The report of a seminar organised by UUK held between 10 and 11 June 2009 reflecting on the current and future developments in European HE and their implications for the UK sector (SC.667/08-09).
- 901/08-09 Ross - CASE Survey: The Annual Survey of Gifts and Costs of Voluntary Giving to HE in the UK
- RECEIVED:
- Notification of the annual Ross-CASE survey to record gift revenue and fundraising costs across the UK HE sector, noting that the University's response will be presented in the forthcoming Development and Alumni Relations update to the Committee.