

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 29 October 2012

- Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor Christina Hughes,
Professor Christopher Hughes,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor S Swain,
Professor P Thomas,
Mr N Swain.
- Apologies: Professor S Croft, Professor T Jones, Professor M Taylor, Professor P Winstanley.
- In Attendance: Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Assistant Registrar (Risk, Continuity and Information Security), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) and QAA Review Academic Co-ordinator (for item 71/12-13).
- 66/12-13 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2012 be approved.
- 67/12-13 Rootes Grid
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That work had begun the new 'Rootes Grid', a new learning space housed in the Rootes Building which would open in April 2013
- 68/12-13 Institute of Digital Healthcare Learning Lab
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- (a) That a major research facility aimed at creating more robust digital and innovative healthcare programmes for people living with life-threatening and chronic illnesses had been launched by the Institute of Digital Healthcare in partnership with WMG and Bosch Healthcare.
- (b) That the new resource was aimed at understanding and evaluating effectiveness of digital programmes in the health service, as well as trialling novel digital healthcare technologies.
- 69/12-13 Installation of Globelynx Camera
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That Warwick had become the first university to install a GlobelynxTVReady camera and that the camera, based in the Arts Centre broadcast studio, would be used for quick expert comment or reaction to news stories and for press interviews, reducing the necessity for academics to travel to TV studios elsewhere.

70/12-13

Recent Meeting of the Russell Group

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the Russell Group had considered exploratory data analysis of the latest admissions round which examined some of the causes of the shortfall in students achieving AAB or above at Russell Group institutions.
- (b) That 11,000 students were denied a place in Russell Group institutions in the latest admissions round which represented a shortfall per annum of £100 million for the Group.
- (c) That the Russell Group voiced concerns about the announced 25 percent increase in subscription fees by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

71/12-13

QAA Institutional Review Draft Self-Evaluation Document

CONSIDERED:

The draft University self-evaluation document for the forthcoming QAA Institutional Review (SC.44/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the QAA Review Academic Co-ordinator)

- (a) That prior to the QAA Institutional Review in Spring 2013, the University was required to submit a self-evaluation document, which detailed how the University meets the Expectations of the UK Quality Code, together with a supporting evidence base.
- (b) That the QAA guidance placed great emphasis on the self-evaluation document in respect of guiding the scrutiny of the review team and that the guidance stated that the document should be factual in nature, with the supporting evidence serving to show the reflective and evaluative activities of the University regarding teaching and learning.
- (c) That identified areas for enhancement had been highlighted deliberately to further demonstrate the University's commitment to continual improvement and progression in this area.

(by the Registrar)

- (d) That it was important that the sources of supporting evidence and practice within the University community matched the confidence of some of the statements in the draft self-evaluation document.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That members forward any comments on the draft University self-evaluation document to the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), in particular notification of specific areas of national or sector best practice at the University for inclusion.
- (b) That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), QAA Review Academic Co-ordinator, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education (Innovation, Employability and Widening Participation) and the Director of Student Careers and Skills ensure that the current range and breadth of employability activities were reflected in the self-evaluation document.

The Milburn Report: 'University Challenge: How Higher Education Can Advance Social Mobility'

CONSIDERED:

The foreword and summary of the Milburn Report into social mobility and access to higher education published on 18 October 2012, together with the Russell Group response to the Report and an oral report by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education (Innovation, Employability and Widening Participation) (SC.43/12-13).

NOTE: A full version of report was made available online at:

<https://files.warwick.ac.uk/steeringcommittee/files/2012+10+29/SC.43.12-13+-+Milburn+Report+FULL.pdf>

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education (Innovation, Employability and Widening Participation))

- (a) That the Milburn Report sought to highlight the social inequalities around access to higher education and proposed some measures to Government for further social mobility within its higher education policies.
- (b) That some of the headline financial recommendations to Government in the Report were as follows:
 - (i) Rethink of funding framework by HEFCE
 - (ii) Review of the National Scholarship Programme (Warwick received £450k under this programme with additional matched funding)
 - (iii) Removal of fee waivers by universities as there was limited evidence to demonstrate that fee waivers made an impact on social mobility
- (c) That the forthcoming Academic Resourcing Committee Away Day would include discussion around widening participation.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (d) That he was concerned with the statement within the Report that financial support for students from challenging backgrounds had had little or no impact on social mobility or widening participation and that this statement should not be accepted as an absolute statement of fact, particularly given the lack of real evidence in this regard and the inconsistency of this message against other findings in the report including the reduction of mature students entering higher education since fees had been increased.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (e) That the Posse Foundation in the United States was a model to consider in terms of its approach to mentoring and supporting students from challenging backgrounds as a 'posse' through their higher education career and that the Foundation was making a difference in terms of retention.

(by the Registrar)

- (f) That, although it was noted that the School of Law and WBS operated schemes in the spirit of the Posse Foundation, it was important to take account of individual students' perception of themselves and not to overgeneralise, which could lead to further issues and challenges.

- (g) That it was unclear as to what would happen now that the Milburn Report had been published but that the University should respond to those elements which fit organically into the University's own programme of widening participation, access and institutional growth, not solely as a reaction to political intervention.

73/12-13

Major Research Proposal: Centre for Multiscale Biosystems Engineering

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Schools of Life Sciences and Engineering and the Warwick Mathematics Institute for an EPSRC Centre for Multiscale Biosystems Engineering (SC.40/12-13).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the proposal was strongly aligned with EPSRC strategic priorities.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (b) That she supported the strategic linking of the Schools of Engineering and Life Sciences and Warwick Mathematics Institute as it would strengthen and expose significant existing strengths in the area of synthetic biology.

(by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (c) That there was a need to ensure that emerging research centres were aware of the expectations of sustainability and return on University contribution that were required for the establishment of any new University Research Centre and that the mechanisms and conditions for this were being considered by the University Research Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to submit a bid to establish an EPSRC Centre for Multiscale Biosystems Engineering be approved as set out in SC.40/12-13, subject to the following:

(i) That it be noted that the Schools of Life Sciences and Engineering and Warwick Mathematics Institute would cover the space for the researchers under this proposal within current space allocations.

(ii) That the academic appointments included in the proposal be reduced to a single academic appointment at Assistant Professor level with a 50:50 split between the two Schools, subject to the EPSRC and Academic Resourcing Committee approval.

(iii) That the Schools must identify a funding stream for the two studentships proposed for the School of Life Sciences.

- (b) That the Deputy Vice-Chancellor work with the Schools of Life Sciences and Engineering and Warwick Mathematics Institute to finalise the proposal prior to submission by 31 October 2012 deadline.

- (c) That the Head of Governance Support Services ensure that the proposal be highlighted to the Research Committee as part of its remit to oversee and monitor the performance of University research centres, and that should the EPSRC proposal be successful, the appropriate process be followed to approve the Centre for Multiscale Biosystems Engineering.

74/12-13

Membership of Senate Committees

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the nomination of Dr Jonathan Vickery to serve on the Board of Undergraduate Studies as the member of the Board of Graduate Studies as appointed by the Senate be approved.
- (b) That the appointment of Professor Nadine Holdsworth to serve on the Academic Quality and Standards Committee as the member of the Senate from the Faculty of Arts be noted.
- (c) That the following appointments to a number of Senate committees further to the recent Students' Union elections be noted:
 - (i) The appointment of Ms Anna Chowcat (Students' Union Postgraduate Officer), to serve on the Academic Quality and Standards Committee as one of two students appointed by the Students' Union.
 - (ii) The appointment of Ms Nese CerenTosun (Theatre and Performance Studies), to serve on the Board of the Faculty of Arts as the postgraduate student member.
 - (iii) The appointment of Ms Nese CerenTosun (Theatre and Performance Studies), to serve on the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Arts as the student representative.
 - (iv) The appointment of Mr Christopher Drake (Warwick Manufacturing Group), to serve on the Board of the Faculty of Science as the postgraduate student member.
 - (v) The appointment of Mr Christopher Drake (Warwick Manufacturing Group), to serve on the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science as the student representative.
 - (vi) The appointment of Ms Oluwasimisola Salau (Law), to serve on the Board of the Faculty of Social Science as the postgraduate student member.
 - (vii) The appointment of Ms Oluwasimisola Salau (Law), to serve on the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Science as the student representative.
 - (viii) The appointment of Ms Laura Glenny (History), to serve on the Art Collection Committee as the student representative.
 - (ix) The appointment of Mr Louis Waterman-Evans (Economics), to serve on the Environment and Amenities Committee as one of two student members (appointed by the Students' Union).

75/12-13

Aggressive Behaviour towards University and Students' Union Staff and other students

RESOLVED:

That further to a number of recent incidents, support be given to a joint Students' Union and University campaign on violence and aggression to other students and to staff and that the Committee voice a clear resolve that where a student or staff member was found to have behaved in this way that the incident be taken seriously and appropriate action taken.

KS/JF/Steering/Minutes/2012-13/29-10-2012