

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 31 August 2010

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Winstanley
Mr D Stevens.

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor L Bridges, Professor A Caesar, Director of Estates,
Director of Development, Communications and Strategy.

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Head of
Governance Support Services Executive Officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer
(Governance).

752/09-10 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2010 be approved.

753/09-10 Responses to Ofcom Consultation on Online Copyright Infringement and the Digital Economy Act (minute 730/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

The Universities UK and University of Warwick responses to the recent Ofcom consultation on online copyright infringement and the Digital Economy Act (SC.505/09-10).

RESOLVED:

That the JANET response to the Ofcom consultation be circulated to the Committee for information at a future meeting.

754/09-10 HEFCE CL 21/2010: Guiding Principles for International Activity (minute 738/09-10 refers)

RECEIVED:

HEFCE guiding principles for international activity (SC.510/09-10).

755/09-10 HESES Audit (minute 737/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the University had yet to receive the outcome of the recent institutional HESES audit and that the Committee would be informed of the outcome when received.

756/09-10 National Pay Negotiations (minute 731/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University had received advice from UCEA regarding the notification of dispute with the University by UCU and that a letter would be sent shortly from the Vice-Chancellor to UCU.

757/09-10 Consultations: Hutton Commission on Public Service Pensions and Fixed Retirement Age
(minute 736/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the University would respond to the consultation on the proposed phase out of the default retirement age by the deadline of 1 October 2010.
- (b) That the University had contributed to a sector-wide Employers Pensions Forum (EPF) response to the Hutton Commission on Fair Pay in the Public Sector.

RESOLVED:

That the EPF submission to the Hutton Commission on Fair Pay in the Public Sector be circulated to the Committee for information at a future meeting.

758/09-10 International Institute for Product and Service Innovation (minute 740/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the University would submit a bid to Advantage West Midland for funding to establish an International Institute for Product and Service Innovation (IIPSI), it being noted that the submission would highlight outstanding issues of concern including some contractual terms and the period of restrictive use of the building.

759/09-10 Student Admissions

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That, as the Committee had been previously informed, the tolerance band for student recruitment within the HEFCE contract was very tight for the coming academic year, with a range of only 100 students between the minimum and maximum levels permitted for Home/EU intake and that HEFCE would impose a financial penalty per FTE for over or under recruitment.
- (b) That, according to current data, Mathematics was experiencing a significant overshoot of c. 70 Home/EU students despite employing mitigating measures throughout in the admissions cycle and that the newly established School of Life Sciences was also on course to exceed target.
- (c) That the potential overshoot in Life Sciences could result in significant issues with regards to practical teaching accommodation and that contingency measures were being actively explored.
- (d) That the usual contingency measures for student accommodation were in place, including access to resident tutoring provision for those students placed in off-campus accommodation.
- (e) That the University's final admissions position would be confirmed in October 2010 and that there was a risk that the University as a whole would overshoot, it being acknowledged, however, that the actual admission numbers might be lower due to students deferring entry to a different year or not taking up their place.
- (f) That the quality of applicants had been extremely high.

760/09-10 Summer Events on Campus and Beyond

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That he wished to extend his thanks to those colleagues involved in the organisation of events and activities on campus and beyond, including amongst others, the IGGY U in Botswana and the Teach First conference.

761/09-10 Consultations Related to Human Resources Activities

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That a University response was being prepared to the consultation on the implications of the Framework Agreement for submission by the deadline of 10 September 2010.
- (b) That proposals relating to changes in pension tax relief had been circulated for comment by HMRC and the Treasury and that the University had contributed to the Employers Pensions Forum response.
- (c) That the Vice-Chancellor had received correspondence from the HEFCE Chief Executive reinforcing the Vice-Chancellor's responsibilities as the University's accountable officer as set out in the revised HEFCE Financial Memorandum effective from 1 August 2010 and that the Financial Memorandum and this latest correspondence would be considered by the University Audit Committee and the Council at their next meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the Employers Pensions Forum response to the HMRC/Treasury consultation on proposed changes to pension tax relief be circulated to the Committee for information at its next meeting.

762/09-10 Advantage West Midlands Funding: Science City Project (minute 701/09-10 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That, as previously reported, the University was in negotiations with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) regarding the future funding levels for University projects as AWM sought to respond to budgetary reductions.
- (b) That the University was seeking to limit funding reduction on the Science City projects and that to ensure that such reductions were conditional on the swift resolution by AWM of a number of outstanding contractual issues.

763/09-10 UCU and NUS National Demonstration: "Fund our Future - Stop Education Cuts"

RECEIVED:

Notification of a joint UCU/NUS national demonstration against funding cuts to be held on 10 November (SC.513/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

- (a) That the Warwick Students' Union was publicising the demonstration amongst the student body and that a large show of support was anticipated.
- (b) That the Students' Union would launch a 'sponsor a student' scheme where staff could anonymously fund a student to attend to the demonstration and that he hoped that the University would support this scheme.

(By the Registrar)

- (c) That the University would not usually lend its name to such activities but staff were free to attend subject to the operation of the University not being affected.

764/09-10

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Regional Growth Fund (RGF) (minute 679/09-10 refers)

- (a) UUK I-Note I/2010/063 and Status on Regional LEP Proposals

RECEIVED:

A UUK I –Note Information regarding LEPs and the RGF, together with a note from the University's Head of Business Relations on the status of regional LEP proposals (SC.508/09-10).

- (b) Draft Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership Proposal

RECEIVED:

The final draft of the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership proposal to be considered by the Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Board on 31 August 2010 (SC.520/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (i) That the deadline for proposals to be submitted to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) was 6 September 2010 and that the University had been given the opportunity to contribute to the proposal.
- (ii) That the proposal sought to protect the arrangements and activities already in existence in the region and but perhaps it lacked the business leadership BIS was expecting.
- (iii) That Solihull was partnering with Birmingham (see item 773/09-10 below) and that the University had not been invited to contribute to the development of that proposal but was engaged in a limited manner via the Science City project.

(By the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (iv) That, in addition to the LEP and once things became clearer, the University must focus on the body which would take on the national responsibility for innovation.

- (c) Draft University Response to Regional Growth Fund Consultation

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the consultation on the Regional Growth Fund announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in June 2010 (SC.521/09-10).

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the draft University response as set out in SC.521/09-10 be provided to UUK to inform its sector response, noting that the draft would be further revised prior to submission to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills by the deadline of 6 September 2010.
- (ii) That the draft University response as set out in SC.521/09-10 be approved for submission to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills by the deadline of 6 September 2010, subject to the inclusion of further examples of how universities might contribute to the local industrial economy.

765/09-10 Academy of Medical Sciences Review of Research Governance and Regulation: Second Call for Evidence

RECEIVED:

The University response to the second call for evidence in the Academy of Medical Sciences review of research governance and regulation (SC.518/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University had shared its response as set out in SC.518/09-10 with the Medical Schools Council and a number of charitable research bodies and would provide the response to UUK following the meeting of the Committee.

766/09-10 E/2010/08: European Commission Survey on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Protection and Enforcement in Third Countries

CONSIDERED:

A Europe Unit note encouraging institutions to participate in the European Commission's new survey regarding IPR protection and enforcement in third countries (SC.511/09-10).

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar and the Director of Warwick Ventures consider whether the University should respond to the survey by the deadline of 31 October 2010, noting that currently the institution had not experienced the specific types of infringements being analysed.

767/09-10 EPSRC Letter – Invitation to Feedback on Framework University Arrangements

CONSIDERED:

A letter sent by the Chief Executive of the EPSRC, Professor David Delpy, to the Vice-Chancellor inviting feedback on the current framework university arrangements by 13 September 2010 (SC.506/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That he and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors for research were preparing a detailed response for submission by the deadline.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the EPSRC request for feedback on the current framework university arrangements be circulated to members for information at a future meeting.

768/09-10 HEFCE Letter – Changes to Capital Funding

RECEIVED:

Notification from HEFCE on changes to the University's capital allocations through to February 2011 (SC.501/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the figures indicated slightly more clawback on funding than expected but that the overall position was acceptable.

769/09-10 HEFCE- Meeting the Information Needs of Users of Public Information about HE

CONSIDERED:

Information concerning the publication of two reports exploring how provision and use of information about HE might be improved to enhance potential students' ability to make informed choices about courses and institutions and the development of the National Student Survey, together with the executive summaries of each of the reports (SC.502/09-10).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

- (a) That the report regarding information provision and the use of this information in potential students' choices was, in his opinion, poorly framed and appeared to disregard sources of information already available and highly used by applicants and their supporters.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

- (b) That the information sources proposed within the report sought to evaluate courses from a 'value for money' perspective and appeared to be based on an assumption of increased fee levels with supporters and parents of students being the targeted audience for the information.

(By the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That it was widely acknowledged that sites which were market-driven rather than operated by Government or HEIs were felt to be the most useful by potential students.
- (d) That the sector had expected the drive towards enhanced information provision by institutions but the concern would be whether the infrastructure set out in the report was appropriate.
- (e) That the report regarding potential development of the NSS recommended the use of NSS data by the QAA which could be beneficial for trend analysis but was not intended to be used as an annual snapshot.

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar write to the Chair of the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group (HEPISG) which commissioned both reports to raise the University's concerns regarding the proposed infrastructure for information provision.

- 770/09-10 OFFA: Access Agreement Monitoring Report 2008/09
- RECEIVED:
- Notification from OFFA on the outcomes of the monitoring of the University's access agreement, including the executive summary of the OFFA monitoring report and Russell Group comparison of expenditure on bursaries (SC.509/09-10).
- REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)
- (a) That the University had been working to manage an overshoot in expenditure of bursaries under the access agreement which was due to a higher than expected number of eligible students joining the University in recent years.
- (b) That the University would not be proposing any further amendments to its access agreement at this stage as student support was an area likely to be explored after the outcome of the Browne review into HE funding and student finance due in October 2010.
- 771/09-10 UUK Publication: Future of Research
- CONSIDERED:
- A UUK I-note and summary of recommendations from the UUK publication on the future of research (SC.512/09-10)
- Note: The full publication was made available to members and attendees on the files.warwick page: <https://files.warwick.ac.uk/steeringcommittee/browse#2010+08+31>
- RESOLVED:
- That the report be forwarded to the Research Committee for consideration at its next meeting.
- 772/09-10 Professor Lee Bridges, Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies, and Mr Ken Sloan, Deputy Registrar
- RESOLVED:
- That the Committee record its sincere thanks and best wishes to Professor Lee Bridges and Mr Ken Sloan as they leave the University for their contributions in their roles as Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies and Deputy Registrar respectively.
- 773/09-10 Draft Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership Proposal
- RECEIVED:
- The draft proposal to create a Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, it being noted that it is intended that Warwick would be partly engaged in the proposed LEP via the Birmingham Science City initiative (SC.519/09-10).
- 774/09-10 University Response to FP7 consultation
- RECEIVED:
- Consultation documentation regarding the interim evaluation of the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) and the associated University response submitted by deadline of 27 August 2010 (SC.515/09-10).

- 775/09-10 I/2010/059: Student Charters and University of Warwick Response
- RECEIVED:
- UUK I-note informing of the work of the UUK Student Charter Working Group and seeking input from institutions on current local practice in this regard, together with the University's response (SC.514/09-10).
- 776/09-10 Science and Technology Committee Contribution to 2010 Spending Review
- RECEIVED:
- A press release regarding the Science and Technology Committee's contribution to the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, together with the Committee's letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (SC.503/09-10).
- 777/09-10 I/2010/060: Research Career Development and Transferable Skills Training
- RECEIVED:
- UUK I-Note regarding changes in the arrangements to support the career development and transferable skills training of researchers through the Research Councils (SC.504/09-10).
- 778/09-10 I/2010/066: Department of Health Review of 'Arms Length' Bodies (minute 744/09-10)
- RECEIVED:
- UUK I-Note regarding the Department of Health review of arms length bodies review of arms length bodies which set out the work to reduce bureaucracy launched in the recent white paper 'Equity and excellence; liberating the NHS' (SC.507/09-10).
- 779/09-10 I/2010/065: Economic Migration Limits Consultation Events for HEIs (minute 703/09-10 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- An invitation from Universities UK, GuildHE and UCEA for HEIs to attend consultation events to be held on 2 September 2010 to inform responses to the UKBA and Migration Advisory Committee consultations on the structure and scale of limits on economic migration to the UK (SC.499/09-10).

JFB/jf/steersshare/minutes/2009-2010/Aug10/31Aug10