

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Open Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 15 June 2015

Present: Professor Sir Nigel Thrift (Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair)), Professor R Ball (Chair of the Faculty of Science), Professor M Freely (Chair of the Faculty of Arts) Professor Christina Hughes (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)), Professor Christopher Hughes (Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences), Professor T Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine)), Professor S Swain (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Arts and Social Sciences)), Ms C Turhan (President of the Students' Union).

Apologies: Professor A Coats (Academic Vice-President (Monash-Warwick Alliance)), Professor S Croft (Provost), Professor J Palmowski (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Postgraduate and Transnational Education)), Professor M Taylor (Dean of the Warwick Business School), Professor P Thomas (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Public Engagement)), Professor P Winstanley (Chair of the Faculty of Medicine), Professor L Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources)).

In Attendance: Mr J Breckon (Director of Estates), Dr G Carden (Director (Management Information and Planning) for item 321/14-15), Ms R Drinkwater (Group Finance Director), Dr M Glover (Academic Registrar), Dr E Hough (Assistant Registrar, Governance (Assistant Secretary)), Professor D Lamburn (for item 326/14-15), Mr I Leigh (President-elect (Students' Union), for item 324/14-15), Ms Yvonne Salter-Wright (Director of Delivery Assurance, for item 326/14-15), Mr K Sloan (Registrar and Chief Operating Officer (Secretary)), Mrs R Wooldridge Smith (Deputy Academic Registrar).

310/14-15 Apologies and Conflicts of Interest

311/14-15 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the open and restricted minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2015 be approved.

312/14-15 Mayor of London officially opens WBS London at The Shard

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That on 2 June 2015, The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, had officially opened Warwick Business School's new base at The Shard.
- (b) That Mr Johnson had unveiled a glass sculpture to commemorate the event.

313/14-15 Australian High Commissioner Visit

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the Hon. Alexander Downer AC, the Australian High Commissioner to the UK, visited the region on 27 May 2015 to attend the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of Sir Henry Parkes.
- (b) That the plaque was unveiled at Sir Henry Parkes' original home at Moat House Cottage in Canley.

- (c) That Sir Henry became a significant and much loved Australian politician and businessman who served as a Premier of New South Wales and was still referred to by Australians as the "Father of Federation".
- (d) That while in Coventry, the High Commissioner also visited the Warwick campus with the newly-appointed Lord Mayor Councillor Michael Hammon and Sheila Woolf, Chair of the Stoneleigh History Society.

314/14-15 The Queen's Garden Party

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That in recognition of the University's fiftieth anniversary, Warwick had received a record ten invitations for staff to join Her Majesty the Queen at Buckingham Palace garden parties this month, noting that the invitations had been shared among colleagues who were either approaching retirement after long periods of service at Warwick, or who had been in receipt of external awards for outstanding performance.
- (b) That those members of staff who had attended the event had enjoyed it immensely.

315/14-15 Interdisciplinary Research Event at The Shard

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That on 15 May 2015, The Institute of Advanced Study had successfully launched its first annual symposium, themed around "The Future of Interdisciplinary Research", at Warwick's presence in The Shard.
- (b) That some 104 University events had so far been hosted at The Shard, in addition to those associated with Warwick Business School.

316/14-15 Research Showcase Event

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That on 10 June 2015, the University had hosted a showcase of postgraduate research, including a poster competition and the live final of the University's first Three Minute Thesis competition.
- (b) That the Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) was a globally recognised research communication competition for doctoral students, founded by the University of Queensland.
- (c) That in the final, nine postgraduate researchers had competed for a £500 travel grant, noting that the prize had been won by Jocelyn Watkins from Warwick Medical School.

RESOLVED:

That congratulations be extended to Ms Watkins.

317/14-15 Rare Rising Star 2015

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That 2nd year PAIS student Stephanie Ifayemi had reached the final ten nominations for the 2015 Rare Rising Star Awards.
- (b) That Rare aimed to develop the talents and abilities of young undergraduates and graduates, in particular those from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, noting that Ms Ifayemi had been nominated in recognition of her work as the President of the Warwick International Development Society.

RESOLVED:

That congratulations be extended to Ms Ifayemi.

318/14-15 Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards

- (a) That Warwick had received three nominations for the THE Leadership and Management Awards, noting that these were for: Outstanding Administrative Services Team; Outstanding Finance Team; and Outstanding Student Admissions Team.
- (b) That winners would be announced at an awards ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel, London on 18 June 2015.

RESOLVED:

That thanks be extended to all those members of staff who had helped the University to secure these nominations.

319/14-15 Cheltenham Science Festival

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That Warwick's participation in the Cheltenham Science Festival held on 2-7 June 2015 had been highly successful, noting that it was deemed very worthwhile to continue this activity in future years.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the thanks of the Committee be extended to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (People and Public Engagement) for her role in coordinating the event.
- (b) That thanks also be extended to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources), the University Events Manager (External Affairs), and all those individuals in academic departments who had contributed to the success of this engagement.

320/14-15 50th Anniversary Event in Brussels

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the third of Warwick's 50th anniversary international events had taken place in Brussels on 9-10 June 2015, led by the Global Research Priorities programmes and bringing together Warwick and Brussels' experts working in the field of Food and Global Governance.

- (b) That the event had been a great success, with a very high turnout.

RESOLVED:

That thanks be extended to the Head of Research Strategy and Development, Dr Rosemary Collier (Life Sciences), Dr James Harrison (Law), and Mr R Bromley (Regional KTP Advisor) for their contribution to the success of the event.

321/14-15 *Rankings Update

RECEIVED:

A presentation from the Director (Strategic Planning and Analytics), providing an update on rankings from the Complete University Guide and the Guardian University Guide.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the information contained in the presentation be noted.
- (b) That the Strategic Planning and Analytics Office departmental consultation process be continued.

322/14-15 *Fees Working Group Update

CONSIDERED:

A report informing the Committee of the Fee Working Group's main items of business from their meetings on 12 February and 1 April 2015 (SC.148/14-15, {restricted}).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the key points of discussion from the meetings of the Fees Working Group held on 12 February and 1 April 2015 be noted.
- (b) That approval of the recommendation pertaining to the MSc in Big Data and Digital Futures be deferred, pending further consideration of the insurance, VAT and licensing implications of providing each student with a laptop.
- (c) That with the exception of the MSc in Big Data and Digital Futures, the recommendations for the 2016/17 standard and non-standard fees levels, as set out in paper SC.148/14-15, be approved.
- (d) That the Chair of the Fees Working Group consider the option of having both open and reserved agendas for future its meetings, noting that this would then enable a Students' Union representative to become a permanent member of the Group.
- (e) That the Fees Working Group continue to explore mechanisms that would enable transparency around fee setting to be enhanced.

323/14-15 OFFA Report on Outcomes of Access Agreement Monitoring for 2013-14

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Office for Fair Access on the monitoring of access agreements for the academic year 2013/14 (SC.149/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (a) That there had been a general shift towards access agreement expenditure being directed towards activity and away from financial support.
- (b) That OFFA wanted to see more institutions evaluating the impact of their access agreement activities on student behaviour, noting that this was already well embedded within Warwick's widening participation strategy.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That Warwick's successes in meeting previous targets meant that it would need to rebase these to ensure that they remained challenging.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report, including the outcomes pertaining the University, be noted.
- (b) That a report updating the Steering Committee on work in this area be brought to a future meeting.

324/14-15 Students' Union Proposal for a Warwick Welcome Week

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Students' Union to hold a Warwick Welcome Week for all students before the start of the teaching term (SC.150/14-15).

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

- (a) That the Students' Union had first sought to establish a policy on a week free from teaching at the beginning of the academic year, in 2009.
- (b) That research presented in the Student Careers and Skills Undergraduate Induction Report, indicated that a significant proportion of students felt overwhelmed and pressured during their first week at the University, noting that there was also a significant variation across academic departments in the number of contact hours during this week.
- (c) That there was a high level of interest among undergraduates in having a week free of academic commitments during induction.
- (d) That the proposal offered a positive opportunity for all incoming students to become acquainted with the wider University, including its central service departments.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (e) That the creation of a Postgraduate Welcome Week in 2014 had made this a timely subject for discussion.
- (f) That two options had been considered in depth, noting that the preferred option would involve holding the welcome week during what is currently scheduled to be week 1 (rather than week 0) and moving teaching so that term ends one week later than at present.
- (g) That the preferred option would minimise the cost to students, minimise the loss of conference income and would enable the programme of summer estates maintenance and refurbishment to be completed.
- (h) That the preferred option would also protect academic research time during the summer vacation, noting that this would potentially be affected by the option of holding Welcome Week in week 0.
- (i) That the proposal did not entail any requirement for academic staff time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the recommendation to begin a process of further consultation with faculties be approved, subject to initial conversations between the Students' Union and Faculty Chairs, in order to identify the most appropriate mode of consultation for each faculty.
- (b) That the consultation also look to engage with universities that offer a similar form of induction activity, in order to learn what does and does not work.
- (c) That the findings of the consultation be used to inform the development of a revised proposal for consideration at a future meeting.

325/14-15

Competition and Markets Authority: Advice on Consumer Protection Law to UK Higher Education Providers

CONSIDERED:

A paper setting out headline information from the Consumer Markets Authority compliance advice relating to Consumer Protection Law and UK Higher Education providers (SC.151/14-15).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That consumer protection law would apply to the relationship between HE providers and current and prospective undergraduate students, noting that the CMA advised that it may also apply to other categories of student.
- (b) That the guidance highlighted the need for HE providers to i) provide clear and accurate information; ii) have fair terms and conditions that could not disadvantage students and iii) maintain clear and accessible complaints handling processes.
- (c) That the provision of pre-course information needed to be accurate, balanced and durable, noting that this would form part of the contract with the student.

- (d) That the CMA guidance on fees and other cost increases, emphasised the need for transparency and timeliness in communication with students.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (e) That the relationship between the CMA and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator was unclear, noting that it was conceivable they could cover similar ground, with the former also potentially having involvement with matters that could fall within the realm of academic judgment.
- (f) That the CMA guidance obliged all members of staff who produced content for the institution to be accountable for the clarity and accuracy thereof.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the recommendation to add the CMA guidance as a distinct item to the institutional risk register be approved.
- (b) That the recommendation to establish a working group to take forward a programme to address the requirements outlined by the CMA be approved.
- (c) That the CMA guidance be raised with the Russell Group Registrars, noting that greater clarity with respect to the date from which compliance would take effect, as well as the respective remits of the CMA and the OIA, would be beneficial.

326/14-15 *Erasmus Plus Exchange Programme

CONSIDERED:

A paper presenting the options and associated risks of the University's response to changes in the requirements set out in the Erasmus Plus Charter (SC.152/14-15, {restricted}).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal to introduce credit transfer for the year abroad and intercalated year be implemented in 2016/17, rather than in 2015/16, be approved, noting that this was the most pragmatic approach given the volume of work required.
- (b) That a paper be brought to the Steering Committee early in the 2015/16 academic year, outlining the various ongoing strands of teaching quality process work that were associated with degree structuring.

326/14-15 Student Discipline Framework Review

CONSIDERED:

A paper outlining proposed revisions to Regulations 23 (Student Disciplinary Offences), 27 (Residential Accommodation) and 36 (Continuation of Registration), as well as matters relating to the review of the Student Discipline Framework (SC.153/14-15)

REPORTED: (by the Director of Delivery Assurance)

- (a) That in developing the proposed revisions, significant discussions with relevant teams across the institution had taken place.
- (b) That the proposals were intended to ensure that the Framework supported a safe, positive and productive living and learning environment for the University community, underpinned by clear guidance on expected behaviours.
- (c) That the proposals provided greater alignment and enhanced parity and proportionality across the Framework.
- (d) That there had been a significant increase in the number and complexity of student disciplinary cases, noting that work would also continue to provide staff and students with clear and transparent guidance on related protocols, as well as the wider support mechanisms available to them.
- (e) That the work relating to policy on mitigating circumstances would be forthcoming.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (f) That the proposals were welcome, noting in particular that the Fitness to Study protocol was an important new policy area.

(by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer)

- (g) That the current structures and processes for dealing with student disciplinary cases had not been designed for the increased volume, noting that these should now be reviewed during the coming year.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (h) That the Students' Union had welcomed the opportunity to feed into consultations on the proposals, noting that they looked forward to continuing this engagement in shaping how the revisions were communicated to the student community.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the language in Regulation 36, Section 4, paragraph C be reviewed, to ensure that it could not be misconstrued if read out of context.
- (b) That subject to the above revisions, the proposals as set out in paper SC.153/14-15 be recommended to the Senate for approval.

327/14-15

Senate Business

CONSIDERED:

The items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 29 June 2015.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Academic Registrar)

- (a) That the 2015/16 Budget and the Provisional University Financial Plan were the main strategic items for discussion at the meeting.
- (b) That a meeting on the University Complaints Framework was scheduled for later that day, noting that the associated paper (S.65/14-15) might therefore change before the meeting of the Senate on 29 June 2015.
- (c) That under Senate agendum 12, a number of reports were still to follow, noting that the meetings themselves had not yet taken place.
- (d) That a ballot for the election of a representative of the Assembly to membership of the Senate would close on 24 June.
- (e) That the next meeting of the Senate would be 12 October 2015 and not 30 September as stated on the Senate Agenda.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the appointments of the Vice-Chancellor and President as a Trustee of the Higher Education Policy Institute, and of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine) to the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, be added to the paper setting out awards and distinctions conferred upon members of the University (S.73/14-15).
- (b) That subject to the minor additions detailed above, the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 29 June 2015 be approved, as set out in the papers circulated for consideration by Senate Steering.

328/14-15 Universities UK Statement Regarding Academic Boycotts and Academic Freedom

RECEIVED:

The Universities UK statement regarding academic boycotts and academic freedom (SC.154/14-15), noting that this reiterated UUK's opposition to academic boycotts on the basis that they were inimical to academic freedom, including the freedom of academics to collaborate with other academics.

329/14-15 Universities UK Response to the Consultation on Support for Postgraduate Study

RECEIVED:

A paper detailing Universities UK's response to the consultation on support for postgraduate study (SC.155/14-15), noting that this welcomed the government's proposals to provide support for postgraduate students and supported the government's recognition of the substantial benefits arising from postgraduate taught and postgraduate research education, both to the individual and to the wider public.

RECEIVED:

A paper detailing Universities UK's response to the Nurse Review call for evidence (SC.156/14-15), noting that this had identified a number of features fundamental to the continued success of UK science research and identified government objectives in this area of policy to be i) setting an overarching strategic framework to support and deliver excellence, and ii) the articulation and delivery of an ambitious, competitive and sustainable plan for long-term investment in the research base.