

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 3 October 2005

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor S Bassnett
Professor L Bridges
Professor A Caesar
Professor J Jones
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Luntley
Professor M Smith
Ms K Stark
Professor H Thomas
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Y Carter, Professor I Lauder, Director of Estates.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Acting Director of Finance, Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Director of Personnel, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 23/05-06 the Project Manager, Singapore Feasibility Study; for items 24/05-06 to 26/05-06 the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality).

18/05-06 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2005 be approved.

19/05-06 Visit of the Director-General for Higher Education (minute 4/05-06 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the visit of the Director-General for Higher Education to the University, scheduled to be held on 5 October 2005, had been further postponed and that alternative dates for the visit were currently being sought.

20/05-06 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Academic Registrar on the latest position in regard to home and overseas undergraduate and postgraduate admissions for the academic year 2005/06.

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That a shortfall in overseas undergraduate student numbers against budget plan was expected due to an increase in no-shows.
- (b) That the increase in no-shows appeared to be symptomatic of a general trend across the sector and might be attributed to changing market factors as well as the impact of the 7 July bombings in London.
- (c) That University data on home and overseas undergraduate and postgraduate intake projections against budget plan would be circulated for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Academic Registrar undertake the following with a view to bringing forward a report for consideration by the Steering Committee in the near future:

- (a) further investigation into the reasons for students who had accepted offers of places failing to enrol;
- (b) analysis of the University's international student profile against that of other UK HEIs.

21/05-06 Sunday Times University Guide

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University had been placed 6th in the Sunday Times University Guide published on 2 October 2005, an improvement of one place on the 2004 guide.

22/05-06 Times Higher Awards

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That Dr Julie MacPherson from the Department of Chemistry had been shortlisted for the Young Researcher of the Year Award in the 2005 Times Higher Awards.

23/05-06 Warwick in Asia

CONSIDERED:

A draft letter to the Economic Development Board of Singapore (EDB) prepared by the Singapore Project Office in consultation with Latham and Watkins (Singapore) on issues of academic freedom and campus governance (SC.12/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft letter to the EDB on issues of academic freedom and campus governance be approved as set out in paper SC.12/05-06 subject to amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting.
- (b) That, should the University proceed to establish a second campus in Singapore, it was the view of the Committee that any governance and decision-making model for the Singapore campus should provide for student representation on decision making bodies on the same basis as that which obtains at Warwick in Coventry.

24/05-06 Post-Qualification Applications: Consultation Paper (minute 2/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The consultation paper 'Improving the Higher Education Applications Process' and a press release from Universities UK (SC.435/04-05) together with a summary paper prepared by the Academic Registrar (SC.15/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it was the view of the Committee that the overall proposals set out in the consultation paper 'Improving the Higher Education Applications Process' did not address the underlying and significant issues of concern relating to the current procedures for admission into UK HE.
- (b) That the University's response to the consultation paper be general, robust and critical but also provide specific responses to selected consultation questions, as discussed at the meeting.
- (c) That the Academic Registrar bring forward a draft institutional response to the consultation paper in line with (b) above for consideration by the Steering Committee by 1 November, with a view to submission of the final response to the DfES by the deadline of 5 December 2005.

25/05-06 Degree Classifications and Credit Proposals

CONSIDERED:

A press release from Universities UK on the launch of two consultations by the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group on the future of the degree classification system and the development of a national credit framework for England (SC.11/05-06) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor {Teaching and Learning})

That a proposal to remove degree classifications from University degree certificates would be considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee during the Autumn Term.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the three-point degree classification system proposed in the consultation document on the future of the degree classification framework in England, 'UK Honours Degree: Provision of Information' be supported.
- (b) That the consultation document on the future of the degree classification system and the consultation document on the development of a national credit framework, 'Proposals for National Credit Arrangements for the use of Academic Credit in Higher Education in England', be circulated for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.

26/05-06 Periodic Review and Quinquennial Departmental Review Processes
(minute 591/04-05 refers)

CONSIDERED:

Proposals for changes to the operation of the University's arrangements for the conduct of Periodic and Quinquennial Reviews of academic departments (SC.13/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposals for changes to the operation of Periodic and Quinquennial Reviews of academic departments be approved as set out in paper SC.13/05-06.
- (b) That the University Secretary and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) discuss appropriate mechanisms for managing the time commitment of external reviewers to the new periodic review and quinquennial departmental review processes.

27/05-06 'Payment by Degrees' Campaign: Explaining the 2006 Student Finance System

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/05/137 on the UUK 'Payment by Degrees' information campaign to publicise new student finance arrangements for 2006 (SC.17/05-06).

28/05-06 Senate Committees

RESOLVED:

That Professor Whitby liaise with the University Secretary to identify a member of academic staff for appointment to the Information Policy and Strategy Committee to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Professor Jones from the Committee, with a view to bringing forward a nomination for consideration by the Steering Committee, on behalf of the Senate, at its next meeting.

29/05-06 Coming-Up Weekend: Letter of Congratulations

RECEIVED:

A copy of a letter to the Vice-Chancellor from the parent of a new student conveying thanks and congratulations for the smooth and efficient running of the University's arrangements for the reception and enrolment of students during Coming-Up Weekend (SC.16/05-06).

30/05-06 Indoor Tennis Centre

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on the proposal that the University build an indoor tennis centre on the Westwood campus with support from the Lawn Tennis Association and the local community.

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the proposed indoor tennis centre would require £900k in funding from the University against a total approximate build cost of £1.8m but was expected to be operationally self-financing.
- (b) That discussions were currently taking place with the Lawn Tennis Association in regard to the periodic use of the floor space within the proposed centre for alternative purposes.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee support in principle and recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee the proposed construction of an indoor tennis centre on the Westwood campus with investment from University funds of £900k.

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