

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 4 December 2006

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor L Bridges
Professor A Caesar
Mr B Duggan
Professor J Jones
Professor R Lindley (from item 156/06-07)
Professor M Luntley
Professor S B Palmer

Apologies: Professor Y Carter, Professor M Smith, Professor H Thomas, Professor M Whitby.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Communication, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Deputy Registrar, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 160/06-07 the Director of WHRI, for item 161/06-07 the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, for item 164/06-07 the Director of CAPD.

151/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2006 be approved subject to the inclusion of the Deputy Registrar in the list of those in attendance at the meeting.

152/06-07 RAE Steering Group Membership (minute 89/06-07 refers)

RESOLVED:

That Professor Baz Kershaw be appointed to the membership of the University RAE Steering Group to fill the vacancy occasioned by the absence on study leave of Professor A McFarlane in the academic year 2006/07.

153/06-07 Student Financial Support (minute 130(b)/06-07 refers)

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary and the Registrar)

That proposals in regard to the University's overall provision of financial support for all students would be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee following the outcome of discussions with OFFA on the scope for making significant changes to the University's Access Agreement within the five-year period for which the Agreement had been approved.

154/06-07 DfES Guidance on Extremism (minute 139/06-07 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the guidance document recently published by the Minister for Higher Education on tackling violent extremism on University campuses would be circulated for the information of members of the Steering Committee following official distribution of the document by the DfES to all Heads of higher education institutions.

- 155/06-07 Dearing Review of Languages (minute 138/06-07 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts)
- That a meeting of the University's Modern Languages Committee was scheduled to take place later in the day to discuss proposals for action in response to Lord Dearing's suggestion for intervention by HEIs in the take-up of languages in secondary schools and that the proposals would shortly be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- 156/06-07 Email Replacement Project Update
- RECEIVED:
- A copy of the draft special edition of the Email Project Newsletter to be published in the week commencing 4 December 2006 (tabled at the meeting) together with an oral report from the Registrar.
- 157/06-07 Select Committee Inquiry
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee was undertaking an inquiry into the future and purpose of the higher education sector, the deadline for submissions of written evidence for which was 18 December 2006.
- 158/06-07 USS and Early Retirements
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That it was expected that an announcement would be made at the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) AGM on 7 December on significant proposed changes to the Scheme and in particular changes relating to the eligibility for early retirement.
- 159/06-07 Vote of Thanks: Deputy Registrar
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That this would be the last meeting of the Committee to be attended by Dr Paul Greatrix, Deputy Registrar, prior to taking up his new appointment as Registrar of the University of Nottingham.
- RESOLVED:
- That the Committee record its gratitude to Dr Greatrix for his valuable contribution to the work of the University during his period of dedicated service and its best wishes for his success in his new role.
- 160/06-07 WHRI Update and Quarter-End Update
- CONSIDERED:
- The 1st quarter statement from Warwick HRI for the financial year 2006/07 and a report providing an update on key recent developments at WHRI (SC.99/06-07) together with an oral report from the Director of WHRI.
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Finance)
- That the Acting Director of HR was taking steps to address the issues raised in paper SC.99/06-07 in regard to pensions arrangements for WHRI staff currently on legacy terms

with a view to resolving these issues under arrangements satisfactory to both the University and the affected members of staff.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 1st quarter statement for the Warwick HRI Devolved Budget for the financial year 2006/07 be noted and approved as set out in paper SC.99/06-07.
- (b) That the report from the feasibility study into the installation of a biotechnology incubator at WHRI be circulated for consideration at the next Science Cities meeting to be held on 11 December and that the Director of WHRI attend the meeting for discussion of this item.
- (c) That the development of the WHRI Wellesbourne site in the context of the University's overall strategic objectives and priorities for the development of the wider University estate be raised as an item for discussion at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

161/06-07 ARC Quarter-End Report

CONSIDERED:

The 1st quarter statement for non-devolved departmental budgets under the remit of the Academic Resourcing Committee for the financial year 2006/07 (SC.97/06-07) together with oral reports from the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and the Director of Finance.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 1st quarter statement for non-devolved departmental budgets under the remit of the Academic Resourcing Committee for the financial year 2006/07 be noted and approved as set out in paper SC.97/06-07.
- (b) That the importance of research grant and contract income on the future financial position and academic standing of the University be reinforced and that all academic departments be reminded of the need to increase the volume and size of research grants and contracts across the University in order to ensure that individual departmental targets for research grant and contract income and projected expenditure against targets are achieved.
- (c) That the Vice-Chancellor contact the Head of the Department of Biological Sciences to discuss the issues raised in paper SC.97/06-07 and in discussion at the meeting in regard to the significant shortfall in research income against target for the department.
- (d) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Director of Finance and the Director of Research Support Services bring forward a report on the research activity and income profile for all academic departments for consideration by the Steering Committee at its next meeting to be held on 11 December.

162/06-07 Academic Statistics

CONSIDERED:

A copy of the Academic Statistics document for the academic year 2006/07 together with an oral report from the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Academic and Student Affairs investigate further the issues raised in discussion at the meeting in regard to access to University facilities, including IT and Library

facilities, for students who have been granted temporary withdrawal from their courses of study.

163/06-07 Consultation Process on University Strategy (minute 126/06-07 refers)

RECEIVED:

A paper providing a summary of the proposed process for the engagement of staff and students and the generation of ideas in the ongoing consultation on the development of a strategy for the University's future direction and advancement (SC.105/06-07).

164/06-07 JISC Learner Experiences of e-Learning: Draft University Submission
(minute 95/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A draft bid from the Centre for Academic and Professional Development (CAPD) under the Learner Experiences of e-Learning theme of the JISC e-Learning Programme for funding to support a collaborative project with the University of Northumbria "Students' Blending Learning User Patterns" (SC.100/06-07) together with an oral report from the Director of CAPD.

RESOLVED:

That the draft bid from CAPD under the JISC e-Learning Programme be approved for submission to JISC by the deadline of 4 December 2006 as set out in paper SC.100/06-07 subject to ratification and approval of the financial element of the bid by Research Support Services and on the understanding that the issues raised at the meeting relating to the academic case and the host department for the proposed project would be addressed and resolved as soon as practicable.

165/06-07 UUK Consultation on HEFCE Employer Engagement Strategy

CONSIDERED:

UUK Information Note I/06/129 summarising key points in the HEFCE's employer engagement strategy "Engaging Employers with Higher Education" and requesting comments from HEIs to inform a UUK response to the proposed strategy together with a copy of the strategy document and the draft University response to the UUK (SC.103/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft University response to the UUK on the HEFCE Employer Engagement Strategy be approved as set out in paper SC.103/06-07 for submission to UUK by the deadline of 4 December 2006.
- (b) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), with support from the Teaching Quality Unit, prepare a separate letter to the HEFCE setting out the University's concerns, as expressed at the meeting, about the proposals for the potential large-scale intervention by the HEFCE in increasing the level of engagement between HEIs and employers.

166/06-07 Further Education and Training Bill

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/133 providing a summary of the key elements of and issues raised by the Further Education and Training Bill published by the Government on 21 November 2006 (SC.104/06-07).

167/06-07 Senate Business

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That he had been asked to attend a meeting on the afternoon of 6 December with the Secretary of State for Higher Education and Skills and a select group of Vice-Chancellors at which the Government's response to the recent consultation on the future of the RAE would be announced and that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor would therefore be chairing the meeting of the Senate on his behalf.

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 6 December 2006 be as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate.

168/06-07 RAE Equal Opportunities Code of Practice: Appeals Process

RESOLVED:

That the appeals procedure set out in the University RAE Equal Opportunities Code of Practice for staff excluded from the University's RAE submission on a basis they believe to be discriminatory be raised as an item for discussion at a future meeting of the Committee.