

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Senate Steering Committee held on 5 March 2007

- Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor L Bridges (until item 379/06-07)
Professor A Caesar
Professor Y Carter
Mr B Duggan
Professor J Jones
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Luntley
Professor S B Palmer
Professor M Smith
Professor H Thomas
Professor M Whitby
- Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Director of Warwick International.
- In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Communication, Director of Estates (until item 380/06-07),
Director of Finance, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 379/06-07 the
University Librarian, for items 380(d)/06-07 and 381/06-07 the School Secretary, Warwick
Medical School, for item 382/06-07 the Senior Assistant Registrar (Planning).
- 373/06-07 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2007 be approved.
- 374/06-07 2007 Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships (minute 214/06-07 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- An oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) providing an update on the submission of applications from the University for the 2007 Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship Scheme.
- 375/06-07 Coventry Business Improvement District (minute 337/06-07 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- (a) That the proposal for the establishment of the Coventry Business Improvement District had been approved in the formal ballot by a 53% majority vote as well as 54% of the rateable value of votes cast, noting that the ballot had had a 33.6% turnout and that the full implications of the ballot outcome for the University were currently awaited.
- (b) That there had been a £6m reduction in RDA funding for AWM arising from the recent adjustments in DTI budgets over the current spending review period.
- 376/06-07 National Student Survey
- REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor {Teaching and Learning})
- That the University's institutional response rate to the 2007 National Student Survey had shown a marked decline from 18% during the initial survey period to 8% as of the second census date on 28 February and that the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality)

would shortly be writing to all Heads of Departments to request that they take steps to encourage all eligible students in their departments to participate in the survey.

377/06-07 Revisions to Research Council Budgets (minute 360/06-07 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Research Support Services prepare a letter from the Vice-Chancellor to the Chancellor of the Exchequer conveying the University's serious concerns about the revisions to DTI budgets in the current spending review period and the significant consequent reductions in the end-of-year flexibility of Research Council budgets and that this letter be publicised to the University community via InSite.

378/06-07 Institute for Advanced Study (minute 334/06-07 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Professor Margot Finn had confirmed her willingness to be appointed as Interim Director of the Institute for Advanced Study, that the detailed terms and conditions of appointment to this position were currently being negotiated and that Professor Finn would remain Head of the Department of History during her term as Interim Director.

379/06-07 Wolfson Foundation CURL Library Programme (minute 228/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft full proposal to the Wolfson Foundation for funding under the second round of the Wolfson Library Programme for University libraries in membership of the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) to support the development within the Library of a flagship postgraduate research support facility (SC.251/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the draft full proposal to the Wolfson Foundation for funding under the Foundation's CURL Library Programme be amended along the lines discussed at the meeting and that the financial aspects of the proposal be developed further in consultation with the Director of Finance and brought back for consideration at the next meeting of the Steering Committee to be held on 12 March prior to submission of the final proposal to the Wolfson Foundation by the deadline of 16 March 2007.

380/06-07 Faculty Issues

(a) Faculty of Arts

RECEIVED:

A report on current developments and issues of concern within the Faculty of Arts, including Faculty Lunches; issues relating to research; and potential future transatlantic partnerships (SC.242/06-07) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the proposal set out in paper SC.242/06-07 for revisions to the format and content of future Faculty of Arts Lunches with a view to utilising this event as a platform for the presentation and discussion of research work from across all four Faculties, in particular interdisciplinary research, be approved.

- (ii) That the need for departments to increase the volume of applications submitted for large-scale research grants be raised as an item for discussion at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

(b) Faculty of Science

CONSIDERED:

A report providing an update on current developments and issues of concern within the Faculty of Science, including the progress of the Science Cities initiative, the call for bids for the next round of Science and Innovation Awards and issues relating to strategic planning for the space requirements associated with large-scale research bids; developments in postgraduate training provision and computer-aided assessment; and issues relating to IT (SC.243/06-07) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science.

REPORTED:

(by the Registrar)

- (i) That the issues identified in paper SC.243/06-07 concerning the need for alignment with the five-year financial plan of a strategic plan for the management and delivery of space requirements throughout the University had been raised in the recent Estates Office ASDAR and would be taken forward in line with the recommendations from this review.

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

- (ii) That funding for the further development of computer-aided assessment within the Faculty of Science might potentially be available through the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund and that possible allocations from this source would be explored.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science, with support from Research Support Services and in consultation with the Academic Resourcing Committee and relevant academic departments, take forward the development of outline bid proposals for funding under Round 4 of the EPSRC Science and Innovation Award Scheme with a view to bringing forward the University's draft submission for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to submission to the EPSRC by the deadline of 10 April 2007.

(c) Faculty of Social Studies

RECEIVED:

A report on current issues of concern within the Faculty of Social Studies, including issues relating to space pressures and research (SC.246/06-07) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies.

(d) Faculty of Medicine

CONSIDERED:

A report on current developments and issues of concern within the Faculty of Medicine, including Phase 1 examination results; the progress of development of the collaborative outline bid with the University of Birmingham for funding under the translational medicine strand of the Science Cities initiative; international developments and developments

relating to accommodation (SC.244/06-07) together with an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

REPORTED: (by the Dean of the Warwick Medical School)

That the draft partnership document for the strategic partnership agreement between the University and the Medical Research Council had been received and that Professor Martin Feelisch was being considered for a strategic appointment within the MRC (minute 263/06-07 refers).

RESOLVED:

That the Dean and the School Secretary of the Warwick Medical School continue to investigate the issues identified in paper SC.244/06-07 and in discussion at the meeting concerning the Phase 1 examination results for WMS students and that the School Secretary undertake a statistical analysis of the entry points and demographic profile for the student cohort concerned with a view to identifying any potential issues and implications for the University associated with the significant failure rate in this assessment.

381/06-07 Review of the Warwick Medical School (minute 358/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The Report of the Strategic Departmental Review of the Warwick Medical School (SC.225/06-07) together with the response of the School to the Review Report (SC.245/06-07) and an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the recommendations set out in the Report of the Strategic Departmental Review of the Warwick Medical School be approved by the Steering Committee and that the Dean of the Warwick Medical School and the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science report back to the Steering Committee by the beginning of the Summer term 2006/07 on the progress of implementation of the recommendations contained within the Review Report.
- (b) That the University Secretary and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) re-evaluate the current arrangements for Strategic Departmental Reviews to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility within the review process to take account of the volume of courses offered by larger departments in the context of the limited timeframe within which the review process is conducted.
- (c) That the University Secretary and the Academic Registrar discuss with the Dean of the Warwick Medical School and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) proposed arrangements for the conduct of a separate periodic review of the range of taught courses offered by the School to ensure that the quality assurance requirements of the University and the QAA are met.

382/06-07

Recurrent Funding 2007/08

CONSIDERED:

Notification from the HEFCE of the University's recurrent grant allocation for the academic year 2007/2008 together with a press release from the HEFCE and a paper prepared by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Planning) summarising the University's 2007/08 recurrent grant allocation and the implications of this settlement (SC.252/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That a working group be established to consider and recommend means by which the level of grant received by the University through the new Business Research element of QR funding might be increased, the proposed membership of this group to be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee at its next meeting to be held on 12 March 2007.

383/06-07

Delivery Partnership: Improving the Higher Education Applications Process

CONSIDERED:

UUK Information Note I/07/24 on the key elements of the second Progress Report from the Delivery Partnership Steering Group established by UUK and GuildHE to take forward the development of proposals for improvements to the higher education applications process together with a copy of the full Report (SC.249/06-07).

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

That the proposed reform of the higher education applications process would be an item for discussion at the next meeting of the Russell Group Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Teaching and Learning) and that he would report back to the Steering Committee on the outcome of discussions.

RESOLVED:

That the issues identified in relation to the proposed reforms to the higher education applications process be raised as an item for discussion during the visit of the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Steering Group to the University from 15 to 16 March 2007.

384/06-07

Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Steering Committee to be held on 12 March 2007 would be held at Warwick HRI Wellesbourne and that the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Officer would shortly be circulating details of meeting and transport arrangements.

385/06-07

Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business to be considered at the meeting of the Senate to be held on 14 March 2007 be as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate.

386/06-07 Anglo-Thai Society Educational Awards of Excellence 2006

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International Affairs and Equal Opportunities))

That Dr Nattavudh Powdthavee, a former doctoral student in the Department of Economics, and Ms Amornrat Aungwerojwit, a doctoral student in the Department of Physics, had received 2 out of the 5 available awards in the 2006 Anglo-Thai Society Educational Awards of Excellence.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee record its congratulations to Dr Powdthavee and Ms Aungwerojwit on their awards in the 2006 Anglo-Thai Society Educational Awards of Excellence.

387/06-07 Spending Review 2007: UUK Policy Briefing

RECEIVED:

A copy of the UUK Policy Briefing "Spending Review 2007: Securing the Future" (SC.247/06-07).

388/06-07 West Midlands Economic Strategy Consultation: University Response

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the 2006-07 West Midlands Economic Strategy Review (SC.248/06-07).

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08/03/07