

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 8 May 2006

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor L Bridges
Professor A Caesar
Professor J Jones
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Luntley
Professor S B Palmer
Professor M Smith
Ms K Stark (until item 475/05-06)
Professor H Thomas
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Professor Y Carter, Director of Personnel.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Registrar, University Secretary, Mrs H E Blunt, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 474/05-06 the Director of Warwick HRI, for item 475/05-06 the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School), for item 476/05-06 the Assistant Director of Personnel, for item 479/05-06 the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Planning), for item 480/05-06 Ms H Hutchings, for item 481/05-06 the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation.

469/05-06 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2006 be approved subject to the deletion of Professor M Smith from the list of members present at the meeting.

470/05-06 Business and Community: Third Stream as Second Mission (minute 463/05-06 refers)

REPORTED:

(by the Registrar)

(a) That a letter from the Vice-Chancellor to the HEFCE setting out the University's objections to the wording of HEFCE circular letter number 05/2006 had been drafted and would be submitted shortly.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research))

(b) That the University of Wolverhampton had met with the HEFCE in the previous week to discuss a potential collaborative submission in response to circular letter number 05/2006 and that feedback from this meeting was currently awaited to inform the University's policy in this regard.

471/05-06 WMG Collaboration with China Aerospace (minute 467/05-06 refers)

REPORTED:

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

(a) That the Board of Graduate Studies, at its meeting held on 28 April, approved the proposed collaborative partnership between the University and the China Aerospace Talent and Development Exchange Centre (CA-TDEC) for one year in the first instance

subject to a review of the proposed partnership being undertaken as soon as practicable after its first year of operation.

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

- (b) That, further to (a) above, the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee (CFDLSC) of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee had taken Chair's Action on behalf of the CFDLSC to grant in-principle approval to the proposed partnership for one year in the first instance.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (c) That the draft contract between the University and CA-TDEC had been forwarded to the WMG's representative in China but that no feedback on the draft had yet been received.

RESOLVED:

That a timeframe for the review of the collaborative partnership with CA-TDEC be raised as a topic for discussion at the next meeting of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee to be held on 11 May 2006.

472/05-06 QAA Institutional Audit: Spring 2008 (minute 464/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on his recent discussions with the Chief Executive of the QAA on the timing of the University's next institutional audit noting that the QAA had identified a number of constraints on the timing of audits at a national level and that the University was currently waiting for a final decision from the QAA on the proposed rescheduling of the University's audit to the academic year 2008/09.

473/05-06 AUT Industrial Action

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

That a meeting of the National Executive Committee of the National Union of Students would be held later in the day to discuss the Union's position on the AUT industrial action and that she would bring forward an update for the Steering Committee at its next meeting to be held on 15 May.

474/05-06 WHRI Update

CONSIDERED:

A report providing an update on key recent developments at WHRI (SC.311/05-06) together with an oral report from the Director of WHRI.

REPORTED:

That the BBSRC had notified the University that continued funding for WHRI through the BBSRC core strategic grant was conditional upon the submission of a clear strategic vision and action plan for WHRI.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of WHRI prepare a timetable for the consideration and approval of the WHRI strategic plan by the appropriate University officers or bodies for submission to the BBSRC by the deadline of 16 June 2006.

475/05-06 Graduate Issues

CONSIDERED:

A briefing paper on the progress of policy reviews in postgraduate admissions and postgraduate funding, the size and composition of the postgraduate student population and issues relating to PhD submission rates (SC.303/05-06) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee support the proposal which would be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies that automatic one-year extensions for the completion of PhDs following the initial period of registration no longer be granted and that doctoral students instead be required to make a formal application to the Graduate School for any extensions to their agreed schedules for completion.
- (b) That the Assistant Registrar (Graduate School), in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies and the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation, undertake a review of departmental policies and practices in regard to postgraduate research recruitment and the development of a proposed strategy for an increase in the University's postgraduate research student population and bring forward a report for consideration by the Board of Graduate Studies and the Steering Committee in due course.
- (c) That the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies review the University's current policy of the non-eligibility of probationary staff as lead PhD supervisors, in the context of the proposed new probationary arrangements to be introduced as part of the University's proposed implementation of the HR Framework Agreement, with a view to bringing back a report for consideration by the Board of Graduate Studies and the Steering Committee in due course.

476/05-06 Equality and Diversity Update

RECEIVED:

A paper providing an update on equality and diversity issues within the University, including the University's progress in implementation of the recently-introduced age and disability discrimination legislation and the impact of the job evaluation scheme in the context of the Framework Agreement (SC.312/05-06) together with oral reports from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International Affairs and Equal Opportunities) and the Assistant Director of Personnel.

477/05-06 International Issues

CONSIDERED:

A report on current international issues including the University's international strategy, the Prime Minister's Initiative for international education, international student recruitment, overseas partnerships and links and the receipt by a Warwick student of an International Student Award in the 2006 British Council International Student (Shine) Awards (SC.305/05-06) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International Affairs and Equal Opportunities).

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

That reports on the 2006 AC21 International Forum and the progress of discussions with Singapore institutions on the University's proposed plans for academic development in Singapore would be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee at its next meeting to be held on 15 May 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee record its congratulations to Mr Bryan Zhang on his outstanding achievement in the 2006 British Council Shine Awards.

478/05-06 Senate Business: Proposed Regulatory Changes (minute 457/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A draft proposal for the introduction of an additional temporary University Regulation to enable the University to graduate students in the summer term 2006 should final degree classifications be temporarily unavailable due to the AUT industrial action (Senate paper S.39/05-06) together with an oral report from the Deputy Registrar.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee support strongly the proposed new University Regulation as set out in paper S.39/05-06 subject to minor amendment along the lines discussed at the meeting and that the revised proposal be submitted to the Senate for consideration at its meeting to be held on 17 May.

479/05-06 Quinquennial Review of the Department of Classics and Ancient History

RECEIVED:

The Quinquennial Review Report of the Department of Classics and Ancient History (SC.301/05-06).

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

- (a) That the Head of the Department of Classics and Ancient History would be attending the next meeting of the Steering Committee for consideration and discussion of the Review Report.
- (b) That the Head of the Department of Classics and Ancient History had clarified that with respect to section 6b of the Review Report, the 0.3 FTE teaching fellow had undertaken 9 contracted teaching hours and a further 3 out-of-contract hours paid for from the Department's general funds rather than the 20 hours stated in the Report.

480/05-06 Quinquennial Review of the Department of Physics

RECEIVED:

The Quinquennial Review Report of the Department of Physics and a response to the Review Report prepared by the Head of the Department of Physics (SC.309/05-06) together with oral reports from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science and Ms H Hutchings.

REPORTED:

That the Head of the Department of Physics would be attending the next meeting of the Steering Committee for consideration and discussion of the Review Report.

481/05-06 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions

CONSIDERED:

University data on home/overseas undergraduate applications by faculty, course, country of domicile and fees status and home/overseas postgraduate applications by faculty and course for entry in October 2006 as at 30 April 2006 (SC.307/05-06) together with an oral report from the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the current University policy on direct web applications made through UCAS International Apply be revised to allow for verification of candidates' qualifications and academic references at a later stage in the admissions process with a view to increasing the speed at which applications from prospective international students are processed, noting that this would not preclude the possibility of the rescindment of any offers of entry made to applicants subsequently discovered to have submitted fraudulent qualifications or references.
- (b) That the financial viability of the fees levied by higher education institutions for postgraduate taught courses be raised as an issue for discussion at a future meeting of the Russell Group.

482/05-06 RCUK Academic Fellowships

RECEIVED:

A paper providing notification that the University had been awarded 8 fellowships under Round 2 of the Research Councils UK (RCUK) Academic Fellowship Scheme (SC.310/05-06) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) noting that the University would be reconsidering its strategy for submissions in future rounds of the Scheme.

483/05-06 Coventry and Warwickshire Lifelong Learning Network: Business Development Plan (minute 295/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

A paper prepared by the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning on the recent submission to the HEFCE of the business development plan for the proposed Coventry and Warwickshire Lifelong Learning Network (LLN) (SC.308/05-06) together with an oral report from the Registrar noting that the proposed LLN would not require any significant financial commitment from Warwick and was expected to provide the University with £40k per annum over the three-year project period to facilitate its contribution in the area of continuing professional development.

484/05-06 JISC Capital Programme: Call for Proposals

CONSIDERED:

JISC Circular 3/06 inviting the submission by institutions of funding proposals for projects in the areas of e-learning, repositories and preservation and e-infrastructure (SC.313/05-06) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) discuss with the University Librarian the potential submission of institutional proposals for funding to support projects associated with the Modern Records Centre and the University's Ethnicity and Migration Collection.
- (b) That the University Librarian be asked to nominate a University representative to attend the meeting to be held in Birmingham on 10 May 2006 to discuss the JISC Capital Programme.

485/05-06 Higher Education and Strategic Health Authority Boards

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/49 on the exchange of correspondence between the Department of Health and UUK regarding future representation on the newly restructured Strategic Health Authority Boards (SC.314/05-06) together with an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor.

486/05-06 14-19 Education and Skills Reforms: Developments

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/47 providing an update on progress made against the proposals set out in the 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper for 14-19 education reform in England (SC.315/05-06).

487/05-06 Membership of the Senate: Committee of the Assembly

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

- (a) That, in accordance with Regulation 2.3, a notice had appeared in CommUnicate inviting nominations for one member of the Assembly to serve as an appointee of the Assembly on the Senate for the period 19 April to 31 July 2006 to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Dr C Humphreys.
- (b) That no nominations had been received by the closing date of 3 April.
- (c) That a notice would be appearing in the forthcoming issue of CommUnicate seeking to fill a further 3 vacancies in the appointees of the Assembly on the Senate for the period 2006 – 2009.

RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with Regulation 2.3, a Committee of the Assembly be convened comprising the following to identify candidates for appointment for approval by the Vice-Chancellor:

Professor S Bassnett (Chair)
Dr J MacPherson
Professor A Phizacklea

488/05-06 Warwick Business School Distinguished Service Award

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

That the Vice-Chancellor had been awarded the WBS Distinguished Service Award at the WBS Annual Dinner held on 4 May 2006.

489/05-06 Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014 (minute 450/05-06 refers)

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

That the briefing paper being prepared by the Director of Research Support Services on the key proposals put forward in the consultation document "Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-14: Next Steps" would be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee at its next meeting to be held on 15 May.