

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 8 October 2007

- Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor S Bassnett
Professor L Bridges
Professor A Caesar
Mr J Kirby
Professor K Lamberts
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Smith
Professor H Thomas
Professor M Whitby
- Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor Y Carter, Professor R Higgott.
- In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Registrar, University Secretary, Vice-Chancellor's Executive Officer, Ms H Sinclair, for item 32/07-08 the Head of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies, for items 33/07-08 to 36/07-08 the Director of Research Support Services.
- 27/07-08 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2007 be approved.
- 28/07-08 Millburn House (minute 5/07-08 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Director of Estates)
- That it was now expected that the University contractor carrying out the refurbishment work to Millburn House would go into liquidation, that the University was continuing to seek legal advice on the matter and that this would be likely to have an impact on the timescale for the completion of the NMR Suite.
- 29/07-08 University Strategy
- RECEIVED:
- An oral report from the Registrar and the University Secretary on arrangements for the implementation of the University Strategy and in particular the provision of resources to support the Implementation Plan.
- REPORTED: (by the Registrar)
- (a) That until detailed plans had been drawn up for each Strategic Priority area it would not be possible to quantify the precise resource requirements for delivery of the Implementation Plan and that it was not clear whether the resource requirements would exceed the current budgetary allocation of £750,000.
- (b) That regular progress reports on the implementation of the University Strategy would be prepared for consideration by the Steering Committee, the Senate and the Council and that a more detailed analysis of resource requirements would be available when the first report was considered at the end of the Autumn Term.

30/07-08 National Student Survey (minutes 664/06-07, 677/06-07 and 06/07-08 refer)

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

That the Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies (PAIS) had asked for clarification about the relationship between the data published in the National Student Survey (NSS) and the results of internal PAIS surveys in view of the apparent disparity in their information about student satisfaction.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning and International Affairs) discuss with the Head of the Department of Politics and International Studies (PAIS) the outcome of the NSS in relation to PAIS, in the context of the data held by the Department on course evaluation, in the expectation that the Department would seek to consider and address the areas of specific concern which had been identified in the data published in the NSS.

31/07-08 Birmingham Research and Development Limited

REPORTED:

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That it had been reported in the *Birmingham Sunday Mercury* on 7 October 2007 that the Managing Director of Birmingham Research Development Limited (BRDL) was the subject of a fraud investigation.

32/07-08 Strategic Departmental Review: Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies (minute 11/07-08 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies responding to the six key recommendations put forward by the Review Group in its Strategic Departmental Review of the Department (SC.31/07-08).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee record its general support for the recommendations set out in the Review Report, in particular the recommendations of the Panel relating to departmental management and workload models.
- (b) That responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the recommendations contained within the report relating to teaching and learning issues, including enhancement of the student experience, be delegated to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and that the Head of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee for discussion of the Report.
- (c) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee be requested to review and determine whether the Strategic Departmental Review of the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies had addressed all the key issues relating to teaching quality assurance and enhancement and whether further review of issues relating to the quality of programmes within the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies was necessary.

- (d) That responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the remaining recommendations contained within the Review Report be delegated to the Academic Resourcing Committee.

33/07-08

Sainsbury Report on Science and Innovation Policies

CONSIDERED:

The Executive Summary of the Review of the UK Science and Innovation System *The Race to the Top* undertaken by Lord Sainsbury and published by HM Treasury on 5 October 2007 (SC.24/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor {Research: Science and Medicine})

That he would be attending a Universities UK seminar on the Review at which Lord Sainsbury would be a key speaker on 18 October 2007 at the Institute of Engineering and Technology with the Director of Research Support Services.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine) and the Director of Research Support Services bring forward a paper on the implications of the Sainsbury Review for the University for consideration at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

34/07-08

Research Degree Qualification Rates

RECEIVED:

HEFCE publication *Research Degree Qualification Rates* setting out the research degree qualification rates by UK institution together with a copy of a memo from the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies to Departmental Directors of Graduate Studies on the new extension procedures (SC.21/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the University research degree qualification rate of 71% as contained in the document did not reach the benchmark of 77%.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it was the view of the Steering Committee that the University's research degree qualification rate as presented in the HEFCE publication was not acceptable and that the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies take forward discussions on what steps can be taken, in addition to those already in place, to improve the submission rates of University PhD students.
- (b) That, it be noted that, while the University Strategy included the objective of increasing significantly the number of postgraduate research (PGR) students it was imperative that the quality of the PGR student intake was not diminished.

- 35/07-08 Research Fortnight Success Rankings
- RECEIVED:
- The success rankings for applications and awards to UK HEIs in 2006/07 from the six Research Councils as published in *Research Fortnight* on 12 September 2007 (SC.22/07-08).
- 36/07-08 Energy Technologies Institute (minute 521/06-07 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- A copy of an article on the announcement that Loughborough University had been chosen by the UK Government to host the Energy Technologies Institute (ETI) in collaboration with the Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham published in *Research Fortnight* on 26 September 2007 (SC.23/07-08).
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)
- That the University of Loughborough had approached the University to establish whether it wished to become a contributor to the Midlands ETI as a 'spoke' institution.
- 37/07-08 Prime Minister's Initiative 2 (minute 659/06-07 refers)
- RECEIVED:
- A paper setting out the invitation from the British Council for bids under the Prime Minister's Initiative 2 in the categories of research co-operation, collaborative programme delivery, UK student mobility and partnership development (SC.30/07-08) together with further information on these categories tabled at the meeting (SC.30/07-08 Annex A).
- 38/07-08 DfES Consultation on a Matched-Funding Scheme for Voluntary Giving to HE in England (minute 12/07-08 refers)
- CONSIDERED:
- The revised draft University response to the Consultation on a Matched-Funding Scheme for Voluntary Giving to HE in England (SC.14/07-08) together with the corrected draft revised University response tabled at the meeting.
- RESOLVED:
- That the revised draft University response to the Consultation on a Matched-Funding Scheme for Voluntary Giving to HE in England be approved for submission to UUK by 19 October and the UK Government by 2 November 2007, subject to amendment along the lines discussed at the meeting, as set out in paper SC.14/07-08.

39/07-08 Review of Science in the Department of Health (minute 640/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the Review of Science in the Department of Health together with the letter inviting responses to the consultation (SC.25/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor {Research: Science and Medicine})

That the Senior Research Development Manager in the Warwick Medical School had invited academic departments to contribute to the University response to the consultation but that no responses had been received to date.

RESOLVED:

That the draft University response to the Review of Science in the Department of Health be approved for submission to the Department of Health by 15 October 2007 and to UUK by 19 October 2007 as set out in paper SC.25/07-08.

40/07-08 HEFCE Capital Investment Framework 2007

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the HEFCE on the Capital Investment Framework which will be used by the HEFCE to determine whether the University meets the HEFCE requirements to benefit from more flexible capital funding arrangements (SC.26/07-08).

RESOLVED:

That the draft University response on the Capital Investment Framework be approved for submission to the HEFCE by 19 October 2007, subject to minor revisions along the lines discussed at the meeting, as set out in paper SC.26/07-08.

41/07-08 Higher Education Regulation Review Group

CONSIDERED:

The Annual Report of the Chair of the Higher Education Regulation Review Group (HERRG) presented to the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education on 12 September 2007 providing an update on the work of the HERRG in the year to September 2007 and an update on the current signatories to the Higher Education Concordat (SC.07/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the Government response to the Annual Report of the Chair of the Higher Education Regulation Review Group was awaited.

RESOLVED:

That any comments on the regulatory burden affecting the University be forwarded to the Registrar for submission to the Higher Education Regulation Review Group

42/07-08 Delivery Partnership: Improving the HE Applications Process (minutes 617/06-07, 581/06-07 and 533/06-07 refer)

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/07/113 providing an update on the work of the Delivery Partnership on improving the higher education application process including the fifth progress report from the Delivery Partnership setting out additional information on the outcomes of the three consultations held on feedback, changes to the application process for art and design and the proposed adjustment process (SC.28/07-08).

43/07-08 Withdrawal of Funding for ELQs (minute 14/07-08 refers)

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/07/117 on the HEFCE consultation on the withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications (ELQs) (SC.29/07-08).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the University is pursuing the implications of the announcement for funding for students on the MBChB course through all relevant channels.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning and International Affairs) raise the issue of the potential consequences of the announcement on the withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower level qualifications at the next meeting of the 1994 Group.

44/07-08 RSA/Russell Group Lecture Series (minute 691/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper setting out proposed names for submission to the Russell Group in response to their letter inviting suggestions for researchers to lead public lectures to communicate the benefits of research (SC.19/07-08).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the names of Professor Julie McPherson, Dr Matthew Watson and Dr Timothy Sinclair, Professor Matthew Keeling and Emeritus Professor Nigel Dimmock together with suggested topics be submitted to the Russell Group together with an indication that the University was investigating further suggestions for submission.
- (b) That topics be investigated for submission to the Russell Group from the additional academic staff suggested in paper SC.19/07-08.

45/07-08 Warwick in Venice

CONSIDERED:

A paper requesting the approval of the Steering Committee to the establishment of a local branch of the University in Italy, the appointment of the Registrar as its permanent legal representative and the granting of Power of Attorney to the legal representative (SC.20/07-08).

RESOLVED:

That the opening of a local branch of the University in Italy, the appointment of the Registrar as its permanent legal representative and the granting of Power of Attorney to the legal representative be approved as set out in paper SC.20/07-08.

46/07-08 Appointments to Committees of the Senate

RESOLVED: (on behalf of the Senate)

- (a) That Professor P Mawby, Professor A Prout and Professor D Wilson be appointed to the membership of the Academic Staff Committee in place of Professor J Gardner, Professor A Harris and Professor M Terry respectively.
- (b) That Mr R Leng be recommended to the Council for appointment as one of the three senior academic members of staff on the Research Ethics Committee in place of Professor L Bridges.

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18/10/07