

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 13 March 2006

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor A Caesar
Professor Y Carter
Professor J Jones
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Luntley
Professor S B Palmer
Professor M Smith
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Professor L Bridges, Professor H Thomas.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Acting Director of Finance, Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Director of Communication, Director of Estates, Registrar, University Secretary, Mrs H E Blunt, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 376/05-06 the Director of Research Support Services, for item 378/05-06 the Assistant Director of Personnel (Policy and Projects), for item 379/05-06 the Director of Warwick HRI, for item 384/05-06 the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation, for item 385/05-06 the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality).

369/05-06 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2006 be approved.

370/05-06 HR Framework/Academic Staff Titles (minute 275/05-06 refers)

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

That the Council, at its meeting to be held on 15 March 2006, would be asked to consider and to approve the following:

- (a) The new academic career structure recommended for approval by the Senate at its meeting on 1 February 2006 as part of the University's proposed implementation of the HR Framework Agreement.
- (b) The new international nomenclature recommended for approval by the Senate at its meeting on 8 March 2006 for the academic staff titles that should apply in relation to the new academic career structure in (a) above.

371/05-06 AUT Industrial Action (minute 364/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

Universities and Colleges Employers' Association Update 06/33 on the ongoing negotiations between universities and the AUT in regard to the AUT's 2006 pay claim (SC.250/05-06, tabled at the meeting) together with oral reports from the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar on recommendations for action by the University in response to the AUT industrial action to be taken from 8 March.

RECEIVED:

Oral reports from the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar on the AUT industrial action taken on 7 March 2006.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposal for the deduction of one day's pay for each separate occurrence of non-fulfilment of contract be supported and endorsed by the Steering Committee.
- (b) That the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and Director of Personnel develop a proposed policy for the University on the pay deductions to be implemented in regard to the AUT industrial action taken from 8 March 2006 for consideration by the Steering Committee as soon as practicable.

372/05-06 Membership of the '94 and Russell Groups

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on the withdrawal of the London School of Economics from the membership of the '94 Group and the issues surrounding the University's continuing representation on this group, noting that Warwick was now the sole remaining joint member of both the '94 and Russell Groups.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, in the light of the points raised in discussion at the meeting, the withdrawal of the University from the membership of the '94 Group be supported and endorsed by the Steering Committee.
- (b) That the Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar prepare a statement on the University's withdrawal from the '94 Group for consideration by the Steering Committee in due course.

373/05-06 Post-Qualification Applications

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on the key decisions reached at the meeting of the Director-General for Higher Education's PQA Consultation Group held on 9 March 2006 noting in particular proposals for the creation of a delivery partnership to oversee the implementation of agreed changes to the higher education applications process, the provision of detailed feedback to all applicants and the introduction of a full PQA system only in 2012/13, with an initial evaluation period to commence in the academic year 2009/10.

374/05-06 HEFCE Recurrent Funding 2006/07

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/22 and HEFCE document 2006/08 on the HEFCE recurrent grant allocations to the sector for 2006/07 (SC.243/05-06) noting that the relatively low overall amount of Widening Participation funding received by the University should be viewed in the context of Warwick's high retention figures for 'non-traditional' students.

375/05-06 CUC Key Performance Indicators

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on the ongoing development by the Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) of a proposed set of key performance indicators (KPIs) for use by all higher education institutions noting that the CUC's suggested list of KPIs was expected to be finalised by the end of July 2006 and that it was anticipated that the University's own set of KPIs would be confirmed well in advance of this date.

376/05-06 Research and Innovation Update

RECEIVED:

An update on current and projected future developments relating to the University's research and innovation activities (SC.239/05-06) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Research Support Services)

That the University was continuing to develop and build upon research initiatives in Arts and Social Studies disciplines and that further information on developments in these areas would be brought forward for the information of the Steering Committee in the next Research and Innovation update.

377/05-06 HEIF3: Institutional Plan Submission (minute 361/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft institutional plan for the use of its formula funding allocation under Round 3 of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF3) (SC.249/05-06, tabled at the meeting) together with an oral report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

RESOLVED:

That the draft institutional plan for the use of the University's HEIF3 formula funding allocation be approved as set out in paper SC.249/05-06 for submission to the HEFCE by the deadline of 15 March 2006.

378/05-06 Equality and Diversity Update

RECEIVED:

A paper providing an update on equality and diversity issues within the University, including the new Staff Harassment and Bullying Policy and forthcoming age, disability and gender discrimination legislation (SC.237/05-06) together with oral reports from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International Affairs and Equal Opportunities) and the Assistant Director of Personnel (Policy and Projects).

REPORTED: (by the Assistant Director of Personnel {Policy and Projects})

That four cases of alleged harassment and bullying were currently being considered under the new Staff Harassment and Bullying Policy and that very positive feedback had been received from staff in regard to the new policy.

379/05-06 Warwick HRI Update and Quarter-End Report

CONSIDERED:

The second quarter statement from Warwick HRI for the financial year 2005/06 and a report providing an update on key recent developments at WHRI (SC.246/05-06) together with an oral report from the Director of WHRI.

RESOLVED:

That the second quarter statement for the Warwick HRI Devolved Budget for the financial year 2005/06 be noted and approved as set out in paper SC.246/05-06.

380/05-06 Academic Resourcing Committee Quarter-End Report

CONSIDERED:

The second quarter statement for non-devolved departmental budgets under the remit of the Academic Resourcing Committee for the financial year 2005/06 (SC.244/05-06) together with an oral report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

REPORTED: (by the Acting Director of Finance)

That, further to the planned revisions to the cost drivers for the charging of bursaries to departments and to remuneration arrangements to CELTE for its provision of in-sessional courses to students throughout the University (minute 346/05-06 refers), the TRAC Steering Group would be reviewing the ITS cost driver at its next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the second quarter statement for non-devolved departmental budgets for the financial year 2005/06 be noted and approved as set out in paper SC.244/05-06.
- (b) That future quarter-end reports for non-devolved departmental budgets under the remit of the Academic Resourcing Committee focus on net rather than gross operating surpluses.

381/05-06 Warwick Medical School Quarter-End Report

CONSIDERED:

The second quarter statement from the Warwick Medical School for the financial year 2005/06 (SC.247/05-06) together with an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

RESOLVED:

That the second quarter statement for the Warwick Medical School Devolved Budget for the financial year 2005/06 be noted and approved as set out in paper SC.247/05-06.

382/05-06 Current Issues in the NHS (minute 362/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

A report on current issues relating to the National Health Service and their implications for the Warwick Medical School and the University more widely (SC.245/05-06) together with an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

383/05-06 University Sustainability Framework

CONSIDERED:

HEFCE Circular Letter number 28/2005 requesting the submission by all higher education institutions of an initial sustainability framework setting out how the long-term sustainability of each institution is being managed and a copy of the University's draft sustainability framework (SC.248/05-06) together with an oral report from the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the draft University sustainability framework be recommended to the Council for approval at its meeting to be held on 15 March 2006 as set out in paper SC.248/05-06 subject to amendment along the lines discussed at the meeting.

- (b) That the Acting Director of Finance prepare a paper incorporating the draft University 10-year financial plan and key assumptions set out in paper SC.248/05-06 and providing a commentary on the 10-year plan for submission to the HEFCE should this information be requested following the submission of the University's sustainability framework.

384/05-06 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 end-February 2006 (SC.240/05-06) together with oral reports from the Academic Registrar and the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation.

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

That the Student Admissions Office would be discussing with the Department of Economics and the Warwick Business School issues relating to their consideration of overseas undergraduate applications, in particular the number of offers made to date against applications received, with a view to improving the University's overall responsiveness to prospective international students.

RESOLVED:

That the initial process of consultation proposed in paper SC.240/05-06 as a precursor to a review and possible revision of the University's undergraduate admissions strategy be approved, subject to the consultation process being underpinned by a given set of precepts guiding the University's admissions strategy and the aim of the consultation process being to canvass the views of departments on the proposed means by which the institutional objectives set out in the strategy might be achieved.

385/05-06 QAA Consultation Responses

CONSIDERED:

Draft institutional responses to five recent consultations by the QAA on the draft QAA Handbook for the revised institutional audit process, proposals for an interim review process as part of the institutional audit process and draft revisions to Sections 6, 7 and 10 of the QAA Code of Practice together with copies of QAA Circular Letters CL01/06, CL02/06 and CL03/06 (SC.241/05-06).

RESOLVED:

That the draft institutional responses to the QAA consultations detailed in Circular Letters CL01/06, CL02/06 and CL03/06 be approved as set out in paper SC.241/05-06 for submission to the QAA subject to amendment along the lines discussed at the meeting.

386/05-06 Longer Term Strategy Group Chronology of Key Reviews/Decisions in HE
(minute 62/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/21 providing an updated version of the chronology of key reviews and decisions having an impact on higher education over the next seven years (SC.242/05-06).