

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)  
Professor L Bridges  
Professor A Caesar  
Professor Y Carter  
Professor J Jones  
Professor M Luntley  
Professor S B Palmer  
Professor M Smith  
Professor H Thomas  
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Professor R Lindley

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Communication, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Deputy Registrar, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 87/06-07 the Director of Information Technology Services, for item 88/06-07 the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation, for item 91/06-07 the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality).

86/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2006 be approved subject to amendment to minute 76/06-07 as follows: (amendments underlined, deletions struck through)

RESOLVED:

- (a) That ~~the proposed new policy on the undertaking of teaching and marking duties by postgraduate students~~ the issues outlined in paper SC.43/06-07 relating to postgraduate funding be referred back to the four Faculties prior to ~~it being considered~~ consideration by the relevant University Committees the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and the Senate.

87/06-07 Power Failure and IT Disruption

CONSIDERED:

A report on the impact of the power failure experienced on 9 November on University IT services (SC.66/06-07, tabled at the meeting) together with an oral report from the Director of Information Technology Services.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Registrar and the Director of Information Technology Services prepare a report setting out proposals for addressing and responding to the issues arising from the significant and serious ongoing disruption to the GroupWise email system for consideration by the Steering Committee at its next meeting to be held on 20 November.
- (b) That the Director of Communication work with the Director of Information Technology Services to develop a strategy for the communication to all members of staff of timely and comprehensive updates on the status of the GroupWise recovery effort.

- (c) That the significant time and effort being invested by members of staff in Information Technology Services to recover services and provide support to affected members of staff be acknowledged.
- (d) That the points raised in paper SC.66/06-07 in regard to the provision of appropriate accommodation for the main ITS computer room be noted.

88/06-07

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions

CONSIDERED:

A paper providing a summary of the 2006/07 admissions cycle, issues and changes to policy and practice arising from this cycle, and ongoing developments in regard to student admissions (SC.49/06-07) together with oral reports from the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs.

REPORTED:

(by the Director of Finance)

- (a) That the overall shortfall in surplus against plan, taking into account safety factors, would potentially be in the region of £2m and that further savings in expenditure to be set against the estimated shortfall would need to be identified and managed by departments over the remainder of the financial year.

(by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs)

- (b) That the shortfall against plan was partly attributable to a higher-than-anticipated increase in non-continuation rates for overseas students and a significant increase in the number of students needing to resit their examinations without residence, particularly within the Sciences, and that further work would be undertaken by the Academic Office to determine the factors affecting these issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee support strongly the measures being put in place to ensure that the issues outlined in paper SC.49/06-07 relating to the University's student admissions procedures are addressed and rectified well in advance of the 2007/08 admissions cycle.

89/06-07

RAE Equal Opportunities Code of Practice

CONSIDERED:

The draft University Equal Opportunities Code of Practice on the preparation of submissions for the 2008 RAE (SC.57/06-07) together with an oral report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, in view of the potential conflict of interest arising from the involvement of the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International Affairs and Equal Opportunities) in the RAE submission appeals process, and in the light of the forthcoming departure of the Deputy Registrar from the University and Professor McFarlane's period of study leave in the academic year 2006/07, the membership of the University RAE Steering Group be revised as follows: (amendments underlined, deletions struck through)

~~Vice-Chancellor~~  
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair)  
~~The Pro-Vice-Chancellors~~  
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Campus and the Community)

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)  
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)  
Chairs of the Faculty Boards  
Registrar  
~~Deputy Registrar~~  
University Secretary  
Director of Academic and Student Affairs  
Three University staff serving on RAE 2008 sub-panels:  
Professor A McFarlane  
Professor K Hoskin  
Professor D Firth

Senior Assistant Registrar (RAE Planning) – Secretary

- (b) That a proposed replacement for Professor McFarlane on the membership of the RAE Steering Group be identified as soon as practicable.
- (c) That the draft University Equal Opportunities Code of Practice be approved as set out in paper SC.57/06-07 for dissemination to all Heads of Department subject to minor amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting.

90/06-07

Faculty Issues

(a) Faculty of Arts

RECEIVED:

A report on current developments and issues of concern within the Faculty of Arts, including issues relating to research, accommodation and postgraduate studies; the operation of Café Humanities; and issues discussed at the meeting of the Faculty Advisory Board held on 12 October (SC.63/06-07) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Arts.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Estates)

That they understood that the proposed relocation of the Department of Film and Television Studies to Millburn House was likely to be confirmed.

(b) Faculty of Medicine

CONSIDERED:

A report on current developments and issues of note within the Faculty of Medicine, including developments in regard to the Science Cities initiative, SIFT funding, undergraduate admissions and research income (SC.51/06-07) together with an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

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

- (i) That a follow-up visit of the General Medical Council to the Warwick Medical School would take place in the New Year.
- (ii) That the first departmental review of the Warwick Medical School under the new Strategic Review of Departments and Courses process would be held in December and that discussions in regard to the format of the review were currently underway.

RESOLVED:

That the topic of research income targets for individual staff be raised as an item for discussion at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

(c) Faculty of Science

CONSIDERED:

A report on current issues of concern within the Faculty of Science, including issues relating to the email replacement project, departmental connections to and communication with the University Library, the need to raise the number of high-profile research outputs and issues considered at the meeting of the Faculty Advisory Board held on 1 November (SC.64/06-07) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the issues raised in paper SC.64/06-07 relating to migration schedules for departments from Novell GroupWise to Microsoft Exchange and the proposed 10MB limit on the size of email attachments under the new Exchange system be referred to the Email Project Board.
- (ii) That it was the view of the Committee that there was a significant need for departments to increase the number of outputs in high-profile journals and that steps would need to be taken to encourage all academic staff to raise their research aspirations.

91/06-07 2006 ESRC Research Centres Competition (minute 706/05-06 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That 6 bids had been shortlisted in the 2006 ESRC Research Centres Competition, which were in the process of being reviewed by the ESRC assessment panel, and that steps would be taken by the University to ensure that an institutional submission was made in future rounds of this competition.

92/06-07 Teaching Quality Issues

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) on strategic developments in matters related to Teaching Quality (SC.53/06-07).
- (b) HEFCE circular letter number 23/2006 setting out proposals in regard to the development of the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) website (SC.59/06-07).
- (c) Selected extracts from HEFCE document 2006/45 on the outcomes of phase two of the review of the Quality Assurance Framework for learning and teaching in higher education (SC.60/06-07).
- (d) A copy of a letter from the Quality Assurance Agency on developments relating to the implementation of the Integrated Quality and Enhancement Review of higher education provision by further education colleges (SC.62/06-07).

REPORTED:

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

- (a) That Ms Sue Bennett had now taken up her position as the new Director of the Centre for Academic and Professional Development and would be seeking to meet with all Faculty Chairs in the near future.

(by the President of the Union of Students)

- (b) That, in view of the issues associated with telephone responses to the NSS, the Aldwych Group would be strongly encouraging online participation in the 2007 survey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the issue of quality enhancement be included as an annual item for discussion in the Faculty Issues updates to be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee.
- (b) That the letter to be circulated to Heads of academic departments in regard to the issues outlined in Section 1 of paper SC.53/06-07 take into account the points raised in discussion at the meeting and that the draft letter be circulated for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to distribution to departments.
- (c) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) prepare a draft institutional response to HEFCE circular letter number 23/2006 for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to submission of the response to the HEFCE by the deadline of 6 December.
- (d) That, in line with the approach to be adopted by the Aldwych Group, the student contact details to be provided by the University to the HEFCE for the 2007 NSS include a maximum of one telephone number per student.

93/06-07 International Student Barometer

RECEIVED:

A summary report on the results from the 2006 Summer Wave of the International Student Barometer survey of international student experiences across the UK HE sector (SC.52/06-07) together with an oral report from the Academic Registrar.

94/06-07 Additional HEFCE Funding for High-Cost and Vulnerable Science Subjects

RECEIVED:

A press release from the HEFCE on the provision of £75m in additional funding over the three-year period 2007 – 2010 to support very high-cost and vulnerable science subjects (SC.56/06-07).

95/06-07 JISC: Learner Experiences of e-Learning

RECEIVED:

JISC Circular 05/06 inviting the submission by institutions of proposals for funding under the Learner Experiences of e-Learning theme of the JISC e-Learning Programme (SC.61/06-07).

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

That discussions in regard to the potential submission of institutional proposals for funding to support 'Learner Experiences of e-Learning' projects were currently underway and that any

draft proposals would be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to submission to JISC by the deadline of 4 December.

96/06-07

Membership of Senate Committees

RESOLVED: (on behalf of the Senate)

That Dr E John be appointed to the membership of the Board of Undergraduate Studies in place of Dr S Gardner.

97/06-07

Meetings of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

That future meetings of the Steering Committee would be held external to University House on a once-monthly basis, noting that the first of such meetings would be held prior to the end of the calendar year at the Warwick Medical School and that members would be notified once arrangements for this meeting had been finalised.

98/06-07

UK Higher Education Research Yearbook 2006

RECEIVED:

Selected extracts from the HEFCE-commissioned UK Higher Education Research Yearbook for 2006 (SC.55/06-07).

99/06-07

EPSRC Update

RECEIVED:

A copy of a letter from the Chief Executive of the EPSRC on the launch of the new EPSRC strategic plan, developments in regard to securing the long-term future of strategically important and vulnerable areas of engineering and the physical sciences, and conveying his thanks for the positive and constructive engagement of EPSRC stakeholders during his tenure as Chief Executive (SC.54/06-07).