

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 24 April 2006

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor S Bassnett
Professor L Bridges
Professor A Caesar
Professor J Jones
Professor I Lauder
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Luntley
Professor S B Palmer
Ms K Stark
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor M Smith, Professor H Thomas.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Acting Director of Finance, Deputy Registrar, Director of Estates, Director of Personnel, Registrar, University Secretary, Mrs H E Blunt, Ms N Snodgrass, for items 464/05-06 to 467/05-06 the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality), for item 467/05-06 Mr S Raynor and Mrs G Kershaw.

452/05-06 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2006 be approved subject to the inclusion of Professor H Thomas on the list of members present at the meeting.

453/05-06 Undergraduate and Postgraduate Admissions (minute 444/05-06 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the Student Admissions Office continue to pursue the issues associated with the increasing reliance of the University on the Warwick Business School in regard to the maintenance of the volume of applications for postgraduate taught courses and that an update on these issues be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee in due course.

454/05-06 Visit of the Chief Executive of the QAA (minute 290/05-06 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the Chief Executive of the QAA would be attending the Heads of Departments' Forum to be held on 5 May and that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the University Secretary would shortly be preparing a list of topics for discussion at this meeting.

455/05-06 University Open Day

RECEIVED:

Oral reports from the Registrar, the Chairs of the Boards of the Faculties of Arts and Social Studies and the President of the Union of Students on the overall success of the University Open Day held on 22 April 2006.

456/05-06 Membership of the '94 Group (minute 404/05-06)

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on his recent discussions with Professor Nigel Thrift, Vice-Chancellor elect, on the withdrawal of the University from the membership of the '94 Group.

RESOLVED:

That the University not withdraw from the membership of the '94 Group until such time as the Vice-Chancellor had an opportunity to discuss the matter further with Professor Thrift.

457/05-06 AUT Industrial Action

RECEIVED:

A copy of a letter from the Unions of Students of 20 UK Universities to the General Secretary of the AUT setting out the Unions' opposition to the AUT industrial action and a UCEA news release providing an update on the AUT action and the ongoing pay level negotiations with Trades Unions (SC.296/05-06) together with an oral report from the Director of Personnel.

REPORTED:

(by the President of the Union of Students)

- (a) That the Warwick Union of Students was continuing to support the AUT in their industrial action over their 2006 pay claim.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (b) That arrangements by the University to mitigate the impact of the AUT industrial action on students were in the process of being implemented, including the proposed introduction of an additional 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 action.

458/05-06 HR Framework

RECEIVED:

Revised proposals for the restructuring of the University's pay and grading arrangements as a component of implementation of the HR Framework Agreement (SC.298/05-06) together with an oral report from the Director of Personnel.

REPORTED: (by the Director of Personnel)

- (a) That meetings with the Trades Unions to discuss the University's revised proposals for the restructuring of its pay and grading arrangements were scheduled for 25 April and 2 May.
- (b) That it was expected that a number of issues not addressed in the current proposals, including the harmonisation of sick pay entitlements and other general terms and conditions, would be addressed in a second phase of negotiations.

459/05-06 Queen's Awards for Enterprise

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Mr David Rowe, the Director of the University of Warwick Science Park, had been conferred the Queen's Award for Lifetime Achievement in Enterprise Promotion in the 2006 round of the Queen's Award for Enterprise Promotion.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee record its congratulations to the Director of the Science Park on his outstanding achievement.

460/05-06 HEFCE Consultation on Capital Investment Framework: University Response
(minute 327/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the HEFCE consultation on proposals for a new approach to capital investment in higher education (SC.292/05-06) together with oral reports from the Registrar, the Acting Director of Finance and the Director of Estates.

RESOLVED:

That the draft University response to the HEFCE consultation on capital investment in higher education be approved for submission to the HEFCE by the deadline of 28 April 2006 subject to amendment along the lines discussed at the meeting.

461/05-06 HEIF3 Institutional Plan (minute 377/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

A copy of a letter from the HEFCE providing notification of the approval of the University's institutional plan for the use of its formula funding allocation under Round 3 of the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF3) (SC.299/05-06).

462/05-06 Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-2014

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/41 summarising key points in the Government's consultation document "Science and Innovation Investment Framework 2004-14: Next Steps" and requesting institutional responses to inform a UUK response to this document (SC.295/05-06).

463/05-06 Business and Community: Third Stream as Second Mission

CONSIDERED:

Circular letter number 05/2006 from the HEFCE inviting HEIs interested in making the third stream their second mission focus after teaching to submit expressions of interest in participating in experimental projects on third stream activities with business and the community (SC.294/05-06).

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That the University had been approached by the Universities of Birmingham and Wolverhampton to consider a potential collaborative submission to the HEFCE in response to circular letter number 05/2006 and that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) would be holding discussions later in the week with colleagues from both Universities.

RESOLVED:

That the Registrar convey to the HEFCE the University's objections to the wording of circular letter number 05/2006 which inferred the restriction of eligibility to non research-intensive HEIs.

464/05-06 QAA Institutional Audit: Spring 2008 (minute 445/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A draft letter prepared by the Academic Registrar and the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) to the QAA conveying the University's significant concerns regarding the proposal that its next institutional audit be held in Spring 2008 (SC.293/05-06).

RESOLVED:

That the Vice-Chancellor contact the Chief Executive of the QAA to discuss informally the University's concerns regarding the proposed timing of its next institutional audit and the possibility of rescheduling the audit for the academic year 2008/09 at the earliest.

465/05-06 Measuring and Recording Student Achievement: Second Consultation on National Credit Arrangements for England (minute 428/05-06 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the follow-up consultation by the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group (the Burgess Group) on national credit arrangements for England (SC.291/05-06).

RESOLVED:

That the draft University response to the Burgess Group follow-up consultation be approved as set out in paper SC.291/05-06 for submission to UUK by the deadline of 2 May 2006 subject to amendment along the lines discussed at the meeting.

466/05-06 QAA Audit of Overseas Provision: Hong Kong and Russia

CONSIDERED:

A copy of a letter from the QAA requesting the submission by all UK HEIs of details of their collaborative partnerships with institutions in Hong Kong and Russia for the 2006-07 QAA quality audit of overseas partnership arrangements together with the draft University response to the QAA (SC.290/05-06).

RESOLVED:

That the draft University submission to the QAA providing details of the University's collaborative partnerships with institutions in Hong Kong and Russia for the academic year 2006/07 be approved as set out in paper SC.290/05-06 for submission to the QAA subject to minor amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting.

CONSIDERED:

A paper prepared by the Academic Registrar on the proposal from the Warwick Manufacturing Group that the University collaborate with the China Aerospace Talent and Development Exchange Centre (CA-TDEC) to deliver the existing post-experience Certificate in Engineering Business Management in Beijing, China (SC.297/05-06).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the establishment of a collaborative partnership with CA-TDEC for the delivery of the post-experience Certificate in Engineering Business Management in Beijing, China be approved in principle subject to the approval of the academic case as outlined below.
- (b) That the proposed collaborative partnership with CA-TDEC, including the issue of the admissions standards to be applied in relation to the proposed partnership, be brought forward for consideration by the Board of the Graduate Studies (BGS) at its meeting to be held on 27 April.
- (c) That, subject to approval of the proposed collaborative partnership by the BGS, the Chair of the Collaborative, Flexible and Distributed Learning Sub-Committee (CFDLSC) of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) be asked to take Chair's Action to approve the proposal on behalf of the CFDLSC and the AQSC respectively.
- (d) That no agreements be entered into or signed on behalf of the University by the Warwick Manufacturing Group in advance of approval of the academic case for the proposed collaborative partnership by the BGS, the CFDLSC and the AQSC and approval of the financial and legal aspects of the partnership by the Acting Director of Finance and the University's interim legal adviser.
- (e) That the University's existing quality assurance procedure for the establishment of new collaborative awards be reaffirmed and that the Warwick Manufacturing Group be asked to note that approval of any future proposed collaborative partnerships would be dependent upon the submission of proposals for consideration and approval by the appropriate University officers or bodies in a timely fashion and in line with this procedure.
- (f) That the need for compliance by all Departments with the University's quality assurance procedures be raised as a topic for discussion at the next Heads of Departments' Forum to be held on 5 May.
- (g) That steps be taken to develop guidelines for the taking of Chair's Action on behalf of University Committees in exceptional circumstances where there was a need for decisions to be taken at short notice and where a meeting of the relevant University Committee could not be convened within the available timeframe.