

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 26 March 2007

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor S Bassnett
Professor L Bridges
Professor Y Carter
Mr B Duggan
Professor R Lindley
Professor M Smith
Professor H Thomas
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor A Caesar, Professor J Jones, Professor M Luntley, Professor S B Palmer, Director of Estates.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Communication, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 430/06-07 the Head of the School of Health and Social Studies.

421/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2007 be approved.

422/06-07 Consultation on European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
(minute 330/06-07 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University would not be making a response to the European Commission Consultation on its proposals for a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training.

423/06-07 Beacons for Public Engagement (minutes 313/06-07 and 338/06-07 refer)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University's application to the HEFCE for funding under the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative had been unsuccessful, that 10 out of 85 applications had been shortlisted to proceed to Stage 2 of the application process and that it was anticipated that the list of those institutions shortlisted would shortly be published.

424/06-07 Recurrent Funding 2007/08: Membership of Working Group (minute 397/06-07 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the membership of the working group to be established to consider and recommend means by which the level of grant received by the University through the new Business Research element of QR funding might be increased be as follows:

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (Chair)
Mr D Mullins
One further member of academic staff to be appointed from Warwick Business School
Director of Finance (or nominee)
Academic Registrar

425/06-07 UK Clinical Research Collaboration Public Health Research Centres of Excellence
(minute 336/06-07 refers)

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

That the University's collaborative bid with the University of Birmingham for funding under the UKCRC Public Health Research Centres of Excellence initiative was currently being finalised.

RESOLVED:

That the final Warwick-Birmingham collaborative bid for funding under the UKCRC Public Health Research Centres of Excellence initiative be forwarded to the Director of Finance for ratification and approval of the financial element of the bid prior to submission to the ESRC by the deadline of 27 March 2007.

426/06-07 National Student Survey

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

- (a) That, as of the latest census date of 21 March, the University's institutional response rate to the 2007 National Student Survey had increased to 37.5% and that steps were continuing to be taken to encourage all eligible students to participate in the Survey, in particular within the School of Engineering and the Warwick Business School.
- (b) That the TQI/NSS Steering Group had announced that it would be continuing to seek advice on an appropriate response threshold for the publication of NSS results (minute 438/06-07 and Steering paper SC.278/06-07 below refer).

427/06-07 Awards and Distinctions

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That Professor P Elias from the Institute for Employment Research had been appointed as Chair of all the multi-disciplinary evaluation panels for the scientific evaluation of the European Commission's Framework Programme 7 Research Infrastructure bids, noting that this would be the first time that the Chair had been held by a social scientist.
- (b) That Dr P Topping from the Warwick Mathematics Institute had been awarded a Leverhulme Research Leadership Award.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee record formally its congratulations to Professor Elias and Dr Topping on their outstanding achievements.

428/06-07 Budget 2007

RECEIVED:

A copy of an email from the Director-General of the Russell Group setting out key extracts from the 2007 Budget of relevance to higher education and providing notification of the issue of a Russell Group press release on the 25% increase in public investment in science budgets, together with a press release from the Government News Network on the announcement in the Budget of a further £100m in funding through the new Collaborative R&D Competition (SC.273/06-07).

REPORTED:

(by the Director of Finance)

- (a) That the reduction in the basic rate of income tax announced in the 2007 Budget would reduce the income reclaimable by the University on Gift Aid donations from 28p to 25p per pound donated.

(by the Registrar)

- (b) That Universities UK had issued a briefing on the main elements of the 2007 Budget of relevance to higher education and that this would shortly be circulated via email to all members and attendees of the Steering Committee.

429/06-07 EPSRC Science and Innovation Award Scheme

CONSIDERED:

A paper providing an update on the progress of preparation of the University's outline proposals for funding under Round 4 of the EPSRC Science and Innovation Award Scheme (SC.282/06-07) together with an oral report from the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science.

RESOLVED:

That responsibility for approving and signing off the final institutional outline proposals for funding under Round 4 of the EPSRC Science and Innovation Award Scheme prior to their submission to the EPSRC by the deadline of 10 April 2007 be delegated to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Registrar and the Director of Finance.

430/06-07 Royal College of Nursing Research Institute: Heads of Terms (minute 71/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The Heads of Terms document for the acquisition by the University of the Royal College of Nursing Research Institute together with a covering letter to accompany the Heads of Terms and a summary paper prepared by the Business Development Manager, Warwick Ventures (SC.271/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the Heads of Terms for the transfer of and collaboration in research activity between the Royal College of Nursing and the University of Warwick be approved for signature by the University as set out in paper SC.271/06-07.

431/06-07 Trust Schools (minute 286/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A paper setting out possible approaches for the potential involvement of the University with Trust Schools and recommendations for the University's continued investigation into this area (SC.272/06-07) together with an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee support in principle the University's involvement with Trust Schools, subject to satisfactory alignment of the purpose of any such engagement with strategic institutional priorities and confirmation that Trustee status will not be associated with any financial liability or exposure.

- (b) That the University's discussions with the Westwood School be continued with a view to determining whether the School's aspirations for working with the University to establish a Trust can be realised to mutual benefit.
- (c) That the Steering Committee support the continuation of investigations into the potential participation of the University in a Shared Trust.

432/06-07 10-Year Pension Strategy for the HE Sector: UUK Questionnaire

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the UUK survey on pension benefits in the HE sector together with a copy of a letter from UUK and a covering paper prepared by the Acting Director of HR (SC.281/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the draft institutional response to the UUK pension benefits review be approved for submission to UUK by the deadline of 5 April 2007 subject to minor amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting.

433/06-07 Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

That the next meeting of the Steering Committee would be held on 16 April 2007.

434/06-07 Wolfson Foundation CURL Library Programme (minute 409/06-07 refers)

RECEIVED:

The final full bid proposal to the Wolfson Foundation for funding under the second round of the Wolfson CURL Library Programme to support the development within the Library of a flagship postgraduate research support facility (SC.274/06-07).

435/06-07 Independent Performance Assessment of Advantage West Midlands
(minute 740/05-06 refers)

RECEIVED:

A copy of a letter from Advantage West Midlands (AWM) on the outcome of the recent Independent Performance Assessment of AWM undertaken by the National Audit Office (SC.275/06-07).

436/06-07 Coventry Business Improvement District (BID) (minute 375/06-07 refers)

RECEIVED:

A copy of a letter from the Head of BIDs Projects for the "Coventry Best for Business" Business Improvement District providing formal notification of the final outcome of the ballot process for the establishment of a city-wide Coventry BID (SC.276/06-07).

437/06-07 HEFCE Allocation of Additional Student Numbers in 2008-09 for Employer Engagement
(minute 408/06-07 refers)

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/07/35 summarising the key elements of the HEFCE's recent announcement on the allocation of funds for additional student numbers to be co-funded by employers for the academic year 2008-09 together with an update on employer engagement

initiatives following the publication of the final Report of the Leitch Review of Skills (SC.277/06-07).

438/06-07 Development of TQI and the NSS: Outcomes of HEFCE Consultation

RECEIVED:

HEFCE Circular Letter number 08/2007 providing a summary of the responses received by the HEFCE to its consultation on development of the TQI website and the National Student Survey and setting out the decisions made by the TQI/NSS Steering Group in the light of the consultation outcome (SC.278/06-07).

439/06-07 New Immigration Fees

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/07/34 on the new visa fees to be implemented by the Home Office from 1 April 2007, the outcome of the recent Home Office consultation on a new charging system for immigration and nationality fees, and research undertaken by the Home Office and UK Visas into visa and immigration issues (SC.279/06-07).

440/06-07 International Student Enrolment Survey

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/07/25 on the findings from the 2007 UUK International Student Enrolment Survey (SC.280/06-07).

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