

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 5 December 2011

Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Professor A Caesar,
Professor S Croft,
Professor M Finn,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts (from item 170/11-12),
Professor S Swain,
Professor M Taylor,
Professor P Thomas,
Professor P Winstanley,
Mr L Bøe.

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Registrar.

In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of HR, Director of Estates, Head of Corporate Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive officer (VC's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), University Strategy Programme Manager (for item 175/11-12), Director of Health and Safety (for item 176/11-12), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for item 177/11-12).

169/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2011 be approved, subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~, additions underlined):

152/11-12 Human Resources Update

REPORTED: (by the Director of HR)

- (j) That, as part of the backfill arrangements for the Deputy Registrar, Jane Hodge had been appointed as Acting Chief Administrative Officer, Warwick Business School for a period of not less than six months commencing 21 November 2011.

(...)

170/11-12 Migration Advisory Committee Call for Evidence – Tier 2 (minute 153/11-12 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the Migration Advisory Committee's call for evidence on the level of the 2012/13 annual limit on Tier 2 and associated policies (SC.140/11-12).

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the Migration Advisory Committee's call for evidence on the level of the 2012/13 annual limit on Tier 2 and associated policies, as outlined in paper SC.140/11-12, be submitted prior to the deadline of 9 December 2011.

171/11-12 OIA Pathway 3 Consultation (minute 64/10-11 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the OIA Pathway 3 Consultation document, as requested in the Higher Education White paper, seeking views on issues relating to the goal of early resolution of student complaints (SC.133/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Corporate Governance)

- (a) That the University's response to the consultation welcomed efforts to promote best practice but was critical of proposals in the consultation to introduce significant new external requirements.
- (b) That the Students' Union would be submitting a separate response to the consultation.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (c) That the University's draft response could be strengthened in places to emphasise the University's opposition to the proposals in the consultation.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (d) That, while the University did not wish to prevent students from voicing valid concerns to the OIA, the number of "not justified" cases returned by the OIA indicated the need for internal mediation, in order to reduce the perception of the OIA being an "automatic" step.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Access, Widening Participation and Development)

- (e) That inclusion of the proportion of the University's student complaints that are deemed "not justified" by the OIA would further strengthen the University's response.

RESOLVED:

That the University's response to the OIA Pathway 3 Consultation as outlined in paper SC.133/11-12, subject to the amendments discussed at the meeting, be submitted prior to the deadline of 16 December 2011.

172/11-12 Department for Education (DfE) Implementation Plan for Initial Teacher Training (minute 805/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A UUK Policy briefing with assessment of the proposed changes to Initial Teacher Training (ITT) set out in the DfE Implementation plan (SC.141/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That changes to ITT funding would necessitate further consideration of the strategic development of the Institute of Education.

(by the Academic Registrar)

- (b) That, while Michael Gove indicated that "there is an important role for high quality, university led training in a diverse initial teacher training system", there was little information within paper SC.141/11-12 regarding the role of higher education institutions in this system.

173/11-12

University Librarian

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University Librarian, Anne Bell, had tendered her resignation to undertake the role of Librarian at Sydney University, Australia, and the Committee congratulated her on this appointment.

174/11-12

Monash University

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That, at its meeting held on 30 November 2011, the Council gave in principle approval for the University to sign a Heads of Agreement with Monash University, Australia to take forward the strategic alliance between the two universities.

175/11-12

University Strategy, Goal 1: Research and Scholarship

CONSIDERED:

An update paper on the progress of a range of activities being undertaken in pursuit of the Vision 2015 strategy objectives, with respect to Goal 1: Research and Scholarship (SC.127/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (a) That, while it was unlikely that the University would achieve its aspiration to attract 45 ISI highly cited researchers by 2015, the University's performance in this regard was above the Russell Group average and that this might be a more appropriate metric to aim for.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

- (b) That the University's Technology and Innovation Centre and strong engagement with industry could be used to increase research impact.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (c) That the increasing number of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students could impact on the potential of increasing postgraduate research student numbers to the desired level through pressures on space and learning resources.

(by the Director of HR)

- (d) That work undertaken by the Learning and Development Centre in respect of "Supporting Early Career staff" could strengthen the assessment of progress in this area.

(by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (e) That Warwick Business School would shortly be launching their strategy, with a strong emphasis on world-leading research, covering outputs, income and impact.

- (f) That the KPI for research outputs could be better disaggregated to separate the targets for 3* and 4* research outputs.

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences) and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine) consider the points raised by the Committee regarding Goal 1 of the University Vision 2015 strategy, to be fed into the revised KPI's for Research.

176/11-12

Health and Safety update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety, outlining the current position and priorities for 2010/11, including an oral report (SC.135/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Health and Safety)

- (a) That enhanced information on incidents, incident investigations and their resolution was being provided to staff and Heads of Departments, to highlight University expectations together with performance within their area.
- (b) That there were several examples of initiatives successfully undertaken by senior managers within departments, without direct involvement from the Health and Safety team, where departmental staff buy-in had been achieved and important progress had been made on health and safety matters.
- (c) That a sustained downward trend in the number of reportable incidents demonstrated changing attitudes and behaviours driven by the University's health and safety strategy.
- (d) That he felt the progress made was facilitated by the positive leadership demonstrated by the senior management in relation to health and safety.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (e) That there was strong evidence of significant progress and improvement in the University's Health and Safety KPI.

177/11-12

QAA Mid-Cycle Review

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft submission to the QAA Mid-Cycle Review (SC.128/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That all institutions were required to submit to the QAA Mid-Cycle Review following their institutional audit, and that this documentation would be reviewed by QAA Officers who would indicate any particular issues prior to the next audit.
- (b) That the University expected to receive the QAA's response to this submission in June 2012, prior to the audit in 2013.

(by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience)

- (c) That section 3.6 and 3.7 of the University's submission provided detail on the changes that had occurred in response to the recommendations arising from the Harris Constitutional Advisory Group.

RESOLVED:

That the University's draft submission to the QAA Mid-Cycle Review as set out in paper SC.128/11-12 be approved, noting that it would also be considered by the Academic Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 7 December 2011, prior to submission to the QAA by the deadline of 12 December 2011.

178/11-12

Schools Network

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Deputy Registrar, outlining a proposed partnership between the University and the Schools Network (SC.117/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the University had been approached by the Schools Network, in part due to existing links with the Institute of Education and their work within the Conference Centres.
- (b) That, in the short term, the proposed Schools Network Institute (SNI) would effectively assume an apprentice role and gain experience of academic approval and quality assurance processes through working with the University on the development of a range of new courses.
- (c) That the University would demonstrate a willingness to engage in the changing landscape of higher education, with potential for strengthening the professional development function within the Institute of Education.
- (d) That, although the role of the Institute of Education would be key at the 'curriculum development' stage, the proposed relationship was with the University more generally and it was likely that other departments might become involved in the initiative.
- (e) That the Schools Network Board had taken an in principle decision to approve the University as its principle partner.
- (f) That, while the Schools Network intended to gain degree awarding powers and eventually become a university, it was likely that it would be a specialised education provider.

(by the Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences)

- (g) That the proposal provided sufficient flexibility as part of the wider review of the Institute of Education's activity, and that responsibility for leading the project should be located centrally.

RESOLVED:

That the provision of a formal indication from the University to the Schools Network that it would, in principle, be willing to enter into a partnership with the aim of building capacity in the organisation to enable it in time to apply for degree awarding powers with the next step being the production of a business plan aimed at achieving this, be approved.

179/11-12

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement

RECEIVED:

A summary of the key areas within the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Autumn Statement, published on 29 November 2011(SC.138/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the proposed kite-marking of certain STEM courses by sector skills councils was unlikely to be introduced from 2012 and was a proposal that the University and the sector more broadly would oppose.
- (b) That it was unclear how the proposed £61m boost to research council capital investment would be allocated.

180/11-12

Fees Working Group Report

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Fees Working Group, with recommendations for changes to non-standard and intercalated year fee levels for 2012/13 (SC.111/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Academic Registrar)

- (a) That rates of increase in non-standard fees, as set out within paper SC.111/11-12, varied by department depending on previous rates of increase.
- (b) That Warwick Business School's proposed pricing strategy enabled premium non-standard fees in areas where the School was particularly strong in terms of reputation and achievement, and that there was substantial investment in the student experience and in scholarships to run alongside the proposed fee increases.
- (c) That the proposed non-standard fees for Warwick Medical School and the School of Law would be considered at a future meeting.
- (d) That it was proposed that six intercalated-year fee bands be established for students starting courses in 2012/13 and beyond, who would be undertaking intercalated years from 2013/14 onwards.
- (e) That the mapping of courses to intercalated-year fee bands followed consultation with departments.
- (f) That, should the ERASMUS scheme end, it was proposed that this fee be aligned with the 'lower' intercalated-year fee category i.e. 50% of the current 'old-regime' undergraduate Home/EU fee (the baseline for 2012/13 being £1,725), and that this was a relatively modest amount.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (g) That she was concerned that some Home/EU non-standard postgraduate taught fee levels within Warwick Business School would increase by significantly more than 20%, and that this concern had been raised at the Fees Working Group.

(by the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (h) That a review had indicated that Warwick Business School's offering was priced lower than their peers, and that the School's system of scholarships would mean that approximately 15% of students paying non-standard fees might be impacted by the fee increases on some courses.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (i) That it would be useful for the Fees Working Group to demonstrate how widening participation and access is considered as part of their deliberations and for this to be reflected in papers from the Group.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education and Student Experience)

- (j) That consideration should be given to the potential impact of fee levels on recruitment to courses with intercalated years, particularly those spent overseas, given the University's strategy to encourage students to work or study abroad.

(by the Deputy Registrar)

- (k) That confirmation had been received that students on an ERASMUS year abroad would continue to be supported in 2012/13 and 2013/14 at the current fee rate.
- (l) That efforts had been made by the Fees Working Group to reflect more accurately the level of supervision and support provided to different categories of intercalated year students.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed increases in non-standard tuition fees for undergraduate and postgraduate courses for 2012/13 as set out in the schedules of paper SC.111/11-12 be approved.
- (b) That the general principles for the setting of intercalated year fees from 2012/13 and beyond, as well as the list of fees by course as detailed in the Annex of paper SC.111/11-12, noting that the proposed fee bands, together with the mapping of courses to those fee bands, will be reviewed on a regular basis, be approved.
- (c) That the proposal that the fee for the PhD by Published Works for 2011/12 be set at £670, an increase of 6% on the 2010/11 fee of £630, be not approved and that the Fees Working Group should look again at this question.

181/11-12 Research Degree Programme Funding

RECEIVED:

A summary of modeling undertaken by the Management Information and Planning Office, using information set out in the HEFCE's announcement regarding Research Degree Programme (RDP) funding allocations (SC.112/11-12), to highlight the potential impact by department.

182/11-12 Higher Education Copyright Licence

RECEIVED:

A UUK Policy briefing regarding the negotiation of a new three-year higher education copyright licence for 2012-2015 (SC.136/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That discussions remained difficult and were ongoing within the sector, but that the University Library was working with departments to minimise potential impact.

183/11-12 REF – Reviewing Codes of Practice for Staff Selection

CONSIDERED:

A HEFCE circular to explain arrangements for reviewing codes of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for submission to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) (SC.139/11-12).

RESOLVED:

That the Committee consider and approve the University's code of practice on the fair and transparent selection of staff for submission to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, prior to the submission deadline of 31 July 2012.

184/11-12 The Woolf Report

RECEIVED:

An article from the Times Higher Education regarding the report of Lord Woolf's independent Inquiry into the London School of Economics' links to the Libyan regime (SC.144/11-12).

185/11-12 Appointments to Committees of the Senate

RESOLVED:

Board of Graduate Studies

That the recommendation that Professor Stephen Brammer (incoming Director of Graduate Studies of Warwick Business School) serve on the Board of Graduate Studies as one of the four members of the academic staff, be approved on behalf of the Senate, to replace Professor Jacky Swan (outgoing Director of Graduate Studies of Warwick Business School).

186/11-12 QAA "Outcomes" Paper

RECEIVED:

A circular from the QAA regarding the publication of an "Outcomes from Institutional Audit" paper, focussing on managing learning opportunities (SC.137/11-12).

187/11-12 Government e-infrastructure Investment

RECEIVED:

A press release from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills announcing the Government's multi-million pound e-infrastructure investment to improve high capacity networks, including support for JANET (SC.145/11-12).

NO/KP/steersshare/minutes/201112/Dec11/5Dec11