

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 31 March 2014

- Present: Vice-Chancellor and President (Chair),  
Provost,  
Professor A Caesar,  
Professor Christina Hughes,  
Professor Christopher Hughes,  
Professor T Jones,  
Professor J Palmowski,  
Professor S Swain,  
Professor M Taylor,  
Professor P Thomas,  
Professor P Winstanley,  
Professor L Young.
- Apologies: Professor A Coats, Registrar, Mr B Sundell.
- In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Group Finance Director, Director of Human Resources, Director of Development and External Affairs, Director of Estates, Assistant Registrar (Governance), Head of Institutional Governance Services (for item 196/13-14).
- 186/13-14 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2014 be approved, subject to the addition of Professor T Jones to the 'present' section of the attendance.
- 187/13-14 Labour Manifesto on Tuition Fees
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- That it had recently been announced that Labour's manifesto for the general election in 2015 could include a pledge to scrap the coalition's £9,000-a-year tuition fee, potentially replacing it with a maximum fee of £6,000.
- 188/13-14 Budget 2014
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)
- (a) That a number of opportunities for the HE Sector were announced as part of the Budget 2014 on Wednesday 19 March 2014, such as funding for a new Alan Turing Institute for work on big data and a pledge to overcome potential barriers in the postgraduate system.
- (b) That the proposed development of new degree-level apprenticeships was an important recurring theme, noting that the coalition government appeared intent on developing an alternative degree-level track.
- (c) That he had attended a meeting recently led by Lord David Sainsbury at which the concept of a system of mass apprenticeships supplemented with high quality vocational training was discussed, noting the challenge in implementing such a system.

189/13-14 Memoranda of Understanding

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the University had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indonesian Institute of Sciences.
- (b) That the Agreement would create a long-term collaboration partnership in priority research areas and professional education, noting that Indonesia was currently the fourth largest country in the world in terms of population.
- (c) That the University had also signed an MoU with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for two joint Chevening-Warwick scholarships.

190/13-14 New Director of Research Support Services

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That Dr Catherine Cochrane had recently been appointed as Director of Research Support Services and would take up the role from Wednesday 18 June 2014.
- (b) That Dr Cochrane was currently the Head of Research Support, Finance & Governance at the University of Liverpool.

191/13-14 Philanthropy Awards

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (a) That the University had granted four special awards to early career researchers to develop exceptional projects.
- (b) That the awards of £50,000 each had been funded entirely by philanthropic donations, with two of the awards presented to support Biomedical research projects, and the other two awarded to support Engineering research projects.

192/13-14 Monash-Warwick Collaborations

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That the first 2014 funding round for collaborative projects between Monash and Warwick had recently been opened, with four schemes offering a range of targeted funding opportunities to academic staff and students at both universities.

193/13-14 Warwick Conferences

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That Warwick Conferences had won Gold in the Best Value for Money Conference venue category at the 2014 Meetings & Incentive Travel Awards for the sixth year in a row.

RESOLVED:

That Warwick Conferences be congratulated on their achievement.

194/13-14 National Student Drama Festival

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That three productions by Warwick students had been selected for the NSDF in April 2014: a Drama Society production of Jim Cartwright's 'Road'; Music Theatre Warwick's sell-out show 'Rent and Nothing'; and a new piece by Barrel Organ and recent English & Comparative Literature Studies graduate Lucyna Raczka.

RESOLVED:

That the students involved in the productions be commended on their successful selection for the NSDF.

195/13-14 Warwick SU NUS Disability Award

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor and President)

That Warwick Students' Union had been named the winner of the NUS Disabled Students' Campaign of the Year (2014) at the Disabled Students' Conference, in recognition of the significant number of campaigns run by students at Warwick.

RESOLVED:

That the Students' Union be commended on their achievement.

196/13-14 Spring Term Institutional Risk Update

CONSIDERED:

A paper providing an overview of the Institutional Risk Register, as updated by risk owners during the Spring term 2014 (SC.107/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Head of Institutional Governance Services)

That following comments from risk owners and Senior Officers, the risk register had been updated for the Spring term and was being presented to the Steering Committee for its consideration and comment on the items raised in paper SC.107/13-14.

RESOLVED:

That the Spring term Institutional Risk Register be approved as set out in paper SC.107/13-14, subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting.

197/13-14 Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Response to Witty Review

RECEIVED:

The Government's response to the review by Sir Andrew Witty of universities and growth, together with comments by HEFCE on the response (paper SC.102/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the refreshed University Strategy would take cognisance of the government's call for universities to include the commitment to contribute to economic growth in their strategies.

198/13-14 HEFCE Capital allocations for learning and teaching 2014-15

RECEIVED:

A letter from HEFCE setting out the allocations for Learning and Teaching Capital Investment Funding (TCIF) for the financial year 2014-15 (paper SC.104/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine))

That the information contained within the letter and annex did not allow for easy comparison between institutions.

199/13-14 HEFCE Recurrent Grant 2014-15

RECEIVED:

An oral report and presentation by the Director of Strategic Planning and Analytics summarising the University's recurrent grant allocation for the 2014-15 financial year, following receipt of the grant letter from HEFCE on 24 March and the sector data on 27 March 2014.

REPORTED: (by the Director, Strategic Planning and Analytics)

- (a) That further analysis and granularity around the Teaching Grant was required, noting that queries and requests for clarification had been submitted to the HEFCE.
- (b) That the Teaching Grant continued to reduce year-on-year, noting that the calculation methodology had changed in 2014-15.
- (c) That a 5.85% sector-wide reduction in funding for old regime students had been applied.
- (d) That HEFCE used a multi-phased process: initially using HESES student number information to estimate allocations for the coming year and subsequently referring to HESA data of actual student numbers to calculate the outturn grant.
- (e) That different scaling factors were used each year, depending on the constitution of the student body, making exact comparisons difficult.
- (f) That a number of other factors were also taken into account, such as non-completion rates and SNC claw-back.
- (g) That £429m capital funding would be available on a competitive basis.
- (h) That Quality Related Research Funding remained flat in cash terms, with decreases in Research Degree Programme Funding and Charity Support Funding.

200/13-14 Strategy Refresh

RECEIVED:

An oral update from the Deputy Registrar on progress with the Strategy Refresh and consultation process.

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That consultation on the refreshed strategy would commence shortly and would include a series of opportunities for the University community to provide feedback.

- (b) That it was intended to present the draft refreshed strategy to the Council at its meeting in July 2014.
- (c) That the final strategy document itself would have a different 'look and feel' linked to the University's brand, following work with the University's Director of Marketing and Director of Development and External Affairs.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning))

- (d) That, in relation to the development of a Monash-Warwick education strategy, colleagues had recently come together to operationalise high level goals around the Teaching and Learning Strategy for the Alliance.

201/13-14

Capital Developments and Space Management

CONSIDERED:

A paper updating the Committee on the key issues and risks relating to capital development and space management at the University (SC.106/13-14).

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Planning and Resources))

- (a) That the paper provided a condensed overview of capital developments on campus.
- (b) That reprioritisation of projects and budgets had been approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee in November 2013.
- (c) That the impact of the timing and location of the approved capital projects had been mapped (as set out in Annex A of the paper), noting that, in view of the density of activity during certain periods, a framework for maintaining progress whilst minimising impact would be implemented.
- (d) That Project Progressing Groups (PPGs) were required for all major capital projects with an estimated cost of completion of greater than £1m.
- (e) That the role of PPGs had been expanded and were now being established at a significantly earlier stage to oversee the development of project objectives, scope and design.
- (f) That the supporting documentation for PPGs had been standardised, with chairs and members of new PPGs receiving an induction pack.
- (g) That further reports relating to campus developments would be brought regularly to the Steering Committee, among others.
- (h) That the Annual Accommodation Round (AAR) forms had been integrated with the Strategic Planning Round documentation requested to support the Academic Resourcing Committee Strategic Planning Group meetings.
- (i) That Space Dashboards, developed by the Strategic Planning and Analytics Office, had been implemented, supporting a shift towards a more metrics-driven approach to benchmarking and space allocation.
- (j) That the Capital Planning and Accommodation Review Group (CPARG) faced a number of challenging space pressures during the AAR this year, with limited opportunities for significant change in allocation.
- (k) That, in response to comments relating to the proposed timing of the ~~Maths~~ Mathematical Sciences (Zeeman) extension in the paper, it was noted that the project schedule was unchanged from the timing presented to Council and that other options

were being explored with the departments in the meantime to deal with additional space requirements.

- (l) That, in response to comments around space for postgraduate research students and Doctoral Training Centres, further discussion could usefully be had in a future meeting of the CPARG.

(By the Director of Estates)

- (m) That Annex B outlined the 19 PPGs, noting that 64 individual projects in total were registered at the current time.
- (n) That a sub-group of the Operational Risk Management Group had been established to meet on a regular basis to assess the impact of the implementation of the capital plan and sustain the campus environment and experience during the forthcoming period of intense capital development, particularly the highways and public realm project scheduled until Easter 2015.
- (o) That a car parking strategy continued to be developed, including the consideration of the potential for additional offsite provision.

(By the Group Finance Director)

- (p) That the National Automotive Centre (NAIC) project schedule was tight, in order to ensure that the contribution from HEFCE would be drawn down by the funding deadline.
- (q) That Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) data and other data indicated the opportunity for more optimal space-use by departments across the institution.

(By the Vice-Chancellor and President)

- (r) That in order to embrace future strategic opportunities it would be important to consider creative use of space on campus.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine))

- (s) That use of space in the centre of campus should be considered for large interdisciplinary initiatives.

202/13-14 Report from Research Support Services

RECEIVED:

A paper providing an update on activity in Research Support Services (RSS), paper SC.109/13-14.

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science, Engineering and Medicine))

- (a) That the volume of applications to date in the current year were down, reflecting the anticipated shift in focus of the University's largest funder, the EPSRC, which had concentrated in recent months on Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs), noting however that the University had been very successful with the recent round of EPSRC CDTs.
- (b) That it was anticipated that the number and value of applications would increase in the second half of the year, with calls for Horizon 2020 funding coming on stream.
- (c) That the Warwick Medical School in particular had secured a large number of new awards, reflecting recent investment in new academic appointments and success with important funders such as the Wellcome Trust and the Medical Research Council.

- (d) That Horizon 2020 would provide a significant funding opportunity for the University, noting however that it would be important for early engagement with RSS with regards to supporting the peak application volumes around deadlines.
- (e) That the HEFCE had recently released documentation on Open Access post-REF, which would be brought to the Committee for consideration in due course.

203/13-14 Membership of Senate Committees

REPORTED:

That the Chair of the Faculty of Social Sciences, acting on behalf of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, had taken Chair's Action to amend the composition of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences to include the Learning and Development Centre (LDC) and that Miss Emma King had been appointed to represent the LDC on the Committee, as set out in paper SC.110/13-14.

RESOLVED:

That the nominations of Dr Helen Toner (School of Law) and Dr William Curtis (Centre for Lifelong Learning) to serve on the Continuation of Registration Committee Panel (Undergraduate and Postgraduate) as members of academic staff appointed by the Senate, be approved as set out in paper SC.110/13-14.

204/13-14 HEFCE Sector Financial Health Report

RECEIVED:

A report providing an overview of the financial health of the HEFCE-funded higher education sector in England, paper SC.112/13-14.