

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Steering Committee held on 11 December 2006

- Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
Professor L Bridges
Professor A Caesar
Professor Y Carter
Mr B Duggan
Professor J Jones
Professor R Lindley (until item 191/06-07)
Professor M Luntley
Professor S B Palmer
Professor M Smith
Professor M Whitby
- Apologies: Professor S Bassnett, Professor H Thomas.
- In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 182/06-07 Mr E Harcourt, for items 183/06-07 to 189/06-07 the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, for items 188/06-07 and 189/06-07 the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation, for item 192/06-07 the University Librarian.
- 177/06-07 Minutes
- RESOLVED:
- That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2006 be approved.
- 178/06-07 USS and Early Retirements (minute 158/06-07 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That it had been announced at the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) AGM held on 7 December that the charging to USS of early retirement provisions for employees under the age of 60 would cease to be permitted with immediate effect and that the retirement age under USS would be 65 for all new contributors to the Scheme.
- 179/06-07 Select Committee Inquiry (minute 157/06-07 refers)
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the Russell Group would be responding to the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee inquiry into the future and purpose of the higher education sector and that it was the University's intention not to submit a separate response to the Select Committee.
- 180/06-07 Research Development Fund
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the information reported at the meeting of the Senate held on 6 December had been a misunderstanding, that there would be a second round of awards under the University's Research Development Fund in the Spring Term 2006/07 and that an announcement to this effect had been made on the University website.

181/06-07 Computer Science Departmental Review

CONSIDERED:

The Report of the Review of the Department of Computer Science (SC.124/06-07) noting that the Head of Department would be invited to attend a subsequent meeting of the Steering Committee for detailed discussion of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, notwithstanding the fact that final decisions on the recommendations of the Report could not be reached until there had been an opportunity for the Committee to discuss these with the Head and representatives of the Department, the Steering Committee support the focus, outcome and general thrust of the recommendations set out in the Review Report and in particular the recommendations of the Review Panel relating to research.
- (b) That it was the view of the Committee that, notwithstanding the strategic focus of the Review Panel on issues relating to research within the Department of Computer Science, the Review Report did not take sufficient account of issues relating to student recruitment, teaching and learning and curriculum content within the Department and that these issues would need to be addressed alongside the recommendations contained within the Report.
- (c) That a monitoring group be established to work with the Department of Computer Science to take forward the recommendations contained in the Review Report which were approved by the Committee, the proposed membership of this group to be approved by the Steering Committee in due course.
- (d) That, in all future instances, the resolutions of the Steering Committee and its approval of any recommendations contained within Strategic Departmental Review Reports be referred to the Academic Resourcing Committee for implementation.

182/06-07 Research Income (minute 161/06-06 refers)

RESOLVED:

That the report on the research activity and income profile for all academic departments to be prepared by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), the Director of Finance and the Director of Research Support Services be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee at its next meeting.

183/06-07 Reform of Higher Education Research Assessment and Funding: Government Response

RECEIVED:

- (a) A news release from the HEFCE on the outcome of the recent national review of research assessment and proposals for alternative approaches to research assessment beyond the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise together with a copy of a letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to the Chairman of the HEFCE (SC.119/06-07).
- (b) An oral report from the Vice-Chancellor on his attendance at the meeting with the Secretary of State for Higher Education and Skills on 6 December at which the Government's response to the national review had been announced, noting that 10 other institutions had been represented at this event (minute 167/06-06 refers).

184/06-07 Beacons for Public Engagement: Invitation to Apply for Funds

CONSIDERED:

HEFCE document 2006/49 inviting proposals from all HEIs for collaborative Beacons of Public Engagement (SC.121/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) discuss with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the Director of the Warwick Arts Centre the potential submission by the University of an application for funding under the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative with a view to bringing forward any bid proposals for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to submission to the HEFCE by the deadline of 14 February 2007.
- (b) That the potential submission of an institutional application for funding under the Beacons for Public Engagement initiative be raised as an item for discussion at the next meeting of the University Research Committee to be held on 12 December 2006.

185/06-07 Cooksey Review of UK Health Research: Final Report

RECEIVED:

The executive summary and key recommendations of the final report from the Cooksey Review of institutional arrangements for the new single fund for Health Research (SC.122/06-07) together with an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

186/06-07 Appointment of ESRC Board and Committee Members 2007

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the ESRC had invited nominations of suitably qualified and experienced individuals to fill a number of vacancies in the part-time membership of ESRC Boards and Committees in 2007.

RESOLVED:

That Research Support Services coordinate the preparation of nominations from the University for appointment to the membership of ESRC Boards and Committees for consideration by the Steering Committee prior to submission to the ESRC by the closing date of 22 January 2007.

187/06-07 Student Admissions

CONSIDERED:

A report prepared by the Director of Academic and Student Affairs, the Director of Finance and the Academic Registrar on progress made in addressing issues in relation to student number target setting and student recruitment and admissions (SC.114/06-07). (minute 72/06-07 refers)

RECEIVED:

University data on home/overseas undergraduate and postgraduate applications for entry in October 2007 as at 30 November 2006 (SC.115/05-06) together with an oral report from the Head of Student Admissions and Widening Participation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the measures that had already been put in place to address the issues relating to student number target setting and student recruitment and admissions for the 2007/08 entry cycle be noted and wholly endorsed by the Steering Committee.
- (b) That the University's target of not entering Clearing by 2008/09 must be achieved with no detriment to entry standards and student number targets.

188/06-07

International League Tables

CONSIDERED:

The recommendations of the Vice-Chancellor's International League Table Review Group established to develop a strategy for the improvement of the University's performance in international league tables (SC.116/06-07) together with an oral report from the Vice-Chancellor.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) contact University College London (UCL) to obtain copies of the guidelines issued by UCL to all members of academic staff on expectations of academic staff relating to research, teaching and administration activities as well as guidance on the level of support to be provided to staff by the institution to support these activities and that these guidelines be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee in due course.
- (b) That the Steering Committee welcome the report from the International League Table Review Group and the recommendations of the Group on the proposed way forward and that further consideration of the recommendations be deferred until the Committee had had an opportunity to discuss the information to be obtained from UCL as set out in (a) above.
- (c) That the Senior Assistant Registrar (Research Assessment) contact the compilers of the Newsweek International Top 100 Global Universities league table with a view to obtaining data on the league positions of universities ranked below the top 100 institutions.

189/06-07

WMS Quarter-End Report

CONSIDERED:

The 1st quarter statement from the Warwick Medical School for the financial year 2006/07 (SC.117/06-07) together with an oral report from the Dean of the Warwick Medical School.

RESOLVED:

That the 1st quarter statement for the WMS Devolved Budget for the financial year 2006/07 be noted and approved as set out in paper SC.117/06-07.

190/06-07

Wolfson Foundation CURL Library Programme: Draft University Submission
(minutes 78/06-07 and 110/06-07 refer)

CONSIDERED:

The draft outline proposal to the Wolfson Foundation for funding under the second round of the Wolfson Library Programme for University libraries in membership of the Consortium of University Research Libraries (CURL) to support the development within the Library of a flagship postgraduate research support facility (SC.113/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Steering Committee approve the draft outline bid to the Wolfson Foundation as set out in paper SC.113/06-07 subject to minor amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting and that responsibility for final approval of the final submission be delegated to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Director of Finance.
- (b) That the final bid to the Wolfson Foundation take into account the issues raised in discussion at the meeting in regard to an appropriate and distinctive nomenclature for the proposed postgraduate research suite

191/06-07 DFES Employer Engagement Survey

CONSIDERED:

A letter inviting the University to participate in a project commissioned by the DfES on policy and practice on the engagement of higher education institutions with the needs of the workforce (SC.123/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the University not respond to the invitation to participate in the DfES employer engagement survey.

192/06-07 Home Office Consultation on New Charging System for Immigration and Nationality Fees (minute 113/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to the Home Office consultation on a new charging system for immigration and nationality fees (SC.107/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the draft institutional response to the Home Office consultation on a new charging system for immigration and nationality fees be approved as set out in paper SC.107/06-07 for submission to UUK by 15 December 2006 and to the Home Office by 22 December 2006.

193/06-07 Higher Education in Further Education Colleges

CONSIDERED:

HEFCE consultation document 2006/48 on the main elements of the HEFCE's policy for supporting higher education in further education colleges (SC.118/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) determine whether the University should respond to the HEFCE consultation on higher education in further education colleges.

194/06-07 Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

That the next meeting of the Steering Committee would be held on 8 January 2007.

- 195/06-07 Board of Governors of Warwick Schools (minute 58/06-07 refers)
- RESOLVED:
- That Professor D Grammatopoulos of the Warwick Medical School Clinical Sciences Institute be nominated as the University's representative on the Board of Governors of the Warwick Independent Schools Foundation for the period to 30 June 2009 to replace Professor McEldowney.
- 196/06-07 Membership of Council Committees
- REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)
- That the Council, at its meeting to be held on 13 December, would be requested to approve the recommendation that Professor C Sparrow and Professor M Waterson be appointed to the membership of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to fill the two existing vacancies in the academic membership of the Committee.
- 197/06-07 Research Incentivisation
- RESOLVED:
- That the issues discussed at the meeting in regard to research incentivisation within academic departments be included as an item for discussion in the report on departmental research activity and income to be brought forward for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting (minute 182/06-07 above refers).
- 198/06-07 TRAC Teaching Costs (minute 737/05-06 refers)
- CONSIDERED:
- A comparative analysis of teaching costs between UK HEIs based on benchmarking data relating to 2004/05 teaching surpluses or deficits as a proportion of spend (SC.108/06-07).
- RESOLVED:
- That a further analysis of comparative teaching costs between UK HEIs based on TRAC data for 2005/06 be brought forward for consideration by the Steering Committee once this data has become available.
- 199/06-07 Part-Time Students in Higher Education: UUK Policy Briefing
- RECEIVED:
- UUK Information Note I/06/116 on the publication of the UUK Policy Briefing "Part-time students in higher education – supporting higher-level skills and lifelong learning" together with a summary note from the Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning (SC.120/06-07).