

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

FACULTY OF SCIENCE

Board of the Faculty of Science

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 14 February 2007.

Present: Professor A Easton (in the Chair), Professor RC Ball, Professor MJ Cooper, Dr A Dowd, Professor J Feng, Dr K Flint, Professor R Freedman, Professor J Hutton, Professor K Lamberts, Professor R MacKay, Dr AM Price, Dr J Robinson, Dr C Sparrow, Professor R Wilson, Professor V Zammit.

Apologies: Mr T Arnold, Professor SK Bhattacharyya, Professor S Bright, Professor P Carpenter, Professor P Derrick, Professor JW Gardner, Professor R Green, Professor S Jacka, Ms S Liggins, Mr D Morley, Professor G Nudd, Professor L Roberts, Professor L Robinson, Dr M Skinner, Professor M Smith, Professor S van Strien, Professor PR Taylor, Professor M Waterson.

In attendance: Professor T Bugg, Ms H Ireland, Dr T Hawkes (for item 23/06-07), Mr S Carpenter (for item 23/06-07), Dr K Leppard,

MINUTES

21/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 8 November 2006 be approved.

22/06-07 Matters arising on the Minutes

(a) Library provision (BFS minute 16/06-07 refers).

REPORTED:

That Departments in the Science Faculty could raise issues connected with library provision through the Library's Science representative.

(b) Future meetings and Deadlines for papers (BFS minute 15/06-07 refers).

CONSIDERED:

A proposal that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Faculty of Science held on 31 January 2007 should not be considered by the Board at this meeting, as they had been received after the deadline for this meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the above proposal be rejected.

23/06-07 Computer-Aided Assessment in Science departments

CONSIDERED:

- (a) A paper on Computer-Aided Assessment (CAA) in Science departments (paper BFS.3/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the Board should support the continuation of this project, to develop Computer-Aided Assessment in Science departments.
- (c) That requests to book IT facilities for Computer-Aided Assessment should be accommodated, and a longer-term solution to this space issue needed to be found.
- (d) To thank Dr Hawkes for his valuable contribution to this project.

24/06-07 Report from the Faculty of Science IT Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Science IT Committee held on 24 January 2007 and an oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science IT Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (b) That the Board recognised that it would need to take a pragmatic approach to the ban on large email attachments, but that it was still concerned:
 - (i) that there was inadequate reporting of message failures to both the sender and recipient; and
 - (ii) that the files.warwick mechanism would not solve the issue of external people sending large attachments to the University.

REPORTED:

- (c) That members of the Board were concerned about the number of occasions when IT problems had occurred over the weekend and had not been fixed until well into the following week.
- (d) That there was an increasing importance of the reliability of IT systems out of hours because of the growth of distance learning programmes (especially international).

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the Chair of the Faculty IT Committee raise this at the IT Policy Committee, and ask IT Services to consider options to ensure out of hours service or monitoring, with a minimum objective of ensuring that, if systems fail during the weekend, they are operational by 9am on the Monday.

25/06-07 Report from the Sub-Faculty

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Faculty of Science held on 31 January 2007 and an oral report from Dr K Flint, on behalf of the Chair of the Sub-Faculty of Science.

26/06-07 Report from the Graduate Studies Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 31 January 2007 and an oral report from the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the constitution of the Science Graduate Studies Committee should be amended to include between one and three members of academic staff of the Doctoral Training Centres within the Faculty, appointed by the Board of the Faculty of Science on the recommendation of the Chair of the Graduate Studies Committee (minute SGS.23(a)/06-07 refers).

27/06-07 Report from the Faculty of Science Research Committee

RECEIVED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty of Science Research Committee held on 17 January 2007.

RESOLVED:

That clarification should be sought over whether study leave could be taken for teaching purposes as well as research (minute 4 from SFRC 17/1/07 refers).

28/06-07 Chair's Business

(a) Advantage West Midlands

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the Science Cities initiative, being funded by Advantage West Midlands.

(b) Nominations for Early-Career Researchers

CONSIDERED:

An invitation for applications from early-stage and early-career researchers to present posters at the House of Commons (paper BFS.2/06-07), noting that the deadline was Friday 23 February.

RESOLVED:

That departments should actively seek people to nominate, noting that the Vice-Chancellor was extremely keen that the University should be represented.

(c) International Strategy

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on links with Africa and North America, noting that a delegation from the Science Faculty will visit the US in early April, to be followed up by a visit of the Vice-Chancellor later in April.

RESOLVED:

That departments should inform the Chair if they have ideas for places that would be worth the Science Faculty delegation visiting.

(d) Midlands Physics Alliance

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the award of funding from HEFCE for a Midlands Physics Alliance, creating a partnership of excellence in physics research and education at the universities of Birmingham, Nottingham and Warwick.

(e) Warwick Teaching Excellence Awards

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair on the Warwick Teaching Excellence Awards, noting that so far no nominations had been received from Science departments.

(f) New Year's Honours

REPORTED:

That Professor Howard Dalton (Biological Sciences) had been awarded a knighthood in the New Year's Honours.

29/06-07 Annual Course Review

CONSIDERED:

- (a) The composite report on the postgraduate course review reports for 2005-06 from across the Faculty of Science (paper SGS.48/06-07).
- (b) The composite report on the undergraduate course review reports for 2005-06 from across the Faculty of Science (paper SFS.38/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the composite reports on the undergraduate and postgraduate course review reports for 2005-06 from across the Faculty of Science be approved (papers SFS.38/06-07 and SGS.48/06-07).

30/06-07 Policy on Use of Postgraduate Students for Teaching

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2006 (minute AQSC 32/06-07 refers) considered a proposal from the Board of Graduate Studies for a policy on the use of postgraduate students for teaching, paper BGS 6/06-07, and resolved that the proposed policy be referred to

the Faculty Boards for comment, before further consideration at the second meeting of that Committee in the Spring Term 2007.

- (b) That the Graduate Studies Committee of the Faculty of Science supported the proposed policy (minute SGS 33/06-07 refers).

CONSIDERED:

- (c) A draft policy on the use of postgraduate students for teaching as set out in paper BGS6/06-07 (revised).

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the draft policy on the use of postgraduate students for teaching as set out in paper BGS6/06-07 (revised) be supported.

31/06-07 Degree Classification Conventions

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Academic Quality and Standards Committee at its meeting on 1 February 2007 (draft minute AQSC 54/06-07 refers) considered a position paper prepared by the Secretary setting out progress to date on consideration given to harmonising degree classification conventions across the Faculties of Arts, Science, and Social Studies and outlining the next steps (paper AQSC 35/06-07) and resolved:
 - (i) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group be reconvened to finalise proposals for introducing a new University-wide marking scale with a shared understanding of the meaning of terms, and GPA-based degree classification conventions along the following lines:
 - (A) The new marking scale to have 16-20 points, presented not in numerical or percentage terms, but using mark descriptors (e.g. exceptional First, high First, mid First, low First, high 2.1, mid 2.1, low 2.1 etc.);
 - (B) A recognition that to avoid clustering overall degree results in the 2.1 bracket unfairly module marks on the 16-20-point scale must be converted to percentages before being averaged to decide the final classification;
 - (C) Credit overloads to be treated consistently across all Faculties, with proposals to recognise credit overloads to be put forward by departments through course regulations or another agreed mechanism;
 - (D) Clarity of terminology around “score”, “mark”, “result” and similar terms, in consultation with colleagues in the Academic Office working on the Mark Entry Project.
 - (ii) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group draw on the expertise and experience of members of the Committee, including Professor Harrison and Dr Flint;
 - (iii) That the Assessment Conventions Working Group prepare a concise summary of their proposals as the first stage in engaging colleagues across the University in discussions.

CONSIDERED:

- (b) The paper on Degree Classification Conventions presented to AQSC (AQSC.35/06-07).

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the recommendations within the paper on Degree Classification Conventions (AQSC.35/06-07) not be supported, noting that:
- (i) the proposals did not meet the criteria of the Burgess Group as far as Science departments were concerned;
 - (ii) several aspects of the proposals were not desirable.
- (d) That Professor J Hutton (Statistics) be nominated to represent the Science Faculty on the Assessment Conventions Working Group.

32/06-07 Items to be brought to the Senate

CONSIDERED:

Whether there were any specific issues which the Board of the Faculty wished to refer to the Senate for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That there were no specific issues which the Board wishes to refer to the Senate for consideration.

33/06-07 Future Meetings and Deadlines for Papers

REPORTED:

- (a) That the final meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science in the academic year 2006/07 would be held on Wednesday 30 May 2007 (Council Chamber).
- (b) That the deadline for the receipt of papers was 12 noon six working days preceding each meeting of the Board of the Faculty.

CONSIDERED:

- (c) A proposal that the date of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science in the summer term be moved to the following week.

RESOLVED:

- (d) That the proposal that the date of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science in the summer term be moved to the following week be approved.
- (e) That the deadline for the receipt of papers for this meeting be kept to the original date (ie. Tuesday 22 May) to facilitate early circulation of papers.

34/06-07 Notification of new appointments to the Library

REPORTED:

- (a) That the Library needed to know about new academic appointments, especially if these would require the purchase of new journals.

RESOLVED:

- (b) That Heads of Departments should ensure that departmental Library Committees were aware of the need to alert the Library about new academic appointments.

35/06-07 Reserved items

See the separate minutes for academic members of the Board of the Faculty only.

JD/HJ/BFSMinutes14Feb07