

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
Wednesday 14 February 2018

- Present: Professor M Shipman (Chair), A Baker, Professor R Ball, Dr D Britnell, Professor G Brown, Professor L Frigerio, Dr M Gifford, Professor L Green, H Koestler, Professor D Leadley, Dr L Ranko, Professor R Roemer, Professor T Mottram, Professor C Sparrow, Professor M Steel, Dr H Toner, Professor D Towers, Dr C Vernon, Professor M Ward, Dr J Warren, Dr D Wood
- Apologies: Professor M Achtman, Professor C Davis, Dr F Camiletti, Professor S Banerji, B Kynman R Goodwin, Dr D Rumynin, Professor G Martin, Dr F Schlaghecken, Professor C Warhurst, Dr D Watson
- In attendance: L Hasler (Secretary), S Black (item 4 only), Professor L Garcia (item 5 only), Dr L Morton (item 9 only)
-

17/17-18 Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 15 November 2017 (BFS.07/17-18).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science held on 15 November 2017 (BFS 07/17-18) be approved

18/17-18 Matters arising on the Minutes

- a) Big Bang Fair (minute 5(b)/17-18 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Schools of Engineering & Life Sciences and Departments of Physics & Statistics would be participating in the Big Bang from 14 – 17 March 2018. The stand would need to be staffed for the entire period, so expressions of interest from postgraduate research students from other disciplines were welcomed, and should be made to sciencefacultyboard@warwick.ac.uk.

The 'Thinking About Science' brochures (one for pre GCSE and one for pre A-level/degree) were having their design refreshed. Any spare copies after the Big Bang could be made available to departments to re-use in their activities. Departments were welcome to arrange their own printing if they would find them useful in the support of events, please contact Louise Hasler for more information.

b) Faculty Representations on the Senate (minute 08/17-18 referred)

REPORTED:

That one nomination to the vacancy on the Senate (until 2020) had been received, for Professor Mike Ward, thus an election had not been required.

19/17-18 Chair's Business

(a) City of Culture 2021

That Coventry's success in winning the bid to become the City of Culture 2021 would provide opportunities for the sciences as well as the arts, and that large scientific events could be brought to the University's campus, e.g. the British Science Festival. The Chair asked for any ideas to be shared with him and Professor Jonothan Neelands (Academic Director, Cultural Partnerships) in the first instance, in order to prevent duplication of effort.

(b) Awards and Congratulations

Professor Tom Marsh (Department of Physics) had been awarded the 2018 Herschel Medal for pioneering research into close binary star systems.

Dr Nikos Zygouras (Department of Statistics), had been awarded an EPSRC Early Career Fellowship.

Dr Matthew Jenner (Department of Chemistry), Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow, had been awarded a BBSRC Future Leader Fellowship.

A partnership between WMG, at the University of Warwick, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and Coventry City Council, had been awarded £80 million to establish a new National Battery Manufacturing Development Facility.

(c) Sustainable Development Workshop

A sustainable development workshop was to be hosted by the Institute for Global Sustainability on 28 February. The event would provide an overview of sustainable development, the Institute, and an opportunity to network and discuss further developing research ideas (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/schoolforcross-facultystudies/igsd/outputs/?newsItem=8a17841a60fe741101611eef9dd73617>), and members were asked to share this with colleagues as appropriate.

(d) New Head of the School of Mathematics

Professor John Greenlees (currently at the University of Sheffield) would commence as Head of Mathematics on 1 April 2018.

(e) 1st Warwick Postdoctoral Science Symposium

The 1st Warwick Postdoctoral Science Symposium was being planned by colleagues in Chemistry for 3 April 2018 (<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/research/postdoc-research/postdoc-science-symposiu>). The aim of the symposium was to foster new collaborations, and it was open to all disciplines. The keynote speaker would be Professor Sir J.Fraser Stoddart, winner of the 2016 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. HoDs were requested to support the event and encourage attendance where appropriate.

(f) Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building

Council had now approved the IBR building that would be built on the Gibbet Hill campus, that will bring together biomedical researchers from the School of Life Sciences and Warwick Medical School. Redevelopment of science infrastructure was emerging as part of the University's strategy and the Vice Chancellor and the Senior Management Team were aware of the salient issues, including the aging buildings along Library Road.

(g) WATE/University Awards

The Chair encouraged the nomination of colleagues for Warwick Award for Teaching Excellence (deadline 28 February), and upcoming University Awards.

20/17-18 University's Anti-Bribery Policy

CONSIDERED:

An oral report from Sophie Black, Assistant Registrar in the Secretary to Council's Office on the University's requirement to comply with the UK Bribery Act 2010, the availability of an e-learning module to ensure appropriate awareness of guidance, and the need for Heads of Departments to determine which colleagues should undertake the module.

RESOLVED:

That due to the relative difficulty of encouraging uptake of modules, it was advised that a targeted approach of key individuals would be most pragmatic.

21/17-18 Review of Personal Tutoring

CONSIDERED:

The report of the Personal Tutoring Review Group, together with an oral report from Professor Louise Gracia, the Dean of Students, outlining the recommendations of the review group (BFS.08/17-18).

That and notwithstanding the view expressed by the Science Faculty Education Committee, AQSC had agreed that recommendation 4) should be rewritten to reinstate a 25 tutee limit, and to indicate that where this limit was exceeded, departments would be required to explain the reasons for this and how the quality of personal tutoring provision and wellbeing of tutors was ensured.

That the Faculty of Science operated a range of models of successful provision, and the opportunity to offer an explanation for divergence from the 25 tutee limit was welcomed.

That the limit might not currently be achievable in some departments due to their success in recruiting students.

That the Dean of Students' Office had been working on the less contentious recommendations such as personal tutoring awards, a student guide, development of training plans and development of the website.

RESOLVED:

To support the report and its recommendations.

22/17-18 Consultation on the Merger of the Faculties of Science & Medicine

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Acting Academic Registrar, outlining the potential benefits and limitations to a merger of the Faculty of Medicine with the Faculty of Science, setting out next steps and inviting the appointment of two members of the Board to the Task and Finish Group to take forward consideration of the proposal to merge the faculties with effect from the start of the academic year 2018/19 (BFS.09/17-18).

That the paper had not met with any objections when it had been considered by the Faculty Board of Medicine; and that concerns had been at the level of ensuring adequate representation on committees and preserving the identify of Warwick Medical School with respect to NHS Trusts.

That the paper had been written from the perspective of how potential changes might influence Warwick Medical School, rather than the possible impact on the Faculty of Science, but that no serious problems were identified.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair would identify two representatives of the Board outwith the meeting, and that the Chair or the Deputy Chair would attend meetings of the Task and Finish Group as *ex officio* members.

23/17-18 Items from the Faculty of Science Education Committee

RECEIVED:

An oral report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science Education Committee, Dr Dave Britnell, from the meeting held on 31 January 2018.

(a) Students Permitted to Start Late

An appeal by a first year student registered in the School of Engineering 2016-17 was upheld, and the student's relatively late start to his studies had been relevant to the appeal; it was noted that departments were expected to agree a 'latest start date' for the purposes of admission, but that this should be no later than two weeks after the start of term (or three weeks for students joining the first year with the new Welcome Week); that starts later than this needed the consent of the Academic Registrar, but that in addition to this other Faculties had requirements for departments to stipulate a named colleague who would support students who started their studies late. SFEC had therefore been asked to consider if a similar stipulation would benefit students in the Faculty of Science.

There wasn't any wish to name a colleague to provide explicit support, but it was agreed that no student should be allowed to start later than two weeks after the beginning of term.

(b) Intermediate Qualifications

A proposal was considered in relation to intermediate qualifications, which would recognise the achievement of students who had been unsuccessful in meeting the requirements for progression or award of a first degree, and reduce non-continuation rates (included in the basket of TEF metrics).

It was agreed to support the new qualifications, but not the recommendation that the harmonised first year progression requirements be increased.

(c) Penalties for Late Submission

A proposal to harmonise submission penalties for all modules (both undergraduate and postgraduate) was considered, driven by the School of Engineering's need to have PSRB requirements reflected in regulation and for modules co-taught at both undergraduate and postgraduate level to accrue the same submission penalties for all students.

SFEC resolved to recommend harmonisation of penalties to the higher limit of 5 percentage points per day, but there was not a consensus across the Faculties for harmonisation at any level. It might be a topic that is revisited, as views may change in the light of sector research.

(d) Graduate Outcomes Survey

The Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE) is to be superseded by HESA's new Graduate Outcomes survey. The census date would now be 15 months, which may be beneficial in that it allows students more time to find a graduate job, but SFEC noted that the at the census point students who had recently completed a Masters degree and were seeking employment would also be captured and that this might have a negative impact on survey results. The University will no longer be able to report on behalf of students, so Student Careers and Skills are keen to draw upon the views of departments regarding how to support high response rates. It was agreed that communications that came via a known contact in an academic department would be more successful than an email sent in the name of Student Careers and Skills.

(e) Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS)

The committee received a presentation from the Senior Assistant Registrar, Strategy and Policy, outlining the forthcoming replacement of the JACS subject coding system with the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS) framework, as required by HESA and UCAS by April 2018.

There is no space left in the JACS hierarchy for further development, and the implementation of HECoS provides an opportunity for a far broader range of stakeholders to use a common subject coding system in the future

HECoS will be implemented for the 2019 recruitment/admissions cycle (students starting study in Autumn 2019), thus UCAS requires HECoS to be in place by April 2018. The aim was to make it easier to sort subjects consistently across the sector and ensure greater transparency.

Subject codes given to courses affect the calculation of benchmarks by HESA and HEFCE. New codes will inform the grouping of the TEF subject areas and

the grouping of subject areas for league tables; each publication builds their own collections of subjects (as yet unknown).

(f) Module evaluation

It was reported that the Student Learning Experience & Engagement Committee (SLEEC) were overseeing the development of an online, central module evaluation system, with automated data gathering for departments. Use of the system will not be mandatory, but the aim is to introduce a central provision at the start of 2018/19, which would provide some common questions, ample space for locally developed questions and a set of guidance on how to collect and use module evaluation data with due care. It would aim to support departmental use of module evaluation data for enhancement purposes as well as individual data gathering for promotion and probation purposes.

(g) Progress Against Institutional Teaching and Learning Review 2017 Recommendations and Student Survey Action Plans

Education Committees had been asked by the PVC (Education) and the Academic Director for WIHEA respectively to consider progress against departmental action plans. Due to volume of business, the plan was to transact this by close reading groups, which is an innovation for Faculty sub-committees.

Close reading groups met in person or virtually prior to the meeting. However, there was consensus that CRGs were symptomatic of an overly full agenda, that the topics for consideration detracted from agenda items to which the committee felt they could contribute more helpfully and that they were ineffective as CRGs had further sub-divided the reading.

Thought was being given to how to proceed, as the PVC (Ed) does wish Education Committees to be involved in this way, and consideration of departmental progress towards enhancement of the student experience is included in the Terms of Reference of Education Committees. It may be that CRGs could be provided with papers more than one week in advance of the meeting to allow more time for consideration of business, and that the Chair/Deputy Chair could be asked to support the CRGs more explicitly. Advice is also being sought from the PVC regarding the minimum input required by Education Committees.

24/17-18 University Research Centres – Triennial Review

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Research & Impact Services (BFS.10/17-18) providing introduction and context to the triennial review of four Category II substantive Research Centres and one Category III departmental Research Centre, and review forms as follows: Mathematics Research Centre; Warwick Anti-Microbial Interdisciplinary Centre; Warwick Centre for integrative Synthetic Biology; Warwick Environmental Systems Interdisciplinary Centre; and Warwick Institute for Science of Cities, and an oral report from Dr Leona Morton, Research Strategy and Development Manager.

That the review process was useful.

RESOLVED:

To recommend the continuation of these Research Centres to the Research Committee, and also the recommendations for changes as required.

25/17-18 Proposed New University Research Centres

CONSIDERED:

- a) Centre for Health Economics at Warwick (CHEW) (BFS.11/17-18).

RESOLVED:

To indicate to the Research Committee that the Board was supportive of the proposal for the Centre for Health Economics at Warwick.

- b) Warwick Mental Health Research Centre (WMHRC) (BFS.12/17-18).

RESOLVED:

To indicate to the Research Committee that the Board was supportive of the proposal for the Warwick Mental Health Research Centre, noting that the paperwork was inconsistent with respect to the period of the appointment of the Director.

26/17-18 Faculty Thesis Prizes

REPORTED:

That the Faculty Thesis Prize scheme would be running for 2018, with full information available online at <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/staffresources/thesisprizes2018>. The competition was being run on the same lines as previously. Winners and their supervisors would be invited to attend the Faculty end of year event to receive their certificate.

27/17-18 Warwick Collaborative Postgraduate Research Scholarships

REPORTED:

That six applications had been received for six scholarships, for which a 50% contribution to the costs must be secured by an external sponsor. The deadline had now passed, but any further applications received would be considered in date order and held as reserve in case further scholarships became available as a result of insufficient uptake of allocations in other faculties.

28/17-18 Timeliness of Feedback

RECEIVED:

A composite report on timeliness of feedback on assessment submitted in the autumn Term 2017 across the Faculty, received by the Science Faculty Education Committee on 31 January 2018 (SFEC.13/17-18), noting that there had been no discussion of the

report at SFEC and that the Secretariat had asked the Chair to consider reports that had flagged failure to comply with the assessment turnaround time policy.

31/17-18 Minutes of Science Faculty Education Committee

RECEIVED:

Confirmed minutes of the SFEC meeting that took place on 25 October 2017, for information (SFEC.13/17-18).

32/17-18 Date of Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science would be held as follows:

Thursday 31 May 2018 from 10.00am – 12:00pm, CMR1.0, University House
(followed by lunch from 12:00 – 2:00 pm).