

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Board of the Faculty of Social Studies

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies held on Wednesday 13th
February 2008

Present: Professor R Lindley (Chair), Professor S Ali, Professor C Aubrey, Professor S Breslin, Dr S Butterfill, Professor R Davies, Professor M Harrison, Dr C Harrison, Professor C Hughes, Dr D Lamburn, Professor G Lindsay, Professor A Neal, Dr F Peter, Professor A Prout, Professor S Rai, Professor A Reeve, Professor B Rosamund, Dr R Smith, D H Spencer-Oatey, Ms A Stewart, Professor A Williams, Dr C Wright.

Apologies: Dr T Allen, Professor P Burnham, Professor R Burridge, Dr R Carter, Professor P Christensen, Professor P Edwards, Dr F Griffiths, Dr C Jones, Professor P Marginson, Professor J McEldowney, Dr F McKay, Professor R Naylor, Professor H Polemarchakis, Professor E Robinson, Mr E Stewart, Professor H Thomas, Professor D Wilson.

In Attendance: Ms A Backhouse, Ms J Bradfield (for item 24/07-08), Dr C Carden (for item 23/07-08), Mr C Jones, Ms N Muckle,

18/07-08 Constitution, Membership and Terms of Reference

REPORTED:

- (a) That Professor J McEldowney had replaced Ms D Stevens as a member of the Board representing the School of Law.
- (b) That Professor S Rai had been appointed as sole Director of the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, replacing Professor J Scholte, and would attend the Board in the capacity as Director.
- (c) That as Professor Rai was attending the Board in her capacity as Director of the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, there was now a vacancy on the Board for a representative from the Department of Politics and International Studies.
- (d) That Professor R Davies had replaced Professor T Ahrens as a member of the Board representing Warwick Business School.
- (e) That Mr Q Diep had been appointed as the Board's postgraduate representative.
- (f) That Mr C Jones had replaced Ms H Kinnear as Assistant Secretary to the Board.

19/07-08 Faculty Representation on the International Committee

REPORTED:

That Ms A Stewart, School of Law, had been appointed as a second representative of the Faculty on the University's International Committee.

20/07-08 Minutes

CONSIDERED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2007.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2007 be approved.

21/07-08 Matters Arising

(a) ESRC Research Centres Competition (minute BFSS.3/07-08 (b) referred)

REPORTED:

That following the submission of a proposal from Professor M Salmon (Warwick Business School) to the ESRC Research Centres Competition to establish an ESRC-funded research centre entitled 'Centre for Financial Innovation and Public Policy', the University had been informed that the proposal had not been short-listed.

(b) Faculty Research Forum (minute BFSS.4/07-08 referred)

RECEIVED:

- (i) Minutes of the first meeting of the Forum, which took place on Wednesday 6th February 2008 (paper BFSS.18/07-08).
- (ii) An oral report from Professor S Rai regarding the first meeting of the Faculty Research Forum, which took place on 6th February.

REPORTED:

- (iii) That the Chair of the Faculty Research Forum was Professor S Rai (PAIS) and that administrative support was provided by Ms F Brown (Economics);
- (iv) That the Faculty had received £5k from the University's Research Development Fund, in order to develop research themes within the Faculty, noting that at the first meeting of the Research Forum the themes of 'Biopolitics' and 'Childhood' were identified as priorities for further exploration.
- (v) That it was anticipated that the next meeting of the Forum would take place in May 2008.

(c) Strategic Departmental Review (minute BFSS.6/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That the Senate, at its meeting on 5th December, had approved the revised guidelines for the Strategic Departmental Review process and that the guidelines and schedule are now available online (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/sdr/>).

- (d) Faculty Forum on Teaching and Learning Issues (minute BFSS.07/07-08 (h) referred)

RECEIVED:

An oral report from Professor C Hughes (Sociology) on preparations for the Faculty Forum on Teaching and Learning Issues, noting that following the agreement of Professor C Hughes at the last meeting to take forward discussions regarding the formation of a Faculty Forum on Teaching and Learning Issues, a Forum was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 5th March at 2-4 pm (venue to be confirmed).

REPORTED:

That Professor Hughes had received the following suggestions from departments for themes which could be explored at the first Forum:

- Assessment and Feedback;
- Alternative Processes of Assessment;
- Plagiarism and the New Marking Scale Pilot;
- Equality and Diversity in Teaching.

RESOLVED:

That Professor Hughes invite Dr J Moss (Teaching Quality) to attend the Forum to discuss the new marking scale pilot, should this be an agenda item.

- (e) Undergraduate and Graduate Committee Procedures (minute BFSS.10/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

That the paper prepared by the previous Assistant Secretary, to examine some of the procedural difficulties encountered in relation to the Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies (paper BFSS.4/07-08), had been revised in the light of comments made by the Board at the last meeting and in the context of comments made under agenda item 9/07-08 (November 2007 agenda), and would be considered by the Deputy Registrar's Office (which replaced the University Secretary's Office from 1st February 2008).

- (f) Election of Board Members to the Senate (minute BFSS.15/07-08 referred)

REPORTED:

- (i) That a By-Election was conducted in accordance with University Regulation 2.2 (6)-(12), in order to fill two vacancies which existed on the Senate for the period to 31st July 2010;
- (ii) That Professor C Hughes (Sociology) and Professor R Burridge (Law) were elected by the Board to the Senate for the period to 31st July 2010.

22/07-08 Chair's Business

Workload Models

REPORTED:

That Heads of Departments in the Faculty had exchanged information about departmental academic workload models. There were a number of differences between departments in

terms of the range of activity covered and how workload elements are measured. For example, some departments regarded membership of Faculty Board sub-committees as contributing to workload, whereas others did not; similarly some departments included PhD supervision as a contributory factor to workload, but others did not.

23/07-08 Items for Strategic Discussion

Research Excellence Framework

REPORTED:

That the HEFCE consultation on the assessment and funding of higher education research post-2008 could be found at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2007/07_34/, noting that the deadline for responding to the consultation was 14th February 2008.

RECEIVED:

- (a) A summary of the consultation on the assessment and funding of higher education research post-2008, paper BFSS.11/07-08.
- (b) The University's draft response to the consultation, paper BFSS.12/07-08.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That Dr G Carden provide the Secretary to the Board with electronic copies of responses to the consultation from individual departments within the Faculty, together with a copy of the summary of responses document, for uploading onto the Board's 'files@warwick' website (<https://files.warwick.ac.uk/bfss/browse/bfss>).
- (d) That the Secretary to the Board investigate the establishment, by the University Library, of an institutional digital repository for the University and its potential relevance to bibliometric indicators.

24/07-08 Credit and Module Framework

CONSIDERED:

Proposed amendments to the University's Credit and Module Framework, paper AQSC 35/07-08 (revised).

REPORTED:

That the Board had concerns in relation to the following sections of the paper:

- (a) Course Structures: (deletions struck through, additions underlined)

"The University.....recommends that courses normally be designed not to require the accumulation of significant quantities of credit in excess of this 120 –150 credits per year. The equivalent load for full-time postgraduate courses is 180 credits, as most such courses take place across twelve months, rather than three 10-week terms."

Despite the inclusion of "normally" in the text, the Board felt that the wording might de-legitimise existing courses with higher credit allowances; for example, the Politics, Philosophy and Economics undergraduate degree, or the Warwick Business School MBA.

(b) Assessment:

“Some modules offer students a choice of assessment methods. Where this is the case, students may not change their chosen assessment method to discount a failure to submit a required piece of assessed work, or change their chosen assessment method after submitting the first piece of assessed coursework.”

The Board noted that some departments currently permit changes in assessment method later in modules and the Board therefore felt that this practice should be left to the discretion of individual departments.

RESOLVED:

That Ms J Bradfield relay the Board's concerns to the Chair of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

25/07-08

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy, paper AQSC 6/07-08 (revised 3).

REPORTED:

That the Board was broadly in support of the paper, but commented on the following sections:

(a) Putting the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Enhancement Strategy into effect:

“4. The University will ensure that there are structures in place to recognise and reward exceptional teaching and learning support, for example through annual monitoring, the promotions processes, sabbaticals for teaching development, and Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence.”

Some Board members wished to receive clarification about the promotions process and the potential for promotion in relation to staff whose work was predominantly teaching (rather than research) focussed, but it was noted that this would be raised directly with the Academic Staff Committee by departments which had concerns.

(b) Longer-term projects: Teaching methods, organisation, resources

- “1. Examine the deal which students receive in terms of hours and spread of contact; establish norms for seminar/discussion group sizes (varying by year)?
2. Investigate the relationship between academic input, expected student effort and credit weighting, to lead to creation of some broad norms, perhaps by Faculty.”

Whilst the Board supported the above discussions, it felt strongly that the University should not try to establish norms, but that what is 'normal' should remain, or be established, at departmental level, noting differences between subjects, with sharing of best practice taking place.

- “3. Provide opportunity for all students to overload, for no extra fee (after raising of fee cap on undergraduate courses), with overload being recognised and rewarded.”

The Board was of the opinion that “Provide” should be amended to “Explore”, noting that there was currently no recompense (financially or in terms of staff time, for example) for departments who teach overloading students.

(c) Longer-term projects: Breadth within curricula, flexibility of delivery

- “5. Consider whether the common module size of 30-credit in Arts & Social Studies inhibits flexibility – a 24-credit standard maximum could allow more external modules to be taken, while a greater range of single-term modules could facilitate students following a wider range of modules.”

The Board had mixed views on whether module sizes should be harmonised. Whilst it was agreed that harmonisation would enable greater flexibility for students, it was noted that:

- (i) A large amount of work would be necessary in order to achieve this, for example in terms of re-examining module content (assessment requirements, contact hours, etc) to be in line with new credit weightings;
- (ii) The current wording was biased towards 24 credits;
- (iii) The credit weightings for modules delivered to external parties were often dictated by them, dependent on the requirements of the course they wished to run.

RESOLVED:

That Ms J Bradfield relay the Board’s comments to the Chair of the Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

26/07-08 Report from the Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committee

RECEIVED:

The *unconfirmed* minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Undergraduate Studies Committee held on 30th January 2008, paper BFSS.13/07-08.

REPORTED: (by Dr C Wright)

- (a) That presentations were received at the meeting held on 30th January about (a) the electronic course transfer system and (b) the new marking scale pilot.
- (b) That discussion took place regarding the role of chairperson of the committee, including expectations placed upon the Chair, succession planning and stability in terms of chairperson, together with discussions about developing efficiencies in committee module and course approval processes, which would be taken up with the Deputy Registrar.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That members of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies submit comments from their departments regarding the new marking scale pilot to Dr J Moss (Teaching Quality).

- (d) That progress on the new marking scale pilot be an agenda item at the Summer Term meeting of the Board and that Dr J Moss and Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor) be invited to attend.

27/07-08 Report from the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee

RECEIVED:

The *unconfirmed* minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Graduate Studies Committee held on 31st January 2008, paper BFSS.14/07-08.

CONSIDERED:

A proposed revision to the terms of reference, as recommended by the Graduate Studies Committee at its meeting held on 31st January 2008, as follows (additions underlined):

- (a) To consider and approve, on behalf of the Board, new postgraduate modules and changes to postgraduate modules in the Faculty.
- (b) To consider and recommend to the Board of Graduate Studies, on behalf of the Board, new postgraduate courses in the Faculty.
- (c) To consider matters referred to it by the Board, including business referred to it by the Board of Graduate Studies and to respond to the Board of Graduate Studies on behalf of the Faculty Board.
- (d) To advise and make recommendations to the Faculty Board on matters concerning postgraduate teaching and assessment in the Faculty.

REPORTED: (by Professor S Breslin)

That the following points had been noted, following the meeting of the Graduate Studies Committee:

- (e) Attendance was often incomplete; therefore it would be advantageous for departments to identify an alternative individual to attend a meeting when required;
- (f) The deadline for submitting Annual Course Review reports (early January) was not workable and had the potential to prevent thorough scrutiny of the information by Committee members, due to (a) the short timeframe in which to do so before a meeting and (b) the vast volume of information submitted for consideration, noting that late submission of Annual Course Review reports could initiate a delay in the consideration of the information by the Committee.
- (g) The expectation early in the Spring Term for Committee members to simultaneously consider Annual Course Review reports and Warwick Postgraduate Research Scholarships creates difficulties in terms of conflicting priorities, as both have pressing timescales.
- (h) The Committee would be highlighting areas of best practice or concern, which were raised in the Annual Course Review reports, to departments via Committee members, before submission to the Board of Graduate Studies and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee for their consideration, together with the composite postgraduate research and postgraduate taught reports on the ACRs.
- (i) The Graduate School was in support of Chair's action not being taken on new modules.

- (j) Due to the particularly large volume of business considered at each Postgraduate Committee and Undergraduate Committee meeting, there was a considerable amount of preparatory work to be carried out by the Secretariat before each meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed revision to the terms of reference of the Committee, as recommended by the Graduate Studies Committee at its meeting held on 31st January 2008 and set out above, be approved.

28/07-08 Report from the Faculty IT Committee

RECEIVED:

- (a) An oral report from the Chair of the Faculty IT Committee, Professor A Neal.
- (b) The minutes of the meeting of the Faculty IT Committee, held on Monday 11th February 2008.

REPORTED:

- (c) That the IT Committee expressed the view that there was an urgent need for IT Services to provide clear guidance at a strategic level on the use of external media for storing data currently held on the University system, including the downloading of material held by way of attachments to emails within the Exchange system, and wished the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies to remit the matter to the Information Policy & Strategy Committee for urgent consideration.
- (d) That issues had arisen in relation to the provision, by the University, of support for foreign language sets, noting that support was available via IT Services, but it was not provided as part of the normal University computer system, but that such support would be important in relation to the University's aims for internationalisation.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That the issue of the use of external media for storing data currently held on the University system be referred to the University's Information Policy and Strategy Committee for urgent consideration.
- (f) That the issue of the provision of support, by the University, for foreign language sets be referred to the University's Information Policy and Strategy Committee for urgent consideration, noting that the student software image was believed to be currently under review within the University.

29/07-08 Faculty Advisory Board

REPORTED:

- (a) That Professor M Harrison (Department of Economics) and Professor C Hughes (Department of Sociology) had been appointed as University members of the Social Studies Faculty Advisory Board for the period to 30th September 2010.
- (b) That the next meeting of the Faculty Advisory Board will be held on 24th April 2008.
- (c) That the period of office of a number of members of the Advisory Board will come to an end on 30th September, 2008. Members of the Faculty were therefore requested to consider appropriate individuals to approach for

membership of the Advisory Board, noting that existing members may be approached to serve a second three-year term of office.

- (d) That the term of office of the current Chair of the Advisory Board would come to an end on 30th September 2008.
- (e) That the current membership of the Advisory Board was set out in paper BFSS.15/07-08.

RESOLVED:

That the Secretary to the Board contact departments to request nominations for future members of the Advisory Board.

30/07-08 Matters Relating to Faculty Research Centres

- (a) Centre of Ethics, Law, and Public Affairs

CONSIDERED:

A proposal for the establishment of a new research centre entitled 'The Centre for Ethics, Law, and Public Affairs' (papers BFSS.16/07-08 and BFSS.17/07-08).

RESOLVED:

That subject to the approval of the Senate to establish the Centre for Ethics, Law and Public Affairs, Dr M Clayton be appointed as sole Director of the Centre for the period to 31st July 2010.

RECOMMENDED: (to the Senate)

That the proposal for establishing a new research centre entitled 'The Centre for Ethics, Law, and Public Affairs' be approved.

- (b) Centre for Criminal Justice (minute BFSS.14/07-08 (e) refers)

REPORTED:

- (i) That at its last meeting the Board considered a proposal for establishing a Law School based Centre for Criminal Justice, papers BFSS.8/07-08 and BFSS.9/07-08, which had been approved by the Law School Research Committee, and resolved that the proposal for establishing a Law School based Centre for Criminal Justice be approved in principal, subject to Chair's action on approving the detailed constitutional information required for submission to Senate (should that be appropriate).
- (ii) That the Senate, at its meeting held on 5th December 2007, resolved that the proposal for establishing a Law School based Centre for Criminal Justice, together with the proposed constitution for the Centre, be approved.

CONSIDERED:

A proposal from the Law School to appoint Professor J Hodgson as sole Director of the Centre for Criminal Justice for the period to 31st July 2010.

RESOLVED:

That the proposal from the Law School to appoint Professor J Hodgson as sole Director of the Centre for Criminal Justice for the period to 31st July 2010 be approved.

31/07-08 Date of the Next Meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Board will take place on Wednesday 28th May at 10am in the Council Chamber, University House.

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