

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 16 March 2009

Present: Vice-Chancellor,  
Professor S Bassnett,  
Professor L Bridges,  
Professor S Bruzzi,  
Professor R Higgott,  
Professor K Lamberts,  
Professor R Lindley,  
Professor M Smith,  
Professor M Underwood,

Apologies: Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor H Thomas, Mr S Thomson, Professor M Whitby

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of IAS (for item 431/08-09), Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (for item 432/08-09), Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality) (for items 433/08-09 and 434/08-09)

423/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2009 be approved.

424/08-09 HEFCE Circular 05/2009/: Bringing Forward Capital Spending from 2010/11(minute 402/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

A letter from the HEFCE confirming that the Chemistry Teaching Laboratory Building and the Millburn House extension capital projects had been approved to be brought forward from 2010/11 (SC.299/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the University would need to demonstrate in May 2010:

- (i) that the work was brought forward and had not displaced other scheduled work,
- (ii) that there was sufficient project management capacity for the increased activity in 2009-10,
- (iii) that this acceleration of the programme had had no adverse impact on the original intentions of the project, and
- (iv) that bringing forward the activity had not compromised the quality of the project or had an adverse environmental impact.

425/08-09 UUK I-Note I/2009/009: HEFCE Announcement on Recurrent Grant 2009/10 (minute 408/08-09 refers)

RECEIVED:

An information note from Universities UK (UUK) providing the Committee with a summary of the HEFCE recurrent grant letter and outlining UUK's response (SC.307/08-09).

- 426/08-09 Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA) Academy Governor
- REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)
- That the RSA Academy in Tipton had requested that the Registrar to serve as a governor for the Academy on behalf of the University.
- RESOLVED:
- That the appointment of the Registrar as a governor of the RSA Academy on behalf of the University be approved.
- 427/08-09 International Leadership and Management Programme
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- (a) That the University was launching an International Leadership and Management Programme (based on the former Higher Education Management Programme) which would consist of a two-week programme for UK and international administrators in HE including visits to other institutions and sessions with high-profile speakers.
- (By the Registrar)
- (b) That further details of the programme's contents would be available shortly.
- 428/08-09 National Pay Negotiations
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the University had been notified that the University and College Union (UCU) had suspended plans to ballot its members over industrial action, noting that the overall position of the talks with the Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) remained unclear.
- 429/08-09 Academic Health Science Centres
- RECEIVED:
- A press release from the Department of Health indicating the institutions awarded Academic Health Science Centre status (SC.302/08-09).
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- As previously noted at the Steering Committee, the University of Birmingham had been shortlisted as one of seven institutions, but had not been successful at the final stage.
- 430/08-09 Letter from Minister of State for Schools and Learners: Graduate Opportunities - Teacher Training and Recruitment
- RECEIVED:
- A letter from the Minister of State for Schools and Learners seeking the University's support for promoting teaching as a career to its graduates (SC.303/08-09).
- REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)
- That the University was actively encouraging its graduates to consider a career in teaching alongside other options.

431/08-09

Policy Update: Institute of Advanced Study

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of the Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) updating the Committee on activities including short-term visiting fellows, facilities, early career fellowships, recruitment of the new director, and outputs & strategic use of the IAS in external bids (SC.300/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the Institute of Advanced Study)

- (a) That the IAS had identified the work of Boston University in African Studies as a potential area of development with regards to the Sub-Saharan African Research Network.
- (b) That the IAS encouraged applicants to engage with external funding bodies as well as applying to the IAS.
- (c) That it was not clear whether the funding for the proposed Westwood Gatehouse refurbishment would be drawn from the IAS budget or other University capital funds.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Science and Medicine))

- (d) That the level of visibility of the IAS across the institution was very good and the IAS was having a positive impact in encouraging colleagues to consider interdisciplinary work.
- (e) That the importance of the interdisciplinary aspect in applications for the IAS Early Career Fellowships might be made clearer to potential applicants.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report on the IAS be approved as set out in SC.300/08-09, noting that the report highlighted the high level of quality activity being undertaken.
- (b) That the Director of Estates, the Finance Director and the Director of the IAS discuss the funding issues concerning the Westwood Gatehouse.

432/08-09

Policy Update: Admissions and Recruitment

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment outlining the University's current admissions position and recruitment, together with updates on widening participation activities (SC.306/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment)

- (a) That the University continued to hold a strong market position at undergraduate level, noting, nevertheless, that some courses and departments would find it challenging to meet their Home/EU intake targets and that the situation in these cases would be monitored.
- (b) That postgraduate research applications had increased by circa 30%.
- (c) That the increased volume of postgraduate taught and research applications had created challenges with regards to making and communicating decisions to applicants in a timely fashion.
- (d) That the results of the Postgraduate Decliners' survey would be disseminated to departments and the Board of Graduate Studies.

- (e) That the survey highlighted the need to increase visibility and opportunities for scholarships at the University.
- (f) That the recent Goal programme launch was a success, attracting around 160 gifted and talented year 10 pupils from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds, their parents and teachers from across England.

RESOLVED:

That the report on admissions and recruitment be approved as set out in SC.306/08-09.

433/08-09

QAA Institutional Audit Final Report and Accompanying Statement

CONSIDERED:

The draft of the University's statement for publication alongside the final QAA Institutional Audit report, as well as details concerning the final report (SC.304/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Science)

That the statement of "our 'strenuous efforts' to develop students' awareness of good academic practice and issues of plagiarism" in the statement for publication might be taken to read as if there had been significant issues in this area within the institution.

RESOLVED:

That the statement for publication be approved to be sent to the QAA by 20 March 2009 as set out in SC.304/08-09, subject to the amendment discussed in the meeting.

434/08-09

School of Life Sciences

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair of the Faculty of Science updating the Committee on the proposal to establish a School of Life Sciences following the extraordinary meeting of the Board of the Faculty of Science on 4 March 2009 (SC.305/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Faculty of Science)

- (a) That the Board of the Faculty of Science had expressed concern over the dual planning group structure as approved by the Steering Committee at its meeting on 23 February 2009 favouring a single Planning Group as set out in SC.305/08-09.

(By the Vice-Chancellor)

- (b) That there were significant issues to be considered by the two groups and that a compromise would be to retain the two Planning Groups as approved by the Steering Committee but to ensure that there were periodic joint meetings of and regular updates between the Groups.

(By the Deputy Registrar)

- (c) That it was anticipated that the governance arrangements arising from the Planning and Implementation Group would be considered by the Faculty Boards in the Summer Term 2009 with recommendations being made to the Senate and Council at their meetings in June/July 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the two Planning Groups approved by the Steering Committee as set out in SC.252/08-09 be retained.

- (b) That the addition of a representative from Warwick Medical School to the membership of the Academic Planning Group be approved.
- (c) That the Terms of Reference be amended to include a 'plan for interaction' rather than 'integration' with Warwick Medical School, Chemistry and other departments.

Kms/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Mar09/16Mar09