

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 19 January 2009

Present: Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Bruzzi,
Professor K Lamberts
Professor R Lindley,
Professor R Higgott,
Professor M Smith,
Professor H Thomas,
Mr S Thomson,
Professor M Underwood,
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Vice-Chancellor, Professor S Bassnett, Professor L Bridges

In Attendance: Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of Estates, Director of Development, Communication and Strategy, Acting Executive Officer (Vice-Chancellor's Office), Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance),

270/08-09 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2009 be approved, subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~ and additions underlined):

(a) 248/08-09:

~~CONSIDERED:~~ RECEIVED:

An information note from UUK asking members to provide comments on the QAA proposals for changes to two aspects of the institutional audit, student membership of audit teams and the audit of collaborative provision (SC.175/08-09).

~~RESOLVED:~~

~~That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning/International Affairs) prepare a response on behalf of the University for submission by the deadline of 13 February 2009.~~

(b) 251/08-09:

RESOLVED:

That ~~Professor~~ Dr Rudolf Roemer (Physics and Director of the Centre for Scientific Computing) be appointed to the Information Policy and Strategy Committee by the Steering Committee on behalf of the Senate.

271/08-09 HEFCE Letter: Bringing Forward Capital Spending from 2010/11 (minute 221/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

A letter from HEFCE providing details on how HEIs could apply to bring forward capital spending projects from 2010/11 (SC.194/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(a) That the possibility of bringing forward spend on equipment was discussed in a recent meeting regarding the University's plans for the Capital Investment Fund (CIF)

allocation to be spent by March 2009, noting that the University had already brought forward many of its projects.

(By the Director of Estates)

- (b) That he would investigate whether it would be possible to exchange the CIF funding for Science and Innovation funding in the Capital Plan funding profile.

RESOLVED:

That following a meeting later today to discuss the financial implications of bringing forward spending, the Director of Estates and the Finance Director update the Committee at its next meeting.

272/08-09 Strategic Departmental Review of School of Law: Departmental Response (minute 231/08-09 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The departmental response to the Strategic Departmental Review of the School of Law held on 29 February 2008 and 15 to 16 May 2008 and the action plan, together with an oral report from the Head of the School of Law (SC.198/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Head of the School of Law)

- (a) That the departmental response had been prepared in consultation with some senior colleagues but had not been circulated to all staff in the School.
- (b) That the goal for the School following the Review was not to change its focus entirely to become more distinctive but to continue with Law in Context with a better structured and quality driven approach to research and teaching.
- (c) That consideration would be given to the function of the Warwick Legal Training unit which, if linked more closely to the mainstream work of the School, could be a formal training outlet to the wider legal community.
- (d) That the Teaching Quality Group within the School was proposing a reduction in the size of Undergraduate seminars from 16 to 14 students, noting that the Group would formally report its recommendations at the end of the current academic year.
- (e) That the School would welcome any feedback from other departments who have deployed incentive and sanction schemes to improve individual, and thus the overall, research performance within the department, noting that the implementation of a University-wide policy would aid all departments in this regard.

(By the Dean of Warwick Business School)

- (f) That Warwick Business School might be able to assist with creating and offering more specialist options to Law students and the establishment of new courses given that several of its academic staff had experience in relevant areas.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the departmental response and action plan be approved as set out in SC.198/08-09.
- (b) That the Head of the School of Law be invited to provide the Steering Committee with a progress report in the Autumn Term 2009.

273/08-09 Next Meeting of the Steering Committee

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

That the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 January 2009 would take place at the new Wolfson Research Exchange located in the University Library.

274/08-09 Visit to US Universities

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That he, the Finance Director, the Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, and the Director of Human Resources & Commercial Services had recently visited the Universities of Boston, New York, Princeton and Vanderbilt, noting that further information on the findings from these visits would be circulated in the future.

275/08-09 HEFCE Circular 29/2008: HE-Business and Community Interaction Survey 2007/08

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft response to the HEFCE Higher Education – Business and Community Interaction Survey for 2007/08 (SC.191/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the University's Industrial Development Officer)

That the 2007/08 narrative return contained only minor revisions from the previous year's response, noting that there was outstanding verification to be undertaken on the figures included in Part B prior to submission.

RESOLVED:

That the response be approved as set out in SC.191/08-09 for submission by the deadline of 26 January 2009, noting that further verification would be required on Part B to ensure accuracy and, particularly, to check whether the numbers included research commissioned by Sector Skills Councils.

276/08-09 Policy Update: Research and Innovation

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Research Support Services updating the Committee of developments within the University's research strategy including the Science City Initiative, Advantage West Midlands funding, strategy initiatives, the Research Development Fund, research income generation and research assessment planning (SC.190/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Research Support Services)

- (a) That three Low Carbon proposals had been submitted for funding to the Low Carbon Initiative, noting that these bids would encourage and support new partnerships.
- (b) That work and expenditure related to all grants awarded for 2006/07 had been started and an analysis for 2007/08 was currently underway, noting that new KPIs within Research Support Services would aid in ensuring and monitoring that work on grants awarded had begun.

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

- (c) That the Boston University partnership had received limited funding in the research strategy stream but would require additional funding to ensure developments were taken forward.

(By the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research: Arts and Social Studies))

- (d) That research performance data for academic colleagues was being prepared for use in research assessment planning meetings with departments, noting that it was important for departments to consider the data and the collection methodology prior to the meetings to ensure that they were as effective as possible.

(By the Finance Director)

- (e) That to aid financial planning, it would be beneficial to receive a disaggregated version which splits the research income figures into capital and revenue.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.190/08-09.

277/08-09

Policy Update: Admissions and Recruitment

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment updating on issues in undergraduate and postgraduate admissions and recruitment (SC.197/08-09).

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

- (a) That the undergraduate recruitment position was healthy, noting that the University would have a clearer picture of its position against competitors after the UCAS deadline of 15 January 2009.
- (b) That Home/EU undergraduate recruitment would continue to be monitored closely to manage overall recruitment given that the University had exceeded the lower threshold of the HEFCE contract range in 2007/08.
- (c) That overseas postgraduate taught applications continued to rise compared to the same time last year, noting that while this demonstrated a positive market position, the increase had put the new BPM workflow system under strain.
- (d) That while Home/EU postgraduate research recruitment was largely in line with the last academic year, the reported decline was related mainly to overseas students, noting that the International Office were investigating whether the decline was country-specific and whether it was similar in other institutions.

RESOLVED:

That the report be approved as set out in SC.197/08-09.

278/08-09

University Draft Annual TRAC Return

CONSIDERED:

The University's draft TRAC return for 2007/08 to HEFCE providing management information on the University's surpluses/deficits on teaching, research and other activities (SC.196/08-09).

RESOLVED:

That the return be approved as set out in SC.196/08-09 for submission by the 30 January 2009 deadline.

279/08-09 Students' Union Consultation on Induction

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That in 2008/09 the University introduced Intr08, a induction programme for new undergraduate students and the next stages for the programme were currently being considered.

(By the President of the Students' Union)

That following Intr08, the Students' Union had started a consultation with heads of academic and service departments on a more substantive integrated induction programme to start in 2010.

RESOLVED:

That any proposals arising from the consultation be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

280/08-09 Prime Minister's Summit on Jobs

RECEIVED:

An email from the Chief Executive of Universities UK reporting on the Prime Minister's Summit on jobs held on 12 January 2009, together with a government press release on the proposals (SC.193/08-09).

281/08-09 HEFCE Circular 01/2009: Grant Programme Relating to Links between HEIs and Schools, Colleges and Academies

CONSIDERED:

Information from HEFCE regarding applications for funding to develop school-HE link models (SC.195/08-09).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That any application would be aligned with the University's strategic priorities, noting that the institution already had a number of school partnerships.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Registrar, the Academic Registrar and Director of Student Admissions and Recruitment undertake work to establish whether the University would submit a bid by the 27 February 2009 deadline, noting that any bid would be considered by the Committee at a future meeting prior to submission.

282/08-09 Death of Miss J D Browne

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

That the first principal of Coventry College of Education, Miss J D Browne had died and that there would be University representation at any memorial event.

RESOLVED:

That a note of condolence be sent to Miss Browne's family on behalf of the University.

283/08-09

UUK Report: Higher Education Pay and Prices Index

RECEIVED:

A report from Universities UK illustrating the changes in price levels including salaries faced by universities in the United Kingdom and providing information at a local level for institutions in costing contracts and setting budgets (SC.192/08-09).

kms/jf/steersshare/minutes2008-09/Jan09/19Jan09