

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 14 November 2011

- Present: Vice-Chancellor,
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Professor S Croft,
Professor C Hughes,
Professor T Jones,
Professor J Labbe,
Professor K Lamberts,
Professor S Swain,
Professor P Thomas,
Mr L Bøe.
- Apologies: Professor A Caesar, Professor M Finn, Professor M Taylor, Professor P Winstanley,
Registrar.
- In Attendance: Deputy Registrar, Director of Finance and Financial Strategy, Director of
Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Head of Corporate
Governance, Head of Governance Support Services, Executive Officer (VC's Office),
Administrative Officer (Governance), Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality)
(for item 129/11-12), Learning and Development Manager (for item 129/11-12),
Director of Management Information and Planning (for item 132/11-12), Acting Senior
Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk and Continuity) (for item 132/11-12), Assistant
Registrar (Governance) (for item 132/11-12), Director of Student Careers and Skills
(for item 133/11-12), Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management &
Timetabling) (for item 134/11-12).

128/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2011 be approved, subject to the following amendments (deletions ~~struck through~~, additions underlined):

107/11-12 Postgraduate Issues

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

(I) That HEIF funded studentships (which accounted for ten of the fourteen WCPRS studentships for 2011) must be used for matched funding by industry or business.

(...)

129/11-12 UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education (minute 103/11-12 refers)

RECEIVED:

The revised UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) published by the Higher Education Academy ((HEA), together with a summary report (SC.104/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality))

- (a) That the revised UKPSF had few substantive changes from the earlier Framework, with the inclusion of a new fourth “descriptor” to encompass wider strategic roles within teaching and supporting learning contexts.
- (b) That engagement with the subject-specific elements of the framework was not considered a significant challenge for the University, given existing ~~LGD~~ LDC provision and the opportunity to contextualise learning in the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic and Professional Practice (PCAPP).

(by the Learning and Development Manager)

- (c) That the University’s current Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision mapped readily to the first two new recognition levels within the revised UKPSF, however the suggestion of a future requirement to engage in ongoing CPD (post PCAPP) to remain in good standing with the HEA may have implications in terms of wider provision and monitoring.

130/11-12 Protection of Freedoms Bill (minute 109/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resourcing)

That the second reading of the Protection of Freedoms Bill in the House of Lords took place on Tuesday 8 November 2011, and that a third of the speakers had supported the request for exemption of pre-published research being subject to Freedom of Information requests.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Registrar's Office provide data on the number of Freedom of Information requests relating to pre-published research to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Resourcing to inform the Russell Group of the extent of the issue.

131/11-12 Researcher Development Programme

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That changes to the Researcher Development Programme were likely to concentrate research funding from the Government, and could result in additional funding for the University to invest in the REF2014.

132/11-12 Key Performance Indicators and Risk Status Summary

CONSIDERED:

The provisional University Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Report and Risk Status Summary Report, to be considered by the Council at its meeting on 30 November 2011 (SC.80/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Management Information and Planning)

- (a) That the Research KPI had moved from Amber-Green to Amber, with a flatter trend in increasing postgraduate research students and no movement in the number of highly cited researchers, but noting improvement in the University’s citation performance.
- (b) That the Teaching and Learning KPI remained as Amber-Green, with a slight rise in Academic Standards from increased average entry tariff scores, but no improvement in undergraduate completion rates.

- (c) That the International Profile KPI remained as Amber-Green, and that the University performed strongly in measures of the diversity of countries from which students were recruited.
- (d) That Webometric rankings had shown improvement in the University's global web presence over the last four years.
- (e) That the KPIs were subjective and could be influenced by the nature of the discussion at each approving committee.

(by the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk and Continuity))

- (f) That the University's Risk Register had remained largely unchanged since it was last considered in July 2011.
- (g) That a number of key risks remained proposed as Red status although all mitigating responses were being undertaken.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (h) That there was concern over the potential interpretation by Council of the frequency with which Key Risks were denoted as Red, given the definition of this status as "requires urgent and decisive action" and the contrast with the overall stability of the institution.

(by the Head of Governance Support Services)

- (i) That the risks selected for consideration by Council in the Risk Register are a sub-set of the overall risks and that only the most salient risks are highlighted for Council, which tends to produce a higher frequency in the Red category.
- (j) That a new methodology for the creation of the Risk Register would address the current subjectivity and the emphasis on comparisons to previous performance rather than a benchmark or target.
- (k) That the methodology for the creation of the Risk Register statuses and the baseline for each Key Risk within the University Risk Register would be reviewed by the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Governance, Risk and Continuity).

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research (Arts and Social Sciences))

- (l) That significant work had been undertaken to reduce the number of RIDDORs (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) across the University, but a KPI status of Amber remained.
- (m) That his experience of the University's systems indicated that there remained areas for potential improvement, but that KPI had a Green status

(by the Assistant Registrar (Governance))

- (n) That, as research data was not available from all of the Research Councils, there were limitations in the metrics available to inform the creation of the Research KPI.
- (o) That many indicators underlying the KPIs did not have specific benchmarks or targets associated with them and, as a result, definition of performance was more subjective.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That a redrafted University Key Performance Indicators Report and Risk Status Summary Report be made available to members of Steering for comment, prior to

circulation of papers to members of the Council at the end of the week commencing 21 November 2011.

- (b) That the Deputy Registrar and Director of Finance and Financial Strategy draft an explanatory note to members of Council to accompany the redrafted University Key Performance Indicators Report and Risk Status Summary Report, to indicate key issues.

133/11-12 Careers and Skills Update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of Student Careers and Skills, with an overview of progress in Student Careers and Skills on the broad themes of Student Experience and Employability since the restructure in August 2010 (SC.81/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Director of Student Careers and Skills)

- (a) That interviews were scheduled in the next few weeks for a Placement Learning Manager and three Placement Learning Officers.
- (b) That the Key Performance Indicators being monitored by the Centre for Student Careers and Skills included student engagement and employment statistics on graduation.

(by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies)

- (c) That collaborative work between the Graduate School and the Centre for Student Careers and Skills had ensured that the needs of postgraduate students were addressed, and that postgraduate employability was a key strategic aim for the Graduate School.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

- (d) That he commended the innovation and flexibility of the work produced by the Centre for Student Careers and Skills.

134/11-12 Capital Development and Space Management

RECEIVED:

A paper outlining recent capital and space development (SC.97/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

- (a) That the business case for Phase 3b of the Warwick Business School (WBS) had been approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- (b) That the CIF2 Decision Making Group had developed a comprehensive scoring matrix for allocation of the University's CIF2 funding that could be refined for similar purposes.

(by the Acting Senior Assistant Registrar (Space Management & Timetabling))

- (c) That the comprehensive scoring matrix used by the CIF2 Decision Making Group enabled the balanced allocation of CIF2 funding to provide tangible benefits to the student experience.

(by the Director of Estates)

- (d) That the CIF2 Decision Making Group had noted evidence of excess demand for significant capital projects, and so consideration should be given to how these could be financed going forward.
- (e) That consideration should be given to separating the build of the 500 seat lecture theatre from the WBS Phase 3b plans, given the advantages of early completion.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

- (f) That consideration should be given to the funding of a new Life Sciences Bio-Interface building on main campus.

(by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Knowledge Transfer, Business Engagement and Research (Science & Medicine))

- (g) That it should be noted that the proposed Life Sciences Bio-Interface building would not just be developed by the School of Life Sciences.

135/11-12

HEFCE Business Plan 2011-15

RECEIVED:

The HEFCE's business plan describing how it intends to meet the challenges and opportunities of the higher education sector (SC.93/11-12).

REPORTED: (by the Deputy Registrar)

- (a) That the wording within the HEFCE Business plan had shifted from "student champion" to "safeguarding the collective interests of students".
- (b) That the Strategy contained a warning that should the average of fee charges be higher than the £7,500 that the Government had used as a modelling assumption, then consideration would be given to offsetting reductions in the remaining HEFCE grant.
- (c) That Key Information Sets and a National Student Survey for postgraduate students were to be considered by the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group (HEPISG).
- (d) That an observatory was to be established to monitor higher education in England, to identify opportunities and risks and, if necessary, prompt action.
- (e) That there was to be a consultation on streamlining the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC).
- (f) That HEFCE was to consider widening the scope of CIF to include infrastructural measures of equipment and IT.
- (g) That HEFCE was to provide a new stream of catalyst funding to support a smooth transition to the new system and to facilitate innovative developments and collaborations in support of HEFCE's objectives.