THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Committee held on 23 May 2011

Present:	Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor S Bruzzi, Professor A Caesar, Professor M Finn, Professor T Jones, Professor J Labbe, Professor K Lamberts, Professor M Taylor, Professor P Winstanley, Mr D Stevens.
Apologies:	Professor C Hughes.
In Attendance:	Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Academic Registrar, Finance Director, Director of HR, Director of Development, Communications and Strategy, Director of Estates, Executive Officer (VC's Office), Acting Head of Governance Support Services, Administrative Officer (Governance), Director of Research Support Services (for items 637/10-11 to 642/10-11), Director of the International Office (for item 643/10-11), Director of IT Services (for item 644/10-11).

636/10-11   Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2011 be approved.

637/10-11   HEFCE Strategic Advisory Committees (minute 614/10-11 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That Sean Ruston, Education Officer, had been nominated for membership of the HEFCE Strategic Advisory Committee for Widening Participation.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Registrar would confirm whether Dr Paul Taylor, Co-Director of IATL, had been nominated for membership on the HEFCE Strategic Advisory Committee for Teaching, Quality and the Student Experience.

638/10-11   Research Strategy Update (minute 606/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

A Research Strategy Update report from the Director of Research Support Services (SC.450/10-11), together with an oral update.

REPORTED: (by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research)

(a)   That projection of the total value of awards by the end of the academic year 2010/11, based on progress to date, was lower than previous years but that steps were being taken to address this.

1

(b)   That the University was seeking to further diversify funding sources for research and was continuing to focus on improving the quality of research proposals submitted.

(c)   That the University would be actively managing the development of large proposals in key strategic areas, through the proposed research hubs.

(d)   That evaluation of the effectiveness of current research incentives to submit bids for large grants was required.

(e)   That a group of members of research council panels was in the process of being established, to assist in gathering intelligence regarding the strategic direction of funding from the various sponsors.

(f)   That the RAPG process was identifying the breadth and spread of research awards across individuals in departments.

(by the Director of Research Support Services)

(g)   That the reduction in the award of grants from major sponsors had been seen across the University, and not in only one Faculty or from one research sponsor.

(h)   That consideration of the future strategy for ERDF applications was required.

(by the Vice-Chancellor)

(i)   That it was essential to ensure that the departmental research oversight committees were working effectively to support the quality of research proposals.

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

(j)   That some members of staff, particularly in Science, were restricted in their ability to apply for larger grants if they did not hold a portfolio of smaller awards.

639/10-11   Alumni Knowledge Exchange

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's thanks were extended to those involved in the success of the recent Alumni Knowledge Exchange weekend.

640/10-11   Social Science Festival

RESOLVED:

That positive feedback had been received with regard to the Social Science Festival and that the Committee's thanks were extended to those involved.

641/10-11   CBI/NUS Employability Guide

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That the CBI/NUS Employability Guide had been received, and that it would be brought as a substantive item to the Steering Committee on 20 June 2011, alongside the scheduled Careers Update from the Director of the Centre for Careers and Skills.

642/10-11   Efficiency 2011-15: Ensuring Excellence with Impact - supplementary guidance

CONSIDERED:

The Research Council UK supplementary guidance relating to requests for capital equipment on grant applications to the UK Research Councils (SC.451/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

(a)   That the University needed to use its equipment efficiently and be able to confirm that equipment requests were not duplicating existing equipment that was under-utilised, prior to submission of a grant application containing a capital bid.

(by the Director of Research Support Services)

(b)   That the Research Council's capital allocations were not included in the ring fenced funding for Science set out in the Comprehensive Spending Review, and so less capital funding was available.

(c)   That, to identify what equipment the University held and how effectively it was being used, could have significant resource implications for the University and de facto, for the sector as a whole.

(d)   That those who had grant applications currently with the EPSRC, would have the new regulations on requests for capital equipment and match funding applied retrospectively.

(by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor)

(e)   That the University would account for what had been committed to already within the grant applications currently under consideration by the EPSRC, but that staff should not be deterred from continuing to apply.

RESOLVED:

(a)   That the Director of RSS write to the Research Councils to suggest that efficiency policies with regard to requests for capital equipment should be applied consistently across all Research Councils.

(b)   That the Research Councils would need to clarify how the University should recover the additional costs of administering the proposed process.

643/10-11   European Universities Association Conference

RECEIVED:

A summary of the plans for the European Universities Association (EUA) Conference to be hosted by the University from 21 to 23 March 2012 (SC.449/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of the International Office)

(a)   That further consideration of key speakers for next year's event was required.

(b)   That the conference was an opportunity to showcase the University's areas of excellence to UK and EU colleagues.

644/10-11   IT Services update

RECEIVED:

A report from the Director of IT Services, highlighting progress on major projects and strategy updates (SC.462/10-11).

REPORTED: (by the Director of IT Services)

(a)   That IT Services had been significantly restructured, to move the focus of its business from infrastructure development to user engagement.

(b)   That the bandwidth in student residences had been increased as part of a three step process, with the outstanding third step expected to improve it still further.

(by the President of the Students' Union)

(c)   That he wished to extend his thanks to IT Services, as feedback from students indicated satisfaction with the improved bandwidth in student residences.

645/10-11   Students' Union Evaluation Initiative Audit

REPORTED: (by the President of the Students' Union)

That the Students' Union was undergoing the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative Audit (SUEI) Audit today, and that the outcome would be reported at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

646/10-11   Wellcome Trust Value in People (VIP) Scheme

RECEIVED:

A letter from the Director of the Wellcome Trust, confirming the decision to close the Value in People (VIP) Scheme (SC.456/10-11).

647/10-11   UCAS Qualifications Information Review (minute 610/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

The University's response to the UCAS consultation on the current Tariff system for qualifications (SC.455/10-11).

648/10-11   Modernising Scientific Careers (minute 597/10-11 refers)

RECEIVED:

The interview dates for the programmes shortlisted in the tender process for "Modernising Scientific Careers" (SC.459/10-11).

649/10-11   Employer co-funded provision

RECEIVED:

A HEFCE report considering the profiles and characteristics of students who undertook employer co-funded higher education (HE) provision in academic years 2007-08 and 2008-09 within the remit of HEFCE's workforce development programme (SC.460/10-11).