

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Notes of the Joint Council and Strategy Committee Awayday held on 24 November 2003

Present: Vice-Chancellor (in the Chair), Professor L Bridges, Mr I Caulfield, Professor P Derrick, Professor M Devereux, Mr P Dodd, Professor R G Dyson, Professor A Easton, Dr P Ferdinand, Professor R Freedman, Mr C Foy, Professor J Gardner, Mr M Greenlees, Mr J Higgins, MR C Howgrave-Graham, Mr R Jones, Professor J Jones, Mr S Lamb, Mr J Leighfield, Professor R Lindley, Professor M Luntley, Professor M A McCrae, Professor A McFarlane, Dr I Nussey, Professor D Rand, Professor S B Palmer, Mr P Varney, Professor M Whitby, Professor R Wilson, Mr B Woods-Scawen, Ms Y Zhabina.

Apologies: Mr M Angle, Professor M Cooper, Professor J Copas, Professor C Davis, Dr A Eastmond, Professor R Fine, Dr E Gallafent, Ms V Gooding, Councillor R Grant, Professor A Harris, Dr J Hinton, Ms S J Hobson, Professor K Lamberts, Professor I Lauder, Professor P Mack, Professor A Mullender, Dr P Murray, Dr L Polezzi, Professor S Swain, Ms R Thorne, Mr T Walker.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Administrative Secretary, Finance Director, Estates Officer, Director of Student and Ancillary Services, Director of Research Support Services, Director International Office.

Strategic Development of the University

The purpose of holding the Awayday is to examine a number of key strategic and developmental issues in the context of the University 's Corporate and Strategic Plan and to assist in informing the annual review and revision of the Plan. A copy of the agreed timetable for the review of the Corporate Plan is attached. Those invited to attend the Awayday received a copy of the University's current Corporate and Strategic Plan.

The Vice-Chancellor opened the meeting by outlining the current position in regard to the progress of the Higher Education Bill, in particular the proposed introduction of variable fees noting that the University would need to adopt a clear position on this issue. This was followed by presentations on topics as outlined below.

(a) Residential Accommodation in the Context of the University's Capital Expansion

A paper prepared by the Director of Student and Ancillary Services on the need for the development of a long term strategy for residential accommodation together with a presentation from the Director of Student and Ancillary Services.

(b) Internationalisation of the University

A discussion paper prepared by the Director of the International Office on the Internationalisation of the University together with a presentation from the Director of the International Office.

(c) University Research Strategy

A discussion paper prepared by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor responsible for Research, Professor J Jones, on the University's Research Strategy together with a presentation from Professor Jones.

The Council divided into four facilitated groups to discuss the issues and themes arising from the two presentations from the Director of the International Office and Professor Jones on Internationalisation of the University and University Research Strategy.

During the feedback session the following themes and questions were reported as having arisen in the course of group discussions:

(a) Internationalisation of the University

- (i) Raising the University's international profile and reputation overseas across all areas of our activities, recruitment, teaching and research, was imperative if we are to continue to expand and enhance the standard and quality of what the University delivers. However, it was important to recognise that our objective is to create and be recognised as a British University of international standing and not as an International University located in Britain.
- (ii) The key international market in which the University needs to raise its profile and reputation is North America; unless we are recognised as an institution of high quality in the United States our global reputation will not be enhanced and this will in turn have an impact on all areas of our activity, particularly staff recruitment and research activity and income.
- (ii) Recruitment of international students represented an important opportunity to enhance diversity on campus and continued growth of our international student population, perhaps to the level of 50% could be supported providing that these numbers were not drawn, in the main, from only two or three international regions. Increased recruitment of EU students was also felt to represent an opportunity to enhance the diversity of campus life and the University's international profile.
- (iv) Delivery of University of Warwick programmes 'off-shore' represented potential for growth and enhancement of the University's profile and reputation providing that the model for delivery ensures quality and standards are maintained.

(b) University Research Strategy

- (i) The importance of research in underpinning and developing the University's national and international reputation and in the significant contribution it makes to the local and regional economy.

- (ii) The key driver in enhancing our research performance and activities is the recruitment of the very best staff and to then support and encourage them. Given that University resources are limited this necessitates the setting of clear priorities for investment, for example Bio-informatics, while retaining sufficient structural and financial flexibility to exploit opportunities when they arise.
- (iii) The need to be strategic in our approach to research was recognised as was the need to increase levels of interdisciplinary research, while ensuring that external pressures did not 'force' interdisciplinarity where there was little real opportunity for synergy or productive outcomes.
- (iv) The need to overcome the structural boundaries between faculties and departments in order to promote and incentivise interdisciplinary research activity.
- (v) There would be value in arranging research theme days to bring together researchers from different disciplines and making more focussed use of monies available from the Research Development Fund.
- (vi) The need to research, collate, publish and monitor more comprehensive data on research activity and performance in the University, and that of our competitor institutions, and to act on that information.
- (vii) Do our current resource allocation models incentivise research activity and are many of our potential 'Product Champions' overburdened with administration and management responsibilities?

(c) University Accommodation Strategy

The University should adopt a twin strategy in its approach to accommodation; put on hold for the short and medium term the construction of any new residences on campus and make proactive efforts to increase the number of high quality off campus residences available to all students registered at the University.