UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2009 at 9:30 am in the Council Room, City Campus, Wolverhampton.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present:</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor Jo Allan, Associate Dean, SEd</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Karen Bill, Associate Dean, SSPAL</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Patricia Bond, SoH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Martin Cartwright, Associate Dean, SLS</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ezech Chukwunonye, Student Representative</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Alan Collins, BDE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Tim Collins, Associate Dean, SAD</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Andrew Cooper, HLSS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor John Darling, Director RIHS</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ashar Ehsan, Director of Marketing &amp; Communications</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Patricia Fouracres, Assistant Director of LIS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Dariusz Galasinski, HLSS</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Jean Gilkison, Dean of Graduate School (Chair)</td>
<td>A Professor John Darling ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Mike Haynes, UWBS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Trevor Hocking, Associate Dean, SAS</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Christine Hockings, CELT</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Silke Machold, UWBS</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Ruslan Mitkov, Director RIILP</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Robert Newman, SCIT</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Jill Morgan, Graduate School (Secretary)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Heather Robinson, Graduate School</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Anthony Robotham, Associate Dean, SEBE</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor David Sallah, SoH</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Robert Sarsby, SEBE</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Ian Sillitoe, Associate Dean, Graduate School</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Andy Sloane, SCIT</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Jim Waddington, Director HAGRI</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ = Present  A = Apology Received  X = Absent

URC/08/27 Apologies for Absence

Received from: Listed above

URC/08/28 Previous URC Meetings

a) Received and approved: URC minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2009.

b) Matters arising from the URC minutes.
   • URC/08/15 Ashar Ehsan, Director of Marketing and Communications, responded to concerns raised at the previous meeting:
     o Website – The launch of the RAE results on the website unfortunately coincided with a catastrophic IT network failure which was rectified within 24 hours and outside the University’s control. When the website came back up a revised statement was included. There was a new banner on the website to publicise the QR funding which created the most web traffic ever.
     o Press Release – The press release was written by journalists to journalists’ specifications.
Media - MAC did a round-robin of national journalists, but in the main they weren't interested in highlighting specific cases. However, the University was mentioned in the Times, Times Higher and Guardian publications comparing us to Russell Group Universities. MAC approached the editors with a comment from Gerald Bennett but this was not taken up. Since then there has been an opinion piece in the Times Higher regarding the funding and MAC will continue to put pressure on other papers. The article in the Shropshire Star was signed off in November before the results were published. We were the only university to get an interview with Research Fortnight. There have been 90 printed articles, 44 radio interviews and 5 television appearances, and MAC will continue to communicate and promote the RAE success.

MAC conducted an internal communications investigation which highlighted that research is not showcased internally. The committee agreed that it is important to communicate any research successes to the press office. The committee also thought it would be a good idea to add links and banners to the letterheads and email templates.

- URC/08/20 Professor Sillitoe updated the committee on the Concordat which highlights the responsibility of departments within the university. In most universities, the principal responsibility lies with HR/Personnel, as these are fundamentally personnel issues.

- Received: Action checklist
  - Question of data protection for the post-mortem documents not yet fully resolved but Professor Sillitoe reported informally that it does not appear to be a problem.
  - Student access to preliminary reports ongoing

URC/08/29 Research Degree Programmes

29.1 Research Degrees Sub-Committee
a) The committee received & approved the minutes of the sub-committee held on 7th January 2009.
b) The committee received & approved the minutes of the sub-committee held on 4th February 2009.

29.2 Research Degrees Sub-Committee Minutes: Matters Arising
Verbal update from Professor Ian Sillitoe:
a) Professor Jean Poesen DSc approved by Chairs action 04/02/09 and by Academic Board 16/02/09

b) New smartcard procedure is ongoing, with IT services wanting another look at the issue. The procedure, when finalised, will be reviewed by the Research Degrees sub-committee after 3 months. The Research administrators will have a direct hotline to the IT Helpdesk and Professor Sillitoe will report back to URC in due course.

c) Postgraduate Research meeting room – Professor Sillitoe has met with Ian Oakes and Fiona Parsons to discuss potential space outside the Learning Centre. The space was limited due to band width problems creating difficulties with electronic links between campuses. There may also be some space in Walsall Students Union, and eventually there should be a room on each campus.

29.3 PhD by Published Work
Received: Discussion Paper: PhD by Published Work – Review of eligibility criteria
The paper posed two key questions:

1. *Should access to the PhD by Published Work, in principle, be extended to non-staff members?*

Member of the committee were broadly in favour of this, on the grounds that the university now had sufficient experience of these awards to justify extending access. Some members felt that, in order to safeguard standards, access should be limited initially, perhaps by invitation only, with a case needing to be made to the RD sub-committee. It was noted that supervising a PhD by Published Work is quite a demanding process, involving bringing a number of published pieces into a coherent whole making an original contribution to knowledge, and that it should not be undertaken lightly. Others felt that a market niche could be developed by advertising the PhD by Published Work as a 1 year PhD, open to any qualifying external applicant and limited by supervisory capacity and resource implications for the SMBs. It was pointed out that any non-staff applicants would have to apply as students, and would therefore be subject to fee liability and visa restrictions. It was agreed that the normal research degree fee would be a minimum charge. Although SMBs could theoretically cover the fee themselves, it was generally agreed that there would be no benefit in doing so, especially as there would no opportunity for joint publications between supervisor and student.

2. *Does URC support, in principle, a hybrid route, that is, allowing a 3-4 year FT registration (or 6-8 year PT registration) with the specified aim of submitting a portfolio of work for the award of PhD by Published work at the end of the programme*

The committee was interested in the idea in principle, noting that this would be moving towards a European model of a PhD. It was pointed out that in some fields publications can take a long time to actually be published so this model might not be suitable for all disciplines. Furthermore, it would require a different way of way of supervising and would therefore require supervisory training. The committee felt that the proposal needed more investigation, in particular to see how other universities are approaching this. It was suggested that there is an existing model at Manchester University and possibly others in the sector to look at. It was pointed out that requiring students to produce publications would be of benefit to the University should the student leave part way through.

**Resolved:** With regard to (i), the GS to work up proposals to open PhD by Published Work to researchers with established connection to university; with regard to (2), that GS to undertake further work on the availability of this type of award in UK universities and within the Bologna process.

**29.4 Postgraduate Issues**
The postgraduate representative reported that there were no new items but that students were eagerly awaiting the outcome of the smartcards and the common room.
URC/08/30  Annual Public Lecture Programme  
Received: Discussion paper: Annual Public Lecture Programme – A Review

The public lecture programme has become a victim of its own success and there are now more inaugural lectures and external lectures than there are slots in the year. The committee was unable to come to a clear view of which option of those proposed would be preferable. In general, a preference was expressed for increasing the number of external speakers, although this suggestion exacerbated rather than resolved the problem. The committee felt that roughly one lecture a month seemed the right number, although it was noted that lectures could be clustered around other events, for example Science Week, where several lectures could be delivered on a similar theme.

Resolved: The Chair of URC should seek the views of MAC and other constituents within the University.

URC/08/31  Annual Monitoring of Research Institutes/Centres/Schools  
Received and discussed: Monitors’ reports for CADRE, CEDARE, HAGRI, ILE, MRC, SLS, RCAS, RCSEP, RiHS, RiILP

Overarching observations noted by URC:
- There is currently some overlap between Institutes, Centres, RAE units, with staff possibly being returned to more than one of these.
- The census period is an academic year, yet it may be easier to report publications on a calendar year basis.
- To record publications properly the 2nd stage of WIRE should be used.
- Lack of uniformity regarding how school research is recorded where it lies outside the RI/RC structure.
- Some confusion as to how to record external funding such as KTPs which can be research-related but which also count for HEBCIS.

URC/08/32  University of Wolverhampton Research Strategy post 2008  
Received for discussion: draft Research Strategy 2009-2013

The Chair reported that this document has been broadly approved by Executive for wider discussion, but is not intended to be the full and final version.

The committee noted that the draft strategy was a continuation of the existing research strategy rather than a new departure from it. Although this was broadly appropriate, the committee wondered to what extent the new strategy would act as an aspirational guide to enable the university to continue to compete in future assessment exercises, and suggested that it needed a livelier feel. The aims and objectives, especially of increasing percentages of staff doing research and of maintaining/increasing quality of outputs, were correct, although the committee noted that the ability of the strategy to deliver lay in the implementation detail. The committee welcomed the inclusion of SMRSA as part of the university’s research resources, as well as the greater clarity around the roles of Schools, Centres and Institutes. However, there was still concern at ‘exclusivity’, with the proposed World Centres of Excellence (which the committee felt was unfortunately named) adding a further tier of exclusivity. Against this was the need to recognise that the external research environment (and funding) would not get easier, and that the university needed to support and safeguard areas of high quality research. It was noted that the funding for the strategy was as yet undetermined, and that this would have a major impact on its ability to deliver. The committee also noted that, in its view, the timescales for delivering the early stages of the strategy were unrealistic, although there was an equally strong view that ‘planning blight’ must be avoided.
URC/08/33 Research Day
Professor Mitkov reported that the Research Day is due to take place on Wednesday 6\textsuperscript{th} May 2009 at the Science Park and will include lectures from RIILP, SEBE and SAD.

URC/08/34 Feedback from Academic Board (standing item)
Received & noted: Feedback from Academic Board Minutes of 16\textsuperscript{th} February 2009

URC/08/35 Matters for the Attention of Academic Board (standing item)
- RAE outcome – KPI of rating of 1 (good)

URC/08/36 List of Submitted Bids
Received for information: Submitted research bids for the period from 1\textsuperscript{st} August 2008 – 31\textsuperscript{st} July 2009.

URC/08/37 Any Other Business
- Members of the committee asked whether the proportion of money to be distributed from the QR funding is known. The Chair confirmed that this is unknown at present.

- Professor Mitkov met with the Head of Residential Services who confirmed that there is only one room in Compton for visiting staff which students can also use. There is no accommodation for families with children. It was noted that in the past there were poor quality hotels in Wolverhampton but that 2 new hotels have opened recently, and this may be an option for short term stays. The rental sector could also be considered for minimum 6 months contracts. It was suggested that a business plan could be made to Executive for accommodation if there is enough need identified.

URC/08/38 Date of Next Meeting
The next meeting of the University Research Committee will take place at 9.30 a.m. Wednesday, 3\textsuperscript{rd} June 2009 in the Council Room, City Campus.