

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2016

Present: The Chairman of the Council (Mr R Jewson), the Treasurer (Mr J Sisson), Mr J Greenwell, Mr G Jones, Ms V Keller Dorsey, Ms L. McGillivray, Dr K Skoyles, Dr W. Thomson, the Vice-Chancellor (Professor D. Richardson), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Professor D. Petley), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor N. Ward), Professor N Boodhoo, Ms H. Lewis, Mr C. Brown and the Student Representatives (Ms A Rust and Mr T Antoniou-Phillips)

With: The Registrar and Secretary (Mr B Summers), the Director of Finance, Planning & Governance (Mr I. Callaghan), the Head of Corporate Communications (Mr A. Stronach), the Assistant Registrar (Ms L. Williams) and the Senior Administrative Assistant (Mrs R. Phillips).

In attendance: The Executive Deans of Faculty (Professor J Collier, Professor P Gilmartin, Professor I. Harvey and Professor Y Tasker)

Apologies: Mr M Williams

Council agreed to be reminded each year that the four Deans of Faculty attend Council as observers and not as members, albeit their contribution to debate is always welcome. The purpose of this reminder was to avoid any perception that Council is weighted in favour of the Executive Team and that undue weight is not given to the views they might express.

1. MINUTES

Confirmed
the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2016.

(It was noted that the impact of Brexit is still highly uncertain for both the country generally and the Higher Education sector specifically. The University was delivering (PPL) some sessions specifically in relation to Brexit and the university will be submitting evidence to a parliamentary committee. It was confirmed that eligibility for Home fees had been confirmed to potential applicants from the EU for academic year 2017/18. The dates of the PPL seminars and the submission to parliamentary committee will be circulated to Council members in due course.)

2. CHAIR'S ACTION

The Chair had taken the following action in between Council meetings:

The Chair has approved a change of title for the Executive Deans. With effect from 1 July 2017 their title will become Pro Vice-Chancellor which will bring UEA in line with other universities and signify the allocation of more cross-institutional duties to all members of ET. The new titles would be:

Pro Vice-Chancellor Arts and Humanities
Pro Vice-Chancellor Science
Pro Vice-Chancellor Social Sciences
Pro Vice-Chancellor Medicine and Health Sciences

The Ordinances of the University would be updated to reflect this change.

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3. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the new members of Council to their first meeting and thanked Professor Dave Petley for his contribution to Council. He then presented his vision for the operation of Council during his period as Chair principally encompassing: (A copy of the presentation is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D011).

- Delivery of the “Plan” and its affordability;
- Risk management;
- A dashboard to monitor key covenants, HEFCE thresholds and key ratios;
- Efficiency and effectiveness

He would also be expecting to discuss key themes during the year:

- Delivering the Plan;
- REF/TEF and attraction of talent;
- Competition: new approaches to HE;
- UEA’s USP in the Innovation space;
- NRP leverage;
- Network and partnership development;
- National Student Survey;
- Business engagement;
- Employability and graduate prospects;
- Strategy discussion process: undertaking “deep-dive” analysis on key topics;
- Committee input to Council.

A key them was anticipated to be reviews of a variety of key strategic themes flowing from Executive Team to Council (via appropriate committees) probably led by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and reporting back on key challenges and opportunities.

4. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Vice-Chancellor made a number of statements in addition to the Vice-Chancellor’s report below.

The Party Conference season had recently concluded. Notable within the conferences was the new Home Secretary’s speech to her Party Conference suggesting even more stringent action on immigration to include potentially linking international student visas to the “quality” of the institution with which they plan to study and also requiring employers to maintain and publish lists of international staff they employ. There had been some swift distancing from the key messages in the speech with the government being keen to state the difference between policy and internal party discussions but there had already been significant adverse comment in the overseas press (notably India where articles were published listing “five reasons not to study in the UK”. The Vice-Chancellor and Students’ Union had issued responses to the EDP and also undertaken social media activity in response. There was, however, a need to watch the development of policy in respect to immigration and its impact on student and staff recruitment to ensure that there is no risk of a two tier policy. UUK is engaging carefully with government on these matters. It was, however, noted that membership of a particular representative group could not be used to define quality and, if there were such attempts, judicial review could be called for.

*5. VICE-CHANCELLOR’S REPORT

Received

the confidential Vice-Chancellor’s report to Council. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D001)

(In discussion it was agreed that future reports would be ordered to reflect the UEA plan (where appropriate) together with the more general comments together with a data pack/dashboard of key relevant data which is updated and submitted to each meeting and which is clearly aligned to the University's strategic objectives. The additional points were noted in discussion)

- (1) In terms of the TEF, the specification documents for year two of the process have been published. There will be no discrimination on the level of fee increase that may be applied in year two (£9,500 has been confirmed as the fee from 2018/19) for those that participate in the TEF and have an appropriate Access Agreement approved by OFFA. There will be three levels: gold, silver and bronze and core metrics will be published at the end of October. Providers will be asked to submit a maximum of fifteen pages of contextual information for consideration by the TEF panel. Preliminary judgments on the core metrics will be suggested by data flags (after reference to benchmarks) and these descriptive statements should address areas where the metrics are at the margins.
- (2) For REF, the Stern Review is being consulted on during the autumn. A submission in November 2020 is anticipated but this may be subject to a one-year delay. The aim is for efficiency with an estimate that the last REF cost £220m across the sector. Currently, the Stern proposals do not readily suggest that savings will be delivered. It is likely that there will be less flexibility in staff selection with all those that have research in their contracts being required to be submitted. Submission of greater numbers of staff members may also reduce the unit of resource (depending on the quality adjustment of these staff). There may also be an opportunity to pool outputs and submission of a single environment statements may require some strategic adjustments.
- (3) The corporate governance in respect of the spin-out companies was queried and it was confirmed that these generally have external directors, are supported by staff in RED (Business Managers) and overtime the shareholding would be anticipated to diminish as the companies proceed to market. It was suggested that governance of these companies could be considered by internal audit. There should also be a policy on the directorship of such companies and a measure of materiality both in terms of financial and reputational risk.

*6. STUDENT NUMBERS AND FINANCES

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

*7. KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

*8. PENSIONS

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

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9. THE DIFFERENCE CAMPAIGN

Received

an update on The Difference Campaign from the Director of Development. (A copy of the presentation is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D010)

10. FINANCE GROUP

Received

a report from the Finance Group from it's meeting on 19 September 2016. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D005)

11. REVISED STATUTES - AMENDMENTS TO ORDINANCES

Received

a report from the Registrar and Secretary regarding changes to the Ordinances in respect of the revisions to Statute 7. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D006)

RESOLVED

to adopt the revised Ordinances and to request the Privy Council to grant effect to the revised Statute from 1 December 2016.

12. COUNCIL: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP 2016-17 AND RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Received

the terms of reference and membership of the Committee 2016-17. . (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D007)

13. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Items for Report. . (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU16D008)

(1) Sealings

14. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

that the dates of future Council meetings were:

Monday 28 November 2016 (during CSC)
Monday 16 January 2017 - 10.30am
Monday 13 March 2017 - 10.30am
Monday 15 May 2017 - 10.30am
Monday 26 June 2017 - 10.30am