

# THE COUNCIL



## Minutes of the meeting held 22 June 2020

### Present:

The Chair of Council  
The Treasurer  
The Vice-Chancellor  
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
The Pro Vice-Chancellor  
Independent Members

Ms L McGillivray  
Mr M Williams  
Professor D Richardson  
Professor N Ward  
Professor F Lettice  
Mr S Blease  
Mr J Clayton  
Mr M Davies  
Mr G Jones  
Miss G Maclean  
Dr K Skoyles  
Ms J Wheeler  
Dr L Bohn  
Professor R Chakraborty  
Mrs D Mailey  
Ms S Atherton  
Ms A Trew

Members appointed by Senate

Member appointed by the Support Staff  
Student Representatives

With: The Chief Resource Officer and University Secretary (Mr I Callaghan), the Chief Operating Officer (Ms J Baxter), the Director of Finance, (Mr J Brown), the Assistant Registrar (Ms L Williams) and the Assistant Head of Corporate Communications (Mrs S Lawson).

In attendance: The Pro-Vice-Chancellors of Faculty (Professor S Barrow, Professor F Bowen, Professor D Edwards and Professor M Searcey), incoming Student Union Representatives for 2020/21 (Mr H. Williams and Ms E. Payne)

Apologies: Mr S. Evans

### 94. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

#### Confirmed

the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 May 2020 and reviewed the action log.

#### Noted

that the business case for Engineering should be re-circulated.

**ACTION: IC**

### 95. MATTERS ARISING

None

96. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

- A copy of the open letter to the VC and Chair of Council from the UCU anti-casualisation officer had been circulated to Council ahead of this meeting (although not yet officially received by the university). The letter was asking the university to protect jobs by not building up cash reserves. A university response has been prepared. Agreed therefore that Council did not need to make a separate statement.
- This was the last meeting for some members of Council and the Chair thanked each one for their valued service and contributions: Graham Jones (nine years), Sophie Atherton (two years) and Amelia Trew (one year).
- The Chair noted that we are still in the midst of very challenging times. She applauded the continued efforts of staff to prepare for a very different 20/21 academic year and the critical milestone of clearing. The future strategy and plans will need to be shaped on a staged basis and the university was still facing a very high degree of uncertainty moving forwards.

97. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

- VC offered his thanks to all staff for getting to the stage we are at; assessments now being marked and exam boards will soon be sitting as we come to end of the standard academic year etc.
- There will be a physical graduation in July 2021, and both the 2021 and 2020 cohorts will be invited. This news had been very well received by students.
- Looking ahead we are getting ready for a vitally important recruitment round and the phased return to campus and the introduction of a limited amount of socially distanced face to face teaching.
- Aurora network of Universities had recently held a major meeting remotely. Charles Clarke joined and talked about his recent book. Aurora continues to be a hugely important network for the university. We await the outcome of the EUN bid.
- VC chaired a meeting of a group of similar universities with the Minister for Universities (Michelle Donelan) last week and like many business leaders, he emphasised the impact that 2m social distancing measures would have on universities. VC has now been asked to attend a 1:1 meeting with the Minister this week.
- Black Lives Matters: VC had thanked Heads and the EDI/Inclusion teams for all the recent excellent communications to staff and students around this area. Excellent work re: decolonising curriculum and useful events in MED and elsewhere. Work has got underway on the Race Equality Charter to develop an action plan which will be shared with everyone soon. It will take time to develop the plan, this is a major issue across the sector but UEA has a strong team of people working on this. Various Workstreams were now in place including mental health and wellbeing support. The Chair noted the importance of the national profile that VC had built in this area.

98. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Jeanette Wheeler declared a potential conflict on the Student Union financial support package and it was agreed she would step away from any approvals required today. Noted Birketts may be instructed on a matter unrelated to the issues in discussion but could be potential creditors re any fees which might fall due. In addition, Jeremy Clayton, Sophie Atherton and Amelia Trew were trustees of the Students' Union and two future trustees of the Students' Union are observing this meeting.

99. MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

- Inclusive Education Committee (19 May 2020)
- Audit Committee (22 May 2020)
- Senate (3 June 2020)
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (8 June 2020)
- Finance Committee (12 June 2020)
- Learning and Teaching Committee (17 June 2020)

\*100. PLANS FOR 2020/21 ACADEMIC YEAR

Considered

1. A confidential report from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in respect of the plans for the academic year 2020-21 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D068)

Noted that at its last meeting on 11th May, Council received a detailed account of the University's response to the Covid-19 emergency from February through to the end of April which covered the move of learning and teaching online with effect from 16th March, the shift to all assessment being conducted online for the rest of the academic year, and the commencement of planning for Academic Year 2020/21 (AY20/21). DVC Prof Neil Ward now updated Council on the approach to planning for AY20/21 and covered plans for the delivery of learning and teaching and support for the student experience and identified the key risks and approaches to managing them. The update concluded by considering the key choices and opportunities for the University's future strategy in the light of the Covid-19 crisis.

The current structure of the work and the key developments under this area were noted:

1. **Curriculum and Assessment:** Curriculum, assessment design, progression, individual arrangements, concessions, assessment methods, academic integrity. Student partnership. Employability - Emma Sutton (Academic Director – Taught Programmes)
2. **Ensuring Inclusive Retention:** Student retention for all taught students, and particularly those who have additional pressures and/or in higher risk groups. Ensure continuity of academic experience and protect positive student outcomes – Helena Gillespie (Academic Director – Inclusive Education)

3. **Student Recruitment:** Making offer as attractive as possible, competitor behaviour, portfolio mix – growth and decline, student numbers, demand and entry scenarios, offer strategies, opportunities for growth/new courses – Angelina Bingley, Alix Delaney (Director and Head of Admissions, ARM)

4. **Communication and Engagement:** Corporate, academics, students. Holistic and user centric. Sense of urgency and mission for staff moving to how deliver. Utilise values. Current and new students - tone of voice/reassuring, VFM, changes to curriculum, CRM. Incorporate SSLC etc. feedback. Signposting training and guidance - Neil Ward (PVC Academic Affairs & DVC)

5. **Training, Preparedness and Digital Transformation:** Delivery of upgrade to Blackboard Ultra and other educational technology; staff – preparedness and training for utilising Blackboard, peer support and new pedagogies to enhance experience; Students' preparedness - summer prep, making the most of online learning. New skills/ways of working required- Kay Yeoman (Academic Director – Learning & Teaching Enhancement) and Mark Barry (Director, ITCS)

6. **Professional Services Support and Transformation:** Professional services business process, systems, training, change management – for student and staff facing services supporting learning and teaching - Eve Dewsnap (Strategic Programmes Team)

7. **Utilising Learning and Teaching Spaces:** Planning overall capacity for socially distanced teaching and learning, pedagogical approaches to socially distanced/small group teaching, the shape of the teaching week, use of learning technology and safety in the classroom. – Louise Bohn (Strategic Programmes Team)

8. **Holistic Student Experience:** Co-ordinate and bring coherence to the various initiatives to support the wider student experience on campus, beyond teaching sessions, identify gaps and further requirements – Polly Morgan (School of Law)

9. **Impact and Evaluation:** Student experience, student engagement with learning, ensuring meaningful feedback as well as quality outputs. Monitoring inclusion. To assess staff engagement and satisfaction - Mark Searcy (PVC SCI)

10. **Quality Assurance, Governance and Compliance:** Capturing decision/audit trail, meeting OfS, CMA, PSRB requirements etc. Drafting changes to regulations, linking to LTC, Senate etc.- Andrea Blanchflower (Director Student & Academic Services)

In response to questions, DVC outlined that for timetabling, current plans were based on 2m distancing rule. First major challenge is how to fit everything in. On student contact hours, DVC was in active discussions with S10 and universities similar to UEA. On academic staff workloads, it was noted that teaching delivery will be much less efficient; students will study in smaller groups, which will be much more demanding of staff time. The current recruitment freeze and reduced budgets for temporary staff would inevitably mean that permanent staff would have to do more.

The digital experience would be built on going forward. There would be a dual start in Sept or Jan for the most popular courses.

Jeremy Clayton noted that Covid-19 had had an impact upon social inequality and learning and presented particular challenges for students in the WP category. Noted that the work stream on ensuring inclusive education would help in that area. Currently the university was providing students in need with laptops utilising hardship funds and specific donations. It seemed that UEA was ahead of the curve nationally in this area.

Council endorsed the overall approach for AY 2020/21, recognising that there is still a high degree of uncertainty which is affecting the planning.

#### Considered

2. A confidential report from the Chief Operating Officer in respect of plans for the return to campus (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D069)

Noted that UEA is taking a phased and cautious approach to re-opening, taking evolving government advice as a baseline. In line with government advice we have moved to open research laboratories in the first wave. Numbers are kept low at any one time and social distancing is in force. Additional PPE is provided if staff need to accomplish an unavoidable task which brings them into closer contact with others. Libraries remain closed nationally but we have opened up a book collection service in the foyer as this is in demand for research and study. The main library building is closed to all but essential staff.

Staff considerations: The health and wellbeing of staff remains a top priority and in line with government guidance individuals advised to shield will continue to be supported to do so and staff will continue to be asked to work from home where possible to maintain social distancing. Without a vaccine, longer term thinking may be required.

Noted that current HR policies are in place to end of July and will be updated.

Looking ahead at arrival of students in September, noted that plans were being drawn up for a form of 'honour code' which will be a prominent part of induction and welcome week to talk through expectations around safe behaviour on campus

The issue of transport was highly relevant to staff and students and COO outlined the intention to work closely with the city as we move to this different phase of lockdown.

Noted that there was a disparity of staff feelings around return to campus: some keen, some less keen. Much would depend upon whether schools reopened in September. Noted that staff with caring and childcare responsibilities had had particularly difficult challenges and had worked extremely hard to overcome them.

PVC FMH provided a brief update on a testing pilot. Testing for Covid is another important area under development. Being able to run local fast-turn around testing will be reassuring to all and a pilot is being actively considered across the NRP. If we can get regular general testing in place we will be in a good position to isolate cases and respond accordingly.

COU-M6  
22.06.2020  
Min. \*100

In response to questions, it was noted that temperature checks at point of entry were probably not feasible as there are so many points of entry onto campus. Voluntary checking might be looked into.

Council endorsed the overall approach for return to campus, once again recognising that there is still a high degree of uncertainty which is affecting the planning.

\*101. FINANCE COMMITTEE

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

\*102. MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

103. UEA PLAN AND UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

Considered

a confidential report on the UEA Plan and the University Structure (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D073)

Noted that UEA was due to publish the next in its series of five year plans that underpin the Vision 2030 this summer. A considerable amount of work and engagement had been done in preparation. In the light of the pandemic and the implications for UEA it is proposed to delay the publication of the plan and to consider, at the very least, a two stage approach that requires us to deal with the near term Covid recovery scenario (in the context of our long term ambitions) with a full plan delayed until 2021.

Council approved the recommendations:

- To delay the publication of the next five-year plan in favour of a shorter "Covid stabilisation and recovery" plan which builds on the emergency responses already underway;
- To consider whether a further detailed multi-year plan should be prepared for 2021 onwards or whether a more iterative planning approach in the context of an evolved vision better suits the level and speed of change now expected of an HEI. This would mean varied levels of detail associated with different areas of our planning. A final recommendation and decision on this would be made in September.
- To note the change in reporting lines for two divisions of Professional Services

104. GOVERNANCE MATTERS

Considered

a report from the University Secretary in respect of:

1. The quadrennial review of Council Effectiveness;
2. The recruitment of the next Chair of Council;
3. The nomination of two student representatives to Council by the UEA Students' Union for 2020/21.

(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D074)

Council confirmed the appointment of student representatives as Members of Council for 2020/21. Elizabeth Payne: Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer and Hamish Williams: Campaigns and Democracy Officer. Noted that this was an amendment to the report submitted that had quoted Emily Anderson rather than Elizabeth Payne.

The Chief Resource Officer verbally brought two further membership changes to the Committee – Mr Matthew Gooch on Inclusive Education Committee and Professor Helena Gillespie on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as full-members due to the closer working between staff and students the Chair's of both Committees had suggested these additions. These changes were agreed.

On the recruitment of the new chair, Council noted the content of this report and that the detailed discussions on both matters will take place at Governance Committee. However, neither process will be finalised without Council members first having sight of detailed terms of reference, project plans and an opportunity to comment in detail. On this basis, there is potential that consultation via email over the summer will take place to enable the fullest consultation with the final proposals being discussed in detail at the September meeting.

Council confirmed that the role of Council was strategy and with responsibility to look ahead, therefore there was no need for a separate subgroup. It was clarified that Governance committee would appoint the consultants but any decisions would be for the full Council. Also all council members would have an opportunity to help frame the questions for the appointment of the new Chair. The recruitment consultants would speak with each member of Council over the summer period.

**ACTION: IC to ensure Council are kept updated**

#### 105. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS

Considered

a confidential report and recommendations from the Chief Resource Officer in respect of the SU Finances (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D075)

A potential conflict of interest was noted, as indicated in the relevant section above.

VC outlined that the SU is a separate organisation. The partnership has developed strongly in the last year and the sabbatical officers have had to face challenges no other Union officers have had to face. They have represented the Union and students and the university with aplomb and are congratulated and thanked for their excellent contributions.

CRO outlined that the SU had a far higher reliance upon trading income than other universities and had suffered more from downturns in trade as a result. There had been a comparison exercise undertaken with Kent university and it was noted that UEASU was more heavily geared to trading activities than other SU organisation.

Noted that the Accounts for 2018-19 needs to be signed and a Letter from auditors had been received requesting a letter of support.

Agreed to delegate initial review to CRO, Treasurer and VC – but if significant need then Council would be invited to take a view. Noted that earlier in the year we were asked to sign a parent company letter and there were some aspects of the UEA/SU with which auditor was not familiar. .

The SU representatives noted that this settlement was the outcome of ongoing discussions for last few years. It was a great achievement to reach agreement, with the assistance of Covid19. This settlement will help SU to help students.

106. RISK MANAGEMENT

Considered

a confidential report from the Chief Resource Officer in respect of Risk Management including the high level and detailed risk register (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D076)

Council agreed the high level risks and the actions to mitigate them, noting that the impact of the pandemic is a new risk which has had a significant impact on the university and will do for a number of years to come. It was agreed that it was important to continue to survey the scene.

Noted that there had been some very good support for business continuity from ITCS, HR, Safety Services under the new director and many other areas of the university.

In terms of contingency for terrorist incidents, it was noted that UEA was in regular contact with special branch and other security agencies as part of Prevent duty.

An emergency notification system Critical Arc would be introduced soon.

The risk of executive stretch was noted and it was agreed that to include this a risk for key senior figures.

**ACTION: CRO**

107. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Considered

a confidential report and recommendations from Audit Committee in respect of the meeting held on 22 May 2020 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D077)

The Chair thanked outgoing Chair of Audit committee Graham Jones for his valued contribution to the work of the Committee.

Noted that during discussions at Audit Committee the immediate risks of the current pandemic were recognised as were the potential risks that could arise as the University team work their way through the impacts of the pandemic on current ways of working, the potential to adopt alternative ways of working and the impacts of these on the future needs and requirements of the University in respect of capital and resource planning.



On Property matters there was discussion around the potential need for a separate property committee. It was suggested that Audit committee should raise risks and have a view about the offsetting of biggest challenges. Finance Committee should review cost and affordability; Audit Committee could then check on programme effectiveness.

Also discussed how we might we ensure that the independent members of Council (and those staff members who are not on ET) have a closer link to the leadership team. For example, could it be possible for sponsors of papers to make themselves available in the week prior to Council for discussions with members or groups of members of Council prior to the meeting? Could it possible for key role holders {Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, Chair of Audit Committee) to have monthly meetings with the VC, University Secretary and others to improve their knowledge and understanding of the University?

Agreed that these were both good ideas which the CRO would consider further with the VC and Chair of Council.

**ACTION: CRO**

#### 108. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Received

a report from the Vice-Chancellor on how the University has been supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing during COVID-19. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D078)

The Chair welcomed this report and noted the large range of outputs and activities that had been undertaken. Noted that it was difficult to measure prevention but it was likely that all the good work was contributing to a supportive environment at UEA. Also noted that further work was planned and that a mapping exercise was underway between UEA's actions and the new UUK framework as well as the Student Union's "We will be Heard" document. These documents would be circulated to Council for information at the next meeting. The wish to provide a diverse range of counselling staff from all backgrounds was also noted and this was being looked into.

**ACTION: LW/IC**

#### \*109. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: LEAGUE TABLE OUTCOMES

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

#### 110. OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

Considered

a confidential report from the Chief Resource Officer and University Secretary in respect of:

1. The details of two "reportable events" submitted to the Office for Students
2. A note of the meeting with representatives of the Office for Students, the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Chief Resource Officer.

(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D080)

COU-M10  
22.06.2020  
Min. 111

111. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Considered

a confidential report from Finance Committee on items considered that are not on the substantive agenda above (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D081)

112. PREVENT: OUTCOME OF ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Received

a confidential letter from the Office for Student's detailing the outcome of the annual monitoring process in respect of the University's Prevent duty (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D082)

113. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Item for Report:

1. Sealings
2. Heads of Schools for 2020/21

Reported

the current Heads of Schools. The date shown is the planned end date of their term of office. Where only a year is shown the end date will be 31 July in that year.

**HUM**

Art, Media and American Studies - Dr M. McLaughlin (17.09.2021)

History - Dr M. Neumann (2024)

Literature, Drama and Creative Writing - Dr J. Noel-Todd (*Interim appointment*) (31.12.2020)

Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies - Dr L. Marsden (2021)

Interdisciplinary Institute for Humanities - Ms R. Burgess (2021)

**FMH**

Norwich Medical School - Professor W. Fraser (*Interim Dean of School*)

Health Sciences - Professor S. Hardy (01.09.2024)

**SCI**

Biological Sciences - Professor T. Dalmay (31.12.2021)

Chemistry - Professor N. Le Brun (31.08.2024)

Computing Sciences - Professor G. Parr (21.08.2021) Environmental Sciences -

Professor K. Hiscock (2022) Mathematics - Professor S. Stevens (31.12.2020)

Pharmacy - Professor S. Gibbons (31.12.2024)

**SSF**

Economics - Dr E. Lazarova (2022)

Education and Lifelong Learning - Professor N. Boodhoo (*Interim appointment*)

International Development - Professor L. Camfield (2023) Law - Professor A. Stephan (2022)

Norwich Business School - Professor O. Tregaskis (2025) Psychology - Professor K. Coventry (2021)

Social Work - Professor J. Dickens (2021)

114. STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Received

the annual report from the Student Experience Committee (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D084)

115. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2020/2021

Confirmed

that the meetings of Council in 2020/21 have been confirmed as:

- Monday 28 September 2020, 09.30-14:00
- Friday 27 November 2020 – Council Strategy Day – All day (09:30-18:00)
- Monday 25 January 2021, 09:30-14:00
- Monday 15 March 2021, 09:30-14:00
- Monday 10 May 2021 – Council Strategy Day – All day (09:30-14:00)
- Monday 28 June 2021, 09:30-14:00

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Recruitment insights: currently more deferrals expected but this could change. International students and two week quarantine rule, not working well.
- VC is expressing to the Minister reasons why home students should be encouraged to go to university and making representations in respect of the challenges presented by the 2m social distancing rules.
- The Chair asked Council how they were finding the new way of meeting via Teams. The view was that as an emergency way of working it had been fine but was not so good as usual face to face for Council, although it was maybe more suitable for sub committees.
- There was a request that if we continue to have c300 pages of agenda papers we need more summaries please
- Noted that all members should wherever possible use UEA email addresses as these were more secure and offered members full Teams functionality. **ACTION: Jeremy Clayton, Gillian Maclean and Jeanette Wheeler to discuss further with PA to the CRO who would liaise with IT to provide support and assistance with transition.**