

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2019

- Present:** The Chair of the Council (Mr J. Greenwell), The Treasurer (Mr M. Williams), the Vice-Chancellor (Professor D. Richardson), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Professor F. Lettice), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor N. Ward), Independent Members (Mr S. Blease, Mr J. Clayton, Mr M. Davies, Mr G Jones, Miss G. Maclean, Dr K Skoyles, Dr W. Thomson and Ms J. Wheeler), Members appointed by the Senate (Dr L. Bohn and Professor N Boodhoo), Member appointed by the Support Staff (Mrs D. Mailey) and the Student Representatives (Ms S. Atherton and Mr O. Gray)
- With:** The Chief Resource Officer and University Secretary (Mr I. Callaghan), The Chief Operating Officer (Mrs J. Baxter), the Director of Finance (Mr J. Brown), the Assistant Registrar (Ms L. Williams), the Head of Corporate Communications (Mr A. Stronach) 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)
- Apologies:** Independent member (Ms L. McGillivray)

85. MINUTES

Confirmed

the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2019. Noted as follows:

- a) On KPIs it was noted that the CRO had taken the latest version to ET and plans to update them over the summer and to bring them back to Council in October. There will be further discussions on how to bring back 2 KPIs to each Council meeting in 2019-20.
- b) On Admissions, it was noted that as per minute 71. the CRO will provide further details on competitor groups to Council **ACTION: CRO**
- c) VC indicated that Council members were welcome to visit UEA's Admissions team during A level week or clearing if wished.
- d) VC and CRO would consider whether an additional Council meeting during A level Admissions week would be helpful. **ACTION: VC/CRO**
- e) Noted that latest NSS would be published 3 July and details circulated to Council.

Matters arising

1. Easton and Otley College: feedback on the FE Commissioner's decision

Since Council last met, it was reported that the FE Commissioner had approved a merger between Easton and City College and Otley and Suffolk New College. UEA's ambition to support tertiary education in the region was well received and favoured by stake holders. Also noted that an exemplar case study in Augar report of an HE

institution taking over and FE college suggested that this initiative could have been well received nationally. Instead the VC is joining a Chair's group of the colleges and will be involved to ensure that HE is involved in the new FE mergers.

2. UEA Plan 2020-25 development

Re: minute 84, Jeremy Clayton underlined that he would like Council members to be fully involved in / serve as a buddy for development of new objectives and values. COO reports that Big Shifts will be iterated with Council members.

COO reported on strategic planning cycle and the work underway to prepare ET for 2019-20. Noted that this will be brought to Council for input. **ACTION: COO to liaise with maybe two members of Council including Jeremy to discuss format and next steps, noting the importance of iterating the plan with Council. COO indicated that she would prepare a written note for Council on timeline and plan.**

PVC-RI reported on staff consultation on Values which will produce valuable data, which will also be brought to Council.

86. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair noted the peaceful Extinction Rebellion demonstration which had taken place outside the building as members entered. VC reported on the recent Assembly motion on climate. As a result ET had accepted Sustainability Board's recommendation that UEA declare a climate and biodiversity emergency and the targets set for 2050. Noted that the Rebellion members would like UEA to be more ambitious than current Climate Emergency targets for 2050. VC outlined that 2025 is not possible but a target of 2025 or 2030 like Bristol could be considered further. The plan was to consider this matter further at Sustainability Board and reconsider at Council in September and October.

Agreed that the Chair and deputy Chair to meet with members of Extinction Rebellion over the summer (with Chair of Sustainability Board Dylan Edwards and VC if diaries permitted). **ACTION: CRO**

Discussion followed on whether solar panels and other sustainable measures could be considered as part of the Lasdun wall refurbishment. Noted that environmental sustainability was important but could add cost to the project so would need to be considered further. Agreed to consider adding Sustainability to the Big Shifts already underway. **ACTION: COO.**

Agreed to consider whether Sustainability should be added to the committee report template. **ACTION: CRO**

The Chair welcomed Jeannette Wheeler and Amelia Trew to their first meeting.

He went on to offer thanks to Oli Gray and Sophie Atherton for their fine contributions over the last year – and very best wishes to Oli in particular at this his last meeting. Also thanked were Nalini Boodhoo and Wendy Thomson who were both stepping down after valued service to Council.

It was reported that (the recently knighted) Norman Lamb MP had visited UEA on Friday. Corinne Le Quere was awarded a CBE on the same honours list and the Chair gave his congratulations.

87. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

VC reported on the £28m investment into the new SCI building, which Council members had visited ahead of the meeting. Chair offered his congratulations on behalf of Council to everyone involved at UEA in bringing this important project to completion.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

*89. REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

90. THE AUGAR REVIEW

Considered

a report from the Vice-Chancellor identifying the key themes from the Augar Review. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D054)

Noted that the Review is currently up for consultation so parts of it may not reach implementation stage as given the political situation there is currently not much appetite in government to follow this through. However, the fee freeze aspect may well be implanted and UEA's long term financial Plan will adjusted accordingly. Whilst the reduction in fees caught the headline, the VC noted there had been less focus on the fact that over a lifetime students would pay for 40 years not 30 years, leading to the average student paying back the entirety of their student loan, meaning lifetime costs are higher. The importance of the maintenance grant in the student pocket was noted. The VC outlined UEA's Access and Participation plan, which may increase in importance if the Review proposals were implemented. Sophie Atherton underlined the importance of the maintenance grant for students. Also noted were the proposal for level 6/7 courses to be inaccessible to those who hold higher level qualifications, which could be damaging for degree apprenticeship plans and Foundation courses.

Student representatives indicated their concerns over the 40 years repayment proposal. Overall they found the Review disappointing.

Jeremy Clayton outlined the risk to Universities on a no deal Brexit and the need to plan cautiously. The popular misconception that UK HE was "awash with cash" would be very damaging. Wendy Thomson recommended Council members refer to the DFE and KPMG reports on what Universities did with the additional tuition fee income. **ACTION: CRO to circulate the links.**

VC reported that UEA hosted a useful CBI dinner recently. VC reported that the business sector locally continue to recognised the importance of HE to the economy and to business sector.

*91. LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2019/20

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

92. RISK MANAGEMENT

Received

a 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. COU18D056)

Noted that all the staff drafting the Risk register items report into COO and CRO so there is good control. New areas had been added and would be monitored closely.

Mark Williams queried risks in two areas and will pass details to Chair of Audit committee and CRO separately.

Graham Jones wished to recognise the valued work undertaken by CRO and team in the area of Risk; he felt that UEA was in an improved position as a result.

93. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Received

a report from the Vice-Chancellor. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D057)

The VC outlined that 5 new Residential Life staff roles will be in post by September, providing 24/7 support for students. 24 wellbeing posts will provide embedded support in schools but the recruitment will be phased; 3 pilot projects will be put in place in 3 different schools by September and will then be reviewed with a view to having a fully embedded system by 2020. These measures meant that two key outcomes of UEA's implementation of the UUK Stepchange Framework will be put in place over the summer. Review of curriculum is underway and various longer term projects will be completed over the next 2-3 years. The importance of close working with the Students Union and other student representatives was underlined. The question of how do we measure success and the impact of the investment would be considered further.

Also noted that the new Dir of P&C Helen Wiseman will assist with staff wellbeing and will join the VC's Taskforce on mental health and the People and Culture strategy group chaired by CRO and PVC HUM.

The VC updated on his trip to Bristol with Dir SSS Jon Sharp where he had met with their leadership team. It was reassuring to learn that UEA is already doing or embarking upon most of the actions which Bristol have in place. The VC had learnt more from Bristol about their implementation of the UUK Stepchange project and in particular the emergency contact protocol (which had achieved 95% students opting in). Noted that opt-in is now becoming the sector-norm and that UEA is more comfortable with a system of asking the student and ensuring safeguarding. UEA will bring in a new opt-in system for 2019-20 (which will be approved by Chair's action so that it can start in September).

Council noted that the University's response had been very active and offered thanks to all involved.

Student representatives outlined a letter published by the Sunday Times which had been signed by a UEA academic. Student representatives commented upon the transphobic nature of the letter and the effect this could have on the mental health of trans students at UEA. Noted that the Officers had written and published an open letter in response. In their role as a "critical friend", SU officers indicated that they wished to highlight what they saw as the unacceptable views of the academic in question.

PVC HUM outlined that UEA is committed to supportive of this vulnerable group. All of ET gave strongest support to trans students and staff; and the whole area of mandatory training for staff will be considered by new Dir P&C.

*94. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: LEAGUE TABLE OUTCOMES

Considered

the confidential Vice-Chancellor's letter to Council and appendices (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D058)

Noted that UEA needs to ensure that as the university relaxes the SSR and staff numbers go down relative to students, that the impact on the university in the context of the competitive environment is monitored closed. NSS scores went down last year and new results will be issued 3 July. Noted that last year's industrial action may have had an impact upon students. Faculty PVCs have put in place new initiatives which may take time to feed through. Noted that the university would wish to improve student experience in areas highlighted irrespective of the NSS.

Louise Bohn asked whether the University had clarity on which areas at UEA affect the NSS metrics. Noted that Senate are looking at assessment and feedback and this is a key area which needs revisiting

VC also noted UEA's low spend per student metric in Guardian, which contrasted with higher spend reported in the Times as different compilers draw from different parts of HESA data. The recent £1m investment in mental health and wellbeing would be reflected in the spend per student data next year. An "optimisation of spend per student meeting" was taking place early July and the optimal allocation of central costs will be looked at further.

In response to a query from Jeanette Wheeler about student surveys, it was noted that the Student Experience Committee considers Student surveys in detail. Internal surveys and the planned launch of a new app called "Enlitened" will help speed up the response to student views.

Chair of Council noted that Council and the Chancellor had been proud of UEA's league table position historically and would be keen to see UEA retain its position in future.

95. CIVIC ROLE

Received

- (1) The recently published "Connecting People +Places" report on UEA's economic and civic impact. A hard copy was available for all members of Council on the day. VC outlined how well received this report had been in the region, following its recent launch.
- (2) A presentation by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Medicine and Health and Mark Hitchcock now the Managing Director in respect of UEA Health and Social Care Partners. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D059)

Noted that the new partnership brought clinicians and academics together. Its research groups would address key regional challenges. Mark Davies advised that NNUH is strongly supportive. NHS is moving into a more collaborative phase with the introduction of Integrated Care Authorities. Noted that this was an important UEA initiative not just confined to FMH.

96. PRESENTATION FROM THE UEA STUDENTS' UNION

Received and considered
a presentation from the UEA Students' Union covering the following themes:

Developing our strategy
Student voice and representation
UEASU campaigned against national boycott of NSS
Wellbeing and mental health
Officer representation, democracy and decision making
Communications with 20,000 members; engaging with members
Concrete confessions
Inclusivity
Sustainability
UEASU long term financial position.
Acting as a critical friend
Importance of student employment opportunities
"We will be heard" – response to student deaths
Commercial services, shared services and charity services
Let's push on, together
Development of a Strategy document 2019-22.

The Chair offered congratulations to all the SU for a helpful and insightful presentation and looked forward to developing the partnership with SU even further.

The VC noted the very helpful way in which SU had collated and represented the student voice in response to the student deaths. Also the personal support from Oli and Sophie at that very difficult time was much appreciated. The partnership with SU was a vital part of the whole institutional response.

97. (14:15) REPORT TO COUNCIL FROM SENATE AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Noted that Members of Council are always welcome to attend Senate in person (contact Ian Callaghan). Council members can see Senate papers on the portal. CRO to circulate dates of Senate/ send link to almanac. **ACTION: CRO**

KPIs: in future all council papers will cross reference (where relevant) to the KPIs.
ACTION: CRO

On assessment and feedback the importance of timely feedback within 15 days was noted. VC had made it clear as chair of Senate that the current performance was unacceptable. Schools receive weekly updates but this information was used with uneven levels of rigour so efforts would be redoubled. There would be an in-year status to Council in the autumn. **ACTION: CRO**

Student Experience Committee (SEC)

Noted that Jeremy Clayton is the independent member on SEC. He queried whether it spent enough time taking a top down strategic approach on what is a good student experience and how to make the student experience excellent? PVC ACAD would consider these observations further. **ACTION: PVC ACAD**

98. MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

Considered

a report detailing major projects currently underway and progress with those projects. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D062)

99. AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT TO COUNCIL

Received

a report from Audit Committee in respect of the meeting held on 4 June 2019. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D063)

100. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Received

a report from Finance Committee on items considered that are not on the substantive agenda above. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D064)

Noted that further discussions on NRFC are ongoing.

101. THE COUNCIL: MEMBERSHIP

Reported

1. Senate had nominated Professor Ratula Chakraborty (NBS) as their representative to serve on Council for the period 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022.
2. The following members of Council had terms of office that expired on 30 July 2019:
 - a. Mr Joseph Greenwell
 - b. Mr Mark Williams
 - c. Ms Gillian Maclean
 - d. Mr Stephen Blease
 - e. Mr Jeremy Clayton

Recommended

1. the appointment of Professor Ratula Chakraborty to Council as a Senate representative.
2. extension of the terms of office for those listed at (2) above as recommended by the Governance Committee.

Approved.

Chair reported that he would be stepping down at end of next academic year. Governance committee had commenced the succession process and external recruitment underway. All existing members were welcome to apply.

VC updated members on the current pay and pensions dispute with UCU. On pensions, noted that UEA had backed the JEP proposals, which required the USS Trustees to accept a little more risk. Currently the USS Trustees have not accepted these proposals.

COU18M008

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24.06.2019
Min. 101

UEA would seek to communicate new initiatives which have been put in place for staff, together with the risks to UEA's long term financial sustainability if employer contributions had to be significantly increased. Council supported option 3 which allowed further JEP work to be undertaken.

Noted that historically UEASU have been mandated by NUS to back UCU but they would be open to discussions on specific proposals.

102. ASSEMBLY

Received

the minutes of Assembly which met on Wednesday 22 May 2019. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D065)

103. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Item for Report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D066)

- (1) Sealings
- (2) Heads of Schools for 2019/20

104. DATES OF MEETINGS IN 2019/2020

Confirmed

that the meetings of Council in 2019/2020 had been confirmed as:

Monday 7 October 2019 – 9.30am to 2pm
Monday 25 November 2019 – Council Strategy Day – All day (9.30am – 6pm)
Monday 27 January 2020 – 9.30am to 2pm
Monday 9 March 2020 – 9.30am to 2pm
Monday 11 May 2020 – Council Strategy Day – All day (9.30am – 6pm)
Monday 22 June 2020 – 9.30am to 2pm