

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 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, Miss G. Maclean, Ms L. McGillivray, Dr K Skoyles and Ms J. Wheeler), Members appointed by the Senate (Dr L. Bohn and Professor R. Chakraborty), Member appointed by the Support Staff (Mrs D. Mailey) and the Student Representatives (Ms S. Atherton and Ms A. Trew)
- With: The Chief Resource Officer and University Secretary (Mr I. Callaghan), 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: Graham Jones, Jenny Baxter, Mark Davies

1. MINUTES

Confirmed

the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2019. Noted action points as follows:

Minutes d) an additional Council meeting will be considered for August 2020 but with no expectation that all members (or staff) will be able to attend as it is peak holiday time.

Minutes - Matters arising

Plan – continued progress will be reported upon separately and, specifically will form part of the Council Strategy Conference. In addition, members of Council will be invited to the “Big Shift” days.

Statements – Extinction Rebellion

The meeting with Council representatives Extinction rebellion had taken place as indicated in minute 11). Noted that members of Extinction Rebellion had once again greeted Council members peacefully on their way into the meeting today. “Sustainability” would in future be considered as part of all university decisions and would be included in the template for committee meetings to facilitate this consideration.

90. CRO will circulate links to the DFE and KPMG reports on what Universities have done with the additional fee income from additional tuition fee income, as mentioned by Wendy Thomson at the 7 June meeting.

97. Reiterated that Council members were welcome to attend Senate meetings. CRO had circulated dates of Senates and members should contact him if they wished to attend a meeting.

SEC: following Jeremy Clayton's comments about the need for a strategic approach to student experience led by SEC, this would be discussed outside the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Jeremy Clayton advised that he had been appointed as a Trustee of the Students Union

3. CHAIR'S ACTION

None.

4. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair welcomed the new members: Amelia Trew (SU representative) and Ratula Chakraborty (Senate representative).

Laura McGillivray had advised the City Council of her resignation with effect from 31 December 2019. The Chair offered thanks on behalf of Council for her valued support as a Council member and extended best wishes for the future.

Congratulations were offered to the VC, the Executive Team and staff for another successful admissions cycle. Council asked for their recognition of this significant achievements to be cascaded to all staff involved.

5. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

UUK had announced the establishment of a new Taskforce to address racial harassment on UK campuses. The VC was previously a member of the UUK Taskforce which led to report on Changing the Culture which was aimed at addressing all aspects of harassment but has primarily been linked to sexual harassment. A specific piece of work was now needed with a focus upon racial harassment. The VC had been invited by UUK to chair this new group and oversee development of new recommendations to sit alongside those of "Changing the Culture. The Equality and Human Rights Commission will also soon be publishing a report in respect of racial harassment at universities.

There were also come specific race related initiatives taking place on campus with the SU hosting a Q&A session today on decolonising the curriculum. This will be attended by a number of ET members. The SU were also launching an eradicate hate campaign. PVC ACAD and colleagues were closely monitoring the BAME attainment gap as well as curricula changes to ensure it was fully representative.

The VC's Taskforce on Mental Health and Wellbeing had met in August. 16 projects had been identified for implementation within the next 18 months. Wellbeing support had been embedded into schools and residences. There would be a full Welcome Week in 2020 with many activities. There would be a full report to Council in due course.

Concrete had published an article on a "mental health crisis" on campus, which had been circulated to Council and SU Trustees for information. The VC considered this to be inaccurate and irresponsible reporting which went against Samaritans guidelines for

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reporting suicides. In particular it was not respectful and potentially triggering to mention individuals' names in this context. The Chair of the Multi-Agency committee on suicide prevention at UEA had written to Editor of Concrete last week. Council members also noted that Laura McGillivray had been interviewed for this article but was disappointed with the way the article was written. There was no evidence that the journalist had spoken to the university and SU about their actions in support of mental health and wellbeing.

SU representative Sophie Atherton reported that the SU were asked to provide support for the campaign in Concrete. While they supported efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing services and the SU "We Will be Heard" campaign, all officers had the same concerns about the article as those voiced by the VC. It was confirmed that whilst Concrete was funded by the SU it was editorially independent.

Audit Committee had recently considered the position of the internal auditors. Their original contract was for three years extendable for a further two years. The first three year period ended on 31 July 2019. Audit Committee recommends that the two year extension is approved.

RESOLVED

to extend the contract for a two year period to 31 July 2021.

***6. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

***7. STUDENT NUMBERS AND FINANCES**

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

8. OFFICE FOR STUDENTS

Considered

- (1) a report from Professor Neil Ward in respect of the submission and subsequent approval of the University's Access and Participation Plan. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D004)

Becky Price Assistant Head of Widening Participation and Prof Helena Gillespie Academic Director of Widening Participation were in attendance.

PVC ACAD outlined that the new Access and Participation Plan replaces the previous OFFA plan and is now produced for a 5 year period (reviewed annually). Our plan was approved without additional conditions (which was unusual in the sector) and a major achievement reflecting the hard work invested in production of the plan.

Jeremy Clayton offered congratulations to the team on behalf of Council for the high quality of the plan. Noted that the challenge now was to ensure that UEA continually improves when competitors are improving too. UEA had an opportunity to be sector-leading in terms of inclusivity excellence.

Laura MGillivray noted the link with the inclusive economy work being done at UEA. Agreed that this could be joined up further within the university and Becky Price and Helena Gillespie would work on this aspect. **ACTION: PVC ACAD/BP/HG**

- (2) a letter from and the University's response to the Office for Students in respect of degree classifications. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D005)

Noted that OfS are looking ever more closely at grade improvement/inflation. Grade improvement had been discussed and noted at Council and Senate in the past. UEA had responded to OfS but had not had a reply yet.

The Council observed their ultimate responsibility for academic standards and discussed how this may best be assured. There continues to be an open invitation for members of Council to attend Senate where these matters are discussed in more detail and Council members are represented on other Committees that will assist in this duty. In addition, there is the opportunity to raise questions with both members of ET attending Council (either as members or observers) and also cross-reference with Student members of Council.

Gillian Maclean indicated that it would be helpful to see a graph and timeline showing the impact of all the different initiatives which had led to grade improvements. This would be considered further at a future Council meeting. **ACTION: Becky Price/PVC ACAD**

PVC ACAD indicated that BIU had analysed good honours closely but there was now a need to look at first class honours separately in future.

- (3) Letters from ministers to the Office for Students setting out their priorities for the regulator. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D006)

Noted that there were many opportunities for the University to remain close to key sector information and ministerial requirements via a wide range of networking groups.

*9. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

10. DO TOGETHER PROJECT UPDATE

Received

a verbal update from Pro-Vice-Chancellor SSF (Frances Bowen) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor RIN (Fiona Lettice)

KPI: Supporting and developing our staff; Projecting our reputation

Noted that 4,613 staff had been invited to take part in the online conversation. 1,119 people had logged in so far (24%), with 723 active participants. 300+ ideas had been added, 1,500 comments and 14,000+ votes. Topics covered in order of engagement were: staff success, values, student success, research

success, global success. Noted that the conversation had been extended for a 4th week and would close on 13th October. Council members were welcome to log in this week and see the depth and breadth of the conversation but are asked not to post comments/vote on suggestions. There would be an analysis of the conversation prior to ET Strategy day and a further report to Council afterwards.

In response to the update, support staff representative Daisy Mailey outlined the perspective of support staff. She noted that the major projects Align and Fixing the Basics have taken place but there was a need for more feedback to staff. She went on to outline a personal journey as a UEA support staff member highlighting equity differences between categories of support staff (specifically between Secretarial & Clerical and Administrative, Library and Computing) in terms of annual leave. Issues relating to parking costs, lack of investment in IT and closure of Catering facilities for staff over the summer were also highlighted as being particularly problematic and demotivating to staff.

Council thanked Daisy for her powerful account and the important issues raised. The impact of annual leave upon wellbeing and work/ life balance was noted. PVC SSF noted that the “them and us” was a very important theme within the online conversation. The new Director of People and Culture Helen Wiseman had now started and improvements were already being put in place with more to come. Staff success was a key part of the next UEA Plan. Agreed that Dir P&C should meet with Daisy Mailey to discuss her reflections more fully. **ACTION: CRO to organise.**

Assistant Head of Comms Sue Lawson underlined that it was important to understand personal stories of staff and for the comms plan to reflect this. The VC underlined the importance of staff being safe in telling about their experiences and comments: one of the reasons for the online conversation. Noted that it was important that action is taken to consider differences between terms and conditions and, where possible, identify actions to address them. He thanked PVC SSF and PVC RI for engaging Clever Together, which had enabled these important conversations to take place.

Noted that Council members will be invited to join Big Shift days and that there would be representations from NRP colleagues at the research big shift big day.

Laura McGillivray and PVC RI left the meeting to attend SCVA Board at this point.

11. EXTINCTION REBELLION

Considered

a report from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Medicine and Health) in respect of a meeting with representatives from Extinction Rebellion. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.COU19D008). *Roger Bond Dir EST in attendance.*

Noted that Extinction Rebellion are lobbying for more representation of Sustainability at ET and Council, for example by the incorporation of a member of Council onto Sustainability Board and an ET member whose sole responsibility was Sustainability. There needed to be a clearer message on Sustainability, not least because this is what our current and future students want; this recommendation was endorsed by Kathryn Skoyles, who attended the meeting with ER over the summer, and would be discussed at

Governance Committee. It was noted that the year of the commitment to carbon neutrality is key with 2050 being challenged. Council were generally in favour of a Sustainability Committee with a Council member sitting on it. It was agreed that a section addressing Sustainability should be added to the standard committee template report. A Sustainability lead would depend on finance but it was difficult getting any traction without a dedicated administrative support role. It was anticipated that this post should be an institutional position, not located within EST.

In terms of a response to ER, it would need to introduce them to the Lasdun wall and the issues this presented for the university.

Agreed that there was general full support from Council. ET to consider next steps. **ACTION: PVC FMH/CRO**

12 PAY AND PENSIONS

Reported

That the Trustee of the Universities Superannuation Scheme had agreed to finalise the 2018 valuation with the following contributions schedule to 1 October 2020:

	01/04/2019	01/10/2019	Original proposal (01/10/2019)
Employer contribution	19.5%	21.1%	24.2%
Employee contribution	8.8%	9.6%	11.4%
Total contribution	28.3%	30.7%	35.6%

The next valuation of the Scheme would commence on 1 April 2020.

Reported

that the campus trade unions were currently balloting their members as follows:

Union	Dispute	Type of ballot	Ballot opens	Ballot closes	Type of action
UCU	USS pensions dispute	Disaggregated	9/9/19	30/10/19	Strike and ASOS
	Pay dispute	Disaggregated	09/09/19	30/10/19	Strike and ASOS
Unison	USS pensions dispute	Disaggregated ¹	09/09/19	30/10/19	Strike
	Pay dispute	Aggregated	09/09/19	30/10/19	Strike
Unite	Pay dispute	Aggregated	23/09/19	31/10/19	Strike

ACTION: CRO to send a copy of communication in Lasdun to Council members.

¹ Unison members are only enrolled with USS in relatively few institutions.

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*13. FINANCE COMMITTEE

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

*14. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT TO COUNCIL

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

15. CHAIR OF COUNCIL

Received

a report on the proposed process in respect of recruiting a Chair of Council. This will be discussed further at the Governance Committee immediately after this meeting. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D012)

Governance committee will consider a process for selecting a new member of Council. A report will be brought back to Council. Mark Williams indicated that the proposed fee is too high and should be negotiated.

16. COUNCIL: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP 2019-20 AND RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

This report was deferred to the next meeting of Council.

17. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Items for Report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D014)

(1) Sealings

18. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

that the dates of future Council meetings were:

Monday 26 November 2019 (during CSC) (all day meeting)

Monday 27 January 2020 - 9.30am – 2pm

Monday 9 March 2020 - 9.30am – 2pm

Monday 11 May 2020 - 9.30am – 2pm (during CSC) (all day meeting)

Monday 22 June 2020 - 9.30am – 2pm

**19. SENIOR OFFICERS' REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

This minute is confidential and reserved and attached as a separate sheet.