

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held 9 March 2020

Present:

The Chair of Council	Mr J Greenwell
The Treasurer	Mr M Williams
The Vice-Chancellor	Professor D Richardson
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Professor N Ward
The Pro Vice-Chancellor	Professor F Lettice
Independent Members	Mr S Blease
	Mr J Clayton
	Mr G Jones
	Miss G Maclean
	Ms L McGillivray
	Dr K Skoyles
	Ms J Wheeler
Members appointed by Senate	Dr L Bohn
	Professor R Chakraborty
Member appointed by the Support Staff	Mrs D Mailey
Student Representatives	Ms S Atherton
	Ms A Trew

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)

Apologies: Mr M Davies

61. MINUTES AND ACTIONS

Confirmed

the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 January 2020.

The action log was reviewed. It was reported that at Governance committee, the recommendation was accepted that the UEA Health and Safety Executive cases and, in its place, H&S would feature as a standing item at ET meetings, with an annual report to Council and a quarterly 1 hour session at ETP. Steven Blease requested that the gap analysis requested at the last meeting of the Health and Safety Executive should not be forgotten and the CRO confirmed this was in hand.

The Chair offered his thanks to Steven Blease for his valued chairmanship of the H&S Executive and to all members for contributions.

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62. MATTERS ARISING

63. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair offered his warm congratulations to Laura McGillivray upon her appointment as interim Chair of Council from 1 April 2020.

64. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The VC thanked Joe Greenwell for his valued service as member of Council since 2013 and as Chair of Council since 2016, at this his last meeting. The Chair had overseen Council and the University during a period of great change and there had been many notable successes, about which he would speak further at the dinner to be held in Joe's honour later that day.

On COVID19 the CRO/DVC had chaired regular Business continuity meetings. The university was following PHE and FCO advice and information was being regularly updated on the UEA website. A number of UEA staff and students had been tested but there had been no positive cases to date. Staff were making contingency preparations for every eventuality, including testing the organisation's ability to hold seminars and events remotely. It was likely that the peak of virus could clash with graduation in July so this was being thought through. Field trips over Easter were likely to go ahead at this stage. Some research conferences had been cancelled too. Ratula Chakraborty reported on the impact of COVID19 on Chinese students who may not be attending lectures. Issues around xenophobia noted; CRO has reiterated importance of reporting all instances of inappropriate behaviour. Concerns re: clinical health professionals were noted. Overall this was a complex and unfolding situation, which was being well managed and monitored at UEA.

Industrial action – noted that today was the 10th day of industrial action in a block of 14 days, following 8 days in late Nov 2019 and 14 days in spring of 2018. UEA is in dispute with UCU on both pay/conditions and pensions. VC has been regularly in touch with national UUK leadership and UCEA CEO and chair. He had also held four meetings with local UCU reps and had had discussions with many VCs around the UK. Noted that negotiations were still proving difficult. On three of the "Four Fights" UEA is already tackling casualisation, workload and gender pay gap and is keen to work with local UCU but the Pay and pension disputes were more difficult. Noted that the dispute covers pay from 1.8.19 which was paid at 1.8%. There would need to be further negotiations for a two year pay deal for 2020-21 and 2021-22. However the pension dispute is even more difficult; two issues remain: the level of employee/employer contributions and maintenance of existing benefits. An increase in employer contributions to cover all additional pension costs, as suggested by UCU in their latest offer, could lead to staff redundancies. The outcome of JEP2 remains to be seen. In order to take further action on pensions, then UCU would need to re-ballot its membership. The numbers taking industrial appeared to be slightly down on previous rounds of industrial action.

The Treasurer indicated that in his experience Council have little influence on the outcome of the industrial action as this was a national dispute and also noted his concern re: lack of an exit strategy for UCU. Council thanked the VC for his work on both the local and national scene in this regard and fully endorsed his approach.

Noted that on the gender pay gap, workloads and casualisation the offer to UCU would be a firm commitment to resolve these issues; implementing changes could take time.

VC indicated that he thought the Augar review may be reinvigorated at some stage; lower fees were back on the table again. An across the board fee cut of 7.5% has been modelled. Likely to be further investment and partnership with FE. Student number controls may be revisited and the 50% into HE aspiration may be looked at again. CSR in the autumn may provide further opportunity.

On racial harassment, the VC had presented at three important national conference recently, in his role as Chair of UUK Advisory Group on tackling racial harassment. He had also invited the new Minister for Universities Michelle Donelan to a meeting. Council noted that this work was enhancing UEA's national profile and reputation. The VC indicated that UEA needed to be an exemplar in equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the university and this would be built into the next Plan.

VC updated in general terms on a student case reported (inaccurately) in the Times and Concrete. VC reported that UEA had asked the publications for inaccuracies to be addressed. There were nonetheless some delays and apologies had been made. Sophie Atherton reported on a discussion at SEC on compulsory consent training for all students. **ACTION: would be dealt with separately.**

On Admissions, it was reported that increase in PGT international admissions, could offset the decline in UG applications (although COVID-19 may impact the beneficial impact).

65. DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

None.

66. MEETINGS SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

- Sainsbury Centre Board (3 February 2020)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (3 March 2020)
- Finance Committee (4 March 2020)
- Governance Committee (9 March 2020)

Report from Governance Committee

- a) CRO reported on the recommendation made at Governance committee to invite the new Chief Executive of Norwich City Council Stephen Evans to join UEA Council, in a personal capacity for the duration of his tenure in the City Council role. The recommendation was agreed. **ACTION: CRO**
- b) CRO reported that Perret Laver had been appointed to search for new Council members, from amongst whom it was hoped to appoint a new Chair of Council.
- c) There will be a governance review.

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67. REPORT FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

Considered

the confidential report from the Vice-Chancellor including an oral update on:

Reported

- (1) Industrial Action
- (2) Coronavirus update
- (3) Sector updates from VC meetings with sector leaders

68. INNOVATION AWARDS

Received

remarks from Fiona Lettice on enterprise and innovation before a presentation of a video of the Innovation Awards 2020.

Noted that the Institute of Productivity was now Productivity East. PVC RI reported that RIN had a small events team who enabled very professional events to take place. Steven Blease reported that the award evenings were a great advert for the university with a notable breadth of work undertaken.

*69. UPDATE ON SKYHOUSE, LASDUN WALL AND OTHER MAJOR PROJECTS

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

70. UEA PLAN AND VALUES

Considered

- (1) The UEA Plan Tracker confidential report from the Chief Operating Officer (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D057)
- (2) A paper in respect of UEA values following the conclusion of consultation (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D050)
- (3) Student Success Section: Paper from DVC (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D050)

Received a verbal update on Staff Success day on 7.2.20.

Received a verbal update on Sustainability day on 14.2.20. Issues around environmental sustainability leading to an action plan noted. Further updates would be provided to the May Strategy conference.

Noted that on Strategic Themes, NBS Brand leader Robert Jones is helping to distil the themes and working with comms team. Strategic planning cycle and curriculum review are underway. Design of the organisation and Professional services was underway with papers coming to ET and then to Council in May.

Noted that the launch of plan may be iterative. Values may be launched earlier and then the Plan in the new academic year.

Council indicated that this tracker document was full. Noted that there could be a distilled version and it was recognised that prioritisation and phasing will be crucial.

On Fixing the Basics noted that there had been 3 or 4 quick wins. Other Basics will take a bit longer but considerable work was underway.

Jeremy Clayton observed that the Plan should indicate more clearly where UEA wants to sit in the 2030s and what would make it distinctive. Should there be more top-down strategic thinking – that meets the bottom up processes. He was keen for Council to be involved and to have a strategic think piece paper rather than a presentation to consider. Agreed that this would be provided.

(2) Values

The proposed Four Values of Collaboration, Ambition, Respect and Empowerment were proposed and agreed and will now be built into the UEA Plan. Sustainability will be added into each of the 4 Values.

Discussion followed on the measurement of Values and how they will they drive behaviour change. Dir P&C will mobilise around the Values.

(3) Student Success Paper

PVC ACAD indicated that he did not recognise the top down/bottom up framing of the Plan as he felt his area had been quite top down already.

71. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF UEA'S POSITION IN LEAGUE TABLES

Received

- (1) A review from Garrick Fincham (Head of Planning) on the gap between the UEA position and the Lancaster position in the THES World Top 200 (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D051)
- (2) An analysis of the current position in UK League Tables (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D052)

Noted that there were familiar themes of metrics and rank position on all of these issues. The Plan and student success work streams would address all of these areas.

Jeanette Wheeler underlined the importance of students having fun and engaging with others. Student societies and the Ziggurat challenge were important parts of this but also additional events for everyone, to bring people together who don't join a club. It was hoped that the new Welcome Week would incorporate these ideas plus the implementation of ideas from the Big Shift Big Day.

Sophie Atherton requested that there should be more SU involvement in the Student Success Plan. Also indicated that the degree completion area needed further consideration. She cited her own example of being unsure about completing her degree, deciding to withdraw and being sent a termination form straightaway without

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the opportunity to discuss her options. In response it was noted that hopefully the new embedded wellbeing teams would be able to provide support in such cases.

On keeping pace with technological change, COO reported that a dynamic learning experience for students was at an experimental stage: she was introducing a new digital tool with the aspiration to do a first online degree in September. There might be further opportunities in the light of Coronavirus.

The new Enlitened app would be promoted more next year. This currently had some 3000 users. UEA is first university to use Enlitened. Its use at UEA would be evaluated further in due course but it was hoped that it would be a helpful gauge of student feeling and concerns, which would enable issues to be addressed quickly.

72. ANNUAL REPORT: EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Considered

a report from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee to Council. This report will be presented by Sarah Barrow, Chair of EDI Committee and Ian Callaghan, CRO. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D053)

Noted that an Action Plan on Athena Swan will be rolled out to Professional Services. Dir P&C Helen Wiseman is forming a working group to coordinate the work. A currently embargoed national review of Athena Swan will be published tomorrow.

Council noted the excellent progress that had been made to date and the plans for further work in this regard.

73. PATTERN OF CHANGES IN NON-CONTINUATION

Received

a report from PVC-ACAD on the pattern of changes in non-continuation by school and subject area, and associated splits (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D054)

Noted that regular data is provided to schools and a set of activities and measures are in place to address some of the issues. BIU will be looking at how clearing maps onto non-continuation as it was recognised that that introduced further risk.

74. REPORT FROM FINANCE COMMITTEE

Considered

a confidential verbal report from Finance Committee held on 4th March 2020.

A confidential document was also tabled. The Treasurer outlined that different scenarios may need to be considered in the light of challenges to international student recruitment and Home/EU reductions; a new government's fee regime; pensions affordability; SSR/Faculty contributions; other Coronavirus implications. Noted that UEA was on target with budgetary target for 2019/20.

75. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS – FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019

Received

a report from the Chief Resource Officer and University Secretary in respect of the financial statements for the Union of UEA Students for 2019. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D055)

Noted that UEA was unable to sign the letter from auditors (it was becoming increasingly common for auditors to request this from universities) but will confirm that the block grant will be continued. CRO indicated that it was not appropriate for the university to put an unlimited guarantee in place for SU as they are a separate charity albeit a close and symbiotic partner organisation. A review of SU's long term funding was being undertaken and as part of this the CEO UEASU and CRO would be visiting Kent university to compare funding models and to seek to find an alternative model in the light of the fall in income from licensed bar sales.

Jeannette Wheeler indicated that Council would need reassurance over the SU's finance and governance. CRO reported that UEA Council members sit on UEASU Trustee body and UEASU reps sit on Council. We work closely with them to satisfy both parties.

The contents of the UEASU accounts were noted. CRO would find a form of words to satisfy the auditors.

76. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Item for Report.

1. Sealings (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU19D056)

77. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

- that the date of the next Council meeting is: Monday 11 May 2020, 9:30am – this is a Strategy Day and will finish at 5:30pm.
- that the dates of future Council meetings were:
- Monday 22 June 2020, 9:30am