

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2018

Present: The Chair of the Council (Mr J. Greenwell), 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 G Jones, Dr K Skoyles and Dr W. Thomson), 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 Interim Director of Finance, (Mr J. Brown), the Assistant Registrar (Ms L. Williams) and the Head of Corporate Communications (Mr A. Stronach).

In attendance: The Pro-Vice-Chancellors of Faculty (Professor S. Barrow, Professor F. Bowen, Professor D. Edwards and Professor P Gilmartin)

Apologies: The Treasurer (Mr M. Williams), Mr M. Davies, Miss G. Maclean and Ms L. McGillivray.

1. MINUTES

Confirmed

the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2018. The following additional points were noted:

- On Minute 72c it was noted that CRO would send the DataHE report to Mr Clayton.
- On Minutes 75 Estates Deep Dive, it was noted that Dir EST would share the Estates management report with COO/CRO for possible further circulation.
- On Minute 82 UEA Students Union, it was confirmed that further resource to support the conversion of the SU Shop had been agreed.
- On Minute 78 Blackdale Residences, in response to a question from Sophie Atherton, CRO confirmed that whilst the residences would indeed be broadly similar in terms of residential experience, the offer would tend to be higher end.

3. CHAIR'S ACTION

There were no actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting. However, the sub-group of the Finance Committee and the Chair of Council confirmed and executed the long-term finance arrangements in line with the resolution at the last meeting of Council.

4. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair congratulated all staff involved in the latest recruitment round for delivering within 2.4% of the admissions target.

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5. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The VC thanked all colleagues involved in admissions and clearing for their hard work and the successful outcome. Whilst recruitment had been challenging in some areas, UEA had largely made its target overall. Plans were now being developed in all Faculties to enable the university to secure more firm offer holders and place a lesser reliance on clearing with the aim being to deliver the best tariff possible.

The relative weakness of international to Home/EU numbers was noted and discussed. Mitigating activities were underway in terms of international numbers including joint provision and 2+2 degrees. There would be further work with INTO and by the International Office. Also the international strategy was being refreshed.

The impact of the move to students in all areas of Health Sciences paying standard tuition fees (rather than being NHS funded) was acknowledged particularly in respect of the mature student market. The University continues to actively explore apprenticeship programmes alongside traditional recruitment. The Nursing Associateship programme delivered in conjunction with City College Norwich is an excellent example of this approach.

Dr Bohn noted that UEA had just welcomed its largest ever cohort of students onto campus and she was interested to know about the impact upon student experience. PVC-ACAD provided reassurance that this had been planned for via the Student Experience Committee which had put in place a strategy for 2017-18 and beyond and this was working effectively.

VC reported that the Migration Advisory Committee report had now been published but had not provided much reassurance to universities. Competitor countries had a much more compelling post-study offer, which remained a concern.

*6. VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Received

the Vice-Chancellor's report to Council and to reflect upon specific items of interest. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D001)

*7. STUDENT NUMBERS AND FINANCES

Received

a confidential report on recruitment for 2018/19 and the financial impact. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D002)

*8. KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Considered

a confidential report providing a summary of key league table information. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D003)

The VC drew Council's attention to the fact that UEA had drawn down major financing to enable a significant investment in the Lasdun Wall; and at the same time had

maintained a Top 15 domestic ranking and a Top 200 international ranking. Whilst the NSS outcome was disappointing, the VC outlined the NSS table that showed the potential impact of strike action upon satisfaction levels. VC outlined plans to improve student satisfaction in future including work on the transition into Higher Education and the development of a Week 0/transitions week for incoming students. Oli Gray and Sophie Atherton indicated their support for a Week 0 and their wish to work with the university on this project.

The new social inclusion measure was noted – and the fact that UEA had come top of the Top 20 universities in this ranking. UEA was also a finalist in THE's "Unsung Heroes" category. PVC ACAD reported upon UEA's relative performance amongst peers and the Group of 6. The importance of the Aurora partnership was noted in terms of helping UEA to co-promote the reputation of the partners, who were all highly cited but low-ranking in league tables in terms of reputation.

On international rankings it was noted that UEA's 190th place had been boosted by the inclusion of the Sainsbury Laboratory and the Quadram Institute. As a result of new governance arrangements, their citations were now reported through UEA which enabled the power of the Institutes and the NRP relationships to be properly captured. Similar conversations with the Earlham Institute and JIC were planned, though the latter in particular would take time.

It was noted that the Chief Operating Officer was working with colleagues on a refresh of UEA's international strategy, with a view to making targeted improvements to UEA's reputation internationally. ARM were developing "super-narratives" which would help UEA tell its story to a wider audience of regional, national and international stakeholders. The importance of the NRP as part of UEA and the region's story was noted. The value of UEA's collaborations would be highlighted as a key part of the next UEA Plan.

*9 PAY AND PENSIONS

Noted

that the Joint Expert Panel has now published their first report. The report and executive summary are available at: <http://www.ussjep.org.uk/>

UUK had invited comments in response to the JEP from members. The Draft UEA response was considered. Noted that the UEA position on risk had altered. On balance, the proposed UEA position was to support the JEP proposals. There were concerns over the affordability of the employers' contribution. There was also concern about the potential impact of trigger payments (should they fall due) on the University's banking covenants.

Graham Jones indicated that there was no guarantee under the current proposals that the deficit situation would improve. He had further detailed points on risk and asset growth which he would put in writing to CRO for possible inclusion in the UEA response to the consultation.

Stephen Blease outlined that the likely additional £2m cost for UEA coupled with a decline in student numbers would not make delivering the UEA Plan any easier. We

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would need to plan conservatively in future, even though the demographic dip was going to improve and the sector as a whole was very strong.

Kathryn Skoyles highlighted her concerns about the role of USS governance in terms of the disruption to the sector. CRO would consider adding something in the draft to this effect.

ACTION: CRO to finalise response to consultation and send to Chair of Council for information.

Considered

a verbal report from the Vice-Chancellor with respect to the current position on pay and pensions.

Noted

that the 2-2.8% pay offer had been rejected by UCU and Unison. A ballot had been opened for industrial action. Noted that UEA's ability to negotiate a deal with the trade unions was limited due to collective bargaining. UCU nationally were asking for 7%.

The SU representatives indicated that traditionally the SU would support UCU action.

*10. LONG TERM FINANCE

Noted

that at the meeting on 25 June Council resolved to enter into a long-term finance contract and delegated authority to the Finance Committee acting with the Chair of Council to review and execute the final transaction.

Reported

that the long-term finance documentation was executed on 28 September 2018 and the University financial re-structure has now completed.

The final position on completion of the transaction on 28 September 2018 was outlined.

The Chair of Council wished to put Council's thanks on record to the Chief Resource Officer, Acting Director of Finance, the professional advisers from KPMG, the Treasurer Mark Williams and the members of Finance Committee for shepherding this process to a successful conclusion.

*11. FINANCE COMMITTEE

Received

a report from the Finance Committee from its meetings on 17 September 2018 and meeting of the Financing Sub Group on 25 September 2018. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D004)

12. ANNUAL REPORT: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Received

a presentation and annual report from the Equality & Diversity Committee to Council. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D005)

Noted that senior staff would be trained in Unconscious Bias at the forthcoming Policy half day in November. Agreed that Council members could also attend if wished. CRO would circulate further details. **ACTION: CRO**

The range of work supported by the Equality team was noted. The issue of adequate resourcing was discussed. Noted that in order to support the data collection for the Race Equality Charter work, some additional resource would be needed. CRO had identified possible sources of funding.

The need to tangibly impact upon outcomes and experiences in all areas of Equality work was noted, not just in the areas of compliance. COO and CRO would be joining the Athena Swan Steering group on behalf of Professional services, which it was hoped would help to improve outcomes.

Council offered their full support for UEA signing up to the Race Equality Charter and undertaking the related work. Signing would be organised at an appropriate meeting or event.

*13. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT TO COUNCIL

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

14. REVIEW OF SENATE EFFECTIVENESS

Considered

a report from the Senate Effectiveness Review Group. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D007).

Council noted the detailed work that had gone into undertaking the review and thanked the parties concerned. On the specific point of membership (notably whether Heads of Schools should be added to the membership) Council considered the various arguments put forward which included:

- The impact on the size of Senate
- The role of Heads of Schools as “drivers and influencers of change and performance”
- The diversity of Senate
- The potential for conflict of interest between Senate’s role in maintaining and improving performance and Heads of Schools’ responsibility for delivering the academic mission of the University.

On balance, it was agreed that the primary driver for adding Heads of Schools to Senate was one of communication and that there were alternative methods to deliver this – this should be the subject of Faculty Executive meetings receiving feedback from

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Faculty PVC's for example. On that basis, it was confirmed that the need for communication to and from Senate would be emphasised and additional communication methods considered in conjunction with the Director of Communications. A review would take place in two years.

ACTION: CRO

15. COUNCIL: TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP 2018-19 AND RESERVED AREAS OF BUSINESS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Received

the terms of reference and membership of the Committee 2018-19. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D008).

16. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Items for Report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU18D009).

(1) Sealings

17. DATES OF MEETINGS

Reported

that the dates of future Council meetings were:

Tuesday 27 November 2018 (during CSC) (all day meeting)

Monday 28 February 2019 - 9.30am – 2pm

Monday 11 March 2019 - 9.30am – 2pm

Monday 13 May 2019 (anticipated to be an all day CSC meeting)

Monday 24 June 2019 - 9.30am – 2pm

**18. SENIOR OFFICERS' REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

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