Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 19 March 2003


With: The Registrar and Secretary, and the Assistant Registrar (Bruce Hurrell)

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2000 were confirmed. (8 March 2000 was the last occasion on which a meeting of the Assembly had been quorate.)

2. NEW STATUTES

Reported

(1) that this was the first meeting of the Assembly to be held under the revised Statute 23 (1), which states that

There shall be an Assembly of the University consisting of all those persons who hold a contract of employment with the University.

This change had been approved by the Council at its meeting on 3 December 2001, and confirmed by the Council as a Special Resolution at its meeting on 9 January 2002. Subsequently, the changes had been approved by the Privy Council.
3. **THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY: MEMBERSHIP**

Reported

(1) that the current membership of the Standing Committee was as follows:

Jean Boase-Beier (Chair)
Rob Evans
Janet Garton
Rupert Read
(Two vacancies)

(2) that all of the current members of the Standing Committee were drawn from the academic or academic-related staff.

Recommended

by the Standing Committee that, in accordance with the widened membership, the membership of the Standing Committee also be changed so as to include

*eight members, including at least two from the academic and academic-related staff, and at least two from the support staff.*

**RESOLVED**

4. **THE ASSEMBLY: APPOINTMENTS TO THE COUNCIL**

Reported

(1) that Statute 15 (1) (C) provides that the membership of the Council includes

*Two members of the Assembly who are not members of the support staff, appointed by those members of the Assembly who are not members of the support staff.*

(2) that the restriction applied because two members of the Support Staff are appointed to the Council via a separate nominations' process.

(3) that, currently, the two members of the Council appointed by the Assembly were

Jean Boase-Beier
Rob Evans

and the current terms of office of both these members would end on 31 July 2004.
5. THE ASSEMBLY: APPOINTMENTS TO THE SENATE

Reported
(1) that Statute 18 (1) (B) provides that the membership of the Senate includes

*Eight members of the Assembly appointed by and from those members of the Assembly who are full-time members of the academic staff and such other members of the Assembly as the Senate shall from time to time determine. Of these eight members at least four shall be lecturers or of equivalent status;*

(2) that the "other members of the Assembly" includes, broadly, the academic-related staff, together with Senior Research Assistants and Senior Research Associates, in accordance with the Senate's role as the supreme academic authority of the University;

(3) that, with the widened Assembly membership, the "electoral college" for the Assembly's appointments to the Senate was now a sub-set of the total Assembly membership.

Recommended
that the process for appointing members of the Assembly to the Senate be carried out by inviting nominations from amongst eligible staff, each of which must be endorsed by the candidate, a proposer and a seconder, all of whom must be eligible to vote. If the number of valid nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, an election would be held.

8. IRAQ

Reported
that the following Agenda Item and Motion were submitted by Rupert Read (SOC) and Tim O'Hagan (SOC).

Noted
(1) that the University had an ethical aspect to its investment policy, an ethical aspect which was initiated first by this Assembly;

(2) that leading bodies in this University had in the past taken strong ethical stances on various weighty matters of foreign policy, such as the struggle against apartheid; and
that universities are places where there is a real possibility for thinking that is independent of our national government to take place and, sometimes, when the matter is weighty enough, for a corporate voice to be given to that thinking;

and, in the light of these three points it was proposed

that we the staff of the University of East Anglia wish to dissociate ourselves from preparations for a war against Iraq, on the grounds that such an attack on Iraq would not be justified by the principles of a 'just war'. We stand corporately opposed to the unjust war that the United Kingdom and United States governments appear currently to be planning; and

further, we urge the Council of the University similarly to resolve.

The debate commenced with a motion from the Registrar and Secretary that the Assembly moved to the next business, on the grounds that the motion was ultra vires and was not a matter related directly to the University. The motion was seconded by Yehuda Baruch.

For 17
Against 52
Abstentions 3

Motion lost

Tim O'Hagan proceeded to introduce the motion as follows. He spoke of an unjust war, and appealed to colleagues to support it. He admitted that he was not speaking as an expert in international law, but sought to reach defensible conclusions based on questions of fact, legality and morality. Figures of immense international and moral standing, such as Kofi Annan, Mary Robinson (the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights), and the Archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster had declared that the law lacked a basis in international law. Natural law suggested that war could be justified if:

it involved the defence of one's own or another nation state against an invader;

it arose from the prevention or rectification of real and certain injury;

the seriousness of going to war was proportional to the damage done already;

it was a last resort;
if it was conducted in accordance with the Geneva Convention, and harm was not inflicted on innocent civilians.

Professor O'Hagan concluded that this war could not be justified on those grounds, and that it was morally wrong. He went on to ask whether Iraq constituted a real threat to the US and the UK. It had been claimed that "the traditional tenets of natural law did not apply" because this was a new dimension of war against terrorism which was not focused on nation states, following the attacks in New York on 11 September 2001. Also, it had been claimed that the war to be waged against Iraq was a matter of self-defence for the UK and US. Professor O'Hagan thought that this connection was fictitious, and he concluded that UEA would do well to dissociate itself from this war because it had no basis in moral or international law.

Rupert Read seconded the motion, and urged the Assembly to speak up and represent the University's staff. The war was probably illegal; as for "supporting our troops", this could be done by suggesting that they should not be sent into battle in an immoral and illegal conflict.

Ben Rogaly then expressed his support for the motion, but proposed an amendment so that the opening phrase

"that we the staff of the University of East Anglia wish to dissociate ourselves from preparations for a war against Iraq ..."

be changed to

"that we the staff attending the Assembly of the University of East Anglia on 19 March 2003 wish to dissociate ourselves from preparations for a war against Iraq ..."

The motion was seconded.

For 59
Against 11
Abstentions 7

Motion carried.

As a result, the motion read:

that we the staff attending the Assembly of the University of East Anglia on 19 March 2003 wish to dissociate ourselves from preparations for a war against Iraq, on the grounds that such an attack on Iraq would not be justified by the principles of a 'just war'. We stand corporately opposed to the unjust war that the United Kingdom and United States governments appear currently to be planning; and
further, we urge the Council of the University similarly to resolve.

Debate continued with a variety of views being expressed, for example that the Assembly could not bind the University, and that as citizens of the UK and EU, other have other routes were available to express discontent. Others thought that every opportunity should be seized to make our views known, that gestures were important. Some members of the Assembly who had attended the march in London expressed their support for the motion. Freedom of speech was mentioned, and the view expressed that the motion should be opposed because freedom of speech is important in an academic and international community, and corporate statements such as the one in the motion went against notions of free speech.

David Marshall proposed a motion that the phrase

"We stand corporately opposed"

be replaced by

"We are opposed".

The motion was seconded by Yehuda Baruch.

For 20
Against 39
Abstentions 14

Motion lost

Debate continued with Yehuda Baruch saying that he had been harmed by Saddam Hussein and that the world needed to be rid of Saddam. He hoped the war was successful in that regard. The Vice-Chancellor expressed his view that a liberal community such as UEA must embrace and tolerate a range of views. Freedom of speech should be celebrated, not merely tolerated, and he was distressed by the wording which sought to bind colleagues to a particular point of view. The real issue was not the motion itself, but to seek to protect tolerance, plurality and liberal values at UEA. Others dissented, saying that universities were not separated from broader currents of opinion, and that silence could be taken as UEA giving implicit consent for the government's policy towards Iraq.

Finally, the Assembly voted on the motion, as amended.

that we the staff attending the Assembly of the University of East Anglia on 19 March 2003 wish to dissociate ourselves from preparations for a war against Iraq, on the grounds that such an attack on Iraq would not be justified by the principles of a 'just war'. We stand corporately opposed to the unjust war that
the United Kingdom and United States governments appear currently to be planning; and

further, we urge the Council of the University similarly to resolve.

For 65
Against 5
Abstentions 2

Motion carried.

9. QUESTION TIME

To report
that the following questions were received.

Catering

1. When does the contract between the UEA and the catering company Sodexho (who run the Diner etc.) expire? Who will run the Catering service when it does?

   The contract between UEA and Sodhexho expires on 30 June 2003. After that date, the catering service will be run by the University.

2. Does a Service Level Agreement (SLA) exist for the Catering service? If it does could it be placed on the Web under Conference Services?

   No, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) does not exist for the catering service.

   (Question submitted by Mike Bristow, ITCS)
   (Answers supplied by Jenny Grant, RSD)

HERA Scheme

1. Why was HERA (from ECC) picked in preference to one of the other evaluation schemes? Were trials on various schemes conducted here and if so which and how many posts were evaluated?

2. Are any current or former members of staff connected with Educational Competences Consortium Ltd (ECC) and if so who are they?
3. Could you please provide % figures of
   i) The upgrades
   ii) The downgrades
   for each dept done in the first round of 230 people?

4. We calculate that greater than 30% of ALC staff in one department (ITCS) were marked initially for lower grades, and we are aware of downgrading of other ALC-level IT jobs elsewhere in UEA.

   Given this dramatic result, what investigation has UEA made as to the appropriateness of the HERA methodology for ALC-level IT jobs? If none, why not? Similarly, has UEA assessed the likely consequences for recruitment and retention of staff for roles that are downgraded?

5. Why were the AUT told that role assessment via HERA was voluntary, but UEA staff were told that it was compulsory?

6. Because we were in the pilot we could not have access to the full HERA Guidance Notes which were only placed on the Web in January 2003. These give examples taken from the pilot. We were at a disadvantage compared to people who will be beginning the HERA process now. If there is scope for inaccuracy why not re-assess everyone?

7. Were there any software developers/support specialists included in the original samples from which the HERA weightings were constructed? If certain roles were missed from the sample, how can we be sure that the weightings are not biased against those roles?

8. Why has the University not put a counselling or other support service in place to help people to deal with the stress and worry of being downgraded?

9. What training have the facilitators had to effectively analyse specialist technical roles such as those in IT?

10. What are the pensions implications for those staff whose salary it is proposed to reduce by downgrading?

11. Software developers/support specialists are required to learn and keep up-to-date a huge amount of complex technical knowledge. We believe that the HERA scoring scheme does not allow sufficient weighting for this. Furthermore we have been told that the 8% weighting given to Knowledge and Experience in the HERA scoring scheme is unusually low compared to typical role analysis schemes and this counts against the above roles. If the university believes that the above points are wrong, please provide evidence. If it
believes they are right, please explain how this situation will be taken into account to give the above roles a fair grading?

The submission to Assembly contains a number of general questions, specific concerns and assertions. This statement deals with those issues that are matters of broad interest to the University. Accordingly, questions 10 and 11 and aspects of questions 3 and 4, which appear to seek responses to statements about personal or unit specific information are not dealt with in detail. These questions, if asked of line management at unit level or of the HERA team, will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Statement

The Higher Education Role Analysis (HERA) scheme was developed by a consortium of Universities to provide a fair, independent and robust role evaluation scheme that is relevant to the wide range of jobs found across the sector. It provides a framework within which different types of jobs can be evaluated to ensure that colleagues are given equal pay for work of equal value. The development of the scheme included assessment and evaluation of a wide range of university jobs. UEA was represented on the Board of Directors of the consortium (Educational Competencies Consortium Ltd) and Council adopted the HERA scheme following a recommendation from the Human Resources Policy Committee.

The first phase of the scheme is currently under way and initial results have been published. Where colleagues feel that their role has been graded inappropriately, either as the result of misunderstandings or anomalous scoring, the HERA facilitators are, where requested, undertaking reassessments. All roles where the initial indication is that the role will be realigned downwards will automatically be re-evaluated. The scheme has a built-in period of time for this to happen, before there is any impact on an individual's grade or remuneration, to ensure that individuals have the opportunity to respond to the initial assessment. There is also a formally agreed appeal process open to job-holders.

As the process is not yet complete it is premature to give final figures on the number of roles that have changed grade, however, across the University the initial analysis of 230 roles would have resulted in 13.5% upgrades, 10.5% downgrades and 12% moving onto a different salary structure.

For the scheme to provide full coverage and ensure its robustness it was essential that all designated roles in the first phase were evaluated together. From the outset the support of staff was welcome but it was made clear that evaluation of a role would proceed even if the member of staff did not wish or was unable to be involved. Assessors are fully-
trained in the HERA methodology, which has itself been designed to accommodate the range of jobs found in the university sector, and work closely together to ensure that the methodology is applied as consistently as possible.

(Questions submitted by Chris Dunlop, Mike Slaughter, Mike Bristow, Pat Newby, Trevor Woods, Richard Woods - all members of staff in ITCS)

(Answers supplied by the Personnel Division)

Equal Opportunities

(1) Does the new Vice-Chancellor fully endorse the University's Equal Opportunities in Employment Code of Practice?

Yes I do indeed fully endorse the University’s Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities in Employment.

(2) If so, does he believe, in the light of the report of the Equality Challenge Unit, that adequate mechanisms are in place to ensure that the provisions of the Code are equally respected and applied throughout the University?

Following the very valuable visit and audit from the ECU, immediate priorities were identified in consultation with the Consultants and a substantial programme of work in the field of promoting diversity and equal opportunities for all is now in place as detailed within the UEAs Human Resources Strategy.

New structures and mechanisms have already been put into place to complement existing structures and procedures, such as the UEA’s new Race Working Group and Equal Opportunities Advisory Group. I believe that such mechanisms will ensure that the provisions of the code are implemented throughout the University.

However we must never be complacent on such important issues and much work remains to be done. Equal Opportunities for all is an area that I feel strongly about and I will continue to take a personal lead in ensuring that the UEA maintains best practice in the field of equal opportunities in employment and indeed in all that the University does.

(Questions submitted by Bill Marsh, Library)
(Answers from the Vice-Chancellor)
Special Salary Increments

1) Is the system of 'Special Salary Increments' grossly unfair and subject to abuse for personal reasons by local management?

2) Would it be far better to dispense with 'Special Increments' in any new / proposed salary structure?

Special salary increments provide an opportunity for the University to recognise above average work performance or to correct salary anomalies and as such are an important part of our current salary structure. Criteria for recommendations are made explicit to managers to ensure that the system is well understood and applied appropriately.

The system requires a detailed case to be made by the line manager which is then considered either by the Personnel Division (in cases relating to Support Staff) or the appropriate Committee. There are also procedures for individuals to appeal if they wish to do so. In this respect the system is moderated and can respond if the terms for a special salary increment being awarded are not satisfied.

As with all policies and procedures relating to the way the University recruits, manages, supports and rewards staff the operation of the salary structure is under regular review to ensure it reflects good practice. Any changes to the way in which the structure operates will be the subject of full consideration and discussion through the appropriate channels.

(Questions submitted by Al Brooks, AVS)
(Answer supplied by Cecile Piper, Director of Personnel)

Organisation of Assembly Meetings

(1) Could the Web page on the Intranet (under Committees) for the Assembly be enhanced with the date of the next meeting and deadlines for submitting items 2 months before it is due to happen?

Yes

(2) Could notification of the Assembly meeting be sent to the newsgroup "uea.announce@uea.ac.uk" at the same time that it is published in Broadview?

Yes

(3) Can a mailing list "assembly@uea.ac.uk" (containing all those eligible to attend) also be set up and the same message sent to this please?

Yes
No, because all members of staff are members of the Assembly, and the e-mail list staff@uea exists already. A copy of the message which appeared in BroadView was sent to that list on 27 February 2003.

(Questions submitted by Mike Bristow, ITCS; (Answers provided by Bruce Hurrell, ACAD)
10. REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

To report

that at its meeting on 19 March 2003, the Assembly debated a motion
on the war against Iraq, and resolved as follows:

"that we the staff attending the Assembly of the University of East
Anglia on 19 March 2003 wish to dissociate ourselves from
preparations for a war against Iraq, on the grounds that such an attack
on Iraq would not be justified by the principles of a 'just war'. We
stand corporately opposed to the unjust war that the United Kingdom
and United States governments appear currently to be planning; and

further, we urge the Council of the University similarly to resolve."