

## THE COUNCIL



### Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2011

- Present:** The Chairman of the Council (Mr R. Jewson) (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor (Professor E.D.J. Acton), the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (Professor D.J. Richardson and Professor T. Ward), the Treasurer (Mr J. Sisson), Sir Richard Dales, Mr D. Edwards, Mr G. Jones, Ms V. Keller-Dorsey, Ms L. McGillivray, Professor N. Norris, Dr K. Skoyles, Mr S. Thompson, Professor C. Waddams and the Student Representatives except for business marked \*\* (Mr R. Bloomer and Mr M. Myles).
- With:** The Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Planning (Mr I. Callaghan), the Director of Finance (Mr S. Donaldson), the Senior Assistant Registrar (Dr L. Moulard) and the Senior Administrative Assistant (Committee Office) (Mrs R. Phillips).
- In attendance:** The Deans of Faculty (Professor D. Peters Corbett, Professor I. Harvey, Professor P. Gilmartin and Professor N. Ward).
- Apologies:** Mr D. White (until 1pm)

#### 14. MINUTES

Confirmed  
the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2011.

#### 15. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

There were no statements from the Chair.

#### 16. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

1. There had been a further release of hacked emails to a Russian website. It was evident from investigations that no new material had been obtained and a press conference had been given by the Vice-Chancellor and Professor Phil Jones. Interest in this additional release had quickly fallen away and the focus is now on using the information to assist with the identification of the group that obtained the data.
2. UCU members will be on strike on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November. At this stage it is not known what the effect will be but members are being urged not to disrupt studies.
3. There has been recent press coverage about a small group of UK universities moving to the US "Grade Point Average" model rather than the current degree classifications used in the UK. This action would potentially give students an extra incentive to gain the extra mark to distinguish themselves from others but the University will not be declaring UDI on this issue. It is anticipated that a parallel system may evolve over time.

17. SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Reported

- (1) that the University Ordinances state that a decision to withdraw from an area of study which would result in the closure of a school, will require the approval of Council, having consulted with Senate.
- (2) that the Senate considered the recommendations from the Review Panel at their meeting on 9 November. The minute of the Senate discussions is enclosed. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D011)
- (3) that the Union of UEA Students have provided additional information to assist the Council in making their decision. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D012)

Considered

the recommendations from the Review Panel commissioned with undertaking a review of the future of the School of Music and the Senate. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D013)

(The Chair advised that a well worked out communication strategy had been compiled to ensure that the result of this meeting was communicated widely. He requested that members refrained from releasing information earlier than the official University statement.

The Vice-Chancellor read a statement to the meeting and a copy is appended to these minutes. The Executive Dean for the Faculty of Medicine and Health as Chair of the Review Panel stated that the panel had been open minded and scrupulous in their consideration of the evidence. The recommendations of the Panel were unanimous. There was no single measure which had defined the conclusion reached it was the full range of data where Music was underperforming judged against University aspirations and the national context that led the panel to reach its conclusion. The exercise was firmly rooted in the 2002 review which did incorporate external expertise. The Panel was satisfied that all of the 2002 recommendations had been addressed appropriately and that the annual subsidy to the School was exceptional in its nature. The Panel considered that music was a vibrant part of the University and that engagement with music outside the formal delivery of teaching and research should continue. Additionally, the current Music students must receive the highest quality of education and support as they complete their courses.

A letter from the General Secretary for the University and College Union was tabled together with a copy of the Equality Impact Assessment statistics in respect of the proposed closure. Both were carefully considered by Council and are filed in the Minute Book. In particular the impact statistics did not suggest a disproportionate impact on any of the protected groups.

The Communications Officer of the Union of UEA Students made a statement addressing a number of key issues and the details of that statement are also appended to these minutes.

The Vice-Chancellor responded to the statement addressing the key points. To continue to divert resources to support a specific area which is not aligned with the University's aspirations was not sustainable.

In further discussion members of Council expressed their opinions. It was noted that the City Council had received many statements of concern both directly and via City Councillors. The Leader of the Council had written to the Vice-Chancellor and was content with the responses that she had received and noted that in the current climate in the public sector difficult choices had to be made. She had great concerns for the life of music in the City but the proposals from the Vice-Chancellor had reassured her.

In response to a query about what the risk would be of taking advantage of the offers from RMA/NAMHE it was noted that this would take additional time and has the potential to mislead. The position could not be resolved without the investment of further resource and this could not be committed. A critical factor was the government's change in policy towards the allocation of student numbers (core-and-margin and AAB) and the overwhelming likelihood that the School's undergraduate recruitment would now decline. This is a judgment that did not depend on the knowledge and expertise of musicians from elsewhere. It is a judgment for the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Team on the basis of market information and advice.

In respect of legal challenge, as long as the University delivered the degree course appropriate to students, there was no risk of a successful legal action in respect of what had been promised. The University's review and decision-making were not known at the time of the admission of the current students and the University fully intended to deliver the course and ensure an appropriate academic experience to those students, noting that all programmes are subject to change in the detail of their delivery over time.

Several more independent members of Council spoke to the matter each stating that they had spent much time reading the relevant papers, the correspondence that had been sent to them personally, the blogs and other information. It was noted that there is a plan in place to deliver education to the current cohorts of students to a high standard and that the richness of the current outreach activity is planned to continue. The main practice rooms in the current building would continue to be available. A national plan for music is expected and it is anticipated that music making on campus will be well supported in the future. The compelling statements made by the Union of UEA Students had been considered but there had been too many issues over a lengthy period and with regret the recommendation was supported.

There was concern from the Student Union representatives that reputational damage may arise from failing to take up the offer of the further review but it was considered that there could always be "one more review".

In final discussions the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities confirmed that the Faculty had responded to the 2002 report regarding investment. Temporary staff had been made permanent, administrative and technical support had been enhanced and the subvention had been increased. Efforts were also made to grow recruitment during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It had been a struggle throughout the period to grow student numbers and in 2006 numbers of undergraduate admissions were only in the 20's. Staff numbers had been maintained.

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COU-M4  
28.11.2011  
Min. 17

### RESOLVED

that with the exception of the two Student Union representatives who had voted against the proposal Council endorsed the summary and recommendations as set out in Page 12 of the Report of the Music Review Panel (COU11A002).

## 18. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

### Reported

that the Audit Committee (11 November 2011) considered:

- (a) the draft Financial Statements 2010-2011 and
- (b) the Auditors' report on the audit and the financial statements, including the draft letter of representation
- (c) a comparison between the forecast and actual outturn position

### Considered

a recommendation from the Audit Committee

- (1) that the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2011 in the form in which they will be presented to the Court and published externally, including the Treasurer's report which forms an integral part of the statements, be approved. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.COU11D014)
- (2) that the letter of representations concerning the University's compliance with relevant laws and regulations be approved. See Appendix 2 of COU11D014)

(The financial statements were also reviewed in draft together with the draft Treasurer's report, by the Finance Group at its meeting on 20 October 2011.)

(There were no changes in format this year and some minor changes in detail. The variance between the month 11 forecast and the final outturn was discussed in some detail which on the face of it was a significant swing. Council members were taken through the detail of these variances and it was identified that the key focus should be on the £1.6m that was neither non-cash nor timing variance. It is these items where efforts are being focussed to improve forecast accuracy. Some elements were very difficult to forecast ahead of year-end (for example the outcome of the administrative integration project, late receipts from the Strategic Health Authority). The net impact of these adjustments was to boost the opening position for cash. It was also pointed out that whilst the variance had been favourable it was unlikely that knowledge of this level of variance would have significantly influenced additional investment given that the forecast was for a deficit position. Also, whilst history is not necessarily a predictor of the future it is the case that in all previous years recently the variance had been favourable, partly due to the tradition of prudence.)

### RESOLVED

- (1) To approve and sign the financial statements as presented;
- (2) To approve and sign the letter of representation.

19. FINANCIAL FORECASTS

Considered

- (1) a confidential report from the Director of Finance which incorporates summary financial forecasts. The outturn for 2010/11 and the current year forecast will then be submitted to HEFCE. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D015)
- (2) including a recommendation that the University seeks loan facilities of up to £30m and is authorised to enter into such facilities subject to returning to Council for specific permission to drawdown funds from the facility.

(Due to the uncertain nature of future funding streams HEFCE has this year relaxed their requirement for five years' financial forecasts and instead requires only the outturn for 2010-11 and the forecast for 2011-12. However, the Bank and Auditors require going concern forecasts and the forecasts presented have been produced on this basis and extend beyond the period required by HEFCE. The forecasts make an assumption that loan finance will be required during the period and the servicing costs of an £18m loan have been factored in. However, it is the aspiration to seek loan finance of up to £30m and discussions have taken place with clearing banks in this regard on terms broadly similar to the current agreement. The Treasurer was able to confirm that he was satisfied that seeking this additional gearing was acceptable given that it will be used as a resource to invest and is not required as working capital. It is possible that permission to borrow may be required from HEFCE if debt servicing costs exceed 4% of annual turnover. It was also noted that in the HEFCE assessment of risk information the University is currently more highly geared than the sector benchmark. It should be noted that existing borrowing is primarily related to student residences which generate much of the positive cashflow for the University (together with high levels of depreciation).)

RESOLVED

- (1) to accept the outturn for 2010/11 and the current year forecast and authorise submission to HEFCE.
- (2) to authorise the University to seek and enter into loan facilities of up to £30m subject to returning to Council for specific permission to drawdown funds from the facility.

20. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Considered

the Annual Report of the Committee. *Please note the appendices are confidential.* (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D016)

(The Chair of Audit Committee noted that the two key issues the Committee had concerns about during the year were the management of joint ventures and maximising revenue from the University's assets, both physical and intellectual. In terms of the latter point further discussions will take place when the Committee holds its annual meeting with the Vice-Chancellor in attendance.)

Confirmed

the signature of the annual assurance return. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D017)

## COU11M002

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\*21. NORWICH RESEARCH PARK – FUNDING THE OPERATING COMPANY

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet

\*22. CONFIDENTIAL PROJECT

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

\*23. STUDENT CENSUS REPORT

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

\*24. FINANCE GROUP

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

\*25. HEFCE ASSESSMENT OF RISK

This minute is confidential and attached as a separate sheet.

26. REF CODE OF PRACTICE

Received

the "UEA Equality Code of Practice: Preparing Research Excellence Framework Submissions" for introduction with immediate effect following approval by both the Senate and Council. The Code of Practice is a requirement of the Funding Councils' "Assessment Framework and guidance on submissions" (REF 02, 2011 paragraph 40c). This document has also been considered by The Senate at their meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The minute from that meeting is:

"Senate noted that HEFCE required HEIs to develop, document and apply their Codes of Practice on or before 31 July 2012 and resolved that the UEA Code be recommended to Council for introduction with immediate effect following approval. It was noted that final guidance from HEFCE on staff circumstances where less than four outputs were permissible would be finalised in January 2012."

(A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref.COU11D023)

27. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the following Items for Report. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU11D024)

- (1) Promotions to Chairs
- (2) Sealings

\*\*28. REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE

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

\*\*29. REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE

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

\*\*30. SENIOR OFFICERS' REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

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

**The School of Music. Statement by the Vice-Chancellor**

The proposal that UEA cease admitting new students for degrees in music has caused a public cry of pain. This seems to me entirely appropriate. What the School of Music (MUS) provides is a public good and its withdrawal a tangible loss.

UEA is among Britain's foremost universities for the Humanities, as evidenced by our prominence on the national and international stage in Literature, World Art Studies, History, American Studies, Film Studies and Translation Studies as well as our strengths in Politics, Philosophy, Drama and Language and Communication Studies (LCS). This prowess has just been underscored by the announcement of the Queen's Anniversary Prize for our work in Creative Writing. It is because it is in the interests of our work in the Humanities, and of the University as a whole, that I have recommended withdrawal from degree provision in music.

**2011 Review**

Since the School was formally reviewed in 2002, I have been aware that specialists in the field have judged it to be 'at the absolute margin of viability.' Following the 2002 Review, the University has made investment in the School, but that has necessarily been contingent on each stage of investment bringing the right results in admissions and research; slow progress here meant that even during the less challenging times of the last decade, the case for further investment at the expense of other areas has been difficult to make. Prompted by the HE environment becoming dramatically more challenging in terms of both research and student funding, I established a Review Panel to examine the School's prospects in the post-2012 regime.

To maximise the chances of an impartial assessment of those prospects, rather than special pleading either way, I asked senior colleagues outside the Faculty to serve on the Review while ensuring the Panel consulted senior colleagues in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (HUM). I also asked the Head of MUS to sit on the Panel to ensure it was fully briefed on the strenuous efforts, made over many years and most vigorously under his leadership, to find ways forward. The timing of the report was affected by my wish that the bleak internal assessment of the School's prospects in the forthcoming Research Excellence Framework (REF) be cross-checked by MUS's much delayed mock-REF external assessment.

**Research Excellence Framework**

The Panel's conclusions are compelling and, that view having been reinforced by consultation with Senate, I recommend their implementation. Despite the research strategy put in place by the Head of School (which has provided study leave for half the School in the last two years), the efforts of colleagues and the work of promising early career colleagues, the research assessment and income prospects look too poor for a University committed to research-led teaching. The prospect is that, at best, the School will fare no better in REF 2014 than it did in RAE 2008. Its RAE rating was the second lowest in the Faculty, and with research metrics now far more challenging, a continuation of that position would still further reduce the already inadequate research income.

Unfortunately, the School's research trajectory is at odds with the mission of a University whose research influence is currently ranked in the top twelve in the UK. Only a considerable investment in new staff could do anything to change this situation, but that would be at the direct expense of other Schools unless MUS secured a large increase in student numbers; in the present climate in higher education, that is not possible.

**Student Numbers**



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Key to the challenge facing the School has long been the need to increase its student numbers and thus fund a staff complement at a healthy remove from 'the absolute margin of viability.'<sup>1</sup> In the last two years, under the leadership of the current Head, some progress has been made but the new government policy on Home/EU undergraduate places makes further progress exceedingly unlikely. Universities of UEA's quality, which have of necessity resolved to charge more than £7,500, have had their guaranteed numbers cut from September 2012. All places filled in September 2010 by students reaching AAB at A level (or equivalent) are being removed, and a percentage of the remainder are being creamed off for auction to providers charging less than £7,500. This cut is likely to be repeated annually for the next few years. The numbers can be recouped, but only by competing successfully in a new open market for students with AAB or better.

In four of the last five years, MUS's recruitment of students reaching AAB has been the lowest in the Faculty, a very long way below the Faculty average. The modest increase even in 2011, when applications ballooned across the sector, makes it plain that in the new regime MUS would face a year-on-year cut in student numbers and associated income. It is possible that some time after 2012, the open market will be extended to ABB. But here too MUS's admissions picture is far out of line with the rest of the Faculty and the implications clear. It is this intractable market position that moves the issue beyond the scope of the generous offer from the RMA and NAMHE to provide counsel from music specialists.

With its student base and teaching income set to shrink, MUS's admission profile is at odds with the University's aspirations and direction of travel.

### Faculty of Arts and Humanities (HUM)

Had the Faculty advanced the case that the School of Music is integral to the academic agenda, research, teaching or league table position of the Faculty and its other Schools, it would have been necessary to weigh that against the grim outlook for MUS. HUM has made no such case. Despite the Faculty having, rightly, steered to give MUS a staff:student ratio as good or better than any other in HUM, the School has usually been below and sometimes far below the Faculty's demanding average on key performance indicators.

In this situation, to divert further resource in order to prop up MUS does not look responsible. To go further, to fund the additional staff places judged necessary to move it above the margin of viability, looks perverse. The effect of doing so in the absence of a miraculous upsurge in AAB students choosing MUS would be greatly to increase the burden placed on other Humanities Schools. Their AAB targets would become all the more stretching to compensate for MUS's dearth. Resource needed to fulfil our plans to enrich their academic offering, increase their academic numbers and reinforce their appeal to students and top-quality staff would have been siphoned away.

### University Strategy

Such an approach, weakening instead of strengthening our position in fields in which UEA can do supremely well, would fly in the face of the Corporate Plan now taking shape. Extended to other areas, it would reverse UEA's progress and obstruct our expansion into new academic areas. In the UK's fiercely competitive HE environment, it would imperil the University's position with negative repercussions for the Norwich Research Park, the city and the region.

### Completing cohorts, musical activity and outreach

It is vital that we safeguard the education of the School's final student cohorts and support their career plans. The prospects are good. We will seek to ensure that the amount of academic time per student devoted to the cohorts graduating in 2013 and 2014, the academic support and attention they receive, is even greater than for earlier cohorts. The Head of School (who has agreed to serve throughout the period) and his staff are fiercely committed to this mission, and plans are in

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<sup>1</sup> Given limited recruitment of postgraduate and international students, the key issue has been Home/EU undergraduate numbers. The Faculty, despite being constrained by tight limits on its overall numbers, gave MUS scope, increasing its permitted target to rise from 20 in 2006 to 44 in 2009 and 2010. On both occasions it fell well short, and in 2011 the target was reined back to 33. In that exceptional year, when national applications leapt, and UEA's far above the average, its numbers rose sharply and overshot to 49, overshooting its target. Unfortunately, that was an aberration precluded by the new rules on student numbers introduced for the 2012 intake.

## **COU11M002**

place to underpin provision should colleagues leave. We will seek to avoid redundancies and consult fully with trade union colleagues throughout the process.

It is also essential that we reinforce and if possible expand the musical activity and opportunities available on campus for students of all disciplines. Here, too, the prospects are promising and offers of expert help most encouraging. The plans being developed will draw both on the experience and resources of the School and on best practice elsewhere. Those plans also encompass ambitious ideas for developing the University's musical outreach programme.

### **Communication**

We must communicate our plans in both areas effectively - to students, concerned parents and mentors, and the School of Music's many supporters. We must communicate our pride in the School's achievements and our regret that UEA's response to the fiercely competitive new HE environment dictates that the School cease to admit new students. We must underline the University's determination to expand its provision in the Humanities, nurturing as they do so much of what is most beautiful and profound, funny and interesting in life. We must make clear UEA's commitment to excel in all that we do.

Edward Acton  
28 November 2011

Summary of Address to Council by Matthew Myles on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Why is the University thinking of closing the School?

1. Tariff points - MUS has a low entry tariff
  - a. therefore has an impact on league table scores
  - b. and recruitment
2. Funding - the University believes that the School is not profitable enough
  - a. It doesn't recruit enough students
  - b. Subsidy
  - c. It might not receive any research funding
3. Research – the School will get a low score in 2014
  - a. Impact case studies
  - b. Therefore will have an impact on league tables

What is the impact for the University? Fractions

1. Tariff points
  - a. Really close to average – 405 vs 418
  - b. Small cohort
  - c. Note that PHI was identified as the highest sensitivity School in an AAB risk assessment by RAM in 2011
  - d. How irreversible is this situation? Personally I'm not convinced that slightly boosted an entry tariff would be impossible, but also I'm not convinced it will make a huge difference.
2. Funding
  - a. The debt of the School if we remove the subvention is set to be £37k – not £165k, nor was it ever. Considering the School has managed to reduce the budgeted deficit from £153k for 11/12 to £37k in 12/13, and student numbers have been increasing since 2008, it would appear that the financial situation of the School is heading in the right direction.
  - b. After conversations with the Finance Department it's clear that the Panel did not look at the finances of the School in the context of the institution **at all**.
  - c. The only figures that were produced were the managed contributions of each School; Music is not the worst. PHI is the worst.
  - d. When we consider the debt of the Music School as a 'hole in the boat' then we need to look at this in the context of other Schools. CHE for example will make a loss after apportionments (tax for Schools).
  - e. These extra Chemistry costs will be entirely rooted in core academic activities, not outreach as with the Music School subsidy.
  - f. If it makes no research funding AND you took away the subsidy, there would still be very comfortable profit of around £400k, until the University decides how much to charge the School through 'apportionment'.
  - g. 49% of the Music School's apportionment is for 'central services'. The institution's central service costs contribute about 64% of overall costs, so it would appear favourable. But the Music School is charged proportionally more for having its own building - how does this central cost match up to that of Chemistry, or History, which are based within the central infrastructure of the university? Is this 49% completely arbitrary?
  - h. This **is** important. Running at a deficit has deemed short term investment in the School to be an option that is not financially viable. But neither Panel nor University Finance Department have fully investigated the institutional implications of this investment, or even began to.

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- i. Where does the investment for Chemistry come from if not from a central subsidy? Will Schools that run at a loss never expand, never improve? Will only those Schools that make a profit ever have the chance to flourish?
  - j. What does Philosophy's apportionment look like?
3. Research
- a. Low score won't greatly affect institutional score, as PVC Professor Richardson tells me.
  - b. They've had a low score for fifteen years, school has expanded
  - c. They will only have to recruit 41 students to break even, so only 8 of those have to be AAB or international students.
  - d. Last year they recruited 50 students, nine of which were AAB or internal.
  - e. Applicants # for our MUS has risen year on year, whilst for our rivals it has fallen.
  - f. The fractional difference in research scores will have an impact on league tables in that it is fractions that make the difference in the cluster below the best universities in the country – applications have risen for UEA MUS against trend regardless.
  - g. Considering the impact case studies, it's unlikely that the School's score will be reversed before the submission in 2014. However, this is not the lowest scoring School in the institution. In the short term this School alone will have a minor impact on research scores, but in the long term with investment in staff - as the 2002 Review recommends - there will be a much improved score and increased funding attained every year.
  - h. Will we choose to improve in the long term? Or will we choose to go down the route of closing Schools like PHJ and PSI that don't make the average institutional grade?

The Impact on the University of just keeping the School open is fractional.

### What is the cost of expansion?

1. The short term financial investment to be made in staff
  - a. To improve teaching, entry tariffs, funding and research in the medium to long term
2. The fractional impact of keeping it open

How much? Where from? Investigations need to take place to prove there is no way of attaining the funding to expand the School before we can say we are certain or even sure. In the long term the School improves to the benefit of students, the University and the local community.

### What are we set to lose?

1. A School that last year scored 98% for teaching satisfaction, placing it second to Southampton on a par with Oxford.
  - a. To maintain this level of teaching as staff leave and institutional knowledge crumbles can be seen as an impossible task
  - b. When in a Q&A with MUS students, the chair of the Music Review Panel tried to reassure students that their time in a closing school will be fine, because he has been on a holiday with a travel agent in administration before and it was good. They were horrified.
2. The central hub for an international network of music graduates
  - a. The only employability resource available to students and graduates at this university who want a career in music.
  - b. Only 17 students last year used the CC, and only 2 went back for a second appointment. The second lowest % in HUM.
  - c. In 2008/9 only one graduate found work in any industry other than Music after 6 months

- d. Only 10% of students with musical qualifications are based in MUS
- e. To replicate this resource as staff leave can be seen as an impossible task
- 3. Community projects are planned to continue, but how?
  - a. There are more than ten successful outreach projects, many of them rooted in the specific interests of different staff members and assisted by a highly qualified core of MUS students
  - b. Prof Charmley has only identified and signalled intentions to continue two of these activities on programs that already exist in Norwich
  - c. To maintain these projects to any comparable standard can be seen as an impossible task
- 4. Diversity and choice
  - a. This School is closing because of the fractional impact it has on league tables.
  - b. Other Schools are particularly sensitive by all the barometers upon which MUS is judged to be failing
  - c. What's next? How many subjects will be cut for fractional benefit to the institution? What will UEA look like in five or ten years' time?
- 5. Precedent and PR issues.
  - a. The Report that recommended the closure was conducted in secret without consulting any experts within or outside of the School.
  - b. It's been widely criticised for its lack of openness, yet when I invited members of the Panel to debate the Report in public they declined.
  - c. On the Panel membership there were academic staff from Schools including LAW and HIS. The report recommended that the resources freed up from MUS be diverted to other Schools, specifically suggesting LAW and HIS. Conflicts of interest such as this are just neglected entirely.
  - d. There is no evidence in the Report to support its claims. For example the claim that facilities are inadequate was supported by four non-expert panellists looking at *websites* of other institutions
  - e. In the terms of reference, the report states that its recommendations will be made in the context of the Corporate Plan – no such document is referred to throughout the Report, nor is it included in the Appendix.
  - f. The Report is said to be rooted in the 2002 Review. But the authors of that review are furious at the "misleading" nature of the "selective quotation" that the Panel used. When this was brought up in Senate, the response from the panel was that Profs Middleton and Pascall must have forgotten the gist of their review. This was not minuted.
  - g. If we accept this Report to be enough to justify a complete absence of further exploration, it will set an uncomfortable precedent for other Schools and other Universities.
  - h. Then the decision will have to be justified publically – considering the 10,000 people who currently disagree with the Report, are we confident that we can justify our actions with just this to support us?

If we have to close the School to benefit from a fractionally better league table position, if we HAVE to – do it properly.

It will set the precedent that it's ok to close a School without exploring any alternatives, without sufficient openness, without sufficient evidence, without any accountability whatsoever.

It will set the precedent that nearly 10,000 people from all over the world can disagree with the people who run this university, and it won't mean a thing.

Universities will close Schools all around the country with ever increasing competition stemming from mounting government pressure that comes from national cuts to education. We understand the pressure the University is under, but the choice is this:

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1. We close a School. We give the impression that we are struggling. We come under scrutiny for a process which has been considered objectionable, and risk public disgrace. But we benefit fractionally on league tables next year.
2. We accept the RMA offer to explore alternatives. Should this prove the same results as the Report, we close the School, but we appear creative, resourceful and determined rather than corporate, weakened and secretive.