

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2013

Present: The Chairman of the Council (Mr R Jewson) (in the Chair), the Vice-Chancellor (Professor E D J Acton), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor D Richardson), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Professor N Norris), Dr M Blyth, Sir Richard Dales, Ms L McGillivray, Mr D Edwards, Mr G Jones, Dr K Skoyles, Mrs E Slaymaker and the Student Representatives Mr M Myles and Mr J Levell.

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 Executive Deans of Faculty (Professor N Ward and Professor I Harvey).

Apologies: The Treasurer (Mr J Sisson), Professor Y Tasker and Professor P Gilmartin

91. MINUTES

Confirmed

the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2013

92. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

- (1) The Chair welcomed the return of the Vice-Chancellor and thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for his sterling work in the intervening period.
- (2) Members had received an email from the Registrar and Secretary regarding the funding position for the Norwich Medical Research Building. It was agreed that the Chair and Deputy Chair work with the Registrar and Secretary to identify a solution.
- (3) This is the last meeting for Sir Richard Dales, Matthew Myles and Professor Nigel Norris. The Chair thanked each person for their hard work in support of the Council during their periods of office.

93. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

- (1) A number of key responsibilities have been formally delegated to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. These are specifically for the Resources aspects of the University (Human, Financial, Estate and IT) and, as a result, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will now Chair ET-R under a policy framework established by ET. Professor Richardson will also replace the Vice-Chancellor on the NRP

- (2) The announcement of the Comprehensive Spending Review is imminent and there is concern in the sector that higher education is seen as having received a good settlement in the original government settlement and that there are significant cash reserves in the sector. There is a specific threat to medical education and research with the potential that training of doctors and the Medical Research Council could be transferred to the Department of Health. This would deliver a paper saving to BIS but would not deliver an overall saving to the public purse. However, whilst the overall Department of Health budget is ring fenced there is a possibility that in difficult times funds could be moved to service delivery threatening both the research and education budgets.
- (3) The continued capital cuts and threats to income streams for Home students mean that UUK is continuing to keep up the pressure on government regarding immigration. There have been two additional debates in Westminster and a meeting hosted by the CBI with the Home Secretary. There is growing evidence that the public do not equate international students with immigration and given the priority to boost the economy the sector is emphasising the economic arguments in favour of international students. UUK is also working with the official opposition to ensure that if it were possible to persuade the government to remove students from the net migration numbers there would be no political challenge.
- (4) UCEA has made a final offer in the pay negotiations of 1% which the Unions have rejected. However, it is anticipated that the final settlement will be 1%.
- (5) Additional clarity is being seen in the admissions picture. It is clear that at sector level part-time and mature applicants have reduced as a result of the change to the higher fee levels. It is also worth noting that the population of 18 year old students is in decline which makes the impact of immigration policy all the more concerning. In terms of UEA it is likely that we will fall short of target by c. 50 students (undergraduate). There are two additional meetings of ET-R, as well as the normal processes in terms of recruitment, scheduled for the A level results week and these meetings will focus on the balance between quantity and quality of students.
- (6) In connection with league tables, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor is leading a careful review of the spend per student measures and also to work on how the various league table drivers are impacted by specific areas of financial spend. It is particularly pleasing this year to see good progress being made on good honours which reflects a better intake and additional academic resource following the SSR investment.
- (7) Currently the performance at the last RAE places the University at 33rd in the league tables for research performance. The target for REF is that the University should move up ten places but of course all our competitors are anxious to do the same. Results will be available at Christmas 2014.
- (8) The NRP LLP is taking centre stage in terms of the City Deal. In addition, the LEP is looking closely at how to leverage EU strategic funds.
- (9) The Faculty of Arts and Humanities is currently looking at how to realign some of the constituent Schools. This will deliver some savings in respect of academic time together with leadership benefits. The Executive Dean is leading the project.
- (10) Professor Jacqueline Collier has been appointed as Executive Dean (Faculty of Social Sciences). The appointment will commence from 1 August. Professor Collier replaces Professor Neil Ward who takes up the post of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) from 1 August.

(11) The University's drive to fundraise has gained momentum with £0.5m from Wolfson for the Norwich Medical Research Building. At Court a good presentation was made by alumni members of the Board.

(14) The new Chancellor, Rose Tremain, was installed at a ceremony earlier this month immediately prior to Court.

*94. NORWICH POWER HOUSE

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

*95. JOINT VENTURE STRUCTURE

This minute is secret.

96. CORPORATE PLAN: EMPLOYABILITY

Received

a confidential report regarding progress towards achieving the corporate plan aims on employability and to review initial data on this subject. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D067).

(During the year the Council has received a number of reports on the performance indicators that feed into the league table results. It is pleasing to see a Top 20 performance in two of the tables (the Times and Sunday Times table will be merged and published in the autumn). The strong SSR and student experience metrics contribute significantly to the high scores achieved. However, the approved financial plan sees SSRs reducing to be in line with a Top 20 performance rather than the current over-achievement position. Completion rates and employability need to strengthen in future years. There is good performance in this year's results for good honours and an expectation that these will continue to improve. Also, in the most recent DLHE submission, it would appear that employability has improved from 62.3% to 68.4% but some definitions have changed this year and it remains to be seen how the league table compilers will treat these. HEIF funds are being invested in a greater volume of employability activity and to boost the careers service. The service is working closely with Schools to boost the number of contact points students have by a factor of four. There is also investment in a Student Union post to support volunteering and Associate Dean positions in the Faculties of Social Sciences and Medicine and Health Sciences with the Faculty of Arts and Humanities imminently making an appointment and an expectation that the Faculty of Science will follow suit. The Employability Executive is also in place and this is jointly chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellors.)

*97 VICE-CHANCELLOR

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

98. THE COUNCIL: MEMBERSHIP

Reported

Senate has nominated Professor Jacqueline Collier as their representative to serve on Council for the period 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2016.

RESOLVED

to ratify the appointment of Professor Jacqueline Collier to Council as a Senate representative.

99. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS CODE OF PRACTICE

Reviewed

the changes to the Code of Practice Relating to Student Unions arising from the review of the Union of UEA Students Constitution. (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D069)

RESOLVED

to ratify
the changes as proposed.

100. ASSEMBLY

Reported

- (1) that the Assembly was established under section 9 of the University Charter and consists of all persons who hold a contract of employment with the University;
- (2) that in accordance with the Ordinances "Assembly may discuss and declare an opinion on any matter which is relevant to the conduct of the business of the University in the pursuit of its charitable objectives";
- (3) that the following motions and questions were raised and that the minutes would appear on the University's website (<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombds/ass>) in due course:

Mature students open day

Submission from Karen Komolafe (ENV):

Having been a mature student here at UEA I was surprised how very little is in place to help and support mature students. Not everyone on the open day wants to see the student bar but rather the nursery.

Assembly calls upon the University to consider holding a mature students open day and have an appropriate guide available that is able to answer questions regarding schools for children, housing etc.

Transfer of administrative tasks to academics

Submission from Bronwen Wilson (ART):

Various tasks that fell to administrators before the coming of integration have now been added to academic workloads, thus eroding time for teaching and research. Assembly calls upon the university management to rebalance the administrative workload and identify how they might prevent further diversions from core academic activities.

Question from Grant Wheeler (BIO):

As far as it is possible to tell, the Biomass Plant does not appear to be producing gas on a routine basis at the moment.

1. Could the University provide some background information about the problems which have caused the delays in this project?

Answer:

The problems associated with the gasification plant are related to the ability to provide Syngas for significant periods and excessive pressure drops. Success has been made in producing Syngas and this has been used to generate heat for the University. This continues to be the University's choice of operation whilst the testing process continues. The plant is also providing district heating and electricity via its CHP engine using natural gas.

2. What are the prospects for the successful commissioning of the Biomass Plant in the near future?

Answer:

Longer term running still remains our key objective and specialist advice is being sought to address the current pressure build up problems and to gain better understanding of the physical flow characteristics of the gasifier. Once overcome, it is expected that testing will include generation of electricity and heat.

The significant financial and carbon benefits of this plant still remain and our government-set carbon targets will not be met without this technology. Security of supply is also a key factor with natural gas supplies becoming more fragile, subject to greater market fluctuations and with a significant portion of the country's electricity being generated by gas.

Question from Jimmy Cross (ITCS):

As Assembly will be aware staff at the University have experienced a significant number of changes in the past few years. In spite of this the University has achieved "number 1 for Student Satisfaction" in the Times Higher Education survey. In this 50th Anniversary year would the University consider awarding an additional customary day with a recommendation that this be on Monday 23rd December 2013.

Answer:

Members of staff of the University already receive 6 customary days' leave (awarded by the University). The Executive Team will consider the proposal that a 7th such day be awarded, exceptionally, in 2013 and respond in due course.

101. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS CONSTITUTION

The committee established by Council with delegated authority to consider and approve the proposed amendments to the Union of UEA Students Constitution has met. The revised Constitution can be seen at

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COU-M6
24.06.2013
Min. 101

<https://intranet.uea.ac.uk/committeeoffice/ueacombds/cou/cou1213/240613/cou12d070>
0 . (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D070)

102. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

the items for report. . (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU12D071)

- (1) Heads of Schools for 2013/14
- (2) Sealings