

THE COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19 May 2014

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 Ward), the Treasurer (Mr J Sisson), Dr M Blyth, Professor G Schofield, Dr K Skoyles, Ms L McGillivray, Ms V Keller Dorsey, Mr D Edwards, Mr J Greenwell, Mr M Williams, Mrs E Slaymaker and the Student Representatives (Ms R Rawle and Mr J Levell)

With: The Registrar and Secretary (Mr B Summers), the Director of Finance (Mr S Donaldson), the Director of Planning (Mr I Callaghan) and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Dr L Moulard)

In attendance: The Executive Deans of Faculty (Professor J Collier, Professor I Harvey, Professor Y Tasker and Professor P Gilmartin)

Apologies: Mr G Jones

70. MINUTES

Confirmed

the minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 March 2014

71. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR OF COUNCIL

The Chairman welcomed Mark Williams to his first meeting of Council and also Sally Ann Forsyth who presented on the Norwich Research Park prior to the formal business of the meeting taking place.

72. STATEMENTS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Vice-Chancellor made the following statements:

1. The Complete Guide league table had recently been published and it was pleasing to see the University increase its ranking. The next table is due on 2 June (The Guardian). There has also been a recently published EU table of European and US Universities which ranked UEA 10th amongst UK Universities. This is broadly in line with previous tables produced by Leiden. The National Student Survey, a key component of league table performance has recently closed for this year and the response rate has been the highest ever for this University.
2. UUK held their conference last week and a number of key issues were discussed:
 - a. Pay negotiations for the forthcoming year have been concluded at 2% and this has also brought to a close the negotiations for 2013/14. Looking to the future there is an increasing disparity between the financial position of institutions and there is a potential that the current national negotiating framework will come under further pressure.
 - b. UUK has written to The Times regarding the UK's continuing membership of the EU.

- c. The Shadow Higher Education Minister has undertaken not to cut the overall unit of resource should his party be successful at next year's general election however, they are considering reducing the maximum undergraduate fee to £6,000
 - d. Labour and the Liberal Democrats have explicitly committed to removing higher education students from the net migration statistics. A Conservative pressure group (Bright Blue) is also campaigning for the same outcome. This week the Commission on Exits is to have its first meeting and will discuss a potential counting issue where on entry a student may say they intend to stay for longer than 12 months e.g. to do an MA but may actually leave having completed the study aspects of their course earlier than 12 months. The entry would then count towards net migration but the exit would not be recorded against the net migration statistics.
3. The Government's Chief Scientific Advisor (Mark Walport) has recently visited the Norwich Research Park (including the University) and was very impressed by what he saw. Sharon Witherspoon (Nuffield) also visited last week.
 4. The publication schedule for REF results has been confirmed:
 - a. The University will receive its own results on 16 December 2014;
 - b. The sector results will be published (under embargo) on 17 December 2014;
 - c. The results will be published in the public domain on 18 December.

73. REPORT FROM THE FINANCE GROUP

Considered

a report from the Finance Group including commentary on the draft budget for 2014/15 and the future years' financial forecasts (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref. COU13D032)

(The contents of this report were noted especially the challenge to maintain quality whilst generating sufficient student demand and, in this context, some of the future targets are challenging. There was a need to invest further capital sums in improving the quality (and capacity) of the Science laboratories and to support the key Arts and Humanities physical spaces. It was also noted that with a change in the University's rankings came a change in the competitor group.)

74. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO FINANCE FUTURE RESIDENCES

Considered

a report from the Director of Finance regarding potential financing options in respect of future developments of residential accommodation (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D033)

(A wide ranging discussion took place regarding the potential development and its financing. It was noted that the case for building additional accommodation was widely accepted (greater flexibility, additional PGT accommodation for Home/EU students, PGR accommodation etc.) and this was more a discussion of financing that accommodation. The concerns of Audit Committee regarding the overall level of the University's gearing were considered though it was noted that there was an identified income stream to support servicing of the relevant debt. The more significant issue here is probably whether by undertaking this activity it would restrict the ability to undertake other capital projects that do not have the benefit of a direct link to a revenue stream. The Finance Group had carefully considered the options regarding finance and, on balance, considered it better to follow the traditional route of developing and managing the project internally funded by debt finance. It was also noted that rental rates tend to be primarily a function of the debt servicing cost rather than any other factor and that in general student demand is for the higher specification accommodation. In summary, Council was of the view that the risk of under-occupancy was low given the relatively low level of

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provision compared to other institutions and the significant untapped demand such as returning undergraduate/postgraduate research students, local students and others who do not receive an accommodation guarantee.)

Resolved

to proceed with the development of residential accommodation financed as outlined in the paper and to seek HEFCE borrowing consent.

75. HEFCE ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL RISK

Received

the annual letter from HEFCE (dated 24 March 2014) regarding the HEFCE annual assessment of institutional accommodation (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D034)

(The assessment was noted but it was also stated that the compilation criteria used by HEFCE do not necessarily map onto the University's current priorities of managing by reference to banking covenants and cashflow management.)

76. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK

Considered

a report from the Registrar and Secretary regarding current developments at University Campus Suffolk (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D035)

(In discussion it was noted that the QAA has accepted the UCS bid for Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP) and, as a result, the prospects of achieving TDAP and University Title were good.)

77. CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

Considered

an update on current capital projects (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D036)

(It was noted that the recent bid is very much a research collaboration. In a demonstration of support the HP Public Sector Board met at the University last week and also confirmed the support of the US Chief Executive. HP is a strong brand and is seeking to identify how local authorities use their data and operate their services. From a research perspective it will be important to identify and address the ethics of using big data and this stream is also high on the agenda of the bid partners. It was also important to recognise that there would be occasions where the challenges of working with large companies could come into focus especially with concerns about the use of big data but this is a key part of how the work on ethics will interface with the project.)

*78. SECRET MINUTE

This Minute is secret and will not be published

79. PROPOSAL FOR A "LESSONS LEARNED" REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Considered

a paper proposing that a "lessons learned" review process for strategic projects should be implemented (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D038)

Resolved

that this process should inform the annual plan and strategic review.

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80. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT TO COUNCIL

Received

a report from the Health and Safety Executive (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D039)

81. ITEMS FOR REPORT

Received

The following Items for Report

(1) Sealings

82. UNION OF UEA STUDENTS – ELECTION 2014/15 RESULTS

Reported

The results of the election:

Full-time Student Officers (start on 1 August 2014)

Undergraduate Education Officer: Connor Rand

Postgraduate Education Officer: Liam McCafferty

Campaigns and Democracy Officer: Chris Jarvis

Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer: Holly Staynor

Activities and Opportunity Officer: Yinbo Yu

Part-time/Volunteer Student Officers

Non-portfolio Officers: Thomas Southerden, Theo Antoniou Phillips, Tom Etheridge, Elizabeth Cody

Environment Officer: Iain Goddard

Mature Students' Officer: John Taylor

Ethical Issues Officer: Josh Wilson

Students with Disabilities Officer: Max Levene

LGBT+ Officer: Daniel Wrigglesworth

Women's Officer: Dolly Ogunrinde

International Officer: unfilled

Ethnic Minorities Officer: unfilled

83. GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

Reported

that the Graduate Students' Association will have a new committee from the end of the 2014 Easter break.

President: Oliver Steward

Secretary: Vacant

Treasurer: Adam Robertson

84. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Reported

that the date of the next Council meeting was on Monday 30 June 2014 at 10:30am

85. REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE

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Considered

the confidential and reserved recommendation contained within the report from the Redundancy Committee (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D040)

Resolved

to endorse the recommendations proposed by the Redundancy Committee.

86. REDUNDANCY COMMITTEE

Considered

the confidential and reserved recommendation contained within the report from the Redundancy Committee (A copy is filed in the Minute Book, ref COU13D041)

Resolved

to endorse the recommendations proposed by the Redundancy Committee.