

## STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY



### Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2008

Present: Dr Chris Harrison (Chair)  
With: The Acting Academic Registrar (Mr Rob Evans)  
Apologies: Dr Gibson D'Cruz

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2007 were confirmed.

2. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

None

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY

Noted

- (1) membership of Standing Committee of the Assembly for 2007-08 as set out below :

Ex-officio – Vice-Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Members elected by the Assembly :

Dr C.J. Harrison (2008)  
Dr G. D'Cruz (2010)  
6 Vacancies

- (2) that the following nominations had been received for vacancies of SCOTA:

Dr C.J. Harrison (to 2011)  
Ms C. Richards (to 2011)  
Mr P. Skillen (to 2011)

- (3) that for 2008/09 there will therefore be 4 members and 4 vacancies. Dr Harrison, Ms Richards and Mr Skillen will be declared members of SCOTA without a ballot being required.

3. ASSEMBLY AGENDA ITEMS SUGGESTED

Noted

that the following agenda items had been proposed for the meeting of the Assembly.

(3.1) SCOTA Membership - To note that to date there have been three nominations to fill three of the 6 vacancies in 2008-09 on the Committee. SCOTA will therefore have 4 members for 2008/09. (The deadline for nominations was the close of business, Monday 12 May 2008.)

(3.2) A request from Miss Toni Clarke (VCO)

**Annual leave entitlement for UEA support staff**

In summary, I would like the Assembly to consider (and vote on) the motion to have the University review leave entitlement with a view to putting all staff on parity (or at the very least closer to parity) at the level of Academic Related staff.

(3.3) A request from Dr Teresa Belton (EDU)

**Recycling policy and practice at UEA**

I would like to urge the university to adopt an active policy of maximum recycling of waste materials on campus. Inorganic waste sent to landfill should be minimised and organic waste should be disposed of or treated in such a way as to turn it into a positive resource. This would require the segregation of waste, as has been the practice in Germany (even on trains) for many years, with regard to external litter bins around campus and within buildings. Separate receptacles should be made available for paper, glass, plastic bottles, cans and vegetable waste such as teabags and banana skins (collected in biodegradable bags). The latter could then be composted for use by ground staff. Cooked waste from catering outlets should be turned into compost by use of wormeries or digesters. There should be an active policy in place to minimise the use of black plastic bin bags, which should be filled completely before disposal.

(3.4) A request from Dr Rupert Reed (PHI) and Dr Nicola Pratt (PSI)

**Staff against the marketisation of higher education through variable tuition fees**

**This Assembly of the staff of the University of East Anglia notes:**

1. The government's review of the funding system for Higher Education (HE) is expected to be published in 2009.
2. Between 1996 and 2006, the number of full-time students of all age groups who supported themselves through paid employment grew by more than 50 per cent.<sup>1</sup>
3. One in five full-time students work between 15 and 20 hours a week, and a further one in five work over 20 hours a week.<sup>2</sup>
4. 55 per cent of students from managerial, professional or intermediate family background take paid employment. Among students from

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<sup>1</sup> NUS (2006); *All Work and Low Pay*, p. 4

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

routine/manual backgrounds, however, 61 per cent undertake paid employment.<sup>3</sup>

5. Although the current fees system contains a variable element, most HE courses are charging the maximum figure.
6. 47 per cent of sixth formers said that inability to afford fees was likely to put them off a degree.<sup>4</sup>
7. The growth of audit culture in the University and the money spent by the registry to 'market' UEA.
8. Students are already paying more than the 25 per cent of the average cost of tuition recommended by the Dearing Report.
9. Labour has increased public funding on HE, but the UK still lags behind the OECD average.
10. The outsourcing of refrigeration and painting services.

**In addition this Assembly believes:**

1. Universities must be funded adequately and fairly. UK universities should receive at least the OECD average percentage of GDP. Currently UK HE is surviving on 1.1 per cent GDP, when US HE gets 2.9 per cent. The UK is behind the US, South Korea, Australia, Belgium and Mexico.
2. Funding universities by massively increasing student debt is not fair, not the best way to increase or widen participation in HE and will lead to further national economic problems with personal debt.
3. Top-up fee income has fallen short of providing the increased income universities both need and deserve.
4. Education is a positive force in our society and should be seen as an end in itself, rather than as a process to create economic fodder.
5. By forcing students to work to fund their studies and reduce their debt, the current system of fees reduces the amount of time students have to study which negatively impacts on the quality of their education and on teaching staff's morale.
6. Forcing students to work by increasing student debt exacerbates class inequalities in HE.
7. Lifting or removing the 'cap' on variable fees will increase the variability of fees, further bringing market forces into HE.
8. The growing marketisation of HE will lead to a two-tiered system, where students choose their university based upon the price of the course rather than the quality of teaching.

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<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> Universities Marketing Forum (2006) quoted in Times Online; *Sixth Formers Haunted by Debt Fears*, found at [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life\\_and\\_style/education/student/article682247.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/student/article682247.ece) on 22/04/08

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9. The growing marketisation of HE changes the relationship between lecturer and student into a commercial transaction. This may, in turn, lead to student litigiousness.
10. The spectre of graduate debt is leading to prospective students not choosing a subject because of being inspired by it and wanting to know more, but because they want to repay debt more quickly. This leaves huge problems around the corner for those subjects perceived as being poor earners.
11. More money may be coming into universities through the variable fee regime, but the sector is poorer in a non-material sense.
12. There are wider implications to the marketisation of HE which are affecting non-academic staff. These are first being seen in the outsourcing of maintenance staff and the introduction of external markets to those areas.
13. Once doctors and teachers have built up massive debt at university, calls will begin for the privatisation of other public services, as a necessary and logical extension of the marketisation of HE.

#### 4. ANY OTHER ITEMS

No other items were proposed at the meeting.

#### 5. QUESTIONS SENT IN

Noted

that the following question had been submitted and that a written answer would be prepared for the meeting.

#### **From Dr Lee Marsden and Dr Sanna Inthorn**

“The “model statute” in pre 1991 universities sets out the principles of ‘justice and fairness in university procedures and protecting the principle of academic freedom. In the light of decisions taken by some universities to downgrade the “model statute” can the university assure staff that any changes it might consider making to Statute 27 are minimal, to reflect UEA’s new structure, and that Statute 27 will remain a statute rather than become an ordinance?”