

NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Held on Friday 4 October 2019 in The Boardroom, Norwich City Football club, Carrow Road, Norwich.

Present

Mr A McMenemy (Chair)
Mrs C Armor
Mrs R Chakraborty
Ms C Coleman
Mrs A Ferguson
Mr A Grimbley
Mr M Jeffries
Ms A Johns
Prof J Last
Ms H Lindsell
Ms N Nannar
Mr P Norton
Mr J Smith

Mr I Watson
Mr T Wood

Apologies

Prof. Lady R Cooper
Prof. N Powell

In attendance

Prof. H Carlisle
Mrs A Robson
Prof. R Sawdon-Smith
Ms A Tubb
Mr D Williams (Clerk)

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS AND PROPOSALS FOR CONDUCTING MEETINGS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Mrs R Chakraborty to her first meeting of the Council.

Members were invited to note the paper detailing the Nolan principles of public life. Members of Council reaffirmed their commitment to abide by the Nolan Principles.

1. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1.1 Chair

Mr A McMenemy was elected to the position of Chair.

1.2 Deputy Chair

Mr M Jeffries was elected to the position of Deputy Chair

1.3 Appointment of Committee Chairs

The following Committee chairs were agreed for 2019/20:

Audit – Mr A Grimbley
Finance and Resources – Mr M Jeffries
Personnel – Ms A John
Remuneration – Mr A Grimbley

The Chair of Council is ex officio Chair of the Nominations Committee.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2019.

The Chair signed the minutes as the formal record of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 3.4 The Registrar confirmed that Council would receive information about the University's academic quality assurance processes at the November meeting of the Council. **AT**

Item 13.2 Remuneration Committee. The matter would be discussed at the private session of Council later in the day.

4. VICE CHANCELLOR**4.1 Vice-Chancellor's Report: update on institutional progress**

The Vice Chancellor (VC) introduced his report.

In his letter of strategic guidance to the Office for Students (OfS), the Secretary of State for Education (SoS) encouraged the regulator to exercise the full range of its newly acquired powers to influence institutional behaviour in a number of policy areas. The tone of Mr Williamson's letter raised concerns about whether the government was respecting institutional autonomy.

The OfS had acquired its full powers from the 1 August 2019. These included the ability to impose a rising scale of sanctions on institutions, should an institution be deemed to have failed to meet the requirements imposed on it by the OfS.

Particular concerns over the actions of the OfS had arisen in regard to NUA's widening participation and access plan. OfS appeared to have adopted a very 'broad-brush' approach, requiring institutions to set unattainable targets and unrealistic time-lines for closing recruitment and attainment gaps for students from low participation neighbourhoods or from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. The OfS's approach failed, for example, to take account of the geographical location of the institution or its subject mix. Further, it was expected that the success of an institution's widening participation and access plan, would be judged solely on the outcomes achieved, with no regard being given to the efforts made by the institution to achieve the targets set. Council were concerned at such an approach by the OfS.

The University had taken a number precautionary measures in the event of a no-deal BREXIT. These included the forward purchases of essential supplies, and support for staff and students who were EU, rather than UK, nationals.

The good progress of preparing for, and the increased numbers expected to be submitted towards, the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF) were noted.

The very strong results achieved by the University following the taught postgraduate survey (PTES) were noted. Out of 84 institutions surveyed, the University had come second for the overall level of student satisfaction.

The VC provided Council with the latest enrolment statistics for 2019/20. The total number of enrolled undergraduate new entrants stood at 846, some 39% up on the number enrolled in 2012. Over the same period, a significant increase in postgraduate taught numbers had also been achieved. Total student numbers for 2019/20 stood at 2361.

The Deputy VC updated Council on the Duke Street Riverside development. Demolition of the existing buildings on the site was underway, will the aim of

having the main contractor on site early in 2020. At the same time some possible progress had been made with the City Council in agreeing new pedestrian/cycle access along the river bank, thereby offering a direct route between Duke Street and St. George Street. The City Council had secured some resources to provide a cycle route.

The VC drew members attention to the tabled guide: "Let's talk! What's on your mind?" Produced by the University's Student Support services, the guide had been developed to support the growing number of students experiencing mental health issues. Council welcomed the development of the guide.

The Chair thanked the VC for his report.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters of any other business.