

NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Minutes of the meeting of Council held in the Graphics Studio, Guntons, St. Georges Street, Norwich on Friday 08 July 2022, commencing at 09.30.

Present:

Mr M Jeffries (Chair)
 Ms C Armor
 Ms C Bray
 Ms R Chakraborty
 Prof. Lady R Cooper
 Ms A Ferguson
 Mr A Grimby (to Item 7)
 Mr M Jeffries
 Mr C Lawrence
 Ms N Lanzalaco
 Prof. S Ofield-Kerr (to Item 12)
 Mr J Smith
 Mr T Wilson
 Mr T Wood
 Ms G Young

In attendance:

Prof. L Anderson, Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic), NUA (to Item 12)
 Ms A Beckett, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Academic Registrar, NUA (to Item 12)
 Prof. H Carlisle, Dean of Creative Education, NUA (to Item 12)
 Ms J Simpson, Students' Union President elect (to Item 12)
 Mr J Smeeth, Chief Operating Officer, NUA (to Item 12)
 Mr D Williams, Clerk

Apologies:

Mr I Watson

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Ms J Simpson and Mr J Smeeth, who were attending their first meeting of Council.

Members of Council were invited to share their views from the guided tours of the University's Fine Art and Photographic facilities. The tours had taken place immediately prior to the meeting of the Council.

The tours had helped members to understand the work of the University. There was a desire for further tours of the University to take place. Consideration should be given to an earlier start time to allow more time for future tours.

Chair/Vice-Chancellor

INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
 The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2022. The Chair signed a copy of the minutes.
2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
 Presentation: the Research and Knowledge Exchange plan would be shared with Council at a future date.
 Item 3.1 Vice-Chancellor's (VC) report: members of the Council had been provided with the mobile telephone number for Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Academic Registrar.

PART 1

3. VICE CHANCELLOR

3.1. Vice-Chancellor's report

The VC reported it had been a very busy year. Following relaxation of the Covid-19 restrictions, the year had seen the return of students to the University's campus.

Students returning to the University's campus had required significant support from staff to re-build their confidence. This process had taken time.

Significant progress had been made in developing the institution's new strategy and associated operational plan. A number of new staff appointments had also been made. It would take time for the new strategy to become embedded, and lead to pay-back.

The recent changes to the holder of the office of the Minister for Higher Education were noted. Prior to the recent changes, the then Minister had written to higher education providers (HEP) giving a direction to institutions that was widely considered to have encroached on institutional autonomy. On behalf of the higher education (HE) sector, Universities UK (UUK) had responded strongly to the Minister's letter.

The challenge of recruiting and retaining staff, and how these linked to the planned changes to organisational culture was discussed. The task would become easier with the raising of the institution's profile: getting staff to move to Norwich was a challenge. Staff recruitment to specific academic and professional areas was proving difficult.

Undergraduate recruitment had been adversely effected by the impact of the pandemic. Staff had been unable to attend recruitment fairs. This had impaired the ability to meet prospective students in person and to encourage attendance at the University's open days. Open days allow prospective students to visit the University and meet staff and students. They were an important part of the University's recruitment process.

The University had engaged a specialist firm of HE data analysts to examine the reasons for the current level of applications received by the University, and to develop an action plan to increase the number. In tandem the University was strengthening the University's recruitment team.

The latest results from the National Student Survey had been published and these would be considered at the next meeting of Council.

VC

Council received the VC's report.

3.2. Update and presentation on Bank Plain

The VC presented on Bank Plain. Following legal completion on the building, detailed consideration was being given to its use. To enable the University to be key partner in a bid led by Norwich City Council to the Government's Levelling-Up fund, work on the planned use of the building had been accelerated.

The total value of the bid to government was in the region of £35M, of which the University's share was between £9M and £10M. The outcome to the bid would be known in September 2022.

The phasing of work on the building would be reviewed, if the bid was unsuccessful.

The overall aim was to make Bank Plain a public building with a similar status to that enjoyed by Norwich Castle and the Cathedral. The building would be at the centre of

the University's engagement with a range of publics, and configured to support a variety of users.

Council were supportive of the plans for developing Bank Plain. To increase footfall and use of the building, the provision of retail outlets and child nurseries might be considered.

The Chair thanked the VC for the presentation.

3.3. Council Performance Indicators

Council reviewed the Performance Indicators. These had been revised to monitor the implementation of the new strategic plan.

Council noted the Performance Indicators

3.4. Significant Risks List

There had been only minor changes to the most significant risks since the risk register had been previously considered by the Council,

The format and presentation of the risk register was under review, the aim being to stream-line the content, and make the register more dynamic

A number of the specific risks were discussed.

Council noted the Risk Register.

3.5. Academic Board Minutes, 15 June 2022

Matters discussed by the Board included the Trans policy. This had been developed in conjunction with the Students' Union. The implementation of the policy was expected to require significant capital spend.

The minutes of the meeting of Academic Board were noted.

3.6. Access and Participation Plan variation

The Office for Students (OfS) had requested variations to the University's Plan. Council reviewed the University's responses to the variations requested by OfS.

Council approved the variations to the University's Access and Participation Plan.

3.7. Annual report on Research Integrity

The report had been reviewed by Academic Board.

Council approved the Annual Report on Research Integrity.

4. PRESS

Future coverage might also include press updates about the activities of the students' union.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Academic Registrar

The press coverage was noted.

5. STUDENT MATTERS

5.1. Students' Union Report

The Students' Union President highlighted student concerns. These included the impact of rises in the cost of living, and mental health and well-being.

The University was strongly networked with the local mental health services and was committing additional resources to support student mental health and well-being. However, it was difficult to keep pace with the growing demand for these services.

The President introduced the rationale for designating the students' union as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This would allow the students' union to become a separate legal entity, independent from the University. Accompanying the change was a request to increase the block grant to enable permanent staff to be appointed. This would reduce dependency on sabbatical officers, whose specific knowledge and expertise, developed while during their term of office, was lost once they relinquished their posts.

The VC was supportive of the desire of the students' union to become more independent of the University, and to strengthen its capacity and resilience.

While changes to the legal form were matters for the union to determine, the request for increased funding was a matter for Council to consider.

Council agreed that a working group with a membership drawn from both the Council and the students' union should be convened quickly to develop a business plan.
SU President/VC

PART 2

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES (1)

6. REPORTS FROM THE FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- 6.1. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2022.
The Committee had examined the student number forecasts, and noted that the University was in an investment period. The opportunity to develop a simple financial model, able to quantify the impact of changes to key variables, had been discussed. The Committee had considered the likely impact of wage inflation.

Council received the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee.

Finance Report, June 2022 – Executive Summary
Council approved the budget for 2022/23.

- 6.2. KPMG Higher Education Financial Benchmarking 2020/21
The report was noted.

7. CHAIR'S COMMENTS AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS

Chair's update
There were no matters to report.

- 7.1. Any other business requests
There were no other business requests.

8. GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE MATTERS

- 8.1. Action to implement the recommendations arising from the Governance Effectiveness Review

The Chair of the Governance Effectiveness Review (GER) task group introduced the report. Good progress had been made in completing the agreed actions. The outstanding actions were expected to be completed by the November meeting of Council.

Council noted the report.

- 8.2. Revisions to the Standing Orders
Subject under item 2.5 to substituting “parental” for “maternity or paternity”, Council approved the revisions to the standing orders.
- 8.3. Code of Conduct
The Code of Conduct was approved.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES (2)

9. REPORT FROM NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

- 9.1. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2022.
Council received the minutes of the Nominations Committee.

10. REPORTS FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 10.1. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2022.
The Committee had received reports from the internal auditor. In their testing of the University’s compliance with the requirements of UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) and in the assessment of Cyber Security, the internal auditors had judged there to be only limited assurance. The University was working to address the concerns highlighted. On the matter of cyber security the University had agreed to report back to the Committee at an early opportunity.

The Committee had reviewed the external audit plan submitted by the external auditors.

The minutes of the Audit Committee were received.

- 10.2. Health and Safety Annual Report
Council noted the H&S annual report.
- 10.3. KPMG Audit Committee Update, June 2022
Council’s attention was drawn to the selected papers circulated from the update received by the Committee from KPMG.

The papers were noted

11. REPORTS FROM THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

- 11.1. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022.
The Chair of the Committee introduced the minutes. The Committee in its current form meets once a year. At its meeting, the Committee had received the annual review of human resources.

The minutes of the Personnel Committee were received.

- 11.2. Proposal to retitle the Committee and revision to the terms of reference

In response to a recommendation from the GER, the Committee was proposing that the work of Committee should be re-focussed to allow greater attention to be given to student, as well as staff, matters. The Committee would meet three times a year.

The retitling of the Committee as the People Committee and the revised terms of reference were approved.

On behalf of Council, the Chair thanked the retiring President of Students' Union, Ms N Lanzalaco, for her work on Council and on behalf of the University's students. Ms N Lanzalaco received a gift from Council.

Members of the Executive who were in attendance, together with the VC, left the meeting.

12. REPORTS FROM THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

12.1. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022.

In the absence of the Chair of the Committee, the Chair of the Council introduced the minutes. The mechanisms by which the performance of the VC had been reviewed and assessed were highlighted.

The Council received the minutes.

12.2. Annual Remuneration Report

Council received the Annual Remuneration Report.

13. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

The next meeting of Council, together with the Away Day, would be held on 30 September 2022.

The meeting closed at 1328.