

NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Minutes of the meeting of Council held in the Conference Suite, 20 Bank Plain, Norwich on Friday 30 September 2022 and commencing at 10.25

Present:

Mr M Jeffries(Chair)
Ms C Armor
Ms R Chakraborty
Prof. Lady R Cooper
Ms A Ferguson
Mr A Grimby
Mr C Lawrence
Prof. S Ofield-Kerr
Mr K Pink
Ms J Simpson
Mr J Smith
Mr T Wilson
Ms G Young

In attendance:

Prof. L Anderson, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Ms A Beckett, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) and Academic Registrar
Prof. H Carlisle, Dean of Creative Education
Prof. L Nixon, Dean of Research and Knowledge Exchange
Mr J Smeeth, Chief Operating Officer
Mr D Williams (Clerk)

Apologies:

Ms C Bray
Ms S Kennedy
Mr I Watson
Mr T Wood

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and drew members attention to the previously circulated paper detailing the Nolan Principles of Public Life. All members of the Council reaffirmed their commitment to the Nolan Principles.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were appointed as officers of Council for 2022/23:

Council

Chair of Council: Mark Jeffries
Deputy Chair of Council: Cathy Armor

Council Committees

Chair of Audit Committee: Toby Wilson
Chair of Finance and Resources Committee: Andy Grimby
Chair of People Committee: Cathy Armor
Chair of Remuneration Committee: Andy Grimby
Ex-officio Chair of Nominations Committee: Mark Jeffries

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Council approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 08 July 2022.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 3.2 The outcome to the bid by Norwich City Council to the Government's Levelling-Up fund was expected to be known shortly.

Item 5.1 Two members of the governing body had agreed to join the working group on exploring the future designation of the students' union. The group had yet to meet.

Item 10. Council was updated on the progress in regard to compliance with the requirements of UK Visa and Immigration and improving cyber security.

PART 1

3. VICE CHANCELLOR

3.1. Vice Chancellor's Policy Update

The Vice Chancellor (VC) introduced his previously circulated report.

A focus for the forthcoming year would be the implementation of the University's strategy, and the cascade of actions throughout the organisation. Further work was anticipated to embed the new staff structure and roles, and to ensure the delivery of the key performance indicators. Bank Plain was a physical embodiment of the strategy.

Two important developments, with separate time-lines, were the projects on branding and the student experience and enhancement. Governors would have the opportunity to consider and inform both activities as part of the Away Day.

The new strategy would need to make a difference to the future outcomes of the National Student Survey (NSS). The results of the 2022 NSS highlighted area of strength, but equally showed that outcomes were not consistent across all course programmes. As a result, the University had initiated the Belonging And Student Engagement: Leading INnovation and Enhancement (BASE LINE) project.

The VC drew Council's attention to the successful level of recruitment to the University's new Undergraduate Diploma in Creative Computing.

The stronger than recently forecast surplus for 2021/22 was noted. The late improvement in the surplus raised some questions. The VC indicated that historically the institutional culture tended to encourage cost centres to under-spend their planned expenditure.

The level of student retention remained at a high level.

The question of embedding the significant number of new staff in the organisation was raised. This in turn led to the question of managing the introduction of new staff, as well as the needs of staff who had been in post for some time. In adjusting to the new culture existing staff might require individual support. The University acknowledged that new and existing staff at all levels would need support, and was enhancing the capacity of the human resources team to enable this to happen.

It would be important to track institutional performance against the operational plan. The VC would bring to Council an annual report on the achievement of the operational plan.

The Chair thanked the VC for his report, which Council received.

4. STUDENT MATTERS

4.1. Students' Union Report

The President of the Students' Union (SU) shared with Council some of the key activities and work of the Union. The Union was currently in the middle of Freshers, which was taking place over two calendar weeks.

This year's student intake was much more confident and adventurous than the two preceding intakes, whose learning had been adversely affected by Covid.

The Chair thanked the SU President for her report, which Council received.

PART 2

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS

5.1. Chair's comments

The Chair updated Council on a search to find a new governor with a background in higher education and notified members that he would shortly begin the process of having 1-to-1 conversations with members of the governing body.

Following the decision of the Clerk to the governing body to step-down from the role at the end of the current academic year, a process for recruiting a replacement Clerk would be instigated.

James Smith was attending his final meeting as a co-opted governor, elected by the University's teaching staff. On behalf of the Council, the Chair thanked James for his significant contributions to the work of the governing body.

5.2. Any other business requests

There were no other business requests.

6. REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

6.1. Appointment of External Auditors

The Chair of the Audit Committee shared the main features of the recently run re-tendering process to appoint the University's external auditors. Following a detailed and thorough examination of four tenders the Audit Committee was inviting Council to ratify its recommendation to appoint HW Fisher as the University's external auditors for a period of five years from 2022/23, subject to annual reappointment by the Council each year. Council endorsed the recommendation of the Audit Committee.

7. PRESS

The press pack was noted.

8. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would commence at 10.00 on Friday 18 November 2022.