

NORWICH UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council

Minutes of the meeting of Council held in the Textile Workshop, St. Georges Building, Norwich on Friday 01 October 2021 and commencing at 10.10

Present:

Mr M Jeffries (Chair)
Ms C Armor
Ms C Bray
Ms R Chakraborty
Ms A Ferguson
Mr A Grimby
Mr M Jeffries
Ms N Lanzalaco
Mr C Lawrence
Ms A Mound
Mr J Smith
Mr I Watson
Mr T Wilson

Mr T Wood
Ms G Young

In attendance:

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

Apologies:

Prof. Lady R Cooper

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The Chair opened the meeting and extended a particular welcome to those new members who were attending their first meeting of Council.

The Chair had been in touch with Mr Albert McMenemy, who while waiting to be hospitalised, was in good spirits. Active consideration was being given to how best record the University's gratitude to Mr McMenemy for his tenure as Chair of Council. Mr McMenemy had expressed a desire that no fuss should be made to mark his departure from Council, or a personal gift given by the University. He had however expressed the wish to receive a photograph of members of Council. This would be actioned in due course.

Chair/VC

Due to his work commitments, Mr Derren Lawford had tendered his resignation as a member of Council. Mr Lawford had expressed an interest in retaining a connection with the University as, for example, an "ambassador" and this would be considered further.

Chair/VC

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were appointed as officers of Council for 2021/22:

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 Personnel 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 02 July 2021.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

PART I

3. VICE CHANCELLOR

3.1 Vice Chancellor's Policy Update

The Vice Chancellor (VC) highlighted a number of areas detailed in his previously circulated report.

In reviewing the external context, the VC drew attention to likely changes in government policy. While the introduction of differential fees was unlikely, there was a strong likelihood that there would be a change to the repayment terms attaching to student loans. Further, a basket of measures testing quality and linked to student numbers was anticipated. The measures would be intended to enable increased control of public spending. More generally, the emphasis was moving from a free market approach to higher education, to one where government exerted stronger control.

Despite continuing concerns about Covid-19, students had enthusiastically returned to University for the new academic year. The University was very aware that first-year students were starting courses, in many cases after two-years of disrupted secondary education. Considerable support was in place to support students and their welfare needs. This covered both proactive activities and the provision of a safety net. In some cases, students are desperate for support, which is not available from other external agencies. Mental health remained a key issue. The need and the nature of the demand in this area continued to change.

Staff continued to deliver courses using a hybrid model.

The University had acquired a Vevox software tool, which was designed to enable greater and more regular feedback to be gained from students. The University was using the tool at course level. Council would be interested in receiving a report on the use of the tool at a future date.

PVC

It was noted that a challenge in the application of any survey tool was getting students to respond.

Generally the University was seeking to strengthen the student voice when making student-facing decisions.

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 detailed in the report.

The establishment of a multi-faith room and commuter kitchen in the students' lounge had been widely welcomed by students.

Commuter students could now make hot drinks and heat food they brought to university. This was a significant benefit to students.

The popularity of the commuter kitchen meant more kettles and microwaves were needed, and at some point additional space might be required.

Both the Move-in weekend and Freshers' activities had been successful.

Spread over a three-week period, Freshers' activities had included 20 day-time and 10 night-time events. The events were open to all years of the student body.

Following Covid-19 the Union was working to revive the number of clubs and societies available to students.

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

PART II

5. CHAIR'S COMMENTS AND ANY OTHER BUSINESS MATTERS

5.1 Chair's comments

While exercising caution when interpreting League Table results, the Chair drew Members' attention to the recent success of the University in being placed 10th for teaching quality in The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide. Council recorded its thanks to all teaching staff.

5.2 Any other business requests

There were no other business requests.

6. GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE MATTERS

6.1 Nomination of co-opted member to join Council

The Deputy Chair of the Nominations Committee, with the Deputy Chair of Council and VC had interviewed Mr Kemet Pink. The group wish to recommend Mr Pink's appointment as a co-opted member to Council. Council approved Mr Pink's appointment.

7. PRESS

The press pack was noted.

8. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would commence at 0930 on Friday 19 November 2021.