

COU.23/24:57

Meeting:	Council OGM
Date:	Monday 3 rd June 2024 - 6.00pm
Venue:	Conference Room, Bedford Square & Via Zoom

PRESENT	Catherine du Toit (CduT)	President & Chair
	Ravin Ponniah (RP)	Vice-President
Via Zoom	Sara Biscaya (SB)	
	Trevor Bolton (TB)	
	Jonathan Brierley (JB)	
	David Edgerton (DE)	
	Susannah Hagan (SH)	
	Simine Marine (SMA)	
Via Zoom	Gayatri Salkar (GSa)	
	George Sawtell (GS)	
	Ingrid Schroder (IS)	School Director
	Ben Stirling (BS)	
INCOMING COUNCIL MEMBERS	Alison Brooks (AB) Pui Quan Choi (PC) Cindy Walters (CW) Steven Ware (SW)	Observer (Via Zoom) Observer Observer Observer
IN ATTENDANCE		
	Mike Aling (MA)	Deputy Head of Teaching & Learning
	Belinda Flaherty (BF)	Registrar – from item 4
	Rob Scully (RS)	Head of Finance
	Tehmina Mahmood (TM)	Head of HR
	Louise Wilkins (LW)	Company Secretary
	Amanda Vidler (AV)	Assistant to Company Secretary
	Tiger Wang (TW)	CTO

1. Welcome and Apologise

CduT welcomed all members of Council and all other attendees to the meeting including the incoming members of Council, Alison Brooks, Pui Quan Choi, Cindy Walters and Steven Ware who will be observing the meeting.

Apologies had been received from Steve Mertz, David Dernie and Nick Viner. Two members of Council joined the meeting via Zoom.

CduT confirmed Trevor Morriss has confirmed he is stepping down from Council and his resignation will be recorded from today's meeting. LW to ensure Company House and Charity Commission records are updated. **ACTION A1**

CduT invited Council to declare any new conflicts of interest. None were declared.

2. Minutes and Action Points

The minutes of the Council Workshop meeting held on 28th March 2024 were approved.

Actions completed, or addressed in this meeting. Actions not addressed elsewhere are:

- A2 – Comments have been received from Council and IS and CduT have suggested a separate session on the strategic plan in the autumn for a more detailed discussion;
- A8 - VAT modelling exercise will be received by the Finance & Audit Committee in July when the results of the general election will also be known

Council resolved to go into a closed session for confidential business at the end of the meeting.

3. School Director's Report

Paper COU.23/24:42 was received by Council. IS noted that the paper also includes an update on the Strategic and Objectives results with items highlighted as having been initiated (in green), ongoing (in blue) and completed (in grey).

IS provided Council with highlights from the Research and Academic Programme noting that Archive Lab work continues to provide online access to work from the department of tropical architecture and access to alumnus work to see how they have progressed. Land Lab opens with an exhibition of an AA alumna in the autumn. IS visited Korea, Taiwan and Japan in the spring to consolidate key relationships with other institutions who might be able to sponsor some larger projects and work jointly with AA on research projects in the future.

Council considered the options for reducing carbon emissions and noted that the immediate challenges in the long-haul unit trips and trips home by students. Easier challenges were recycling within the School. It was confirmed that there will be another 'Climate Week' at the start of Term 1 in 24-25. The New Standards Charrette report is to be shared to Council. **ACTION A2**

Council discussed the hiring of a person to lead on fundraising/development and IS confirmed this a consultant would be used for now rather than a full-time hire. Noting that the School first needs to evaluate its needs and data available from the alumnus network. Any suggestions from Council members for development consultants would be welcomed.

Student Information System – Closure Report (and presentation of key dashboards)

Paper COU.23/24:43 was received by Council.

TW provided an overview of the project which started two years ago to meet mandatory reporting requirements. The solutions were provided by Tribal, a student records system and CRM system (Customer Relationship Management). The first part of the project is completed and has met the objectives of the first phase.

TW presented the dashboards for the student life cycle, admissions and membership demonstrating the usefulness of the data now held for operational management. TW noted that all student data is now being managed through the system for all twenty-five programmes. TW explained the membership data of 32,000 records held on the new system is 95% accurate, having been cleaned up as part of the transfer from the old database. Membership data can be broken down into regions, or geographical locations for events, and enables the School to track members registration with Eventbrite for AA events.

Council asked about the security of the system, and who has access. TW confirmed access to relevant data is restricted by role and responsibility. Council noted the system is the same as used by many other HE institutions and provides useful, real time data.

Council asked if there had been any tracking of efficiencies since the instruction of the new system but were reminded that efficiencies and savings were not an objective of SIS so such information was not being tracked.

TW confirmed that the next stage of the project would be to obtain data on graduate employment when student's graduate. Council noted that the old system is still held, and would need to be for some time particularly as HR still utilise the old database for now.

IS thanked TW and team for managing both a difficult process and for providing so much personal assistance and with great patience. TW noted that it had been a huge effort for those involved who also had to maintain day to day operational roles concurrently.

4. Academic Governance

Academic Board Report Q3

Council received the paper COU.23/24:44.

Council held a discussion on admissions, and IS had confirmed that on target at the moment with no issues flagging. It was noted that there are more students directly entering 4th year from 3rd year due to difficulties gaining year out employment, although work continues within the School to secure experience for students. IS confirmed that the allocation of space will be reviewed in September 2024, when final numbers are known.

Council requested that there be a paper in future on the strategy for research and plans for the Research-Degree Awarding Powers application. Council agreed this would be a useful paper.

ACTION A3

IS noted that there is a large piece of work being carried out to form a research framework and to consolidate relationships with other institutions. A future ambition is to be able to offer PhD studentships with financial support but this will come out of the framework that is being developed.

Degree Awarding Committee (Oversight) Chairs Report

Council received the paper COU.23/24:45.

SH advised Council that the application for indefinite TDAP would be submitted in September and this will lead to changes in the reporting to Council. SH noted that the reporting to the Committee was lacking in some analysis and this is required for the Committee to be offering the necessary assurance to Council.

SH welcomed contact from any of the new members of Council to discuss the role of DAC.

5. Risk and Assurance

Dignity at Works and Study (DAWS) Closure Report

Council received the paper COU.23/24:46.

Tehmina Mahmood (TM) provided an overview of the work carried out in response to the DAWS report and recommendations which were now completed with any remaining recommendations being addressed next year, or dealt with in an alternative way. TM noted that the next step in the process should be a staff survey and move beyond the DAWS report. The last survey was carried out in 2016. The survey would be completed in early 24-25 academic year.

Council asked about student pastoral care and IS confirmed that student pastoral care is reported separately by the Registrar, this will come to the first Council meeting of 24-25. All the AA policies are available on the intranet and these have recently been reviewed with clear ownership and accessibility.

TM will bring an annual report to the first meeting of Council each year with joiners and leavers, trends in staff grievances and disciplinary matters and general overview of staff satisfaction.

ACTION A4

Duty of Care to Students

Council received the paper COU.23/24:47.

LW noted that the paper is for discussion and sets out for Council the support that is currently available, and priorities for wellbeing of students for next year.

Council discussed the open juries and the pressure this places on students. IS confirmed the Code of Behavioural Expectations is circulated before juries, but work continues to ensure behaviours are appropriate and occasions where tutors are commenting in juries if someone's behaviour is not appropriate. IS confirmed that mandatory training has been put in place around unconscious bias and harassment. Council noted that the AA has come a long way in the last few years and following DAWS. Council suggested that simple approach was required with clear and separate streams of advice and support communicated to students:

- Academic advice
- Pastoral care
- Complaints procedure

Council noted that feedback meetings are held with IS and BF, which offers students another opportunity to raise concerns. Council continued their discussion about the assessment and evaluation process of architectural schools, and the anxiety it can cause. Council noted this was a topic they would return to and be updated on, as work continues to improve wellbeing for

students. Any further comments on the paper can come to LW by email.

Draft Freedom of Speech Code of Practice

Council received the paper COU.23/24:48.

LW provided an overview of the change in the law which has moved from the protection of, to the promotion of Freedom of Speech. LW noted the OfS have not published their guidance, which will be important for the final version of the Code. Council suggested that the document needs to stress the positives, and asked about how decisions on lawfulness are made. LW confirmed that it will be case of judgments being made, with the reasoning recorded.

Council discussion focused on the need for the document to not just be seen as restricting rights, and noted that the School should not be engaging in political campaigns unless they are around the AA's role in architectural education.

LW confirmed a final version will be presented to Council in July which will cover all staff, students and guest speakers. It was noted that social media is a separate policy. Final draft of the policy to be provided to July meeting of Council. **ACTION 4**

6. Corporate Governance/Compliance/Committee Reporting

Committee Terms of Reference

Estates & Infrastructure

Council received the paper COU.23/24:49 and adopted the revised Terms of Reference for Estates & Infrastructure Committee subject to clarity about "independent members" in paragraph 4(f).

Finance & Audit

Council received the paper COU.23/24:50 and adopted revised Terms of Reference for Finance & Audit Committee subject to clarity about "independent members" in paragraph 4(f).

LW noted that 4F will be amended in both sets of Terms of Reference. **ACTION A6**

Nominations & Remuneration Committee Report

Council received the paper COU.23/24:51A.

CduT confirmed that Trevor Morriss will be stepping off Council from 3rd June 2024.

Estates & Infrastructure Committee

Council received the paper COU.23/24:52.

RP commented that during Council recruitment an additional digital infrastructure expert on Council and the Committee will be useful. LW confirmed this has been included in the next round of recruitment through Nurole.

Finance & Audit Committee

Council received the paper COU.23/24:52A.

Management Accounts (FIN.23/24:39)

Council received the Management Accounts for information only.

7. Risk and Assurance (Closed Session)

President & Vice President Recruitment

8. En Bloc Items

Council received the paper COU.23/24:54 and adopted the revised "AA Safeguarding Policy"

Council received the paper COU.23/24:54 being the report from Consumer Protection Law working group

Council received the paper COU.23/24:55 being the draft Corporate Governance Framework.

9. AOB

CduT asked Council to approve Nick Viner as a trustee of the AA Foundation, upon the recommendation from the AA Foundation. Council approved the appointment.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 20.07hrs.

Outstanding Actions from previous AA Council meeting on 9 October 2023

	Action	Owner	Due Date
A2	Detail on reasoning for applications and relationship with the School to be included within the membership list	Alex Lorente	Completed
A9	Freedom of Speech code of practice to be drafted	LW	Completed

Action arising from AA Council meeting on 18 March 2024

	Action	Owner	Due Date
A6	Risk Register – Correction to the CMA references and in next revision consider a specific “financial” risk rather than incorporation within “legal and regulatory compliance risk”	LW	October 2024
A8	Initial and high-level exercise on where the School could recover VAT if had to pay/charge it	RS	F&A Committee July 2024

Action arising from AA Council meeting on 3 June 2024

	Action	Owner	Due Date
A1	Trevor Morriss Resolution to acknowledge resignation from Council, Update Companies House & Charity Commission	LW	Completed
A2	Share with Council the New Standards charette report	LW	Completed
A3	Discussion at a future Council meeting to be held on the AA Research strategy	CduT/LW	2024/2025
A4	Freedom of Speech, final draft to be provided to July meeting of Council	LW	July 2024
A5	HR Annual Report to Council	TM	October 2024
A6	Terms of reference adopted subject to minor amendments	LW	Completed
A7	President and VP recruitment to begin led by TB	TB	October 2024

Resolutions to note

- Council acknowledge receipt of Trevor Morriss resignation from Council
- Council approved the appointment of Nick Viner as a trustee for AA Foundation
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Chair

Date: 17 July 2024