

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
ASSEMBLY
PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 12:00, MONDAY 21 JUNE 2021
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Present	Professor Stuart Croft	Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
	Sharon Tuersley	Secretary to Council
	Professor Maureen Freely	(Proposer of the Motions)
	Professor Naomi Eilan	(Seconder of the Motions)
	Professor David Mond	(Speaker to Motion 1)
	Dr Myka Tucker-Abramson	(Proposer of amendments to Motion 2)
	Dr Charlotte Heath-Kelly	(Seconder of amendments to Motion 2)
	Sophie Black	Assistant Registrar (Governance) (Technology Assistant)
	Elizabeth Gillick-Daniels	Administrative Officer (Governance) (Technology Assistant)
	Emma Tew	Assistant Registrar (Governance) (Minute-taker)
	Members of the Assembly (218 members present including the above-listed)	

Ref	Item
013	<p>Welcome and Introductory Remarks</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members of the Assembly, declared the meeting open and reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meeting would be run as a Microsoft Teams meeting as it was not possible to hold a socially distanced physical meeting at the current time. • The meeting was first announced on Insite on Tuesday, 15 June 2021, with the motions and associated documents published on the same date. Three motions were being brought forward for the Assembly's consideration. <p>The Secretary to Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As at 12:00, 153 members of the Assembly were present and the meeting was confirmed as quorate. - The membership of the Assembly extended to all staff employed on level 1-9 terms and conditions from the date of their employment, and such staff would be entitled to vote on the motions. • Outlined the voting procedure, noting that an electronic polling function within Microsoft Teams would be used to vote on the motions, with contingency measures in place should individuals encounter any issues. Verification of the vote count would take place after the Assembly meeting and the final outcome would be recorded in the minutes.
014	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>The Chair declared a conflict in relation to Motion 1, as they were specifically named in the wording of the motion.</p> <p>Dr Goldie Osuri declared a conflict in relation to Motion 1 as one of the academics referenced in the wording of the motion.</p> <p>Dr Meleisa Ono-George declared a conflict in relation to Motion 2 in their capacity as Chair of the University's Race Equality Taskforce.</p>
015	<p>Chair's Business</p> <p>The Chair reported that nominations were currently being invited for two Assembly representatives on Senate: one academic staff member and one professional services staff member.</p>
016	<p>Minutes of the meeting of the Assembly held on 15 December 2020</p> <p>DECISION: The minutes of the meeting of the Assembly held on 15 December 2020 (016-A210621) were approved.</p>

017	<p>Standing Orders of the Assembly</p> <p>The Secretary to Council reported that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assembly was not a decision-making body of the University. It could make recommendations to Council and Senate. • As the meeting was taking place on Microsoft Teams there were a number of the procedural elements under the current Standing Orders that did not apply. • That the Standing Orders were last approved by the Assembly on 15 December 2020.
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Items for Discussion

018	<p>Motions of the Assembly (papers 018a-A210621 and 018b-A210621)</p> <p>a) Motion 1</p> <p>It was proposed that Professor David Mond (an Emeritus Professor) speak to Motion 1 on the condition that members of the Assembly did not object. No objections were raised and Professor Mond presented an overview of Motion 1:</p> <p><i>“This assembly deplores the April 27th attack by Jonathan Gullis MP on three Warwick University academics, among them the Vice Chancellor, and the endorsement of his remarks by Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the House of Commons Select Committee on Education, and rejects as false and defamatory the allegations of antisemitism made by Gullis and Halfon.”</i></p> <p>Comments and amendments were invited from the floor. No amendments to the motion were proposed and numerous expressions of support were provided by members.</p> <p>A vote was taken on Motion 1, with the results outlined in Table 1 below:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2" style="text-align: left;">Table 1: Voting Outcome of Motion 1</th> <th colspan="3" style="text-align: center;">Vote Count</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Electronic Poll</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Contingency Measure (vote submitted directly to Secretary to Council)</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>For</td> <td style="text-align: center;">186 (96%)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">13 (100%)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">199 (97%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Against</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 (0%)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 (0%)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 (0%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abstain</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7 (4%)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">0 (0%)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7 (3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: right;">Total vote count =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">206</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="text-align: right;">Members present at time of vote =</td> <td style="text-align: center;">217</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>*Note – percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number</i></p> <p>DECISION: The Assembly endorsed Motion 1.</p> <p>b) Motion 2</p> <p>Professor Naomi Eilan presented an overview of Motion 2:</p> <p><i>“This assembly resolves to establish a working party, with the help of the already existing Race Equality Taskforce, to make recommendations on the handling of allegations of all forms of racism, including antisemitism, against staff or students. The working party should, among other issues,</i></p> <p><i>(a) consider whether definitions of specific racisms should be adopted by the University, and</i></p> <p><i>(b) if so, consider various definitions of antisemitism, with a view to recommending that the University adopt the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism as a guideline.</i></p> <p><i>The working group will consist of eight academic staff with diverse views reflecting the range of opinions within the university, a representative of the university’s senior management team, and a representative of UCU. They will be selected and advised by the University’s Race Equality Taskforce, with the aim of reporting to the Vice Chancellor and the Assembly by the end of the calendar year.”</i></p> <p>An amendment to Motion 2 had been received in advance of the Assembly meeting, but outside of the 72 hour timeframe required to publish it online. The amendments were proposed by Dr Myka Tucker-Abramson and</p>	Table 1: Voting Outcome of Motion 1	Vote Count			Electronic Poll	Contingency Measure (vote submitted directly to Secretary to Council)	Total	For	186 (96%)	13 (100%)	199 (97%)	Against	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	Abstain	7 (4%)	0 (0%)	7 (3%)	Total vote count =			206	Members present at time of vote =			217
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seconded by Dr Charlotte Heath-Kelly. Dr Tucker-Abramson presented an overview of the amended Motion 2 (amendments outlined in red, underlined text):

“This assembly resolves to establish a working party, with the help of the already existing Race Equality Taskforce, to make recommendations on the handling of allegations of all forms of racism, including antisemitism, against staff or students. The working party should, among other issues,

(a) consider whether definitions of specific racisms should be adopted by the University, and

(b) if so, consider various definitions of antisemitism with a view to recommending that the University adopt the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism as a guideline.

The working group will consist of 8 academic staff with diverse views reflecting the range of opinions within the university; a representative of the university’s senior management team, and a representative of Warwick UCU. They will be selected and advised by the university’s Race Equality Taskforce and will consult with staff and students by inviting written submissions, with the aim of reporting to the Vice Chancellor and the Assembly by the end of the calendar year. Until then, and in light of the well-documented legal and scholarly criticism of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, and the admission by some of its authors such as Kenneth Stern that it was never intended to curtail academic freedom or free speech, the Assembly calls on the University not to use the IHRA definition of antisemitism in disciplinary procedures or in investigations into allegations made against staff or students.”

The Chair proposed that the amended version of Motion 2 be taken forward and voted on, and Professor Eilan (the original proposer of Motion 2) confirmed their agreement. Comments and further amendments were then invited from the floor, summarised as follows:

- It was raised that the stipulations of the Equality Act 2010 and legislation around freedom of expression were accounted for within the University’s internal policies and procedures, and that these measures were being used to counter violations of protected characteristics. The value of adopting a single definition in relation to violation of a specific protected characteristic was questioned, and it was asserted that the Motion could look across a broader range of protected characteristics in an effort to reduce all forms of discrimination on the University campus.
- It was countered that anti-Semitic attacks were on the rise and needed to be explored in the context of the University campus. Whilst specific definitions could be polarising, there was precedent of definitions being adopted and then amended to apply in specific circumstances.
- A further amendment to Motion 2 was proposed by Dr Christine Achinger in relation to widening the consultation group to include academic experts on anti-Semitism and other forms of racism, alongside Jewish staff and members of the wider Jewish community. Following discussion on the difficulties of defining an expert in this context and consideration of other groups which might need to be included in a consultation process, the further amendment to Motion 2 was withdrawn by Dr Achinger. The Assembly agreed, that should Motion 2 be endorsed, the working group would engage with Dr Achinger to discuss the points raised more comprehensively.

A vote was taken on the amended Motion 2, with the results outlined in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Voting Outcome of Motion 2 (amended)	Vote Count		
	Electronic Poll	Contingency Measure (vote submitted directly to Secretary to Council)	Total
For	179 (93%)	13 (100%)	192 (93%)
Against	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
Abstain	13 (7%)	0 (0%)	13 (6%)
Total vote count =			206
Members present at time of vote =			218

**Note – percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number*

DECISION: The Assembly **endorsed** Motion 2 (amended).

ACTION: The working group, established as part of Motion 2, to engage with Dr Christine Achinger to discuss the points they raised on Motion 2 during the Assembly more comprehensively.

c) Motion 3

There was not time for the Assembly to consider Motion 3:

“This Assembly calls on the University to:

(a) uphold its commitment in its Statute 11(7)a

to ensure that academic staff have freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs and privileges

(b) make clear that the protection of academic freedom and freedom of expression is not limited to opinions within academics’ field of study; they should not be put at risk on the grounds of the exercise of their right to freedom of expression, within the law, on any social or political issue in which they take an interest;

(c) make clear that it is not the role of the university to investigate expressions of opinion by its members on social or political issues in which they take an interest, provided that they do so within the law; the university differs from other organisations, for example political parties, which may seek to ensure that their members align with their policies, whereas a university must seek to protect and encourage a diversity of views.”

With the agreement of Professor Maureen Freely (proposer of Motion 3), it was agreed that another meeting of the Assembly would be convened to consider Motion 3. Additionally, if any further amendments were required to Motion 2 (arising from the discussion between the working group and Dr Christine Achinger – item 018b refers) then they could be submitted to the next meeting of the Assembly for consideration.

ACTION: Another meeting of the Assembly to be arranged to consider Motion 3 and further amendments to Motion 2 (if required).

The Chair thanked members of the Assembly for attending and declared the meeting closed.

Meeting Closed 13:00