

**UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK
ASSEMBLY
PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 12:00, FRIDAY 17 JUNE 2022
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

Present	Professor Stuart Croft	Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
	Katharine Gray	Head of Governance Services (Secretary)
	Professor Charlotte Heath-Kelly	Professor of International Security (Politics and International Studies) (Proposer of Motion 1)
	Claire Daffern	Quality Assurance Manager (Warwick Medical School) (Seconder of Motion 1)
	Sophie Black	Assistant Registrar (Governance) (Technology Assistant)
	Angela Gibson	Administrative Officer (Governance) (Technology Assistant)
	Salma Ahmed	Administrative Officer (Governance) (Technology Assistant)
	Emma Tew	Assistant Registrar (Governance) (Minute-taker)
Members of the Assembly (196 members present)		
Ref	Item	
016	<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 membership of the Assembly included all staff employed on level 1-9 terms and conditions from the date of their employment. Staff members who were also Warwick students were asked to enter the meeting via their staff IT account, to ensure that only eligible members of the Assembly could vote on the Motion. • As at 12:01, 147 members of the Assembly were present, and the meeting was quorate. • The meeting was first announced on Insite on 1 June 2022. The Motion and associated documents were published online on the same date. <p>The Secretary outlined the voting procedure, noting that an electronic polling function within Microsoft Teams would be used to vote on the Motion, 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.</p>	
017	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>No conflicts of interest were declared.</p>	
018	<p>Chair's Business</p> <p>There were no items of Chair's business.</p>	
019	<p>Minutes of the meeting of the Assembly held on 8 March 2022</p> <p>DECISION: The minutes of the meeting of the Assembly held on 8 March 2022 (019-A170622) were approved.</p>	
020	<p>Matters arising from the meeting of the Assembly held on 8 March 2022</p> <p>The Chair reported that the Draft Principles for a Code of Practice on Academic Freedom and Freedom of Expression were approved by the Senate at its meeting on 16 March 2022, and the work of the Senate and Assembly Working Groups continued to be aligned.</p>	
021	<p>Standing Orders of the Assembly</p> <p>The Secretary 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. 	

Items for Discussion

022

Motion to the Assembly: Residential Life Team

Professor Charlotte Heath-Kelly and Claire Daffern presented an overview of Motion 1 (outlined in italics below) related to the restructure of the University's Residential Life Team (RLT):

"This meeting of the Assembly notes:

- 1) That the Residential Life team provides a crucial service to the University by helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, especially out-of-hours;*
- 2) That the changes proposed by Wellbeing and Safeguarding are aimed at moving the Residential Life team from 'volunteer' to 'employee' status;*
- 3) That the Residential Life team is now facing a major restructure that would see most current members removed from their roles and, by extension, their homes;*
- 4) That the current team would be replaced primarily by final-year undergraduate students and postgraduate students, with a limited number of managers living off-campus;*
- 5) That the planned changes would bring the University into line with practices at other institutions (including Bristol) that have seen recent rises in student suicides;*
- 6) That serious concerns about the planned changes and the consultation process have been raised by the campus unions, the Warwick Leaders Forum, the University Senate, the Students' Union, and other campus groups (including the Boar newspaper);*
- 7) That serious concerns have been raised in particular about the capacity of current students to safeguard other students with complex needs or who have been historically marginalised, including students of colour, students with disabilities, students who are neurodiverse, and LGBTQIA+ students;*
- 8) That the proposed changes would preclude some international students (especially PGR students with teaching responsibilities) from taking up these roles.*

The Assembly resolves:

To recommend to the University Senate that the proposed programme of changes be paused to allow for:

- 1) Fuller and more meaningful consultation;*
 - a) That further consultation should involve all campus groups that wish to be involved, including (but not limited to): the campus trade unions; the Students' Union; academic and professional services departments (including Community Safety and Estates); the Dean of Students' Office and Senior Tutors' Forum; the Assembly's representatives to Senate;*
 - b) That the consultation should incorporate a programme of open meetings for staff and students to attend.*
 - c) That further consultation should have a particular focus on the impact of the proposed programme of changes on students with complex needs and historically marginalised students, including students of colour, students with disabilities, students who are neurodiverse, and LGBTQIA+ students.*
- 2) Further consideration of possible advantages and disadvantages of the existing system, proposed reforms, and potential alternatives;*
- 3) Any proposed changes to be discussed and agreed by the Senate."*

Comments were invited from the floor, summarised as follows:

- There would be detrimental impacts from having a reduced number of RLT members who were also living off-campus, such as:
 - Crises might be responded to with less immediacy.
 - Reduced out-of-hours support would mean that extra responsibilities would be placed on the Community Safety Team, who were already stretched.

- Students would have less of an opportunity to build relationships with RLT members and could be more hesitant in seeking help or reporting incidents to them. Marginalised student groups could be particularly disadvantaged by not being able to develop a face-to-face relationship with an RLT member. LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse and racialised student groups had already raised concerns about their discomfort in calling the Community Safety Team out of hours.
- Finalist students acting as Residential Community Assistants (RCAs) might not have the experience or emotional resilience to deal with the challenging situations that current RLT members were often required to deal with e.g., suicide attempts and sexual assault allegations. This point was debated, and it was reported that it could not be assumed that a finalist student could not perform an RCA role well. Furthermore, undertaking an RCA role could benefit the development of finalist students. It was concluded, nevertheless, that RCAs would require appropriate induction/supervision, which could be compromised if their managers were living off-campus.
- It was questioned whether it was reasonable to expect finalist students to take on an RCA role in addition to their academic responsibilities.
- The power dynamics between students and older adults, which facilitated the safeguarding and disciplinary elements of the RLT role, needed to be kept in mind. Finalist students who were RCAs might be perceived as peers to other students, which could for instance, make issuing fines for wrongdoing more challenging if there was a perceived lack of authority. The current on-campus presence of RLT staff also acted as a deterrent to poor behaviour.
- It was recognised that the current RLT model required review; however, further research and evidence was required to demonstrate that the proposed restructure was the best option, given the potential impact on student welfare and the University's reputation. Other universities which had introduced similar models had experienced a number of issues and Warwick should aim to be distinctive.
- It appeared that the motivation for the restructure might be driven by financial considerations.
- The current Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal did not thoroughly consider the impact of the restructure on marginalised student groups, in particular disabled students, and should be reviewed.
- Consultation on the proposals was lacking and a more comprehensive discussion should have taken place across the University and at the Senate, which had a responsibility for student wellbeing as outlined in the University's Ordinances and Regulations.

A vote was then taken on Motion 1, with the results outlined in the table below:

	Vote Count		
	Electronic Poll	Contingency Measure (vote submitted directly to Governance Resource or Head of Governance Services)	Total
Motion 1			
Yes	184 (96%)	4 (100%)	188 (97%)
No	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	5 (3%)
Abstain	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
Total vote count =			194
Members present at time of vote =			196

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

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

Meeting Closed 12:50