**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a Meeting held on**

**Wednesday 19 October**

**Present:**

Gary Dixon (Chair)

George Acquah Huw Barton

Craig Brown Nishan Canagarajah

Martin Cullen Sophie Dale-Black

Cathy Ellis Rhiannon Jenkins

Ian Johnson (via Teams) Catherine Morley

Rishi Madlani Kevin Nagle

Mark Purnell Vijay Sharma

Jacqui Shaw Richard Tapp (via Teams)

**In attendance:** Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary); Phil Baker (PVC Research and Enterprise, for 22/M54); Steve Corbett (Director of DARO, for M/57) Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor’s Office); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Liz Jones (PVC Education); Kerry Law (Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professional Services); Gareth Oughton (Chief Executive UoL SU, for M/55); Martyn Riddleston (Chief Operating Officer); Joe Suffield (Secretariat)

**Apologies:** Azam Mamujee

22/M51 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest in any of the items dealt with in this meeting.

22/M52 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Council approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 as a correct record and **noted** the responses to the matters arising from that meeting.

22/M53 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council which provided a wide-ranging and comprehensive update on recent developments in the HE sector generally, and at Leicester specifically.

It was reported that Freemen’s Common Village had recently reached practical completion and was now open to students. Thanks were given to Martyn Riddleston for his oversight of this project.

Attention was also drawn to the positive start to the term for new students, with a number of events having been undertaken to welcome new and returning students to campus.

It was highlighted that a package of support was being provided to staff to help with the cost of living. This included free breakfast on campus, reduced parking charges and financial support advice sessions. A financial payment to staff was not currently being considered.

It was reported that Leicester students had not been directly impacted by the recent disturbances within the city. Outreach activity was underway to support students in affected areas, and the Students’ Union had provided support to the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim Societies. Some academics had been targeted on social media and were also receiving appropriate support.

The latest Student Recruitment Update report highlighted that student numbers for 2022/23 admission had been strong. There would be a focus on closing gaps in home postgraduate taught students, which was a sector-wide issue.

**Council noted** the report and student recruitment update.

22/M54 **STRATEGY REPORTING – WORLD CHANGING RESEARCH**

**Council considered** a presentation from Phil Baker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Enterprise, on the University Strategy theme of World-Changing Research.

It was reported that research would be embedded into the school and college structure through action and delivery plans. This included through the creation of research institutes which would be interdisciplinary flagships within the University. Initiatives were planned to maximise enterprise within the University in appropriate areas of opportunity such as the Leicester Biomedical Research Centre.

**Council noted** the success associated with steps taken to ensure researchers could maximise their success with grant applications. This was evidenced by the significant funding secured for the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

**Council noted** that to ensure the Institutes were embraced by staff within the University, there would be a focus on added value and removing obstacles for researchers. The process for accreditation for Institutes had a high threshold to ensure that they would meet the ambitions of the University. To assist with this there would also be appropriate links with industry.

22/M55 **STUDENTS’ UNION ANNUAL REPORT AND PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23**

**Council considered and noted** a presentation on the Students’ Union priorities for 2022/23. It sought to build on the activities of the Union over the previous year which had been a ramping-up after the effects of COVID-19. The 2022-26 strategy would continue to focus on the Union’s priorities of student opportunity, student voice and student support. Processes had been put in place to ensure Officer priorities could be monitored in future years to maximise their impact e.g. through a KPI dashboard reported to Executive Board.

**Council noted** that students were made aware of the work of the Union through social media, student Council meetings and through promotion of their successes.

**Council noted** that there had been close liaison with the University to enable students to access advice and support services, with a particular focus on improving sexual violence support.

**Council noted** that the Students’ Union operational budget had been reduced by £0.5m. There had therefore been a number of challenging financial decisions to take which had included making a small number of staff redundant and stopping or scaling back certain initiatives. This had been managed compassionately and appropriate steps had been taken to minimise the impact on students.

**Council noted** that the quality of the data which fed into the KPIs had improved significantly and that analysis of this data would enable the Union to provide more targeted support. This would be complemented through discussions with relevant networks within the University and the ongoing working relationships with the Registrar and Secretary and the PVC Education.

22/M56 **NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2022**

**Council received and noted** the latest update on the National Student Survey (NSS) for 2022 from Liz Jones, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education. It was noted that Senate and its relevant subcommittees had considered this in-depth but that headline results were reported to Council as governing body in particular relation to reputational risk.

The sector had seen a small increase in overall satisfaction ratings (from 75.41% to 76.29%), but due to the spread of results across competitors this had resulted in a significant drop in rankings for the University (from 56 of 126 in 2021 to 74 of 126 in 2022). The areas of strongest performance were learning resources and the learning community. The areas of weakest performance were assessment and feedback, organisation and management.

The significant satisfaction gap between White and BAME students was the largest satisfaction gap across demographics. Interventions would be made to address these satisfaction gaps which would improve outcomes for all students.

It was reported that a targeted response and action planning were underway, with a focus on Schools which had performed less well in the latest survey. Professional Services Staff would also continue to be involved in action planning to add their expertise and ensure consistency of approach.

Council noted that student advisory groups would assist in gathering information from students to inform this work, but should not duplicate existing structures.

It was reported that significant changes were anticipated for NSS 2023 but that guidance had not yet been issued. An internal steering group had been established to guide the University’s work in this area.

22/M57 **PHILANTHROPIC INCOME REPORT 2021-22 [RESERVED]**

**Council received and noted** the annual philanthropic income report for 2021-22 from Steve Corbett, Director of Development and Alumni Relations.

22/M58 **COUNCIL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

**Council approved** the Council Governance Framework for 2022-23, comprising the Council Membership 2022/23, the Council Members Register of Interests, Powers of the Council, Statement of Responsibilities, Council Standing Orders 2022/23 and Charity Commission Trustee Guidance

**Council approved** the analysis of compliance with the CUC Code and **noted** the associated areas of priority work proposed by the Governance Office for 2022/23.

22/M60 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Council approved** the Committee’s Annual Report for 2021-22.

**Council noted** the report of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 and the Terms of Reference for 2022/23.

22/M61 **SENATE**

**Council noted** the report of the meeting held on 5 October 2022.

**Council noted** the renaming of the “Department of Health Sciences” to “Department of Population Health Sciences”.

22/M62 **FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council received and noted** a report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 22 September 2022 including the Terms of Reference for 2022-23.

22/M63 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]**

**Council received and noted** a report of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held on 20 September 2022 including the Terms of Reference for 2022-23.

22/M64 **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE**

**Council noted** a report of a meeting of the Alumni Association Committee held on 8 September 2022.

22/M65 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Council noted** the dates of meetings scheduled for 2022-2023:

* Wednesday 14 December 2022 - Ordinary meeting 4pm (NB date change)
* Wednesday 8 March 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
* Wednesday 10 May 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
* Wednesday 5 July 2023 - Ordinary meeting 4pm

CHAIR Duration of meeting: 2 hours 8 minutes