

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 6 November 2019**

Present:

N Canagarajah (Chair)

P Baker	E Jones
M Barer	S Kyd
S Barry	D Lambert
H Barton	G Lewis
E Burke	L Liu
N Chakraborti	P Monks
H Challiss	B Norman
J Chambers	H O'Connor
J Devlin	A Rahman
S Dudley	I Somerville
I Forsythe	C Taylor
R Fryer	A Thomas
A Goodall	R Thomas
M Halliwell	G Wynn
S Handa	C Wilkins (<i>vice W Cajkler</i>)
C Hewitt	

In attendance: D Hall, A Benson, G Green (Secretary) and A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from N Armstrong, L Bailey, W Cajkler, S Davies, A Ellis, S Garrett, I Gillespie, R Holland, O Obioha, J Prados, T Robinson and J Schwabe

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

19/M11 **WELCOME**

Professor Canagarajah, in his first meeting as President and Vice-Chancellor, welcomed members of Senate to the first meeting of the 2019/20 academic year.

19/M12 **STANDING BUSINESS**

(a) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(b) Membership and Powers of Senate

Senate received its Membership for the 2019/20 academic year and its powers as set out in Ordinance 10.

(c) Standing Orders

Senate considered and **approved** its Standing Orders for the conduct of its business and meetings in the 2019/20 academic year.

(d) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Senate considered the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2019.

Senate **approved** the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

i) Effectiveness Review

Senate received an update on the outcomes of the review of its effectiveness that had been undertaken over the course of Spring 2019.

Senate noted the actions already undertaken in response to a number of the technical and logistical recommendations. Senate also noted the proposed actions in response to the more complex recommendations. In particular, Senate noted the process and timescale for amendments to its membership, and that these would require approval by both Council and the Privy Council.

Senate agreed that the existing vacant nominated member slots should be used in the short term to promote further diversity of representation from academic and professional services staff within the membership. Senate noted that the wider changes to membership would potentially increase the size of the membership and agreed that it would be helpful as part of the review to consider whether an appropriate balance of perspectives could be achieved via amendments which did not increase the overall size of Senate.

ii) Matters Arising

Senate noted the action log from its previous meeting, and further noted those actions completed.

Senate noted that revised Student Regulations remained under development and would be presented to Senate for consideration at a future meeting.

Arising from M06(e) the President and Vice-Chancellor reported that the processes for the recruitment to new Pro-Vice-Chancellor posts in Education and Research had been suspended. In light of the current stage in REF preparations and the work already underway and led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Enterprise, and the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, it had been judged as neither necessary nor appropriate to continue with new senior appointments at this time. Senate also noted that Professor Wynn would be acting as Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) in the immediate term. The formulation of a revised University Vision and Strategy would take place over the coming months and would be due for publication in March 2020. Senate noted that this would represent an opportunity to consider the composition of the Executive Board if required.

Arising from M07(b) Senate noted that the University's Access and Participation Plan had been approved by the Office for Students for a 5 year period.

(e) Chair's Business

Following the outcome of the UCU ballot the President and Vice-Chancellor highlighted the importance of achieving an ongoing positive dialogue between the University and trade unions. Notwithstanding the disappointing outcome of the ballot, Senate recognised the concerns expressed by HE staff both nationally and locally.

A Working Group was developing the University's action plan in light of the proposed industrial action. Members of Senate noted the value of both face-to-face briefings and written guidance regarding the management of impact upon learning, teaching and assessment, and requested that these be provided as soon as possible.

(f) Summary Report of Items for Approval

Senate considered and **approved** a summary report of business for consideration arising from reports from subsidiary Committees and other areas where Senate's approval was required.

Terms of Reference

Learning and Teaching Committee

Senate considered and **approved** a minor amendment to the stated role of the Learning and Teaching Committee, in order to highlight the Committee's responsibility to have due regard to the student interest in all considerations.

Senate considered and **approved** amendments to the structure of the membership of the Committee in 2019/20 which reflected the ending of certain roles and the corresponding addition of alternative academic roles in order to ensure an appropriate balance on the Committee.

Research and Enterprise Committee

Senate considered and **approved** amendments to the membership of the Committee for 2019/20, to include the addition of ex officio membership for the Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer and the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Schedule of Delegation

Senate considered and **approved** an amendment to the Schedule of Delegation in order to delegate Senate's authority to amend Senate Regulation 1 to the newly established Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board.

Quality Assurance Summary Report

Senate noted the report from the Learning and Teaching Committee of the annual review of the operation of the Code of Practice on the Development, Approval and Modification of Taught Programmes. Senate welcomed the confirmation that, arising from the review, it could have confidence that the operation of the Code ensured that appropriate consideration and scrutiny was applied to each stage of the development, approval and modification of programmes.

Early Career Researcher and Research Staff Career Enhancement Sub-Committee

Senate considered a proposal to establish a formal Early Career Researcher and Research Staff Career Enhancement Sub-Committee within the Senate Sub-Structure.

It was therefore proposed that, in order to ensure that there is effective recognition of this important area of work and a demonstration of institutional commitment to the ECR and research community, the current standalone group should be formally embedded within the Senate Sub Structure. Senate considered and **approved** the creation of the Sub-Committee and the draft Terms of Reference, and noted that the Sub-Committee would report to the Research and Enterprise Committee.

Senate considered the membership of the proposed Committee and whether there was the potential for duplication of roles across different categories. Senate agreed that the membership was broadly appropriate but that any specific issues should be relayed to the Director of the Doctoral College and if revisions were considered necessary these could be resolved via Chair's action on behalf of Senate.

19/M13 BUSINESS TO CONSIDER**(a) Initial Reflections of the President and Vice-Chancellor**

The President and Vice-Chancellor highlighted his sense of privilege and honour in being appointed to the role. Professor Canagarajah thanked colleagues for the welcome that he had received, and for the opportunities that there had already been to meet with colleagues from across the University and hear their views.

Professor Canagarajah noted the range of initiatives in place to address some of the challenges, but highlighted the importance of focus and prioritisation, impact assessment, and accountability in selecting which initiatives to undertake. He recognised that strategic focus would also have benefits for staff morale by focusing workload on fewer, important things. He stressed the importance of remaining a comprehensive University, as this opened up opportunities for research, education, and engagement, which would not otherwise exist.

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his five priority areas:

1. Student Experience

Professor Canagarajah highlighted the student experience as his top priority, as the University's current league table rankings did not accurately reflect the institution's position. It was important not to chase league tables just for the sake of it, but to focus on core practice excellence in learning and teaching.

2. Student Recruitment

Student recruitment was essential to the sustainability of the institution. Despite challenging circumstances, achieving recruitment targets remained critical to ensuring the income for investment in the University's estate, infrastructure and research. This would require a flexible balance between quantity and quality, particularly in the short-term given the demographic dip in the UK.

3. Research Performance

Whilst welcoming success in recent years the President and Vice-Chancellor further emphasised that there was room for growth. Growing research income and achieving the best possible REF outcome was mission critical for both the University's reputation and sustainability.

4. Staff Morale

The President and Vice-Chancellor fully recognised the impact of the University's current circumstances on the morale of staff. He would be meeting with all departments and services and would also be holding regular informal coffee mornings. He encouraged colleagues to make use of both formal and informal means of contacting him and highlighted his desire to hear from the full University community.

5. Community Engagement

Finally, Professor Canagarajah emphasised the importance of engaging locally with the city of Leicester and the wider regional community. Whilst seeking to be a University with a global brand and reach, it remained critical that the work of the institution in both education and research should positively benefit and impact upon the local community.

Senate welcomed the President and Vice-Chancellor's reflections and explored a number of further questions as summarised below.

- In the short term meeting recruitment targets was paramount. While this may necessitate some drop in tariff this was necessary for the future sustainability of the institution. Excellence in learning and teaching could more than mitigate any impact of lower tariff scores in league table calculations.
- Senate discussed the importance of ensuring a balanced and flexible approach to research infrastructure, which recognised the very different support requirements in the arts and social sciences, compared to physical and life sciences.
- Senate agreed the importance of articulating a clear identity for the University. This was core to the new Vision and Strategy under development, with this area being led by External Relations.
- Senate raised the need to establish the strategic role and direction of distance learning provision within the University. Professor Canagarajah noted the opportunities potentially afforded through DL to diversify recruitment, and that that further consideration would be undertaken through the strategic review.
- While recognising the advantage of being a comprehensive institution when competing for multidisciplinary research funding, Professor Canagarajah emphasised the importance of supporting staff to be more pro-active in advance of calls being issued, through the provision of research incentive and pump-prime funding.

(b) Regulations on Student Conduct and Discipline

Senate considered draft revised Regulations for Student Conduct and Discipline, and a revised governance structure for student wellbeing and discipline.

A review of the University's regulations regarding non-academic discipline had been undertaken by a Working Group during the last six months. The new regulations included a clear and concise code of conduct for students and clarified a number of procedural steps. These included the removal of the Authorised Officer role and introduction of Student Conduct Officers, clearer processes for the use of precautionary measures and a revised framework for sanctions.

The new Sexual Misconduct Policy had been developed to provide clear definitions of this form of misconduct, clarity in the procedural steps and set out the structures in place for the communication and support with students engaged in this process.

Senate **approved** the revised regulations and the Sexual Misconduct Policy.

Senate considered and **approved** a proposal to introduce a new Student Discipline Committee reporting directly to Senate, with delegated authority to approve and amend Senate Regulation 11, and replacing Student Conduct Group.

Senate considered and **approved** the creation of a new Student Wellbeing Sub-Committee, reporting to the Learning and Teaching Committee with a dotted reporting to the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee.

(c) Recovery Plan

Senate received an update on the Recovery Plan. Senate noted the updates that had been made to the Plan since it was last received by Senate in March 2019. Senate noted in particular the updates to the section on Student Experience and Success, where the overall objectives had been revised to reflect the priorities recently agreed by both the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Executive Board.

Senate noted that the development of the Staff Morale section was welcome but that the actions areas within the plan may not fully reflect the priorities of front line staff. The Registrar and COO noted that staff engagement had taken place and that the plan would be updated to reflect the range of activities to support staff morale that had been collated through that process.

Senate noted that upon the publication of the new University Strategy in 2020, the ongoing actions from the Recovery Plan would be rolled into this, and the Plan would cease to exist as a separate document.

(d) Annual Assurance Report

Senate considered a draft annual assurance report. Senate noted that the report was aligned to conditions B1-B6 of the OfS ongoing conditions of registration, and **approved** the report for submission to Council.

(e) Strategic Learning and Teaching Themes

Senate received a presentation from Professor Wynn which addressed the interrelated strategic learning and teaching themes of NSS outcomes, TEF 5 preparation and the BAME outcome and satisfaction gaps.

Senate noted the NSS 2019 outcome that had been presented in a range of fora previously. Professor Wynn presented the outcomes of further analysis which demonstrated that a small shift from a very small number of students would significantly impact the University's overall satisfaction rating. Senate noted the launch of an 'every contact counts' approach in order to support this overall aim of maximising the quality of the student experience at every point for every student.

Senate noted the current uncertainty regarding the format of the TEF from 2020 onwards which was pending the outcome of the independent Pearce review. Senate considered the methodology for future TEF awards, noting in particular the relative weightings accorded to metrics such as the NSS and Continuation, which would make it significantly more challenging for institutions to achieve a Gold outcome.

Senate considered the ongoing issue of the attainment gap for BAME students. Senate noted the need to achieve a greater level of granular data in order to understand this critical issue and how the University could best respond to first close and then eliminate this gap. Senate welcomed the work that had been led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) in order to disaggregate the overall attainment gap defined nationally around 'Good Honours', from the gaps in student satisfaction and in student outcomes. Data packs had been produced for publication to all Schools in order to support them in understanding the performance profile of the different demographics and identify the actions necessary in response.

Senate welcomed the University's commitment to the pledges set out in the recent UUK and NUS led 'Closing the Gap' report. Senate also welcomed the more integrated University approach which connected the work of Schools with the Education Excellence Project and the programme of work underway via the Race Equality Action Group

The President and Vice-Chancellor welcomed the presentation and highlighted that he wished for the University to be recognised as sector-leading in how it addressed the BAME satisfaction and awarding gaps.

(f) Award of Honorary Degrees

Senate considered the nominations for Honorary Degrees put forward by the meeting of the Honorary Degrees Board in October 2019.

Senate noted the range of nominations and welcomed a greater diversity, notably in gender, among both the nominations and the awards.

Senate considered the nomination for Lady Warsi in light of some of her previous public comments on equality issues. Senate noted that this had been discussed in detail at the

Board, which included among its membership the Chairs of the University's Equality Action Groups.

Senate endorsed the nominations for the award of Honorary degrees, subject to the outcome of appropriate due diligence before final approval by University Council.

19/M14 **BUSINESS TO NOTE**

(a) Reports from Committees

i) Learning and Teaching Committee

Senate **approved** reports from the meetings of the Learning and Teaching Committee that had taken place on 9 July, 11 September and 23 October 2019.

ii) Research and Enterprise Committee

Senate **approved** a report from the meeting of the Research and Enterprise Committee that had taken place on 2 July 2019.

(b) University Officer Appointments

Senate received for information a list of all University Officer level appointments that had been made since 26 June 2019.

(c) Programmes Approved and Withdrawn

Senate received a list of programmes and pathways that had been approved in principle, in full and withdrawn.

(d) Senate Student Discipline Panels

Senate received the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

19/M15 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Senate noted the dates of its remaining meetings in 2019/20 as follows:

4 March 2020, 2pm

24 June 2020, 2pm

DURATION OF MEETING: Two Hours

CHAIR: