

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COURT

Minutes of the Sixty-Third Annual meeting of Court held on Friday 14 February 2020

Present:	The Rt Hon the Lord Willetts (Chancellor)	
	Cllr Mr E Baines	Dr G Lewis
	Mr G Bodiwala	Mrs H Lewis
	His Hon Judge D Brunning	Col R Martin
	Professor E Burke	Mrs M Miles
	Cllr Mrs A Byrne	Mr D Moore
	Professor N Canagarajah	Mrs L Perham
	Mr M Cullen	Cllr Mrs P Posnett
	Dr S Dale-Black	Professor K Pounds
	Mr G Dixon	Mr C Ramsey
	Ms M Duke	Dr N Reed
	Mrs C Ellis	Mr R S Sandhu
	Mrs S Forsyth	Dr V Sharma
	Dr J Foster	Professor S Sharma
	Mr G Green	Mr D Tams
	Lady J Gretton	Ms C Thorogood
	Dr R Hake	Dr B Towle
	Mr D Hall	Mr M Turnbull
	Mr B Hellyer	Mrs S Watson
	Dr J Higgins	Mr A Wessel
	Mr B Hindocha	Mrs C Wessel
	The Very Rev Dr D Hole	Dr A Weston
	Mr D James	Mr P Wilson
	Mr J Kapasi	Mr D Woodhead
	Mr P Lawson	

In attendance: Mr M Riddleston (Chief Operating Officer, University of Leicester); Ms K Law, Ms R Faint, Mr J Pandya and Ms M Perkins (all from the Division of External Relations, University of Leicester); Mr A Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office, University of Leicester), and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary to Council and Court, University of Leicester).

Apologies for absence were received from those members of Court whose names are listed in the Appendix attached to these minutes.

20/M1 **COURTESIES**

The Chancellor expressed his appreciation to David Hall, Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, who would be leaving the University at the end of February, after 14 years with Leicester, to take up a new position with the Open University. Related to this change, the Chancellor welcomed Martyn Riddleston to the meeting in his capacity as the University's new Chief Operating Officer, and also Geoff Green as the University's interim Registrar and Secretary.

20/M2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Full Member of Court Cathy Ellis declared an interest in, and left the meeting for the discussion of, the business recorded under 20/M5 below.

20/M3 MINUTES

Court formally received the minutes of the sixty-second Annual Meeting, held on 15 February 2019.

20/M4 MEMBERSHIP OF COURT

Court received the current list of the Full Members of Court, as at 1 February 2020. **Court noted** that the current list was presented each year at the Annual Meeting. The the complete and updated Full and Associate membership lists could be viewed at any time on the University's website.

20/M5 COURT APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL

Court approved a recommendation from the University's Nominations Committee that Cathy Ellis be reappointed to serve as a member of the University Council, under *Statute 4.1c: Membership of the Council*, for a further three-year term to run from 1 August 2020 to 31 July 2023.

20/M6 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2018-19

Court formally received the University's audited financial statements for the last financial year, covering the period from 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019. The statements also included a strategic overview report of the institution's activities and highlights, and a corporate governance statement of the responsibilities of the Council (as the University's governing body) and its key committees, over the last year. The statements had been approved by the Council and submitted to the Office for Students, the new regulator for universities.

Court noted that in the year to 31 July 2019 the University's income had totalled £331 million, with a surplus (after pension provision accounting movements) of £2.9 million. The University had generated operating cash of £12.7 million and had finished the year with a cash balance of £61.5 million.

Key capital investments included the redevelopment of the Percy Gee Students' Union Building on the main campus and the 'Brookfield' site on London Road in Leicester, both of which were nearing completion. Major redevelopment work at Freeman's Common, and the University's key involvement with the Space Park Leicester project, was also well underway. Taken together this programme of major investment work was targeted at improving the University's student experience and research and business engagement capabilities and profile. This was critically important in the increasingly competitive higher education environment.

With regard to a specific query from Court about the gender pay gap at the University, it was noted that this had reduced from an average of 23.1% in 2018 to 20.6% in 2019, in a continuation of the modest progress that had been made over the last three years. The target for the next three years was to reduce the gender pay gap to that of the average figure for the pre-92 universities, once this was made available – the current average gender pay gap for the HE sector as a whole was 15%.

20/M7 ANNUAL PRESENTATION BY THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

The University's new President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nishan Canagarajah, who had started in the role officially at the beginning of November 2019, gave his first annual presentation to Court. Reflecting on his first 100 days at Leicester, which had

featured an intensive programme of induction meetings with academic and administrative units across the University, the President and Vice-Chancellor commented on how impressed he had been by the high calibre and commitment of its staff and students. His priority was to harness this to its maximum potential and to marry it with his long term strategic vision for shaping the second century of the University, with a renewed sense of ambition and confidence, and a more prominent profile in the life of the city and county.

In a wide-ranging presentation the President and Vice-Chancellor outlined his determination to pursue a philosophy of research-inspired education and curiosity-driven research, and emphasized the need for the University to develop effective and sustainable partnerships at local, national and global level. Underpinning all of these objectives were five guiding commitments for the University to embrace and promote:

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Wellbeing
- Environmental Sustainability
- Financial Sustainability
- Operational Excellence

The President and Vice-Chancellor emphasized to Court that the University's new strategic plan would be formulated and implemented in a period of continued great uncertainty - with some political and media hostility - for the higher education sector. But the University's successes during the last year – including national and international recognition and reward for its teaching and research, its close involvement in the launch of Space Park Leicester, and the start of a transformative redevelopment of the Freeman's Common site - was a cause for optimism and confidence for the challenges ahead.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: One hour and 35 minutes

At the conclusion of the formal business of the meeting, members gathered outside the Council Room for the unveiling of an official portrait of Dr Bridget Towle, who had retired from her position as Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council in July 2019, having been closely involved with the governance of the University for almost twenty years.