

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Monday 7 July 2014

Present:

Dr B Towle (Chair)

The Vice-Chancellor	Dr D Lockett
Mr P Ash	Mr D Moore
Professor M Barstow	Mr P Mulvihill
Mr G Dixon	Professor M Peel
HH Judge A Hampton	Professor E Raven
Mr M Hindle	Dr N Reed
Mr I Johnson	Mr M Rubin
Professor J Ketley	Ms V Sharma
Mr P Lawson	Professor M Thompson
Professor M Lester	Ms C Thorogood

In attendance: the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance, the Director of Estates, and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Morgan, Dr M Rawlinson and Professor D Wynford-Thomas.

COURTESIES

Council welcomed Michael Rubin, the new President of the Students' Union, to his first meeting.

Council congratulated Vijay Sharma, who would receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University at the degree ceremony at De Montfort Hall on 15 July 2014.

Council also noted that Christine Fyfe (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Students) had received an MBE for contributions to Higher Education, in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2014.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

14/M37 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Vice-Chancellor and Mr Moore declared an interest as Directors of College Court Conference Centre Limited. Dr Reed and Mr Rubin declared an interest as Trustees of the Students' Union.

14/M38 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2014.

Council approved them as a correct record.

14/M39 VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

The Vice-Chancellor brought to the attention of Council a number of recent developments involving or of interest to the University, including:

- the new Richard III Visitor Centre, on Peacock Lane in Leicester, was due to open on 26 July 2014
- the redevelopment of College Court had received the *Best Change of Use of an Existing Building or Conversion* award in the East Midlands Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards, taking the Centre's total number of awards to five
- the University had been placed in 21st position in the *Guardian* 2015 University League Table 2015
- a short documentary series on *The Secret Life of Students*, filmed at the University during 2013-14, was being broadcast by Channel 4. The first episode went out on 3 July 2014.

In his final appearance at a meeting of Council, prior to his retirement in September 2014, the Vice-Chancellor made reference to his continued belief in the importance of synergy between teaching and research; to the importance of the University operating at a local, national and international level; and to the particular strategic challenges presented by a student population with broadly similar numbers of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Sir Robert thanked Council for the opportunity to have served as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, 1999-2014.

14/M40 SENATE

Council considered the report of a meeting of Senate held on 1 July 2014.

Council noted that:

- a. the percentage of First/Upper Second Class degrees awarded by the University in the 2014 midsummer examinations was 78.8%, a reduction of 0.5% on the equivalent outcome in 2013
- b. the practice of a growing number of institutions, including Leicester, to make unconditional offers of admission for undergraduate programmes, based on predicted grades, was another contributing factor in the increasingly volatile recruitment market. It also raised the possibility of a movement towards the adoption of a 'post-results' admissions process
- c. Senate had approved a proposal for the running down and closure of the School of Social Work and its associated MA Social Work programme, with effect from the end of the 2015-16 academic year. Due to changes to student funding arrangements, minimum staffing requirements, insufficient research activity and other factors, the School and its teaching programme was no longer viable
- d. Senate had approved amendments to Senate Regulation 11 on Student Discipline, including the formal separation of processes dealing with student discipline and fitness to practice issues.

14/M41 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted the report of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 16 June 2014.

14/M42 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council considered the report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on 23 June 2014.

Council noted that the first cycle of internal audit reviews by KPMG, the University's new internal auditors, were being conducted on a notably comprehensive and challenging basis. Significant recommendations and action points were emerging in areas such as risk management, IT security and data handling. The University's responses to such points were being closely monitored and, where necessary, questioned by the Committee.

Council noted that the Audit Committee had considered the report of a special investigation by the internal auditors into an incident of significant fraud at the University, which had been discovered in February 2014. HEFCE and the University's insurers had been notified. The internal auditors were supporting the University in the preparation of a potential insurance claim, and the case was the subject of an ongoing police investigation. The Committee had received full details of mitigating actions taken by the University in response to issues identified during the special investigation, and would receive a follow-up report at its next meeting.

14/M43 **ESTATES AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

Council received a report of a meeting of the Estates and Infrastructure Strategy Committee held on 6 June 2014.

Council noted that the Committee had approved the principles of three main recommendations from the Capital Project Working Group:

- i. for the taking forward of 'beacon' projects which addressed key student needs and had the additional advantage of bringing some benefit to the University community at large
- ii. for the 'stratification' the capital fund to allow for major projects, capitalised maintenance, and small strategic projects awarded on a competitive basis
- iii. for the capital fund to include an appropriate allocation for improvements to the public areas, running alongside the construction of new buildings.

14/M44 RISK MANAGEMENT 2013-2014

Council considered the annual report of the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee on the effectiveness of the University's risk management procedures during the 2013-14 academic year. **Council noted** that VCAC had reviewed the summer term update of the Internal Control Report and Corporate Risk Register and had concluded that it continued to provide a comprehensive and current assessment of the University's position with regard to its principal corporate risks and the action taken to control them.

Council noted that a recent internal audit review of the University's risk management processes had concluded that, although the system was broadly satisfactory in its design and scope, there was insufficient evidence against which to assess its overall effectiveness. Specific weaknesses had been identified in certain key areas. A range of actions were being taken forward by the University, in conjunction with the internal auditors, to begin to address a number of these issues. Some urgent actions would be taken over the summer, but others required direct linkage to the University's strategic objectives. Further work on this particular aspect of the risk management procedures would therefore need to be informed by the new Vice-Chancellor's anticipated review of the University's strategic direction. This would have an impact on the timetable for the work, and for the nature and detail of the risks to be monitored in future.

14/M45 RE-APPOINTMENT OF LAY MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Council approved a recommendation from the Nominations Committee for the re-appointment to Council of Mr Ian Johnson, as a member appointed to Council by Council itself, for a further period of three years, from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

Council noted the re-appointment to Council of Dr Neville Reed, as a member of Council appointed by Court, for a further period of three years, from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017.

14/M46 NEW APPOINTMENTS TO COURT

Council approved recommendations from the Nominations Committee for the appointment of the following individuals as new members of Court, to serve in a personal capacity, in the 'Other Persons' category of Court membership:

Mr Paul Bateman - Member of the University Council and Pro-Chancellor 2009-2013

Dr Roger Bettles - Member of the University Council 1998-2013; Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor 2007-2013

Mrs Sally Bowie - High Sheriff of Leicestershire 2013-14

Mr Bart Hellyer - High Sheriff of Rutland 2012-13

Mr David James - Member of the University Council 2004-2013

14/M47 UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES 2014-15

Council approved proposals from the Nominations Committee for lay representation on University committees, sub-committees and groups for the academic year 2014-15.

The Chair indicated that if any member had any queries about the committee(s) for which they had been proposed, or if they would like to be considered for any of the small number of vacant positions, they should notify her or Neil Cox in the first instance.

14/M48 AGREEMENT ON INSTITUTIONAL DESIGNATION

Council received the final version of the new HEFCE Agreement on Institutional Designation, effective from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2017 in the first instance.

Council noted that the Agreement was designed primarily to ensure that HEIs continued to demonstrate accountability for their access to the publicly subsidised student support system, as the funding balance shifted from grants to fees.

14/M49 CHANGES TO THE CHARTER AND STATUTES

Council noted that changes to the University's Charter and Statutes, in order to:

- a. adopt the use of *President and Vice Chancellor*; and
- b. use *Chair* in place of *Chairman*

had been approved by the Privy Council on 27 May 2014.

14/M50 STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Council received a report of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 9 May 2014.

In attending his last meeting of Council, prior to standing down from his position as Chair of the Alumni Association, Mr Mulvihill reflected on his work for the Association during his time as Chair. He had been particularly pleased by the Association's success in generating a greater level of engagement between alumni and the University, the provision of more incentives for alumni to come back to revisit the University, and the promotion of more reasons for alumni to feel pride in the continuing work of the University. The Association had also taken care to recognise and celebrate the achievements of individual alumni, not just those of the University itself.

Council recorded its appreciation for Mr Mulvihill's leadership of the Alumni Association and for his contribution as a member of Council.

14/M51 HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Council received and noted a report of the Health and Safety Committee held on 9 June 2014.

14/M52 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Council noted that forthcoming meetings of Council were scheduled as follows, all to commence at 4.00pm:

Monday 24 November 2014

Thursday 19 March 2015

Monday 18 May 2015

Wednesday 8 July 2015

14/M53 AWARD OF HONORARY DEGREES

Council was reminded that nominations for the award of honorary degrees could be submitted to the Vice-Chancellor's Office, for consideration by the Honorary Degrees Board. The deadline for receipt of nominations was 15 September 2014.

It was necessary for the person nominating the candidate to provide a full description of the reasons for the nomination, the nominee's CV, other background information (such as a *Who's Who* entry) and contact details. Without this information it would not be possible for the nomination to be considered by the Honorary Degrees Board.

Council noted that nominations for senior female and ethnic minority candidates were especially welcome as these groups were generally under-represented at the present time.

14/M54 PROFESSOR SIR ROBERT BURGESS

On behalf of Council, the Chair thanked Professor Sir Robert Burgess for his service as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester over the last fifteen years, and congratulated him for his achievements during that time. Under his leadership the University had earned a consistent position in the top 20 of UK universities and in the top 2% of universities internationally, the campus had been transformed, and the student experience had been placed at the heart of the University's ambitions for excellence.

To warm applause from Council, the Chair wished Sir Robert a long, active and happy retirement.

CHAIR