

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 8 July 2015

Present:	Dr B Towle (Chair)	
	The President and Vice-Chancellor	Mr A Morgan
	Mr P Ash	Professor M Peel
	Mr M Hindle	Professor E Raven
	Mr I Johnson	Dr M Rawlinson
	Mr P Lawson	Dr N Reed
	Professor M Lester	Dr V Sharma
	Dr D Lockett	Ms C Thorogood
	Mr D Moore	Mr L Trotman

In attendance: the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance, the Director of Estates,

Apologies for absence were received from Professor M Barstow, Mr G Dixon, Judge A Hampton, Ms R Holland, Professor J Ketley and Professor M Thompson.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

15/M40 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The President and Vice-Chancellor, Mr Moore and Mr Morgan declared an interest as Directors of College Court Conference Centre Limited. Dr Reed declared an interest as a Trustee of the Students' Union.

15/M41 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2015. **Council approved** them as a correct record.

Arising from minute 15/M25 (new CUC Code of Governance), **Council agreed** that a small group of Council members and appropriate officers would be convened in the autumn to undertake the planned review of the requirements of the new Code. Members were invited to notify the Chair if they were interested in joining the group.

15/M42 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Council noted that proposals regarding the appointment of lay members to serve on University committees in 2015-16 had been placed on hold temporarily, pending confirmation of proposed changes to the committee structure (minute 15/M47 refers). Members were invited to notify the chair by 13 July 2015 if they were particularly interested in serving on specific committee(s), although preferences could not be guaranteed.

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Council noted that HEFCE was engaged in a consultation with the sector on a proposed new regulatory framework for the assurance of teaching quality, with potential implications for the responsibilities placed on governing bodies. It was not yet clear how this might relate to similar responsibilities in this area already included in the new CUC Code of Practice.

15/M43 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

With regard to league tables, **Council noted** that the University had dropped out of the top 20 in both the *Guardian* (32nd place) and the *Complete University Guide* (24th place) league tables for 2016. Analysis of these results, which were based on metrics of the University's performance prior to the 2014-15 academic year, indicated that Leicester's relative performance in the National Student Survey was a major contributing factor in this decline. Remedial action to address this was obviously required and would be taken, but the way that the NSS operated meant that there would be a significant lag factor before any benefits could start to show through.

With regard to the Chancellor's 2015 budget announcement, **Council noted** that the savings requirement for the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills would inevitably lead to a further decline in HEFCE teaching funding, with some reductions expected to be implemented in the current financial year. The decision to allow student tuition fees to now rise above £9,000, and in line with inflation, was a more positive development for the sector.

With regard to appointment of senior officers, **Council noted** the appointment of Professor Mark Peel as Provost, Professor Julie Coleman as Head of the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, and Professor Philip Bailey as Dean of Medicine and Head of the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology. The appointment process was continuing for the posts of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International).

15/M44 **SENATE**

Council considered a report of a meeting of Senate held on 1 July 2015. **Council noted** that Senate had endorsed for approval by Council the University's draft Strategic Plan (minute 15/M46 refers), proposed changes to the governance structure (minute 15/M47 refers), and the annual budget for 2015-16 and financial forecasts to 2018-19 (minute 15/M57 under Reserved Business refers).

Senate had also endorsed the proposed amendments to Ordinances 6, 10 and 18 as provisionally approved by Council at the last meeting. **Council therefore gave final approval** for the amendments to Ordinances, as detailed in Appendix 15/M44App attached to the signed copy of these minutes, for introduction with immediate effect.

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15/M45 **SENATE APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL**

Council noted that Senate appointments to Council would be as follows in 2015-16 (and until the end date shown in brackets):

- a. Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Provost:

Professor Philip Baker	(31.7.2017)
Professor Martin Barstow	(31.7.2016)
Professor Julie Coleman	(31.7.2017)
Professor Mark Peel	(31.7.2017)

- b. Senate members

Professor Julian Ketley	(31.7.2016)
Professor Mark Lester	(31.7.2016)
Dr Suzanne Macleod	(31.7.2018)
Professor Emma Raven	(31.7.2018)

15/M46 **THE UNIVERSITY'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

Council received a presentation from the Provost, and an early 'enhanced' print copy, of the University's proposed new Strategic Plan. **Council acknowledged** that there was an underlying complexity to the Plan which aimed to address internal and external audiences and to convey the breadth and depth of the University's vision and ambitions in a way that was bold, confident and realistic. It sought to capture the outcomes of a highly successful Strategic Conversation and to maintain an effective interplay between the past, present and future of the University.

Council agreed that the Plan was effective in conveying a sense of distinctiveness for the University, and particularly welcomed the aspirational element of the concept of the University defining a new 'distinctive elite'.

In voicing its strong support for the Strategic Plan, Council emphasised that it would need to be reinforced by clear action and delivery plans with comprehensive timelines. These would be developed during autumn 2015, to allow for appropriate input from new senior officers, and Council would receive further updates and material at its meeting in November.

Council approved the University's new Strategic Plan for launch in September 2015.

15/M47 **RETHINKING THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

Council considered proposals for the first phase of changes to the University's governance structure, for implementation during 2015-16.

With regard to the Committees of Senate, **Council noted** that the titles, terms of reference and constitutions of the existing committees with oversight of learning and teaching, research and enterprise (and a new international committee, to be created) would be reviewed and refined to emphasize their responsibility for enhancing the University's performance in these areas.

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It was likely that these changes would be made incrementally during 2015-16, to enable appropriate input from new senior officers, and so as not to undermine the University's preparations for the QAA Higher Education review audit due in early 2016.

With regard to the committees of Council, **Council noted** the proposed creation of a new Council Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide a forum for considering and reviewing all major strategy, policy and investment proposals prior to a full meeting of Council. This Committee would ensure the alignment of all aspects of University strategy in relation to financial, estates, information technology and human resource planning. The Finance Committee would remain, as a sub-committee of the CAC, but the existing committees covering estates, information technology and staffing policy would be abolished, the Equality and Diversity Committee would report directly into Council, and the Schedule of Delegation would be expanded. Lay members of Council would be represented on all of the key committees, and there would be a light touch arrangement to link individuals with specific aspects of the University for which their skills and experience would enable them to act as a critical friend.

Council approved the proposed changes to the University's governance structure and the accompanying Schedule of Delegation, for implementation during 2015-16. **Council noted** that refinements would continue to be made as the new arrangements came into effect, and an expanded Schedule of Delegation would be presented in due course.

15/M48 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Council received a report of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 15 June 2015.

Council noted the contents of the report, none of which required approval or ratification by Council on this occasion.

15/M49 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council received a report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on 22 June 2015.

With regard to the University's compliance with UK Visa and immigration Tier 4 (students) sponsorship requirements, **Council noted** that the University had implemented 15 out of 17 improvements recommended by the internal auditors, with clear plans in place to address the other two. On this basis the internal auditors were now able to provide 'significant assurance' for the University's procedures in this area.

15/M50 **STUDENTS' UNION CONSTITUTION**

Council noted that, under Section 22 of the Education Act 1994, it was required to review and approve the Constitution of the Students' Union at least once every five years. The last review took place in 2010 and therefore a further review was due before the end of the 2014-15 academic year.

Council noted that a review group comprising the following had met on two occasions to review the Constitution and to identify any areas where updates were required:

Mr Ian Bruce, Student Voice and Support Manager, Students' Union
Mr Sean Kelly-Walsh, Engagement Officer, Students' Union
Dr Neville Reed, Trustee of the Students' Union and lay member of University Council
Mr Trevor Page, Chief Executive, Students' Union
Mr Neil Cox, University's Governance Office and Assistant Secretary to Council

Council noted that the review group had identified three specific sections of the Constitution where minor updates were required and would be helpful, in relation to the conduct of Union Elections, the approval of External Affiliations, and the responsibilities of Executive Officers as charity trustees.

Council considered the review group's proposed amendments to the Union's constitutional documents (the bye-laws) to address the above matters. **Council approved** the amendments, subject to one grammatical correction, as detailed in Appendix 15/M50 App attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

15/M51 **STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Council received and noted a report of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 7 May 2015.

15/M52 **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of the Health and Safety Committee held on 8 June 2015.

15/M53 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates of meetings in 2015-2016, all to commence at 4pm :

Tuesday 24 November 2015
Thursday 17 March 2016
Monday 16 May 2016
Wednesday 6 July 2016

15/M54 **COURTESIES**

Council recorded its appreciation and best wishes for the contribution and support of the following members of Council, whose membership would come to an end on 31 July 2015:

Dr M Rawlinson
Professor Mark Thompson

CHAIR

Duration of meeting (including Reserved Business): 2 hours and 40 minutes