

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Tuesday 23 November 2021

Present:

Gary Dixon (Chair)

Janet Arthur	George Acquah (online via Teams)
Huw Barton	Craig Brown
Edmund Burke	Nishan Canagarajah
Martin Cullen	Sophie Dale-Black
Mehmooda Duke	Cathy Ellis
Rhiannon Jenkins	Azam Mamujee
Andrew Morgan	Vijay Sharma
Jacqui Shaw	Mark Purnell
Richard Tapp	Carole Thorogood (online via Teams)

In attendance: Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Kerry Law (Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer); Martyn Riddleston (Chief Operating Officer); Paul Gowdridge (Director of Finance); Rebecca Lord (Assistant Council Secretary), and Alison Benson (Secretariat).

Apologies for absence were received from Stephen Garrett and Ian Johnson.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

21/M115 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

20/M116 **WELCOME**

George Acquah was welcomed to his first meeting of Council.

21/M117 **UNRESERVED MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the unreserved minutes of the 'Teams' meeting held on 29 September 2021. **Council approved** them as a correct record. There were no matters arising that were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

21/M118 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council which provided an update on recent developments, news and key student and staff achievements since the meeting of Council held on 29 September 2021

The President and Vice-Chancellor commended the University community for the support given to events held to mark the University's Centenary year and warmly invited Council members to attend future events. The situation at the start of term had not been customary due to the ongoing pandemic, however the University was delivering high levels of in person activity whilst continuing to support students, staff and the wider community.

The University had recently presented its first Citizens Awards, which had included nominations put forward from across the University community. It was noted that the President and Vice-Chancellors Award had been presented to the three College Directors of Operations for their outstanding work to support the operation of the University during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was noted that Professor Kamlesh Khunti, Director of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Applied Research Collaboration (ARC) East Midlands and Professor of Primary Care Diabetes and Vascular Medicine at the University of Leicester, had been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Primary Care Diabetes Society (PCDS).

Council noted that Space Park Leicester had been awarded the place-based initiative of the year at the recent KE (Knowledge Exchange) Awards organised by PraxisAuril and sponsored by UKRI.

It was noted that the Institute of Technology bid had not progressed to the next stage, however opportunities would continue to be explored to progress the strong partnership that had been built with Further Education Colleges.

Council commended the President and Vice-Chancellor and Senior Management on progress made in building relationships with the City Council and the work completed on the levelling up agenda.

Council congratulated the University on the recent £7.2m grant received from the Wellcome Trust for the 'Leicestershire Healthcare Inequalities Improvement PhD Programme'.

It was observed that the Centenary events had been perceived as high quality but that the turnout for the first Difficult Conversation event had been lower than anticipated. This could be attributed to a number of factors including topics covered, and engagement with marketing activity. Further information would be provided to Council regarding the number of people who had streamed the event online. [ACTION: Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer]

It was highlighted that levels of Covid-19 vaccination within staff and students were high, resulting from a combination of successful signposting and ease of access, such as the vaccination pop-up clinic which had been on campus during freshers' week. It was noted that the University would continue to respond to Government guidance regarding the pandemic and that preparations had been made should the Government move their Winter Covid Plan B scenario.

Following the launch of the University Strategy on 4 November 2021, the feedback from staff had been generally positive. A series of Town Hall events was planned in order to explore the strategic objectives with the University community.

21/M119 **NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY 2021**

Council considered a comprehensive report into the causes of satisfaction gaps highlighted by the NSS 2021 dataset, and the remedial actions taken by the University of Leicester.

The survey revealed a 'satisfaction gap' between White and Black responders of 13.8% at institution level, which was in line with the national picture for the sector. The key drivers for satisfaction gaps were outlined and included value for money and teaching quality. Council noted that recommended actions had been identified and progressed, with a focus placed on engaging and listening to students. The Peer Mentoring programme led by the Students' Union was highlighted as an example of a project already underway. The decolonisation campaign within the Students' Union was highlighted as an area which might benefit from more vocal support given by the University.

Council noted that black students' responses indicated significantly less satisfaction than their white peers when asked whether the university had taken sufficient steps to support their mental wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The University was taking steps to improve student wellbeing, including completing a review of the Student Wellbeing Strategy and piloting a 24 hour helpline service at the Oadby village called Health Assured. A key facilitating factor would be the development and implementation of a case management system to manage information on individual cases.

Council noted that a multi-faceted approach would be taken to achieve the target set by the University of eliminating the awarding gap by 2026. Information regarding the current gap would be shared with Council, along with the presentation provided in the meeting. [ACTION: Registrar and Secretary] The information from the recent survey by the Students' Union would also be shared with Council members. [ACTION: President of the Students' Union]

21/M120 **OFS COMPLIANCE – PREVENT ANNUAL REPORT**

Council considered a report which set out the necessary information and evidence that it required in order to sign off and submit to the Office for Students (OfS) the Prevent Duty accountability return for 2020-21.

Council noted a comprehensive summary of key examples and evidence which demonstrated the University's due regard for the responsibilities of the Prevent duty, linked to a number of suggested questions and indicators (some of which related to Covid-19) provided specifically for this purpose by the OfS. The use of additional training and a co-ordinated approach had provided additional assurance on the University's compliance in this area.

Council approved the report and **authorised** the Chair of Council to sign the Prevent Duty accountability return for 2020-21 for submission to the OfS.

21/M121 **OFS COMPLIANCE – 2021 ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT**

Council considered the 2021 annual assurance statement against the OfS conditions of Registration B1-B6, which had been brought to Council to provide further visibility of this area.

Council noted that the report outlined the operation of the University's processes for the overall assurance of academic quality and standards in the 2020/21 academic year, which incorporated the University's ongoing response to the impact of the pandemic.

Council noted the report.

21/M122 **STUDENTS' UNION ELECTIONS**

Council noted that Ordinance 22(8) required that the conduct of the election of Officers of the Students' Union be subject to inspection by a person appointed by Council.

Council approved the appointment of Liz Jones, in her capacity as Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education (Interim), as Observer for the elections to be held during 2021-22.

21/M123 **REMUNERATION ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021**

Council considered the University's remuneration annual report. As a requirement of the *Higher Education Senior Staff Remuneration Code*, published by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) in 2018, the report sought to provide assurance to the governing body that the Remuneration Committee had effectively discharged its responsibilities during the 2020-21 financial year.

Council noted that the University was aiming to operate at the forefront of CUC guidance and, as such, the Remuneration Committee had followed the standard process within the review. It was noted that Students' Union membership was not required by the Committee for reasons of independence and relevant expertise.

Council approved the University's Remuneration Annual Report 2020-21, for publication on the University's website.

21/M124 **SENATE**

Council received and noted a report of an Urgency Committee of Senate held on 20 October and a report of an ordinary meeting of Senate held on 3 November 2021.

Council noted that the meeting held on 3 November 2021 considered the following key items: an update on the University Strategy; the Students' Union Priorities for 2021-22, and an update on student wellbeing. The University's continued commitment to the Botanical Gardens was highlighted and **Council noted** that the Oversight Board was to be reinstated.

21/M125 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

Council received and noted details of the affixing of the University Seal to the document(s) as listed in Appendix C/21/M125, attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

21/M126 **REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

Council received and noted the Register of Interests as recently updated for 2021-2022.

21/M127 **RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

Council received the Annual Research Integrity report from the University's Research Integrity Working Group (RIWG). It was noted that the report was a requirement under the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and covered the period 30/06/20 to 01/07/2021. **Council noted** that the report had been considered by the Executive Board and the action plan which outlined planned actions for 2020-21 was highlighted.

21/M128 **COURSE FEES**

Council received and noted a summary statement of tuition fees charged by the University in 2021-2022. The setting of course fees at individual programme level was a management process based on a comprehensive market analysis, including reviews of headline course fees advertised at competitor universities.

21/M129 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates and times of scheduled Ordinary meetings, and an Awayday, in the remainder of 2021-2022, all to commence at 4pm unless stated otherwise:

Tuesday 15 March 2022 - Ordinary meeting
Wednesday 11 May 2022 - Ordinary meeting
Tuesday 7 June 2022 - Council/Executive Board Awayday, all day
Thursday 7 July 2022- Ordinary meeting

CHAIR

Total duration of meeting: 1 hour and 53 minutes