# UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

## Minutes of a Meeting held on

## Tuesday 24 October 2023

**Present:**

Gary Dixon (Chair)

George Acquah Lauren Bartlett

Liz Blyth Nishan Canagarajah

Jack Chambers Martin Cullen

Sophie Dale-Black Cathy Ellis

Rishi Madlani Catherine Morley

Kevin Nagle Henrietta O’Connor

Gabrielle Provan Archie Robinson

Jacqui Shaw Richard Tapp

**In attendance:** Phil Baker (PVC Research and Enterprise, for item 23/M56); Alison Benson (Assistant Secretary to Council); Ian Forristal (Director of RED, for item 23/M56); Paul Gowdridge (Chief Financial Officer); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Liz Jones (PVC Education); Joe Suffield (Secretariat Support)

**Apologies:** George Acquah; Mehmooda Duke; Mark Purnell

The formal meeting was preceded by a development session led by Steve Corbett, Director of DARO.

23/M52 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of personal interest pertaining to any of the items dealt with in this meeting.

23/M53 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

**Council approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2023 as a correct record and

**noted** the responses to the matters arising from that meeting.

23/M54 **CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed Lauren Bartlett, Jack Chambers, Henrietta O’Connor and Gabrielle

Provan to their first formal meeting of Council.

The Chair recorded that there had been a lively start to term on campus. This highlighted a return to business as usual and a move away from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# 23/M55 PRESIDENT AND VICE CHANCELLOR’S BUSINESS

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council, which provided a comprehensive update on recent developments in the HE sector generally, and at Leicester specifically.

It was highlighted that a significant amount of work had been undertaken to support the start of the academic year, such as clearing, welcome week and timetabling, and thanks were extended to all relevant colleagues.

An update was given on recent significant research funding awards.

The University Chancellor had hosted a discussion event with the Students’ Union to celebrate Black History Month, to champion the theme “Saluting Our Sisters”. The latest Chancellor’s Distinguished Lecture had also recently taken place, delivered by Dr Venki Ramakrishnan on “Science and Prosperity: Why should countries invest in science?”.

The University had reached out to support staff and students affected by the situation within Palestine and Israel. There were small numbers of Israeli and Palestinian students and staff within the University. Additionally, related events that had taken place on campus had passed off peacefully.

**Council noted** the report.

# 23/M56 UNIVERSITY STRATEGY: WORLD CHANGING RESEARCH

*Phil Baker and Ian Forristal joined the meeting*

**Council considered** an update on the World Changing Research theme of the University Strategy from Phil Baker, PVC Research. There had been a number of successes, which included a record year for research awards, and income had now returned to pre- pandemic levels. However, there remained some difficulties, such as overdependence on a small number of funders, an insufficient overall research contribution, performance against the UKRI benchmark and the need for reconfiguration to optimise access to Horizon Europe funds. The University would aim to focus on the growth of research income, an increase to research contribution levels, the improvement of the PGR experience and implementation of PRES Action Plans.

**Council noted** that the strong REF results had led to positive experiences in the recruitment of new researchers, particularly in the areas of medicine, arts and the humanities.

**Council noted** that the Horizon Europe programme would still be a considerably smaller funder than the NIHR. Work was required to develop Horizon Europe funding and grants which required links with European partners.

**Council noted** the existence of differing practice across the University in terms of accessing grants. Some areas required a shift in mindset, and researchers would be encouraged to apply for funding from sources that they had not approached previously.

**Council noted** that it was important to engage with key companies and industry partners to help fund research.

Council **noted** the report

*Phil Baker and Ian Forristal left the meeting*

23/M57 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

TEF Update

**Council considered** an update on the University's provisional outcome in TEF 2023, whereby further representation had been made to the Office for Students ahead of confirmation of a final outcome. A further update would be given to Council in due course and the provisional outcome remained strictly embargoed at this time. It was anticipated that a final outcome would be available by December 2023.

NSS Update

**Council considered** a presentation on the NSS 2023. It was highlighted that the survey methodology had changed significantly from previous years, which meant that precise comparisons were difficult. The overall position for the University had improved, but this had largely come from a low base. The priority areas were outlined. Benchmarking had become increasingly important, and the University benchmark was low for the sector. Members were reminded that the NSS results would feed into metrics for the next TEF in due course. The University needed to improve consistency of quality and embed best practice.

**Council noted** the low score in the additional Freedom of Expression score. This had been unexpected, however it was noted that a number of students did not respond to this question. As this was a new question, an investigation would be undertaken to understand the responses received.

# 23/M58 APOLLO HOSPITALS GROUP PARTNERSHIP [RESERVED]

**Council considered** a presentation on the proposed partnership with Apollo Hospitals Group.

Council would be asked to approve the final partnership in due course.

Following the discussion, Council:

1. **Endorsed** the exploration of a strategic partnership opportunity with the Apollo Hospitals Group,
2. **Noted** that:

external communications will be issued by both parties to confirm that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with the firm intention of establishing a strategic partnership with operations in the UK and India;

# 23/M59 STUDENTS’ UNION PRIORITIES 2023/24

**Council considered and noted** the Students’ Union objectives for the 2023-24 year. The current vacancy for an SU Wellbeing Officer had resulted in that portfolio of work being absorbed by the other Officers.

**Council noted** that it was important to have KPIs which highlighted the impact and outcomes for the activities of the Officers.

**Council noted** that additional student staff had been recruited to support with other tasks in light of the Wellbeing portfolio being covered by the other full time Officers.

**Council noted** the report.

# 23/M60 COUNCIL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

**Council considered** the Council Governance Framework for 2023/24.

**Council noted** that it was good practice to renew DBS checks annually.

**Council approved** the Council Governance Framework for 2023/24 and **noted** the annual review of compliance with the CUC HE Code of Governance 2020.

23/M61 **CHANGES TO ORDINANCES**

**Council confirmed** changes to Ordinance 20 (The Alumni Association), Ordinance 21 (Powers of the Alumni Association) and Ordinance 34 (Appointment of members of Senate under Statutes Section 6.1 (c), (d), (e) and (f)).

23/M62 **PREVENT DUTY**

**Council approved** the University’s Prevent duty accountability and data return for the 2022-23 academic year for signing by the Chair of Council and submission to the Office for Students by 1 December 2023.

23/M63 **PHILANTHROPY**

**Council noted** the 2022-23 Annual Philanthropic Income Report.

23/M64 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

**Council noted** the affixing of the University seal to official documents.

# 23/M65 ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

**Council considered** the annual report of the Alumni Association Committee for 2022/23. There had been a refresh of the governance arrangements for the Alumni Association, which Council had approved by way of changes to Ordinance 20 and 21. A number of events had been held over the previous academic year to engage with the alumni community and to generate funds to support current students.

**Council noted** the 2022/23 annual report of the Alumni Association Committee.

23/M66 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Council considered** an update on the business of the Nominations Committee.

**Council approved** the 2023/24 Terms of Reference for the Nominations Committee.

**Council approved** the appointment of Dr Vijay Sharma as Pro-Chancellor (Community Engagement) for a three year term from 1 November 2023.

## Council noted:

1. the report of business arising from Nominations Committee meetings held on 8 and 25 September 2023;
2. Council membership of University committees for 2023/24; and
3. the Annual Report of the Nominations Committee for 2022/23 which would shortly be published on the University website.

# 23/M67 FINANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]

**Council noted** the report of the Finance and Infrastructure Committee meeting held on 28 September 2023 and **approved** the Terms of Reference for 2023/24.

# 23/M68 AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE [RESERVED]

**Council noted** the report of the Audit and Assurance Committee meeting held on 3 October 2023 and **approved** the Terms of Reference for 2023/24.

# 23/M69 PEOPLE, EDI AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

**Council noted** the report of the People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 10 October 2023 and **approved** the Terms of Reference for 2023/24.

23/M70 **SENATE**

**Council noted** the report of the Senate meeting held on 4 October 2023.

# 23/M71 DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Council noted the dates of meetings scheduled for 2023-2024:

* Tuesday 12 December 2023 at 4pm
* Tuesday 5 March 2024 at 4pm
* Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 4pm
* Tuesday 2 July 2024 at 4pm 23/M72 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 2 hours 15 minutes