

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a 'Teams' meeting held on
Wednesday 29 September 2021

Gary Dixon (Chair)

Janet Arthur	Huw Barton
Craig Brown	Edmund Burke
Nishan Canagarajah	Martin Cullen
Sophie Dale-Black	Cathy Ellis
Stephen Garrett	Alison Goodall
Rhiannon Jenkins	Ian Johnson
Azam Mamujee	Andrew Morgan
Mark Purnell	Richard Tapp
Carole Thorogood	

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); Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office); Graham Wynn (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education); Liz Jones (Acting Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education); Jacqui Shaw (Senate member of Council from 1 November 2021) and Gareth Oughton (Chief Executive, University of Leicester Students' Union) for minute 21/M96.

Apologies for absence were received from Mehmooda Duke and Vijay Sharma. Partial apologies were received from Alison Goodall.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

21/M89 **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.

21/M90 **THE COUNCIL 2021-2022**

Council received details of its membership for the academic year 2021-2022. The Chair welcomed Mark Purnell to his first meeting as Senate representative to Council and Jacqui Shaw, who was observing the meeting prior to assuming membership as Senate representative to Council following the standing down of Alison Goodall in October 2021.

The Chair of Council recorded his appreciation for the contribution of Alison Goodall, who would be standing down from Council with effect from 31 October 2020, due to her retirement from the University. Council was pleased to note that Alison would be appointed as an Emeritus Professor on her retirement, so her long-standing connection with the University would continue.

21/M91 **RESPONSIBILITY OF MEMBERS AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

Council received the following documents concerning the powers and responsibilities of Council, the conduct of Council business and the role of members, as routinely presented to Council at the first meeting in the new academic year:

- a. Powers of the Council
 - i. Extract from the Statutes (Section 5)
 - ii. Extract from the Ordinances (Section 9)
- b. Statement of Council's Primary Responsibilities
- c. Standing Orders
- d. Charity Commission guidance on acting in a charity's best interests

21/M92 **UNRESERVED MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the unreserved minutes of the 'Teams' meeting held on 6 July 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/M93 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council which provided an update on recent developments and news in the HE sector generally, and at Leicester, as well as key student and staff achievements.

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported positively on the activities taking place to welcome students back onto campus for the start of term and commended both the collaborative work undertaken by staff and the support of the Students' Union in achieving this outcome.

The Centenary was highlighted as a key milestone to celebrate the University's successes and honour the legacy of its founders. The early success of the Centenary programme was noted, with members of Council warmly invited to attend the many planned events.

Council noted that work had been undertaken, in collaboration with the Trade Unions, to reassure some staff who were nervous to return to in-person teaching. An audit of all teaching spaces had been completed to ensure compliance with the latest COVID-19 guidance and strong messaging had been issued both around the use of face coverings and to encourage student vaccination.

It was reported that in-person teaching events were increasing with the aim of reaching 50-75% of pre-pandemic contact hours. Some students had expressed a desire to continue with a blended learning approach and a post-arrival survey had been planned to obtain further feedback.

Council noted concerns raised by the Students' Union with regard to the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill currently being considered by Parliament. These concerns were shared by the University and the Sector. Accordingly it was confirmed that UUK were actively lobbying the Government regarding the Bill.

21/M94 **NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY**

Council considered a comprehensive report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) on the University's approach to the NSS 2021, with a summary of the results and key follow-up actions for 2022.

Council noted that the sector score for overall satisfaction for all providers had decreased by 7.24% points from 82.65% in 2020 to 75.41% in 2021. This drop had been anticipated due to the dis-satisfaction felt by some students as a result of their experience during the pandemic. In this context the University received an overall satisfaction score of 75.95% which was marginally above of the OfS benchmark score of 75.27%. The University had also improved its ranking amongst HE Institutions (63/125 in 2020; 56/127 in 2021). It was noted that the University had outperformed the Sector in COVID-19 based questions and had taken lessons learned from the feedback received relating to student wellbeing.

Council were assured that student satisfaction remained a key priority for the University, with teaching quality and assessment and feedback being areas of focus for improvement. It was noted that student satisfaction was fully embedded within the Research-Inspired Education theme of the University Strategy.

Council requested that further information was provided on the drivers for the BAME results and the remedial actions being taken by the University to address the issues raised. [ACTION: Registrar and Secretary].

Council commended both the analysis completed on the NSS outcome for 2021 and the continued focus on student satisfaction at the University.

Council recorded their appreciation for the contribution of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Graham Wynn, and wished him continued success in his new role at the University of Northumbria.

21/M95 **STUDENTS' UNION ANNUAL REPORT AND PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022**

Council received an annual report from the Students' Union and a presentation by the President on key activity undertaken in 2020-2021 and priorities for 2021-2022.

The Governance structure of the Students' Union as a registered charity was outlined and its mission, vision and values were highlighted.

An overview of key achievements for 2020-21 was provided. Highlights included the first digital Freshers' Fair, which had raised over £20,000 for local and national charities. It was noted that a planned initiative for the non-refurbished part of the Percy Gee Building would be brought to Finance and Infrastructure Committee for consideration in late 2021.

Council noted that the financial position of the Students' Union had been challenging due to a reduction of block grant funding by 20% and poor trading performance, both outcomes of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was noted that the cash position remained strong and that adequate resourcing was in place. **Council were assured** that the rigorous planning process in place at the University would ensure that funding levels would be appropriate for all areas, including the Students' Union.

The Students' Union President highlighted the following University facing priorities of the Students' Union, which would be worked on collaboratively with colleagues across the University:

- a. Fulfilling Education Standards: Work would be undertaken to ensure consistency across Schools and Colleges in communication, provision and quality.
- b. Sustainability: Noted that a sustainability framework would be developed to be considered alongside the EDI framework to inform university and union decision making.
- c. Employability and Carers: Highlighted an initiative which would enable the translation of student skills onto their CVs. Outlined collaborative work with Alumni and University Colleagues as part of the Our Citizens strategic theme.
- d. Inclusion: Noted the approval of a liberation fund and developing safe spaces for marginalised students to fully participate.
- e. Welfare: Highlighted continuing work to improve sexual violence reporting systems and providing survivor focused support.
- f. Accessibility and Affordability: Outlined the local and national approach. Noted the ambition to provide more support to students through the Inclusion and Hardship fund.

The Students' Union President summarised that the overwhelming priority of the Union was to increase student engagement through improved visibility, and support the university as it sought to rebuild trust with the student community.

Council commended the strong alignment between the Students' Union priorities and those of the University.

Council recorded its appreciation for the work of the Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer and her staff for their outstanding efforts in trying to maximise the student recruitment outcome in the unprecedented circumstances of the 2020 intake.

21/M96 **AUDIT AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

Council received and **noted** reports of a virtual meeting of the Audit and Assurance Committee held on 10 September and 21 September 2021.

Council noted that the University was transitioning to new external auditors (BDO), following some delays in formally ending the relationship with the previous auditors. It was noted that work was progressing well to deliver the external audit plan to the agreed schedule. Key risks had been identified within the plan and it was viewed positively that Going Concern was to be treated by the auditors as a 'normal' risk.

It was noted that the Internal Auditors, PwC, had successfully completed their Plan of work for 2020-21. This was seen as a positive outcome due to the additional challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Council noted the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee which broadened its remit to cover assurance matters, including Health and Safety.

Council received an update regarding the Committee Effectiveness Review which had recently been completed. The Chair of Audit and Assurance Committee commended the work completed by the Secretary, Alison Benson, in facilitating this review.

21/M97 **EQUALITY, DIVERSION AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of a virtual meeting of the Equality, Diversion and Inclusion Committee held on 29 June 2021.

Council noted that a model relating to EDI Governance Roles and workload allocation would be recommended to the University.

There were no matters that required the approval of Council on this occasion.

21/M98 **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Council received and noted a report of a virtual meeting of the Alumni Association Committee held on 7 September 2021.

Council noted that the Students' Union President's involvement in the Committee was welcomed as part of its commitment to engage further with recent graduates.

There were no matters that required the approval of Council on this occasion.

21/M99 **HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of a virtual meeting of the Health, Safety Wellbeing Committee held on 20 July 2021. There were no matters that required the approval of Council on this occasion.

21/M100 **NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE**

Council received the annual report of the work of the Nominations Committee during the academic year 2021-2022. The report brought together in summary form the various matters dealt with by the Committee in the course of the year, most of which had already been the subject of specific recommendations presented to and approved by Council/Court. This would now be published on the University website.

21/M101 **APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL AND COURT**

Council considered and approved the following recommendations of the Nominations Committee regarding appointments to Court:

- a. that Martin Hindle be invited to become a full member of Court in a personal capacity, in recognition of his 9-years' service as a member of Council, effective to 31 December 2024 in the first instance
- b. that the following newly-appointed emeritus professors be invited to become Associate Members of Court, effective until 31 December 2024 in the first instance:

Name	College/School/Department	From
Panicos Demetriades	School of Business	1 July 2021
Alison Goodall	Cardiovascular Sciences	1 November 2021
Simon Gunn	History, Politics and International Relations	1 August 2021

Colin Haselgrove	Archaeology and Ancient History	1 July 2021
Michael Saren	School of Business	1 July 2021
Mark Stein	School of Business	1 July 2021
Janet Ulph	Law	27 September 2021

21/M102 **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Council noted the draft Code Of Conduct which had been recommended to Council following its review at Nominations Committee. Further consideration of the Code would be undertaken at the Council meeting due to be held on 23 November 2021.

21/M103 **LAY MEMBER RECRUITMENT**

It was noted that a wider recruitment campaign would start in December 2021 to fill the vacancies left by 3 members whose term on Council was ending in July 2022. This campaign would include a review of the skills matrix for members and the active involvement of Alumni in identifying expressions of interest.

21/M104 **SENATE**

Council received and noted a reports of Urgency Committees of Senate held on 23 July 2021 and 30 July 2021.

Council commended Senate and all colleagues for their work to ensure the timely graduation of students.

There were no matters that required the approval of Council on this occasion.

21/M105 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

Council received and noted details of the affixing of the University Seal to the document(s) as listed in Appendix C/21/M105, attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

21/M106 **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 23 November 2021 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
 Tuesday 15 March 2022 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
 Wednesday 11 May 2022 - Ordinary meeting 4pm
 Tuesday 7 June 2022 - Council/Executive Board Awayday, all day
 Thursday 7 July 2022- Ordinary meeting 4pm

Council noted it was expected that the remaining meetings in 2021 22 would be held in person. Dial-in facilities would be provided should any member not be comfortable to attend face-to-face.

CHAIR

Total duration of meeting: 1 hour and 55 minutes