

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 3 October 2018**Present:**

Bridget Towle (Chair – but not present for 18/M91)	
Janet Arthur	Martin Hindle
Paul Boyle	Anil Majithia
Edmund Burke	Azam Mamujee
Sarah Davies	Amy Moran
Gary Dixon (Chair for 18/M91)	Andrew Morgan
Sandra Dudley	Stephanie Osborn
Mehmooda Duke	John Schwabe
Cathy Ellis	Vijay Sharma
Janet Finch	Carole Thorogood

In attendance: Dave Hall (Secretary); Neil Cox (Assistant Secretary); Martyn Riddleston (Director of Finance); Jon Scott (PVC Student Experience, for 18/M83 only); and Philip Baker (PVC and Head of the College of Life Sciences, for 18/M84 only).

Apologies for absence were received from Ian Johnson and Paul O'Brien.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS18/M77 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No personal interests were declared by members in relation to any items of unreserved business transacted at this meeting.

18/M78 **MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL 2017-2018**

Council received details of its membership for the academic year 2018-2019. New members Anil Majithia and Azam Mamujee (lay members appointed on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee) and Sarah Davies and Sandra Dudley (staff members appointed by the Senate) were warmly welcomed to their first meeting.

18/M79 **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 Primary Responsibilities
- c. Standing Orders
- d. Charity Commission guidance on acting in a charity's best interests

18/M80 UNRESERVED MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Council considered the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018. **Council approved** them as an accurate record. There were no matters arising.

18/M81 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair indicated that she had decided to retire from Council on 31 July 2019, at the end of her term of office as Chair.

The Chair explained that the report listed separately on the agenda (minute 18/M91 refers) outlined a proposed process for the appointment of the next Chair of Council. The Chair would leave the meeting for consideration of this item and the Treasurer would chair the discussion in her place.

18/M82 PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

The President and Vice-Chancellor drew Council's attention to various recent issues and developments, including:

- a. External matters
 - i. *Immigration and overseas students*: The Migration Advisory Committee had published its long-awaited report on the impact of international students in the UK. The report recommended that overseas students should remain in migration figures and targets, but that the numbers should remain uncapped.
 - ii. *Review of post-18 education and funding in England*: The government had confirmed that the maximum domestic tuition fee would be frozen at £9,250 for a further year in 2019-20. There had been no other significant developments, although rumours continued of the introduction of a £7,000 fee level.
 - iii. *Brexit and HE*: The government had announced that EU students applying for 2019-20 entry (after the formal EU exit date) would still be eligible for domestic rate loans and fees. The sector was becoming seriously concerned about the impact of a 'no deal' Brexit scenario.
 - iv. *Government engagement*: The University had had a strong presence at the Conservative and Labour party conferences, lobbying on behalf of the midlands engine platform, space park and the University more widely.
 - v. *National Pay Award*: the 2018-19 national pay round had concluded with the award of a 2% salary uplift effective from 1 August 2018, as provided for in the University's budget for 2018-19.
- b. Internal matters:
 - i. *Industrial action*: ULT had resolved the dispute with UCU over plans for compulsory redundancies and the planned industrial action had been cancelled. Industrial action linked to the national pay award, USS reforms, and the restructuring of pay for certain staff was still a possibility.

- ii. *Research awards and income:* in 2017-18 the University had achieved its highest ever success in research awards of £75 million, an increase of 75% in the two years since the low point of 2015-16, with particular strengths in regeneration activities, CPD and consultancy.
- iii. *Campus developments:* a planning application for the Space Park had been submitted. The planning application for Freeman's Common was likely to be considered at the end of October, subject to small number of queries being resolved.
- iv. *Senior staff changes:* Kerry Law had been appointed as the University's new Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer, and would take up her position in January 2019.
- v. *Awards and successes:* Leicester Conferences had been awarded "Best Conference Venue 2018 – Leicestershire" in the 2018 Midlands Enterprise Awards. The University's Sports Ground Team had been shortlisted by the National Professional Body of Groundsmanship for the College Grounds Team of the Year award, to be announced at the end of October.

18/M83 **2018 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY**

Council considered a comprehensive report from the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) on the University's 2018 NSS results.

Council acknowledged that the period of national strike action earlier in the year, linked to proposed changes to USS, had undoubtedly had an adverse impact on student satisfaction overall, and scores in the Business School (with a large student population) had not been helped by the disruption of moving to the Brookfield site. But **Council was still extremely disappointed** that students' overall satisfaction in the NSS had declined from 86% in 2017 to 82% in 2018, which was 1% below the national average and 2% below the University's OfS benchmark.

The report outlined the extensive suite of actions that were being taken at both University and departmental level to try to address the current NSS weaknesses. However, **Council expressed additional disappointment** that actions already implemented in response to previous years' NSS results had still not prevented the further decline in 2018. With the latest performance starting to impact on wider rankings - the University had already dropped four places in the 2019 Good University Guide, the first to pick up on the 2018 NSS outcome – **Council was frustrated** that there seemed to be no imminent prospect of an upturn in results.

Council noted that at its next meeting it was due to consider an annual assurance report on the quality of learning and teaching and the student experience, and this would enable it to begin to explore other measures of performance in this area, beyond the NSS results.

18/M84 **ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE HEAD OF THE COLLEGE OF LIFE SCIENCES**

Council received a presentation from the Head of the College of Life Sciences on the current strategic direction, challenges and achievements in the College.

Council noted that the current positive headlines for the College included a continued significant increase in the value of research awards - up from £20m in 2015-16 to £48m in 2017-18; student recruitment targets had been achieved, with the total number of undergraduates in the College now at record levels; some evidence of a steady improvement in students' overall satisfaction in the NSS, and climbs in world university rankings; and a particularly positive phase in the strategic relationship with local NHS partners.

Council also noted that behind these encouraging headlines there were also some significant causes for concern. These included required reductions in the planned budget for 2018-19, and managing these to limit any longer term impact; an acknowledgement that recent increases in research income were probably unsustainable at their current levels; and the likely negative impact on the College of key university metrics such as the NSS, TEF and national rankings. Staff morale had also been affected by recent business cases for 'change', and addressing this was now a key priority for the College.

18/M85 **REGISTRATION WITH THE OFFICE FOR STUDENTS**

Council considered the formal notification letter from the Office for Students that it had registered the University of Leicester in the register of approved English higher education providers.

Council noted that no specific ongoing conditions of Leicester's registration had been imposed by the OfS, although two specific areas would be subject to "enhanced monitoring". These areas covered access for specific under-represented groups, and attainment for some minority ethnic groups. The OfS had not yet provided details of what this enhanced monitoring would consist of, although the focus on access and attainment issues was expected to be a common monitoring theme across the sector.

18/M86 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council considered the report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on 11 September 2018.

Council noted that the Committee had discussed in detail the factors behind the University's position in the 2018 NSS (minute 18/M83 also refers), and had expressed its own disappointment in the overall performance and the reduced level of satisfaction across many programme areas.

18/M87 **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Council considered the report of a meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 19 September 2018.

Council noted that the Committee had proposed some amendments to its terms of reference, to acknowledge the Committee's wider responsibilities for the general 'wellbeing' aspects its health and safety remit, applicable to both staff and students. **Council approved** the amendments to the terms of reference.

18/M88 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Council received the annual report of the work of the Nominations Committee during the 2017-18 academic year.

Council noted that the Committee reported to Council and to Court from time to time, as required by the flow of business, but by long-standing arrangement did not present its minutes to either body. Instead, it reported on specific matters to whichever body was appropriate, and otherwise submitted an annual report to Council. The annual 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.

18/M89 UNIVERSITY NAMING POLICY

Council considered the 'final' draft of the University's proposed new Naming Policy, prepared by the Philanthropy, Alumni and Community Engagement Office. This had been considered and endorsed by both the Nominations Committee and the University Leadership Team, both of which had provided feedback and comments on an earlier first draft, to which substantive revisions had then been made.

Council was pleased to note that the Policy outlined clearly the arrangements that would apply for honorific and non-philanthropic naming proposals, and for the possible termination of naming agreements. Council also welcomed the fact that the Policy did not attempt to anticipate every conceivable naming scenario, and deliberately allowed some flexibility to be exercised by the University in responding to opportunities as they arose.

Council approved the new University Naming Policy.

18/M90 APPOINTMENTS TO COURT

Council approved the following recommendations of the Nominations Committee regarding the appointment of members of Court:

- a. that Dominic Lockett and David Moore, who retired as lay members of Council in July 2018 both having served since 2009, be invited to continue as Full Members of Court, serving in a personal capacity, until 31 December 2020 in the first instance;
- b. that Nisha Dogra (Department of Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour), a retired member of academic staff who had been awarded the title of emeritus professor, be invited to become an Associate Member of Court, until 31 December 2020 in the first instance.

18/M91 APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT CHAIR OF COUNCIL

In light of the current Chair's decision to retire from Council on 31 July 2019 (minute 18/M81 above refers), Council considered a report from the Nominations Committee which proposed a process for the appointment of her successor, effective from 1 August 2019. The Chair left the meeting for consideration of this item and the Treasurer chaired the discussion in her place.

Council noted that the Nominations Committee (without the current Chair of Council in attendance) had discussed the possibility of making an appointment by means of a selection panel; through a secret ballot; or by identifying and then approaching a single preferred candidate. All three options had their own pros and cons, but the Committee had concluded that a selection panel with a lay majority would provide the most transparent and robust approach, and had agreed to recommend this to Council. The Committee had also confirmed its view - endorsed previously by Council - that the initial aim should be to appoint the new Chair from amongst the current and recently retired lay members of Council.

Council approved the role description and specification for the position, and **agreed** that the Nominations Committee, supported by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, would proceed to establish a Selection Panel to commence and manage the recruitment and selection process. Having reflected on the rapidly evolving and increasingly challenging environment in which the University was operating, and the even greater demands and expectations that would be placed on the incoming Chair, **Council also agreed** that the process would make provision for 'external' candidates to be considered, via an opportunity for current and recent Council members to make nominations and to encourage expressions of interest from amongst their own personal and professional networks. The Panel would be able to augment its membership through the co-option of an independent lay person, if a suitable individual could be identified and was able to participate within the intended timescale, which envisaged that a Special Meeting of Council would be convened in January 2019 to consider the Panel's final report and recommendation.

18/M92 **FORWARD BUSINESS SCHEDULE**

Council received and noted the current schedule of standard business expected to be taken at specific meetings of Council during 2018-2019.

18/M93 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

Council received details of the affixing of the University seal to documents as listed in Appendix C/18/M93 (App), attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

18/M94 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates and times of its scheduled meetings in 2018-19:

Wednesday 21 November 2018 at 4pm (lay members' dinner afterwards)
Wednesday 20 March 2019 at 4pm
Wednesday 15 May 2019 at 4pm
Tuesday 11 June 2019 (Awayday, 9.30am-4.30pm)
Wednesday 10 July 2019 at 4pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting (Unreserved and Reserved Business): 2 hours and 50 minutes