

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

**Unreserved Minutes of a Meeting held by 'Teams'
on Tuesday 6 July 2021**

Present:

Gary Dixon (Chair)

Janet Arthur	Stephen Garrett
Huw Barton	Alison Goodall
Craig Brown	Martin Hindle
Edmund Burke	Rhiannon Jenkins
Nishan Canagarajah	Ian Johnson
Martin Cullen	Andrew Morgan
Sophie Dale-Black	Vijay Sharma
Sandra Dudley	Richard Tapp
Mehmooda Duke	

Apologies for absence were received from Cathy Ellis, Azam Mamujee and Carole Thorogood

In attendance: Neil Cox (Assistant Council Secretary); Phil Baker (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research and Enterprise, for item 21/M72 specifically); Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office); Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Aash Khadia (Director of Planning, for item 21/M72 specifically); Kerry Law (Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer); Martyn Riddleston (Chief Operating Officer); and Graham Wynn (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education).

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

21/M68 **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/M69 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

- a. The Chair welcomed Rhiannon Jenkins to her first meeting as a member of Council, in her capacity as the President of the Students' Union for 2021-22.
- b. On behalf of the full Council the Chair recorded his appreciation for the contribution and support of the following individuals, who would be standing down as members of Council on 31 July 2021:
 - Martin Hindle, who had served as a lay member of Council and a number of University committees since 2012;
 - Sandra Dudley, who had served as a Council member elected by Senate since 2018.

The Chair also recorded his and Council's appreciation to:

- Graham Wynn, who would be leaving his post as Pro-Vice-Chancellor, (Education) at the end of September 2021 to take up a similar role at Northumbria University, after 34 years as a student and then a staff member at Leicester;

- Neil Cox, who would be retiring at the start of September 2021 after 30 years at the University in a variety of governance roles, including as Assistant Council Secretary since 2007.
- c. The Chair informed Council that a report of the results of the online Council Effectiveness Survey, conducted in May 2021, would be presented for consideration by the Nominations Committee in September 2021. A copy of the report, and the details of any recommended actions to be taken in response to it, would then be presented for consideration and approval by Council.

21/M70 **UNRESERVED MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the unreserved minutes of the virtual meeting held on 10 May 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/M71 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor introduced his written report for Council which provided a wide-ranging and comprehensive update on recent developments in the HE sector generally, and at Leicester, including a succession of staff-student awards and achievements. Council commended the thoroughness and range of material covered by the report, and confirmed how useful and informative they had found these reports to be throughout the last year.

With regard to further developments since the report was circulated, **Council noted** that the government's provisional announcement on 5 July 2021 of the likely easing of certain COVID-19 restrictions from 19 July 2021 had contained no major surprises. Most details of the announcement had been anticipated in advance and had limited immediate impact on the student population as a whole, since most of the current year's assessments had already been completed. The focus now was on planning for the delivery of teaching from the start of the 2021-22 academic year, and the exact balance of 'blended' teaching that would be required under various possible scenarios. Council would be kept updated as appropriate as the position became clearer in the next few months.

Council was pleased to note that the University's 'blended' open day held on Saturday 3 July 2021 had been very successful and potentially was a model for longer term use, with about 350 prospective students and parents visiting, plus online attendance.

21/M72 **UNIVERSITY STRATEGY**

Council received a comprehensive update from senior officers on recent progress made in the continued development of the University's new Strategy.

Council was provided with an overview of the approach that was being taken, with the involvement of key stakeholders, to the ongoing development of the three main themes of the Strategy. **Council noted** that the delivery plans for the implementation of these strategic themes were being formulated by appropriate working groups with cross-University representation.

With regard to the key drivers of the 'Research-Inspired Education' theme, this had led to the development and analysis of strategic aims to identify emergent themes and areas of focus. This work had been divided into four main components, all of which were underpinned by attention to student wellbeing. **Council noted** that the themes

would be augmented by underlying internal and external metrics. Achievement of TEF 'Outstanding' was one of the principle objectives of the Strategy.

On the 'World-changing Research' theme, **Council noted** that this also featured four main components, for which appropriate research KPIs would need to be developed and linked closely to the REF.

And on the 'Our Citizens' theme, which was focussed on people, partnerships and impact, **Council noted** that this also featured four main components which would align to and support the delivery of the education and research and education themes. Work was continuing to develop delivery plans and associated KPIs.

In addition to the KPIs referred to above, **Council also noted** that it was intended that the University would have a small number of additional institutional KPIs in some, but not all, areas and disciplines. Individual priorities for all schools and disciplines would be addressed and agreed through the annual planning cycle.

Council was particularly pleased with the high level of interconnection between the three main strategic themes, and the consistency of approach in each one. It would be important to identify and deliver on some 'quick wins' for the new Strategy so that these could be presented to staff and students at an early stage.

Council noted that the proposed delivery plans and KPIs for the Strategy would be discussed by the Executive Board in July 2021, and then taken forward for consideration by Council at its first meeting in the autumn term.

21/M73 **SENATE**

Council received a report of a meeting of Senate held on 23 June 2021, including a report which had previously been considered by the Education Committee, which summarised the findings of a review of the University's compliance with applicable student-related requirements of the Competition and Markets Authority.

Council noted that this review had been undertaken in response to an OfS requirement for the University to complete a review of its obligations under the Condition of Registration C1 (Consumer law). It was **noted** that the review had been broadened to encompass all CMA compliance, and the key finding was that the University was compliant.

On other matters, **Council noted** that Senate had approved the naming of the newly established School in the College of Science and Engineering, following the disestablishment of the separate schools of Informatics and Mathematics/Actuarial Science, as the School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences, effective from 1 August 2021. **Council was also pleased to note** that nearly 3,000 Finalists would graduate on time in July 2021, with the position of only 30 students still being dealt with through University processes.

21/M74 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Council received a report of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 21 June 2021. Council noted that the Committee had comprehensively considered the University's 2021 financial forecasts and had recommended them for approval by Council (minute 21/M also refers). The Committee had also endorsed the University's proposed response to the UUK consultation on changes to USS, subject to the inclusion of additional comments from the Treasurer, which Council had subsequently endorsed by correspondence for submission to UUK.

21/M75 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council received a report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on 15 June 2021. **Council noted** that BDO had finally been confirmed as the University's new external auditors, following the completion of a well-managed tendering and appointment process. On other issues, the Committee was dealing with some internal audit matters for which recommendations had not yet been closed off, and University colleagues had been invited to put timescales against these for consideration at the next meeting. The Committee had also considered an ongoing government consultation on proposed audit reforms, one of which was for universities to be treated as 'public interest entities'. If implemented this would have a significant impact on internal audit protocols and the level of regulation of 'directors', probably to a point that would become unreasonable for volunteer governors.

21/M76 **STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Council received a report of a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 10 June 2021. **Council was pleased to note** the financial support provided by the Committee, from its Convocation Fund, for the COVID Student Experiences project, led by academics at the University.

21/M77 **HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE**

Council received a report of two meetings of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee held on 28 April and 16 June 2021 respectively. There were no specific matters that needed to be brought to Council's attention on this occasion.

21/M78 **CHANGES TO THE STRUCTURE OF COUNCIL'S STANDING COMMITTEES**

Council considered a report which provided an overview of proposed changes to certain standing committees of Council, to be implemented from the start of the next academic year.

Council noted that the key elements of the proposed changes, subject to further consideration and development over the summer, were to:

- a. extend and clarify the remit of the *Finance Committee* to reflect explicit responsibility for the governance oversight of estates and digital development matters. The Committee would be renamed as the *Finance and Infrastructure Committee*, and its terms of reference and membership would reviewed and revised as necessary, in consultation with the Treasurer and relevant senior officers;
- b. transfer the 'wellbeing' responsibilities of the *Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee* to a new *People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee* (under e. below), to ensure that the University's overarching objectives and responsibilities for its staff were dealt with coherently in one committee;

It was also proposed to extend the remaining responsibilities of the *Health and Safety Committee* to include general 'environmental' aspects, under a revised title of the *Health, Safety and Environment Sub-Committee*, and for this to operate as a sub-committee of the renamed *Audit and Assurance Committee*, (under d. below);

- c. to expand and transfer the responsibilities of the *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee* to the new *People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee* (under

- e. below), for the same reasons as given for the transfer of ‘wellbeing’ responsibilities referred to above. To ensure no loss of momentum in the University’s EDI initiatives whilst the new Committee became established the existing EDI Committee would continue to operate, as a sub-committee of the new Committee, during 2021-22;
- d. rename the *Audit Committee* as the *Audit and Assurance Committee*, to further emphasise the importance of its role in providing assurance to Council on a wide range of risk-related matters, including in relation its own new sub-committee for *Health, Safety and Environment*, referred to above;
- e. establish a new *People, EDI and Wellbeing Committee* to provide coherent, overarching assurance to Council on the University’s people-related objectives and responsibilities for its staff. This was a broad remit and the terms and reference and membership would need further consideration and consultation with senior officers and the campus trade unions, particularly in relation to the transfer of the ‘wellbeing’ responsibilities that currently lay with the *Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee*.

Council endorsed in principle the proposals outlined above, whilst noting that further discussions would need to continue over the summer to formulate and refine the proposed terms of reference and membership details for each committee, and to confirm its meeting schedule for 2021-22. The aim was to ensure that each committee involved in the changes had provisional terms of reference and membership in place for its first meeting in the new academic year. Each committee would reflect on these at its first meeting and would then present them back to Council for formal approval in the autumn term.

21/M79 **LAY MEMBERSHIP OF UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES 2021-22**

Council received details of the intended appointment of lay members to serve on key University committees and groups for 2021-22. The Chair indicated that since the circulation of the paper Sophie Dale-Black had agreed to join the Remuneration Committee for 2021-22, to fill the vacancy arising from the retirement of Martin Hindle.

The Chair also indicated that if any lay member had any queries about the committee(s) to which they had been allocated, or would like to register an interest in becoming a member of a specific committee when a vacancy next arose, they should notify the Chair of Council after the Council meeting.

21/M80 **APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL AND COURT**

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

- a. that Azam Mamujee be invited to continue to serve as a lay member of Council for a further term of three years, to run from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2024;
- b. that the following newly-appointed emeritus professors be invited to become Associate Members of Court, effective until 31 December 2023 in the first instance:

Raymond Dagleish	Genetics and Genome Biology
Martin Dzelzainis	English
Ian Forsythe	Neuroscience, Psychology and Behaviour
Cosmo Graham	Law

Julian Osborne	Physics and Astronomy
Kevin Schurer	History
Richard Willingale	Physics and Astronomy

21/M81 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

As custodian of the University's Seal **Council received and noted** details of the affixing of the Seal to the document(s) as listed in Appendix C/21/M81App, attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

21/M82 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates of its scheduled meetings in 2021-2022, all to commence at 4.00pm unless stated otherwise, Outlook invitations for which would be sent out over the summer:

- Tuesday 14 September 2021 - Council/Executive Board Awayday, all day
- Wednesday 29 September 2021 - Ordinary meeting
- Tuesday 23 November 2021 - Ordinary meeting
- 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 (reserved and unreserved business): 2 hours