

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a 'Teams' meeting held on
Tuesday 9 June 2020**Present:**

Gary Dixon (Chair)

Janet Arthur	Alison Goodall
Edmund Burke	Martin Hindle
Nishan Canagarajah	Ian Johnson
Martin Cullen	Azam Mamujee
Sophie Dale-Black	Oge Obioha
Sarah Davies	Vijay Sharma
Sandra Dudley	Richard Tapp
Mehmooda Duke	Carole Thorogood
Cathy Ellis	

In attendance: Geoff Green (Registrar and Secretary); Kerry Law (Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer); Neil Cox (Assistant Council Secretary); Alex Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office); Graham Wynn (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education); and Mia Nembhard (President-Elect of the Students' Union).

Apologies for absence were received from Craig Brown, Andrew Morgan and Martyn Riddleston (as an officer normally in attendance).

UNRESERVED BUSINESS20/M35 **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/M36 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the minutes of the virtual meeting held on 13 May 2020. **Council approved** them as a correct record. There were no matters arising that were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

20/M37 **COVID-19 - OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

Council received a comprehensive update from senior management on the University's operational response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Council noted that key developments since the last meeting included an intensive programme of work focussed on the impact on staff workloads of the University's new way of working in response to the pandemic. It would also address how to support staff and recognise their performance during this difficult time. Over 600 staff had responded to a new *Wellbeing at Work Questionnaire*, the results of which would inform the wider staff health and wellbeing strategy but would also help guide the ongoing support for staff in the current working environment, and over the next few months. A full Equality Impact Assessment of the changes to current work and study practices due to COVID-19 was being carried out to identify any differential impact on student and staff equality groups, and to make recommendations for mitigating

actions. In the meantime **Council noted** that an online Support Toolkit, developed to support staff during the Covid closure, had now been viewed by over 70% of the workforce.

The Lockdown Exit Group was continuing to focus on steps for the phased and safe re-opening of parts of the campus to more staff and students, with risk assessment of individual buildings, production of guidelines for safe work and study, and appropriate new signage. An online booking system had been introduced to enable staff to visit the campus to collect essential items, to help support home working.

With regard to student recruitment for 2020-21, **Council was pleased to note** that the first virtual Open Day held on 6 June had attracted over 5,000 visitors – almost double the number who had pre-booked in advance – and another such event would be held in July. Although the number of ‘Firm’ Home/EU undergraduate acceptances was significantly down compared with the same point a year go, this was still broadly in line with budget assumptions. The impact of student deferral decisions could not be predicted with any certainty at this stage – most publicly available data on student intentions was collected at the start of the lockdown, and even subtle changes since then could have a significant impact on the eventual outcome and financial impact. In the meantime, Intensive preparations were being made for the format and approach to be taken to ‘Freshers’ in 2021, particularly including the safe promotion of social interaction.

With regard to teaching in 2020-21, the launch of the University’s ‘Ignite’ blended learning model had been very well received, and would be a key feature of communication (with close collaboration with the Students’ Union) with both new and returning students over the summer. Particular attention was being paid to the need to ensure that finalists in all disciplines would be able to graduate as expected in 2021.

Council noted that, under the current 2 metre social distancing requirement, the University would probably have around 25% capacity for on-campus face-to-face teaching. The rumours of a possible reduction to 1 metre in the social distancing requirement, which was being lobbied for strongly by various sectors including higher education, might increase capacity to around 45%, but even this would probably be impossible to work with in the most ‘congested’ buildings, such as the Attenborough Tower and the Engineering Building.

20/M38 **BLACK LIVES MATTER**

With regard to the recent killing in America of an African-American by a white police officer, and the resulting global anger and protests, **Council welcomed** the statement on this matter that had been issued by the President and Vice-Chancellor

20/M39 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council received and noted a report of a virtual meeting of the Audit Committee held on 20 May 2020. There were no matters that required the approval of Council on this occasion.

20/M40 **STATUTES AND ORDINANCES**

Council considered a small number of proposed minor amendments to the University’s Statutes and Ordinances. These were to give effect to specific recommendations arising from the 2019 external review of Senate’s effectiveness, regarding the

widening of the membership of Senate; and to take account of recent changes to the titles of specific senior officer positions.

Council approved, in principle, the proposed amendments to the Statutes and Ordinances and agreed that they should be presented to Senate at its meeting on 24 June, so that Senate had an opportunity to submit any final comments before they were confirmed by Council at its meeting on 8 July. The changes to the Statutes would then need to be submitted for formal approval by the Privy Council. The changes to the Ordinances would not require external approval.

20/M41 **COURTESIES**

Council recorded its appreciation and best wishes for the future to Oge Obioha, who would stand down from the position of President of the Students' Union at the end of June 2020, and was therefore attending her last meeting of Council.

20/M42 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates and times of:

- a. the one remaining Ordinary meeting in 2019-20:
Wednesday 8 July 2020 – 'Teams' meeting, 4.00-5.30pm
- b. **provisional** dates of Ordinary meetings and Awayday in 2020-21, all at 4pm unless stated otherwise:

Wednesday 30 September 2020

Wednesday 25 November 2020

Wednesday 17 March 2021

Monday 10 May 2021

Tuesday 8 June 2021 - Council/Executive Board Awayday (all day)

Tuesday 6 July 2021

Council noted that additional meetings might be arranged, but only if essential, to provide Covid-specific updates on an interim basis.

CHAIR

Total duration of meeting: 1 hour and 30 minutes