

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
Monday 21 January 2019**

**Present:**

Bridget Towle (Chair)

Janet Arthur  
Paul Boyle  
Edmund Burke  
Sarah Davies  
Cathy Ellis  
Janet Finch  
Martin Hindle

Ian Johnson  
Paul O'Brien  
Anil Majithia  
Amy Moran  
Andrew Morgan  
Stephanie Osborn  
John Schwabe

**In attendance:** Dave Hall (Secretary); Neil Cox (Assistant Secretary); and Martyn Riddleston (Director of Finance).

**Apologies for absence** were received from Mehmooda Duke, Gary Dixon, Sandra Dudley, Azam Mamujee, Vijay Sharma and Carole Thorogood.

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

19/M5 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No personal interests were declared by members in relation to any items of business recorded in the Unreserved section of these minutes.

19/M6 **MINUTES**

Council considered the unreserved minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2018. **Council approved** them as an accurate record. There were no matters arising not dealt with on the main agenda.

19/M7 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

With regard to matters reported to Council by the Chair:

- a. Council was delighted to learn that Mehmooda Duke had been recognised in the 2019 New Year's Honours List, with an MBE for services to the legal profession and female entrepreneurship;
- b. Council was saddened to learn of the death on 11 January 2019, aged 89, of Sir Michael Atiyah, who served as the University's fourth Chancellor between 1995 and 2005 and was widely regarded as one of the greatest ever British mathematicians.

**19/M8 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. the Office for Students had mandated a change in the government's accounting treatment for tuition fee loans, having judged the current system to be a 'fiscal illusion'. It had been estimated that, in the financial year ending 31 July 2019, the replacement accounting methodology would increase the public sector net borrowing requirement by around £12 billion, with potentially profound implications for the government and the HE sector. The new accounting arrangements were expected to be in place by autumn 2019.
  - ii. The outcome of the Augar review of post-18 education and funding in England was now expected in late February 2019. The latest media stories suggested that students who failed to achieve three Ds at A-level would be refused government loans. Previous rumours had speculated about the introduction of a £6,500-£7,500 fee cap and top-up funding of up to £13,500 for STEM subjects. A £6,500 fee cap without any top-up would cost the University around £30 million per year.
  - iii. Chris Skidmore had been appointed as the new Universities Minister in December 2018, replacing Sam Gyimah.
  - iv. The HE sector remained seriously concerned about the possibility of a 'no deal' Brexit scenario. The Brexit deal rejected (so far) by Parliament provided little detail on higher education, although it had been confirmed that there would be no change to student funding and support regimes for students starting their courses in 2019-20.
  - v. The UCU had announced a ballot on strike action in relation to the national pay award implemented in 2018. Depending on the outcome, the first possible date for industrial action to take place would be in mid-March 2019.
- b. Internal matters:
  - i. A University student had tragically died in a traffic incident in Oadby in the early hours of January 19 2019. A police investigation was continuing.
  - ii. Representatives of the University had attended a memorial service held in Oxford on 19 January 2019 for Sir Maurice Shock, who served as the University's Vice-Chancellor between 1977-1987.
  - iii. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge had visited the University on 28 November 2018, as part of a visit to Leicester to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the tragic helicopter crash at the King Power Stadium in October 2018.
  - iv. The University had won the prestigious Research Project of the Year Award (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences) in the 2019 Times Higher Education Awards, for the development of a kit that enabled victims of sexual violence to capture DNA evidence.

**19/M9 APPOINTMENT OF THE NEXT CHAIR OF COUNCIL**

Council considered the report and recommendation of the Selection Panel established for the appointment of the next Chair of Council. The Panel had been chaired by the Chair of the Audit Committee and, as requested by Council, had included an independent 'external' lay person amongst its membership, with an overall lay majority. The Panel had also made provision for current and recently retired Council members to make nominations and encourage expressions of interest from amongst their own personal and professional networks.

Ultimately, two current lay members of Council had expressed an interest in being considered for the position; there were no late applications and no 'external' candidates. The Selection Panel met with and interviewed the two candidates on 22 November 2018 and agreed unanimously to recommend to Council that Gary Dixon be appointed as the next Chair of Council.

**Council unanimously approved** the appointment of Gary Dixon as its next Chair, as successor to Bridget Towle, effective from 1 August 2019 for an initial term of three years. An appropriate programme of induction would need to be arranged and, if members had any specific suggestions for the topics that this should cover, they were encouraged to share these directly with Bridget Towle and Gary Dixon [ACTION: ALL].

At its meeting to be held on 31 January 2019 the Nominations Committee would consider the process for the appointment of a new Treasurer to take over from Gary Dixon in August 2019.

**19/M10 STUDENTS' UNION ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**

Further to the preliminary discussion at its meeting held on 21 November 2018 (minute 18/M111 refers), Council considered a formal proposal from the Students' Union for the creation of a new position of Equality and Liberation Officer. This would increase the number of Officer Trustees from five to six, plus one continuing appointed Student Trustee, and with the number of Lay Trustees remaining at five. This change would require an amendment to the Union's Articles of Association, which currently included a requirement for there to be an equal number of Officer and Lay trustees.

**Council noted** that the Board of Trustees had given specific consideration to the imbalance between Officer and Lay Trustees that would result from the proposed changes, and had investigated the position in a representative sample of other students' unions. The Board already featured an overall student majority of one, which would be increased to two under the current proposals. This was a significantly smaller majority than in nearly all of the comparator institutions, and the Board had agreed that there was no need for this aspect of the proposals to be amended.

**Council approved** the introduction of the position of Equality and Liberation Officer as the sixth officer trustee, with the resulting changes in the composition of the Students' Union's Board of Trustees, and the necessary amendments to the Articles of Association to facilitate this. **Council requested**, however, that the actual proposed wording of the amendment(s) to the Articles be submitted to the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer, who would arrange for them to be reviewed by the University's legal advisor, to help ensure that they were appropriately drafted [ACTION: IAN BRUCE, STUDENTS' UNION].

**19/M11 STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Council considered the report of a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 6 December 2018.

**Council was delighted to note** that the very first Alumni Awards Dinner would be held in London on Thursday 21 March 2019. Over 60 nominations had been received for the various awards categories, some of which were new awards, and these had been reviewed by the Standing Committee to determine the finalists and winners, for announcement at the event.

**19/M12 VAN GEEST FOUNDATION MANAGING TRUSTEES**

Council received reports of the annual meeting and one additional meeting of the managing trustees of the van Geest Foundation Heart and Cardiovascular Diseases Research Fund, held on 24 October and 21 November 2018 respectively.

**Council noted** that the managing trustees had approved a proposal to draw down £340,000 of capital funding in a single year to support the establishment of the Leicester-van Geest Multi-Omics Facility for Translational Research. However, there was some uncertainty as to whether the managing trustees had the authority to commit to that level of funding under the terms of the declaration of trust, or whether the higher approval of Council was required.

**Council requested** that this matter be referred to the next meeting of the Finance Committee for further consideration, and for the Committee to report back to Council as appropriate [ACTION: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE].

**19/M13 FORWARD BUSINESS SCHEDULE**

Council considered the current schedule of standard business expected to be taken at specific meetings of Council during the remainder of the 2018-2019 academic year.

**Council noted** that although the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) was due to attend the next meeting to present an update on current research issues and developments at the University, 'research' as a general topic had a relatively low profile at Council, and this needed to be addressed. It was hoped that the presentation and discussion at the next meeting – and possibly a further discussion at the Awayday in June - would enable this to begin to be explored directly with members, and a longer term approach agreed.

**19/M14 UNIVERSITY SEAL**

Council received details of the affixing of the University seal to documents as listed in Appendix C/19/M14 (App), attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

19/M15 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

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

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): 1 hour and 50 minutes