

# UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

## COURT

### Minutes of the Sixty-Fourth Annual meeting of Court held on Friday 11 February 2022

<b>Present:</b>	The Rt Hon the Lord Willetts (Chancellor)	
	Mr G Acquah	Mrs J Higgins
	Mr A Aggarwal	Mr M Hindle
	Mr G Arthur	Mr B Hindocha
	Mrs J Arthur	Sir L Howard
	Mr P Ash	Mr I Johnson
	Cllr Mr E Baines	Mrs G Johnston
	Mr R Bettles	Mr J Kapasi
	Mr G Bodiwala	Mr P Lawson
	Mrs S Bowie	Ms A Linsell
	His Hon Judge D Brunning	Dr G Lewis
	Professor E Burke	Col R Martin
	Professor N Canagarajah	Mr D Moore
	Mr J Chandarana	Mrs L Perham
	Mr M Cullen	Professor K Pounds
	Dr S Dale-Black	Mr P Rivlin
	Mr G Dixon	Mr R S Sandhu
	Ms M Duke	Dr V Sharma
	Mrs S Forsyth	Dr P Sykes
	Dr J Foster	Mr D Tams
	Mrs S Furness	Dr B Towle
	Mr R Graham-Brown	Mr M Turnbull
	Mr G Green	Mrs S Waddington
	Lady Gretton	Mr A Wessel
	Dr R Hake	Mrs C Wessel
	Mr D Harrison	Mr D Wood
	Mr B Hellyer	Mr D Woodhead

**In attendance:** Mr M Riddleston (Chief Operating Officer, University of Leicester); Mr P Gowdrige (Director of Finance, University of Leicester) Ms K Law, Ms R Faint, Mr J Pandya and Ms M Perkins (all from the Division of External Relations, University of Leicester); Mr A Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office, University of Leicester), and Mrs A Benson (Acting Assistant Secretary to Council and Court, University of Leicester)

**Apologies for absence** were received from those members of Court whose names are listed in the Appendix attached to these minutes.

#### 22/M1 **COURTESIES**

The Chancellor welcomed all Court members to the meeting, particularly the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland, Chair of Leicestershire County Council and High Sheriff of Rutland and those members joining the meeting by Teams.

#### 22/M2 **MINUTES**

**Court formally received** the minutes of the sixty-third Annual Meeting, held on 14 February 2020.

**22/M3 MEMBERSHIP OF COURT**

**Court received** the current list of the Full Members of Court, as at 1 February 2022. **Court noted** that the current list was presented each year at the Annual Meeting. The complete and updated Full and Associate membership lists could be viewed at any time on the University's website.

**22/M4 ANNUAL PRESENTATION BY THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR**

The University's President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nishan Canagarajah, gave his annual presentation to Court, including an update on progress against the University Strategy.

The President and Vice-Chancellor outlined the achievements of the University since 2020 across the key themes of education, research, student recruitment and community engagement.

The President and Vice-Chancellor emphasised the University's adaptability, resilience and continued success in its education delivery despite the ongoing impact of the COVID pandemic. It was noted that the ability of students to succeed in and progress with their studies had not been materially affected. This was attributed both to the hard work of students and staff as well as mitigation measures which had been put in place. Specific examples of innovative teaching and student success were highlighted.

In relation to research, the President and Vice-Chancellor reported £61.6m of research income for the 2020-21 year, with new research awards of £76m secured in the same period (£9.9m of which was for COVID research). Major research awards across several disciplines were highlighted alongside high-profile research successes such as the discovery of the Rutland Mosaic and the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope. It was noted that Professor Kamlesh Khunti had received a CBE in the New Year's Honours List 2022 for services to health. It was reported to Court that five new Research Institutes had recently been approved.

Turning to student recruitment, the President and Vice-Chancellor noted that UK and international recruitment was holding up well, with a future focus on strengthening the UK undergraduate position and reducing reliance on Clearing. It was reported that for 2022 entry, the University was tracking ahead of its competitor set and of the sector as a whole at this stage. This was attributed to innovative recruitment approaches, increased marketing activity earlier in the cycle, improved league table positioning and more targeted activity as well as the return of on-campus Open Days.

The President and Vice-Chancellor highlighted several key areas of the University's engagement with the local community, including the Heritage Hub, the Civic University Agreement with De Montfort University, sponsoring key Leicester calendar events and the Centenary Community Engagement Fund. It was noted that the University had been awarded the Freedom of the Borough by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council as part of its Centenary, in recognition of its local and civic contribution. The University had also joined with Sporting Equals in a strategic partnership to promote ethnic diversity amongst sports leaders.

Considering future challenges, the President and Vice-Chancellor drew the attention of Court to the University's need to deliver on its academic mission post-pandemic, embark on and develop partnerships to deliver the mission and add value, and to build on its founding principles in bringing civic benefit to Leicestershire and Rutland.

Finally, the President and Vice-Chancellor gave an overview of the University Strategy which had been launched in November 2021 around three themes: Research-inspired education; World-changing research; Our Citizens. The Strategy was underpinned by values of health and wellbeing, equality and diversity, environmental sustainability and operational excellence.

Court discussed the relationship between the University's league table performance and its student success, the impact of Brexit on EU student recruitment across the sector and the impact of the pandemic on face-to-face learning and grade inflation. Court commended the University for its civic contribution during the pandemic, particularly in relation to medical students graduating early to commence hospital work.

## 22/M5 **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020-2021**

**Court formally received** the University's audited financial statements for the last two financial years, covering the period from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2021. The statements also included a strategic overview report of the institution's activities and highlights, and a corporate governance statement of the responsibilities of the Council (as the University's governing body) and its key committees, over the last year. The statements had been approved by the Council and submitted to the Office for Students, the regulator for universities, in line with the relevant timeframes.

The University's Chief Operating Officer, Martyn Riddleston, presented an overview of the University's current financial situation.

**Court noted** that in the year to 31 July 2021 the University's income had totalled £316.7 million with a surplus (**before** pension accounting movements) of £13.4 million.

The impact of the COVID pandemic was outlined. It was noted that in 2020/21 the University's income had reduced by 2.8% and operating expenses managed **carefully**. The University had accessed a £60m Covid Corporate Financing Facility from the Bank of England and had made new short-term borrowing facilities available. All existing **and new** loan repayments and obligations had been met.

Key capital investments had included the redevelopment of the Percy Gee Students' Union Building on the main campus, the Brookfield School of Business and Space Park Leicester, all of which were now fully operational. The Sir Bob Burgess Building was already operational and Freeman's Common would be fully complete during 2022/23.

It was noted that the University was forecast to end the 2021/22 year with in excess of £50m cash and a forecast strengthened by January student recruitment. However, pressure from accommodation and utility costs would be ongoing.

## 22/M6 **CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

**Court received** a presentation by the University's Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer, Kerry Law, with insight into the celebrations taking place to mark the University's second century. Events included a Poppy Pilgrimage to lay wreaths across 100 memorial sites in Leicestershire and Rutland, the Changemakers Centenary Festival and Leicester Symphony Orchestra 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The attention of Court was drawn to the 100 Trees initiative and to details of future events, which would be circulated to Court members for information.

22/M7 **CHANCELLOR TERM OF OFFICE**

The Chancellor, Lord Willetts, informed Court that he would step down as Chancellor at the end of his term of office in February 2023. Lord Willetts reflected positively on his time in office and noted that he would continue his association with the University as Chair of the Space Park Strategy Board.

**Court noted** that the appointment process for the next University Chancellor would be underway shortly.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 1hr 30 mins

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER  
MEETING OF COURT  
Friday 11 February 2022  
Apologies**

Mr K Beaumont  
Dr M Chamberlain  
Mr S De Looze  
His Hon Judge G Dickinson  
Mr H Doyle  
Ms C Ellis  
Mr H Ghelani  
Mr D James  
Ms R Jenkins  
Cllr Mrs L Kaufman  
Mr A Mamujee  
Mr I Mattioli  
Mr A Morgan  
Mr P Mulvihill  
Mr C Ramsey  
Dr N Reed  
Mr V Sethi  
Professor S Sharma  
Mr H Stevenson  
Mr R Tapp  
Ms C Thorogood  
Mr P Wilson