

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COURT

Minutes of the Sixty-Sixth Annual meeting of Court held on Friday 9 February 2024

Present:	Dame M Aderin-Pocock (Chancellor)	
	Mr P Ash	Dr J Higgins
	Cllrs Mrs S Barton	Sir L Howard
	Ms E Blyth	Mrs G Johnston
	Dr R Bettles	Mr J Kapasi
	Mr G Bodiwala	Ms K Law
	Mrs S Bowie	Mr P Lawson
	Cllr Mr A Brown	Dr A Linsell
	Professor N Canagarajah	Mr R Madlani
	Mrs H Chubb	Dr D Moore
	Mr S de Looze	Professor K Pounds
	Dr S Dale-Black	Dr N Reed
	HH Mr G Dickinson	Mr A Robinson
	Mr G Dixon	Mr R S Sandhu
	Mr H Doyle	Professor S Sharma
	Ms M Duke	Dr V Sharma
	Ms C Ellis	Mr D Tams
	Mrs G Feehally	Mr R Tapp
	Cllr Mr K Feltham	Dr B Towle
	Mrs S Forsyth	Mrs S Waddington
	Dr J Foster	Mr P Wilson
	Mrs S Furness	Mr A Wessel
	Mr R Graham-Brown	Mrs C Wessel
	Lady Gretton	Mr P Wilson
	Mr I Johnson	Mr R D Wood
		Dr D Wykes

In attendance: Mr P Gowdrige (Chief Financial Officer, University of Leicester); Ms R Faint, Mr J Pandya, Mr S Corbett and Ms R Selfridge (Development and Alumni Relations Office, University of Leicester); Mr A Erdlenbruch (Chief of Staff, President and Vice-Chancellor's Office, University of Leicester); Mrs R Lord, Mr J Suffield and Mr K Joyce (Governance Office); Professor E Jones (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Education); Mr W Wells (Deputy Director: Research, Innovation and Impact)

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

24/M1 COURTESIES

The Chancellor welcomed all Court members to the meeting, noting that it was her inaugural meeting as Chancellor.

24/M2 MINUTES

Court formally received the minutes of the sixty-fifth Annual Meeting, held on 10 February 2023.

24/M3 **MEMBERSHIP OF COURT**

Court received the current list of the Full Members of Court, as at 1 February 2024. **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](#)

24/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.

The President and Vice-Chancellor outlined the achievements of the University in the past 12 months.

It was reported that the University had achieved an outstanding result in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), rated Gold overall. The TEF panel had highlighted the University's sector-leading work on research-inspired education, and embedding its extra-curricular career development programme into all undergraduate programmes.

In terms of student experience, the 2023 National Student Survey results had been positive, with improvements in areas where additional focus had been placed such as assessment and feedback.

The University had achieved a record-breaking £103 million in research awards in 2022-23, along with being highly rated in the Knowledge Exchange Framework. Leicester researchers had been involved in key projects, including the Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer (JUICE) mission and research into lifestyle changes for people from multi-ethnic communities with chronic conditions. The entry into Horizon for space research would provide opportunities but also required support for a new generation of academics to access funding within a very competitive environment. Investment had also been made towards future research success with 50 additional PhD studentships and the launch of both the Heritage Hub and the Institute for Policy.

The President and Vice-Chancellor also outlined key successes within the Our Citizens strand of the university strategy, including sustainability training and the excellent progress made with the Universities Partnership. The university's continued focus on civic engagement was exemplified by the appointment of Dr Vijay Sharma as its first Pro Chancellor for Community Engagement.

The attention of Court was drawn to the ambitious five-year Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which had been agreed in 2023. The median gender pay gap had reduced to 17.9% from 18.6% in the previous year, with mentoring and support in place for early career academics.

The University had retained a consistently positive position within Global and National league tables, with a record student intake in September 2023. However, the national drop in overseas Post Graduate Taught students had impacted the whole sector, including Leicester. The University now participated in the Turing Scheme, with the largest funding targeted at students from deprived communities. The opportunities and challenges provided by Degree Apprenticeships was discussed in terms of their potential to widen participation should issues with funding and portfolio mix be addressed.

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported the success of the '2121-Founders of the Future' philanthropic campaign, in particular highlighting the launch in year of the Centre for Empathetic Healthcare.

International engagement by the institution had continued with the launch of a new Internationalisation Strategy. Key achievements included the initiation of strategic partnerships with Apollo Hospitals Group, the Smithsonian, along with further engagement with existing Chinese Partner institutions in Dalian and Chongqing.

Reflecting on present and future challenges, the attention of Court was drawn to the significant issues facing the sector, including Government policy changes, international competition and geopolitical tensions, alongside maintaining financial sustainability. In response, the University would innovate and diversify, including continuing to engage in partnerships with prestigious and value-driven institutions. A focus would also be put on improving the financial position in order to invest further in high-quality education, research and infrastructure.

Court commended the University for its recent successes.

Court noted the report of the President and Vice-Chancellor.

24/M5 **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2022-2023**

Court formally received the University's audited financial statements for the last financial year, covering the period from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023. 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 previous 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 Financial Officer, Paul Gowdridge, presented an overview of the University's current financial situation.

Court noted that in the year to 31 July 2023 the University generated £22.7 million of operating cash flow and a surplus of £2m before other gains, and £3.1 million with them included. This represented a reduction on the previous year as a result of multiple operating environment challenges. Nevertheless, the Revolving Cash Facility had not been required at year end and the University did not forecast triggering the Office for Students reportable event threshold of falling below the equivalent of 30 days liquidity in the next 12 months.

It was reported that £31 million had been invested in the University estate and infrastructure during the year. This included, completion of Freeman's Common Village, plus significant maintenance expenditure on both the residential and non-residential campuses. Large investments into digital infrastructure and equipment were also made during the year, as part of the strategy for infrastructure spending.

Court noted that the future financial outlook for the HE sector had declined further from one of caution to concern. The University was responding in a careful and considered manner through financial management activities including post control and capital spend delay through reprofiling and changing financing approach. A Financial Performance Improvement Plan had been developed.

Court received and noted the Financial Statements for 2022-2023.

24/M6 **TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE AT LEICESTER**

Court received a presentation by the University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), Liz Jones.

The University had been delighted to achieve a rating of Gold overall in the 2023 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), the highest possible category. Court noted this result had only been equalled by seven of the twenty-four Russell Group institutions.

The University's implementation of Research-inspired education, a key strategic theme, was provided as an example of gold-level performance. Feedback from the TEF Panel cited the 'presence of a substantive outstanding element concerning the teaching-research nexus.

Another example of gold-level performance had been the development of MedRACE, a student/staff group at Leicester Medical School, which had been working to progress the British Medical Association Charter for medical schools to prevent and address racial harassment since March 2020. This was seen by the TEF Panel as an example of sector-leading evidence-based work to embed EDI best practice.

Court commended the University on their sector-leading work to further the research-inspired education strategic theme and offered congratulations on the TEF result.

24/M7 **KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND ENTERPRISE AT LEICESTER**

Court received a presentation by the University's Deputy Director of Research, Innovation and Impact, Will Wells.

Court noted that the rationale behind the World-Changing Research theme of the strategy was for the institution to continue to growth in strength as a world-leading research-intensive university. Two of the primary aims within this objective had been to optimise research impact and drive ambitious innovation and enterprise, with the Knowledge Exchange (KE) and Enterprise strategy being key enabler for delivery.

Court noted both Policy drivers and the national and local economic context. The much-publicised productivity issue within the UK coupled with a lack of growth provided a complex challenge but also an opportunity for universities to play a part in their resolution.

Significant achievements had already been made in delivery of the strategic theme. The university had attained a Top 30 position within REF 2021 and delivered a record year of research income in 2022/23 of £70 million.

Court's attention was drawn to the key delivery platforms underpinning the KE and Enterprise Strategy. These were: Space Park Leicester, the Health Technology Accelerator, the Heritage Hub and the University of Leicester Business School. The results of activities driven by these platforms have been positive, with the university becoming a major driver of local innovation and within the top 10 in the UK for regional innovation funding.

Court members were asked to contact the Deputy Director of Research, Innovation and Impact, should they believe they can add further value in this area.

24/M8 **CHANCELLOR'S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chancellor expressed her personal thanks to the University community for its support during her initial year of tenure, in particular the positive experience of investiture.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 2 hrs

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER
MEETING OF COURT
Friday 9 February 2024
Apologies**

Mr G Arthur	Mr D James
Mrs J Arthur	Mr M Kapur
Mrs L Bartlett	Mr K Nagle
Mr K Beaumont	Prof H O'Connor
Mr J Chambers	Mrs L Perham
Mr M Chamberlain	Mr N Popat
Mr M Cullen	Mr P Rivlin
Mr B Ghelani	Mr H Stevenson
Mr H Ghelani	Mr M Turnbull
Mr R Hake	Mrs C Wigley
Mr M Hindle	Mr D Woodhead
Mr B Hindocha	