UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

SPECIAL MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Friday 7 May 2021 online via Teams**

Present: Nishan Canagarajah (Chair)

Y Amrani	N Armstrong
P Baker	H Barton
E Bunce	E Burke
N Chakraborti	J Challiss
S Davies	J Devlin
N Donohue	S Dudley
A Ellis	S Fishwick
M Flanagan	R Fryer
S Garrett	A Goodall
S Handa	K Herbert
C Hewitt	E Jones
S Kyd	D Lambert
G Lewis	L Liu
J Marshall	L Masterman
C Morley	M Nembhard
A Ng	H O'Connor
K Paterson	J Prados
M Purnell	J Schwabe
J Shaw	I Somerville
R Thomas	C Wilkins
G Wynn	

In attendance: G Green (Registrar and Secretary), K Law (Chief Marketing and Engagement Officer), M Riddleston (Chief Operating Officer), E Stevens (Interim Director of HR), A Khadia (Director of Planning), S Tailor (IT support), R Lord (Assistant Secretary) and A Benson (Secretariat).

Observing: S Seaton (UCU representative).

Apologies for absence were received from A Thomas, R Holland, A Rahman and E Draper.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

21/M07   WELCOME

Professor Canagarajah welcomed Senators and attendees to the meeting.

21/M08   STANDING BUSINESS

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21/M09 **BUSINESS TO CONSIDER**

a) **Proposal to merge the School of Informatics and the School of Mathematics & Actuarial Science**

Senate **considered** a proposal to merge the School of Informatics and the School of Mathematics & Actuarial Science.

Senate **noted** that the proposal had been developed following a detailed process of consultation with staff, students and external organisations. The rationale behind the proposed integration was provided, namely to offer competitive and sustainable programmes and research to meet rising market demand for, and the national skills shortage in, Artificial Intelligence, Computational Modelling, Digitalisation and Data Science.

A UCU observer made a statement outlining points raised by UCU members regarding the proposal, including their endorsement of the counter-proposal.

It was **noted** that the integration of the schools would not make the University less attractive for researchers, but would remove barriers to enable more collaborative working. It was **noted** that there was no standard mathematics school model in the sector, and the proposed approach had been developed in order to maximise opportunities for the University and was based on its activities and particular expertise.

Senate **approved** the proposal for recommendation to Council. One objection to the proposal was noted.

It was **noted** that the outcome would be shared with staff following consideration by Council on Monday 10 May 2021.

b) **Shaping for Excellence Programme**

Senate was provided with an update on the Shaping for Excellence Programme, led by the President and Vice-Chancellor.

The President and Vice-Chancellor outlined the key strategic objectives of the programme: to provide the best education possible; create an inclusive and enabling research environment, and to ensure that the University was sustainable. It was reported that in the current challenging environment, a strategic approach was required to move the University forward.

The approach taken by the University had been underpinned by the Leading and Managing Change Principles which had been developed and agreed with the three recognised Trade Unions in 2018. The 90-day consultation exercise commenced in January 2021 and complied with the University's Redundancy Ordinance process. During the consultation process feedback was received and reviewed from staff, student representatives, alumni and other colleagues to inform the final changes which were made Regular updates had been provided to Senate, Council, JNCC and to the University Senior Leadership Team throughout the period.

Reactions to the Cases for Change were outlined, including coverage across traditional and social media. It was noted that some of these reactions could be taken as breaching the University Dignity and Respect policy. Due process would be followed in any such cases. It was highlighted that, during the process, the University had limited its official media response to the correction of misinformation and factual inaccuracies only. This

had included false allegations made regarding financial mismanagement, which had been categorically denied by the University.

It was noted that the programme's governance processes had adhered to the University Ordinances. Some concerns had been raised around Academic Freedom, all of which had been considered by relevant panels, which had unanimously found no evidence of any breach.

Some cases for change had been amended in line with feedback received, demonstrating the genuine nature of the consultation. An example of the consultation process followed in Education Services was provided by the Registrar and Secretary.

The President and Vice-Chancellor highlighted the programme risks and proposed mitigations relating to student experience and staff engagement. It was noted that the University would continue to engage and build relationships with both the Students' Union and recognised Trade Unions.

Senate noted the governance timeline for the programme. Redundancy notices were expected to be served shortly after Council on 10 May 2021, but re-deployment options would continue to be explored. It was anticipated that new structures would be in place from August 2021.

A question was raised around the University Ordinances and transparency provided to Senators. Senate noted that the Ordinances had been followed throughout the process and that they should be reviewed at an appropriate time. The role of Schools and Colleges in organising their portfolios was also referenced.

The President and Vice-Chancellor thanked colleagues for their work and their support during the process. The importance of evaluating the process, and taking forward any lessons learned, was highlighted and Senators were invited to provide feedback.

21/M10   DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Senate noted the remaining meeting scheduled for 2020-2021 was as follows:

Wednesday 23 June 2021, 2pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 67 Minutes