



UNIVERSITY OF  
LEICESTER

# **65<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Alumni Association**

Thursday 14 September 2023

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
65<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Held on Thursday 14 September at 6:00pm

Held via Zoom

Minutes

### **1. Welcome by Chair of the Alumni Association Committee**

The Chair, Martin Cullen, welcomed alumni to the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Meeting, held online via Zoom.

The Chair introduced Steve Corbett, Director of the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

### **2. Welcome from Steve Corbett, Director of the Development and Alumni Relations Office (DARO).**

Steve Corbett noted how when he had spoken at the Alumni Annual Meeting in October 2022, he had been in post for a few months. He was happy to confirm he had continued to fall in love with the University in the past 12 months and was looking forward to pushing forward with Development and Alumni Relations projects and initiatives at Leicester.

Steve highlighted how he had really enjoyed meeting Leicester Alumni, and made special mention of meeting Alumni in New York City during his first international visit on behalf of the University in May 2023. Steve expressed his enthusiasm for the University's upcoming fundraising campaign, which is hoped will bring about transformational development of the institution to ready it for its second century.

### **3. Update and Q&A from President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Nishan Canagarajah Update on the University**

The Chair welcomed President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nishan Canagarajah, to deliver his update.

Professor Canagarajah welcomed attendees of the Alumni Annual Meeting, and made special mention that it was wonderful to be joined by University Chancellor, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock.

Professor Canagarajah noted that he was very glad of the involvement of Leicester alumni with the University. University of Leicester currently has over 200,000 alumni living worldwide, and a further 5,000 graduating students joined the alumni community in 2023.

Professor Canagarajah noted the many ways in which alumni can be involved with the University. One such way is for alumni to serve as champions for the University, and share in the successes of the institution. Some recent successes include:

- The University's performance in both domestic and international League Tables in 2023; Leicester ranked as #22 in The Times University Rankings, made more remarkable considering 34 Russell Group

Universities appear in The Times listing. While the University of Leicester is **not** currently in the Russell Group, it can go toe-to-toe with, and if outperform, some Russell Group institutions.

- The Daily Mail University Ranking spoke very highly of the University of Leicester in 2023.
- The University of Leicester experienced a record performance in recruitment in 2023, recruiting 5,050 new students. 4 years ago, the University only recruited 2,500 new students, showing the growth the University has seen in such a small length of time.
- 2023 saw the launch of several new Research Institutes, showcasing some of Leicester's greatest academic strengths. The NIHR has received £5m award for its work, and is the only non-Russell Group Research Institute to receive such an award.
- Notable achievements also include the Heritage Hubs and Jules mission to Jupiter

Professor Canagarajah is keen to make Leicester a Russell Group University.

Leicester can credit itself with high levels of alumni engagement. Some examples include the naming of several student halls of residence on its Freemans' campus after alumni and friends of the University, such as Mary Attenborough, Esua Goldsmith and Sir Geoff Palmer. The University's Alumni Awards celebrate the world-changing achievements of Leicester alumni around the world.

There have been some exciting philanthropic developments for the University of Leicester this year. Generous support from the Stoneygate Trust supported students completing degrees within the Leicester Medical School; these students were able to complete a Medical Foundation Year at the beginning of their degree, and graduated this summer. The Stoneygate Trust also supported the creation of the multi-million-pound Centre for Empathic Healthcare, which is embedding empathy at the heart of the medicine curriculum.

The University of Leicester has pursued a partnership with De Montfort University and IntoUniversity. The fundraising efforts of the Development and Alumni Relations (DARO) team have provided funds to help bridge the gap between student fees and the cost of taking on students. Support from donors has also provided funding for awards for students in financial need; this has been especially vital during the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

The University is now looking forwards towards its second century. The University will embark on its largest fundraising campaign, Founders of the Future 2121. More details of this campaign will follow in the next few years, but ultimately, the intention is to raise £100m to transform student experience, research and infrastructure at Leicester.

## Q & A

**The following questions were asked by alumni in attendance and were put to the Vice-Chancellor by the Chair:**

**Q:** How can International Alumni engage with the University?

**A:** The Vice-Chancellor thanked the alumni who had asked or liked this question, and thanked international alumni for all they do for the University and global alumni community.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that international alumni could participate in regional University initiatives and partnerships; for example, by supporting or joining local Alumni Chapters. The University has key stakeholder populations in the US and Canada, Malaysia and across Africa, so these are envisioned as the site of further engagement from the University in coming years. Alumni in these areas should keep themselves informed about

University and DARO plans by following them on social media and by opting-in to alumni communications; they will then be the first to know about upcoming visits to their part of the world.

**Q:** What is the University doing to combat Climate Change?

**A:** The University has committed to a Net Zero target by 2040. A sustainability programme has been implemented for every degree course currently offered; these programmes consider how to maintain teaching excellence while also limiting impact upon the environment. The newly opened Freeman's Common campus in particular has been envisioned with its own environmental policies.

Unfortunately, there was only time for the Vice-Chancellor to address these two questions before needing to move on to the next agenda item. The Vice-Chancellor thanked all alumni who had submitted and liked questions within the chat.

#### **4. Remarks from Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock MBE, University Chancellor**

Dr Aderin-Pocock noted her background on the call depicted a starry sky, and was apt for two reasons: firstly, it tied into her area of academic interest - astronomy, space science and the popularisation of STEM subjects - and secondly, it concealed the messiness of her room. She added that this reflected two aspects of her own personality – her scientific interest and her aspiration to conceal her own messiness.

She went on to speak about how modern technology is a useful tool in enabling communication and understanding on a global scale. The internet, for example, has allowed for the sharing of information like never before.

Dr Aderin-Pocock is proud of the legacy of the University of Leicester; it was founded as an outcome of the First World War, and has since offered itself as a place of sanctuary, welcoming refugees over the years from sites of conflict such as Afghanistan, Iran and Ukraine, to name but a few.

She is likewise proud of the Leicester alumni community – the humanity at the core of the University's being. The University's alumni community has gone from strength to strength, empowering the benefits of education and embodying the Citizens of Change spirit.

An interest in the study of space offers perspective, and realization of how tiny humanity is in the wider cosmos. It also helps to break down barriers, uniting people in a common experience of awe and amazement.

Dr Aderin-Pocock closed by thanking the alumni community for their support; support offered not for appreciation or reward, but out of pure altruism.

#### **5. Report of the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held on Saturday 1 October 2022**

Attendees of the Alumni Annual Meeting were invited to approve the minutes of the last Alumni General Meeting in October 2022. **The minutes were approved.**

## 6. Chair's Report of the Year

The Chair provided his annual report on activities of the Alumni Association Committee during the past twelve months.

The Chair noted that several Festival of Change lectures and talks for alumni and supporters had taken place. [Recordings of these Festival of Change lectures and talks](#) can be viewed on the University's YouTube channel or accessed via the University website. The Chair also noted that local alumni and supporters could get involved in the upcoming Alumni and Friends Day event.

To aid with hearing a greater range of voices within the Alumni Committee, all meetings were now being offered in a hybrid setting. The Chair noted that a review of the Alumni Association's Governance was taking place, as the old terms and conditions documents were no longer fit for purpose. This development is envisioned to secure Alumni Association representation at the highest level of conversation within the University, to allow for the voices of the Alumni community to be heard. This will include, for example, continuation of Alumni Association representation on University Council. The changes to the Alumni Association's Governance will mostly concern a refresh of policies that concern election of members and Chair etc., and will bring them in line with related policies within the wider University.

The Chair noted that around 5,000 new alumni had joined the Alumni Community during 2022/23. The Chair offered his thanks to the Alumni Committee and DARO for their involvement in events, in particular Graduations and the Alumni Awards Dinner, and communications to alumni worldwide.

## 7. Accounts: Funds at the disposal of the Alumni Committee

A brief update of the funds available from the Convocation Fund and William Ruddick Fund was given. The current state of these funds on the date of the Alumni Annual Meeting (1 October 2022) was as follows:

<b>The Convocation Jubilee Fund</b>	Capital Fund:	£44,324.00
	Expendable Fund:	£5,039.00
<b>William Ruddick Legacy Fund</b>	Capital Fund:	£36,481.00
	Expendable Fund:	£6,799.00

The Chair noted that two projects had been supported or were earmarked for support from the Convocation Fund. The first was a project around student perceptions and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines on campus, as part of a wider understanding of perceptions of information offered during the pandemic. The second was to fund the Sport and Active Life Coaching and Officiating Award, which would support students with talent in sport in achieving qualifications to coach, referee or officiate in their chosen discipline. After a period of inactivity, the William Ruddick Scholarship had been reinstated and three recipients in the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (CSSAH) have been selected.

The Chair noted that suggestions of new projects that could be supported and/or matched funding for monies offered through the Convocation Fund were very much welcome.

## 8. Elections

The Chair gave an update on current members of the Alumni Committee standing for re-election and co-opting members of the Alumni Committee standing for election as full members.

### **Election of new co-opting members:**

- Archie Robinson to replace Rhiannon Jenkins as a co-opting member, as incoming SU President

### **Re-election of current co-opting members:**

- Kim Holloway

### **Re-election of full members:**

- Arnaud Melilli (current co-opting member)
- Charles Tawk (current co-opting member)
- Bob Fairbrother (current full member)

### **Thank you for the following members of the Committee who are standing down:**

- Lukas Stahl (Joint Vice-Chair)

The Chair noted that the Alumni Association Committee had reviewed these proposed movements of personnel within the Committee and approved them. The Chair asked the alumni community to support this resolution; **there was no objection from the online chat, so this motion was carried.**

The Chair thanked attendees for joining for the Alumni Annual Meeting and their participation in the activities of the alumni community.