

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 24 June 2020 online via Teams**

Present: Nishan Canagarajah (Chair)

N Armstrong	C Hewitt
P Baker	E Jones
M Barer	S Kyd
S Barry	D Lambert
E Bunce	G Lewis
E Burke	L Liu
N Chakraborti	L Masterman
J Challiss	N Mac Sweeney (vice H Barton)
S Davies	P Monks
J Devlin	N Norman
N Donohue	H O'Connor
S Dudley	A Rahman
A Ellis	J Prados
I Forsythe	M Purnell
R Fryer	J Shaw
L Gibson	I Somerville
I Gillespie	A Thomas
A Goodall	T Webb
S Handa	C Wilkins
M Halliwell	M Williams
R Holland	G Wynn

In attendance: G Green (Registrar and Secretary), Sandip Tailor (IT support), R Lord (Assistant Secretary) and A Benson (Secretariat).

Observing: G Brown and D Toner (UCU)

Apologies for absence were received from S Garrett, O Obioha, M Nembhard, H Barton and M Purnell (partial)

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

20/M06 **WELCOME**

Professor Canagarajah welcomed members to the meeting. It was noted that there had been positive news in recent Government announcements to ease lockdown measures, but that the University needed to move forward cautiously and in line with advice.

Professor Canagarajah welcomed Professor Lu Liu, Head of the School of Informatics, to his first meeting of Senate.

20/M07 **COURTESIES**

Senate recorded its appreciation and best wishes for the future to Oge Obioha, who would stand down from her position of President of the Students' Union at the end of June 2020. Professor Canagarajah noted that he had written to thank Oge and send his best wishes.

20/M08 **STANDING BUSINESS**

(a) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

The requirements and process for declaring interests was outlined. Members were advised they could declare either during the meeting or in advance to the Assistant Secretary.

(b) Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Senate considered the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March 2020 and 7 May 2020.

Senate **approved** the minutes of both meetings as an accurate record.

(c) Matters Arising

Senate **noted** the matters arising from the meeting held on 4 March 2020, and further **noted** that the action was completed.

(d) Chair's Business

The President and Vice Chancellor provided a report into key matters concerning the University.

Professor Canagarajah thanked colleagues for their work during the term and noted the heightened risk to staff mental health, including the challenge of balancing the additional impact from the pandemic across research, teaching, and home life commitments.

Professor Canagarajah encouraged members to set an example as leaders in ensuring they took steps such as taking time off over the summer to maintain good mental health.

The President and Vice-Chancellor provided an update on recent positive league table results as follows:

- The University position in the Complete University Guide has improved from 44th last year to 38th.
- The University remained 31st best University in the UK in the 2021 QS World University Rankings – 242nd overall.

Professor Canagarajah noted the good work he had seen on visiting campus and asserted that the League Tables would not determine the strategy of the University, rather that the University's strategy would drive the League Table positions. The University must keep committed to its core strategic vision and celebrate achievements as a community. The University must understand and focus on both areas going well and those not going well.

It was noted that the University had announced a £1.5 million investment in PGT and PGR scholarships for BAME students in the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities. This announcement was a result of work that had been underway for some time and not a reaction to recent world events. Professor Canagarajah thanked both the Head of the

College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities and colleagues within the College and also the Students' Union for their efforts in this work.

Last month, the University received notification that the University had been successful in two Athena Swan applications: the College of Life Sciences had received a Silver award and the School of Law a Bronze award. Professor Canagarajah congratulated the leadership within the University which had given rise to these achievements.

Professor Canagarajah noted that the University was conscious of the current workloads for staff and that both staff health and wellbeing, and longer-term career progression should be considered. Two workgroups had been set up, one led by Professor Henrietta O'Connor to look at academic workload and progression, and the other led by Geoff Green to look at workloads within the Professional Services. It was noted that Senate would be provided with an update from these groups in due course.

There had been strong engagement from the Students' Union on Ignite and feedback from students had been positive. It was noted that there were still challenges as the University needed to deliver its responsibility to support students through their studies.

Professor Canagarajah noted that lockdown exit plans were underway for a safe return to operating on campus and thanked colleagues for their work in this area. The needs of staff were being considered and ideas on different approaches were welcome. Staff could raise these ideas through Heads of School or other leaders, including through the President and Vice-Chancellor directly.

The President and Vice-Chancellor noted that he had engaged with Universities UK, the OfS and the Department for Education over recent weeks to discuss plans for the re-introduction of the Student Number Control. The University had been successful in making its voice heard, and this meant the University would be able to recruit in line with last year's recruitment levels, approximately 400 more than originally anticipated. It was noted that there remained a considerable challenge facing the University to fill its student places given the market conditions as a result of Covid19.

Professor Canagarajah thanked the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the colleges for their efforts made to support the planning process so far this year. It was noted that the University's financial plan would necessarily remain agile due to the high number of continuing uncertainties.

(e) Summary Report of Items for Approval

Senate considered and **approved** a summary report of business for consideration arising from reports from subsidiary Committees and other areas where Senate's approval was required.

Degree outcomes statement

Senate noted that the Learning and Teaching Committee had considered a Draft Degree Outcomes Statement for the University. The Committee had approved the Degree Outcomes Statement for submission to Senate and Council prior to publication.

Senate **approved** the report and noted it would be taken to Council for final approval prior to publication.

Home tuition fee rates for students following an UK Asylum Application

Senate noted that the Recruitment, Reputation and Performance Board had discussed the proposal to charge Home/EU tuition fees to students with Discretionary Leave to Remain or Limited Leave to Remain from 2020/21 onwards. It was noted that the Board had approved the recommendation.

Senate **approved** the recommendation on home tuition fee rates.

Change to undergraduate entrance criteria for Chinese 'Gao Kao' students and English Language Requirements for Postgraduate Applicants from Ghana.

Senate noted that the Recruitment, Reputation and Performance Board had considered and approved the recommendation to remove the requirement for additional evidence of English Language competency for PG applicants that have completed one year or more of study at a recognised University in Ghana or Nigeria.

Senate **approved** the change to undergraduate entrance criteria.

Personal Support Review Group

Senate noted that the Learning and Teaching Committee had considered a report and recommendations from the review of Personal Support for Students on Taught Programmes.

Senate **noted** the report.

20/M09 **BUSINESS TO CONSIDER**

- (a) Academic response to Covid19 pandemic: Education
 - i) An Emergency Senate Regulation for the purpose of responding to significant disruption
 - ii) Invocation of the Emergency Senate in response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Senate noted that without the regulation the University would be unable to deliver secure outcomes for students, including progression and awarding/graduation. It was also noted that the Office for Students expected safeguards to be in place for the student experience and for the University to meet its contractual obligations to students.

Senate noted that cross-sector intelligence had informed the report, which had also been revised following a request for feedback in May from Senate members. Feedback had also been received from Learning and Teaching Committee and the JNCC, which included representation from the Students' Union and campus trade unions respectively.

Senate noted a correction in paragraph 3 of the Regulation which should have stated the University's formal position was that invocation would require full Senate approval not just the Urgency Committee. This correction provided consistency with paragraph 8 of the Regulation.

It was noted that the inclusion of a clause explicitly excluding industrial action had been discussed at JNCC and had not been seen by the University as being in the best interests of students, and in no way undermined the ability of staff to take industrial action, as the Regulation was concerned solely with the assessment of students. Senate noted that it was necessary to invoke the Regulation in order to ensure the University could graduate students this year. It was noted that the full Senate would consider any invocation of the Regulation on a case-by-case basis and that it would be applied sensibly and pragmatically.

It was noted that any outstanding concerns should be raised via the Governance Office by 26 June 2020. (Secretary's Note: none were received.)

Senate **approved** the emergency Regulation.

Senate **approved** the invocation of the emergency Regulation in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

iii) Education response: assessment procedures

Senate **noted** the detailed arrangements that had been put in place to support students' academic progress.

iv) Ignite launch

Senate noted an update provided by the PVC Education, Graham Wynn, on the launch of Ignite.

The major dates for the launch of Ignite were noted, including Education Planning Principles for 2020/21 which would be circulated to schools on 20 May 2020. The impact of the launch was highlighted in terms of both external media coverage and an increase in web traffic of 26%.

The education planning principles were noted with key areas highlighted as ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students and staff and the recognition that a School-based pedagogical approach would need to be taken.

Senate noted that a Student Support and Transitions Board had been established which was co-ordinating with the Lockdown Exit Programme. It was noted that the Students' Union were integral to this group.

The timeline for curriculum planning was noted, including the requirements to communicate with both current and prospective students.

Senate noted that timetabling guidance would be issued very soon and that schools would need to prioritise face-to-face teaching events. It was also noted that guidance would be issued shortly on the definition of contact time, which was different to face-to-face time.

(b) Leicester Institute for Inclusivity in HE

The President and Vice-Chancellor noted that inclusivity was core to the University's strategy and vision, and the establishment of the Institute was central to this strategy. The full support of the Students' Union in shaping the approach to the Institute was noted.

Senate **recommended** the establishment of the Institute for approval by Council.

(c) Revisions to Statutes and Ordinances

Senate noted that this was a further opportunity for members to review the proposals to expand Senate membership ahead of the final reading by Council. The proposals were outlined to members and key points around membership were noted.

Senate **approved** the proposals.

(d) Senate nomination for Council

Senate noted the process that had been followed to nominate a Senate member to Council to fill the one current vacancy.

A nomination had been received to appoint Dr Huw Barton, Head of the School of Archaeology & Ancient History. As no further nominations had been received, Dr Barton had been deemed to have been elected, subject to completion of subject to Senate's approval and completion of Council's formal confirmation process.

Senate **noted** the nomination and the next steps for ratification.

20/M10 **BUSINESS TO NOTE**

(a) Academic Response to Covid-19: Research

Senate was asked to note in particular the phenomenal amount of direct Covid19 research that had been completed. Research had not stopped on campus during lockdown and was starting to gradually ramp back up.

Senate noted that support for our PGR students was continuing.

It was noted that the University had reached out to the business community to help to sustain business eco-systems. Successes with this work included the launch of the Euro Space Agency business incubator on 24 June 2020.

It was noted that there was a push towards focussing on clearly externally-funded research and reducing the proportion of colleague time spent on unfunded research, as that was imperative for the health and vibrancy of the research community.

Senate **noted** that the revised REF deadline was 31 March 2021, but that the Census date was unaffected.

(b) Reports from Committees

i) Learning and Teaching Committee

Senate noted reports from the meetings of the Learning and Teaching Committee held on 10 March 2020 and 27 May 2020, and that the elements that required Senate's approval had already been considered under item 20/M08.

Senate noted the other business set out and **approved** the reports.

ii) Research and Enterprise Committee

Senate noted the report from the meeting of the Research and Enterprise Committee that had taken place on 30 April 2020.

Senate noted the other business set out and **approved** the reports.

iii) Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board

Senate noted the report from the meeting of the Reputation, Recruitment and Performance Board which had taken place on 3 March 2020, and that the elements that required Senate's approval had already been considered under item 20/M08.

(c) University Officer Appointments

Senate received for information a list of all University Officer level appointments that had been made since 4 March 2020.

(d) Programmes Approved and Withdrawn

Senate received a list of programmes and pathways that had been approved in principle, in full and withdrawn.

(e) Senate Student Discipline Panels

Senate received the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

20/M05 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Senate noted the draft schedule of meetings for 2020-2021 is as follows:

Friday 17 July 2020, tbc (Urgency Committee only for the purpose of conferring degrees for the class of 2020)

Wednesday 4 November 2020, 2pm

Wednesday 3 March 2021, 2pm

Wednesday 23 June 2021, 2pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: 1 hour