

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Monday 15 May 2017

Present:

Dr B Towle

Mrs J Arthur
Professor P Boyle
Mr G Dixon
Ms M Duke
Mr M Hindle
Ms R Holland
Mr I Johnson
Mr P Lawson

Dr D Lockett
Dr S Macleod
Mr D Moore
Professor P O'Brien
Professor M Peel
Professor E Raven
Professor J Schwabe
Dr V Sharma

In attendance: Mr D Hall (Secretary); Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary); Mr M Riddleston; Ms A Moran (Students' Union President Elect, attending as an observer) and Professor P Monks (for 17/M34).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A Morgan, Dr N Reed, Ms C Thorogood and Mr L Trotman.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

17/M30 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr G Dixon declared an interest in the business recorded under 17/M (Students' Union), as he was about to take up a position as a Trustee of the Students' Union.

17/M31 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2017. **Council approved** them as an accurate record.

Arising from minute 17/M3 (Donations) the Chair formally reported that the two new donations had subsequently been approved by Council, by means of an email ballot. With regard to the donation from Mr Jimmy Mayer, the Nominations Committee had subsequently approved two 'namings' associated with the donation:

- "The Mayer IGA Nephropathy Laboratories", located in the Maurice Shock Building; and
- the naming of an existing personal chair at the University as "The Mayer Chair in Renal Medicine".

17/M32 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair reported on the following:

- a. further to 17/M31 above, a third new offer of a significant donation to the University was at an advanced stage of negotiation. It was hoped that it would be presented for approval by Council in the near future;
- b. informal interviews as part of the effectiveness review of Council, being undertaken by staff from Lancaster University, were being held between 15-17 May. The final report from the reviewers, when received, and the results of the supporting on-line questionnaire, would be presented for discussion by Council at a subsequent meeting;
- c. the Chair had asked the Governance Office to prepare a schedule of standard items of business that would normally be included on Council agendas at various points in the year. This was to ensure that best use was made of the increase from four to five Council meetings to be held from 2017-18.

17/M33 PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS

The President and Vice-Chancellor drew Council's attention to the following:

- a. The Higher Education and Research Bill had now been passed in Parliament, with a number of amendments that had generally been welcomed by the sector. The Teaching Excellence Framework and the Office for Students would both now proceed;
- b. although formal Brexit negotiations were now underway within Europe, UK universities were still concerned by the risks of a prolonged hiatus, particularly the impact this would have, for example, on research grant applications and funding decisions;
- c. early stage discussions were underway with City Council planning officers to obtain their initial feedback on the University's proposed development at Freemen's Common (17/M44 refers);
- d. with regard to student recruitment for 2017 entry, the University was moving closer to its forecast position for this point in the cycle, with Home/EU UG applications and PGT applications from China looking particularly buoyant.

17/M34 COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

Council received a presentation from the Head of the College of Science and Engineering, Professor Paul Monks, on the current strategic direction, challenges and achievements in the College.

Council noted that the main strategic priorities for the College were to improve performance at the individual and departmental level, and in research; to maintain and improve the student experience; to enhance the College's physical estate and infrastructure through the proposed new multi-disciplinary laboratory (MDL); and to deliver greater impact in enterprise and industrial activity.

The Head of College outlined the programme of activities that were in place to address these priorities, and the breadth of challenges for the year ahead, some of which were continuing to evolve. There was some emerging anecdotal evidence, for example, that uncertainty over the direction and outcome of Brexit negotiations was leading to a decline in scientific partnership opportunities between the UK and the EU.

17/M35 **STUDENTS' UNION**

Council received a presentation from the outgoing President of the Students' Union, Rachel Holland, reflecting on her two years in office.

Council noted the prominence of the widening participation agenda within the Unions' overall programme of work, and the efforts that were being made to boost students' confidence and levels of participation in certain activities – particularly sports – that tended traditionally to be targeted at a narrow audience. Council was also pleased to note the various initiatives that were being taken, in liaison with the University where appropriate, to address current national challenges and concerns regarding student wellbeing and mental health issues (minute 17/M40 also refers).

Council recorded its appreciation and best wishes to Rachel Holland, who would stand down from the position of President of the Students' Union at the end of June 2017, and was therefore attending her last full meeting of Council.

17/M36 **COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Council considered the unreserved report of a meeting of the Council Advisory Committee held on 31 March 2017.

Council noted that the Committee had reflected on its original intended purpose of providing a platform for senior management to gain early feedback and challenge from lay members on emerging strategic thinking and direction. The Committee had agreed that it was important to provide such a platform on an ongoing basis, although the timing of the need for meetings was proving difficult to predict, and they would operate on an 'if required' basis in 2017-18.

17/M37 **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Council considered the University's Performance Assessment Dashboard mid-year update for May 2017, with a supporting set of eight Strategic KPI Reports, one for each Strategy.

Council noted that many of the KPI measures included data that updated only on an annual basis, but any measures which had updated since the last report, in November 2016, had been incorporated. With regard to material changes since the last report, **Council noted** that the University's research income had improved within its comparative peer group. In particular, the proportion of research income from overseas sources had risen, with performance against sector and peers both improving.

Council welcomed the scope of the mid-year update and the detailed commentary it provided on the University's performance, but was mindful of the amount of work involved to produce it, especially having noted that many measures did not update

at the mid-year point. With this in mind, **Council suggested** that, once the KPI reporting process had become fully established, consideration might be given in the longer term to producing the mid-year report on a more streamlined 'by exception' or 'material changes' basis.

17/M38 **HEFCE'S ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL RISK – ANNUAL PROVIDER REVIEW 2016-2017**

Council considered the outcome of HEFCE's Annual Provider Review (previously known as the Annual Assessment of Institutional Risk) of the University of Leicester for 2016-2017. Outcomes of the review were reported in two parts:

- a. Financial sustainability, good management and governance matters, where the University was 'not at higher risk', with no action required; and
- b. Quality and standards matters, where the University 'meets requirements', with no action required.

Council noted that part b) above was a new feature of the assessment process for 2016-17, and the outcome would be made publicly available by HEFCE.

17/M39 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted:

- a. Dates and times of remaining Council meetings in 2016-17:

Thursday 8 June 2017 9.30am-4.30pm (Awayday)
Wednesday 5 July 2017 at 4pm ('Ordinary' meeting)

- b. Dates and times of Council meetings in 2017-18:

Monday 25 September 2017 at 4pm
Wednesday 22 November 2017 at 4pm (dinner with lay members afterwards)
Wednesday 21 March 2018 at 4pm (**originally Wednesday 14 March**)
Thursday 19 April 2018 (Awayday)
Monday 14 May 2018 at 4pm
Wednesday 11 July 2018 at 4pm (**originally Wednesday 4 July**)

CHAIR

Duration of meeting (Unreserved and Reserved Business): 3 hours and 20 minutes