

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on
Thursday 17 March 2016

Present:

Dr B Towle (Chair)

Mr P Ash	Dr D Lockett
Professor M Barstow	Mr D Moore
Professor P Boyle	Mr A Morgan
Professor J Coleman	Professor M Peel
Mr G Dixon	Professor E Raven
Mr M Hindle	Dr N Reed
Ms R Holland	Dr V Sharma
Mr I Johnson	Ms C Thorogood
Mr P Lawson	Mr L Trotman

In attendance: Mr D Hall (Secretary), Mr M Riddleston, Ms K Bradley, Mr A Vinick (for 16/M3), Ms L Bailey (for 16/M6), and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary).

Apologies for absence were received from Professor P Baker, Judge A Hampton, Professor J Ketley, Professor M Lester and Dr S Macleod .

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

16/M1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No personal interests were declared by members in relation to any items of business to be transacted at this meeting.

16/M2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2015. **Council approved** the minutes as an accurate record. There was no business to be dealt with under matters arising.

16/M3 **STRATEGIC FUNDRAISING**

The Acting Director of Development presented the Annual Report of the Strategic Fundraising Committee, including the work of the Development and Alumni Relations Office, covering 2014-5 and the first half of the 2015-16 financial year. **Council noted** that the Committee's terms of reference had been updated in 2015, following its reconstitution in 2014 to include members of the former Development Board.

Council reviewed the key fundraising activities and donations received by the University in the period covered by the report. New philanthropic funds in 2014-15 totalled £2.65 million from 1,553 donors, including 1,006 alumni, and the number of donors had increased by 39% year-on-year to 2,058. New funds raised to date in 2015-16 totalled more than £1.04 million, in line with the full-year target.

Council was reminded that due diligence was undertaken for philanthropic donations, with 16 due diligence requests completed during the period of the report, and a further 15 pending. No gifts or pledges involving sensitivity or doubt had needed to be referred to Council during the period.

Council noted that there was significant potential for the University to expand its international fundraising opportunities, with some possible realignment of current activities, and for there to be closer integration with the work of the Alumni Association. The external connections and networks of Council members was an important resource, and it was hoped that there would be an early opportunity for members to meet the University's new Director of External Relations, who was due to take up her duties after Easter.

16/M4 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

The Chair reported that the President and Vice-Chancellor had been invited to participate in a Universities UK delegation to Brussels between 5-7 July 2016, linked to the outcome of the EU Referendum vote on 23 June.

Given the potential significance of the vote for the UK HE sector **Council agreed** to explore the possibility of moving its own meeting from Wednesday 6 July so that Professor Boyle would be able to attend both events [ACTION: NEIL COX, see also 16/M17].

16/M5 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor informed Council that:

- a. the QAA's interim report on the quality of the University's academic standards and students' learning opportunities was very positive, with commendations received in four particular areas. **Council recorded** its appreciation for the work of Professor Jon Scott and staff in the Quality Office for helping to achieve such a positive outcome;
- b. Leicester's position in the latest international university rankings was holding up well, despite its decline in recent UK league tables;
- c. work was about to start to redevelop the de-commissioned central car park area opposite the Percy Gee Building, which would significantly improve the feel of the main campus.

16/M6 **DIGITAL STRATEGY**

Council considered the University's new 'digital' strategy for ensuring appropriate use of technology in the enhancement of learning and teaching, innovative research, and efficient management and administrative processes.

Council noted that the 'digital by default' principle which underpinned the strategy would require significant cultural change to achieve the necessary buy-in and compliance across the University. A senior academic lead would be appointed to promote and champion the implementation of the strategy within the academic community.

Council accepted that further work was needed to assess the deliverability of all aspects of the strategy within the likely envelope of resources and the load on key individuals. Some upfront expenditure would be required – and was already underway in respect of certain ‘quick deliverables’ - in order to secure longer term objectives for efficiency and effectiveness.

Council approved the new Digital Strategy, noting that it had also been endorsed by the Council Advisory Committee and by Senate.

16/M7 **PEOPLE STRATEGY**

Council considered the new ‘people’ strategy for ensuring that the University was an attractive place to work and provided an encouraging, supportive and rewarding environment for staff.

Council noted that the strategy required an ambitious and challenging level of cultural change, which would need to be managed in a realistic and positive way, and its successful implementation would be of fundamental importance to the long term success and sustainability of the University. Lay members of Council had significant collective experience of addressing such challenges in a range of organisations, and this experience was available for the University to draw upon as required.

Council welcomed the comprehensive statement of intent represented by the strategy, particularly with regard to its clarity around the setting of clear and realistic performance expectations for all members of staff at all levels of the organisation. **Council noted** that, although written for the longer term, the strategy would be refined to address developing issues as required, for example prominent themes emerging from the latest staff survey.

Council acknowledged that it was unfortunate timing to be launching the Strategy within the current challenging financial environment, and it was important for this context to be properly explained to staff in the University’s communications on the Strategy.

Council approved the new People Strategy, noting that it had also been endorsed by the Council Advisory Committee and by Senate.

16/M8 **COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report of Unreserved business dealt with at a meeting of the Council Advisory Committee held on 7 March 2016. The Committee had endorsed the Digital and People strategies and recommended them for approval by Council (16/M6 and 16/M7 refer).

16/M9 **SENATE**

Council considered a report of a meeting of Senate held on 9 March 2016, noting in particular:

- a. that Senate had endorsed the proposed amendments to the Statutes and Ordinances (15/M86 refers), in order for the University to adopt the title of ‘Registrar and Chief Operating Officer’ in place of ‘Registrar and Secretary’.
Council confirmed its approval for the necessary amendment to be made to

the Ordinances, and for a submission to be made to the Privy Council for approval to make the necessary amendment to the Statutes [ACTION: NEIL COX];

- b. the use of Chair's action, on behalf of both Senate and Council respectively, to approve a recommendation for the award of an honorary degree to an additional candidate whose nomination had emerged subsequent to the recommendations presented and approved at the last meeting;
- c. that Senate had endorsed the Digital and People strategies and recommended them for approval by Council (16/M6 and 16/M7 refer).

16/M10 **FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION 2016-17**

Council received the BIS grant allocation letter to HEFCE for 2016-2017, dated 4 March 2016. **Council noted** that the letter included no major surprises or major new announcements and was broadly in line with the University's expectations. Leicester's own grant letter from HEFCE for 2016-17 was due to arrive on 19 April 2016.

16/M11 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Council considered a written report of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 15 January 2016, and received an oral report of a meeting held on 14 March 2016.

With regard to the meeting of 15 January **Council noted** that the Committee had agreed to work closely with the Students' Union to address certain issues raised by students in relation to ethical investments. The Committee had also considered a report on the implications for the University of an exit from the European Union; the terms of the European Investment Bank Loan were not conditional on the University's location in an EU member state.

With regard to the meeting of 14 March **Council noted** that, in its consideration of financial challenges facing the University and its planned responses, the Committee had emphasized the need for effective monitoring of staff numbers and pay costs, to ensure that savings achieved were not undermined later by 'unplanned' regrowth of the staffing base.

16/M12 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 February 2016.

Council noted that the Audit Committee had received an updated schedule of the University's progress against outstanding action points from completed internal audit reviews. The Committee was pleased to see that of the 238 recommendations originally outstanding some 47% were now complete, compared with only 8% as reported in November 2015.

The Committee had considered a risk management update on the development of local risk registers, presentation of those within the current planning round and the resulting consolidated corporate risk register. The Committee believed that

the University was making good progress in developing a more responsive and strategic approach to risk management, and in addressing specific recommendations from the internal auditors on the format of the risk register.

16/M13 **STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Council considered reports of meetings of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 10 December 2015 and 18 February 2016.

Council noted the opportunity for the work of the Alumni Association to benefit from closer collaboration with the Strategic Fundraising Committee, especially given the imminent arrival of the new Director of External Relations (minute 16/M3 also refers), and the recent appointment of a new Director of Development and Alumni Relations, who would join the University in the summer.

Council was also pleased to note that the Annual Alumni Dinner at Claridge's had been a great success, with over 200 guests attending.

16/M14 **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report of a meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 29 February 2016.

Council noted that, with regard to smoking on campus, the University was about to trial a single all-weather smoking shelter on campus. This followed a number of complaints from staff and students about people smoking close to building entrances, particularly during wet weather.

More widely, consideration was being given to recognizing the role of the University's Safety Office for policing health and safety compliance on campus, not just in advising on matters of health and safety policy.

16/M15 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report of a meeting of the Equality and Diversity Committee held on 3 December 2015.

Council noted that the Committee had received a presentation from the Disability Staff Forum Chairs on significant progress made by the Forum regarding access for people with disabilities to University facilities including food and drink outlets, lifts, toilets and car parks. There were ongoing challenges in relation to such matters as achieving true equality in a group of people who may not be able to work long hours, performance management of staff with reduced outputs for the REF, and the need to review equalities data and disability declarations. The Forum believed that creative solutions to such challenges could be found.

16/M16 **STUDENTS' UNION SABBATICAL ELECTIONS**

Council noted that the outcome of the election of full-time sabbatical officers in the Students' Union, to serve for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, was as follows:

President:	Rachel Holland
Education:	Alex Mitchell
Sports:	Rasteen Boni
Activities:	Dan Schofield
Well-Being:	Harriet Smailes

Professor Mark Peel, appointed by Council as the University's Observer to the elections, reported that following an investigation by the Returning Officer a 'levy' had been applied to the votes received by one candidate, due to an overspending on the maximum sum allowed for campaign expenses. The levy had been applied in accordance with the rules of the SU Constitution, but it had not affected the final outcome of the elections.

16/M17 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Council noted the dates and times of its remaining meetings scheduled for 2015-2016:

Thursday 12 May 2016 (Awayday, 10am to 4.30pm)

Monday 16 May 2016 at 4pm

Monday 4 July 2016 at 4pm (*post-meeting note: new date, moved from original date of Wednesday 6 July, confirmed in the light of 16/M4 above.*)

CHAIR

Duration of meeting (Unreserved and Reserved Business):
2 hours and 35 minutes