

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting held on  
Thursday 19 March 2015

<b>Present:</b>	Dr B Towle (Chair)	
	The President and Vice-Chancellor	Mr D Moore
	Mr P Ash	Mr A Morgan
	Professor M Barstow	Professor M Peel
	Mr G Dixon	Professor E Raven
	Mr I Johnson	Dr M Rawlinson
	Mr M Hindle	Dr N Reed
	Mr I Johnson	Mr M Rubin
	Professor J Ketley	Dr V Sharma
	Mr P Lawson	Professor M Thompson
	Professor M Lester	Ms C Thorogood

**In attendance:** the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance, the Director of Estates, the Director of Development (for 15/M3 only) and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary).

**Apologies for absence** were received from Judge A Hampton, Dr D Lockett, Mr L Trotman and Professor D Wynford-Thomas.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

15/M1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The President and Vice-Chancellor, Mr Moore and Mr Morgan declared an interest as Directors of College Court Conference Centre Limited. Mr Rubin and Dr Reed declared an interest as Trustees of the Students' Union.

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

Council considered the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014.

**Council approved** the minutes, subject to two minor corrections. There were no matters arising.

15/M3 **FUNDRAISING**

The Director of Development presented the Annual Report of the Strategic Fundraising Committee for 2013-14, also covering the first half of the 2014-15 financial year. **Council noted** the Committee's current terms of reference, and that it had been reconstituted in 2014 to include members of the former Development Board.

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Council reviewed the key fundraising activities and donations received by the University in the period covered by the report. New philanthropic funds totalled £2.7 million in 2013-14 and the number of donors had increased by 39% year-on-year to 2,058. New funds raised to date in 2014-15 totalled more than £1.5 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 8 pending. No gifts or pledges involving sensitivity or doubt had needed to be referred to Council during the period.

**Council noted** that there was potential for the University to pursue international fundraising opportunities, although this would require some supporting investment and possible realignment of current activities.

**Council congratulated** the Development Team on winning the HEIST Gold Award for the University's 'Lost Alumni' project and an Institute of Fundraising Award for its successful approach to prospect research.

#### 15/M4 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

Following Council's Strategic Awayday held on 27 February 2015 the Chair updated members on the timeline for completion of the University's overall *Strategic Conversation*. The cycle of workshops and surveys involving staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders would be mostly complete by the end of April, and drafting of the new strategic plan would commence in early May. The Ranmore Consultants would present a progress report to the Council meeting on 18 May 2015, and the strategic plan would be formally presented and recommended for approval by Council at the meeting on 8 July 2015.

**Council noted** details of the remit of the various task and finish groups that been established to explore and bring forward recommendations on specific themes in the *Strategic Conversation*.

#### 15/M5 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

The President and Vice-Chancellor emphasised the efforts that were being made by the University to ensure that the *Strategic Conversation* was conducted in an open and transparent manner, with frank discussion of the University's strengths and weaknesses. Some of these might not have been expressed directly to the University community in the past, and it was important for their emergence at this time to be handled in a positive and constructive way. With the necessary leadership and cultural change the University was well placed to build on its strengths and to develop a renewed sense of strategic direction.

#### 15/M6 **FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN ENGLAND 2015-2016**

Council considered the BIS grant letter to HEFCE for 2015-2016. **Council noted** that the total funding allocation to HEFCE for that year was broadly unchanged from the indicative allocation announced a year ago. However, there was no indication of expected funding levels in the post-election period from 2016-17, which underlined the uncertainty of future funding scenarios and the sector's vulnerability to government spending review.

**Council noted** that, based on known information at this stage, the funding announcement was consistent with the University's grant assumptions set out for the current planning cycle. The institution's own detailed grant letter would be received at the end of March 2015 and this would be presented to Council, with an analysis of the implications, at the next meeting.

15/M7 **SENATE**

Council considered and noted a report of a meeting of Senate held on 11 March 2015, incorporating reports of the Enterprise Policy Committee, Staffing Policy Committee and the Information and Communications Technology Committee. There were no matters requiring approval by Council on this occasion.

With regard to the University's research and enterprise activities, and relevant metrics of performance, **Council noted** that this would be a standing item on the agenda for future meetings of Senate.

15/M8 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Council considered and noted a report of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 30 January 2015. There were no matters requiring approval by Council on this occasion.

15/M9 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Council considered a report of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on 17 February 2015. There were no matters requiring approval by Council on this occasion.

With regard to a number of recent internal audit reviews issued with 'partial assurance', **Council noted** that the new internal auditors were adopting a challenging approach across a broad range of areas, and some of their findings were unexpected based on previous levels of assurance obtained. To achieve compliance with the new Public Sector Internal Audit Standard the internal auditors had also implemented changes to the levels of assurance provided by their reviews, and to the grading of their audit recommendations.

15/M10 **ESTATES AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

Council considered the report of a meeting of the Estates and Infrastructure Strategy Committee held on 4 March 2015.

**Council noted** that, subject to Council approving the University's overarching strategic plan at its meeting on 8 July 2015, a supporting draft estates strategy would be presented by the end of the year. In the meantime the commencement of new major capital projects, including the redevelopment of the Charles Wilson Building, would be placed on hold. This would not affect the drawdown of the European Investment Bank loan funds required for the capital projects already completed.

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15/M11 **STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

Council received and noted reports of meetings of the Standing Committee of the Alumni Association held on 11 December 2014 and 19 February 2015.

15/M12 **HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**Council received and noted** a report of a meeting of the Health and Safety Committee held on 2 March 2015.

15/M13 **RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE, SPRING 2015**

Council considered the University's corporate strategic risk register as updated in spring 2015. **Council noted** that the format of the risk register had been further refined since the last meeting, to achieve greater focus on High/Critical risks and to provide more concise and specific information on the key controls and improvement actions and progress against these.

Council welcomed the improvements made so far to the format of the risk register. Council acknowledged that further work would be needed in due course to reflect material risks to the emerging objectives in the University's new strategic plan, including the University's appetite for risk, and to ensure that the Target Risk Reduction Dates were being applied consistently.

Council expressed some concern that the use of the terms *Strategic Area Owner*, *Strategic Area Risk Manager* and *Risk Owner* lacked clarity in terms of where accountability for the mitigation of individual risks was ultimately located, particularly as some risks featured multiple risk owners. The usefulness and transparency of this approach, which had been formulated in response to recommendations from the internal auditors, was already the subject of debate by senior management.

One new 'Critical' risk added to the risk register in spring 2015 was discussed by Council under Reserved Business (minute 15/M21 refers).

15/M14 **STUDENTS' UNION SABBATICAL ELECTIONS 2015**

**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 2015 to 30 June 2016, was as follows:

President:	Rachel Holland
Education Officer:	Lily Patrick
Engagement Officer:	Alex Mitchell
Student Development Officer:	Ayesha Hamilton
Well-Being Officer:	Roisin Gallagher

**Council welcomed** the improved gender balance of the sabbatical team.

Professor Mark Thompson, appointed by Council as the University's 'Observer', confirmed that no matters of concern had been reported to him in relation to the conduct of the elections.

15/M15 **UNIVERSITY SEAL**

**Council noted** the affixing of the University seal to the documents listed in Appendix 15/M15 App attached to the signed copy of these minutes.

15/M16 **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Council noted** the dates and times of the remaining meetings scheduled for 2014-2015:

Monday 18 May 2015 at 4pm  
Wednesday 8 July 2015 at 4pm

CHAIR

Duration of meeting (including Reserved Business): 2 hours and 15 minutes