

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

COURT

Minutes of the Sixty-Second Annual meeting of Court held on Friday 15 February 2019

Present:	The Rt Hon the Lord Willetts (Chancellor)	
	Mr G Arthur	Dr J Higgins
	Mrs J Arthur	Mr B Hindocha
	Mr P Ash	Very Rev Dr D Hole
	Mr E Baines	Mr D James
	Dr R Bettles	Mr J Kapasi
	Mr G Bodiwala	Mr M Kapur
	Mrs S Bowie	Dr D G Lewis
	Professor P Boyle	Mrs H Lewis
	Dr J Bourne	Dr A Linsell
	His Hon Judge D Brunning	Mr A Majithia
	Professor E Burke	Mr D Moore
	Cllr Mr D Carter	Cllr Mr O O'Shea
	Mr S de Looze	Mrs L Perham
	His Hon Judge G Dickinson	Professor K Pounds
	Mr G Dixon	Dr N Reed
	Mr H Doyle	Mr P Rivlin
	Ms M Duke	Professor S Sharma
	Mrs S Forsyth	Dr V Sharma
	Dr J Foster	Mr D Tams
	Dr S Furness	Dr B Towle
	Professor R Graham-Brown	Mr A Wessel
	Jennifer, Lady Gretton	Mrs C Wessel
	Dr R Hake	Dr A Weston
	Mr D Hall	Mr D Woodhead
	Mr B Hellyer	

In attendance: Mr M Riddleston (Chief Financial Officer, University of Leicester); Mr B Friar, Ms A Carver, Ms L Jones, Ms R Faint, Ms L Woodhouse and Mr B Youngwood (all from the Division of External Relations, University of Leicester); Professor E Bunce (Professor of Planetary Plasma Physics, University of Leicester); and Mr N Cox (Assistant Secretary to Council and Court, University of Leicester).

Apologies for absence were received from those members of Court whose names are listed in the Appendix attached to these minutes.

19/M1 **COURTESIES**

Before the formal business commenced, the Chair of Council warmly welcomed Lord Willetts, the University's seventh Chancellor, to his first Annual Meeting of Court.

19/M2 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members of Court Mehmooda Duke and Vijay Sharma declared an interest in and left the meeting for the duration of the business recorded under 19/M5 below.

19/M3 MINUTES

Court formally received the minutes of the sixty-first Annual Meeting, held on 9 February 2018.

19/M4 MEMBERSHIP OF COURT

Court received the current list of the Full Members of Court, as at 1 February 2019. **Court noted** that the current list was presented each year, at the Annual Meeting, and the complete and updated Full and Associate membership lists could also be viewed at any time on the University's website.

19/M5 COURT APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL

Court noted that Full Members of Court Mehmooda Duke and Vijay Sharma would reach the end of their current three-year terms as members of the University Council, appointed by the Court, on 31 July 2019, having served on Council for a total to date of three years and six years respectively.

Court approved a recommendation from the University's Nominations Committee that Mehmooda Duke and Vijay Sharma both be reappointed to serve as members of the University Council, under *Statute 4.1c: Membership of the Council*, for a further three-year term to run from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022.

19/M6 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

Court formally received the University's audited financial statements for the last financial year, covering the period from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2018. The statements had been approved by the Council, as the University's governing body, and submitted to the Office for Students, the new regulator for universities. The statements included a strategic overview report of the institution's activities and highlights over the last year.

Court noted that in the year to 31 July 2018 the University's income had totalled £330 million, an increase of 8% on the previous year, with a surplus of £3.6 million. Tuition fees had accounted for 52% of total income, and 2017-18 had seen the University's largest campus-based student intake to date. Research income had increased by 5% and awards for new grants had risen by 25% to £75 million. Donations and endowment income was £5.1 million in the year. The University had a very clear focus on the need to generate additional cash for its strategic investment programme. Long-term sustainability was monitored constantly by Council and senior management, and this key function had assumed even greater significance in the current climate of uncertainty over possible changes to the tuition fee regime and the impact of Brexit. See also under 19/M7 below.

19/M7 ANNUAL PRESENTATION BY THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

The University's President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Boyle, made his fifth annual presentation to Court.

In the course of a wide ranging review of developments across the HE sector and the University during the last twelve months, the President and Vice-Chancellor reflected in particular on:

- The possible outcomes of the ongoing Augar review of the tuition fee regime, with rumours of a reduction in tuition fees, the introduction of variable fees, and of student loans not being available to those with less than 3Ds at A level. This had the potential to cause major structural changes to the university sector
- Continued negative publicity about the higher education sector, in such areas as the use of unconditional offers, value for money, freedom of speech on campus, vice-chancellors' pay and remuneration, student mental health, and the general governance framework
- Changes to the universities' national pension scheme, with the potential for national strike action and increased costs for the University
- A challenging environment for student recruitment, with the impact of a fall in the University's performance in league tables coinciding with the 'demographic dip' in the number of 18-20 year olds, and aggressive expansion by Russell group and teaching-focused universities
- The continued uncertainty surrounding Brexit, and the challenges that this was presenting for all universities in terms of planning for the possible future impact on student recruitment, and sources and levels of research income. In the short term the University was supporting its EU members of staff and their families with appropriate legal and other advice.

The President and Vice-Chancellor explained that in its immediate response to this very uncertain and volatile background the University was focusing on its financial and student recruitment prospects as they were currently known, rather than being diverted by the constant speculation around the possible implications of the various longer term factors referred to above. To this end an ongoing programme of new initiatives was being pursued on many different levels, including:

- a vision for Education Excellence, to improve the student learning experience across a wide range of indicators
- a suite of new programmes, with an enhanced focus on student support, peer mentoring and employability
- a transformed teaching curriculum, with standardised module lengths, increased contact hours and embedded employability skills
- a major programme of campus redevelopment, with a new home for the School of Business at Brookfield House, an expansion of the Percy Gee Building, and a new student village and teaching and learning centre on the Freeman's Common site
- a wide-ranging agenda to promote and enhance the University's profile in research, enterprise and business innovation, with strong growth in awards already being achieved
- development of the digital campus to improve IT facilities and functionality for staff and students
- a new marketing campaign for student recruitment, with new courses, revamped open days and a focus on offer conversion.

19/M8 'MISSION TO MERCURY'

Court received a presentation from Emma Bunce, Professor of Planetary Plasma Physics at the University, on Leicester's involvement with the recently launched BepiColombo 'Mission to Mercury'. This exciting joint venture of the European and Japanese space agencies was the first return to Mercury since Mariner 10's visits in the 1970's.

The spacecraft was launched in October 2018 and was due to enter orbit around Mercury in 2025. Central to the mission was the inclusion of the ground-breaking MIXS instrument, which was the first imaging x-ray telescope to be sent to another planetary body. Designed and built at the University of Leicester, MIXS would analyse the surface of Mercury and reveal the composition of its rocks. This would help to address questions about the planet that had puzzled scientists for almost half a century, such as why Mercury had a magnetic field when Venus and Mars did not, and why Mercury was so much denser than any other planet.

19/M9 COURTESIES

The President and Vice-Chancellor informed Court that this would be Dr Bridget Towle's last Annual Meeting of Court, in her capacity as Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, as she would be retiring from Council in July 2019. As a lay member of Council Dr Towle had been closely involved with the governance of the University for almost 20 years, including serving as Treasurer between 2009 and 2013, and as Chair of Council for the last six years. Speaking on behalf of the Court, the Council and the wider University community, Professor Boyle thanked Dr Towle for her outstanding and dedicated contribution over such a long period. His words were greeted with sustained and warm applause from all those present.

CHAIR

Duration of meeting: One hour and 55 minutes

At the conclusion of the formal business of the meeting, members gathered outside the Council Room for the unveiling of an official portrait of The Rt Hon The Lord Bruce Grocott, who served as the University's sixth chancellor between 2013-2018. Lord Grocott was in attendance for the unveiling.