

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

MEETING OF SENATE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Wednesday 6 May 2015**

Present: The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Professor Ainley	Professor Lawson
Professor Andrew	Professor Lees (vice Professor Page)
Dr Aissaoui	Professor Lester
Mr Athwal	Dr Lewis
Professor Atkinson	Professor Lunt
Mrs Bailey	Dr Macleod
Dr Barber	Dr Maltby
Professor Barstow	Dr Marsh
Professor Beck	Professor Marshall
Dr Cameron (vice Professor Lilley)	Dr Norman
Professor Challiss	Professor Pan
Professor Chapman	Dr Parry
Professor Coffey	Professor Peel
Professor Coleman	Professor Phythian
Professor Davidchack	Professor Pritchard
Professor Du Bois	Professor Raven
Professor England	Professor Samani
Professor Foxhall	Professor Schurer
Professor Fry	Professor Schwabe
Dr Gibson	Dr Shaw
Professor Hainsworth	Ms Taylor
Professor Hall	Professor Thompson
Professor Heckel	Professor Wallace
Professor Hughes	Professor Wynford –Thomas
Professor Ketley	
Professor King	Mr Nikolov

In attendance: Director of Finance, Director of Estates and Facilities Management, Professor Goodhall, Registrar and Secretary (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

Apologies for Absence were received from Professor Fulcher, Professor Lilley, Professor Page and Professor Wilson

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

15/M13 **PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

a) Strategic Conversation

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported on the progress of the Strategic Conversation. Senate noted the scope of the consultation that had taken place with staff, students and other internal and external stakeholders. The Strategic Plan was due to be presented to Council for approval on 8 July, and would be formally launched in

September 2015. Senate also noted that a number of the Task and Finish Groups which had been created to consider a range of key themes within the institutions were presenting their reports to the University Leadership Team for consideration within the wider development of the Strategic Plan.

The President and Vice-Chancellor thanked members of Senate for their valuable input into the Strategic Conversation thus far.

b) Recruitment

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that ULT was monitoring data relating to student recruitment for 2015/16. Senate noted that the University was seeking to increase its undergraduate intake by a minimum of 3%, with the potential for further expansion under consideration.

The President and Vice-Chancellor encouraged all members of Senate to work within their Colleges and engage positively with the Division of External Relations wherever possible in the process of target setting and student recruitment.

c) Senior Management Team

The President and Vice-Chancellor outlined amendments to the senior management team of the University.

The role of Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor would be replaced and expanded through creation of the new role of Provost. The Provost would act as deputy to the President and Vice-Chancellor, and would have additional responsibilities for implementing the strategic plan, inter-College collaboration, career enhancement and planning. The role would be advertised internally shortly.

Senate noted that the recruitment process for a new Head of the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology was close to completion, that the recruitment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) was underway, and that an external recruitment process would shortly commence for a new Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise). An internal recruitment process would commence shortly for a further new appointment subject to Senate's approval of the proposals discussed under M14 below. The Director of Human Resources would also join ULT.

15/M14

TASK AND FINISH GROUP: UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

Senate considered a paper from the Task and Finish Group which contained a series of recommendations for the future academic structure of the University.

The Task and Finish Group had undertaken detailed consultation with key stakeholders including heads of college, heads of academic departments and directors of college administration. The Group had analysed the benefits and potential issues associated with a continuation of the current structure and possible alternatives such as a Schools model. Feedback had demonstrated a general level of satisfaction with the College structure, whereas a School model received less support. The Group therefore recommended maintaining the College structure, but to merge the College of Arts, Humanities and Law and the College of Social Science.

Senate considered the proposal in detail. It was proposed that a merger presented opportunities to enhance the work that was already taking place in each College with an emphasis upon the complementary nature of the disciplines involved.

Interdisciplinarity interactions between the two colleges in research and teaching already exist. Removal of the structural boundary would strengthen these links and support developments such as teaching Pathways and thematic research. The proposal would also provide balance between the Colleges in terms of staff numbers and reduce administrative overheads. The Students' Union reported that consultation within the student body had demonstrated a desire for greater interdisciplinary opportunities, and therefore strongly supported the proposals.

Senate also discussed whether the other two Colleges (Science and Engineering and Medicine, Biological Sciences and Psychology) should be considered for merger. It was reported that the decision relating to Social Science and Arts, Humanities and Law had been on the basis of the genuinely cognate nature of the disciplines involved, which did not exist to an equivalent degree in the other pair of Colleges. Senate discussed whether a detailed financial assessment of the benefits of merger was required. However, it was noted that there were limited financial costs of such a merger. It was also noted that the financial model for the University as a whole was under consideration through a separate task and finish group, and Senate noted that the points raised relating to the current College resource structure would be a key element of that Group's recommendations.

The Group had also considered the current number and distribution of academic departments. Whilst there were benefits to retaining disciplinary distinctiveness, feedback indicated a view that the current number and size range of departments was unsustainable, and that the research activities of the institution may be enhanced by the regrouping of certain research clusters and themes. The Group recommended a phased reduction in the overall number of academic departments from 32 to around 20, via a carefully considered bottom-up process of merger or re-alignment.

Senate discussed the proposals. It was noted that a number of departments were already exploring the opportunities for merger, and Senate agreed that it was helpful to approach this issue at departmental level in order to involve the full academic community. Senate noted that the future location of any new academic units would be based on the most appropriate disciplinary fit.

Following detailed consideration, Senate agreed to **approve** the proposals for the merger of the College of Arts, Humanities and Law and the College of Social Science, and to **approve** the proposals for a phased reduction in the number of academic departments. An internal process for a new Head of College would commence shortly.

15/M15

TASK AND FINISH GROUP: CAREER ENHANCEMENT

Senate considered a report and a series of recommendations from the Task and Finish Group which had considered the issue of Career Enhancement for staff of the University.

The proposals were the result of a series of consultations with staff and stakeholders throughout the institution and addressed a wide range of processes including appraisal, merit and reward, support for specific staff groups, retention and leadership. The paper set a series of short, medium and long term priorities to be in place by October 2016, and Senate noted that the development of each policy contributing towards the overall strategy would be subject to a process of consultation.

One of the immediate short term priorities was the establishment of a clearer role description and the development of a training programme for Heads of Academic and

Professional Services Departments. The first cohort would commence this programme in September 2015. Senate welcomed this proposal, and noted that there was an opportunity to further exploit the skills and expertise developed by Heads of Department during their period of office, particularly to support incoming Heads.

Senate supported all of the recommendations, but noted that these were substantial and wide ranging. The task and finish group would produce a series of reports on work in progress, each of which would review the priorities and schedule for the next period. Senate was assured that the career development needs of research-dominant staff would be addressed as part of this review process. It was also noted that career development was relevant to the work of the Task and Finish Group considering the development of the University's research agenda and, in particular, the preparations for REF 2020. Senate agreed that the relevant aspects of the work of the two groups should be considered together in order to ensure a coherent approach to the support and progression for research staff.

Senate welcomed and **approved** the proposals, and thanked the members of the Group for the production of such a comprehensive structure for career enhancement within the institution.

15/M16 **TASK AND FINISH GROUP: ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY**

Senate considered a paper and received a presentation from the Registrar and Secretary regarding the Committee structure of the University, and principles for how this may be amended going forwards.

Senate noted that although the introduction of the College system had simplified the University's governance framework, there remained in places a lack of clarity over roles and lines of authority, and that there were opportunities for activities to be reorganised in a more effective manner. Whilst it was agreed that Committees remained a vital mechanism for effective governance, Senate further agreed that the Strategic Conversation offered an opportunity to review the current structure to ensure that an appropriate balance was achieved between collective oversight and the ability to respond in an agile manner to a changing educational landscape.

The paper proposed a series of principles to underpin reconsideration of the University's governance framework. These included the reduction of the number of committees, the establishment of clearer lines of delegation and authority and that there should be some further delegation of responsibility to senior staff. It was suggested that the establishment of a new joint Committee of Senate and Council, to oversee the implementation of the University strategy and bring together key finance and estates functions, might be more effective than the existing separate committees. Senate also discussed the 'dual assurance' model used by some universities which identifies specific portfolios for members of council.

Senate agreed that it would be helpful to establish clear protocols for consultation to ensure that both the academic and administrative aspects of any decision were understood. It was also agreed that the reflection of the respective lines of authority in a comprehensive schedule of delegation would ensure a collective understanding of responsibility, inform the composition of each group and also make clear the mechanisms for members of the University to raise issues through the University.

Senate **endorsed** the principles set out in the paper and that amendments to the governance structure should be considered further. It was noted that the paper would

be presented to the next meeting of Council for consideration, and that detailed proposals for changes to the governance structure would be presented to Senate and Council in due course.

Duration of Meeting: One hour and forty five minutes