

**UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER**

**MEETING OF SENATE**

**Minutes of a meeting held on  
Wednesday 9 March 2016**

Present: The President and Vice-Chancellor (Chair)

Professor Abbott (vice Professor Raven)	Dr James
Mr Athwal	Dr Jones (vice Professor Pritchard)
Professor Atkinson	Professor Ketley
Professor Baker	Dr Macleod
Professor Barstow	Professor Martin
Dr Cameron	Dr Norman
Professor Coffey	Professor O'Brien
Professor Coleman	Professor Pan
Professor Davidchack	Dr Parry
Dr Dickinson	Professor Peel
Professor Dixon	Professor Phythian
Professor England	Professor Schwabe
Professor Fulcher	Professor Scott
Dr Gibson	Dr Shaw
Professor Gillespie	Dr Tansey
Professor Heckel	Dr Thomas
Professor Hughes	Professor Wood
	Ms Patrick

**In attendance:** Mr C Brain (Unite), Ms P Lorber (Unison), Mr G Reay, Director of Finance, Director of Human Resources, Registrar and Secretary, Academic Registrar (Secretary) and Mr A Petersen (Assistant Secretary)

**Apologies for Absence** were received from Professor Andrew, Mrs Bailey, Professor Du Bois, Professor Hainsworth, Ms Holland, Professor London, Dr Maltby, Professor Marshall, Professor Pritchard, Professor Raven, Professor Samani, Ms Taylor and Professor Wallace

**UNRESERVED BUSINESS**

16/M1 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Senate considered the minutes of the meetings that had taken place on 18 November 2015.

Senate **approved** the minutes as a correct record.

16/M2 **MATTERS ARISING**

No matters arising were identified that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

16/M3 **PRESIDENT AND VICE CHANCELLOR'S BUSINESS**

## (a) Honorary Degree

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that he had taken action on behalf of Senate to approve the recommendation for the award of an honorary degree to Major Tim Peake.

## (b) Teaching Excellence Framework

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that Professor Jon Scott, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) had been appointed to sit on a Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Board considering the implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework.

## (c) European Union Referendum

The President and Vice-Chancellor reported that Universities UK was undertaking a campaign for the UK to remain within the European Union in the upcoming referendum. Senate noted that an exit from the EU would have significant implications for student and staff mobility and for research funding. The President and Vice-Chancellor highlighted the importance of encouraging students to register and vote in the referendum.

16/M4 **STRATEGY AND POLICY**

## (a) Discovery Enabling People Strategy

Senate received a presentation from the Director of Human Resources regarding the Discovering People Strategy. The development of the Strategy had built upon the work of the Task and Finish Group which had considered the development and enhancement of careers at the University.

The Strategic Conversation had demonstrated a desire to change the organisational culture of the institution and the core of the Strategy was to make the University of Leicester a great place to work, where colleagues felt supported and valued. The core of the Strategy was a series of commitments namely:

- Attracting the best people
- Valuing equality and enhancing diversity
- Nurturing and developing people
- Health and wellbeing
- Embracing change, innovation and learning
- Celebrating and recognising success

Senate noted that that a series of actions were being taken in line with these commitments including the delivery of the Leadership Framework and the development of a new framework for performance and development discussions. The Strategy included a series of measures of success including improving diversity and achieving 100% completion of performance and development discussions. Senate also noted that the Staff Survey that was underway would provide a baseline dataset against which to measure the success of the Strategy going forward.

Senate welcomed the document and **endorsed** the Discovering People Strategy for submission to Council.

Senate considered the recent publication of data relating to the gender pay gap at the University. Senate noted that action had been taken on this issue through the engagement of an external company to undertake a benchmarking exercise against sector peers and also examine internal sources such as data from merit and award rounds and the circumstances within individual disciplines.

Senate noted that the presentation of the data by the Times Higher Education did not take account of the commitments already in place from the University in terms of engagement with campaigns such as HeforShe, and that this should be highlighted in the University's response.

(b) Discovery Enabling Digital Strategy

Senate received a draft of the Discovery Enabling Digital Strategy, introduced by the Registrar and Chief Operating Officer.

Senate noted that the Strategy aspired to ensure that the experience of staff, students and visitors on campus and in the residences was digital by default. It was noted that the pace of technological change and managing future student and staff expectations in this regard was a challenge for all institutions, and the Strategy was designed to provide a framework but remain sufficiently dynamic to allow further development.

The Strategy included a series of measures by which success would be judged including the presence and availability of digital resources to staff, the extent to which members of the University engaged with digital resources and the impact that this had on the operation of the institution.

Senate welcomed the development of the document, however agreed that it would be helpful to expand the measures in order to more clearly articulate what implementation of the strategy would mean for individual members of staff and how they engaged with digital resources. It was also noted that it would be helpful to provide some specific examples of institution-wide digital developments, for example the implementation of electronic marking.

Senate welcomed the Digital Strategy and **endorsed** its submission to Council.

(c) Creation of the School of Arts

Senate considered a paper proposing a title for the newly created School incorporating the previous School of English, School of Modern Languages and the Department of History of Art and Film. Senate noted that the establishment of the new School had been approved at its previous meeting (15M/M30 (b) refers) and that the paper proposed the new unit be entitled the School of Arts.

Senate **approved** the proposal.

(d) Amendment to Ordinances

Senate considered minor amendments to Ordinances and Statutes to reflect the change of title of the 'Registrar and Secretary' to become the more widely understood and business oriented title 'Registrar and Chief Operating Officer'.

Senate **endorsed** the proposals for amendments to the Ordinances and Statutes of the University for consideration by Council and the Privy Council.

**16/M5 RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE**

Senate received a presentation from Professor Abbott regarding student enterprise. Senate noted that the development of student enterprise was directly informed by the Strategic Plan in order to create an enterprise and discovery led culture.

Senate noted that opportunities for enterprise had a range of benefits both to students and to the wider university. The ability for students to have exposure to business, enterprise and entrepreneurship opportunities, and to engage with businesses enhanced student employability, increased the profile of the institution and relationships within the region, and could enhance recruitment in an increasingly competitive market.

Senate noted the range of enterprise activities available to students currently across departments and central services, and agreed that these would benefit from a greater degree of co ordination at University level, to ensure that the opportunity to undertake enterprise activities was integrated into all programmes of study and research at the University. This would include the development of a minor pathway in the area of enterprise, the creation of modules in enterprise that could be taken by students on a credit or non-credit bearing basis, further opportunities for industrial experience and support for students independently undertaking enterprise activities.

Senate welcomed the proposals and noted that a proposal to appoint a Director of Student Enterprise was under consideration to co-ordinate activity, engage with sources of external funding and showcase the successes already achieved in this area.

**16/M6 FINANCIAL CHALLENGES**

Senate received an update from the President and Vice Chancellor and members of the University Leadership Team regarding the financial position of the University.

Senate noted that there were a number of internal structural and external factors which affected the University's financial position in the coming academic year. These included proportionately higher staff costs, proportionately lower research grant capture and an unbalanced recruitment profile which, combined with a fall in NSS ratings and an associated fall in league table ranking meant that student recruitment for the 2016/17 academic year was significantly reduced. Although work was underway to enhance conversion rates and develop new revenue streams through restructuring taught provision and enhancing research grant applications and enterprise activity, Senate noted that such activities would not be sufficient to address the scale of the projected income gap in 2016/17.

The University Leadership Team had undertaken detailed consideration of the situation and the cost saving and income generation measures available. Senate noted that the proposed measures had been informed by and were directly aligned with the Strategic Plan in terms of moving towards a stronger, more sustainable financial model.

Actions would include some restructuring of departments and schools in order to generate efficiencies but also better enable interdisciplinary research and teaching. There would also be a rationalisation of the University's overall research base in order to focus upon areas of strength and develop a deeper, more sustainable research profile ahead of the next Research Excellence Framework (REF). Finally, where there was evidence of poor performance this would be challenged and action taken as

appropriate. Senate noted that a Voluntary Severance Scheme (VSS) process would commence, subject to approval from Council.

The University Leadership Team would commence discussions with individual Heads of Department regarding proposed actions within the coming weeks. Senate noted that Heads of Department would be centrally involved in the process and would have the opportunity to input proposals or suggestions for action in addition to those identified by ULT. It was also noted that the Professional Services would be contributing to the measures through the generation of additional income where possible, a continued drive towards achieving efficiencies and the challenging of underperformance.

Senate considered the proposed measures in detail. It was noted that any opportunities identified under the VSS scheme would need to be processed in a timely fashion in order to allow for continuity planning and ensure that support for teaching and research students remained in place. The process would also need to be considered and assertive with regards to the overall needs of the organisation and identify where actions may be necessary to mitigate the impact of VSS decisions. The University had also engaged an external company to benchmark expenditure in key areas against peer institutions, in order to better understand its cost base.

Senate noted that the formal request to open a VSS scheme would be considered by Council in March. Senate agreed that it would be essential to ensure clear and consistent communication with staff regarding the measures to be taken. In particular, this should demonstrate that the process of rationalisation of the University's research base, focussing upon areas of strength and the addressing of performance issues where these were identified, would result in a stronger and more sustainable institution better able to meet the aims and objectives that had been agreed through the Strategic Conversation. It was also recognised that this was a strategic institutional approach and that academic and professional services staff would need to work collectively in order to achieve the overall savings required.

16/M7

**LEARNING AND TEACHING****(a) Term Dates for 2017/18 onwards**

Senate received a document which outlined the University term dates for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years. Senate noted that the revised dates were aligned with the principles for the restructuring of the academic year that had been approved at its meeting in November 2014. Senate noted in particular that the term dates had been amended to create two unbroken blocks of teaching, to reduce the January examination period, and to bring forwards both the midsummer examination and re-assessment periods. This would provide a more coherent learning experience for students and ensure that the re-sit and appeals processes were concluded significantly in advance of the following academic year.

Some queries had been raised by students and staff in relation to the timing of the assessment periods, particularly in relation to examination loading in the January assessment window and potential issues relating to caring commitments during the re-assessment window. Senate noted however that the wider developments within the University to reduce and harmonise assessment loading would address issues around examination frequency. It was also noted that the University was moving into closer alignment with the sector in the structure of the academic year and that students had been fully engaged with and supported the proposals for action.

Senate noted that the dates would shortly be published on the University website and that an extended calendar of term dates up to and including the 2021/22 academic year was under development.

(b) Outcome of the QAA Higher Education Review

Senate considered the key findings letter from the Higher Education Review that had taken place between 1 -4 February 2016.

Senate was pleased to note that the University had been judged to be meeting UK threshold standards in all key judgement areas. The review had highlighted four areas of good practice, namely:

- The inclusive approach to the management of change which will enable the realisation of strategic priorities
- The commitment to widening participation which promotes student inclusivity
- The strategic approach to the professional development of students which enhances their employability
- The continuing effective oversight of the postgraduate research student experience

The Review Panel had made three recommendations for action by September 2016 as follows:

- The University should review its regulations to assure itself that all graduates will meet threshold standards in minor subject pathways
- Ensure that departments are fully implementing the code of practice on the personal support for students, for all modes of programme delivery
- Articulate a policy governing the employment of postgraduate research students as teachers

Senate welcomed the extremely positive outcome of the Review, which confirmed that the policies and processes underpinning the management of academic standards and the student experience were of a high standard. It was noted that the positive outcome would feed directly into the upcoming Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) exercise. Senate noted that the recommendations for action would be considered by the Academic Policy Committee and any amendments to regulations would be presented to Senate in June 2016.

Senate expressed its thanks to all colleagues who had been involved in the preparation for the Review and those who had been interviewed by the Panel. In particular, Senate wish to record its thanks to Professor Jon Scott, Louise Masterman, Lily Patrick and the team in the Quality Office.

(c) National Student Survey Response Rates

Senate considered a paper detailing the current response rate to the 2016 National Student Survey. Senate noted that response rates were slightly below the equivalent level for the previous academic year. Senate noted that all departments were seeking to maximise student engagement with the survey and that a number of departments had been successful in this regard. Senate agreed however that the period remaining until the end of the teaching term would be critical in terms of maximising response rates. Senate agreed that all departments should further encourage students to complete the survey.

16/M8

**BUSINESS TO REPORT**

**Strategy and Policy**

(a) Academic Career Structures and Promotions

Senate received a paper which detailed the outcomes of the recent consultation on proposals for a revised approach to academic career structures, promotion and professorial remuneration.

The proposals had been subject to wide consultation with a range of stakeholder groups. Senate noted that the proposals established 5 distinct domains of contribution and achievement for academic staff, and clearly aligned activity in these domains with one of three formal career structures. The proposals also set out a clear and transparent process for the submission of cases for promotion and professorial remuneration.

The paper outlined a number of outstanding issues regarding the categorisation of staff, promotion routes for teaching fellows and staff retention. Senate noted that these issues were under consideration by the University Leadership Team and would feed into a final version of the proposals for consideration by Council in May 2016. Senate noted that the final paper would also be circulated to Senate for information.

**Research and Enterprise**

(a) Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

Senate received the reports of the meetings of the Research Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee held on 3 December 2015 and 26 January 2016.

Senate noted in particular the Committee's consideration of the governance and support for research throughout the institution, including the newly created Research Institutes. Senate also noted the Committee's development of a response to the recent Department for Business, Innovation and Skills consultation paper on future Research Excellence Framework exercises.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(b) Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee

Senate received the report of the meetings of the Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee held on 25 February 2016.

Senate noted that enterprise income in the 2014/15 academic year had grown by 3% with particular growth from contract and collaborative research as well as Intellectual Property income. Senate welcomed the growth however noted the increasingly challenging economic climate and its impact upon the availability of commercial funding.

Senate **approved** the report.

### **Learning and Teaching**

(a) Academic Policy Committee

Senate received reports of the meetings of the Academic Policy Committee held on 26 November 2015, 19 January 2016 and 18 February 2016.

Senate considered and **approved** minor amendments to Senate Regulation 1 to incorporate a new English Language qualification, and Senate Regulation 2 with regard to students' obligation to obtain ATAS clearance.

Senate noted in particular the Committee's oversight of the development and implementation of the Pathways project. This included the review of application and offer data so as to refine the overall pathways portfolio in 2016/17 and development of a Lecture Capture Policy, which Senate noted had been the subject of detailed consideration and consultation.

Senate also noted the Committee's consideration of the scope and timescale for the implementation of the Curriculum Transformation Programme. Senate noted that a detailed process and schedule for the Programme was under production, along with a range of supporting resources for academic departments.

Senate noted that working groups had been established to consider the development of the personal tutor system, the course representative system, English Language entry requirements and the operation of the Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard).

Senate noted the approval of External Examiners for a range of programme as detailed in the reports.

Senate **approved** the reports.

(b) Postgraduate Research Policy Committee

Senate received a report of the meeting of the Postgraduate Research Policy Committee held on 18 January 2016.

Senate considered and **approved** minor amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Committee in 2015/16.

Senate noted the Committee's consideration of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES)

Senate also noted that a wide ranging review of the support for postgraduate research students was underway, with input sought from all stakeholder groups. Senate also noted that the Committee was supporting the development of the submission of a bid for a collaborative ESRC Doctoral Training Centre in the College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

Senate **approved** the report.

(c) Programmes of Study

Senate received a list of programmes and pathways that had been approved in principle, in full and withdrawn.

**Committees of Senate**

(a) Senate Student Discipline Committee

Senate received the report of the meeting of the Senate Student Discipline Committee held on 3 November 2015.

Senate considered and **approved** the Terms of Reference for the Committee for the 2015/16 academic year.

Senate noted in particular that the Committee was undertaking a review of the current regulatory framework for the management of student discipline, which would include the training for staff taking part in student disciplinary proceedings, current information available to students, and the range of sanctions available under the regulations.

Senate **approved** the report

(b) Reports of Panels of the Student Discipline Committee

Senate received the outcomes of recent Senate Student Discipline Panels.

16/M9 **DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS IN 2015/16**

Senate noted the date and time of its next meeting in 2015/16 as follows:

Wednesday 29 June 2016, 2pm

DURATION OF MEETING: Two Hours

CHAIR