



GA22-M1

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022.

Attendance

The meeting was hybrid with members attending in-person and online; the meeting was also recorded for inclusivity reasons and for members who couldn't attend.

Present:

25 people in person and 128 online

In attendance:

Professor Nick Jennings (Chair), Richard Taylor (Chief Operating Officer), James Henry (Interim Director of Finance), Luke Vulpiani (Secretary)

22/1 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 June 2021 were confirmed as accurate.

22/2 Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

22/3 Revisions to Statutes

It was noted that there had been no revisions to Statutes since June 2021.

22/4 Vice-Chancellor's Report

- 22/4.1 The Vice-Chancellor outlined that work around the development of the strategy had engaged with over 1000 staff and students at townhall and other events. The strategy is due to be approved by Council (the formal body responsible for its approval) at the end of March.
- 22/4.2 A new Chief Financial Officer, Alexandra Owen, is starting on 20th April. The CFO will have a broad remit to maximise benefits from areas such as the science park and other commercial activities, as well as from research and facilities.
- 22/4.3 Two PVC roles are currently being appointed. A PVC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion role has been created as part of the strategy's strong focus on EDI and to put EDI on a par with research and innovation and education and student experience. The PVC Research and Innovation role is intended to obtain the benefits and synergy that come from combining research and innovation.

22/5 Senior Staff Reports

- 22/5.1 Richard Taylor thanked all colleagues for their work during the COVID pandemic, which is now moving into a different phase. The testing centre will be closing from the beginning of April but after this date colleagues may still obtain lateral flow tests from Wavy Top while stocks last.
- 22/5.2 Dynamic working, which came into operation during the pandemic, remains in place and combines the benefits of remote working with the undoubted benefits of in-person activities.
- 22/5.3 Our staff and student communities are being rebuilt following the impact of COVID and there is an increase in activity across student areas from sport to RAG. There are challenges in returning students back into the classroom, but it is positive that things are returning to more normal. Research activities were largely maintained during the pandemic.
- 22/5.4 James Henry gave a presentation on pensions and particularly the recent changes to USS. While the current focus is on USS it is recognised that a significant number of colleagues at Loughborough are in the LGPS and these colleagues are not neglected.
- 22/5.5 Changes to USS were approved on the vote of the independent chair following alternative proposals from UCU and UUK. These changes will be implemented, with the exception of the 2.5% cap on benefit growth which has been deferred until 2025.
- 22/5.6 USS changes will take place from 1st April 2022 and benefits accrued to date will be unaffected. The effect of the changes will depend on individual circumstances and it is strongly recommended using the modeller on the USS site.
- 22/5.7 A valuation of USS is scheduled for 2022, as part of the standard three-year cycle of valuations and there are on-going workstreams exploring the future of the scheme.

22/6 Questions from Members

- 22/6.1 A member asked about the effects of COVID on the current research climate and how Loughborough is positioned to respond to these changes.

The Vice-Chancellor responded that the Government is still committed to research and the pandemic raised the profile of science research and innovation. The new strategy has a strong focus on research and innovation based on a set of institutional wide themes. We can be more ambitious in terms of the research we undertake and bolder in taking leadership roles on big national level projects.

- 22/6.2 A member asked about how people who missed the townhall meetings could find out more information about the strategy and how will further steps be communicated once it is approved.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined that there will be a formal launch of the strategy in May, after its approval at Council, including internal and external events. Recordings of the strategy townhall meetings are available online for those who weren't able to attend.

22/7 AOB

Professor Matthew Inglis (Mathematics) had given his apologies prior to the meeting and asked that it was recorded that he thinks it's inappropriate to hold a General Assembly during a strike and had requested that the meeting be postponed.

The Vice-Chancellor noted Professor's Inglis' comments but observed that the meeting had been scheduled some time in advance of the strikes and it had been decided it was not appropriate to rearrange.

22/8 Date of Next Meeting

Spring Term 2023 (TBC)