

Council

19/55 A meeting of the Council was held in Room 101, Carrington Building, on Wednesday 27 November 2019 at 10.00 am.

The President
The Vice-President (Mrs K. Owen)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor M. Fellowes)

Mr T. Beardmore-Gray
Miss M. Cleaver
Mr K. Corrigan
Mrs P. Egan
Professor C.L. Furneaux
Miss G. King
Ms S. Maple

Mr P. Milhofer
Professor J.R. Park
Mr N. Richards
Dr C. Shaw
Mr J. Taylor
Ms S.M. Woodman

In attendance:

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor P. Yaqoob)
The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary
The Chief Financial Officer
The Director of Quality Support and Development

Apologies were received from Professor J. Board, Mr R.E.R. Evans, Mrs H. Gordon, Mr S.C.C. Pryce, and Professor D. Zaum (in whose place Professor Yaqoob was attending).

The President welcomed Ms Maple, Mr Milhofer, Mr Richards, Dr Shaw, and Mr Taylor to membership of Council and to their first meeting, and also Miss King who was attending her first meeting.

The President thanked members for attending the dinner, together with presentations on the University's research on climate change, on the previous evening.

19/56 The President informed Council that Mr Andrew Palmer CMG, CVO, a former member of Council, had died on 13 November 2019. The President paid warm tribute to Mr Palmer, referring to his personal qualities, his distinguished career in the Diplomatic Service, and his loyal support for and service to the University. Mr

Palmer had served on Council for 12 years, had been instrumental in the move of the Museum of English Rural Life to its present site, had chaired the Friends of the University, and had been awarded an Honorary LLD in 2016.

19/57 The minutes (19/36-19/54) of the meeting held on 8 July 2019 were confirmed and signed.

Items for note

19/58 Membership and Terms of Reference (Item 4.1)

The Council received a statement of its Membership and Terms of Reference. The President reminded colleagues that the CUC Code of Practice was also an important point of reference for the Council in fulfilling its responsibilities.

19/59 Council Standing Orders (Item 4.2)

The Council noted the Council Standing Orders.

19/60 Disclosure of Interests (Item 4.3)

The Council noted a paper from the University Secretary in regard to Disclosure of Interests. The Council received a list of members' interests and members were asked to notify the University Secretary of any amendments as a matter of urgency; the list would be kept up to date and was a requirement of the Office for Students (OfS).

19/61 Freedom of Speech Annual Report (Item 4.4)

The Council received the Freedom of Speech Annual Report.

19/62 Report on the Exercise of Vacation Powers (Item 4.5)

The Council noted that there had been no occasion to exercise the Vacation Powers.

19/63 Availability of Council Papers (Item 4.6)

The Council noted a paper from the University Secretary in regard to the availability of Council papers.

19/64 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 4.7)

The Council received a list of documents sealed and to be sealed.

Resolved:

1. "That draft amendments to Ordinance A1 (The Council), now submitted, be approved."
2. "That the Freedom of Speech Annual Report, now submitted, be received."

3. "That the Council approve the action taken by the Officers and Members in affixing the University Seal to documents sealed since the last Ordinary Meeting of the Council and authorise the Seal of the University to be affixed to the documents to be sealed as now reported."

Main items of business: strategic and governance matters for discussion

19/65 Update on the University Strategy (Item 5)

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the development of the new University Strategy. He explained that, on his appointment as Acting Vice-Chancellor, he had initiated a review of the existing strategy in order to take account of changes in the higher education environment since the strategy's inception. The development of the new strategy had been informed by wide consultation with Schools, Functions, students and external stakeholders, and reflected both its co-production and co-ownership. It was structured around four principles, namely Community, Excellence, Sustainability and the Engaged University. The draft of the new strategy would be finalised in March 2020 and submitted to Council.

The Vice-Chancellor referred to a range of factors which had transformed the higher education environment over the past decade, including the increase in student fees from £3k to £9k, the removal of the student number cap in 2015, the cessation of capital grants, the disbanding of HEFCE and its replacement by the OfS, demographic decline in the number of 18 year olds, and evolving behaviours among young people. He noted that the freezing of the student fee at £9,250 (with no prospect of an increase in the foreseeable future) implied a 30% reduction in its value over the period 2012-26. The University had adapted well to these changes in the short-term and had succeeded in achieving 25% growth in undergraduate numbers in the period 2016-18. However, this growth had been achieved at the cost of maintaining the entry tariff which, given the association between entry tariff and league table position, led to a negative cycle of declining entry tariff and declining league table position. The University had fallen from a rank of 25th in the Good University Guide 2016 to a rank of 40th in 2020, and several universities in Reading's peer group had followed a similar trajectory. A major focus of the strategy was to develop a more distinctive, environmentally focussed identity for the University which would be attractive to applicants and students, and to improve the student academic experience. Improvements in recruitment, NSS and league table position would drive a virtuous cycle.

In response to questions, the Vice-Chancellor explained that, in the context of the declining value of domestic student fee income, universities would seek to increase numbers of international students since international fee levels were not frozen. League table rank was an important factor in international student recruitment and in establishing and maintaining strategically important international partnerships. Improving the University's undergraduate entry standard, together with maintaining its research standing, was critical to international recruitment.

In relation to other aspects of the strategy, the Vice-Chancellor referred to the importance of establishing a closer relationship between the University Executive Board and the University community, the need to communicate more effectively with the University community about high profile initiatives which carried significant risk, the risks which Brexit posed to strategic European research

partnerships, and the need to improve the University's relationship with its local community.

The Council discussed the new strategy in small groups and identified a range of issues which would inform further discussion. The Council strongly supported the principles and direction of the strategy and looked forward to seeing further detail on its implementation. In the discussion, the groups variously observed that: the University should be more confident in talking about itself and in projecting its identity; the strategy would benefit from being more student-centric; establishing environmental credentials was challenging for large organisations with extensive international activity; the principles identified felt authentic and realistic; and a rank in the top 25 was an appropriate objective.

The President thanked the Vice-Chancellor and all involved for progressing the new strategy. The Council looked forward to receiving the final version of the new strategy.

Matters for approval

19/66 Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Council and the Vice-Chancellor for 2018-19 (Item 7.2)

The Council received the Annual Report of the Audit Committee to the Council and the Vice-Chancellor for 2018-19.

Mr Beardmore-Gray, as Chair of the Audit Committee, confirmed that it had fulfilled its functions with integrity and independence, and that, following careful consideration of evidence, the Committee was fully satisfied that it could provide the assurances required by the OfS in respect of the University's arrangements for: risk management, control and governance; value for money; and management and quality assurance of data submitted to the named bodies.

Mr Beardmore-Gray advised that the OfS's interpretation of value for money now took greater account of the student's perspective whereas previously it had been understood primarily from the taxpayer's perspective, and that the University was making good progress in detailed work on this matter. Mr Beardmore-Gray observed that the University's finances were heavily geared, that the University was looking at ways of reducing the cost of debt, and that cashflow was being appropriately monitored. In response to a question from Mr Milhofer, the Chief Financial Officer explained that the Audit Committee, at a previous meeting, had given the necessary assurance that the university was a going concern for the next twelve months, but she undertook next year to include this assurance in the annual report. In response to a further question, the Chief Financial Officer indicated that the University's intangible assets largely comprised course materials for executive education and the Army Higher Education Pathway.

The President thanked the Audit Committee for its careful work.

19/67 Draft Report to the Audit Committee on the audit for the year ended 31 July 2019 from Deloitte (Item 7.3)

The Council received a draft Report to the Audit Committee on the audit for the year ended 31 July 2019 from Deloitte.

The Chief Financial Officer reported that Deloitte had confirmed that it anticipated providing unqualified audit opinions on all Financial Statements for the Group and subsidiaries, and that the University had met its legal obligations as a charity.

Mr Beardmore-Gray reported the University finance team had prepared much better for this year's audit, and that this had facilitated a much smoother audit process. Deloitte on their part had made some constructive changes to their team following their first year as auditors in 2018. Mr Beardmore-Gray explained that the draft result was a deficit of £43.3m, which had been heavily influenced by two factors—the sale of part of the University's landholding at Didcot, generating a surplus of £18m, which had been more than offset by an in-year increase of £60m to the provision for accrued liabilities in the USS pension scheme. Without these two major items, the University had made a small underlying deficit.

19/68 Draft Letters of Management Representations to the University's Auditors (Item 7.4)

The Council received and approved the Draft Letters of Management Representations, which had been submitted previously to the Audit Committee.

19/69 Letter of Support (Item 7.5)

The Council received the Draft Letter of Support in respect of the University's subsidiary companies.

19/70 Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2019 (Item 6.3 and 6.4)

The Council received and approved the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2019 for approval by the President, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer in advance of submission to the OfS. The Financial Statements had been submitted previously to the Audit Committee. The Council noted the process by which the University would need to submit data to the OfS alongside these statements.

19/71 Annual Assurance Return 2019 from the University to the Office for Students (Item 6.5)

The Council received a copy of the Annual Assurance Return 2019 from the University to the Office for Students, for approval.

Resolved:

1. "That the financial position of the University for 2018/19, the financial statements and the audit report, now submitted, be noted and approved for signature by the President, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer."
2. "That the President and the Chief Financial Officer be authorised to sign the Letters of Representation to Deloitte and that the Chief Financial Officer be authorised to sign the letters of support for the University's subsidiary companies."

3. “That it be noted that the external auditor Deloitte proposes an unqualified audit opinion on all of the Financial Statements for Group and subsidiaries.”
4. “That it be confirmed that in all material respects the University has conducted its affairs during the year ended 31 July 2019 in accordance with its status as a charity and with the requirements identified in the Accountability Return to the Office for Students, and that the Vice-Chancellor be authorised to sign the Accountability Return to this effect.”

Matters for report

19/72 Report of the Student Experience Committee (Item 7)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 11 November 2019.

Mrs Owen, as Chair of the Committee, was pleased to report that the Committee now had a full complement of lay members, and commended the RUSU full-time officers for their leadership, teamwork and progress to date. She noted that Professor Brooks would shortly be leaving the Committee and the University following his appointment as Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Buckinghamshire New University, and she expressed the Committee’s appreciation of his contribution and commitment to the Committee and improving the student experience during his term as Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

Miss Cleaver, RUSU President, and Miss King, RUSU Welfare Officer, reported that the full-time RUSU officers had identified sustainability as the overarching theme for their year in office, under which sat three goals: engagement, well-being and facilities. They explained that sustainability encompassed both environmental and social sustainability, and that the full-time officer team was mindful of its responsibilities not only to current students but also to future generations of students. The £1m student experience fund, which they helped to prioritise, funded initiatives where the benefits often would only be realised in the longer term. In outlining their goals, they referred to celebrating the cultural diversity of the student community, the BAME attainment gap, increasing democratic engagement and accountability, better signposting of mental health support, raising awareness about drugs and alcohol, improving campus security, improving provision of study space, the creation of an outdoor gym and meeting pods, and reducing the environmental impact of RUSU’s and the University’s activities. They also spoke of continuing work on the ‘Never OK’ consent campaign and the campaigns around relaxation and revision before and during the examination period.

The Council welcomed the initiatives being undertaken by RUSU, noted the use of the £1m for some of this work, and thanked the RUSU officers for their considerable contribution to improving the student experience.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Student Experience Committee held on 11 November 2019, now submitted, be approved.”

19/73 Report of the Vice-Chancellor (Item 8)

The Council received the Report of the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor reported on the industrial action called by the University and College Union (UCU), which currently comprised strike action for eight days in the period 25 November- 4 December 2019, and action short of a strike beginning on 25 November 2019 and finishing no later than 29 April 2020. He informed Council that approximately 190 staff had taken part in the first day of the strike, which was significantly fewer than in the 2018 strike and was having less impact on students. He expressed frustration that the University and the local UCU branch had been working together effectively to address issues in respect of sessional staff and Grade 6 teaching fellows and had been close to a resolution when these issues were included in the industrial dispute. He was also concerned that, while UCU had balloted locally for industrial action (with the consequence that only some institutions were affected by the strike), the University was not able to resolve the dispute locally as it was bound by national negotiations. He assured Council that the University was taking all reasonable measures to mitigate the impact on students.

In response to a question from Mrs Woodman, the Vice-Chancellor explained that UCU, following a change in its leadership, had changed its position in relation to the USS and was now demanding that any changes to the pension scheme should not involve any detriment to its members, which, if accepted, would cripple universities' finances.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the newly configured Department of Languages and Cultures had been launched successfully, that the required savings had been achieved without compulsory redundancies, and the new arrangements offered the realistic prospect of a sustainable future, both financially and academically.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the Vice-Chancellor, now submitted, be approved.”

19/74 Report of the Investments Committee (Item 11)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Investments Committee held on 24 September 2019.

Mr Corrigan, on behalf of the Chair of the Committee, reported that: there had been a strong return on investments; that the appointment process for a Manager of Investment Funds had been successful, had involved the RUSU Diversity Officer, and had given consideration to ethical stewardship as well as financial return; [redacted, section 43]. The President suggested that Council might usefully discuss the performance and further development of the Thames Valley Science Park at a future meeting.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meeting of the Investments Committee, held on 24 September 2019, now submitted, be approved.”

19/75 Report of the Senate (Item 9)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 6 November 2019.

The Council welcomed the review of the University's brand to ensure its alignment with the new University Strategy. Mrs Owen, as Chair of the Student Experience Committee, commended the University Annual Learning and Teaching Report (Autumn 2019) and commented that, following a review of its format, the Report provided greater insight into the University's significant work to improve the students' academic experience and to ensure the maintenance of academic standards.

Resolved:

1. "That the University Annual Learning and Teaching Report for Council (Autumn Term 2019), now submitted, be approved."
2. "That draft revisions to Ordinance C3 (Degree Diplomas and Certificates) to include among the University's Degrees Master of Physician Associate Studies (MPAS) and Master of Architecture (MArch), now submitted, be approved."
3. "That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 6 November 2019, now submitted, be approved."

19/76 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 10)

The Council received the Report of the meetings of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 21 October and 14 November 2019.

In relation to the National Institute for Research in Dairying (NIRD) Trust, the President explained that NIRD had been established in 1923 and that the University was its trustee and sole beneficiary. The University, as its trustee, had substantially increased the value of the land held by the Trust, and, following the disposal of some of this land, the Trust had elected to lend the University funds in accordance with the Trust's purpose, namely to support research in agriculture and food. Advice had been sought from the Charity Commission during 2016 in respect of the procedures to be followed in respect of an inter-company loan, but, unfortunately, the University had failed to comply with this advice and had not sought the approval of the Charities Commission prior to the loan being agreed. Having recognised this error, the University had referred itself to the Charities Commission and had asked that the independent Trust Board to review all NIRD's transactions over an extended period. The Trust Board had concluded that, as far they could reasonably ascertain, all transactions proper to NIRD had been recorded as such in the University's accounts, NIRD's assets were clearly identifiable and complete, and there was no evidence of misuse of funds; this conclusion had been endorsed by the External Auditor. A few matters remained under negotiation.

The Council commended the progress towards a resolution of the issues by the NIRD Trust Committee and the University's Negotiating Committee, and looked forward to receiving a final report on the negotiations.

In relation to student recruitment, Professor Fellowes explained that variations in student recruitment from year to year required careful management. Schools were often inclined to accept a larger cohort, given that it provided financial capacity to strengthen its educational provision and ensure greater resilience, but they recognised the need to ensure that the larger cohort enjoyed a high quality student experience.

Resolved:

“That the Report of the meetings of the Strategy and Finance Committee, held on 21 October and 14 November 2019, now submitted, be approved.”

19/77 Report of the Appointments and Governance Committee (Item 12)

The Council received the Report of the meetings of the Appointments and Governance Committee held on 24 September and 21 October 2019.

The Vice-Chancellor reported that the remits of the two vacant Pro-Vice-Chancellor roles had been revised to reflect the University’s increased focus on student experience. Whereas the previous remits had carried the designations ‘Teaching and Learning’ and ‘Global Engagement’, the revised remits would be designated ‘Education’ and ‘International and Student Experience’. The Vice-Chancellor outlined the recruitment arrangements for the roles, noting that the process had been limited in both cases to internal candidates only.

The Vice-Chancellor noted that the role of Deputy Vice-Chancellor would become vacant on Professor Brooks’ departure from the University; he had discussed the appointment of a successor with the current Pro-Vice-Chancellors and all had been in favour of the appointment of Professor Yaqoob.

The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary informed the Council that elements of the University’s approach to implementation of the Prevent Duty had been commended as good practice by a recent Home Office audit.

Resolved:

1. “That the appointment of Professor P. Yaqoob as Deputy Vice-Chancellor for a two-year period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021 be approved.”
2. “That the Annual Report on the Prevent Duty, now submitted, be approved.”
3. “That the Prevent Annual Data Return, now submitted, be approved for submission to the Office for Students.”
4. “That the President of Council be authorised to sign the Prevent Annual Accountability Statement on behalf of the Council for submission to the Office for Students. ”
5. “That the Report of the meetings of the Appointments and Governance Committee, held on 24 September and 21 October 2019, now received, be approved.”

19/78 Regulatory matters: recent publications from the Office for Students (Item 13)

The Council received a paper concerning recent publications and other communications from the Office for Students (OfS), together with copies of: a letter to the Vice-Chancellor in respect of Ongoing condition A1: Access and participation plan; and a letter to the President in respect of Compliance with regulatory deadlines: reminder for governing bodies.

The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary noted that, while the University had met all of the conditions for registration set out by the OfS, it had been subject to 'enhanced monitoring' in respect of its Access and Participation Plan. The OfS had now approved the University's revised Access and Participation Plan and did not require an updated plan until 2024-25, although annual updates on progress were required.

He drew attention to the OfS's reminder that Council, as the University's governing body, was responsible for ensuring that the University continued to satisfy the ongoing conditions of registration. The Appointments and Governance Committee would consider a paper published by the OfS on Registration and outcomes 2019-20: Key themes and analysis, and submit to a future meeting of Council any recommended changes to the University's approach to fulfilling the ongoing conditions of registration.

The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary explained that, as a condition of registration, higher education providers were required to report to the OfS any 'reportable events'. A reportable event was defined by the OfS as 'any event of circumstance that, in the judgement of the OfS, materially affects or could affect the provider's legal form or business model, and/or its willingness or ability to comply with its condition of registration'. While the University had reported three events to the OfS during 2018-19, it is understood that some providers had erred on the side of caution in reporting events or in asking the OfS for advice about whether or not an event qualified as a reportable event. The OfS had now issued a warning that the OfS would no longer normally provide 'in principle' advice about whether an event should be reported beyond the information already provided, that providers were expected to understand the expectations placed on them by the conditions of registration, and that where a provider 'seeks to abdicate responsibility for decision-making, and seeks a steer from the OfS, this behaviour may indicate non-compliance with condition E2 (management and governance)'. A number of providers had expressed concern that effectively they would no longer be able to consult the OfS on the appropriate interpretation of its expectations without jeopardising their registration.

The Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary reported that, on 21 October 2019, the OfS had written to the Chairs of governing bodies of 282 of the 384 registered higher education providers, detailing a failure of compliance to meet deadlines set as part of the regulatory framework, either by failing to pay a relevant fee on time or failing to provide certain data on time, or both. The OfS stated that, on this occasion, it would not impose a fine, but would do so if there was a repeated breach, noting that the maximum penalty for a university of Reading's size would be £4m. The OfS required that this letter be shared with Council and that a minute from Council be returned to them 'to record a discussion of the reasons recent regulatory deadlines were missed and the actions the Provider will take to ensure compliance with any future deadlines set by the OfS'.

In the case of the University, the OfS indicated that we had failed to pay the fee to the Quality Assurance Agency for their function as the designated quality body. The relevant fee amounted to less than £11k. On investigation, it had transpired that the QAA had emailed the University's invoices team on 18 July 2019 with what had been understood to be a reminder for an invoice for the unpaid fee. Following responses by the QAA to a number of queries raised by the University, the invoices team had paid the invoice on 7 August 2019.

As part of the correspondence with the QAA, the QAA had sent the University a copy of the original invoice, dated 10 June 2019. The University had no record of having received this invoice. On investigation, it had appeared that the QAA had changed the format of the address, such that the number of the University's PO Box had lost its last two digits. It was reasonable to assume that the error in the address explained why the University had no record of having received the original invoice. Since the University had reliably paid all other invoices required by the OfS in timely fashion, and had paid the equivalent QAA fee in timely fashion in previous years, and since the best explanation for not having paid the QAA's invoice for the relevant fee on time was the QAA's error in respect of the University's address, the University has taken the step of contacting the QAA to ask that they rectify the error and, in future, send the invoice to the University's correct address.

The Council considered that this was a reasonable explanation which fully addressed the OfS's concern. The Council was satisfied that the University had taken sufficient action to address the matter and it did not require the University to take any further steps.

Resolved:

1. "That a letter, dated 21 October 2019, from the Office for Students to the President concerning compliance with regulatory deadlines, now submitted, be received."
2. "That a paper on recent publications from the Office for Students, now submitted, be received."

19/79 Deputy Vice-Chancellor

The Council noted that Professor Brooks would be leaving the University at the end of December to take up the office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Buckinghamshire New University. The Council congratulated Professor Brooks on his appointment and thanked him for his contribution to the work of Council and for his wider work in the University as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), and in his earlier roles. Professor Brooks thanked the Council for its support in his various roles.

Members of the University Executive Board withdrew at this point, before the discussion of the Report of the Remuneration Committee.

19/80 Report of the Remuneration Committee (Item 14)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee, held on 21 October 2019, and the Report of the Committee's work in 2018/19.

The Council noted that the Committee had received detailed reports on the annual performance of the University's senior officers reporting to the Vice-Chancellor, and had also approved a paper, prepared by the Vice-Chancellor, setting out a framework of principles for the remuneration of members of the University Executive Board. The Council noted that the Vice-Chancellor, on his appointment, had requested that his salary be below the [redacted, section 40] range which the Remuneration Committee had considered appropriate and reasonable for the role; in consequence, the Vice-Chancellor's pay ratio as measured against the total median pay of all staff had decreased substantially relative to previous years. The Council respected the Vice-Chancellor's stance on this matter, but was concerned that the University might appear to undervalue the role of Vice-Chancellor and Professor Van de Noort's performance in the role. The Council therefore asked that consideration be given to an annual determination of the appropriate, competitive salary level for the role and any increases, reflecting the demands of the role and the Vice-Chancellor's performance; the Vice-Chancellor could elect to accept or decline any increase in his salary.

The Council noted a concern that [redacted, section 40] received substantially higher pay than the Vice-Chancellor. The President explained that the remuneration [redacted, section 40] was comparable with remuneration for similar roles in other institutions, and that the apparent anomaly was attributable to the Vice-Chancellor's choice to receive a lower salary than the Remuneration Committee was willing to offer. The proposal to determine annually the appropriate salary for the Vice-Chancellor and any increases, which he might then choose to decline, would help to clarify the reasons for this disparity.

Resolved:

1. "That the Annual Report of the Remuneration Committee, now received, be approved."
2. "That the Report of the meeting of the Remuneration Committee, held on 21 October 2019, now received, be approved."

19/81 Selection process for Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International and Student Experience)

Professor Furneaux raised under any other business her concern, which, she reported, reflected a widespread concern among academic staff, that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor roles which were currently vacant should have been advertised externally. She emphasised that she believed that there were suitable internal candidates who could fulfil the roles with distinction, but that the University needed to ensure that it was appointing the best possible candidates, and that this could only be achieved through an open competition which included external candidates. She was concerned that the restriction to internal candidates risked insularity. Miss Cleaver shared this concern.

The President acknowledged the issue and explained that a factor in the decision was the probable difficulty of attracting strong external candidates given that a fixed-term had been agreed for the appointment. The Appointments and

Governance Committee had given the matter careful consideration before coming to its decision.

19/82 Dates of further meetings of the Council in the Session 2019/20

Further meetings of the Council in this Session had been scheduled for:

Thursday 23 January 2020 at 2.15pm

Monday 16 March 2020 at 2.15pm

Monday 6 July 2020 at 2.15pm.