A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Friday 24 January 2014 at 2.15pm.

The President
The Vice-Presidents (Mr R Dwyer, Ms S M Woodman)
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor G Brooks)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor S J Mithen)
The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor C M Williams)

Mr T Bartlam
Professor J Board
Dr B Cosh
Ms S Davies
Mrs B Edwards
Professor R H Ellis
Dr P E Erskine
Mr S Hawker
Mr M Kelleher
Professor G Marston
Mr H W A Palmer
Dr P R Preston
Mr S C C Pryce
Mr S P Sherman
Mr I P Smith
Professor G H Tucker
The University Secretary

In attendance:

The Chief Operating Officer
The Head of University Administration
The Director of Finance

Apologies were received from Dame Moira Gibb, Professor I Mueller-Harvey, Sir John Sunderland and Mrs S L Webber.

14/02 The minutes (13/54-13/77) of the meeting held on 25 November 2013 were confirmed and signed.

Arising on the Minutes:

Minute 13/72: Report of the Appointments Committee

It was reported that the President, acting on behalf of the Appointments Committee and of the Council, had appointed Professor Gavin Brooks (being a Pro-Vice-Chancellor) to the Student Experience Committee for the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 July 2015 and Dr Orla Kennedy (being an Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning)) to the Student Experience Committee for the period from 1 January to 31 July 2014.

14/03 New Year Honours (Item 2(a))

It was reported that the following appointments had been made in the New Year Honours List:

DBE – Dr Alison Carnwath, Chairman of Land Securities and an honorary graduate of this University (HonLLD, 2010), for services to Business.

DBE – Professor Julia Slingo, OBE, Chief Scientist at the Meteorological Office, sometime Professor of Meteorology in this University, currently Visiting Professor in the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and an honorary graduate (HonDSc, 2011), for services to Weather and Climate Science.

OBE – Professor James Knowlson, Professor Emeritus of French and a graduate and honorary graduate (HonDLitt, 2006) of this University, for services to Literary Scholarship.

OBE – Cllr Paul Swaddle, representative of Wokingham Borough Council on the University Council from 2009 until 2011 and a graduate of this University, for voluntary political service.

MBE – Professor Peter Lansley, Professor Emeritus of Construction Management and a graduate of this University, for services to Research into Ageing and Well-being of Older People.

14/04 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 2(b))
The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 25 November 2013 relating to items for report

14/05 Museum of English Rural Life and Special Collections Review 2012-13 (Item 2(c))


Resolved:

“That the following reports, now submitted, be received:

Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 25 November 2013 relating to items for report;

Annual Review of the Museum of English Rural Life and Special Collections 2012-13.”

14/06 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 2(d))

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

Resolved:

"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."

Items for Discussion and Decision

14/07 Report of the Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor:

(a) spoke of the opportunities and threats implicit in the removal by Government of the student number cap with effect from 2015-16. In the context of UCAS data which revealed a mixed approach to expansion in student numbers across the sector in recent years, competition amongst universities for well-qualified Home and EU undergraduates was now set to grow fiercer and the University was taking all possible steps to sharpen its appeal in the market. Disappointingly, Home and EU applications to Reading for admission in 2014 were down by comparison with the sector average but these were early days and it was not yet possible to extrapolate a likely outcome. More encouragingly, applications from overseas and for postgraduate taught and research programmes had increased;
(b) described the many positive ways in which the University had responded to student feedback: twenty-four hour opening of the University Library had been particularly well-received. The University continued to recognise and reward its highest achieving students through initiatives such as the Chancellor’s Awards and the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme;

(c) explained the benefits that were expected to accrue from the development of a teaching partnership with Nanjing University Institute of Science and Technology (NUIST), China, and confirmed that the University of Reading Malaysia would be admitting its first cohort of undergraduate students in September 2014. The official opening of the EduCity campus in Johor Bahru by the Malaysian Prime Minister was imminently to take place and the Chief Operating Officer would be attending on behalf of the University;

(d) noted that the University’s submission to the Research Excellence Framework 2014 had comprised 590 staff FTEs, representing 84% of those eligible. Strategic planning for the next such exercise, particularly in regard to research impact, was already underway;

(e) drew attention to the University’s programme of community-focused events such as Public Lectures and Donor Day and invited members of the Council to participate whenever they could.

Resolved:

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

14/08 Presentation to the Council by Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) entitled Teaching and Learning at Reading: Responding to the Rapidly Changing Landscape of HE. (Item 4)

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) made a presentation to the Council entitled Teaching and Learning at Reading: Responding to the Rapidly Changing Landscape of Higher Education (copy inserted in Minute Book).

Professor Brooks described the ways in which the University was rising to the challenges it faced as set out in its Teaching and Learning Strategy 2013-18, and most notably through the judicious application technology-enhanced learning and a thoroughgoing portfolio review. In essence, the University strove to enhance its research standing in the context of buoyant student recruitment, attracting aspirational students with the ambition to succeed in life.

Mr Hawker and Mr Sherman enquired as to the scope for, and the constraints on, expansion of student number in specific areas. Professor Brooks noted that opportunities presented themselves in subjects related to health (including Pharmacy), Business and certain disciplines within the Arts and Humanities. In the first of these, laboratory space would clearly be an issue but the Vice-Chancellor suggested that the imagination with which the University overcame any such difficulties would set an early test of its ambition. In response to a question from Dr Erskine, Professor Brooks assured the Council that a distinctive approach to teaching and learning was evolving resourcefully and at pace,
unhindered by any excess of caution that might arguably have prevailed in the past.

14/09 Reports of the Strategy and Finance Committee

* The Council received reports from the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 25 November 2013 relating to items for discussion and decision.

In regard to item 5(i)(a), a Proposal for a School of Architecture, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks), reiterated that the introduction of Architecture into the University’s academic portfolio would fit well with existing expertise in a number of related professional areas, would attract significant numbers of well-qualified and employable students to Reading and would confer both reputational and competitive advantage. Similar arguments had applied to the successful introduction of Pharmacy some years earlier.

The Council had regard to written questions submitted by Professor Mueller-Harvey who was unable to be present. In response to these, and to questions on similar themes posed by other members, the Vice-Chancellor explained that the proposal to introduce Architecture had arisen not from an exhaustive options analysis nor as an investment opportunity per se but from its close fit with cognate subject areas which already flourished within the University and contributed strongly to both its national and international standing. In its comment on the proposal the Senate had recognised the more obvious synergies and had identified yet more. In response to a question from Mr Pryce, the Chief Operating Officer explained that the initiative entailed capital investment in the order of £10m for the refurbishment of a building which would, in any case, have been necessary.

In regard to item 5(i)(b), the Annual Review of Risk Management and Internal Control 2013-14, the University Secretary explained that, at the suggestion of the Audit Committee and with the approval of the Strategy and Finance Committee, a new risk relating to failure to achieve anticipated savings and secure additional revenue from the strategy work that was underway had been added to the Risk Register.

In regard to item 5(i)(c), University Strategy: Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme, the Chief Operating Officer explained that the immediate priority was to build a secure IT-based platform upon which ‘the student journey’ might be re-engineered, thus enabling the University to re-capture lost ground and to compete more effectively.

The Council had regard to further written questions submitted by Professor Mueller-Harvey, in response to which the Chief Operating Officer suggested that reference to ‘staff resistance’ as a key threat to the success of the Programme might better have been couched in terms of ‘limited staff engagement’. The underpinning IT element of the Programme, while significant, was to be composed of a series of smaller projects, each carefully phased and managed. An holistic and fully costed plan for the entire Programme was to be submitted to an additional meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee on 3 February 2014 and the Council could expect to receive not only a report of that meeting when it met on 24 March 2014 but also further reports routinely thereafter. Dr Cosh was
assured by the Vice-Chancellor that the nature and timing of similar reports to the Senate was actively under consideration; and the Deans of the Faculties of Life Sciences and of Science both spoke of an appetite for change born of frustration amongst staff with the status quo.

Resolved:

“That:

(a) the proposal for a School of Architecture, now submitted, be approved;
(b) the Annual Review of Risk Management and Internal Control 2013-14, now submitted, be approved;
(c) the Report entitled University Strategy: Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme, now submitted, be received;
(d) the Report of the Health and Safety Committee, now submitted, be received;
(e) the Financial Regulations, now submitted, be approved;
(f) the Terms of Reference of the Strategy and Finance Committee, now submitted, be approved.”

14/10 Report of the Review of the National Centre for Language and Literacy
(Item 5(ii)(a))

* The Council received the Report of the Review of the National Centre for Language and Literacy. The President, having consulted with a Vice-President (Ms Woodman) and the Vice-Chancellor, had agreed on behalf of the Strategy and Finance Committee that the Report be submitted direct to the Council for discussion and decision. Any comments that the Senate might have in the matter when it met on 13 March 2014 would be relayed to the Council at its meeting on 24 March 2014.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Professor Brooks) described the origins of the National Centre for Language and Literacy and explained the rationale for the proposed dispersal of its present activities. Referring to the prolonged uncertainties for staff that were inherent in the present Statute-based arrangements for the cessation or diminution of an academic activity, the President asked the University Secretary comment on progress with the project to reform the Charter, Statutes and Ordinances which the Council had commissioned. A presentation was to be made to the Council by the Project Manager before the end of the present Session.

Resolved:

“That:

(a) the National Centre for Language and Literacy cease to exist with effect from 31 July 2014 and the roles and responsibilities associated with the management of the Centre cease from that date;
having regard to (a) above, the University proceed on the basis that it is desirable that there be a reduction in, or redeployment of, Academic Staff as a result of the changing roles and responsibilities associated with the management of the National Centre for Language and Literacy;

(c) a Restructuring Committee be established in accordance with Statute XXXIII and with the University’s Review and Restructuring Policy to conduct consultation with all staff affected and appropriate representatives on (b) above and on the further recommendations contained within the Report of the Review of the National Centre for Language and Literacy;

(d) the President be authorised to appoint a Chair, one further member of the Council and such other persons as are necessary to the Restructuring Committee; and

(e) the Report of the Review of the National Centre for Language and Literacy and the sum of the recommendations contained therein, now submitted, be approved.”

14/11 Report of the Senate

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 4 December 2013 (Item 6)
Resolved:

“1. That, with reference to item 1,

   (a) Professor Stuart Green be reappointed as Head of the School of Construction Management and Engineering for the period from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2018;

   (b) Professor Simon Chandler-Wilde be reappointed as Head of the School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences for the period from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2016;

   (c) Dr Mark Fellowes be reappointed as Head of the School of Biological Sciences for the period 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2018.

“2. That, with reference to item 2, under the provisions of Ordinance XXIV the title of Professor Emeritus be conferred on Professor Chris Garforth with effect from 1 January 2014.

“3. That, with reference to item 3, Dr Sara Poole be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years with effect from 1 November 2013.

“4. That, with reference to item 4, the following be accorded the title of Visiting Professor:

   Henley Business School:

   Mr I. Cooper (international, business and personal development author), for the period to 31 December 2016;

   Professor Jingti Han (Shanghai University of Business and Economics), for the period to 31 December 2016;

   Professor V. Nienhaus (Islamic Financial Services Board), for a further period to 31 December 2016;

   Professor Zhongming Wang (Zhejiang University), for the period to 31 December 2016.

   School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy:

   Professor D. Gregory (Bopran Holdings Ltd), Centre for Food Security, for a further period to 31 December 2016;

   Professor Arif Shivji (Ziarco Pharma Ltd), Food and Pharmacy, for a further period to 31 December 2016;

   School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences:

   Dr J. Lowe, (Met Office), for the period to 31 December 2016;
Professor J. Mitchell OBE FRS, (Met Office), for a further period to 31 December 2016;

“5. That, with reference to item 5,

Alterations to Ordinance XLV (University Board for Teaching and Learning) to provide for increased representation of students on the Faculty Boards for Teaching and Learning, be approved.”

“6. That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 4 December 2013, now submitted, be approved.”

14/12 Report of the Committee of Selection for two Offices of Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Item 7)

* The Council received the Report of the Committee of Selection for two Offices of Pro-Vice-Chancellor. The President referred to the national and international search that had been undertaken and to quality of the field of applicants that had resulted.

Resolved:

“That Professor Robert Van de Noort and Mr Vincenzo Raimo each be appointed as Pro-Vice-Chancellor with effect from 1 August 2014.”

14/13 Report of the Students’ Union Liaison Committee (Item 8)

* The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Students’ Union Liaison Committee held on 27 November 2013.

Resolved:

That with reference to item 2, the Financial Statements of the Students’ Union for the year ending 31 July 2013, now submitted, be received;

That with reference to item 3, alterations to the Students’ Union Constitution, now submitted, be approved.”

14/14 Matters relevant to Statute XXXIII (Item 9)

* The Council received a paper from the University Secretary on matters relevant to Statute XXXIII.

Resolved:

“That a report from the University Secretary on matters relevant to Statute XXXIII, now submitted, be approved.”
14/15 Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Honorary Degrees (Item 10)

- The Council received a Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Honorary Degrees.

   **Resolved:**

   “That the Report of the Joint Standing Committee on Honorary Degrees, now submitted, be approved.”

14/16 Secretary to the Council (Item 11)

   The President reported that it had been agreed that Mr K N Hodgson, University Secretary, be permitted to retire early with effect from 30 September 2014; and that Dr R J Messer, currently Head of University Administration, be designated Chief Strategy Officer and University Secretary with effect from 1 August 2014.

   **Resolved:**

   “That, consequent upon the impending retirement of Mr K N Hodgson, Dr R J Messer be designated Secretary to the Council with effect from 1 August 2014.”

14/17 Dates of further meetings of the Council in the Session 2013-14

   Further meetings of the Council in this Session had been scheduled for Monday 24 March 2014 at 2.00pm, following a meeting of the Court in the morning, and for Monday 14 July 2014 at 2.15pm.