Meeting of the Council (23 March 2015)
Agenda Item 1

Academic and Governance Services

Council

15/01 A meeting of the Council was held in Room 201, The Carrington Building, on Friday 23 January 2015 at 10.30am.

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 R Van de Noort)

Mr T Beardmore-Gray
Professor J Board
Ms T Corless
Professor B Cosh
Lord Crisp
Professor R H Ellis
Dr P E Erskine
Ms N Harper
Mr S Hawker

Dr O B Kennedy
Mrs M Martin
Mr H W A Palmer
Dr P R Preston
Mr S C C Pryce
Professor G H Tucker
Professor S Walker

The University Secretary

In attendance: The Chief Operating Officer
The Director of Finance and Corporate Services
The Director of Quality Support and Development

Apologies were received from Mr T Bartlam, Mr R E R Evans, Dame Moira Gibb, The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Mr V Raimo), Mr S P Sherman, Sir John Sunderland and Mrs S L Webber.

The President reported the deaths of:

Professor Peter Byrne, who had joined the University in August 1972 as Lecturer in the Department of Land Management and had gained the personal title of Senior Lecturer in Land Management and Development in 1988. He had been Head of the Department of Land Management and Development from 1996 until 2001, and had become Head of the intra-school Department of Land Management in 2001. He had become a Professor of Real Estate and
Dynamics in 2003. In April 2012, he had been appointed Head of Real Estate and Planning and had been in post until his death in January 2015.

**Professor Simon Dentith**, who had joined the University in 2007 as a Professor of English and had become Head of Department in August 2008. He had retired from the University in 2014.

**Miss Rosemary Harriott**, who had been Warden of Wessex Hall from 1970 until 1975, and a Lecturer in the Department of Classics from 1970 until her retirement in 1984.

**Mr David Charles Large**, who had become a Warden of St. Patrick’s Hall in 1962, and had also been a part-time Lecturer in the Department of Geography. He had retired in 1987.

**Emeritus Professor Christopher Salvesen**, who had been appointed Lecturer in English in 1966, and in 1971 had become Head of the Department of English. He had retired in 2000.

The President invited members of the Council to visit the Library following the meeting in order to view the most recent phase of refurbishment and to be better placed to consider proposals for a further, more extensive redevelopment which would be submitted to the Council in due course.

15/02 The minutes (14/55-14/79) of the meeting held on 21 November 2014 were confirmed and signed.

Arising on the Minutes:

**Minute 14/69: Management Letter and Audit Highlights Memorandum from KPMG for the year ended 31 July 2014**

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services reported that arrangements had been made for relevant staff to receive training in connection with the UK Bribery Act. The training would be delivered by solicitors external to the University, and staff in the Reading International Office and in Henley Business School would be included in the early phase of training. Consideration was also being given to the development of an online training package. Work is ongoing around the contracts entered into by the University, with a particular emphasis on international representatives and agents, and international teaching collaborations. This includes a review of the due diligence processes operated by the University in these scenarios, with new procedures being developed where appropriate.

The Council noted that the proposed draft Ordinances required the University to have in place policies on Whistleblowing and on Anti-Corruption and Bribery, and that the revised staff contracts which were currently being drafted would include explicit obligations in connection with the Anti-Corruption and Bribery policy. The Audit Committee would continue to monitor the University’s provision in these areas.

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services undertook to report to Council on the delivery of training and the development of online provision at its
meeting in March.

In response to observations from Mr Hawker and Lord Crisp, the University Secretary assured the Council that the University’s policy on Whistleblowing made provision for concerns to be raised initially under internal procedures without fear of victimization. Again, the Audit Committee had oversight in this area.

Minute 14/76: Report of the Appointments Committee

The Council noted that 69 individuals had responded to the advertisement for interest in lay membership of Council, and that, with four vacancies expected to arise between summer 2015 and summer 2016, eight candidates had been shortlisted for interview in February. Appointments would be further considered by the Appointments Committee on 9 February 2015. The President assured the Council that the Appointments Committee was mindful of the importance of diversity in the membership of the Council.

Items of Report

15/03 Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee (Item 2(a))

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 21 November 2014 relating to items for report.

15/04 Freedom of Speech: Annual Report (Item 2(b))

The Council received the Annual Report on the operation of the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech. In response to a question from Dr Erskine, the Vice-Chancellor noted that the absence of cases to be reported under the provisions of the Code of Practice was due, in part, to the sense of responsibility and good judgement of student societies in conducting their business. The University continued to strengthen its relationship with student societies, which allowed potential issues to be discussed informally at an early stage.

Resolved:

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

Report of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 21 November 2014 relating to items for report;

Annual Report on the operation of the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech.”

15/05 Documents sealed and to be sealed (Item 2(c))

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**

15/06  **Report of the Vice-Chancellor** (Item 3)

The Vice-Chancellor:

(a) reported that the University had performed well in the Research Excellence Framework. The Vice-Chancellor paid tribute to all colleagues who had contributed to this result, and noted that the next phase of the University's research strategy was being developed in anticipation of the next such exercise which would be held in 2020;

(b) reported that, by the UCAS deadline for standard applications, undergraduate applications to the University had increased overall by 21% relative to last year, in comparison with an increase of only 2% for the sector, and that overseas undergraduate applications had increased by 14%. The University’s marketing strategy and a shorter turnaround time for applications were believed to be significant factors in this improvement. Applications for postgraduate taught programmes had shown a modest increase and for postgraduate research programmes a slight decline, but the application cycle for both these areas tended to run later than for undergraduates. The University was working hard to convert applications to acceptances.

In response to a question from Dr Erskine, the Vice-Chancellor assured the Council that the capacity of the University’s infrastructure, including student accommodation and teaching space, was being reviewed to ensure that increases in student numbers in 2015 and beyond could be adequately supported.

In response to an observation from Lord Crisp, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that the increasing stringency of immigration arrangements had placed a greater administrative burden on the University and had made the recruitment of overseas students more difficult. However, the University was less exposed than some other institutions to the Indian market, which had been most affected. The University’s investment in internationalisation over several years had meant that the University had outperformed the sector and a number of major Russell Group competitors in the increased recruitment of international students;

(c) reported that he had recently visited Henley Business School South Africa (HBSSA) and had been impressed by its campus, provision, and evident impact in the business community and society more broadly. HBSSA, as currently constituted and previously under Henley Management College, was long-established and highly regarded in the region, and was currently
one of only two international business schools permitted to operate in South Africa;

(d) reported that a consultation was currently being held on proposals for the reform of the University’s academic structures. Under the proposals Faculties and Deans of Faculties would be discontinued, and Deans of Teaching and Learning and Deans of Research, reporting to the University Executive Board (UEB), would be introduced; Heads of School would also report to UEB. Formal proposals would be submitted to the Senate and subsequently to the Council in March.

In response to a question from Dr Preston, the Vice-Chancellor indicated that the proposed restructuring would enhance the University’s ability to meet the challenges facing higher education and would help to strengthen its competitive position in respect of both research and student recruitment;

(e) reported that the National Student Survey (NSS) 2015 would be launched shortly. While the University sought students’ views through various means throughout the year, the NSS was particularly important since it contributed significantly to league tables and offered useful benchmarking data. The University had improved its response rate to the NSS in 2014, and would be seeking further improvement in the current year. The Council noted that the student experience would be a primary focus for the annual meeting of Court in March;

(f) reported on a number of imminent building developments, including: new sports pavilions on the Whiteknights campus and at the Bulmershe playing fields; an extension of the Cafe Mondial in the Students’ Union, which would increase the University’s provision of alcohol-free social space; the refurbishment of the Palmer Theatre; and a new car park in Queen’s Drive, which would operate on a ‘pay and display’ basis. The former MERL building on Chancellor’s Way would be demolished in the Autumn Term, and, previous proposals for a hotel development having now been set aside, the use of the site was currently under consideration. In addition, work had begun on the developments south of the M4, particularly preparation for the new bridge across the M4;

(g) reported that the University was currently considering the implications of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill, which would place on universities a statutory duty to have ‘due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism’. The University would adopt a proportionate risk-based approach to the issue, and would fulfil its statutory duty while maintaining the principle of freedom of speech within the law.

Resolved:

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

15/07 Presentation to the Council by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mithen) on the outcome of the Research Excellence Framework 2014 (Item 4)
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor made a presentation to the Council on the outcome of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014 (copy inserted in Minute Book).

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor outlined the strategy which the University had adopted in relation to the REF, explained the University’s results across the 36 Units of Assessment for which submissions had been made, and contextualised the University’s performance with reference to Russell Group institutions. The University had submitted a high proportion of its eligible staff, and had been ranked 48th in relation to research quality, 27th in relation to research power and 19th in relation to research intensity. The University had confirmed its status as a leading research-intensive university, but had not yet met its strategic aspirations. In order to enhance its performance in the 2020 research excellence exercise, the University was currently restructuring its leadership of research and would need to undertake a programme of targeted investment, increase the number of research-active staff, and build its research income.

Dr Erskine and Lord Crisp enquired about focussing investment in those areas which would yield the greatest return and how the University might maximise the impact of research in these areas. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor reported that the University had identified Environment, Food and Health as strategic priorities for investment, and that, while there was currently substantial engagement with relevant external bodies, further work was needed to build relationships with a wider range of commercial, charitable and governmental bodies. A presentation on the University’s initiatives in respect of Health would be included in a forthcoming meeting of Council. While there would be greater focus in research investment, the University continued to recognise the importance of those disciplines, mainly in the Arts, Humanities and Social Science, which did not and could not yield high levels of research funding relative to the Sciences but where the strength of research would be important to reputation and, indirectly, student recruitment. The University sought opportunities for innovative interdisciplinary initiatives, which encompassed a wide range of Schools, for example, the Leverhulme Research Centre on Climate Justice, which included a number of disciplinary areas including Philosophy.

15/08 Charter, Statutes and Ordinances (Item 5)

The Council received, at the second occasion, the proposals for the reform of Charter, Statutes and Ordinances, and also received a report on the actions taken as a consequence of its resolution at its meeting on 21 November 2014. In accordance with the resolution, the Senate and the Standing Committee of Convocation had been consulted on the revised Charter of Incorporation and the proposal to abolish the Statutes of the University, and the Senate had been consulted on the revised Ordinances. In addition, the Privy Council and the Charity Commission had been informally consulted.

The Charity Commission had requested two minor changes, namely a clearer format for the sections governing the name, objects and membership of the University, and new wording for the Objects clause which would align more closely with preferred standard wording within the sector. The President had,
on behalf of the Council and in line with the requirements of the Privy Council, approved these minor changes as part of the first resolution phase.

Members of the Senate had raised two comments. The first had been to seek reassurance that UCU would be involved in any processes for the review of employment policies. The Senate had been informed that the policies, as drafted, prescribed the involvement of UCU and of the Staff Forum in the review of employment policies. The second had related to a range of concerns indicated in a letter sent to members of the Senate. Reassurance had been given that these concerns would be addressed in the continuing discussions between the Director of Human Resource, Director of Legal Services, UCU and the Staff Forum.

Two members of the Standing Committee of Convocation had submitted comments. One response had expressed disappointment in the decision to remove Convocation. The other response had been strongly supportive of the proposals.

Council noted that the draft employment policies would be submitted to its next meeting.

Resolved on the second occasion:

1. “That a revised Charter of Incorporation, as now submitted, be approved and submitted to the Privy Council for consideration;”

2. “That, contingent on (a) above, a proposal to abolish the Statutes of the University be approved and submitted to the Privy Council for consideration;”

3. “That, contingent on (a) and (b) above, and the approval by the Privy Council of the same, revised Ordinances, as now submitted, be approved.”

15/09 Reports of the Strategy and Finance Committee

The Council received reports from the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Committee held on 21 November 2014 relating to items for discussion and decision.

In regard to item 6(a), University Strategy: Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme, the Chief Operating Officer reported that the review of professional and administrative services was making good progress, that the voluntary severance scheme, having attracted more than 200 expressions of interest, would be carefully managed to ensure that the University did not lose key staff, and that a range of functionality to support the Student Journey would be released in March 2015.

In response to a request from Mr Hawker, the Chief Operating Officer undertook to provide future reports in a format which set out more clearly the benefits, savings, costs and risks, and mapped progress against targets.

In regard to item 6(b), University of Reading Malaysia Progress Report, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the Provost was now based in Malaysia full-time, that Heads of Section and Heads of Service were now in place, and that the campus building was expected to be completed in May, slightly behind schedule. The recruitment cycle
in Malaysia ran much later than the UK cycle; in consequence, a report on applications would be submitted to the Council at its July meeting.

In response to a question from Mr Dwyer, the Chief Operating Officer reported that there would be an intensive marketing and publicity campaign in the final phase of the recruitment cycle, focussed on target markets in Malaysia and beyond.

In regard to item 6(c), University and College Union: industrial action, the Vice-Chancellor reported that the University and College Union had extended its suspension of industrial action pending the outcome of a ballot on revised proposals for the future of the Universities Superannuation Scheme. Although the risk of industrial action had receded, the University had nonetheless been developing contingency plans.

**RESOLVED S.43**

**Resolved:**

“That:

(a) the Report entitled University Strategy: Efficiency and Effectiveness Programme, now submitted, be received;

(b) the University of Reading Malaysia Progress Report, now submitted, be received;

(c) the paper entitled University and College Union: industrial action, now submitted, be received;**

**REDACTED S.43**

15/10 Report of the Senate (Item 7)

The Council received the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 3 December 2014.

**Resolved:**

1. “That, with reference to item 1, alterations to Ordinance III (Degrees Diplomas and Certificates) and to Ordinance L (Degrees of Bachelor) to provide for the introduction of a degree of Bachelor of Pharmacy (BPharm), now submitted, be approved.”

2. “That, with reference to item 2, the following be accorded the title of Visiting Professor:

   * Henley Business School
   Mr Bill Payne (Concentrix/Synnex), for the period ending 31 December 2017;

   Mr Richard Barkham (CBRE), for the period ending 31 December 2017;
3. “That, with reference to item 3, the following be accorded the title of Honorary Fellow for a period of five years from the date indicated:

Ms Carol Prior (1 September 2014)
Mrs Kay Dickinson (12 October 2014)
Miss Celia Ayres (1 November 2014).”

4. “That the Report of the meeting of the Senate held on 3 December 2014, now submitted, be approved.”

15/11 The Eastern Relief Road/M4 Bridge Guarantee Bonds (Item 8)

The Council received a paper on The Eastern Relief Road/M4 Bridge Guarantee Bonds, which set out proposed arrangements for two performance guarantee bonds, as required by the Highways Agency and Wokingham Borough Council. As part of the paper, the Council received a document from Barclays Bank PLC to the University setting out the terms and conditions upon which the bank is prepared to make available a facility for bonds, guarantees and/or indemnities.

Resolved:

1. “That the Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Ms C A B Wright) and the Chief Operating Officer (Mr D C L Savage) be authorised on behalf of the University to sign the Facility letter REDACTED S.43

2. “That, should a lower cost, secured facility be offered by the Bank on terms that are acceptable, the President of Council be authorised, on behalf of Council, to give authority to the Director of Finance & Corporate Services (Ms C A B Wright) and the Chief Operating Officer (Mr D C L Savage) to sign a revised Facility letter.”
15/12 Report of the Joint Standing Committee of Council and Senate on Honorary Degrees (Item 9)

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

Resolved:

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

15/13 Appointment of Head of the Institute of Education

The Vice-Chancellor reported that, acting on behalf of the Senate, he had approved, for submission to the Council, a recommendation that Dr Cathy Tissot be appointed Head of the Institute of Education for a period of four years.

Resolved:

“That Dr Cathy Tissot be appointed as Head of the Institute of Education, for the period from 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2019;”

15/14 Dates of further meetings of the Council in the Session 2014-15

Further meetings of the Council in this Session had been scheduled for Monday 23 March 2015 at 2.00pm, following a meeting of the Court in the morning, and for Monday 13 July 2015 at 2.15pm.