UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
COUNCIL
27th June 2012
MINUTES

Members present:
Mr J E K Smith (Pro-Chancellor, in the Chair); Mr C N Banks CBE (Deputy Pro-Chancellor); Mrs M C Davies; Mr M Devenish; Professor D S Eastwood (Vice-Chancellor and Principal); Professor J Frampton; Dr M G Gilbert (Treasurer); Ms E Halford (Postgraduate Mature Students Officer, Guild of Students); Mr R Halton; Mr M Harrop (President, Guild of Students); Dr R C Horton; Mr R J Keys; Mr G R Mackenzie OBE; Dr N E Price OBE; Professor C Ryan; Professor A J Schofield; Professor M C Sheppard (Provost and Vice-Principal); Dr R Sondhi CBE

Also present:
Mrs G Ball OBE (Director of Finance); Dr S J L Gower (Assistant Secretary); Professor J K Heath (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Ms T Lancaster (Director of External Relations) for item 12/33 only; Professor K O’Brien (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Mrs H Paver (Director of HR); Professor E W Peck (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor M C Press (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Mr L Sanders (Registrar and Secretary); Professor A Tickell (Pro-Vice-Chancellor); Professor M Whitby (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor R A Williams OBE (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College); Professor L S Young (Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Head of College)

Apologies: Mr D J Davies OBE; Professor M J Hilton; Hon Alderman D Roy OBE; Ms C Snowball CBE; Ms S Vickers

Papers: The minute book contains copies of all written papers or reports to which reference is made below unless indicated otherwise.

12/28 Minutes of previous meeting

Resolved: to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2012 (CO.12.06.01 and CO.12.06.01a).

12/29 Matters arising not addressed elsewhere on the agenda

There were none.

12/30 Pro-Chancellor’s Items

Received: an oral report from the Pro-Chancellor.

(i) Queen’s Birthday Honours.

Reported: that the Director of Finance had been awarded an OBE and Professor Sir Michael Sterling a knighthood in the Queen’s Birthday Honours.
Resolved: to congratulate the Director of Finance and Professor Sir Michael Sterling on their awards.

(ii) Russell Group

Reported: that the Vice-Chancellor was to be appointed Chair of the Russell Group with effect from the start of September.

Resolved: to congratulate the Vice-Chancellor on his appointment.

(iii) Farewell and Thanks

Resolved: to thank the following Council members whose terms of office were due to end on 31st July 2012 for their contributions to the Council and its committees:

Mr Graham Mackenzie
Professor Matthew Hilton
Mr Mark Harrop

12/31 Vice-Chancellor’s Items

Received: a report from the Vice-Chancellor containing a number of items for information (CO.12.06.02).

(i) Birmingham Fellows

Reported: by Professor Tickell that the posts of three of the Birmingham Fellows were now being funded philanthropically. A list of the Fellows appointed and their subject areas would be circulated to members after the meeting.

(ii) Policy Commissions

Reported: by Professor Peck that the Policy Commissions were proving an effective and practical way of shaping the agenda in several key areas. The first Commission, The Future of Local Public Services in a “Big Society”, had been completed twelve months earlier. Its recommendations were informing the University’s relationship with the City Council. The second, The Future of Nuclear Energy in the UK, would report next month, with a launch involving major players in government and industry. Fringe events, to be held by the University at the three major party political conferences in the autumn, would be linked to the Policy Commissions.

(iii) Impact of Days of Action

Reported: that only about a hundred support staff had taken part in the Unison days of action, and that there had been very little impact on the Open Days. The University would not re-open negotiations on last year’s pay settlement. Negotiations on this year’s round would not commence until this settlement had been formally accepted.
12/32  **Key Performance Targets Update**

**(COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

**Considered**: a paper (CO.12.06.03).

12/33  **Admissions Update**

**Received**: a paper (CO.12.06.04).

**Reported**: by Professor O'Brien that

(a) the 2012 Undergraduate recruitment round had been more challenging than for many years. Based on information available in June, the University was on target to achieve overall targets for Home Undergraduate recruitment, whilst Overseas Undergraduate recruitment was very close to the position last year. The situation was still particularly volatile, as it was unclear what actions other institutions might take over the summer and their impact or how applicant behaviour might change. Significant activity would take place during the confirmation period to maximise the quality of the intake;

(b) in the autumn a detailed analysis would be undertaken to assess comparative performance across individual subjects areas, and the impact of factors such as competitors’ activities and increasing parental influence;

(c) Home Postgraduate numbers were likely to be below targets. Overseas Postgraduate numbers were on target. The University’s experience in this area was consistent with that of institutions across the sector;

(d) Postgraduate Research recruitment was currently forecast to be slightly below targets though still higher than last year. Recruitment and conversion activities would continue through the summer.

**Resolved**: to thank admissions staff in Schools and in Professional Services for their efforts in the recruitment round to date.

12/34  **Budget 2012/13 and Forward Look to 2015/16**

**(COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

**Received**: a report from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 12th June 2012 (CO.12.06.11).

**Resolved**: to approve the University Budget for the year ending 31st July 2012 as set out in the paper, noting the Forward Look.

12/35  **Update on the Proposal to Create a University of Birmingham School and Sixth Form**

**Received**: a paper containing details of progress to date (CO.12.06.06).

**Reported**: by Professor Peck that

(a) an interview had taken place at the Department for Education earlier in the month, which had been very positive. Discussions were continuing about details
of capital allocations;

(b) over recent months a series of conversations had taken place with local stakeholders. There had been broad support for the proposed School from the City Council and from local schools. A small number of adjustments had been made in response to concerns about the possible impact on local Sixth Forms;

(c) it was hoped that a formal announcement on the proposal would be made in July. However, the University would not make a final commitment to the project until outstanding capital issues had been satisfactorily resolved.

Resolved:

(a) to confirm the previous decision by Council with regard to granting a long-term lease on the Selly Oak site for the purposes of the School, subject to the negotiation of terms;
(b) to agree the establishment of a Council reference group, comprising the following members:

The Pro-Chancellor
The Vice-Chancellor
The Deputy Pro-Chancellor
The Treasurer
Mr David Davies.

The group would be consulted on any significant issues arising in relation to the University School between this and the next meeting of Council in October, should the Department for Education wish to progress discussions over the summer.

12/36 Report from the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee (SPRC)

Received: a report from the meetings of the Strategy, Planning and Resources Committee held on 2nd May and 12th June 2012 (CO.12.06.07).

Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity

Noted: that

(a) the outcome of the Review had been endorsed by the Senate, having previously been unanimously supported by the College Board and by UEB;
(b) grant applications and grant capture were declining. The commercial environment made it difficult for project groups to bid for contracts at full economic cost;
(c) the College was committed to ensuring that all registered students graduated with the degree for which they were registered and that the quality of the degrees was maintained. The range of module choices would be maintained as far as possible for 2012/13 modules;
(d) the relocation of the IAA within the School of History and Cultures would encourage a broader range of collaborations and promote the discipline.

Resolved: to endorse the outcome of the Review and to approve the continuation of the 90-day consultation period.

Resolved: to approve the following items in the Report from SPRC:
(i) Recommendations for Capital Projects over £2.5m – refurbishment of areas of the Robert Aitken Building (c £3m), of Oakley Court student residences (c. £2.7m) and of Jarratt Hall (c. £7.86m).

(ii) Guild Budget for 2012/13, including a University block grant of £1,704k;

(iii) Amendments to Section 1 of the University Ordinances and Section 3 of the Regulations;

(iv) Conditions of Employment, including a recommendation that the approval of conditions of employment be delegated to SPRC and that the Council Scheme of Delegation be amended to this effect;

(v) The establishment of a Redundancy Panel for one member of staff, relating to the closure of MCS.

12/37 Proposed Amendments to University Legislation

Received: a paper (CO.12.06.08).

Noted: that

(a) the proposals had been developed at the request of Council to provide for suspension and withdrawal of membership of University committees. It was believed that such instances would be rare. An individual whose membership of a committee was withdrawn would be replaced by a person of the same category of membership, using the normal procedure for determining that category;

(b) the proposed amendments to the Statutes would be submitted to Court for comment and to Senate in relation to proposals relating to its terms of reference. They would then be further considered by Council at its meeting in October, together with any comments received from Court and Senate.

Resolved: to approve

(a) the proposed amendments to Statutes, as set out in the paper, for consultation with Court and Senate;

(b) the proposed amendments to the Ordinances, as set out in the paper.

(c) the proposed amendments to the Code of Governance and Scheme of Delegation, as set out in the paper.

12/38 Terms of Reference for the Quinquennial Review of the Guild

Received: a paper detailing proposed terms of reference for the forthcoming review (CO.12.06.09).

Resolved: to approve the membership and terms of reference as set out in the paper.

12/39 HEFCE Financial Forecasts

Received: to endorse the Financial Commentary and associated Financial Forecasts that, because of the HEFCE deadline falling before the Council meeting, had been approved by SPRC and submitted to HEFCE (CO.12.06.10).
12/40 Report of the Audit Committee

*Received:* a report from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 6th March 2012 (CO.12.06.11).

12/41 Report of the Membership Committee

*Considered:* a report (CO.12.06.12).

*Resolved:* to approve the recommendations in the Report.

12/42 Draft Annual Report from the Council to Court

*Received:* a copy of the draft report to be submitted to Court in September 2012 (CO.12.06.13).

*Agreed:* to approve the report for submission to Court.

12/43 Annual Assurance Report on Equality and Diversity from the Council to Court

*Received:* a copy of the Annual Assurance Report on Equality and Diversity, submitted by UEB (CO.12.06.14).

12/44 Report from Senate

*Received:* a report from the meeting of Senate held on 13th June 2012 (CO.12.06.15).

12/45 Appointment of Chancellor

*Received:* a report on progress (CO.12.06.16).

*Resolved:* to approve an extension to Sir Dominic Cadbury’s term of office as Chancellor to 31st December 2013, subject to consultation with Court.

12/46 Capital Projects Over £5m

*Received:* a progress report on capital projects above £5m previously approved by Council (CO.12.06.17).

12/47 Items approved between Meetings of Council

*Received:* a list of items approved since the meeting of the Council on 27th June 2012 (CO.12.06.18).

12/48 Affixing of the University Seal

*Received:* a report noting the transactions which had required use of the University
Seal since the last meeting of Council (CO.12.06.19).

12/49 Arrangements for Transaction of Business between meetings of Council

Resolved: to approve arrangements for transaction of businesses during the summer vacation (CO.12.06.20).

12/50 Any other business

There was none.

12/51 Date of Next Meeting

Reported: that the next meeting of the Council would take place on Wednesday 3rd October 2012, commencing at 10.00 a.m. This would be a Strategy Day and would include consideration of the University’s engagement with the City and the Region.