

9. Institutional relationship with Stonewall

Noted:

- UMC was asked to consider whether UCL should:
 - Re-join the Stonewall Diversity Champions Programme (DCP) and the Stonewall Global Diversity Champions Programme (GDCP)
 - Submit to the 2023 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (WEI) (in 2022)
- A detailed and comprehensive paper was presented, considered and discussed at length. The paper provided a clear and balanced summary of the background, context and prior consideration of the complex and sensitive issues relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex. This paper included the papers on the matter that had been received and discussed by Academic Board and the EDI Committee and the minutes of meetings of the EDI committee and Academic Board, summarising a range of opinions and containing the advice of both of those groups to UMC.
- Those in favour of UCL's participation in the two Stonewall schemes had cited the benefits of a clear external framework to shape and measure UCL's work on LGBTQ+ inclusion, and the support that participation signals to trans staff and students in particular. Those opposed had raised concerns about academic freedom in the light of Stonewall's positions on the protected characteristic of sex, and on single sex exemptions allowed by the Equality Act and the impact on academic debates about sex and gender identity, and their relationship to biology, culture and law, that may stem from alignment with Stonewall, with and implied endorsement of its positions.
- The minutes of the UCL EDI Committee (6 December 2021) and Academic Board (10 December 2021) were considered. It was noted that the EDI Committee supported re-joining the Diversity Champions Programme and the Global Diversity Champions Programme and submitting to the 2023 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, by a very large majority. The Academic Board did not support re-joining the Diversity Champions Programme and the Global Diversity Champions Programme and submitting to the 2023 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, by a majority of the vote, which was conducted anonymously.
- Additionally, UMC noted:
 - That the debate at Academic Board and at the EDI Committee had been conducted in a positive, constructive and respectful manner. A wide range of voices and a diverse range of views had been heard. It was noted that there was not unified support for Stonewall within the LGBTQ+ community.
 - That it was unlikely that UCL would be able to influence the Stonewall position through renewed membership for a shorter period of time.
 - Deans had also received many representations from academic and professional staff and students. It was recognised that while the views of Academic Board might not represent all groups, a large number of views had been fed into discussion through other

channels. That notwithstanding, UMC agreed that there was a need for an ongoing conversation with the UCL community.

- UMC agreed that external benchmarking schemes provided valuable frameworks and indicators that were helpful to ensure that UCL was able to assess its performance and identify areas for change and improvement. In the absence of that framework from an external organisation such as Stonewall, and recognising the need to sustain a community that was supportive, inclusive and open to difference, it was agreed that internal measures would be required to ensure that UCL continued to make progress in this area. Such benchmarks, measures and priorities would need to be agreed with the community.

Outcomes:

- UMC confirmed UCL's unwavering commitment to upholding the rights of LGBTQ+ staff and students and to working to ensure that UCL is a diverse community to which everyone can bring their whole self without fear of discrimination, bullying or harassment.
- In weighing up the spectrum of views and opinion, UMC accepted the Academic Board's advice, that UCL should not re-join Stonewall's Diversity Champions Programme or make a submission to the Workplace Equality Index, on the grounds that there is a fundamental need to uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech in an academic context, and a formal institutional commitment to Stonewall may have the effect of inhibiting academic work and discussion within UCL about sex and gender identity.
- This decision was made in the context of a clear commitment that UCL would re-double our work around LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion, with a particular focus on supporting trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming members of our community.
- UMC endorsed the proposal to establish an LGBTQ+ Equality Implementation Group, following the model of the Race Equality Implementation Group, which would develop a strong programme of action to tackle all forms of inequality, marginalisation, and discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ colleagues and students.

Action: Pro-Provost (Equity & Inclusion)