



Academic Board

Wednesday 2 June 2021¹

MINUTES

Present: Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost (Chair).

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Professor Nick Achilleos; Mr Adnan Ali; Dr Mark Altaweel; Professor Lynn Ang; Dr Seth Anziska; Ms Wendy Appleby; Professor David Attwell; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Sakiru Badmos; Professor Maryse Bailly; Dr Simon Banks; Professor Polina Bayvel; Professor Jonathan Bell; Mr Ayman Benmati; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Professor Zoltan Biedermann; Professor Robert Biel; Professor Stephanie Bird; Dr Matthew Blain; Professor Brad Blitz; Professor David Bogle; Professor Douglas Bourn; Professor Rachel Bowlby; Dr Geraldine Brodie; Professor Clare Brooks; Dr Nicole Brown; Professor Robert Brownstone; Professor Eric Brunner; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Suzy Buckley; Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo; Professor Neil Burgess; Professor Jonathan Butterworth; Mr Tadhg Caffrey; Professor Licia Capra; Professor Matteo Carandini; Dr Alisia Carnemolla; Professor Richard Chandler; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Michael Cheetham; Professor Kwang Choy; Dr Evangelia Chrysikou; Professor Chris Clack; Dr Alun Coker; Professor Claire Colomb; Professor Barbara Conradt; Professor Anthony Costello; Ms Sonja Curtis; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Dr Nathan Davies; Professor Nathan Davies; Professor Sally Day; Professor Michelle De Haan; Professor Marc Deisenroth; Dr Elton Dias; Professor Andrew Dick; Professor Annette Dolphin; Ms Dominique Draï; Professor Paulo Drinot; Professor Ian Eames; Professor Frances Edwards; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Professor Joanna Evans; Dr Russell Evans; Professor Susan Evans; Ms Pascale Fanning-Tichborne; Ms Ava Fatah; Dr Javier Fernandez Garcia; Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Professor Patrizia Ferretti; Professor Margot Finn; Professor Andrew Fisher; Professor Maria Fitzgerald; Dr Andrew Flinn; Professor Peter Fonagy; Professor Eric Fraga; Professor Nicholas Freemantle; Dr Bettina Friedrich; Dr David Frost; Dr Martin Fry; Dr Federico Galvanin; Dr Claire Garnett; Professor Mark Geller; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Adam Gibson; Professor Deborah Gill; Professor Richard Gilson; Professor Nikolaos Gonis; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Mr James Gorridge; Dr Ryan Grammenos; Ms Emma Grant; Ms Amanda Greene; Professor Ann Griffin; Professor Francois Guesnet; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Professor Patrick Haggard; Professor Stephen Hailes; Professor Susan Hamilton; Mr Jesper Hansen; Professor Kenneth Harris; Professor Graham Hart; Professor Kirsten Harvey; Professor Michael

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Heinrich; Professor Therese Hesketh; Professor Jonathan Hill; Professor Evangelos Himonides; Professor Michael Hoare; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith; Dr Dan Jagger; Mr Rafid Jawad; Professor Kathryn Jeffery; Professor Jasmina Jovanovic; Dr Thomas Kador; Dr Jens Kandt; Professor Jian Kang; Mr Peter Kelly; Dr John Kelsey; Dr Maki Kimura; Professor John King; Professor Jeffrey King; Professor Robert Kleta; Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou; Ms Edyta Kostanek; Professor Patty Kostkova; Mr Dimitrios Kraniotis; Dr Fiona Kyle; Professor Marie-Carine Lall; Dr Danielle Lamb; Professor Alena Ledeneva; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Professor Louis Lemieux; Professor Paola Lettieri; Professor Caren Levy; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor Annemaree Lloyd-Zantiotis; Professor Kai Luo; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir ; Ms Collette Lux; Ms Xuanyi Ma; Dr Isabel Mackay; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Dr Merle Mahon; Professor Eleanor Main; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Dr Giulio Marini; Professor John Martin; Dr Ruth McGinity; Professor Andrew Mcquillin; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Zoran Milutinovic; Professor Jenny Mindell; Professor Sara Mole; Professor Jonathan Montgomery; Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti; Professor Sharon Morris; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor John Mullan; Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde; Professor Steven Murdoch; Professor Mirco Musolesi; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Professor Ad Neeleman; Dr Helene Neveu Kringelbach; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Alex Norori-McCormac; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Dr Ademola Odunsi; Professor Alexandra Olaya-Castro; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Enrico Palandri; Professor Quentin Pankhurst; Professor Jayne Parker; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Nora Pashayan; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Dr Olga Perski; Professor James Phillips; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor Deenan Pillay; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Professor Mike Porter; Professor John Potter; Professor David Price; Professor Sarah Price; Professor Saul Purton; Professor David Pym; Professor Stephen Quirke; Professor Ahad Rahim; Professor Rosalind Raine; Dr Joana Ramalho; Professor Margaret Rawes; Dr Samantha Rayner; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Thilo Rehren; Professor Michael Reiss; Professor Jane Rendell; Professor William Richardson; Dr Carol Rivas; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Aeli Roberts; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Suzanne Ruddy; Professor Dmitri Rusakov; Professor Nader Saffari; Professor Patricia Salinas; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Prince Saprai; Professor Giorgio Savini; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Eloise Scotford; Professor Mala Shah; Professor Maryam Shahmanesh; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Professor Robert Sheil; Dr Michael Short; Mr Justin Siefker; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Dr Bill Sillar; Professor Michael Singer; Ms Thushyanthi Sivagnanam; Professor Lucia Sivilotti; Professor Sam Smidt; Mr Andy Smith; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Pam Sonnenberg; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Catalina Spataru; Professor Sarah Spurgeon; Professor Kalia Srari; Professor Andrew Stahl; Dr Uta Staiger; Dr Karen Stepanyan; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Michael Stewart; Mr William Stewart; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Ms Joanna Stroud; Professor Judith Suissa; Professor Matthew Sydes; Professor Krisztina Szendroi; Mr Bryan Taylor; Professor Irving Taylor; Professor Geraint Thomas; Professor Giles Thomas; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Jordan Timothy; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Helena

Titheridge; Professor Ahmed Toosy; Professor Jose Torero Cullen; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Jayant Vaidya; Professor Liz Varga; Mr Clive Vassell; Professor Laura Vaughan; Professor Yiannis Ventikos; Dr Nalini Vittal; Ms Yasmin Walker; Dr Ryan Wang; Mr Patrick White; Ms Breege Whiten; Professor James Wilson; Professor Stephen Wilson; Ms Izabella Wodzka; Professor John Wood; Professor Selina Wray; Ms Tor Wright; Professor Guoxiong Wu; Professor Maria Wyke; Dr Vedran Zerjav; Dr Stan Zochowski; Professor Alimuddin Zumla.

In attendance: Ms Alison Blackburn; Dr Clare Goudy; Ms Freya Markwell; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary); Mr Turloch O'Brien; Ms Olivia Whiteley.

Apologies: Professor James Bainbridge; Professor Susan Collins; Professor Andrew Davenport; Professor Sandra Dunsmuir; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Dr Quentin Huys; Professor Lily Kahn; Ms Sarah Lasoye; Professor David Lomas; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Dr Margaret Mayston; Professor Lorraine Noble; Dr Michaela Pollock; Dr Stephen Potts; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Ms Maria Sibiryakova; Professor Jolene Skordis; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Dr Rhiannon Stevens.

Part I: Preliminary Formal Business

57 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

57.1 The Minutes of 17 March 2021 [AB Minutes 41-44] were approved, subject to the following amendment of Minute 42A.2:

The Provost advised that the students' union Jewish Society had written to him to explain that they would not be prepared to nominate a member to the working group if the membership included any signatories of an open letter in support of Professor David Miller at Bristol University. The Provost felt that Jewish Society representation was crucial. Noting that the original resolution had been that the working group should carry out its role 'in coordination with the Provost and Council' [AB Minute 25.11, 2020-21], the Provost considered that he would have to take advice on the way forward if the Jewish Society found itself unable to make a nomination.

57.2 The Minutes of 12 May 2021 [AB Minutes 45-56] were approved, subject to correction of the minute numbering.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

58 PROVOST'S BUSINESS (Paper 7-43)

58.1 In respect of the disestablishment of UCL Qatar as an academic unit of UCL, the Provost thanked all of the staff and students who had made the venture such a success. Over the ten years of its operation UCL Qatar had graduated

330 students, and its staff had won over £11m in research grants and had published more than 180 peer-reviewed papers.

- 58.2 In line with government guidance, UCL was recommending that, on return to campus, members should carry out a lateral flow test twice a week. Results could be reported on the Connect to Protect portal as well as the NHS portal. This was not mandatory but would assist in monitoring any localised outbreaks. AB welcomed a suggestion that an update on the position in respect of COVID planning could be brought to the next meeting.
- 58.3 UCL expected that members of staff who had been working overseas during the pandemic would make themselves available to work in London for at least some of each week once the campus reopened. It was noted that there was a risk of significant financial penalties if staff were found to be working from the EU on a long-term basis.
- 58.4 In respect of UCL's announcement² that it had priced the issue of £300 million 40-year Sustainability Bonds at 1.625%, members asked for details of how the borrowed funds would be used. The Provost noted that the funds would need to be spent in accordance with the commitments made in respect of UCL's sustainability strategy. This would contribute to the capital investment plan which would form a key part in the strategy conversation over the coming year. Market conditions for borrowing had been exceptionally favourable and UCL had received a AA3 rating from Moody's.
- 58.5 The Provost confirmed that Academic Board would be involved throughout the development of the strategy as a key constituency for consultation. It would be necessary to consider issues of size and shape, estates planning, the model for resources and cost allocation, education, research and work culture. It was intended to produce a series of discussion papers for the university, alumni and stakeholders. The Provost noted that he had been encouraged by a general sense of agreement on the institution's operational strengths and weaknesses. He aspired to have developed a clear strategy for the period 2022-27 by the end of the next academic year.

59 **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES** (Paper 7-44)

- 59.1 The Provost introduced the paper, noting that Council as the governing body delegated to him authority for the academic, corporate, financial, estate and human resources management of UCL. The Provost was seeking to broaden the pool of colleagues who assisted him in the exercise of that delegated authority, as well as to make that function more transparent.
- 59.2 The governing documents were not prescriptive in setting out which matters were required to be taken to Academic Board. The Provost's preference was to take more rather than less to Academic Board, as little real progress could

² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/2021/may/ucl-announces-pricing-ps300-million-1625-sustainability-bonds-due-2061>

be made without the general support of the academic community. Nevertheless, some level of materiality had to be met in order to justify taking an issue to a body of 1,700 members, and it was not feasible to develop a set of criteria that would meet every case. It was therefore important to have an open and transparent management structure, which is what the current proposals sought to achieve.

- 59.3 It was suggested that it was not necessarily clear, particularly to someone whose responsibilities were primarily managerial, what the potential extent of the academic impact of a given proposal might be. The management committee structure sought to provide fora for discussion of such matters with appropriate academic input. In respect of the example of discretionary accounts [AB Minute 1, 9 June 2016], the Provost was of the view that an appropriately consultative management culture would usually avoid issues of this kind having to be challenged by Academic Board by obtaining sufficient stakeholder input early in the process.
- 59.4 The membership of the University Management Committee (UMC) would include those with responsibilities for running the institution. Academic Board provided a forum in which those role-holders could be accountable to the academic community in respect of questions of academic quality and standards. The governing body, the membership of which had to be more than 50% external, was accountable to the government and to the public for the future sustainability and strategic direction of the institution. Under the current structure the distinction between these management, governance and academic functions was not always sufficiently clear. Education Committee was cited as an example of this, as its constitution resembled that of a management committee but it held delegated functions from both Academic Board and Council. The Provost wished to establish a clearer formal distinction, under which a single issue such as a proposal for a new programme would be discussed on both sides; at a management committee in respect of considerations such as the financial implications, and elsewhere for consideration of the academic quality of the programme. There was a proposal in the following paper [Minute 60] that this latter function be carried out by a joint committee of Council and Academic Board.
- 59.5 In response to a number of proposals made by GCAB in a memo circulated in advance of the meeting, the Provost noted that he was happy for the UMC Terms of Reference to state that they were subject to the powers of Academic Board, and noted that commitments had already been made to producing Academic Impact Statements in consultation with ExComAB. Judgement would always be required in determining which initiatives required the input of Academic Board as any activity in a university could be said to have academic implications. The Provost clarified that he did not envisage the Education Committee listed in the management committee structure to be exercising delegated powers from Academic Board.
- 59.6 Article 7 of the Charter stated that Council 'shall have the management and administration of the property of the College and the conduct of its affairs, subject to the powers of the Academic Board'. Statute 7(11) stated that 'the

powers of the Academic Board shall be governed by Regulation or decision of the Council made in manner hereinbefore provided'. It was noted that Article 16(3) allowed for bodies to delegate functions provided that such delegation was not repugnant to the provisions of the Charter or the Statutes. Academic Board could not therefore be asked to give up its responsibilities under Article 8. Council however had made no specific provision in Regulation for the powers of Academic Board. Article 7 appeared to be making the point that Council delegated powers to AB but must then respect that delegation in the exercise of its own powers. It was for Council and Academic Board to resolve how that relationship was to function.

59.7 In respect of membership, there was a balance to be found between the functional requirement to ensure that those responsible for delivery at faculty level were members of the appropriate bodies, with the need to maintain an appropriate level of diversity at senior committee level, for example in ensuring that the non-professorial academic voice was heard. The issue of diversity would be particularly acute at the UMC if its membership relied exclusively on ex officio senior office-holders. The Provost acknowledged that this was a particularly difficult issue and one which would need careful consideration.

59.8 It was noted that the organogram provided related only to the proposed UMC structure, whereas there was in reality a hidden structure of faculty committees feeding in to the current Education Committee, and that in some cases such as the Research Degrees Committee the constitution drew on such structures for its ex officio membership. The detail at that level had yet to be worked out. Members asked for an expanded organogram indicating the relationship between the UMC structure and the rest of UCL's governance arrangements.

60 **ACADEMIC COMMITTEES** (Paper 7-45)

60.1 Turlogh O'Brien (external member of Council) introduced the paper.

60.2 Council had established a Governance Working Group to consider the recommendations of the Halpin and Commission of Inquiry reports [AB Minute 33, 12 February 2020] and to consider how these might be implemented. The Working Group had reviewed the interaction between Academic Board and Council and the way in which Council received advice on academic issues, as well as the ways in which Council and AB could most effectively exercise their responsibilities in the context of the proposed management structure. The goal was to develop a more collegial style of working. It would be possible for Council and Academic Board each to establish its arrangements independently – presumably, in Academic Board's case, by way of ExComAB, but there was currently an opportunity to consider whether a joint arrangement would be more effective in establishing a collegial style.

- 60.3 The proposals in the paper were not a detailed design; rather they sought to explore whether Academic Board would consider a joint working relationship model with Council in the Academic Committee domain. If there was an appetite to explore this further, a joint working group would need to be established to carry out the detailed design.
- 60.4 It was suggested that the proposal to establish a closer working relationship between Council and Academic Board was being made on the basis of taking away some powers from Academic Board. It was further suggested that the Charter and Statutes made AB the highest academic authority on academic matters. It was noted that the regulatory landscape had altered significantly since the Charter and Statutes were created.
- 60.5 The Governance Working Group's assumption had been that the current AB delegations to Education Committee and Research Degrees Committee would instead be to this academic body. Members expressed concerns about the delegation of powers to a body that was joint with Council as well as about the principle of Council being advised by a body over which it had joint oversight. It was noted however that Council and AB would still be in the position to disagree with whatever the committee concluded.
- 60.6 It was suggested that the formulation used in Academic Committee's Terms of Reference prior to 2010 ('Subject to any general or particular direction that may from time to time be given by the Academic Board, the Academic Committee is charged by Council...') could be revived in this context. AB did of course have the ability to recall its delegated powers, but it was envisaged that any new arrangement be subject to a significant review as a matter of course after 18 months. It was also suggested that there was a need for a detailed review of the proposals so that Council could assure itself that UCL was following its governing articles.
- 60.7 On the basis of a show of hands it was agreed to ask a Working Group of Council and AB to consider both the GCAB proposals and the proposal for a joint committee and to come back to AB with a recommendation for a way forward.

Part III: Other Business for approval or Information

61 LEAD OFFICER REPORT: STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING (Paper 7-50)

61.1 Academic Board received the report.

62 EUGENICS INQUIRY RESPONSE GROUP (Paper 7-51)

62.1 Academic Board received the report.

63 REGULATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT – LIST OF ACADEMIC UNITS (Paper 7-52)

63.1 Academic Board noted the proposed removal of UCL Qatar from the list of academic units.

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