



Academic Board

Wednesday 3 March 2021¹

MINUTES

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

Professor Bas Aarts; Dr Ali Abolfathi; Professor Daniel Alexander; Professor David Alexander; Mr Adnan Ali; Dr Mark Altaweel; Professor Lynn Ang; Professor Panagiota Angeli; Dr Seth Anziska; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Manuel Arroyo-Kalin; Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Professor David Atkinson; Professor David Attwell; Ms Marie Augustin; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Dominik Bach; Professor Jurg Bahler; Professor Maryse Bailly; Professor James Bainbridge; Dr Emily Baker; Professor Stavroula Balabani; Professor Torsten Baldeweg; Dr Simon Banks; Professor Yolande Barnes; Professor Kathryn Batchelor; Professor Gill Bates; Dr Cecile Bats; Professor Rachel Batterham; Professor Polina Bayvel; Mr Ayman Benmati; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Professor Nadia Berthouze; Professor Jeff Bezemer; Professor Zoltan Biedermann; Professor Robert Biel; Professor Stephanie Bird; Dr Matthew Blain; Professor Brad Blitz; Professor David Bogle; Professor Iain Borden; Professor Douglas Bourn; Professor Rachel Bowlby; Professor Daniel Bracewell; Professor Annie Britton; Dr Geraldine Brodie; Ms Annabel Brown; Professor Jamie Brown; Professor Dan Browne; Professor Robert Brownstone; Professor Eric Brunner; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Suzy Buckley; Professor Richard Bucknall; Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo; Professor Jonathan Butterworth; Mr Tadhg Caffrey; Professor Joseph Cain; Mr Simon Cane; Professor Licia Capra; Professor Claire Carmalt; Dr Alisia Carnemolla; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Michael Cheetham; Professor Andrew Chesher; Professor James Cheshire; Professor Kwang Choy; Dr Evangelia Chrysikou; Professor Lucie Clapp; Professor Beverley Clark; Professor Andrew Coates; Professor John Collinge; Professor Susan Collins; Professor Claire Colomb; Professor Barbara Conradt; Professor Anthony Costello; Professor Duncan Craig; Ms Sonja Curtis; Professor Caroline Daly; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Professor Nathan Davies; Professor Sally Day; Professor Dina D'Ayala; Professor Bert De Reyck; Professor Rohan de Silva; Professor Andreas Demosthenous; Professor Snezana Djordjevic; Professor Paul Dodds; Professor Annette Dolphin; Ms Dominique Draï; Professor Michael Duchen; Professor Sandra Dunsmuir; Professor Frances Edwards; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Professor Mark Emberton; Ms Ecem Ergin; Dr Russell Evans; Professor Susan Evans; Ms Pascale Fanning-Tichborne; Ms Ava Fatah; Professor Andrew Fazakerley; Professor Federico Federici; Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Professor Patrizia Ferretti; Professor Margot Finn; Professor Andrew Fisher; Professor Elizabeth Fisher; Dr Andrew Flinn; Mr James Ford; Professor Eric Fraga;

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

Dr Bettina Friedrich; Professor Paul Fromme; Dr David Frost; Dr Martin Fry; Professor Mary Fulbrook; Professor Jonathan Gale; Professor Nicholas Gallent; Dr Caroline Garaway; Professor Sarah Garfinkel; Professor Haidy Geismar; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Adam Gibson; Professor Shirli Gilbert; Professor Deborah Gill; Professor Richard Gilson; Professor Xavier Golay; Professor Nikolaos Gonis; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Professor Lesley Gourlay; Professor Ivan Gout; Ms Emma Grant; Professor Andrew Green; Ms Amanda Greene; Professor Linda Greensmith; Professor Alistair Greig; Professor Lewis Griffin; Dr Anne Grydehoj; Professor Francois Guesnet; Professor David Guile; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Professor Patrick Haggard; Professor Stephen Hailes; Professor Mordechai Haklay; Mr Martin Hall; Professor Susan Hamilton; Mr Jesper Hansen; Professor Stephen Hart; Professor Stephen M Hart; Professor Kirsten Harvey; Professor Michael Heinrich; Professor Robin Hickman; Professor Evangelos Himonides; Professor Aroon Hingorani; Professor Michael Hoare; Professor Arne Hofmann; Professor Martin Holbraad; Professor Jonathan Holmes; Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith; Professor John Hyman; Dr Alan Ingram; Professor Tom Jacques; Dr Dan Jagger; Professor Parmjit Jat; Mr Rafid Jawad; Professor Kathryn Jeffery; Professor Helene Joffe; Professor Peter Jones; Professor Jasmina Jovanovic; Professor Lily Kahn; Dr Jens Kandt; Professor Jian Kang; Ms Gunay Karimova; Professor Anthony Kenyon; Mr Joshua Kerr; Professor Eli Keshavarz-Moore; Dr Maki Kimura; Professor John King; Professor Robert Kleta; Professor Jonathan Knowles; Professor Martin Koltzenburg; Professor Nikolaos Konstantinidis; Ms Edyta Kostanek; Mr Dimitrios Kraniotis; Dr Fiona Kyle; Professor Monica Lakhanpaul; Professor Marie-Carine Lall; Dr Danielle Lamb; Professor Jonathan Ledermann; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Professor Louis Lemieux; Professor Paola Lettieri; Professor Albert Leung; Professor Wei Li; Professor Vincenzo Libri; Professor Jennifer Linden; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor Chaozong Liu; Professor Alison Lloyd; Professor David Lomas; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Ms Collette Lux; Ms Xuanyi Ma; Dr Isabel Mackay; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Professor Claudio De Magalhaes; Dr Merle Mahon; Professor Eleanor Main; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Professor Chloe Marshall; Professor John Martin; Dr Juliana Martins; Professor Christos Masouros; Professor Jackie Masterson; Professor Sarah Matthews; Dr Claire McAndrew; Dr Ruth McGinity; Professor Jacqueline McGlade; Professor Chris McManus; Professor Andrew Mcquillin; Professor Susan Michie; Professor Nicola Miller; Professor Robert Mills; Professor Jenny Mindell; Professor John Mitchell; Professor Sara Mole; Ms Joanne Moles; Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti; Professor Sharon Morris; Professor Gemma Moss; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor Michael Munday; Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde; Professor Steven Murdoch; Professor Mirco Musolesi; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Ms Marga Navarrete; Dr Helene Neveu Kringelbach; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Professor Mignon Nixon; Professor Lorraine Noble; Dr Nikolitsa Nomikou; Dr Alex Norori-McCormac; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Martin Oliver; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor John O'Regan; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Enrico Palandri; Professor Amos Paran; Professor Jayne Parker; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Nora Pashayan; Professor Sandip Patel; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Dr Olga Perski; Professor James Phillips; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor Deenan Pillay; Professor Massimo Pinzani; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Professor Helene Plun-Favreau; Dr Michaela Pollock; Professor Mike Porter; Professor John Potter; Dr Stephen Potts; Professor David Price; Professor Audrey Prost; Professor Shamima Rahman; Dr Joana Ramalho; Professor Margaret

Rawes; Mr Kieren Reed; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Graeme Reid; Professor Jane Rendell; Professor William Richardson; Professor Jason Rihel; Dr Carol Rivas; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Jennifer Robinson; Dr Tristan Robinson; Professor Stuart Robson; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Professor Karin Ruggaber; Professor Dmitri Rusakov; Professor Yvonne Rydin; Ms Fiona Ryland; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici; Dr Alexander Samson; Professor Richard Sandford; Professor Prince Saprai; Professor Federica Sarro; Professor Robert Savage; Professor Giorgio Savini; Dr Tim Scanlon; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Anette Schrag; Professor Eloise Scottford; Professor David Selwood; Professor Mala Shah; Professor Maryam Shahmanesh; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Professor Robert Sheil; Professor Stephen Shennan; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Ms Maria Sibiryakova; Mr Justin Siefker; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Dr Bill Sillar; Professor Angus Silver; Professor Michael Singer; Professor Lucia Sivilotti; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Willem Smelik; Professor Sam Smidt; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Kenneth Smith; Mr Andy Smith; Professor Reecha Sofat; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Pam Sonnenberg; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Catalina Spataru; Professor David Spratt; Professor Kalia Srari; Professor Andrew Stahl; Professor Philip Stanier; Professor Sir Terence Stephenson; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Fiona Stevenson; Professor Michael Stewart; Mr William Stewart; Professor Melvyn Stokes; Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen; Professor Alberto Striolo; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Ms Joanna Stroud; Professor Judith Suissa; Professor Seirian Sumner; Professor Junwang Tang; Professor Irving Taylor; Mr Bryan Taylor; Professor Paul Taylor; Professor Giles Thomas; Professor Olga Thomas; Professor Alan Thompson; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Helena Titheridge; Professor John Tomaney; Professor Ahmed Toosy; Professor Jose Torero Cullen; Mr Martyn Towner; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Kimberley Trapp; Professor Emmanouil Tsochatzis; Ms Helen Tsui; Professor Elaine Unterhalter; Professor Rosemary Varley; Professor Laura Vaughan; Professor Steven Vaughan; Professor Yiannis Ventikos; Professor Gabriella Vigliocco; Dr Nalini Vittal; Dr Bella Vivat; Ms Yasmin Walker; Professor Michael Walls; Dr Ryan Wang; Ms Katherine Welch; Professor David Wengrow; Dr Hayley Whitaker; Mr Patrick White; Ms Breege Whiten; Professor Edward Wild; Professor Amanda Williams; Professor Duncan Wilson; Professor James Wilson; Professor Stephen Wilson; Professor Alison Wright; Ms Tor Wright; Professor Maria Wyke; Professor Anne Young; Professor Silvia Zane; Professor Semir Zeki; Dr Vedran Zerjav; Dr Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Dr Clare Goudy; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary); Ms Sian Minett; Mr Derfel Owen; Mr Dean Stokes; Ms Olivia Whiteley.

Apologies: Dr Nicole Brown; Professor Marc-Olivier Coppens; Professor Andrew Davenport; Professor Simon Dixon; Professor Paulo Drinot; Professor Peter Earley; Professor Helen Hackett; Dr John Kelsey; Ms Sarah Lasoye; Professor Annemaree Lloyd; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Ms Laure Montangerand; Dr Dafne Zuleima Morgado Ramirez; Professor John Mullan; Professor Sarah Spurgeon.

Part I: Preliminary Formal Business

34 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

- 34.1 The minutes of the AB meeting of 10 February 2021 [AB Minutes 22-33, 2020-21] were confirmed, subject to the following amendments (addition of underlined text):

Minute 25.4: The Working Group explained that it had put this experience at the heart of its attempt to identify the most viable position, and had drawn on it in proposing an extensive programme of educational measures.

Minute 25.5: The Working Group explained that its concerns were founded on their view that the IHRA definition was inadequate, and did not reflect a lack of concern for the lived experience of Jewish people.

Minute 25.7: A number of members expressed their concerns about the level of antisemitic behaviour reported by UCL students. Several members spoke of their concerns about how any move to retract the IHRA definition would be perceived and how it might impact communal cohesion. It was noted that the adoption of the definition had been welcomed by the majority of Jewish staff and students...

35 MATTERS ARISING

- 35.1 At a meeting on 18 February 2021 Council had approved AB's recommendation for the amendment of the Regulations for Management to dispense with the cap of six consecutive years for the purposes of elected membership of the Board. The Regulations would be updated with effect from 1 April 2021.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

36 PROVOST'S BUSINESS (Paper 4-30)

- 36.1 An additional meeting of Academic Board would be arranged for Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 3pm, to discuss proposals for the membership of a working group to discuss definitions of antisemitism [AB minute 25.11, 2020-21].

37 2021/22 SCENARIOS (Paper 4-31)

- 37.1 Professor Geraint Rees, Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences, introduced the paper.
- 37.2 Academic Board was invited to reflect on the scenarios, particularly with a view to testing their robustness. Their function was to support planning by way

of the consideration of hypothetical narratives. The scenarios should not be read as predictions.

37.3 It was likely that reality would reflect elements of all four scenarios described in the paper, although it appeared that Scenario C particularly resonated with current experience. A return to face-to-face teaching as set out in that scenario would constitute a significant challenge, not least in accommodating the high student intake of 2020.

37.4 The following observations were made during the ensuing discussion:

- The dissemination of scenarios was helpful in engaging the wider UCL community in the direction of travel and in providing staff with a basis for addressing the concerns of students and applicants. It also served to demonstrate the range of issues that were being actively considered.
- The scenarios needed to reflect the reality of a partially-vaccinated population for the rest of the calendar year.
- The scenarios drew attention to the benefits of planning academic content in a way that could be relatively easily and rapidly adapted to different forms of delivery.
- A number of assumptions were made about the impact of the pandemic on the economy, unemployment and travel. It was thought likely that, whatever the overall economic impact, international travel would continue to be significantly below pre-pandemic levels in the longer term. Members drew attention to UCL's commitment to become a net zero carbon university by 2030. The pandemic had driven changes in behaviour which made such ambitions more realistic.
- University communities would be particularly vulnerable to outbreaks given the levels of individual travel and the nature of interactions between members. Test, trace and isolate systems would be especially important in preventing outbreaks from becoming waves against a background of relatively low levels of infection. UCL might usefully consider what such a system could look like within the university. Members noted also the social impact of such systems in changing thinking about the spread of disease.
- The broad-brush approach taken in the scenarios could not capture the very different experiences of individuals. Inequalities of opportunity during the pandemic needed to be addressed. Members urged that the scenarios reflect the longer-term impact on future cohorts of students whose education would have been seriously, if unevenly, disrupted.
- Members discussed the feasibility of a return to face-to-face delivery in view of the risk of new variants and overseas students hindered from travelling.
- Members were concerned about the impact of the pandemic on students' mental health, and noted the benefits of any activity that drew them back to physical engagement with activities on campus. It was suggested that the scenarios should refer specifically to non-teaching student activity, and that this be reflected in communications.
- UCL's London location had always been a significant draw for students. It was suggested that this may have been affected by the pandemic, but

also that the relative success of the UK's vaccine rollout would have a positive impact.

- Regardless of the progress of the recovery from the pandemic, the expectations of individuals in terms of way of working would be fundamentally changed. The challenge to UCL would be to pivot to a more blended mixture of online and face-to-face teaching delivery. The discourse of inevitability should be resisted and the advantages of blended learning framed as a positive choice rather than merely the response to an emergency.

37.5 Professor Rees thanked Academic Board members for their comments and invited any further contributions to be sent to the Director of Planning, Dean Stokes.

38 EDUCATION PLANNING 2021-22 (Paper 4-32)

38.1 Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) and Professor Deborah Gill, Pro-Vice-Provost (Student Experience) introduced the paper, which set out the high-level principles informing a framework for departmental planning for the next academic year.

38.2 The key message of the principles was that UCL would be a campus-based university next year but with a strong emphasis on blended learning. Students would therefore need to come to the UK, although the reality was that not all teaching could be accommodated on campus. Face-to-face activity would need to focus on activity that was core to achieving the Learning Outcomes, or co-curricular activity with a community or social aspect that could not be delivered remotely.

38.3 The paper sought to balance pedagogical considerations with the considerable practical challenges involved in a return to face-to-face teaching. It was necessary to address these questions now as choices would need to be made and communications developed in good time for students.

38.4 Two modifications had been accepted since the paper was circulated:

- Removal of the need to plan for 2m social distancing in teaching spaces for the whole year. It was thought that this was likely to reflect government requirements and would make a significant difference to the options for use of the estate.
- The hard limit of 35 students for in-person classes would be amended to a guideline, as it was felt this would not necessarily encourage best use of the estate and staffing capacity and could not apply equally to all types of teaching.

38.5 The following observations were made during the ensuing discussion:

- AB noted the danger of failing to manage student expectations appropriately. It was vital that communications be clear and timely, and resist the temptation to be overoptimistic about the volume of face-to-face activity that was likely to be achievable. It was also important that the position be confirmed to admissions tutors as soon as possible in order to inform their discussions with applicants and the planning for open days.
- It was noted that the fundamental difference between 2021-22 and the current academic year was in the nature of the face-to-face activity, which was currently focussed on enrichment activity rather than the core activity intended for next year. It was recognised that given the uncertainty about how the pandemic will progress, there would always need to be the ability to pivot to fully remote teaching if lockdown requirements came into force.
- AB discussed the approach in the case of students who were unable to come to campus. There had been a significant number of requests for repeat online classes over the past year. It was important to be clear that in 2021/22, as before the pandemic, it would be necessary to come to London in order to meet the Learning Outcomes of the programme. It was recognised that this may mean that some individual students would need to consider interrupting their study.
- The vital importance of the provision of study spaces was noted, particularly for those students who were not able to study effectively at home. This presented a challenge on arrangements for return to working as office space in Bidborough House and 1-19 Torrington Place had been repurposed for student study.
- The logistical challenges in dealing with larger cohorts did not only relate to the question of maintaining suitable social distancing within lecture theatres, but also in ensuring that students could move about the campus and use ancillary facilities, such as cafes, safely. Experience over the past 12 months had demonstrated that, in some cases, alternatives to large-scale lectures could in fact be preferable.
- The importance of giving due consideration to staff morale was noted, not just in respect of the direct impact of the pandemic but also the consequent changes to the nature of work demands.
- The deadline for decisions about which modules would be running was approaching. Work was ongoing now on timetabling and the identification of what space could be made available. The question of guidance on the appropriate handling of shared instruments and other objects in a teaching setting was noted.

38.6 In summation, the Provost noted that staff had done an extraordinary job over the past year, but that it was important not to allow the pandemic to dictate the institution's strategic decisions. The next academic year would be difficult to plan for on a number of key parameters. It was not possible to know to what extent life would return to normal, and there were differing expectations and appetites for risk amongst the UCL community. In respect of education planning, the key question was the set of principles set out in the paper, modified as reported by Professor Gill.

38.7 Academic Board was generally content to proceed on the basis of those principles. Members were invited to contact Professor Gill if they had any further comments.

Part III: Other Business for approval or Information

39 MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 4-33)

39.1 Academic Board received the minutes of other committees.

40 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

40.1 An additional meeting of Academic Board would be arranged for 17 March 2021 at 3.00-4.00pm.

40.2 The summer term meeting would be held on 12 May 2021 at 2.00-4.00pm.

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