



## Academic Board

Wednesday 3 July 2024<sup>1</sup>

### MINUTES

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

Dr Mojtaba Abdi-Jalebi, Dr Bojan Aleksov, Professor Daniel Alexander, Dr Tamara Alhilfi, Adnan Ali, Professor Lynn Ang, Professor Kathleen Armour, Professor Paul Ashley, Dr Glory Atilola, Professor Jan Axmacher, Professor Gianluca Baio, Professor Kristin Bakke, Dr Cecile Bats, Emily Bellshaw, Professor Michael Berkowitz, Professor Stephanie Bird, Robert Bodden, Professor Jan Boehm, Dr Neus Bover Fonts, Professor Eva Branscome, Professor Tanya Bressesey, Professor Jamie Brown, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Dr Suzy Buckley, Professor Richard Bucknall, Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo, Professor Erik Burman, Professor Jonathan Butterworth, Professor Fabio Caccioli, Professor Francesca Cacucci, Professor Licia Capra, Professor Matteo Carandini, Dr Brent Carnell, Professor Paola Ceccarelli, Professor Rachel Chambers, Dr Edith Chan, Dr Declan Chard, Muhammad Shaban Chaudhary, Professor Michael Cheetham, Andrew Churchill, Professor Olga Ciccarelli, Professor Chris Clack, Professor Lucie Clapp, Professor Beverley Clark, Professor Benjamin Clifford, Professor D'Maris Coffman, Dr Alun Coker, Dr Silvie Cooper, Kimberly Cornfield, Professor Codina Cotar, Professor Nicola Countouris, Dr Ludovic Coupaye, Dr Damian Cummings, Dr Jason Davies, Professor Edward Denison, Professor Janice Derry, Professor Jason Dittmer, Professor Snezana Djordjevic, Dr Alex Donovan, Dr Johanna Donovan, Elizabeth Dow, Dominique Draï, Professor Karen Duff, Professor Ian Eames, Professor Frances Edwards, Professor Mark Emberton, Mary Evans, Dr Russell Evans, Professor Susan Evans, Dr Lorenzo Fabrizi, Dr Alexander Fedorec, Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes, Professor Patrizia Ferretti, Professor Ilanah Fhima, Professor Margot Finn, Dr Andrew Flinn, Professor Murray Fraser, Dr Lisa Fridkin, Dr Bettina Friedrich, Dr Federico Galvanin, Dr Anna Garnett, Professor Mark Geller, Professor Carsten Gerner-Beuerle, Hayley Gewer, Professor Alasdair Gibb, Professor Sam Gilbert, Professor Faye Gishen, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Professor Stephen Hailes, Martin Hall, Rachel Hall, Professor Sean Hanna, Jesper Hansen, Professor Penelope Haralambidou, Professor Kenneth Harris, Professor John Hartley, Dr James Haworth, Professor Michael Heinrich, Professor Garrett Hellenthal, Professor Zelee Hill, Professor Evangelos Himonides, Professor Jane Holder, Dr Joshua Hollands, Dr Wayne Holmes, Dr Pam Houston, Professor Jie Huang, Professor Jennifer Hudson, Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith, Professor Quentin Huys-Gavric, Professor Richard Jackman, Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho, Professor Tom Jacques, Professor Dan Jagger, Professor Helene Joffe, Professor David Jones, Professor

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held via videoconference.

Tim Jordan, Professor Nicoletta Kessar, Professor Maria Kett, Dr Amit Khandelwal, Professor Robert Killey, Leigh Kilpert, Dr Maki Kimura, Professor John King, Professor James Kirkbride, Professor Josef Kittler, Professor Martin Koltzenburg, Professor Nikolaos Konstantinidis, Professor Kristen Kreider, Professor Amy Kulper, Dr Danielle Lamb, Professor Alan Latham, Professor Alena Ledeneva, Dr Borja Legarra Herrero, Dr Natalie Leow, Professor Paola Lettieri, Dr Jonathan Lezmy, Professor Li Wei, Professor Vladimir Litvak, Professor Alison Lloyd, Dr Kris Lockyear, Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir, Professor Ruth Mace, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Professor Mairead MacSweeney, Dr Merle Mahon, Professor Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Professor Margaret Mayston, Dr Claire McAndrew, Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Professor Francesca Medda, Professor John Mitchell, Professor Richard Mole, Professor Sara Mole, Professor Ruth Morgan, Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, Professor Gemma Moss, Dr Guy Moss, Professor Vivek Mudera, Professor Julius Mugwagwa, Professor John Mullan, Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde, Professor Steven Murdoch, Professor Mirco Musolesi, Dr Marga Navarrete, Dr Hélène Neveu Kringelbach, Dr Mark Newman, Professor Thanh Nguyen, Dr Mengyan Nie, Professor Lorraine Noble, Dr Alex Norori-McCormac, Johanna Novales, Professor Colm O'Conneide, Dr Ademola Odunsi, Professor Moses Oketch, Professor Norbert Pachler, Dr Ioannis Papaioannou, Professor Susan Parekh, Professor Jayne Parker, Professor Hirak Patra, Dr Anne Peasey, Professor Paola Pedarzani, Professor Alan Penn, Professor Jane Perryman, Professor Justyna Petke, Professor Konstantinos Petrides, Professor Tejendra Pherali, Professor James Phillips, Professor Franck Pichaud, Professor Hynek Pikhart, Dr Jeffrey Pittaway, Professor Joanna Porter, Professor Mike Porter, Professor Stephen Porter, Professor John Potter, Dr Stephen Potts, Dr Ayanna Prevatt-Goldstein, Professor Raman Prinja, Professor David Pym, Professor Ahad Rahim, Dr Sophie Read, Dr Jon Reades, Professor Kieren Reed, Professor Geraint Rees, Professor Rebecca Rees, Dr Jill Reese, Professor Jane Rendell, Professor Antonella Riccio, Dr Miguel Rivera, Professor Aeli Roberts, Professor Helen Roberts, Professor Jennifer Robinson, Dr Igor Rogelja, Professor Dimitrios Rovas, Professor Patricia Salinas, Dr John-Paul Salter, Dr Benet Salway, Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici, Professor Timothy Scanlon, Professor Stephanie Schorge, Professor Eloise Scottford, Professor Toby Seddon, Professor Alessio Serafini, Professor Mala Shah, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Professor David Shanks, Professor Robert Sheil, Professor Elizabeth Shepherd, Professor Nadia Sidorova, Justin Siefker, Professor Talvinder Sihra, Professor Michael Singer, Dr Henrik Singmann, Professor Trevor Smart, Professor Andrew Smith, Professor Anthony Smith, Issy Smith, Dr Daphne Sobolev, Professor Eva Sorensen, Professor Catalina Spataru, Professor David Spratt, Professor Michael Stacey, Professor Vincent Sterk, Professor Claudio Stern, Professor Sacha Stern, Professor Michael Stewart, Professor Joshua Stott, Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Dorota Studniarczyk, Dr Mike Sulu, Dr Bugra Susler, Professor Alastair Sutcliffe, Dr Becky Taylor, Bryan Taylor, Professor Cheryl Thomas, Professor Olga Thomas, Professor Julian Thompson, Professor Claire Thomson, Dr Amy Thornton, Professor Ulrich Tiedau, Dr Matteo Tiratelli, Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Professor Helena Titheridge, Simon To, Professor Ahmed Toosy, Dr Helen Tsui, Professor Laura Vaughan, Dr Michael Veale, Dr Nalini Vittal, Dr Bella Vivat, Dr Julia Wagner, Professor Michael Walls, Professor Vincent Walsh, Patrick White, Professor Amanda Williams, Professor James Wilson, Dr Elliott Wimmer, Dr Nick Witham, Professor John Wood,

Professor Nicholas Wood, Michael Wozniak, Professor Anne Young, Professor Fabio Zanasi, Professor Shi Zhou.

**In attendance:** Beth Beasant (for minute 67), Alexandra Brace, Aimie Chapple, Jason Clarke (for minute 69), Donna Dalrymple (for minute 71), Ian Dancy (for minute 69), Rebecca Edwards (for minute 71), Claire Goudy, Effie Koliou, Natasha Lewis, Sally Mackenzie (for minute 66), Nick McGhee (secretary), David Pacey, Rupal Patel (for minute 67), Professor Emanuela Tilley.

## Part I: Preliminary Business

### 64 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

64.1 AB approved the minutes of the Academic Board meeting of 18 June 2024.

### 65 MATTERS ARISING

*See minutes 70 and 74.*

## Part II: Matters for Discussion

### 66 EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE: FURTHERING OUR AMBITIONS WITH ENHANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS (Paper 5-01)

- 66.1 Academic Board was invited to comment on two early-stage projects arising out of the Education Strategy: (i) Research-Intensive Education; and (ii) Extended Learning Opportunities. This feedback would then inform the development of a discussion paper for consultation with the wider UCL community.
- 66.2 The Research-Intensive Education (RIE) project sought to move attention away from the question of how to make a distinctive UCL offering in this area and towards the question of how it should feel to be part of a research-intensive community, and how that could be defined in a way that encompassed the varied research activity across disciplines.
- 66.3 The Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO) project aimed to address the variable nature of the offer to undergraduate students in different disciplines, in particular the relative lack of activity (other than assessment) in Term 3 in some areas. The project was reviewing the options for development of experiential, non-credit bearing activities with a view to introducing a centrally-organised programme from Term 3 of 2024/25. A small-scale pilot had indicated a potentially high level of demand from students for engaging in research-based activities. Members flagged the apparent gap between the identified wish to increase student engagement with research and the more varied activities trialled as part of the 'proof of concept' process.
- 66.4 Members queried the expected model for delivery, the interaction between central coordination and research in individual departments, and the nature of the resourcing model for new activity. It was confirmed that these were among

the matters to be addressed by the project, but that the intention was to expand the provision gradually in order to learn from experience and to monitor the scale and nature of interest. Not all of the activity would be new as part of the function of central coordination would be to identify and involve relevant activity that was already happening, and to engage with partner organisations. The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) office would fund a co-ordinator post but would look to faculties for additional funding if there was sufficient demand.

66.5 Members of Academic Board were invited to submit any further comments in writing to Professor Kathy Armour.

**67 EDUCATION AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE ('EASE') PROJECT (Paper 5-02)**

67.1 The EASE programme represented a key element of the service improvement activities outlined in the Strategic Plan. It had been prioritised in recognition of UCL's relatively weak NSS scores on organisation and management of courses, despite the spend on this activity being significantly above benchmark. The design principles of the programme were focussed on improving the student experience by seeking to release resource in this area and particularly for pastoral support.

67.2 The project was structured in three phases, addressing in turn: (1) organisational structures; (2) processes and technology; and (3) opportunities to deliver further savings. This approach helped to refine the process as it progressed, as an understanding of structures informed the later questions. Phase 1 was now largely complete in three faculties: Population Health Sciences, Medical Sciences, and the Institute of Education.

67.3 In the course of discussion the following issues were raised:

- a) In respect of specific elements of the design principles (such as the organisation of education delivery by speciality) members queried whether the approach was sufficiently flexible to accommodate the differing needs of departments. It was confirmed that the need for flexibility to accommodate disciplinary differences was fully recognised and that this was part of the reason for the faculty-by-faculty approach. EASE was not seeking to lift everything to faculty level but to find the best way of delivering a resilient structure.
- b) Members flagged the risk of a more impersonal experience for students, and suggested that the issue was not so much the clarity of relationships between professional services and academic staff as suggested in the objectives for Phase 1, but the volume of resource overall. The issue of the impact of home working on the student experience on campus was considered to be a function of the post-covid working culture rather than a ceding of control from departments to faculties in this respect.

67.4 Members were encouraged to engage with the feedback mechanisms on EASE within their own departments and faculties, not only for the benefit of the programme itself but also to inform later functions reviews.

68 **PROVOST’S BUSINESS** (Paper 5-03)

68.1 AB noted the report.

69 **SUSTAINABILITY PLAN** (Paper 5-04)

69.1 Jason Clarke, Assistant Director of Sustainability, gave a presentation on the Sustainability Plan created as the successor to the 2019-2024 Sustainability Strategy.

69.2 Academic Board was briefed on the key change in respect of UCL’s Net Zero commitment. The former 2030 Net Zero target for Scopes 1-3 had placed UCL as an outlier in the Russell Group, with the majority of institutions making a similar commitment in respect of Scopes 1 and 2 only, albeit in some cases alongside a 2050 Scope 3 target. UCL’s proposed Scope 3 Net Zero target was 2040, but with a commitment to a 53% reduction by 2030.

69.3 Scope 3 emissions accounted for 86% of UCL’s total emissions in 2022/23, overwhelmingly from (i) student travel, and (ii) products and services (including construction and IT). The Net Zero commitments of UCL’s principal suppliers had therefore been reviewed. UCL was a primary signatory to the UKRI Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice<sup>2</sup>, which focussed on the sustainability of research methods, including business travel, sustainable procurement, and infrastructure.

69.4 The Sustainability Plan did not require that UCL resort to offsetting in order to achieve the new Net Zero commitments. It did however afford the flexibility to pursue offsetting if this was deemed to meet the institution’s requirements in respect of additionality, verifiability, permanence and social justice.

69.5 In the course of discussion the following key points were raised:

- a) Emissions generated by home working were not currently included in the data, but UCL in partnership with EcoAct was considering a mechanism for incorporating this. Members queried the principle of designative home working emissions as Scope 3.
- b) Noting the significant impact of international student travel on UCL’s Scope 3 emissions, members queried whether work on the fundamental question of UCL’s reliance on international travel as part of its business model ought not to begin as soon as possible, particularly in view of the slow pace of cultural change. AB noted however the risk to an institution’s competitiveness in being the first to move in this space. Assuming no significant improvements in the carbon efficiency of air travel, offsetting was likely to be the only option in this respect in the short term.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://wellcome.org/what-we-do/our-work/environmental-sustainability-concordat>

- c) The carbon impact of the use of generative AI by both students and staff was a major contributory factor to the data on processing and data storage, but had not been singled out as a factor for individual tracking. The widespread use of two monitors likewise would be reflected in the broader category of IT hardware. It was acknowledged however that the methodology for assessing this category was unsophisticated, reflecting the level of spend but not the impact of purchasing decisions. UCL was working in partnership with Normative to general a more granular data set in this area. It was hoped that this would in turn help to drive procurement decisions.

69.6 Members were encouraged to submit any further feedback to Jason Clarke.

**70 STANDING ORDERS OF ACADEMIC BOARD (Paper 5-05)**

- 70.1 The Chair of GCAB introduced a consolidated set of proposals from the first readings on 8 May and 18 June [AB Minutes 30 and 51, 2023-24 respectively].
- 70.2 The draft Standing Order 19 was in tension with the current Terms of Reference and constitution of the Education Committee. Academic Committee was the body with the authority to approve changes in this respect. It was proposed that AB consider approving the draft Standing Order 19 in principle, subject to discussion at Academic Committee.
- 70.3 On that basis, AB approved in principle the revised Standing Orders with effect from 1 October 2024, subject in the case of SO19 to a decision at Academic Committee about the Terms of Reference and the constitution of the Education Committee.

**71 STATUTE 18 WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS (Paper 5-06)**

- 71.1 Professor Nicola Countouris, Chair of the Academic Board Statute 18 Working Group [AB Minute 5, 01.11.23] introduced a set of draft Regulations which Academic Board was invited to consider recommending to Council under Article 17 of the Charter<sup>3</sup>.
- 71.2 The draft Regulations were designed to service the disciplinary processes of Statute 18, as required under paragraphs 17 and 29 of the Statute. Absent such Regulations, disciplinary cases were being managed on the basis of guidance issued on a case-by-case basis. The Working Group considered this to constitute a key contributory factor to two major shortcomings in the current arrangements: timeliness, and a lack of transparency.
- 71.3 The Working Group had received collated feedback on the draft regulations from individual members of the Task and Finish Group on Disciplinary

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<sup>3</sup> “The Academic Board shall have power to propose to the Council Statutes and Regulations to be made by the Council and it shall be the duty of the Council to consider any such Statutes or Regulations.”

Procedures [AB Minute 4, 01.11.23] but most of these had been after the circulation of papers for the current meeting. The Working Group had nevertheless considered and responded to those comments and remained of the view that its proposals were viable and compliant with the Statute. It would support the submission to Academic Board and to Council of its exchange with the Task & Finish Group. The Working Group also envisaged that, should Council suggest any substantive changes to the draft, the Working Group would be willing to engage with Council and, if the changes were substantial, bring that back to Academic Board for further comment.

71.4 The Working Group acknowledged that, as noted in some of the feedback from members of the Task & Finish Group, the accessibility of the prose of the document could, where necessary, be reviewed. It was noted that the draft was a technical document written in technical language, and had been written in the context of a Statute which in turn was based on legislation from 1988. It also reflected the language of similar Regulations in use at other HEIs. A flow chart was provided to the meeting and the Working Group confirmed that, if the Regulations were adopted, it would not be opposed to the production of an explanatory note.

71.5 In the course of discussion the following key points were made:

- a) Members reported having experienced the hearings during the tribunal stage of the Statute 18 process as efficient and well-run; it was the earlier stages of the process prior to the hearings of the tribunal where timelines were unreasonably extended and procedural clarity lacking.
- b) The Chief People Officer continued to have some concerns about the workability of the draft Regulations in the context of the current arrangements; in her view those arrangements would therefore need to be reviewed. In particular she considered that they did not address the issue of timescales. Further dialogue would be necessary if a single set of Regulations were to be supported by both groups. It was noted by Professor Countouris however that the proposed timescales were more generous than those in UCL's standard staff disciplinary procedures, and had been generated with a view to those in place at other institutions as well as the ACAS Code of Conduct. They also included provision for the extension of timeframes in the interest of justice.
- c) Council may want to take advice in adopting any set of Regulations in this area. There was an open question as to whether an amendment to the Statute itself would be required, particularly in respect of the key question of the membership of the Tribunal. The Working Group considered that the Regulations as drafted were compliant with the Statute, whereas the Chief People Officer did not.

71.6 The Working Group considered that, if Academic Board voted to recommend the Regulations to Council, it would not be procedurally appropriate for the Working Group itself to continue to negotiate with colleagues on further changes and that further discussions should only take place with Council. Nevertheless it was clear that Council may want to take advice and would be likely to hear from HR and from both groups.

71.7 Academic Board voted as follows on the proposal to recommend the draft Regulations to Council for adoption:

|         |     |       |
|---------|-----|-------|
| Yes     | 172 | 80.4% |
| No      | 11  | 5.1%  |
| Abstain | 31  | 14.5% |

**72 EASTMAN DENTAL INSTITUTE AND UCL MEDICAL SCHOOL MERGER (Paper 5-07)**

72.1 Academic Board was invited to comment on an Academic Impact Statement, drafted by a Project Board as discussed at the AB meeting of 14 June 2023 [Minute 49].

72.2 Engagement with staff of the two departments was ongoing; this would assist with the further identification of risks and benefits. A number of risks had been identified in the GCAB memo but it was considered that these could be appropriately mitigated. The proposed merger was largely feasible as a result of the co-location of the two units in the Rockefeller Building. The proposal was timely given the rising level of national and local interest in exploring the options for the modern healthcare workforce in the wake of the 2023 NHS Long term Workforce plan.

72.3 In response to a question it was confirmed that the Faculty was not yet in a position to present a proposal on the name of the merged unit. This question would be addressed as part of the formal HR organisational change consultation process. The Faculty was naturally keen to protect the international reputation of the UCL Eastman and its brand recognition within the dental profession.

72.4 In respect of the vision to establish an undergraduate dental programme as set out in the June 2023 AB paper, it was confirmed that, although it was still felt that this would constitute an important factor in the long-term sustainability of the UCL Eastman beyond the current planning period, the case for merger was not dependent on this question. Further, there were external factors impacting its viability, such as the requirements of the NHS, the capping of medical and dental student numbers by government, and the regional distribution of those numbers. In respect of student numbers in Bloomsbury, AB was reminded that medical and dental students complete a large proportion of their training in NHS locations.



**Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information**

**73 EXTERNAL EXPERTS ON GCAB AND EXCOMAB**

73.1 Approved.

**74 SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE**

74.1 Noted.

**75 ACADEMIC BOARD ELECTIONS**

75.1 Noted.

**76 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

76.1 Wednesday 30 October 2024, 14:00-16:00.

Nick McGhee  
Secretary to Academic Board  
Tel: [+44] (0)20 3108 8217  
email: [n.mcghee@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:n.mcghee@ucl.ac.uk)