



Academic Board

Wednesday 5 July 2023¹

MINUTES

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

Professor Bas Aarts; Aziz Abdulhadi; Hamza Ahmed; Jennifer Akinola; Dr Bojan Aleksov; Professor Mark Altaweel; Dr Jake Anders; Professor Lynn Ang; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Kathryn Batchelor; Professor Polina Bayvel; Emily Bellshaw; Professor Mette Berg; Professor Stephanie Bird; Robert Bodden; Professor David Bogle; Dr Neus Bover Fonts; Dr Jeff Bowersox; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo; Professor Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski; Professor Jonathan Butterworth; Dr Boyana Buyuklieva; Professor Claire Cameron; Professor Nauro Campos; Professor Licia Capra; Professor Tom Carlson; Professor Claire Carmalt; Professor Madeline Carr; Professor Philip Cavendish; Professor Paola Ceccarelli; Dr Edith Chan; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Michael Cheetham; Dr Evangelia Chrysikou; Andrew Churchill; Dr Alun Coker; Kimberly Cornfield; Professor Anna Cox; Professor Sebastian Coxon; Dr Damian Cummings; Professor Pamela Davidson; Dr Nathan Davies; Professor Janice Derry; Professor Simon Dixon; Dr Megan Donaldson; Dominique Draï; Professor Ian Eames; Dr Karen Edge; Dr Ian Edwards; Professor Frances Edwards; Dr Alex Elwick; Professor Marc Esteve; Dr Lorenzo Fabrizi; Ava Fatah; Professor Anibal Fernandez; Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Dr Bettina Friedrich; Professor Jonathan Gale; Professor Sebastian Gardner; Professor Mark Geller; Professor Guido Germano; Hayley Gewer; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Shirli Gilbert; Professor Faye Gishen; Polly Glegg; Professor Nikolaos Gonis; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Professor Eric Gordy; Dr Anne Grydehøj; Professor Francois Guesnet; Professor Susan Hamilton; Jesper Hansen; Professor Kirsten Harvey; Professor Angela Hassiotis; Dr James Haworth; Professor Michael Heinrich; Dr Katie Hemer; Elisabeth Herbert; Dr Wayne Holmes; Professor Jie Huang; Professor Jennifer Hudson; Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Professor Tim Jordan; Dr Keri Ka-Yee Wong; Kate Keen; John Kelsey; Dr Amit Khandelwal; Dr Maki Kimura; Professor John King; Professor Diane Koenker; Professor Julia Korosteleva; Professor Alison Koslowski; Dr Danielle Lamb; Professor Phillipa Laursen; Dr Sandra Leaton Gray; Professor Alena Ledeneva; Professor Jonathan Ledermann; Dr Fiona Leigh; Professor Dewi Lewis; Dr Jonathan Lezmy; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor Vladimir Litvak; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Dr Isobel Mackay; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Dr Antony Makrinos; Dr Miriam Manchin; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Professor Chloe Marshall; Professor Sarah Matthews; Professor Francesca Medda; Professor Grant Mills; Professor Zoran Milutinović; Professor

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference.

Richard Mole; Professor Sara Mole; Professor Ruth Morgan; Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti; Professor Emma Morris; Professor Gemma Moss; Dr Guy Moss; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor John Mullan; Professor Veronique Munoz-Dardé; Professor Steven Murdoch; Professor Mirco Musolesi; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Dr Hélène Neveu Kringelbach; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Mengyan Nie; Professor Mignon Nixon; Professor Martin Oliver; Professor Susan O'Neill; Dr Ioannis Papaioannou; Professor Ivan Parkin; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Tejendra Pherali; Professor James Phillips; Professor Ann Phoenix; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Dr Anna Ponomareva; Dr Ayanna Prevatt-Goldstein; Professor Slavo Radosevic; Professor Samantha Rayner; Professor Kieren Reed; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Rebecca Rees; Jill Reese; Professor Antonella Riccio; Professor Mary Richardson; Professor Aeli Roberts; Dr Igor Rogelja; Professor Karin Ruggaber; Professor John Sabapathy; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici; Professor Alexander Samson; Dr Andrei Samsonov; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Ingrid Schoon; Professor Stephanie Schorge; Professor Eloise Scottford; Professor David Selviah; Professor Alessio Serafini; Professor Mala Shah; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ruth Siddall; Justin Siefker; Dr Samuel Sims; Dr Henrik Singmann; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Daphne Sobolev; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Vincent Sterk; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Jack Stilgoe; Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Dorota Studniarczyk; Professor Alastair Sutcliffe; Professor Matthew Sydes; Bryan Taylor; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Claire Thomson; Professor Ulrich Tiedau; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Helena Titheridge; Professor Jose Torero Cullen; Dr Helen Tsui; Professor Liz Varga; Professor Laura Vaughan; Dr Nalini Vittal; Dr Julia Wagner; Dr Zachary Walker; Professor Li Wei; Patrick White; Breege Whiten; Professor Edward Wild; Professor Andrew Wills; Professor Duncan Wilson; Professor James Wilson; Michael Wozniak; Professor Paola Zaninotto; Dr Anselm Zdebik; Dr Davide Zecchin; Professor Stan Zochowski.

In attendance:

Professor Parama Chaudhury; Donna Dalrymple; Dr Clare Goudy; Natasha Lewis; Nick McGhee (secretary); Angharad Milenkovic; David Pacey; Kirsty Walker; Olivia Whiteley.

58 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

58.1 The minutes of the Special meeting of 9 June 2023 [AB Minutes 44-45, 2022-23] and the meeting of 14 June 2023 [AB Minutes 46-57] were confirmed.

59 MATTERS ARISING

59.1 Minute 44, 9 June 2023: see Provost's report (Paper 7-01).

Part II: Matters for Discussion

60 **PROVOST'S REPORT** (Paper 7-01)

60.1 Noted.

61 **SSEES AND THE FACULTY OF ARTS & HUMANITIES** (Paper 7-02)

61.1 The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Director of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) introduced the proposal that SSEES be integrated into the Faculty of Arts and Humanities with effect from 1 September 2023.

61.2 SSEES had joined UCL in 1999, initially as a discrete unit sitting alongside the Faculties of Arts & Humanities and Social & Historical Sciences (SHS). As UCL had grown in size and complexity since that time, the structures enabling the continuation of that arrangement had come under strain. In recent years SSEES had been informally represented at school (SLASH)² level. It had also developed a functional relationship with the Joint Faculty structure (Arts & Humanities and SHS), a relationship which had been further strengthened during the covid period, notably by way of access to the Joint Faculty education team. The Faculty of Arts & Humanities had also come to play a facilitating role in many processes within SSEES, such as senior promotions. UCL's school structure (including SLASH) had now been abolished, and in view of the growth of the two faculties the Joint Faculty arrangements were also being dissolved. This risked leaving SSEES in an increasingly isolated position, notably in respect of reporting lines and the provision of education functions.

61.3 The proposal to assign SSEES formally to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities had been raised some years ago, but first discussed with SSEES staff generally in June 2022. There had been a year of consultation and discussion, with opportunities to engage with the Dean since that time. A Memorandum of Understanding between SSEES and the Faculty had been agreed in March-April 2023.

61.4 A letter from 15 SSEES members of AB had been circulated in advance of the meeting, setting out their opposition to the proposals and requesting an extension of the consultation process. In discussing the consultation process members raised the following issues:

- a. The proposals had been presented to members of SSEES in June 2022 as a *fait accompli*, which discouraged engagement. In particular, there had been no discussion of alternative options; members cited the preponderance of SSEES students and staff working in social sciences

² The former School of Laws, Arts & Humanities, and Social & Historical Sciences

rather than arts and humanities disciplines. The Academic Impact Statement currently before the Board was identified as the first written rationale for the proposal seen by SSEES staff. Members contrasted the process with that recently initiated in respect of a proposed structural change in the Faculty of Medical Sciences. The Provost noted that the SSEES proposal was fundamentally different in character to that in the Faculty of Medical Sciences as it related to the formal recognition of a relationship that had been functioning for some time, but acknowledged the case made by staff that the process was not as extensive or transparent as it might have been.

- b. A number of factors had contributed to the relatively low level of engagement with the process, notably the pressure on SSEES staff in the early months of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and a reticence to engage in a process about a proposal to which individuals objected. It was noted however that there was no reason to expect that this would change if the consultation period were to be extended as requested.
- 61.5 The vision for the proposal was to preserve SSEES's academic standing whilst giving it greater financial and strategic stability within a formal faculty structure, for example through access to faculty RCIF funding and scholarships. Although the disciplinary breadth of SSEES overlapped with several faculties, the Faculty of Arts & Humanities was already home to several interdisciplinary units and there was no reason for the proposed structure to hamper links with SHS. The proposal would also provide SSEES staff with an opportunity to take on faculty leadership roles. It was suggested however that the rationales presented were fundamentally administrative in nature, rather than academic- or research-driven, and had not taken a strategic approach to considering the options available, nor fully considered the risks and complexities that could arise as a result. Members expressed differing views of the extent to which UCL's internal structures would impact external perceptions of SSEES.
- 61.6 The letter from members alluded to other potential structures, including the incorporation of SSEES into an area studies platform within the Institute of Education. It was suggested however that this was founded on a misunderstanding of the purpose of the Policy Commission for Area Studies, which was chaired by the Director of the IoE, and which was tasked with reviewing UCL's provision of high-impact policy advice in Area Studies. The Commission was not considering structural arrangements.
- 61.7 In respect of Academic Board's responsibility to advise Council, members were invited to vote on the proposal that SSEES become an academic unit of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities with effect from 1 September 2023, or (if not supported) subsequently to vote on the alternative proposals put forward by 15 members.

61.8 On the question of whether members supported the proposal, 156 members of Academic Board voted as follows:

Yes	60	38%
No	52	33%
Abstain	44	28%

61.9 Academic Board's views would be passed on to Council. In summing up, the Provost noted that the conversation had drawn attention to the broader question of area studies, and proposed that Academic Board receive a presentation on that in due course.

Part III: Other business for approval or information

62 MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 7-03)

62.1 Noted.

63 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

63.1 Wednesday 1 November 2023 at 2-4pm.

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