



Academic Board

Wednesday 11 May 2022¹

MINUTES

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

Dr Ali Abolfathi, Professor Ibrahim Abubakar, Mr James Agar, Dr Mark Altaweel, Professor Lynn Ang, Dr Seth Anziska, Professor Kathleen Armour, Professor Tomaso Aste, Professor Jan Axmacher, Dr Paul Ayris, Professor Gianluca Baio, Professor Torsten Baldeweg, Professor Simon Banks, Professor Yolande Barnes, Professor Polina Bayvel, Mr Ayman Benmati, Professor Mette Berg, Professor Michael Berkowitz, Professor Wendy Best, Professor Stephanie Bird, Professor Chris Blackman, Professor Martin Bobak, Professor Christian Boehmer, Professor David Bogle, Professor Annie Britton, Professor Geraldine Brodie, Professor Jamie Brown, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Dr Suzy Buckley, Professor Richard Bucknall, Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo, Professor Helene Burningham, Professor Gaetano Burriesci, Professor Jonathan Butterworth, Professor Fabio Caccioli, Mr Tadhg Caffrey, Professor Licia Capra, Professor Claire Carmalt, Dr Alisia Carnemolla, Professor Rachel Chambers, Professor Richard Chandler, Dr Declan Chard, Professor James Cheshire, Dr Evangelia Chrysikou, Professor Olga Ciccarelli, Professor Lucie Clapp, Professor Beverley Clark, Dr Alun Coker, Professor Susan Collins, Professor Claire Colomb, Professor Barbara Conradt, Ms Sarah Cows, Professor Anna Cox, Dr Sebastian Coxon, Professor Duncan Craig, Ms Sonja Curtis, Ms Donna Dalrymple, Professor Izzat Darwazeh, Professor Nathan Davies, Professor Sally Day, Professor Janice Derry, Professor Rohan de Silva, Dr Elton Dias, Professor Dagmara Dimitriou, Professor Ian Eames, Professor Frances Edwards, Professor Piet Eeckhout, Professor Susan Evans, Ms Pascale Fanning-Tichborne, Ms Ava Fatah, Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes, Dr Liory Fern-Pollak, Professor Patrizia Ferretti, Professor Andrew Fisher, Professor Elizabeth Fisher, Dr Andrew Flinn, Mr James Ford, Professor Mark Ford, Professor Becky Francis, Professor Mark Freeman, Dr Bettina Friedrich, Dr Martin Fry, Professor Mary Fulbrook, Professor Dorian Fuller, Professor Jonathan Gale, Dr Federico Galvanin, Dr Claire Garnett, Professor Haidy Geismar, Professor Dame Hazel Genn, Professor Alasdair Gibb, Milena Gonakova, Professor Nikolaos Gonis, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Professor Francis Green, Ms Amanda Greene, Professor Lewis Griffin, Professor Michael Grubb, Dr Anne Grydehøj, Professor François Guesnet, Professor David Guile, Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning, Professor Stephen Hailes, Mr Martin Hall, Mr Jesper Hansen, Professor Kirsten Harvey, Professor Adham Hashibon, Professor Michael Heinrich, Professor Mark Hewitson, Professor Evangelos Himonides, Dr Christine Hoffmann, Professor Arne Hofmann, Professor Martin Holbraad, Professor

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference.

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Jane Holder, Professor Catherine Holloway, Professor Richard Jackman, Professor Dan Jagger, Professor Kathryn Jeffery, Professor Vivienne Jones, Ms Liz Jones, Professor Tim Jordan, Dr Thomas Kador, Professor Jian Kang, Dr John Kelsey, Dr Maki Kimura, Professor James Kirkbride, Professor Josef Kittler, Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou, Professor Alison Koslowski, Ms Edyta Kostanek, Mr Dimitrios Kraniotis, Dr Danielle Lamb, Professor Alena Ledeneva, Professor Maria Lee, Dr Borja Legarra Herrero, Professor Paola Lettieri, Professor Li Wei, Professor Christoph Lindner, Professor Allison Littlejohn, Professor Vladimir Litvak, Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir, Professor Philip Luthert, Dr Isobel Mackay, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Professor Mairead MacSweeney, Professor Eleanor Main, Ms Viktória Makai, Professor Chloe Marshall, Professor Manolis Mavrikis, Dr Margaret Mayston, Professor Robb McDonald, Professor Neil Millar, Professor John Mitchell, Ms Joanne Moles, Dr Dafne Zuleima Morgado Ramirez, Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, Professor Sharon Morris, Professor Gemma Moss, Professor Richard Mott, Professor Vivek Mudera, Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde, Professor Steven Murdoch, Professor Mirco Musolesi, Dr Richard Nayak-Luke, Professor Thanh Nguyen, Professor Lorraine Noble, Professor Moses Oketch, Professor Martin Oliver, Professor Enrico Palandri, Professor Jayne Parker, Professor Jenny Parkes, Professor Ivan Parkin, Professor Paola Pedarzani, Professor James Phillips, Professor Hynek Pikhart, Professor Deenan Pillay, Dr Jeffrey Pittaway, Professor Mike Porter, Professor John Potter, Professor David Price, Professor Stephen Price, Professor David Pym, Professor Ahad Rahim, Dr Joana Ramalho, Professor Davide Ravasi, Professor Geraint Rees, Professor Graeme Reid, Professor Jane Rendell, Professor Mary Richardson, Professor Aeli Roberts, Professor Helen Roberts, Dr Tristan Robinson, Professor Miguel Rodrigues, Professor Sasha Roseneil, Mr Mike Rowson, Dr Suzanne Ruddy, Professor Karin Ruggaber, Ms Fiona Ryland, Dr Benet Salway, Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici, Professor Federica Sarro, Professor Ralf Schoepfer, Professor Stephanie Schorge, Professor Eloise Scotford, Professor Toby Seddon, Professor Andrea Sella, Professor Mala Shah, Professor Lion Shahab, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Professor David Shanks, Dr Ala'a Shehabi, Professor Robert Sheil, Professor Elizabeth Shepherd, Ms Maria Sibiryakova, Mr Justin Siefker, Professor Talvinder Sihra, Professor Bill Sillar, Professor Angus Silver, Dr Samuel Sims, Professor Michael Singer, Professor Sanjay Sisodiya, Professor Lucia Sivilotti, Professor Trevor Smart, Professor Sam Smidt, Professor Samuel Solomon, Professor Eva Sorensen, Professor Catalina Spataru, Professor Michael Stacey, Professor Claudio Stern, Professor Sacha Stern, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Professor Judith Suissa, Dr Mike Sulu, Dr Bugra Susler, Professor Alastair Sutcliffe, Mr Bryan Taylor, Professor Giles Thomas, Professor Olga Thomas, Professor Alan Thompson, Professor Julian Thompson, Professor Claire Thorne, Professor Ulrich Tiedau, Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Professor John Tomaney, Professor Ahmed Toosy, Professor Stefan Trapp, Professor Georgios Tsakos, Ms Helen Tsui, Professor Liz Varga, Professor Laura Vaughan, Professor Yiannis Ventikos, Dr Nalini Vittal, Dr Bella Vivat, Ms Kirsty Walker, Ms Yasmin Walker, Professor Jeremy Watson, Ms Katherine Welch, Ms Breege Whiten, Professor Stephen Wilson, Professor Scott Woodley, Professor Selina Wray, Ms Tor Wright, Dr Vedran Zerjav, Professor Stan Zochowski, Professor Martijn Zwijnenburg.

In attendance: Dr Clare Goudy, Mr Richard Jackson, Ms Freya Markwell, Ms Joanna Marshall-Cook, Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary), Mr Ben Stubbs, Ms Olivia Whiteley.

Apologies: Professor James Bainbridge, Professor Rachel Bowlby, Dr Nicole Brown, Professor Annette Dolphin, Professor Helen Hackett, Professor Lily Kahn, Dr Jens Kandt, Professor Sir Peng Khaw, Professor Alison Lloyd, Professor Gesine Manuwald, Professor Usha Menon, Professor Henrietta Moore, Professor Carol Rivas, Professor Anthony Smith, Professor Dominic Wyse.

Part I: Preliminary Formal Business

45 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

- 45.1 The minutes of the AB meeting of 30 March 2022 [AB Minutes 42-44, 2021-22] were confirmed, subject to the following amendment of draft minute 43.11:

Academic Board proceeded to take a vote on the proposals in the letter. The Provost encouraged members to vote 'yes' to each of the questions, ~~on the understanding.~~ He understood that he could, as envisaged, have a conversation with the community about the strategy, then bring back a draft strategy with a coherent financial plan, and subsequently develop individual business cases with an Academic Impact Statement for each one.

- 45.2 It was confirmed that Council would be informed of the numbers of AB members voting on 30 March by way of the confirmed minutes, which could now be issued to them.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

46 PROVOST'S BUSINESS (Paper 7-31)

- 46.1 In respect of the Teaching Model for the academic year 2022-23, members raised concerns about the risk of rising staff sickness rates. It was noted that investment in improving ventilation had the potential to have a positive impact both in this respect and on the sustainability agenda [see Minute 49]. UCL had an ongoing programme to upgrade ventilation as part of the Strategic Maintenance Plan, although this was a more straightforward proposition in some spaces than others.
- 46.2 The Model reflected government guidance, which required universities to return broadly to the arrangements in place prior to the pandemic. It was noted that any flexibility would be owed equally to students and staff. It could prove extremely challenging if staff were obliged to provide online delivery to students who requested it on any significant scale in addition to the standard delivery model.
- 46.3 Members highlighted the different needs of neurodivergent staff, the clinically vulnerable, and those with disabilities or caring or other duties. Those with particular needs were encouraged to liaise with their line managers about making special accommodation for them. Members enquired about carrying out Equalities Impact Assessments on the Teaching Model. It was suggested

that this could be a useful mechanism for providing additional clarity to managers about dealing with requests for flexibility. It was noted that any impact assessment would be likely to note that UCL was following its normal delivery model but that, if there were any staff who were unable to do so because of their personal situation, UCL would make reasonable accommodation for them as required by equalities legislation. The Chair confirmed that a note on how this issue might be addressed would be circulated with the draft minutes of the current meeting.

47 **EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT** (Paper 7-32)

- 47.1 Members raised concerns about the issue of grade inflation. A group was reviewing assessment outcomes and would be responding to the Office for Students on this issue, as this was a matter that was attracting attention across the sector.
- 47.2 Members discussed the arrangements for online assessments and invigilation in 2022/23. It was confirmed that this was fundamentally a matter of departmental choice, but that it was expected that students be appropriately supported in any return to invigilated, in-person examinations. UCL's position was that it would be unreasonable to expect a generation of students who, due to the pandemic, had no experience of that kind of examination to switch to doing so without support. The impact of such an arrangement on both students and those staff required to provide that support would need to be considered carefully.
- 47.3 AB asked that the report be taken for discussion as a matter of course in future.

48 **STANDING ORDERS** (Paper 7-33)

- 48.1 Since the first reading of the paper on 9 February 2022, the proposed Standing Order 16 had been reframed as a proposed Regulation, to be submitted to Council by Academic Board as it was entitled to do under Article 17 of the Charter, as it was felt in part to fall outside the scope of Academic Board Standing Orders.
- 48.2 It was confirmed that there was no intention to challenge the treatment of confidential material under this proposal.

RESOLVED

- 48.3 **That the Academic Board Standing Orders be amended as set out in the paper, with effect from 1 October 2022;**
- 48.4 **That Academic Board propose a new Regulation to Council, as set out in the paper.**

49 **DELIVERING A NET ZERO PLAN** (Paper 7-34)

- 49.1 Richard Jackson, Director of Sustainability, summarised the proposals for meeting UCL's commitment to becoming a net zero carbon institution by 2030. He invited Academic Board to consider in particular their level of support in three respects: for the Net Zero work as part of the Strategic Plan; for the measures proposed under the five-point plan, mindful of their implications for academic activity; and for the proposals to accelerate energy and carbon savings.
- 49.2 Members queried whether more attention ought not to be focussed on Scope 3 (products and services) given that Scope 1 emissions constituted only 4% of UCL's carbon footprint. It was noted however that Scope 1 was the area in which UCL had the most control.
- 49.3 It was exceptionally difficult for universities to obtain robust data on travel. The figure quoted in respect of start and end of term travel was based on assumptions about students' behaviour informed by an analysis of the distribution of their home addresses. In view of the statement in the paper that 'fundamental consideration should be given to the impact of organisational decisions on climate change', members raised the issue of UCL's reliance on overseas student fees, and queried the implications for UCL's education policy, and in particular the question of face-to-face teaching. It was noted also that this issue highlighted the difficulty of determining where responsibility for particular emissions lay. This was an important question in view of recent trends in staff working practices.
- 49.4 Academic Board discussed the proposals in respect of staff travel, noting the vital role of conferences in academic life but also the rapid cultural changes in this respect brought about by the pandemic. The need to identify effective incentives for the use of low-carbon travel was noted, with European rail journeys cited as an example. Large organisations had the potential to exercise significant leverage through their procurement activity if they were prepared to take a clear position on the use of low-carbon suppliers, although it was noted that effective collective action relied on purchasing being done through preferred suppliers. Members cautioned however against the risk of 'greenwashing', and noted the importance of prioritising measures which were likely to have the greatest and most rapid impact.
- 49.5 Academic Board discussed the challenges of both assessing and tackling the carbon impact of commuting to central London. The opportunities presented by drawing on UCL academic expertise in this area, and by developing partnerships with other institutions, were noted. Some members reported that there was insufficient provision for bicycle parking on campus.
- 49.6 Members discussed the options for the closure of buildings outside working hours, noting that the difference in daytime and night-time energy usage was comparatively small. It was intended that in the first instance this be trialled in 15 office buildings with low out-of-hours usage. The extent and feasibility of

such approaches would vary significantly according to types of activity and the nature of the facilities.

- 49.7 It was noted that laboratories were by far the largest consumer of energy and that the potential for the closure of some labs outside working hours therefore needed to be explored. UCL should also be seeking to introduce the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF)² to all its labs. This methodology had been developed at UCL and was being used elsewhere in the sector.
- 49.8 The carbon impact of changes to common practices in computer usage, such as increased cloud storage and the use of double screens, was potentially significant. Members also noted the complexities of questions around the temperature of freezers, and the need to account for the nature of the material stored. The issue of sample management, and specifically the retention of samples for longer than they were useful, was noted.
- 49.9 Members suggested that UCL's approach to heating through the year could be more nuanced and reactive to circumstances. The policy had last been reviewed in 2014 and it was felt could benefit from some input from academics with expertise in this area. Members noted the opportunity of quick efficiencies through the delivery of minor repairs around the estate. The importance of considering the impact of such policies on all staff was noted, and it was requested that the Disability Equality Steering Group be consulted on any proposed changes to the Heating, Cooling and Ventilation Policy³.
- 49.10 Members noted the importance of Academic Impact Statements for proposals in this area. Impact statements would be further developed following the meeting in order to reflect those areas identified as a priority.
- 49.11 In the context of the commitment in the paper for every student to have the opportunity to study sustainability by 2024, as well as the alignment with the proposed Grand Challenge on the climate crisis, members discussed the relationship between a university's research, education and its institutional life. The pedagogical opportunities of a 'living lab' approach in engaging the wider community were noted, as was the potential for students to help to address the lack of data.
- 49.12 Members highlighted the importance of transparency and messaging, as engagement was likely to be greater where progress was visible and where it was readily apparent which issues were being addressed and which may have been overlooked.
- 49.13 The Chair thanked the Director of Sustainability and the rest of his team for their work and on behalf of Academic Board committed to working with them to achieve the goals set out and to bring about a cultural change such that sustainability was at the forefront of UCL's activity.

² <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sustainable/leaf>

³ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/policies/2020/sep/ucl-heating-cooling-ventilation-policy>

Part III: Other Business for approval or Information

50 **AB MEMBERSHIP UPDATE** (Paper 7-35)

50.1 Noted.

51 **AB ELECTION UPDATE** (Paper 7-36)

51.1 Noted.

52 **ACADEMIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT** (Paper 7-37)

52.1 Noted.

53 **LEAD OFFICER REPORT: CAREERS** (Paper 7-38)

53.1 Noted.

54 **STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURE; STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE** (Paper 7-39)

54.1 Noted.

55 **MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES** (Paper 7-40)

55.1 Noted.

56 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

56.1 The next scheduled meeting was on **Monday 30 May 2022**, 14:05-16:00.

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