

**Academic Board****Wednesday 11 December 2024¹****MINUTES****Present:** Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost (Chair).

Professor Bas Aarts, Professor Ibrahim Abubakar, Dr Matteo Agostini, Professor Daniel Alexander, Professor Nazif Alic, Professor Laura Allen, Professor Gareth Ambler, Professor Lynn Ang, Dr Vivi Antonopoulou, Professor Elsa Arcaute, Professor Kathleen Armour, Professor Kristine Arnvig, Professor Anasuya Aruliah, Professor Tomaso Aste, Dr Paul Ayris, Professor Gianluca Baio, Professor Torsten Baldeweg, Professor Julie Barber, Professor Yolande Barnes, Professor Kathryn Batchelor, Emily Bellshaw, Professor Mette Berg, Professor Stephanie Bird, Dr Isra Black, Professor Chris Blackman, Robert Bodden, Dr Daniel Boswell, Professor Douglas Bourn, Laura Bovo, Professor Eva Branscome, Professor Tanya Bressey, Professor Annie Britton, Dr Stuart Brookes, Professor Jamie Brown, Professor Duncan Browne, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Dr Feifei Bu, Professor Hernan Andres Burbano Roa, Professor Helene Burningham, Dr Vera Buss, Professor Jonathan Butterworth, Professor Fabio Caccioli, Professor Francesca Cacucci, Tadhg Caffrey, Noel Caliste, Professor Benjamin Caplin, Professor Licia Capra, Professor Matteo Carandini, Dr Velia Cardin, Professor Tom Carlson, Professor Claire Carmalt, Professor Vincent Carpentier, Professor Paola Ceccarelli, Professor Arthur Chapman, Professor Elaine Chase, Professor Joanna Chataway, Dr Kimberly Chong, Dr Evangelia Chryssikou, Professor Chris Clack, Professor Lucie Clapp, Professor Beverley Clark, Professor Christopher Clark, Dr Jon Clayden, Dr Alun Coker, Tabitha Cooper, Dr Silvie Cooper, Dr Sarah Correia, Professor Nicola Countouris, Dr Cosette Crisan, Professor Marcos Cruz, Professor Emily Dawson, Professor Sally Day, Professor Benedetto de Martino, Professor Edward Denison, Professor Andrew Dick, Dr Francisco Diego, Dr Laura Dietz, Professor Jason Dittmer, Professor Snezana Djordjevic, Professor Paul Dodds, Professor Annette Dolphin, Dr Megan Donaldson, Dr Alex Donovan, Dr Johanna Donovan, Dr Elizabeth Dow, Dominique Draï, Professor Paulo Drinot, Professor Oliver Duke-Williams, Professor Ian Eames, Dr Sophia Economides, Dr Karen Edge, Professor Michael Ehrenstein, Professor Sohier Eneil, Dr Alex Elwick, Dr Bronwen Evans, Professor Suzanne Farid, Dr Alex Fedorec, Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes, Dr Liory Fern-Pollak, Katherine Fletcher, Professor Murray Fraser, Professor Richard Freeman, Dr Lisa Fridkin, Dr Bettina Friedrich, Professor Tatiana Fumasoli, Professor Jonathan Gale, Professor Dame Hazel Genn, Professor Eirini Geraniou, Professor Guido Germano, Hayley Gewer, Professor Alasdair Gibb, Dr Polly Glegg, Professor Charles Keith Gomez, Professor Nikolaos Gonis, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Dr Rebecca Gordon, Professor Jean-Baptiste Gouyon, Professor Ann Griffin, Professor François Guesnet, Elena Sofia Guidi, Professor Patrick Haggard, Professor Martin

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference.

Hall, Professor Susan Hamilton, Professor Penelope Haralambidou, Dr Lois Haruna-Cooper, Professor Kirsten Harvey, Professor Michael Heinrich, Dr Victoria Hilborne, Professor Evangelos Himonides, Dr Josh Hollands, Dr Pamela Houston, Dr Shih-Che Hsu, Professor Jennifer Hudson, Professor John Hurst, Dr Francesco Iacoviello, Anoushka Ichpanani, Professor Talia Isaacs, Dr Sarah Jackson, Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho, Dr Nicholas Jewell, Professor Yuemei Ji, Professor Helene Joffe, Professor Heather Jones, Professor Tim Jordan, Professor Lily Kahn, Sonia Kalsi, Professor Dimitrios Kanoulas, Dr Sophie Kerlake, Professor Maria Kett, Dr Maki Kimura, Professor John King, Professor James Kirkbride, Professor Josef Kittler, Dr Caroline Knapp, Professor Martin Koltzenburg, Professor Andreas Korn, Professor Alison Koslowski, Dr Eirini Koutoumanou, Professor Kristen Kreider, Dr Kimon Krenz, Professor Ofer Lahav, Dr Patrick Lantschner, Professor Phillipa Laurenson, Professor Sandra Leaton-Gray, Professor Alena Ledeneva, Dr Borja Legarra Herrero, Professor Paola Lettieri, Professor Li Wei, Dr Xiaofan Amy Li, Yi Jie Li, Zak Liddell, Dr Adam Liston, Professor Vladimir Litvak, Dr Wilton Lodge, Professor Robert Lowe, Professor Ruth Mace, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Professor Eleanor Main, Antony Makrinos, Professor Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Professor Virginia Mantouvalou, Dr Hélia Marçal, Professor Sarah Matthews, Dr Lorraine McDonagh, Dr Ruth McGinity, Dr Jennifer McGowan, Cristy Meadows, Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Professor Susan Michie, Professor John Mitchell, Professor Richard Mole, Professor Sara Mole, Alison Moody, Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, Professor Gemma Moss, Dr Dale Moulding, Professor Vivek Mudera, Professor Julius Mugwagwa, Dr Anjoom Mukadam, Professor John Mullan, Professor Véronique Munoz-Dardé, Professor Sudax Murdan, Professor Steven Murdoch, Dr Marga Navarrete, Toby Neville, Dr Mark Newman, Professor Thanh Nguyen, Dr Alex Norori-McCormac, Johanna Novales, Dr Abel Nyamapfene, Professor Colm O'Coinneide, Dr Ademola Odunsi, Professor Moses Oketch, Priscilla Olaseyinde, Dr Melissa Oldham, Professor Susan O'Neill, Professor Ben Page, Professor Ivan Parkin, Professor Anne Peasey, Professor Paola Pedarzani, Professor James Phillips, Professor Franck Pichaud, Professor Hynek Pikhart, Dr Nischalan Pillay, Professor Alexandra Pitman, Dr Jeffrey Pittaway, Dr Alessandro Poma, Dr Anna Ponomareva, Alexandra Potts, Dr Stephen Potts, Ayanna Prevatt-Goldstein, Dr Sarah-Louise Quinnell, Professor Stephen Quirke, Adriana-Monica Radu, Dr Sangaralingam Ramesh, Professor Davide Ravasi, Professor Samantha Rayner, Dr Jessica Rea, Professor Kieren Reed, Professor Jane Rendell, Dr Lee Rensimer, Farlie Reynolds, Professor Helen Roberts, Professor Rachel Rosen, Dr Simon Rowberry, Professor Karin Ruggaber, Dr Benet Salway, Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici, Professor Lisa Sampson, Professor Prince Saprai, Professor Timothy Scanlon, Professor Steven Schofield, Professor Bob Schroeder, Professor Eloise Scotford, Dr Luke Seaber, Professor Toby Seddon, Dr Antonio Sennis, Professor Alessio Serafini, Professor Mala Shah, Professor Maryam Shahmanesh, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Professor David Shanks, Mrityunjay Sharma, Professor Robert Sheil, Dr Miranda Sheild Johansson, Professor Nicola Shelton, Michelle Shipworth, Justin Siefker, Professor Talvinder Sihra, Professor Allan Sikk, Dr Henrik Singmann, Professor Jeremy Skipper, Professor Jolene Skordis-Worrall, Abbey Smith, Professor Christophe Soligo, Professor Samuel Solomon, Professor Eva Sorensen, Professor Sarah Spurgeon, Professor Michael Stacey, Dimitra Stamogiannou, Dr Ine Steenmans, Professor Claudio Stern, Professor Sacha Stern, Professor Jack Stilgoe, Professor Joshua Stott, Joanna Strange, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Dr Mike Sulu, Professor Alastair Sutcliffe, Professor Nicolas Szita, Zeyuan Tao, Dr Becky

Taylor, Professor Irving Taylor, Dr Vitor Teixeira, Professor Olga Thomas, Professor Ulrich Tiedau, Michelle Tinsley, Martyn Towner, Dr Temenuga Trifonova, Dr Janice Tripney, Wing-Chau Tung, Professor Patric Turowski, Professor Marcella Ucci, Professor Sotirios Vandoros, Professor Laura Vaughan, Dr Michael Veale, Dr Nalini Vittal, Professor Julian Walker, Professor Nicola Walshe, Professor Li Wei, Breege Whiten, Professor Ralph Wilde, Professor Amanda Williams, Professor Duncan Wilson, Professor Stephen Wilson, Alice Winters, Professor Nick Witham, Professor Kathryn Woods, Michael Wozniak, Hao Wu, Professor John Yandell, Professor Steve Yoo, Yue Yu, Professor Ian Zachary, Professor Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Alex Brace, Aimie Chapple, Claire Goudy, Nick McGhee (secretary), Christina McGregor (for minute 17), Hannah Milner (for minute 16), Martin Moyle (for minute 17), Turlogh O'Brien, Vincent Preece (for minute 21), Callum Tait (for minute 17), Neil Turvey (for minute 16).

Part I: Preliminary Business

14 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS

14.1 The minutes of the meetings of 3 July and 30 October 2024 were approved.

15 MATTERS ARISING

See minutes 17 and 22 below

Part II: Matters for Discussion

16 PROVOST'S REPORT (Paper 2-01)

16.1 A report summarising the management of events during 2023/24 in the context of the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech had been issued to members the day before the meeting. This would be brought back to the next meeting to allow time for considered discussion.

16.2 Members enquired about the impact of the main contractor for the IoN Dementia Research Institute project, ISG, having gone into administration. It was not considered that this had been foreseeable at the point at which ISG had been appointed, but the requisite action to protect UCL's position had been taken as the risk had emerged. Mace had been appointed to complete the work and had taken on a number of ISG staff involved in the project. There would inevitably be cost implications for UCL, although work was ongoing to contain those costs as far as possible.

16.3 AB was briefed on the planned refurbishment works affecting the quad, Wilkins Building and Gordon Street² as part of UCL200. Planning approval had been secured from Camden Council, and contractors were due to be appointed in the New Year. During the course of discussion the following key points were raised:

² See <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/estates/our-services/campus-works/bicentennial-physical-legacy-works>

- a) the impact of the work on the ability of graduands to use the Portico as a backdrop for photography during the 2025 graduation ceremonies. It was confirmed that the steps of the Portico would be accessible at all times and that, as the graduation arrangements for the period May – September 2025 progressed, UCL Estates would consider what could be done in respect of hoardings to meet the needs of graduands so far as was practicable;
- b) the opportunities to improve indoor air quality as part of the works. Putting ventilation ducts into a Grade 1 listed building was not permitted, but it was intended that ventilation would be improved by way of upgrades to windows and improved heating arrangements;
- c) the impact of the works on the trees in the quad. It was confirmed that three trees would have to be removed but that nine would be planted. This was reflected in the planning approval granted by Camden Council. The tree commemorating Gladys Wundowa would be preserved but would need to be relocated a short distance. The plans were informed by a desire to improve the biodiversity of the space, and would include the replacement of grass by a more biodiverse meadow accessible to all as part of the ‘Wild Bloomsbury’ campaign;
- d) the need to be mindful of the broad range of activities for which the Haldane Room was used, including the concerts of the UCL Chamber Music Society;
- e) there were no plans for any change to the Marmor Homericum, which would remain in situ throughout the works;
- f) planned EDI improvements included: the creation of an additional level access route from the quad into the Wilkins Building; improved access into the Jeremy Bentham Room; induction loops in the new rooms in South Cloisters; and exploring the options for use of Google Maps inside the Wilkins Building;
- g) hoardings would include QR codes providing routes for further communication including any problems with noise or other issues relating to the work.

17 UCL ART MUSEUM (Paper 2-02)

- 17.1 AB received an update on the plans for the relocation of the UCL Art Museum as a consequence of the UCL200 works. An Academic Stakeholder Group had been established and would hold monthly meetings from January. The Group would consider how the current facilities and services could be replicated in a new location. It was intended that the Group include external art experts, to be nominated by the academic members and then approached by the Chair. The Provost noted his desire to establish a proper museum in the longer term, although this would require philanthropic involvement.

- 18 **STATUTE 18 WORKING GROUP – DRAFT REGULATIONS** (Paper 2-03)
- 18.1 Academic Board received an overview of the Working Group’s activities during its first year and reviewed a set of draft Regulations relating to investigation procedures.
- 18.2 Since its creation on 1 November 2023 [AB Minute 5, 2023-24] the Working Group had held 29 meetings, interviewed 17 stakeholders, engaged with legal experts, and drafted two sets of Regulations. The first of these had been recommended by Academic Board to Council on 3 July [AB Minute 71, 2023-24] and subsequently presented to Council on two occasions.
- 18.3 Council had agreed to establish a trilateral Working Group, drawing on the membership of Council and AB as well as colleagues from HR, to consider the question of Regulations and the principles underpinning them. UCL had obtained external legal advice, as had the Working Group; the latter would be shared with AB after the meeting.
- 18.4 AB received the proposed Regulations for investigations, an earlier draft of which had been presented to the AB meeting of 30 October [AB Minute 6, 2024-25]. HR had considered that the Working Group did not have the authority to propose procedures in respect of investigation because this was currently subject to the standard disciplinary procedures applying to all staff; the Working Group was of the view that it did have that authority as a result of the reference to investigation in Statute 18.14(2).
- 18.5 The proposed Regulations sought to address issues of clarity over the use of suspension and other interim measures. They also sought to introduce timeframes for each stage of the procedure, illustrated in the meeting by way of a flowchart. Lack of timeliness had been a key concern expressed by colleagues with practical experience of the procedure. The principal causes of delay were understood to be the process of securing the availability of external Council members and of witnesses.
- 18.6 In the course of discussion the following points were raised:
- a) whether there was provision for issues of workload to be taken into account in respect of timescales, eg in the case of the 14 days permitted to a respondent under 14.2(d) to respond to a complaint or grievance. It was confirmed that it was intended that discretion would be available in respect of the projected timescales and that the wording could be reviewed in this respect if the Regulations were approved;
 - b) the Regulations did not relate to environmental investigations, but the arrangements in this respect were being reviewed separately;
 - c) there was a significant internal cost associated with the members of Academic Board tasked with sitting on tribunals under Statute 18.
- 18.7 The Provost noted that he was in no doubt that Council would wish to receive the draft Regulations as part of the broader conversation about disciplinary process reform, and that he therefore hoped that Academic Board would support the recommendation.

18.8 On the question “Do you support the proposal to adopt these Regulations as recommendations from Academic Board to Council according to Article 17 of UCL's Charter, under Standing Order 5.i. b), with delegation to the Working Group to discuss amendments with Council”, Academic Board voted as follows:

Yes	197 votes	84.9%
No	5 votes	2.2%
Abstain	30 votes	12.9%

18.9 The Provost thanked the Working Group for its ongoing work on this issue.

19 **GCAB ANNUAL REPORT** (Paper 2-04)

19.1 Academic Board received the first annual report from GCAB. The Provost thanked members of GCAB for their work.

20 **EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24** (Paper 2-05)

20.1 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) briefed Academic Board on the work of the Education Committee over the last academic year in the context of an increasingly complex regulatory environment. The Vice-Provost highlighted a number of successful IQR processes and resulting action plans during the year, and noted a welcome uptick in the NSS score on assessment and feedback in 2024. It was also noted that UCL had recently responded to a suggestion by the DFE that support for Level 7 apprenticeships would be withdrawn.

20.2 A member queried the freeze on new programme proposals until 2027 in the context of PEP2, given the risks to student recruitment in what was an increasingly volatile student recruitment market. It was confirmed that there would be scope for exceptions.

20.3 The Chair thanked the AB members elected to Education Committee for their work.

21 **SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY CONSULTATION** (Paper 2-06)

21.1 Academic Board was briefed on the revised Sabbatical Leave Policy, to be renamed the Research Leave Policy, following a preliminary discussion of the options at the meeting of 8 May 2024 [Minute 29, 2023-24].

21.2 The principal changes between the current and the proposed policies were: an increased offer of one term of research leave after 6 terms of qualifying service, in place of the current 9 terms; and the introduction of faculty-level scrutiny of research leave arrangements with a view to monitoring their equity and practicability. These changes would bring UCL more closely into line with other institutions.

- 21.3 Members noted that the extent of the variation in research practice between disciplines made it difficult for a university-wide framework of this sort to reflect the culture of every part of the institution. An example of this was the impact-related work (such as engagement with start-ups) common in some disciplines. It was confirmed that there was no intention to narrow the scope of the activity deemed suitable for research leave. Some members felt that the nature of disciplinary variation meant that equity within individual faculties was the best that could be hoped for. It was noted however that academics in some fields, such as economics or sociology, were found across the university, and that one important function of a university-wide framework would be to seek to ensure parity between them.
- 21.4 Several members spoke to the issue of equity between academics on teaching, research, and teaching/research contracts, and drew attention to points of inequity including the provision for a period of reduced activity on return from parental leave. It was noted that many teaching staff used the 15% time allowance under the Teaching Concordat for research, but also that some research staff did substantial amounts of teaching. In view of these complexities, some members queried whether it was the right approach to seek to increase the amount of research leave available to those currently within scope of the policy before addressing these broader questions.
- 21.5 In the course of discussion the following key points were raised:
- a) in order to guard against equity gaps it would be important to review the data on the take-up of research leave amongst different groups. This was one potentially useful function of the proposed faculty-level scrutiny mechanisms;
 - b) a small proportion of teaching staff were not based in academic departments and therefore did not have the option of seeking to switch to a teaching/research contract, even though they may be research-active;
 - c) the paper did not address how the proposals would be funded as it was first necessary to identify what arrangements the University was seeking to fund, but there were mechanisms for avoiding a simple transfer of teaching responsibilities onto colleagues not on sabbatical, such as the suspension of the individual's specialist options.
- 21.6 The Provost noted that, although the conversation was indicative of general support for the proposals, it was accompanied by a strong sense of dissatisfaction with the scope of those covered by the policy and a desire for UCL to consider and address the position of staff on teaching contracts and on research contracts.
- 21.7 Members were invited to indicate their view in response to the question: *Do you support the policy and ask that the University look further at the position of staff outside scope?* Members voted as follows:

Yes	121 votes	61.1%
No	47 votes	23.7%
Abstain	30 votes	15.2%

21.8 The Provost confirmed that a timetable would be developed for returning to Academic Board with proposals on the above.

22 **MEETINGS MODES OF ACADEMIC BOARD** (Paper 2-07)

22.1 Following consideration by GCAB of the suggestion of an annual in-person meeting of the Board from 2025/26 [Minute 56.2, 18.06.24], AB agreed to a proposal to hold a consultative poll of all members outside the meeting. This would then be used to inform the drafting of a Standing Order.

22.2 It was agreed that the poll would allow members to express a view on a hybrid option.

23 **MEMBERS' ITEMS**

23.1 Members requested that a short break be built in to future agendas of Academic Board.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

24 **SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS** (Paper 2-08)

24.1 Noted.

25 **MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES** (Paper 2-09)

25.1 Noted.

26 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

26.1 Wednesday 5 February 2025, 14:00-16:00.

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