



Academic Board

Wednesday 12 February 2020

MINUTES

Present: Professor Michael Arthur, President and Provost (Chair).

Ms Mumtaz Abdul-Ghafoor; Dr Ali Abolfathi; Mr James Agar; Dr Bojan Aleksov; Professor David Alexander; Dr Seth Anziska; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Manuel Arroyo-Kalin; Professor David Attwell; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Malcolm Bailey; Dr Simon Banks; Mr Samuel Barnes; Professor Kathryn Batchelor; Professor Polina Bayvel; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Dr Jane Biddulph; Professor Zoltan Biedermann; Professor Stephanie Bird; Mr Matthew Blain; Professor David Bogle; Dame Nicola Brewer; Dr Jamie Brown; Professor Jon Butterworth; Ms Elizabeth Carter; Dr Celia Caulcott; Dr Evangelia Chrysikou; Dr Alun Coker; Ms Lori Coletti Campbell; Professor John Collinge; Professor Nicola Countouris; Ms Sonja Curtis; Professor Janice Derry; Professor Annette Dolphin; Ms Dominique Draï; Professor Ian Eames; Professor Karen Edge; Professor Frances Edwards; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Ms Evelyn Eguridu; Dr Russell Evans; Professor Susan Evans; Dr Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti; Professor Andrew Fisher; Professor Elizabeth Fisher; Professor Maria Fitzgerald; Dr Rachael Frost; Dr Martin Fry; Professor Tamar Garb; Dr Claire Garnett; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Derek Gilroy; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Ms Emma Grant; Professor Lee Grieveson; Dr Francois Guesnet; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Professor Patrick Haggard; Mr Martin Hall; Dr Anja Heilmann; Professor Mark Hewitson; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Jane Holder; Dr Sarah Jackson; Professor Parmjit Jat; Professor Edward Johnson; Dr Jens Kandt; Professor Ilan Kelman; Ms Leigh Kilpert; Professor Robert Kleta; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Dr Dewi Lewis; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor Allison Littlejohn; Dr Kris Lockyear; Professor Virginia Mantouvalou; Professor John Martin; Professor Ronan McCrea; Professor Robb McDonald; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Kevin Middlebrook; Professor Alex Mills; Professor Sara Mole; Ms Jameela Nagri; Dr Mark Newman; Dr Teresa Niccoli; Ms Emer O'Driscoll; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Alexandra Olaya-Castro; Professor Enrico Palandri; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor Mike Porter; Dr John Potter; Dr Stephen Potts; Professor Stephen Quirke; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Bill Richardson; Dr Carol Rivas; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Ms Fiona Ryland; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Peter Sammonds; Professor Giampietro Schiavo; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Philip Schofield; Professor Frederic

Schwartz; Professor Tony Segal; Dr Lion Shahab; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Beatrice Sica; Professor Angus Silver; Professor Richard Simons; Professor Michael Singer; Ms Ashley Slanina-Davies; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Alan Sokal; Professor Terence Stephenson; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Sacha Stern; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Professor Judith Suissa; Dr Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite; Dr Ilias Tachtsidis; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Mr Simon To; Dr Kimberley Trapp; Mr Graham Van Goffrier; Professor Hans Van Wees; Ms Louise Vink; Dr Nalini Vittal; Ms Yasmin Walker; Professor Robert West; Dr Hannah Williams; Professor John Wood; Professor Christopher Yeo; Professor Jose Zalabardo; Dr Stan Zochowski; Dr Martijn Zwijnenburg.

Apologies: Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Professor James Bainbridge; Dr Jyoti Belur; Professor Ann Blandford; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Susan Collins; Dr Ruth Dann; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Dr Johanna Donovan; Professor Jonathan Gale; Professor Helen Hackett; Dr Andrew Harris; Professor Stephen Hart; Professor Michael Heinrich; Dr Evangelos Himonides; Dr Phyllis Illari; Ms Ahina Ip; Professor Heather Jones; Dr Lily Kahn; Professor Susanne Kord; Professor Robin Ketteler; Dr Hans van de Koot; Professor Ofer Lahav; Mr Julian Laufs; Dr Sandra Leaton-Gray; Ms Collette Lux; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Professor Charles Marson; Dr Margaret Mayston; Dr Claire McAndrew; Professor Bob Mills; Dr Susan Moore; Professor Ruth Morgan; Dr Andy Pearce; Dr Joanne Pearce; Professor Greta Rait; Professor Alwyn Seeds; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Andrew Stahl; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Emanuela Tilley; Professor Laura Vaughan; Dr Bella Vivat; Professor Sarah Walker; Professor Andrew Wills; Dr Tarek Yousry.

In attendance: Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Sandra Hinton; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary to Academic Board); Mr David Allen, Ms Susie Hills and Mr Ewart Woolridge (members of Halpin); Ms Eleanor McDavis; Mr Turlogh O'Brien (external member of Council); Professor Sir Mark Pepys; Dr Meera Sarin.

Part I: Preliminary Business

27 MINUTES

- 27.1 The Minutes of the Meeting of 23 October and 12 December 2019 [*AB Minutes 1-25, 2019-20*] were confirmed.
- 27.2 The Minute of the Special Meeting of 12 December 2019 [*AB Minute 26, 2019-20*] was confirmed.

28 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

28.1 The Provost updated AB on the membership of the AB Working Group on Racism and Prejudice [*AB Minute 26, 2019-20*], which was now almost complete.

Part II: Matters for discussion

29 PROVOST'S BUSINESS

29A Brexit

29A.1 The Provost noted that, following Brexit on 31 January 2020:

- research staff could continue to make applications to Horizon 2020. Applications to ERC and other EU funding sources were therefore encouraged. Successful applications would be funded through the full period of the award;
- tuition fees for EU students admitted in 2020 would be set at the home rate for the duration of their programmes. The arrangements for EU students enrolling in 2021 were yet to be confirmed, despite the imminent commencement of the admissions cycle. UCL was making representations to the government on the issue. It was clear that raising EU fees to the level of international fees would involve a significant risk to student numbers. Consideration was being given to an increased bursary scheme for EU students.

UCL was encouraging the government to negotiate an agreement on science student and staff mobility. The Brexit Mitigation group, which had met 52 times prior to Brexit, had been reconstituted as the Brexit Transition Oversight Group.

29B COVID-19

29B.1 The Provost reported that:

- there had been no cases of Coronavirus within the UCL community. Five students had returned to UCL from Wuhan but all had tested negative for the virus;
- appropriate resources were being made available to staff and students through the UCL website. This mirrored the advice from Public Health England;

- English language teaching and testing centres in China had been closed down. This would have an impact on UCL's admissions function. The Provost had convened a working group to address the situation and to anticipate and mitigate possible risks;
- during the last 24 hours, two Chinese students had been attacked and verbally abused, including mention of the coronavirus, outside the Roberts Building. The matter had been reported to the police and the students concerned were receiving support. The Provost had written to all students about sources of help and advice. A second incident of verbal abuse had also been reported.

29C **Eugenics Inquiry**

29C.1 A Town Hall on 28 February 2020 would receive the report of the Eugenics Inquiry. The Report would be submitted to AB for discussion, and then to the following meeting of Council.

29D **Industrial Action**

29D.1 The Provost invited Matthew Blain, Executive Director of HR, to update AB on the scheduled industrial action.

- UCL recognised the importance of issues around pay, pensions, casualisation and workload and was doing what it could to encourage a resolution of the current dispute. A solution however was not within UCL's gift as a national bargaining arrangement was in place. In respect of those specifically local matters where UCL was able to make a change, work was ongoing both in respect of contractual variations affecting the status of Teaching Fellows and the equalisation of pay and benefits of outsourced staff.
- The JEP had issued their second report (JEP2) in recent days on possible ways forward relating to the USS and had asked institutions for their views. At UCL this would involve consultation with all staff, which process would be initiated on 13 February.

30 **UNIVERSITY TITLE** (Paper 3-23)

Presented by Wendy Appleby, Registrar and Head of Student & Registry Services

30.1 A Special Resolution enabling UCL to apply for the amendment of its Charter and Statutes had been passed by Council in 2018, following discussion at Academic Board [*AB Minute 4, 17.01.2018*]. The

resolution had timed out however following delays in passing the University of London Act and complications associated with the creation of the Office for Students. UCL's formal status remained that of a College of the University of London. AB was invited to advise Council on the passing of the Special Resolution once again.

- 30.2 The Registrar had received a request, via GCAB, for Statute 7(1)A to be amended in the same way as was proposed for Statute 3(1)A, by replacing the reference to "The Education and Campaigns Officer of the Students' Union / The Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer of the Students' Union" with "Two Students' Union Officers designated by the Students' Union". This request would be recorded in the AB minutes and incorporated into the amendments submitted to Council.
- 30.3 Members noted the importance of the relationship with UoL. The Provost noted that he had taken an active role in this relationship, that he was a Trustee of the UoL, and that formal and informal partnerships with key UoL institutions were very important.

31 **UCL 2034: ENABLER A UPDATE** (Paper 3-24)

Presented by Wendy Appleby, Registrar and Head of Student & Registry Services

- 31.1 The objectives of Enabler A had been reviewed and updated as five years had passed since the Enabler was written. A 'deep dive' appendix had been included on the opening of the new Student Centre.
- 31.2 The Registrar noted that PTES scores had remained broadly steady over the last three years, with NSS scores rising by 2% annually over the same period, albeit within the context of generally improved scores across the sector. Efforts were still needed to continue with the improvement of the student experience and to ensure that survey results reflected that improvement.
- 31.3 Members made the following points during discussion:
- Students' Union UCL was shortly to present its budget to Council. It was understood that this would include a reduction in the spend per student.
 - Problems with UCL's IT infrastructure were flagged.
 - The importance of encouraging research-active staff to teach was noted.

- There were risks in over-interpreting student survey results, and of being drawn into seeking to improve the results themselves rather than the underlying causes of those results.

32 **UCL RESEARCH MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE (Paper 3-25)**

Presented by Wendy Appleby, Registrar and Head of Student & Registry Services

32.1 The current iteration of the Procedure had been in place since March 2014, subject to some relatively minor amendments since that date. The proposed revision sought to address the two principal criticisms of the Procedure: (i) the length of time spent in some cases on the screening process; and (ii) the transparency of information emerging from investigations. The revised Procedure, which had been approved by Research Governance Committee, involved the creation of a standing committee charged with carrying out the screening stage, in place of the current 'bespoke' panels. AB's views were sought on the proposals. Members were also invited to comment on how far back in time UCL should be able to consider an allegation.

32.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- A Memorandum between Russell Group institutions provided for the investigation of cross-institutional allegations of misconduct in research. Where there was crossover with other institutions, one institution would report on it and keep the others informed.
- UCL should be in a position to consider any allegation regardless of how long ago the research was undertaken.
- In some cases it may be important for screening panel members to have expert knowledge of the particular discipline concerned. It was noted that this had been provided for in that the screening panel had the option of co-opting expert members as required, whether from inside or outside the institution.

32.3 The draft revised version of the procedure would be made available for AB members to view and provide comments at its meeting of 13 May 2020.

33 **COMMISSION OF INQUIRY REPORT** (Paper 3-26)

Presented by Professor Stephanie Bird, Chair, Commission of Inquiry

- 33.1 The Commission of Inquiry had been established by AB [*AB Minute 1, 14.05.2018*] with a mandate to review problems reported in UCL's governance, decision-making and strategic direction, and to make recommendations to Academic Board. The report identified a number of areas of concern, illustrated by case studies which the Commission felt demonstrated the nature of the issues identified. In summary, the report found that there had been a significant reduction in the ability of the wider academic community to contribute to decision-making, and decisions were being taken without due consideration of their impact on the academic community. This had eroded trust between academic staff and management. Professor Bird emphasised that the Commission had not sought to evaluate past decisions but had focussed instead on the way in which such decisions had been taken, with a view to developing recommendations that sought to enable UCL to deliver its mission more effectively. The Commission believed that the recommendations were feasible and did not require changes to UCL's Charter and Statutes.
- 33.2 The Report was final, although the Commission invited notification of matters of factual error so that these could be corrected ahead of a second reading at a meeting in the summer term. AB was urged to read the full report and its recommendations carefully, and to submit their feedback to the Commission.
- 33.3 Members of Council and the Council Effectiveness Review Group had received copies of the report. The Terms of Reference of the Council Effectiveness Review Group included consideration of the Commission's report.
- 33.4 The Provost offered to call an additional 'ordinary' meeting for the purpose of the second reading of the report. This would avoid the timing issues involved in calling a Special Meeting, which under Statute 7(6) had to be held within a short window after receipt of a written requisition. Setting a date in advance would allow members significantly more notice, with the likely impact of improved attendance.
- 33.5 Comments on the report were invited. The following points were made:
- A number of statements made in the context of the Athena Swan case study were challenged, and the opportunity to highlight factual

inaccuracies was accordingly welcomed. It was noted in response however that, whatever the issues around the understanding of the implications of the Athena Swan decision, it ought not to have been so difficult for the Commission to discover how the decision had been taken. This experience informed the Commission's conclusion that some decisions with institution-wide significance were not being appropriately disseminated.

- A member challenged the picture presented in the report of a binary division between academics and management, noting in particular that Deans were academics engaged with teaching and research activity. It was noted that practice in one Faculty in respect of the selection process for appointment of Heads of Department already aligned closely with the Commission's recommendations, particularly with regard to gender and disability. This was welcomed by AB, but it was noted that there needed to be confidence that such practices were followed equitably across the institution and were not reliant on the good offices of particular individuals.
- The report's characterisation of SMT's decision-making processes and the role of its sub-groups, such as the Financial Strategy Group, in the setting of policy, was challenged. It was suggested that SMT did carefully consider the resource implications of proposals. Members of the Commission noted that they had conducted interviews with a number of members of SMT and its sub-groups and that these had revealed divergent opinions regarding the role and purpose of these bodies.
- One AB member cited his experience of attending employment tribunals on behalf of UCL, in which he had benefitted from a considerable degree of support both from UCL Human Resources and from the UCU. UCL had been commended by the court for its adherence to correct process. It was noted that the tribunal cases cited in the report were of necessity only those in the public domain, and did not therefore reflect the high number of disciplinary and grievance cases brought to a successful conclusion each year. It was further noted that one of the cases in question was still subject to appeal. References to the structure of HR appeared to be based on an outdated understanding of HR divisional structures, which had changed in 2018.
- It was noted that all six academic representatives on Council were currently from SLMS and that Council might benefit from broader representation from different subject areas.

- A member expressed disappointment at the position taken by the Commission on a Senate model, suggesting that a Senate would provide increased accountability and a higher quality of debate. The Commission's response suggested that those who had advocated the Senate model had generally been members of SMT, and that the Commission had considered the question at some length. A member suggested that Senates tended to become politicised, and that there was a risk of a lack of transparency in decision-making; it was further suggested that there was a significant advantage in the Academic Board model in that any professor might speak and have their views thereby transmitted to Council. Members cited AB's history of bringing challenge to bear on proposals with fundamental implications to matters of academic freedom.
- In respect of the proposal that the reporting line of Education Committee be changed from Academic Committee to Academic Board, it was suggested that AB had not always demonstrated its ability to engage with questions of academic policy in any detail, and that the proposal to replace the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) as Chair of Education Committee with an elected member of AB would weaken the ability of the Students' Union to hold the Vice-Provost to account.
- Council was ultimately responsible for the financial management of the institution, but recognised that many financial decisions had important long-term impact on teaching activity. The Commission was keen to foster greater communication between AB and Council in order to ensure that Council was suitably apprised of any such impact, and was accordingly recommending a mandatory academic impact statement be incorporated into all financial proposals. Members of Finance Committee had expressed the view that papers were submitted to the Committee too late for adequate consideration to be given, although the inevitability of commercially- or time-sensitive situations arising was noted.
- Members recorded their gratitude to the Commission for its work. It was hoped that in enacting the report, care would be taken not to undermine UCL's ability to act decisively and to compete successfully for the important projects that had been so important to the institution's success in recent years.

33.6 The report would return to AB for a second reading at a meeting in the summer term, after discussion with the wider community at a Town Hall

meeting, and would be fed in to the ongoing Council Effectiveness Review as proposed in the report.

Part III: Other Business for approval or Information

34 POLICIES FROM PREVENTING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT STRATEGY GROUP: UPDATE (Paper 3-27)

34.1 Noted.

35 SUPPORTING SENSITIVE ACTIVITIES – PROGRESS REPORT (Paper 3-28)

35.1 Noted.

36 AB MEMBERSHIP UPDATES (Paper 3-29)

36.1 Noted.

37 UCL AWARDS, ELECTIONS AND HONOURS (Paper 3-30)

37.1 Noted.

38 APPOINTMENTS (Paper 3-31)

38.1 Noted.

39 ESTABLISHMENT OF ACADEMIC UNITS: UK DEMENTIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE HQ (Paper 3-32)

39.1 Noted.

40 ESTABLISHMENT OF ACADEMIC UNITS: INSTITUTE FOR RISK AND DISASTER REDUCTION (Paper 3-33)

40.1 Noted.

41 LECTURECAST WORKING GROUP UPDATE (Paper 3-34)

41.1 Noted.

42 ELECTIONS TO AB AND FROM AB TO OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 3-35)

42.1 Noted.

- 43 **STANDING ORDERS – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS** (Paper 3-36)
- 43.1 Noted.
- 44 **ACADEMIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT** (Paper 3-37)
- 44.1 Noted.
- 45 **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION LEAD OFFICER REPORT** (Paper 3-38)
- 45.1 Noted.
- 46 **CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY LEAD OFFICER REPORT** (Paper 3-39)
- 46.1 Noted.
- 47 **MINUTES OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE** (Paper 3-40)
- 47.1 Noted.
- 48 **MINUTES OF COUNCIL** (Paper 3-40)
- 48.1 Noted.
- 49 **MINUTES OF GCAB** (paper 3-40)
- 49.1 Noted.
- 50 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- 50.1 13 May 2020, 2.05-4.00pm in the Cruciform Building, B304 Lecture
 Theatre 1

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