



SPECIAL MEETING OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Monday 14 May 2018

MINUTES

PRESENT:

President and Provost (*Chair*)

Professor Bas Aarts; Professor Robin Alia; Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Wendy Appleby; Professor Timothy Arnett; Professor Erik Arstad; Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Professor David Atwell; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Michael Barlow; Professor Polina Bayvel; Professor Jonathan Bell; Professor Sarah Bell; Professor Sven Bestmann; Professor Sarah Jayne Blakemore; Professor Martin Bobak; Professor Catherine Bracewell; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor Eric Brunner; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Professor Neil Burgess; Professor Joseph Cain; Dr Ben Campkin; Dr Celia Caulcott; Professor Guillaume Charras; Dr Ben P. Clifford; Professor Shamshad Cockcroft; Dr D'Maris Coffman; Dr Alun Coker; Professor John Collinge; Professor Susan Collins; Dr Mike Cope; Professor Nicola Countouris; Professor Peter Coveney; Mr Mark Crawford; Professor Stuart Cull-Candy; Professor Robertus De Bruin; Professor Annette Dolphin; Ms Elizabeth Dow; Dr Philippe Duffour; Dr Karen Edge; Professor Frances Edwards; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Professor Susan E. Evans; Professor Mark Emberton; Professor Mark Farrant; Professor Ariberto Fassati; Professor Adele Fielding; Professor Margot Finn; Professor Andrew Fisher; Professor Maria Fitzgerald; Professor Becky Francis; Dr Richard Freeman; Dr Martin Fry; Professor Alison Fuller; Professor Nicholas Gallent; Dr Andrew Gardner; Professor Asterios Gavriilidis; Professor Francesco Gervasio; Professor Alastair Gibb; Professor Deborah Gill; Professor Derek Gilroy; Ms Emer Girling; Professor Eric Gordy; Dr Lesley Gourlay; Professor Elizabeth Graham; Professor Andrew Green; Professor Lee Grieson; Professor Derek Guile; Professor Serge Guillas; Dr Andrew J. Harris; Professor Graham Hart; Professor Valerie Hazan; Professor Mark Hewiston; Dr Evangelos Himonides; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Jonathan Holmes; Professor Bart Hoogenboom; Ms Lori Houlihan; Professor Parmjit Jat; Professor Glen Jeffery; Professor Kathryn Jeffery; Professor Francis Johnson; Dr Lily Kahn; Professor Benjamin Kaplan; Professor Rainer Kattel; Professor Jeffrey King; Professor Robert Kleta; Mr Rex Knight; Professor Jonathan Knowles; Professor Martin Koltzenburg; Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou; Professor Susanne Kord; Dr Patty Kostkova; Professor Alena Ledeneva; Professor Louis Lemieux; Professor George Letsas; Dr Dewi Lewis; Professor Alison Lloyd; Professor David Lomas; Dr Helga Luthersdottir; Ms Collette Lux; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Professor Eleanor Main; Professor Virginia Mantouvalou; Professor Mark Marsh; Professor Chloe Marshall; Dr Anna Mavrogianni; Professor Mariana Mazzucato; Ms Fiona McClement; Professor Simon Mead; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Susan Michie; Professor Robert Mills; Professor Nicola Miller; Dr Rob Miller; Professor John Mitchell; Professor Tania Monteiro; Professor Goodrun Moore; Professor Henrietta Moore; Professor Sharon Morris; Professor John Morton; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Professor Mignon Nixon; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor Dejan Mumovic; Professor Ian

Needleman; Dr Mark Newman; Mr Angus O'Brien; Professor John O'Keefe; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Martin Oliver; Professor Tadj Oreszczyn; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Alan Penn; Dr Rosie Peppin Vaughan; Professor Kevin Pickering; Dr Inés Pineda Torres; Professor David Price; Professor Stephen Quirke; Professor Shamima Rahman; Professor Sarah Randall; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor William Richardson; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Patricia Salinas; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Tony Segal; Professor Andrea Sella; Professor David Shanks; Professor Robert Sheil; Professor Stephen Shennan; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Dr Bill Sillar; Trevor Smart; Dr Reecha Sofat; Professor Alan Sokal; Professor Kalia Srail; Professor Helen Stagg; Professor Philip Stanier; Professor James Steele; Professor Judith Stephenson; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Michael Stewart; Professor Melvyn Stokes; Dr Sherril Stroschein; Professor Judith Suissa; Professor Peter Swaab; Dr Kristza Szendroi; Professor Nicolas Szita; Professor Jeremy Tanner; Professor Alan Thompson; Mr Jon Thomson; Dr Emanuela Tilley; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Mr Simon To; Professor Andrew Townsend Nicholson; Dr Hans Van de Koot; Professor Ann Varley; Professor Yiannis Ventikos; Professor Gabriella Vigliocco; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor David Voas; Professor Goya Wannamethee; Professor David Wengrow; Professor Robert West; Professor Andrew Wills; Dr James Wilson; Professor Richard Wortley; Professor Maria Wyke; Professor Christopher Yeo; Professor Jose Zalabardo; Dr Stan Zochowski

In attendance: Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary to Academic Board); Ms Karen Dwyer (Dept. of English Lang & Literature); Professor Steve Jones (Genetics, Evolution and Environment); Ms Rachel Port (Academic Services); Dr Mina Sotiriou (UCL Life Learning & CALT); Mr Rob Traynor (Academic Services); Ms Olivia Whiteley (Academic Services).

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Sarah Al-Aride; Dr Joerg Albert; Professor James Bainbridge; Dr Beatrice Baudet; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Professor Ann Blandford; Professor Rob Brownstone; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Dr Rachele De Felice; Dr Vanessa Diaz; Professor Simon Dixon; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Professor Nicholas Freemantle; Professor Mary Fulbrook; Professor Jonathan Gale; Jessica Gramp; Professor Helen Hackett; Professor George Hamilton; Professor John Hartley; Professor Jenny Head; Professor Michael Heinrich; Professor Giandomenico Iannetti; Professor Alejandro Madrigal; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Professor John Martin; Dr Anna Mavrogianni; Professor Usha Menon; Professor Jenny Mindell; Professor Sara Mole; Professor Jonathan Montgomery; Professor Ruth Morgan; Professor Richard Mott; Professor Ivan Parkin; Dr Hynek Pikhart; Dr Markella Ponticos; Professor Sally Price; Dr Stephen Price; Professor Thilo Rehren; Professor Jennifer Robinson; Dr David Sim; Professor Lucia Sivilotti; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Phiroze Vasunia; Professor Susan Ware.

Key to abbreviations

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| AB | Academic Board |
| HE | Higher Education |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| USS | Universities' Superannuation Scheme |

Matter for discussion

1 **REQUISITION LETTER FOR A SPECIAL MEETING OF ACADEMIC BOARD**

[PAPER 6-01 (17-18)]

- 1.1 **Received** – an oral introduction from the Provost.
- 1.2 The Provost explained that the Special Meeting had been called to consider the motion to create a Commission of Inquiry into UCL’s governance.
- 1.3 **Received** – a presentation from Dr Alun Coker, Division of Medicine, as a representative of the signatories of the letter calling for the Special Meeting.
- 1.4 The purpose of the meeting and the scope of the proposed Commission was outlined. It would be created as a sub-committee of AB to review aspects of UCL’s governance, decision-making and strategic direction raised in recent meetings and communications. It was proposed that the Commission should have independent input and this was included as an option for the membership of the commission (Paper 6-01 (17-18)).
- 1.5 Following the presentation, the Provost invited comments from members of AB and encouraged a collaborative and non-confrontational approach. During the discussion, the following points were made:
 - It was considered that the letter had been signed by a large number of staff indicated that concerns about governance, management culture and the strategic direction of UCL were felt across UCL.
 - UCL’s formal response to the USS pension scheme reform consultation was highlighted as an issue of concern amongst UCL’s staff.
 - The necessity of producing an operating surplus was felt to be placing an unreasonable burden on some parts and communities of staff across the institution.
 - Staff who support the proposal and the work of the commission had done so as they wished to support UCL’s academic mission and aims but felt that academic input needed to be strengthened in institutional decision making. Many individuals do not feel connected to the decision-making process and the motion aimed to identify the way forward and offered a clear mechanism through which all members of UCL could be included and have a voice in academic matters.
 - The experience of staff appeared to be very different across the institution, some staff explained that they and their colleagues did not perceive that there were significant problems with governance and decision making at UCL, but that they appreciate the number of issues raised by staff in other parts of the university and that a commission might helpfully provide reassurance. For example, it was considered that the requirement to generate a surplus was not an issue of concern in some areas, while other members considered that the increases in student numbers had created problems.
 - Many of the issues being raised reflected a wider malaise across the higher education sector such as Brexit and the pensions dispute and while these issues should be discussed and debated openly at UCL, it should not be assumed that the issues are unique to UCL or created by the leadership.
 - It was noted that a key concern of staff was the lack of transparency about decision making processes. For example, in relation to the UCL consultation response on the USS pension scheme reform, UCL’s submission to the

consultation had not been shared with staff and the position adopted had caused significant concern; academic staff were aware of the issues and case for reform but if they had been consulted to inform and understand the position, it could have limited the level of disquiet about its governance structure amongst the UCL community.

- In response to perceived lack of academic input decision making, it was noted that the Senior Management Team had significant academic input from Deans and Vice-Provosts
- It was noted that the motion was not intended to be a criticism of the Senior Management Team but an opportunity for UCL to review and consider its governance arrangements and to report the views of Academic Board to Council.
- It was noted that many staff feel disconnected from decision making and do not feel there is sufficient opportunity to contribute to decisions that are taken that affect their day to day activities, in particular it was highlighted that Teaching Fellow and early-career researchers felt particularly excluded and that the proposed inquiry would give an opportunity for them to influence the direction of UCL.
- It was noted that AB's role was limited to advising Council and that it may be beneficial for AB to request that Council establish a review of governance structures at UCL to include an external chair, as it would then have the authority to implement the review's recommendations. However, other members expressed support for AB to exercise its responsibility to advise Council on academic matters.
- Members wished to ensure that the Commission was representative of all UCL's Faculties and it was noted that the broad membership would hopefully ensure this would be the case, and if not there would be opportunities for colleagues to present evidence as witnesses.
- In addition to exploring the issues of concern to staff, it would be helpful for the commission to identify examples of good practice within UCL and perhaps from other universities.

1.6 In response to a query about proxy and absentee voting, the Secretary noted that the Charter, Statutes and Regulations for Management do not make provision for these and therefore it was not possible to record the votes of members who were not present.

1.7 The Provost thanked members for the constructive discussion and noted that the outcome of the ballot would be emailed to AB later that day.

Vote on the motion

1.8 The vote on the motion was by anonymous paper ballot which was distributed to voting members of AB at the beginning of the meeting. The votes were collected during the meeting and were counted afterwards. The options on the ballot paper were "For", "Against" or "Abstain".

1.9 The outcome of the paper ballot was:

Against the motion – 44;
For the motion – 149;
Abstain – 7.

Therefore the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1.10 That a Commission of Inquiry be created by AB (as an AB sub-committee - and therefore subject to changes and dissolution by AB decision) to review the problems reported in UCL's governance, decision-making, and strategic direction, (especially as stated in the above meetings and survey) and to establish their accuracy and causes and, where necessary, to make recommendations for AB to approve a way forward, addressing any genuine problems. This should be in light of academic values and UCL's academic mission, and in the spirit of transparency and accountability to the academic body. The Commission's focus shall include: a) the centralisation of UCL decision-making on matters that affect academic work and its effect on this; b) the way that the delegated powers of Academic Board have/are being reported and used by other committees and bodies; c) the current role of academic input into the appointment of Heads of Department, Deans, and Vice Provosts, and how these relate to their constituencies; d) the position of the Senior Management Team in relation to other UCL committees and academic input into its decisions; e) the structure and composition of key UCL Governance-Level Committees, especially as regards academic representation and input into their decision-making processes and as regards transparency and accountability of their decisions.

ii. The Commission shall have the following membership composition (the numbers of each category are in brackets), with positions filled by volunteers or where volunteers exceed places, by election of each from their named constituency:

- a) - Former elected members of Council (2)
- b) - Current elected members of Council (2)
- c) - Members of GCAB (other than former members of Council) (3)
- d) - Members of SMT (1)
- e) - Heads of Academic Units (4)
- f) - Elected members of AB (6) ⁱ
- g) - Students (2)

Quorum shall be 10 and the Commission may invite witnesses, expert and non-expert alike, to supply evidence as necessary.

ii. That the Commission elect one of their number or appoint a person with relevant experience and expertise to act as Chair.

UCL Academic Services shall confirm the arrangements for establishing the Commission.

2 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 2.1 The next meeting of AB would take place on **Tuesday 23 October 2018** at **2.00pm**.

DERFEL OWEN

Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Board

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11 June 2018

ⁱ Subsequent to the meeting, members of AB have sought clarification on point (f) in the proposed membership of Commission “Elected members of AB (6)”. Elected members of AB are defined in the statutes, but it is proposed that this should be interpreted as 6 members elected by and from the whole membership of AB. The Secretary to AB will invite any comments or views from members on whether this clause should be interpreted that way, the Provost will then be invited to take Chair’s action on the matter and will formally report back to the next AB meeting on 23 October 2018.