



Academic Board
Tuesday 14 July 2020¹
Special Meeting

MINUTES

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

Professor Bas Aarts, Dr Ali Abolfathi, Mr James Agar, Professor Joerg Albert, Dr Bojan Aleksov, Professor Adriana Allen, Professor Lynn Ang, Ms Wendy Appleby, Ms Raphaela Armbruster, Dr Manuel Arroyo-Kalin, Professor Jonathan Ashmore, Professor David Attwell, Dr Paul Ayris, Professor Jurg Bahler, Dr Elinor Bailey, Professor Maria Balda, Mr Sam Barnes, Professor Yolande Barnes, Professor Gill Bates, Professor Vittorio Bellotti, Dr Jyoti Belur, Professor Michael Berkowitz, Dr Jasvir Bhamrah, Professor Zoltan Biedermann, Professor Stephanie Bird, Professor Chris Blackman, Dr Matthew Blain, Professor Martin Bobak, Professor Rachel Bowlby, Professor Catherine Bracewell, Professor Annie Britton, Professor Frances Brodsky, Dr Jamie Brown, Professor Rob Brownstone, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Dr Suzy Buckley, Dr Shanie Budhram-Mahadeo, Professor Neil Burgess, Professor Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski, Professor Jon Butterworth, Professor Francesca Cacucci, Professor Ben Campkin, Professor Matthew Carmona, Professor Celia Caulcott, Dr Declan Chard, Professor Andrew Chesher, Dr Evangelia Chrysikou, Professor Lucie Clapp, Dr Beverley Clark, Dr Ben Clifford, Dr Alun Coker, Ms Lori Coletti Campbell, Professor John Collinge, Professor Susan Collins, Professor Claire Colomb, Professor Stephen Colvin, Professor Barbara Conradt, Professor Andrew Copp, Professor Nicola Countouris, Professor Stuart Cull-Candy, Professor Neil Curson, Ms Sonja Curtis, Professor Izzat Darwazeh, Dr Jason Davies, Professor Nathan Davies, Professor Marc Deisenroth, Professor Frank Deppisch, Professor Annette Dolphin, Dr Johanna Donovan, Mr Rob Doswell, Ms Dominique Draï, Dr Karen Dwyer, Professor Ian Eames, Dr Karen Edge, Professor Piet Eeckhout, Professor Susan Evans, Professor Joanna Evans, Dr Sam Evans, Professor Mark Farrant, Ms Ava Fatah, Dr Luke Fenton-Glynn, Dr Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, Professor Patrizia Ferretti, Professor Elizabeth Fisher, Professor Maria Fitzgerald, Dr Andrew Flinn, Professor Murray Fraser, Dr Mark Freeman, Professor Nicholas Freemantle, Dr Bettina Friedrich, Dr Martin Fry, Professor May Fulbrook, Dr Tommaso Gabrieli, Professor Nick Gallent, Dr Claire Garnett, Professor Mark Geller, Professor Carsten Gerner-Beuerle, Professor Jonathan Gershuny, Professor Alasdair Gibb, Professor Shirli Gilbert, Professor Deborah Gill, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Professor Lesley Gourlay, Professor Andrew Green, Professor Amanda Greene,

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Professor Nicholas Greene, Professor Lee Grieveson, Professor Francois Guesnet, Dr Lucia Gunning, Professor Patrick Haggard, Professor Mordechai Haklay, Mr Martin Hall, Professor Mairead Hanrahan, Dr Andrew Harris, Professor Michael Hausser, Dr Jennifer Hazelton, Dr Anja Heilmann, Professor Mark Hewitson, Dr Evangelos Himonides, Professor Jane Holder, Professor Tom Jacques, Dr Dan Jagger, Professor Parmjit Jat, Professor Edward Johnson, Dr Thomas Kador, Dr Lily Kahn, Dr Jens Kandt, Professor Jian Kang, Professor Benjamin Kaplan, Professor Tara Keck, Professor Nicoletta Kessarlis, Professor Robin Ketteler, Professor Robert Killey, Professor Jeffrey King, Professor Josef Kittler, Professor Robert Kleta, Professor Nikolaos Konstantinidis, Professor Patty Kostkova, Dr Sarabajaya Kumar, Professor Marie-Carine Lall, Professor Nick Lane, Professor Diana Laurillard, Professor Nicholas Lesica, Professor George Letsas, Professor Paola Lettieri, Professor Caren Levy, Dr Dewi Lewis, Professor Wei Li, Professor Allison Littlejohn, Dr Kris Lockyear, Dr Helga Luthersdottir, Ms Collette Lux, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Mr Simon Mahony, Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva, Professor Virginia Mantouvalou, Professor Mark Marsh, Professor Chloe Marshall, Professor John Martin, Professor Martinez Martinez-Barbera, Professor Mark Maslin, Professor Karl Matter, Professor Tristan McCowan, Professor Jacqueline McGlade, Professor Chris McManus, Professor Andrew McQuillin, Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Professor Usha Menon, Dr Nils Metternich, Professor Susan Michie, Dr Lucinda Miller, Professor Zoran Milutinovic, Professor Jenny Mindell, Professor Paul Mitchell, Professor Sibylle Mitnacht, Professor Sara Mole, Professor Jonathan Montgomery, Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, Professor Paul Morris, Professor Gemma Moss, Professor Peter Muller, Dr Florian Mussnug, Ms Jameela Nagri, Professor Mignon Nixon, Professor John O'Keefe, Professor Moses Oketch, Professor Alexander Olaya-Castro, Professor Martin Oliver, Mr Jim Onyemenam, Professor Thomas Otis, Professor Enrico Palandri, Professor Ivan Parkin, Dr Joanne Pearce, Professor Paola Pedarzani, Professor Hiranya Peiris, Dr Rosie Peppin Vaughan, Professor Arthur Petersen, Professor Konstantinos Petrides, Professor Yiannis Petridis, Dr Hynek Pikhart, Professor Michael Pitt, Professor Andrew Pomiankowski, Dr John Potter, Dr Stephen Potts, Professor David Price, Professor Sally Price, Professor Saul Purton, Professor Geraint Rees, Professor Jane Rendell, Professor William Richardson, Dr Annie Ring, Dr Carol Rivas, Professor Sue Rogers, Professor Sasha Roseneil, Dr Suzanne Ruddy, Professor Dmitri Rusakov, Ms Fiona Ryland, Professor Patricia Salinas, Dr Benet Salway, Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici, Professor Peter Sammonds, Dr Meera Nath Sarin, Professor Giorgio Savini, Professor Ralf Schoepfer, Professor Ingrid Schoon, Professor Jonathan Schott, Professor Mala Shah, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Professor Stephen Shennan, Dr Beatrice Sica, Dr Bill Sillar, Professor Angus Silver, Professor Richard Simons, Professor Michael Singer, Professor Lucia Sivilotti, Ms Ashley Slanina-Davies, Professor Trevor Smart, Professor Willem Smelik, Professor Kenneth Smith, Professor Alan Sokal, Professor Christophe Soligo, Professor Samuel Solomon, Professor Kaila Srail, Professor Paul Standish, Professor Terence Stephenson, Professor Claudio Stern, Professor Sacha Stern, Professor Fiona Stevenson, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Professor Judith Suissa, Professor Oriel Sullivan, Professor Alice Sullivan, Professor Adam Swift, Professor Tse-Hui Teh, Professor Geraint Thomas, Professor Mark Thomas, Professor Julian Thompson, Professor Andrew Thomson, Ms Emanuela Tilley, Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Mr Simon To, Dr Ahmed Toosy, Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson, Professor Stefan Trapp, Professor Georgios Tsakos, Professor Elaine Unterhalter, Professor Graham van Goffrier,

Professor Hans van Wees, Professor Liz Varga, Professor Laura Vaughan, Ms Louise Vink, Dr Nalini Vittal, Dr Bella Vivat, Professor Michael Walls, Professor Graham Welch, Professor Simon Werrett, Professor Andrew Wills, Professor James Wilson, Professor Stephen Wilson, Professor Matthew Wing, Professor John Wood, Professor Graham Worth, Mr Michael Wozniak, Professor Maria Wyke, Professor Ziheng Yang, Professor Christopher Yeo, Professor Anne Young, Professor Ian Zachary, Professor Semir Zeki, Dr Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Ms Clare Goudy; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary to Academic Board); Ms Olivia Whiteley.

51 **REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY** (Paper 4-41)

- 51.1 The meeting had been called a requisition letter submitted by 19 members of Academic Board.
- 51.2 The Provost welcomed members to the meeting. This was the first time that a meeting of Academic Board had been held online. As the Statutes did not explicitly make provision for meetings to be held in this manner, the Provost invited AB members, including members of the Commission of Inquiry and the signatories to the requisition letter for the Special Meeting, to raise any concerns about the proposal to treat this as a formal meeting of the Academic Board. No objections were made.
- 51.2 The recommendations would be considered in groups as proposed in the requisition letter. No requests to consider recommendations individually had been received in advance of the meeting.
- 51.3 The report was introduced by Professor Stephanie Bird, Chair of the Commission of Inquiry. The Commission had been mandated by Academic Board to review problems reported in UCL's governance, decision-making and strategic direction, and to make recommendations to Academic Board [AB Minute 1.10, 2018-19]. Following the discussion at Academic Board on 12 February 2020 the Commission had received and considered feedback from across the UCL community. Changes had been made to the report where it was acknowledged that there were factual errors.
- 51.4 Professor Bird summarised the recommendations as follows:
- The recommendations sought to address what the Commission identified as a growing centralisation of decision-making and a decrease in the role of academics without managerial responsibility in contributing to that decision-making.

- A number of recommendations were made on UCL's committee structure, with a view to improving transparency of decision-making. It was proposed that AB itself should play a greater role by delegating direct to Education Committee powers that were currently delegated to Academic Committee. It was further proposed that committee memberships should be rebalanced to enable a greater representation of the broader academic voice. The creation of an 'External Events' or 'Risks' Committee was proposed, for the specific purpose of dealing with policy around external speakers and academic freedom.
- The Commission requested that meetings of groups outside the formal committee structure, such as the Senior Management Team and the Financial Strategy Group, be minuted, and that explanations be made available for the variations in faculty contribution targets and the prioritisation of different estates projects.
- It was proposed that all major business cases and strategy documents should include a mandatory academic impact section and details of any consultation, to address dissatisfaction with business cases and the lack of consideration of financial impact on departments. It was further proposed that final decisions should be taken without the presence of the advocate in the room.
- Recommendations relating directly to Academic Board included the reinstatement of an AB Executive Committee. This would enable Academic Board to be more agile when called upon to be so.
- Recommendations were made with a view to improving Council's communication with academics. It was recommended that the secretary to Council should have no other governance role in the university.
- Since the meeting of 12 February 2020, the proposed recommendations on HR and the staff ombudsman had been amended to reflect the creation of the Employment Relations team. The report recommended the appointment of an in-house employment lawyer to advise independently on all grievances and a staff ombudsman reporting to Council providing non-binding recommendations.

51.5 AB discussed further the proposals with respect to Education Committee. It was noted that Education Committee was responsible for carrying out much of the detailed work on educational policy and assurance that is actually the

responsibility of Academic Board under Article 8 of the Charter², but reported to Academic Committee rather than direct to AB. The intention behind the proposals was to establish a clearer formal relationship between the two. It was also recommended to Council that the elected academic representation on Education Committee be increased, and that the Chair of Education Committee be elected from Academic Board. It was noted that the Faculty Tutors were members of Education Committee, and although not technically academic members of staff, had in many cases been appointed to that role from amongst the academic members of staff. It was noted also that a good deal of Education Committee's work did not relate to academic quality and standards and that it was vital that it had appropriate expertise to address such matters.

- 51.6 The Commission had been challenged on the grounds that the proposals would break the line of accountability within UCL and with the regulator, the Office for Students (OfS). The Commission had taken legal advice and did not accept that this was an issue; OfS regulations 458 and 460³ were not prescriptive about how assurance on education should operate within a university, requiring simply that a single officer of the university be accountable for the university's quality assurance. Nor did the Commission accept the suggestion that it was not in the power of Academic Board to change Education Committee's reporting structure. AB had the power to delegate its own powers under Article 7 of the Charter.
- 51.7 At the last meeting of Academic Board the Commission had been asked to expand on its reasoning for seeking to reinstate the Executive Committee of Academic Board. It was envisaged that an Executive Committee would increase agility by providing a mechanism for liaising with the executive at the point of inception of policies, whilst remaining accountable to AB. This was contrasted with the function of GCAB, which operated 'downstream' and reviewed proposals late in the process, directly before their submission to AB.
- 51.8 An annexe to Appendix 9 had been added to the report, relating to the principles of academic governance. The distinction was made between 'assembly' style bodies such as Academic Board, under which members were citizens of the university community participating directly in decision-making, and smaller bodies comprising elected and appointed individuals. The assembly model enhanced transparency and legitimacy and maximised the

² 'There shall be an Academic Board of the College (in this Our Charter referred to as the 'Academic Board'). Statutes shall provide the constitution of the Academic Board and it shall, subject to the powers of the Council as provided in this Our Charter and the Statutes, be responsible for the academic work of the College in teaching, in examining and in research and for the regulation and superintendence of the education of the Students of the College.'

³ https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/1406/ofs2018_01.pdf

ability of citizens to participate. It was noted however that AB was already a partly elected body and did not include all academic citizens of the institution, so it would always be necessary to find some mechanism for representation. Nevertheless it was suggested that the number of vacancies amongst the elected constituencies indicated that no-one who wished to be involved in the business of Academic Board was being left out. It was noted that a 'Senate' model was not representative in the sense of having members who were responsible for advocating for the views of a constituency.

- 51.9 AB discussed what lessons could be learned from the use of the command structure in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was evident that this arrangement had facilitated rapid decision-making and it was suggested that this experience reinforced the argument for an AB Executive Committee, which could play a useful advisory role in such emergency situations.
- 51.10 Members discussed the importance of encouraging involvement in Academic Board, both in terms of maximising diversity and in drawing on the expertise available across the academic community.
- 51.11 AB discussed the process for consideration of the report and its recommendations, and debated whether the time was available at the current meeting for sufficiently detailed consideration. It was noted that an earlier version of the report had been submitted to AB in February and members had been able to make representations to the Commission since that time, although the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their ability to do so was noted and considered. It was further noted that the requisition letter also offered members the opportunity to raise individual recommendations for discussion, but no such representations had been received. It was quite possible that the implementation stage would foreground issues that were not appreciable at this stage. It was therefore agreed that AB should conduct a review into how implementation was progressing within 12 months of the commencement of the implementation of the initial set of recommendations.
- 51.12 The Provost thanked members for their contributions to the discussion. Voting on the report took place after the meeting. The results were as follows:

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of the Report text?

Yes	226 votes
No	16 votes
Abstain	6 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 1 & 2

[Recommendations of the Visitor / chair's action]

Yes	230 votes
No	16 votes

Abstain 3 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 3–7
[Recommendations on appointments to senior management positions]

Yes 227 votes
No 19 votes
Abstain 3 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 8–13 [Committees]

Yes 219 votes
No 24 votes
Abstain 7 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 14–18
[Transparency]

Yes 230 votes
No 17 votes
Abstain 3 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 19–24 [Academic Board]

Yes 223 votes
No 21 votes
Abstain 5 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 25–34 [Council and communication with academics]

Yes 224 votes
No 24 votes
Abstain 2 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 35–37 [HR Division review and creation of Staff Ombudsman]

Yes 231 votes
No 16 votes
Abstain 5 votes

Do you support Academic Board's adoption of Recommendations 38 read together with part C (p. 24) [Report implementation]

Yes 227 votes
No 22 votes
Abstain 5 votes

RESOLVED

That Academic Board adopt the Commission of Inquiry report and its recommendations.

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