



Academic Board

Tuesday 15 March 2022¹

MINUTES

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

Dr Ali Abolfathi, Professor Patti Adank, Mr Adnan Ali, Professor Lynn Ang, Dr Seth Anziska, Professor Kathleen Armour, Professor Tomaso Aste, Professor David Atkinson, Professor David Attwell, Dr Paul Ayris, Professor Maryse Bailly, Professor Gianluca Baio, Professor Jamie Baker, Professor Kristin Bakke, Professor Simon Banks, Dr Cecile Bats, Professor Matthew Beaumont, Professor Jonathan Bell, Mr Ayman Benmati, Professor Robert Biel, Professor Stephanie Bird, Dr Matthew Blain, Professor Martin Bobak, Professor Douglas Bourn, Professor Richard Breheny, Professor Annie Britton, Professor Clare Brooks, Ms Annabel Brown, Dr Nicole Brown, Professor Robert Brownstone, Dr Suzy Buckley, Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo, Professor Jonathan Butterworth, Dr Tim Button, Professor Joseph Cain, Professor Virginia Calder, Professor Licia Capra, Professor Tom Carlson, Professor Claire Carmalt, Dr Declan Chard, Andrey Chau, Professor James Cheshire, Professor Olga Ciccarelli, Professor Chris Clack, Professor Beverley Clark, Dr Alun Coker, Professor Susan Collins, Professor Claire Colomb, Professor Barbara Conradt, Professor Anna Cox, Professor Duncan Craig, Ms Sonja Curtis, Professor Nathan Davies, Professor Sally Day, Professor Andreas Demosthenous, Professor Janice Derry, Professor Snezana Djordjevic, Professor Annette Dolphin, Professor Paulo Drinot, Professor Michael Duchen, Professor Sandra Dunsmuir, Professor Ian Eames, Professor Piet Eeckhout, Professor Marc Esteve, Dr Russell Evans, Professor Susan Evans, Ms Pascale Fanning-Tichborne, Ms Ava Fatah, Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes, Dr Liory Fern-Pollak, Professor Patrizia Ferretti, Professor Margot Finn, Professor Andrew Fisher, Professor Elizabeth Fisher, Professor Maria Fitzgerald, Mr James Ford, Professor Eric Fraga, Professor Mark Freeman, Professor Jonathan French, Dr Bettina Friedrich, Dr Martin Fry, Professor Jonathan Gale, Professor Nicholas Gallent, Dr Federico Galvanin, Professor Caroline Garaway, Professor Sebastian Gardner, Professor Mark Geller, Professor Dame Hazel Genn, Professor Guido Germano, Professor Adam Gibson, Professor Shirli Gilbert, Professor Faye Gishen, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Professor Eric Gordy, Ms Emma Grant, Ms Amanda Greene, Professor Alistair Greig, Professor Ann Griffin, Professor Patrick Haggard, Professor Stephen Hailes, Professor Susan Hamilton, Professor Penelope Haralambidou, Professor Stephen Hart, Professor John Hartley, Professor Kirsten Harvey, Professor Michael Heinrich, Professor Mark Herbster, Professor Evangelos Himonides, Dr Christine Hoffmann, Professor Arne Hofmann, Professor Martin Holbraad, Professor Jane Holder, Professor Katherine

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference.

Holt, Professor Bart Hoogenboom, Professor Jennifer Hudson, Professor Richard Jackman, Professor Dan Jagger, Professor Helene Joffe, Professor David Jones, Ms Liz Jones, Ms Charlotte Choy, Professor Jian Kang, Professor Benjamin Kaplan, Professor Matilda Katan-Muller, Professor Catherine Keen, Professor Yvonne Kelly, Professor Nicoletta Kessar, Professor James Kirkbride, Professor Josef Kittler, Professor Robert Kleta, Professor Alison Koslowski, Ms Edyta Kostanek, Mr Dimitrios Kraniotis, Professor Mark Lake, Professor Benjamin Lauderdale, Dr Borja Legarra Herrero, Dr Fiona Leigh, Professor Paola Lettieri, Professor Li Wei, Professor Xi Liang, Professor Allison Littlejohn, Professor Annemaree Lloyd-Zantiotis, Professor David Lomas, Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir, Professor Gary Lye, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Professor Eleanor Main, Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva, Dr Juliana Martins, Professor Christos Masouros, Dr Margaret Mayston, Dr Claire McAndrew, Professor Carolyn McGettigan, Dr Ruth McGinity, Professor Desmond Mcmorrow, Professor Anne McMunn, Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Professor Nils Metternich, Professor Susan Michie, Ms Angharad Milenkovic, Professor Oleg Mitrofanov, Professor Sara Mole, Dr Dafne Zuleima Morgado Ramirez, Professor Ruth Morgan, Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti, Professor Sharon Morris, Professor Gemma Moss, Professor Vivek Mudera, Professor Dejan Mumovic, Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde, Professor Steven Murdoch, Professor Mirco Musolesi, Professor Florian Mussnug, Dr Helene Neveu Kringelbach, Dr Mark Newman, Dr Will Newton, Professor Thanh Nguyen, Dr Alex Norori-McCormac, Professor Richard North, Dr Abel Nyamapfene, Professor Catherine O'Keeffe, Professor Moses Oketch, Professor Martin Oliver, Mr Derfel Owen, Professor Norbert Pachler, Professor Mathew Page, Professor Jenny Parkes, Professor Ivan Parkin, Professor Nora Pashayan, Dr Thomas Peach, Professor Paola Pedarzani, Professor James Phillips, Professor Hynek Pikhart, Professor Stephen Pilling, Dr Jeffrey Pittaway, Professor Helene Plun-Favreau, Dr Stephen Potts, Professor David Pym, Dr Joana Ramalho, Professor Geraint Rees, Professor Jane Rendell, Professor Antonella Riccio, Professor Aeli Roberts, Professor Helen Roberts, Dr Tristan Robinson, Professor Miguel Rodrigues, Professor Sasha Roseneil, Professor Daniel Rothschild, Dr Suzanne Ruddy, Professor Dmitri Rusakov, Ms Fiona Ryland, Professor Patricia Salinas, Dr Benet Salway, Dr Alexander Samson, Professor Prince Saprai, Professor Ralf Schoepfer, Professor Eloise Scotford, Professor Toby Seddon, Professor Maryam Shahmanesh, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Dr Ala'a Shehabi, Professor Alison Shell, Professor Alexander Shluger, Ms Maria Sibiryakova, Dr Ruth Siddall, Mr Justin Siefker, Professor Bill Sillar, Dr Samuel Sims, Professor Michael Singer, Professor Trevor Smart, Professor Sam Smidt, Mr Andy Smith, Professor Anthony Smith, Dr Holly Smith, Professor Christophe Soligo, Professor Samuel Solomon, Professor Catalina Spataru, Dr Uta Staiger, Dr Karen Stepanyan, Professor Vincent Sterk, Professor Claudio Stern, Professor Sacha Stern, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Ms Joanna Stroud, Professor Alice Sullivan, Dr Mike Sulu, Dr Bugra Susler, Professor Alastair Sutcliffe, Mr Bryan Taylor, Professor Olga Thomas, Professor Alan Thompson, Professor Ulrich Tiedau, Professor Helena Titheridge, Professor Ahmed Toosy, Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson, Ms Helen Tsui, Professor Chronis Tzedakis, Professor Gert Van Der Heijden, Professor Liz Varga, Professor Faraneh Vargha-Khadem, Professor Rosemary Varley, Professor Laura Vaughan, Ms Marine-Oceane Verdez-Scholler, Professor Lourdes De Agapito Vicente, Dr Nalini Vittal, Professor Ann Walker, Professor Simon Walker-Samuel, Dr Ryan Wang, Dr Hayley Whitaker, Mr Patrick White, Ms Breege Whiten, Professor Andrew Wills, Professor James Wilson, Professor Matthew Wing,

Professor Selina Wray, Professor Maria Wyke, Professor Dominic Wyse, Dr Christine (Xine) Yao, Professor Ian Zachary, Dr Sophie Zadeh, Professor Stan Zochowski, Professor Martijn Zwijnenburg.

In attendance: Mr Douglas Bertram, Dr Clare Goudy, Ms Freya Markwell, Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary), Ms Olivia Whiteley.

Apologies: Professor James Bainbridge, Professor Michael Berkowitz, Professor Jamie Brown, Dr Jens Kandt, Professor Sir Peng Khaw, Professor Gesine Manuwald, Dr Giulio Marini, Dr Jennifer Mindell, Ms Marga Navarrete, Professor Carol Rivas, Professor Elizabeth Shepherd, Professor Jolene Skordis, Professor Joy Sleeman, Professor Michael Stacey, Dr Amy Thornton, Dr Bella Vivat.

Part I: Preliminary Formal Business

37 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

37.1 The minutes of the AB meeting of 9 February 2022 [AB Minutes 24-36, 2021-22] were confirmed.

38 STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-27: EDUCATION PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMES (Paper 5-27)

38.1 Professor Kathy Armour, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience), introduced the paper. This aimed to initiate a discussion with a view to identifying and removing barriers to the delivery of outstanding education across UCL.

38.2 After setting out the context, the paper outlined proposals for four projects: engagement with the UCL community on a teaching and assessment framework; development of an Empowering Programme Architecture framework; creation of an Institute for Higher Education Development and Support; and modernising the structure of the academic year.

38.3 AB considered the proposed projects in turn. In discussion of the teaching and assessment framework, the following matters were raised:

- the impact on staff morale of successive rounds of remodelling teaching delivery, and the necessity of thinking differently about how we do what we do in order to avoid ever increasing workloads;
- the balance between questions of interdisciplinarity and student choice on the one hand, and the need to retain an identifiable subject base at the core of a programme;
- the need to learn from the rest of the sector, particularly when student survey data pointed in that direction, without feeling obliged to follow it;

- the need to avoid resorting to reorganisation as a response to concerns with student satisfaction levels without evidencing a relationship between the two;
- the need to identify in a structured way (involving the Education Committee) what the current problems were, and to develop a detailed understanding of current delivery, mindful of the importance of local flexibility appropriate to the discipline;
- the question of the inclusion of lifelong learning in the process;
- the mutual interdependence of the current discussion with that arising from the forthcoming Size and Shape paper. It was noted that the intention in the current case was to have a conversation about aspirations;
- the need to work with the Office for Students to develop a view on how to move forward from the pandemic in the most effective way in terms of teaching delivery;
- the potential for increased online delivery to minimise the institutional carbon footprint; the relationship between mode of delivery and expectations in terms of student fees, and the role of leading institutions in engaging with the Government over the funding model.
- An academic member expressed the view that those who were doing only teaching were second-class citizens at UCL;
- An academic member stated that they were considered underperforming because they were, in the view of UCL, not conducting research.

38.4 In respect of the *Empowering Programme Architecture Framework*, AB discussed balancing student choice with considerations of what was both deliverable and pedagogically justifiable. The question of the flexibility to amend choices after commencement of a course was raised, as was the need for programme architecture to build on agreed principles, such as the extent to which the first year of a programme should be based around core content.

38.5 During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- the importance of departmental autonomy in determining the pedagogical approach best suited to the subject and local circumstances;
- the challenge presented by the need to deliver what was advertised, mindful of consumer law, against the pedagogical need to be responsive to the rapidly changing needs of students and of the external environment, such as industry;
- the contrast between the presentation of the question of module choices in the *UCL Now* paper [AB Minute 5, 2021-22] with that of the current paper. It was suggested that the key issue here was one of the curation of course pathways in a way that led to pedagogically justified options that were deliverable in practice, not least with a view to staff workload.

38.6 In respect of Project 3, *An Institute for Higher Education Development and Support*, AB noted UCL's arrangements for staff and student skills development and the Government's focus on employment outcomes, and the need for appropriate support in this area, particularly to a more diverse student intake.

- 38.7 In respect of Project 4 on the academic teaching year, it was suggested that UCL's former model of a three-term arrangement with teaching delivery in Terms 1 and 2 and assessments in Term 3 had shifted towards an arrangement in which assessment was sometimes entirely by way of coursework, but where this was not scheduled in Term 3. This contributed to uneven levels of pressure on students in different parts of the year. This was being reflected in student feedback and may be a factor in UCL's comparatively poor NSS and PTES scores on assessment and feedback.
- 38.8 In respect of Academic Impact Statements, it was intended that any proposal taken forward under the Strategy would in due course require a business case, and that Academic Impact Statements would be produced once it became clear what those proposals were. The timing of that process was not yet settled, and there was room for discussion about the scope of the Statements, particularly in respect of the impact on students and academic activity as well as academic staff themselves.
- 38.9 A letter had been circulated from a number of members in advance of the meeting, asking for a single anonymous vote on five proposals relating to the involvement of the Education Committee in the current discussions. The Provost took the view that the proposals appeared to be fundamentally in line with what was envisaged for Project 1, although he noted his concern that there should not be two parallel consultation mechanisms. It was confirmed that the intention behind the letter had been to address a procedural question that the Education Committee had not been involved in the design or drafting of the document.
- 38.10 AB proceeded to vote on the following proposal:

The Board is asked to resolve on the following procedural proposal on how to move forward with the draft Education Strategy paper "Education Priorities and Programmes" (EPP).

- i. The draft document "Education Priorities and Programmes" should be referred for consideration and scrutiny to the Education Committee (EdCom)
- ii. EdCom shall be in charge of a consultation process, inviting formal feedback from all Academic Units of UCL and other department-like structures, and may also consult with experts, as it sees fit.
- iii. EdCom shall deliberate and produce recommendations for the Academic Board on the proposals in the current draft EPP document, confirming, modifying, removing, or adding to the proposal as it sees fit. EdCom shall present the updated draft document to AB, accompanied by a Report detailing EdCom's deliberations, and any non-unanimous conclusions, and highlighting any matters of controversy on which AB needs to resolve, before the consultation is completed.
- iv. EdCom's report shall include an Academic Impact Statement covering each component of the proposal separately. ExComAB will assist EdCom

with the format of the Academic Impact Statements. These documents (proposal and Report) including their options shall then be part of the presentation to AB for its deliberation. EdCom will adjust the proposals in light AB's deliberations, and produce a final document.

v. The finalised Education Strategy document must come to AB for final approval at a meeting where all other Strategy documents are also before the Board.

38.11 Academic Board voted 72% yes, 10% no, and 18% abstaining, with 222 members voting.

39 MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 5-28)

39.1 Noted.

40 ACADEMIC BOARD – ELECTED CONSTITUENCIES (Paper 5-29)

40.1 AB approved the proposal.

41 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

41.1 The next scheduled meeting was on **11 May 2022**, 14:05-16:00. The Chair intended to schedule an additional meeting² to discuss the options for reducing UCL's carbon footprint.

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² Two further meetings were subsequently confirmed: **30 March** at 15:05-17:00, and **5 May** at 14:05-16:00.