



ACADEMIC BOARD

17 January 2018

MINUTES

Ms Wendy Appleby; Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Professor Gill Bates; Dr Simon Banks; Dr Beatrice Baudet; Dr Yasminah Beebeejaun; Professor Stephanie Bird; Professor Douglas Bourn; Professor Robert Brownstone; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Ms Bonita Carboo; Professor Claire Carmalt; Dr Celia Caulcott; Professor Lucie Clapp; Dr Ben Clifford; Dr Elisabete Cidre; Professor Susan Collins; Dr Alun Coker; Mr Mark Crawford; Ms Sonja Curtis; Rachele De Felice; Professor Annette Dolphin; Professor Susan E. Evans; Professor Andrew Fisher; Professor Elizabeth Fisher; Dr Richard Freeman; Dr Martin Fry; Dr Eric Gordy; Ms Jessica Gramp; Professor Alistair Greig; Dr Jennifer Griffiths; Professor Helen Hackett; Dr Evangelos Himonides; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr David Hornsby; Ms Lori Houlihan; Professor Brad Karp;; Professor Robert Kleta; Mr Rex Knight; Dr Sandra Leaton-Gray; Dr Ruth Lovering; Dr Helga Luthersdottir; Ms Collette Lux; Professor Robin McAnulty; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Jenny Marie; Professor Charles Marson; Dr Margaret Mayston; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Gudrun Moore; Professor John Mullan; Dr Charlene Murphy; Mr Angus O'Brien; Professor Moses Oketch; Dr Kit Opie; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Enrico Palandri; Dr Andy Pearce; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Alan Penn; Dr Hynek Pikhart; Professor David Price; Mr Kieren Reed; Professor Helen Roberts; Ms Fiona Ryland; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Anthony Segal; Dr Lion Shahab; Professor David Shanks; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Dr. Sherrill Stroschein; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Dr David Sim; Dr Bill Sillar; Professor Lucia Sivilotti; Professor Trevor Smart; Dr Uta Staiger; Professor Philip Stanier; Professor Melvyn Stokes; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Professor Judith Suissa; Dr Kristza Szendroi; Professor Jeremy Tanner; Dr Emanuela Tilley; Mr Simon To; Professor Derek Tocher; Dr Ahmed Toosy; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Dr Nalini Vittal; Mr Martin Walsh; Dr Jane Warren; Professor Robert West; Ms Breege Whiten; Dr Norman Williams; Dr James Wilson; Professor Maria Wyke; Dr Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary to Academic Board); Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane (Governance and Secretariat Manager); Mr Philip Harding (Finance & Business Affairs); Mr Charles Hymas (Communications & Marketing); Dr Ruth Morgan (Mechanical Engineering); Ms Rachel Port (Academic Services); Mr Ayo Olatunji (in attendance from item 5)

Apologies: Professor Jim Anderson; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Abdel Babiker; Professor Maurice Biriotti; Mr Tim Bodley-Scott; Professor Graziella Branduardi Raymont; Professor Andrew Brown; Professor John Collinge; Prof Marc-Olivier Coppens; Dr William Coppola; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Dr Vanessa Diaz; Professor Peter Earley; Professor Andrew Eder; Professor Mark Emberton; Professor Alison Fuller; Dr Xavier Golay; Professor George Hamilton; Professor Becky Harris; Professor Kenneth Harris; Mr Johnathan Jones; Dr Lily Kahn; Professor Diana Laurillard; Dr Melanie Leggett; Professor David Lomas; Dr Merle Mahon; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Professor Kevin Middlebrook; Professor Robert Mills; Dr Jennifer Mindell; Professor Henrietta Moore; Professor Ruth Morgan; Professor Huw Morris; Dr Mark Newman; Mr David Newton; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Stephen Quirke; Dr Benet Salway; Dr Rebecca Schendel; Professor Jonathan Schott; Professor Clare Selden; Professor Mala Shah; Mr Ehtesham Shamsar; Professor Lorraine Sher; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Sarah Spurgeon; Dr Helen Stagg; Mr Olga Thomas; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Thomas Voit; Professor Andrew Wills; Professor Tarek Yousry; Professor Sarah Walker; Professor Li Wei; Professor Graham Worth; Professor Alison Wright; Professor Dominic Wyse

| <i>Key Abbreviations</i> | |
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| AB | Academic Board |
| AC | Academic Committee |
| DfE | Department for Education |
| GCAB | Governance Committee of Academic Board |
| HE | Higher Education |
| OfS | Office for Students |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| TRAC | Transparent Approach to Costing |
| USS | University Superannuation Scheme |
| VP | Vice-Provost |

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| Preliminary business |
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1. MINUTES OF 11TH OCTOBER 2017 AND 30TH OCTOBER 2017 MEETINGS

- 1.1 The minutes of the 11th October 2017 were approved.
- 1.2 A member of AB requested that the minutes of the Special Meeting of AB on 30 October 2017 were amended to explain the context in which some members present had requested additional time for discussion before moving to a vote. It was agreed that the minutes would be amended to include this context.

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 The Chair of GCAB requested that the presentation slides from the presentation by the Academic Director of UCL East to AB, be made permanently available to AB members. The Chair of AB confirmed that the presentation would be made available online but emphasised that some commercially sensitive information had been included in the presentations and that this must remain confidential to protect UCL.

- 2.2 GCAB had circulated a memo to AB on Transparency. The Chair of GCAB noted that the late circulation of the document for the Special Meeting of Academic Board prevented GCAB from undertaking its role. The Chair of AB noted that the timescales for preparing papers for a special meeting of AB were very tight and that on this occasion the motion proposed to the SMAB was lengthy and detailed with a number of questions asked specifically for response from the Provost. The paper had taken some time to prepare and the Provost wished to fully review the contents before circulation, this meant that the paper could not be circulated until the morning of the meeting of AB.
- 2.3 It was planned that AB would hear from academics working on programmes due to be delivered at UCL East at the January AB meeting. However, due to the time spent on this at Special Meeting of AB and the busy agenda for January, the UCL East slot had been moved to the May meeting to enable sufficient time for presentation by each of the Faculty Leads and from Here East, as well as time for Q&A from the room.

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

3. Provost's Business

3A. Cabinet Reshuffle

- 3A.1 Sam Gyimah, has replaced Jo Johnson as the Universities and Science Minister. Damian Hinds has been appointed as the new Education Secretary after Justine Greening resigned from the Government.
- 3A.2 It is not known how this reshuffle would impact on the planned review of higher education fees. However, it could result in a reduction of fees which could cover all disciplines or exclude lab based disciplines. This would have a significant impact on income with a potential loss between £30 million to £36 million. The Russell Group was setting up a working group to address this matter. Professor Anthony Smith, Vice Provost would be UCL's representative.

3B. Brexit

- 3B.1 The European Commission and the UK government have reached a deal on citizens' rights after Brexit. EU citizens will be able to apply for settled status using a streamlined application process. The Joint Report states that permanent residence would not be lost unless an individual has been absent from the UK for five consecutive years.

3C. Office for Students (OfS)

- 3C.1 From April 2018 the Office for Students (OfS) will be the regulatory body for the English higher education sector. UCL was seeking an introductory meeting with the Chair and the CEO of the OfS.

3D. London Conference on Intelligence

- 3D.1 UCL was currently investigating a potential breach of its room bookings process for events after being alerted to a conferences being hosted on UCL premises by an honorary senior lecturer at UCL. UCL has set up an inquiry team led by the head of UCL's Division of Psychology & Language Sciences with three other senior academics. UCL have suspended approval for any further conferences of this nature by the honorary lecturer and speakers pending our investigation into the case. UCL has a legal obligation to protect free speech on campus, within the law, even if the views expressed are inconsistent with the values and views of UCL. UCL has had to manage and sometimes restage events where there had been disruption by protest. The matter under investigation was whether the room booking processes had been deliberately undermined.
- 3D.2 There was a lengthy discussion on how incidents of this nature could be prevented in the future. It called into question whether the process for approval of honorary member's process needed to be strengthened. The room booking procedures and policy would be reviewed. It was also noted that it was important that while protecting free speech that UCL had a duty of care to staff and students to make them feel safe. It was also raised that students were very interested in this issue and it would be an opportunity for learning for UCL students to engage in critical discussion about this matter.

3E. University Visitor

- 3E.1 A senior member of staff of UCL had petitioned the University Visitor, requesting an investigation into a series of issues that they considered to be of concern. The Provost explained that while he felt the petition covered many matters that had been dealt with and concluded internally already, this was a matter for the Visitor to investigate and to reach a conclusion. UCL would cooperate fully.

4. REPORT ON UNIVERSITY TITLE STATUS

[Paper 3-23, 2017-18]

- 4.1 AB received and noted the outcome of the consultation on the UCL Charter and Statutes. AB considered the proposed amendments to the UCL Charter and Statutes, following the consultation with Academic Board.
- 4.2 AB also noted the proposal to establish a Working Group to review the Charter and Statutes, it was clarified that this was a working group of Academic Board, not of the Governance Committee.

RESOLVED

- 4.2 **That AB endorsed the wording included in Part One Appendix 1 of the paper and recommends it to Council for approval**
- 4.3 **That AB supported the proposals for the special resolution contained in Part Three of the paper.**

- 4.4 **That AB would establish a working group to consider the remaining proposed changes to the Charter and Statutes. It will identify whether proposals should be recommended for adoption and for those that are considered appropriate to recommend for adoption, to identify appropriate wording.**

5. ANNUAL REPORT OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE SESSION 2016-17

[Paper 3-24, 2017-18]

- 5.1 AB received the Annual Report of AC Session 2016-17. AB considered the recommendations contained in the GCAB memo on this item.
- 5.2 The matter was discussed. It was noted that AC exercises powers delegated from Council and AB and that it would be helpful for AC to report annually to AB as well as to Council, specifically referring to its delegated authority from AB.

RESOLVED:

- 5.3 **That AC produces a report, to be supplied to AB for its next regular meeting, listing when and how it has employed AB's delegated power in any of its decisions or communications.**
- 5.4 **That further discussion will take place between the secretary of AB and GCAB on how best to report on providing information on the following:**
- a) **The list of all sub-committees, working groups or sub-bodies that report to or advise AC, where these powers were exercised and have been engaged;**
 - b) **The membership lists and terms of reference of these committees; and**
 - c) **A list of when and how delegated powers have been engaged by these sub-committees, working groups or sub-bodies.**

6. VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH) ANNUAL REPORT

[Paper 3-25, 2017-18]

- 6.1 AB received the report of the VP Research on Principal Theme Three "Addressing global challenges through our disciplinary excellence and distinctive cross-disciplinary approach". The VP Research apologised for the delayed circulation of the report. This was due to the fact that data did not become available until the report was due. It was recommended that the future reporting schedule for the report be reviewed.
- 6.2 The VP Research presented on a number of key items contained in the report, performance against Principal Theme 3 performance indicators, 2016-17 Research Grants & Contracts, Global rankings based on mean league table ranking, UCL's performance in connection with cross-disciplinary and disruptive thinking activity and examples of funding success. The presentation demonstrated the outstanding research strength of the academic community at UCL.

- 6.3 AB welcomed the report and the success outlined in it. During a discussion on the report, it was noted that one of the most significant challenges was handling UCL's research success. An increase in research funding was matched by an increase in researchers. An estates strategy was being developed in order to support this growth and mitigate some of the short-term pressures on space.
- 6.4 There was a question about whether research generated a surplus to UCL. The Vice-Provost explained that some research output could produce substantial commercial returns to UCL, analysis of full costs and expenditure across UCL indicated a funding shortfall of approximately 10 percent for research activity.

7. USS PENSIONS

- 7.1 In advance of the meeting, the Chair of AB was asked to respond to the following series of questions about USS Pensions:

A) Whether UCL made a formal submission to UUK about its position on the proposed changes: does the Provost/UCL agree with the UUK position on ending the defined benefit scheme, and would UCL consider increasing the level of employer contributions?

B) Whether the Provost/UCL is in favour of the proposal of retaining DB with the accrual rate reduced from 1/75 to 1/80;

C) How does the Provost/UCL propose to assuage the fears, concerns, and low morale of its academic staff, who are facing - cross-generationally - a very uncertain future where it is impossible to plan for retirement?

- 7.2 The Provost stated that this was a difficult issue and recognised the level of concern among staff and responded as follows:

Answer A: Yes, UCL did respond to the technical consultation and indicated that the cost to employers should not rise above 18%. It was flagged up as part of the consultation that a change to the DB scheme would impact on the ability to attract and retain high quality academic staff. UCL asked for more work to be undertaken on benchmarking against international pensions.

Answer B: No, UCL did not accept the proposal of retaining DB with the accrual rate reduced from 1/75 to 1/80. It would increase employer contribution by 5.5%. There would be much higher contributions for poorer outcomes. The proposal did not address the high risks associated with the scheme and it could be expected another intervention would be required in the future.

Answer C: The Provost explained that steps had been taken to support staff. Two open meetings had been held. It was important to remember that under the proposals defined benefit accrual would be unaffected until April 2019. Any benefits accrued under the defined benefit scheme until this point would be protected. The defined benefit scheme could be reintroduced if the scheme's performance improved.

- 7.3 During discussion it was queried whether it would be possible for UCL to suggest the codification of when the scheme was favourably performing and the trigger for

reintroducing the DB Scheme. This would instil some confidence that the scheme could be re-opened.

- 7.4 A number of members queried the affordability argument and asserted that UCL could choose to spend on pensions rather than other commitments such as investing in the estate or producing an annual surplus. The Provost noted that increasing employer contributions would be a long term commitment and significantly affect UCL's flexibility to invest in supporting excellent research and teaching facilities.

OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

8. Library Committee Annual Report 2016-17

[Paper 3-26, 2017-18]

- 8.1 **Received** – the Library Committee Annual Report 2016-17.

9. GCAB Minutes: 2nd October 2017, 24th October 2017 and 12th December 2017 (unconfirmed)

[Paper 3-27, 2017-18]

- 9.1 **Received** – the confirmed minutes of GCAB meetings that took place on the 2 October 2017 and 24th October 2017 and the unconfirmed minutes of the 12 December 2017.

10. Proposed Arrangements for AB Elections Spring Term 2018

[Paper 3-28, 2017-18]

- 10.1 **Received** – a confirmation of arrangements for conducting the following elections after the Academic Board meeting of 17 January 2018.

11. Awards and Prizes to UCL Staff

[Paper 3-29, 2017-18]

- 11.1 **Received** - Details of awards, appointments, elections and honours relating to UCL staff since the last report to Academic Board.

12. List of recent appointments

[Paper 3-30, 2017-18]

- 12.1 **Received** - a list of recent appointments (i) of Heads of Academic Departments, and (ii) to established Chairs tenable at UCL.

13. Chair's action (including Academic Board Working Groups on Established Chairs and Readerships)

[Paper 3-31, 2017-18]

- 13.1 **Received** - a note of action taken by the Chair on behalf of Academic Board since the last report.

14. Any Other Business

- 14.1 A member expressed their concern that the matter of the London Conference on Intelligence had not been discussed at the meeting. It was clarified that the matter had been discussed under "Provost's Business" and the Provost offered to meet with the individual to discuss the matter further.

15. Dates of next meeting:

- 15.1 Wednesday 2 May 2018, 2.05pm, Christopher Ingold Building, XLG2 Auditorium