



ACADEMIC BOARD

Wednesday 23 October 2013

MINUTES

*PRESENT*¹:

President and Provost (*Chair*)

Professor Jurg Bahler, Mr Malcolm Bailey, Professor Polina Bayvel, Dr Stephanie Bird, Dr Bob Blizard, Professor Vanda Broughton, Professor Robert Brown, Dr Ben Campkin, Dr Elettra Carbone, Ms Sue Chick, Professor Lucie Clapp, Professor Shamshad Cockcroft, Professor Susan Collins, Professor Marc-Olivier Coppens, Professor Simon Dixon, Professor Susan Evans, Professor Fred Fitzke, Dr Martin Fry, Professor Mary Fulbrook, Mr Keir Gallagher, Professor Dame Hazel Genn, Professor Francesco Gervasio, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Dr Jamie Harle, Professor Kenneth Harris, Professor Jem Hebden, Professor Benjamin Heydecker, Dr Arne Hofmann, Professor Michael King, Mr Rex Knight, Dr Dilwyn Knox, Professor Susanne Kord, Professor Cecile Laborde, Professor Nicos Ladommatos, Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Professor Alejandro Madrigal, Professor Gesine Manuwald, Professor Charles Marson, Dr Cristina Massaccesi, Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia, Dr John Mitchell, Professor Maxine Molyneux, Professor Susan Morrissey, Mr Tony Overbury, Professor Barbara Pedley, Professor Alan Penn, Mr Frank Penter, Mr Tim Perry, Ms Kuen Yip Porter, Professor David Price, Professor Slavo Radošević, Professor Rosalind Raine, Dr Lucia Rinaldi, Dr Seb Savory, Professor Ralf Schoepfer, Dr Stephanie Schorge, Dr Chris Scotton, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Professor John Shawe-Taylor, Professor Richard Simons, Professor Lucia Sivilotti, Professor Trevor Smart, Professor Anthony Smith, Professor Sacha Stern, Dr David Stevens, Dr Martin Stocker, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Mr Mark Sudbury, Dr Ilias Tachtsidis, Professor Alan Thompson, Professor Derek Tocher, Mr Ben Towse, Professor Yiannis Ventikos, Ms Charlotte Verney, Mr Nigel Waugh, Dr Thomas Wilks, Professor Jonathan Wolff, Professor Richard Wortley.

In attendance: Mr Jason Clarke (*Secretary*), Mr Dominique Fourniol, Ms Lori Manders, Mr Nick McGhee.

Apologies for absence were received from: Professor Michelle Baddeley, Professor Raimund Bleischwitz, Professor David Bogle, Professor Graziella Branduardi-Raymont, Professor Franco Cacialli, Professor Matteo Carandini, Dr Dave Chapman, Ms Sue Chick, Professor Mary Collins, Mr Ben Colvill, Professor Peter Dayan, Professor Bryony Dean Franklin, Dr Vanessa Diaz, Ms Fiona Duffy, Professor Margot Finn, Professor Eric French, Mr Sean Hanna, Professor Mairéad Hanrahan, Professor Graham Hart, Professor Harry Hemingway, Dr Christine Hoffmann, Dr Katherine Holt, Professor Steve Humphries, Professor Yvonne Kelly, Professor Peng Khaw, Professor Ofer Lahav, Professor Andrew Leak, Professor Paul Longley, Dr Merle Mahon, Professor Judith Mank, Professor Mark Marsh, Dr Jennifer Mindell, Professor Huw Morris, Dr Nicholas Ovenden, Dr Andrew Pink, Professor Andrew Ramage, Ms Laura Parrett, Professor Amanda Sacker, Professor Lorraine Sherr, Dr Christina Smith, Dr Sarah Snyder, Ms Olga Thomas, Professor Rosemary Varley, Ms Susan Ware, Professor Bryan Williams, Dr Gavin Winston.

¹ An attendance sheet was circulated for signature at the meeting. Any colleagues present who did not sign the sheet and whose names are therefore not recorded as present are invited to notify the AB Secretary's office (e-mail – jason.clarke@ucl.ac.uk) so that their names can be included in the record when these Minutes are confirmed at the next scheduled meeting of AB.

Key to abbreviations

AB	Academic Board
ABWG	Academic Board Working Group
BME	black and minority ethnic
HE	Higher Education
NSS	National Student Survey
PGTA	Postgraduate Teaching Assistant
SSCC	Staff Student Consultative Committee
StARs	Student Academic Representatives
STEM	science and medicine, technology, engineering and mathematics [subjects]

1 PROVOST'S OPENING STATEMENT

Received:

- 1.1 An oral report from Professor Michael Arthur, President and Provost of UCL, at his inaugural meeting as Chair of AB.

Reported:

- 1.2 After paying tribute to the achievements of his predecessor, Professor Sir Malcolm Grant, in leading UCL to its current strong position, the Provost expanded on some of the themes relating to the future vision and strategy for UCL which he had set out in his lunch-hour lecture on 3 October².
- 1.3 UCL faced a number of significant challenges in maintaining its current outstanding research performance over the long term. These included an increasingly marketised and competitive environment within the sector, and a range of wider global uncertainties. The funding environment for the sector was unstable, with no prospect of an inflationary increase in the £9,000 minimum fee during the lifetime of the current parliament, and the flat-cash settlement for research was expected to continue for at least another two years. This threatened the international competitiveness of the UK's HE sector. It was incumbent upon the sector to make a persuasive case for the value of research funding, a case that was now being heard in Government.
- 1.4 In his lunch-hour lecture the Provost had drawn attention to a particular need to focus on the student educational experience, and to ensure that UCL enjoyed a reputation for the excellence of its education and student experience as well as for the excellence of its research. This entailed strengthening the linkage between education and research, as well as achieving a vision for a research-based pedagogy in which students are involved in the research process at an early stage in their programmes.
- 1.5 The Provost also highlighted the following areas as requiring particular attention:
- the need to update UCL's institutional strategy and vision which would be rooted firmly in UCL's history, values and ethos, but which would also enable UCL to tackle the various challenges which would arise over the next 20 to 30 years;
 - a renewed commitment to equality and diversity, specifically the need for additional work on gender and BME issues;
 - widening participation of students from low-participation backgrounds;
 - the development of different types of partnership, particularly with industry, the NHS (eg through UCL Partners), small and medium enterprises, and in London generally;
 - reviewing the focus of UCL's international activities, with a view to developing a vision for positive and coordinated engagements with different regions of the world (eg the global South), whilst honouring existing commitments;
 - enabling infrastructure investment in a way that would ensure the sustainability of UCL's activities, without compromising financial sustainability.

² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU690MQ8uSE>

- 1.6 With respect to recent discussions within AB over the proposed reform of Statute 18, the Provost noted the following:
- The Provost had now been briefed fully on the background to the proposed reform of Statute 18 and had considered the report from the AB Working Group on Statute 18, which had been endorsed by AB at its previous meeting [*AB Minute 32, 2012-13*].
 - The current Statute 18 was identical to that currently in place at the University of Leeds and, though not perfect, it could be made to work if there was a determination to do so. The Provost advised AB, therefore, that the proposed revised Statute which had been put to AB on 24 October 2012 was being withdrawn [*AB Minute 5, 2012-13 refers*].
 - The Working Group had made some very helpful proposals for updating the Statute in order to remove obsolete references to legislation and to ensure that it complies with current employment law, although there were a few minor points which would need some further thought. The Provost hoped that these points could be agreed following discussion with the Working Group, Human Resources and the campus trades unions. In relation to the proposed introduction of a “fairness principle”, some more work would need to take place to assess how such a principle might be introduced and its possible implications. The Provost would be asking the Director of Human Resources and his team to work with the campus trades unions to take this forward.
 - In the Provost’s view it would be premature for Council to be asked to consider the existing proposals which had been drawn-up by the Working Group and which had been endorsed by AB until the further work outlined above had been completed. He proposed, therefore, that the further work he had outlined, including consultation with the campus trades unions, should now be undertaken. Once that further work had been completed, a revised set of recommendations could be drawn-up and brought back to AB for its consideration.

Discussion:

- 1.7 The student-led ‘OpenLab’ initiative was cited as an excellent example of the integration of research and teaching. The Provost noted that the concept of a research-based pedagogy did not imply any top-down restructuring of distinct research and teaching structures, where those existed; it would be for Deans and Heads of Departments to interpret the strategy as was most appropriate locally.
- 1.8 There was strong support for strengthening the link between education and research and for an increased focus on the quality of the student experience. It was noted that in some departments an increasing proportion of teaching is delivered by Teaching Fellows and Postgraduate Teaching Assistants; it was suggested that this should be reviewed as part of this initiative.
- 1.9 In discussions of the development of a new strategic approach to overseas activities, the Provost noted that the post of Vice-Provost (International) had been externally advertised, and was open to both external and internal applicants.
- 1.10 The Provost identified a need to encourage the interaction of home and overseas students in London, and to ensure that individual classes were not dominated by students from any one overseas country.

- 1.11 In response to a question regarding UCL's strategic vision for student numbers, the Provost noted that each faculty already had a student numbers plan, reflecting the considered, strategic expansion on which the continued financial health of the institution was predicated. UCL should be mindful of the impact of expanding UCL's research activity on other sources of income, with particular attention paid to the pressures on staff and the estate.
- 1.12 On the reform of Statute 18, the withdrawal by senior management of the original proposed revised Statute was welcomed by AB, which also supported the Provost's proposal that Council should not be invited at this stage to consider the existing proposals (as set out in the Working Group's report), in order to allow the further work which he had outlined to be undertaken. It was also noted that, as had been discussed by AB at its previous meeting, there was a need for a review of the nomenclature of academic posts given the growth in different job titles used within UCL over a number of years.

RESOLVED:

- 1.13 **That Academic Board (i) welcomes the withdrawal by senior management of the original proposed revision to Statute 18 and (ii) endorses the Provost's proposal that further work on Statute 18 take place, with a view to revised proposals being prepared and submitted to the Board for its consideration.**

2 THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

Received:

- 2.1 A note at [AB 1-1 \(13-14\)](#) and a presentation³ by the Vice-Provost (Education), Professor Anthony Smith, on UCL's performance in the 2013 NSS.

Reported:

- 2.2 The NSS surveyed undergraduate students in their final year, and went on to form an important element of the Key Information Set that was made available to potential applicants. The widely-publicised data relating to overall satisfaction with an institution was derived from a single question, and not from the responses overall.
- 2.3 In the 2012 NSS, UCL's overall satisfaction rating had dropped three percentage points from 88% to 85%. In the 2013 NSS the overall satisfaction rating had dropped a further percentage point to 84%. UCL was now ranked 100 out of 150 in the sector and 22 out of 24 in the Russell Group. 16 of UCL's 39 subject clusters were in the bottom quartile for their discipline, and overall satisfaction was two percentage points below the sector average. Written comments included in students' NSS returns continued to record a wide variety of experiences, even on the same programme. The response rate from UCL students was poor, at approximately 60%, 10% below the sector average. UCL was now working with UCLU to increase the proportion of students responding to the survey.
- 2.4 It was notable that UCL's ratings on assessment and feedback had flatlined since 2010, compared to an overall rise in ratings on this issue across the sector. A review of UCL's Assessment Strategy, including the use of different assessment practices across UCL, had been initiated; there was some evidence that UCL was over-assessing its

³ A copy of the presentation will be filed with the Minutes of the meeting as [AB 1-11 \(13-14\)](#).

students compared against its main competitors. The Student Barometer survey was being used as a way of sampling student satisfaction ahead of the final year. StARs were being encouraged to give frank feedback through the SSCC mechanism in an attempt to identify and address problems in a timely fashion.

Discussion:

- 2.5 It was noted that course evaluations undertaken within departments already acted as a useful local barometer of the student experience. It was notable that feedback from this route was often significantly more positive than that resulting from the NSS.
- 2.6 It was suggested that experience in other universities was that those institutions and departments which perform well in the NSS tend to be those that have effective student representation systems and mechanisms for responding to student feedback. It was argued that UCL's current systems for providing feedback to students on their performance, including the use of second markers for all work, were often unnecessarily cumbersome. It was further suggested that there may be a relationship between UCL's rise in university league tables and the fall in student satisfaction, as the gap between expectations and delivery widened.
- 2.7 The issue of the increasing use being made of PGAs in many departments was raised again, specifically issues relating to their training, workload and remuneration.
- 2.8 The Provost commented that UCL's underperformance in the NSS was a major cause for concern and that concerted action was needed across the whole of UCL to address it. The potential reputational damage to UCL was considerable and could have a negative impact on future student recruitment. There was a need for a cultural change within UCL to take the NSS more seriously, as part of the increased focus on the importance of education and the quality of the student experience which he had referred to in his opening statement.
- 2.9 It was the clear view of AB that UCL's performance in the NSS 2013 was not acceptable and that the AB would support the Vice-Provost (Education) in his efforts to put in place measures to address the situation.

RESOLVED:

- 2.10 **That Academic Board notes with concern UCL's unacceptable performance in the 2013 NSS and supports steps to be taken to address that situation.**

3 FACULTIES AND ACADEMIC UNITS OF UCL

Received:

- 3.1 At AB 1-2 (13-14), a proposal that the Mental Health Sciences Unit be established as an academic unit of UCL within the Faculty of Brain Sciences.

RECOMMENDED – to Council

- 3.2 **That the Mental Health Sciences Unit be established as an academic unit of UCL, within the Faculty of Brain Sciences, with effect from 1 January 2014.**

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2013-14

Received:

- 4.1 At *⁴AB 1-3 (13-14), AB's terms of reference ⁵.
- 4.2 At *AB 1-4 (13-14), AB's constitution and membership for the session 2013-14 ⁶.
- 4.3 A note by the AB Secretary on AB Standing Orders, for information, at AB 1-5 (13-14).

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 22 MAY 2013

Confirmed:

- 5.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AB held on 22 May 2013 [*AB Mins. 29-42, 22.5.13*].

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

6A Reform of Statute 18 [*AB Min.32, 22.5.13*]

Noted:

- 6A.1 The Report of the Academic Board Working Group on Statute 18 had been received by Council at its meeting on 9 July 2013. [*See also Minute 1 above*].

6B Schedule of Delegated Powers [*AB Min.33, 22.5.13*]

Noted:

- 6B.1 This matter would be brought back to AB in due course following further consideration.

6C Council approval of Academic Board recommendations [*AB Mins.34.2, 35.3, 22.5.13*]

Noted:

- 6C.1 At its meeting on 9 July 2013, Council had approved, on the recommendation of AB, the following:
- that (i) the Department of Science, Technology, Engineering and Public Policy, (ii) the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour, and (iii)

⁴ An appendix reference preceded by an asterisk indicates that, for the sake of economy, the document is not issued with the Agenda but will be filed with the Minutes of the meeting. Copies are available on request to the AB Secretary (telephone 0207 679 8594, internal extension 28594, email jason.clarke@ucl.ac.uk).

⁵ See also <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ras/acs/governance/committees/ab>

⁶ See also <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ras/acs/governance/committees/ab>

the Institute of Clinical Trials and Methodology be established as academic units of UCL with effect from 1 August 2013;

- that the Lead Officer reports on the Careers Service, Student Accommodation and Student Welfare be approved.

6C.2 At its meeting on 22 May 2013 AB also approved a proposal to recommend to Council the establishment of the STEM Policy Engagement and Decision Support Institute as an academic unit of UCL. The original proposers (the Deans of the Faculties of Engineering Sciences, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, and the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment) had subsequently withdrawn this proposal, which had been made as a result of a misunderstanding of the formal status that the Institute would require in order to carry out its work. [See also Minute 11 below.]

7 LIBRARY COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012-13

RECOMMENDED – to Council:

7.1 The Annual Report from the Library Committee for session 2012-13 at AB 1-6 (13-14).

8 AWARDS TO UCL STAFF

Noted:

8.1 At AB 1-7 (13-14) a note on the award of major prizes *etc* to members of the academic community of UCL since the previous meeting of AB.

9 APPOINTMENTS

Noted:

9.1 The list of recent appointments (i) of Vice-Provosts, (ii) of Heads of Academic Departments and (iii) to established Chairs and Readerships tenable at UCL at AB 1-8 (13-14).

10 ELECTION OF NON-PROFESSORIAL ACADEMIC STAFF, TEACHING FELLOW STAFF AND NON-ACADEMIC STAFF TO SERVE ON ACADEMIC BOARD IN SESSIONS 2014-15 AND 2015-16 [AB Min.7, 26.10.11]

Noted:

10.1 In accordance with the arrangements previously agreed by AB at its meeting on 26 October 2011, elections would be held in the Spring Term 2014 for non-professorial academic staff, Teaching Fellow staff and non-academic staff to serve on AB for sessions 2014-15 and 2015-16. A note reminding AB of the arrangements for the elections was at AB 1-9 (13-14).

11 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Noted:

- 11.1 Since the previous meeting of AB, the (former) Chair had taken action on behalf of AB to approve:
- the appointment of Professor Bart Vanhaesebroeck to the Chair of Cell Signalling;
 - the appointment of the Director of Human Resources, Mr Nigel Waugh, as an Appointed member of AB;
 - the withdrawal of the recommendation to Council that the STEM Policy Engagement and Decision Support Institute be established as an academic unit of UCL [see *Minute 6C.2 above*];
 - the appointment of Professor Susan Irvine to the established Quain Chair of English Language and Literature;
 - revisions to the UCL '*Disciplinary Code and Procedure in Respect of Students*'. (NB The Disciplinary Code and Procedure were amended in order to reflect organisational and related changes effective from 1.10.13 following the discontinuation of the office of Dean of Students (Welfare) and the transfer of responsibilities to the new role of Student Mediator and to Student and Registry Services. The revised Disciplinary Code and Procedure were subsequently approved by Council at its meeting on 7 October 2013 and were then available from the *Academic Manual* at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-5/disciplinary-code>. Council also agreed that a more extensive review of the Disciplinary Code and Procedure should be undertaken, with a view to a further revised Disciplinary Code and Procedure being submitted to its March 2014 meeting, following consultation with the UCL Union and on the advice of AB at its February 2014 meeting.)

11A Academic Board Working Groups on Established Chairs and Readerships

To note:

- 11A.1 Since the last meeting, action had been taken by the Chair of AB, on behalf of AB, to approve the membership of the ABWGs listed at ^{*7} AB 1-10 (13-14).

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An appendix reference preceded by an asterisk indicates that, for the sake of economy, the document was not issued with the Agenda but would be filed with these Minutes.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Discussion:

- 12.1 It was suggested that in future meetings of AB might start at five minutes past the hour in accordance with the UCL 'teaching hour'. AB endorsed this suggestion.

Noted:

- 12.2 The next meeting of AB would be on Wednesday 19 February 2013 at 4.05pm in Lecture Theatre 106, Roberts Building.

Secretary's Note: it has been necessary to reschedule the above meeting of AB. The next meeting of AB will now take place at 4.05pm on Wednesday 26 February 2014 in the Sir Ambrose Fleming Lecture Theatre, room G06, Roberts Building.

JASON CLARKE
Secretary to Academic Board