Academic Board

Wednesday 23 October 2019 [Minutes 1-11, 13-25], and

Thursday 12 December 2019 [Minute 12]

MINUTES

Present [23 October]:
Professor Michael Arthur, President and Provost (Chair)

Dr Bojan Aleksov; Ms Wendy Appleby; Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Mr Malcolm Bailey; Dr Beatrice Baudet; Dr Jyoti Belur; Dr Jane Biddulph; Professor Stephanie Bird; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Professor Jon Butterworth; Ms Elizabeth Carter; Dr Alun Coker; Ms Sonja Curtis; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Professor Sally Day; Professor Snezana Djordjevic; Professor Annette Dolphin; Dr Johanna Donovan; Ms Dominique Drai; Professor Frances Edwards; Dr Russell Evans; Dr Carlotta Ferrara Degli Uberti; Dr Andrew Fisher; Professor Becky Francis; Dr Richard Freeman; Dr Rachael Frost; Dr Martin Fry; Dr Andrew Gardner; Dr Claire Garnett; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Professor Eric Gordy; Ms Emma Grant; Ms Amanda Greene; Dr Lucia Gunning; Mr Martin Hall; Dr Jennifer Hazelton; Professor Michael Heinrich; Dr Phyllis Illari; Dr Sarah Jackson; Dr Dan Jagger; Dr Jens Kandt; Ms Leigh Kilpert; Professor Robert Kleta; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Dr Dewi Lewis; Professor Christoph Lindner; Dr Kris Lockyear; Dr Ruth Lovering; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Ms Collette Lux; Professor Simon Mahony; Ms Bella Malins; Dr Margaret Mayston; Dr Claire McAndrew; Dr James McCafferty; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Dr Meera Nath Sarin; Dr Mark Newman; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor Mat Page; Professor Enrico Palandri; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor Steve Pilling; Mr Andrew Porter; Professor Michael Porter; Dr Stephen Potts; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Ms Fiona Ryland; Professor Patricía Salinas; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Andrea Sella; Dr Lion Shahab; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Dr Bill Sillar; Ms Ashley Slanina-Davies; Professor Anthony Smith; Ms Jamie Smith; Professor Sam Solomon; Professor Sacha Stern; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Professor Judith Suissa; Dr Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Mr Simon To; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor Gabriel Waksman; Ms Yasmin Walker; Professor Andrew Wills.

Apologies: Dr Afia Ali; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Matthew Blain; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor Jamie Brown; Professor Matteo Carandini; Dr Declan Chard; Dr Elisabete Cidre; Dr Ben Clifford; Professor Andrew Cook; Dr William Coppola; Dr Ruth Dann;
Dr Martin Davies; Professor Karen Edge; Professor Chamkaur Ghag; Professor Helen Hackett; Professor Stephen Hart; Dr Evangelos Himonides; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Heather Jones; Dr Lily Kahn; Professor Susanne Kord; Ms Katherine Koulle; Professor Diana Laurillard; Dr Sandra Leaton Gray; Professor David Lomas; Professor Gesine Manuwald; Professor Charles Marson; Professor Robert Mills; Professor Sarah Mole; Dr Susan Moore; Professor Ruth Morgan; Ms Ema Muk-Pavic; Professor Alexandra Olaya-Castro; Professor Ivan Parkin; Dr Andy Pearce; Professor Sir Michael Pepper; Professor David Price; Dr Carol Rivas; Professor Lorraine Scherr; Professor Mala Shah; Professor Nicola Shelton; Dr Beatrice Sica; Professor Richard Simons; Thushyanthi Sivagnanam; Professor Jolene Skordis-Worrall; Professor Sarah Spurgeon; Dr Tse-Hui The; Professor Alan Thompson; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Dr Hans Van de Koot; Professor Rosemary Varley; Ms Louise Vink; Professor Sarah Walker; Dr Carla Washbourne; Professor Maria Wyke; Dr Jinghao Xue; Dr Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Dr Clare Goudy, Ms Sandra Hinton, Mr Richard Jackson, Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary), Mr Peter Warwick.

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. Academic Board Terms of Reference 2019-20 (Paper 1-01)

   1.1 Noted.

2. Constitution and Membership 2019-20 (Paper 1-02)

   2.1 Noted. The Chair thanked new members for their participation in AB.

3. Standing Orders (Paper 1-03)

   3.1 Noted.

4. Academic Committee Terms of Reference and Constitution (Paper 1-04)

   4.1 Noted.

5. Governance Committee of Academic Board Terms of Reference (Paper 1-05)

   5.1 Noted.

6. Commission of Inquiry Terms of Reference (Paper 1-06)

   6.1 Noted.
7. **Academic Board Minutes**

7.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AB on 15 May 2019 were confirmed.

7.2 The Minutes of the Special Meeting of 20 May 2019 were confirmed subject to the following amendment to Minute 1.7: substitution of the phrase ‘AS investigations had proved unfruitful’ by the phrase ‘AS had been unwilling to investigate the matter.’

8. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

8.1 The Chair reported that Professor Georgio Savini had joined the Buildings Naming Group [AB Minute 2, 6 February 2019].

8.2 Members queried the accuracy of the statement that ‘the Visitor had not upheld the Petition’ [AB Minute 19, 15 May 2019] as it was suggested that this did not reflect the full picture including the fact that individual shortcomings had been identified. The Provost considered that the overall spirit of the minute was accurate in that it reflected the Visitor’s conclusions that UCL had not deviated from its constitution in any sustained or intentional way.

8.3 Members queried the suggestion [AB Minute 19.4, 15 May 2019] that the Visitor’s Report would not be made available to the wider UCL community. The Report itself had stated that a decision on that question should be made jointly by UCL and the Petitioner. The Petitioner had subsequently confirmed that his permission to release the report had not been sought. Concerns about the confidentiality of individuals named in the report were cited as the reason for not releasing the report.

8.4 The report contained a significant quantity of personal data. It was suggested that the consent of individuals named in the report could be sought before an appropriately redacted version was shared with UCL. A number of individual AB members named in the report confirmed to the meeting their consent to the release of their own contributions.

8.5 The consent of the Chair of Council would be required if the report were to be shared. The Commission of Inquiry had requested access to the first draft of the report and arrangements were being made to facilitate this.

8.6 By way of a show of hands, AB gave its overwhelming support for the sharing of the report, whether unredacted or redacted as necessary in recognition of the wishes of those named in it. The Provost would carry AB’s views forward to the next meeting of Council.

**ACTION: Provost**
8.7 A member raised the fact that Council minutes from 2003 to 2009 were no longer available online [AB Minute 1.7, 20 May 2019]. This had been the result of a move to Drupal. The Registrar and Secretary to Council confirmed that these would be made available shortly¹.

**ACTION: Secretary**

8.8 A member noted that the Secretary to Council had not provided information to AB on the Council and AB Joint Committee charged with advising on the next Provost. The Secretary confirmed that this had been an oversight and would be circulated with the Minutes of the AB meeting of 23 October. The Secretary to Council reminded AB that both GCAB and AB had been given the opportunity to engage with the search firm, Perrett Laver.

**ACTION: Secretary**

**Part II: Matters for discussion**

9. **Provost’s Business**

9.1 The Chair reminded members of the need to maintain an appropriately collegial and constructive approach during discussion of AB business, and to be mindful of the functions of the Board as prescribed in its terms of reference, the Charter, Statutes and Regulations for Management. He asked also that members be succinct in their contributions and prepared to accept decisions made in the broader interests of the institution.

9.2 Significant progress was being made on a range of gender, disability, and LGBTQ+ issues, as well as in respect of tackling bullying and sexual misconduct. Nevertheless there remained much to do.

9.3 UCL had met its financial targets for the year in the face of a number of external financial pressures.

9.4 UCL East remained a high priority. The project was progressing on schedule and on budget. Members queried the projected cost of £515 million, noting that AB had previously been advised that the cost would be £426m [AB Minute 1.8, 30 October 2017]. The Provost responded that that figure had been in respect of the main academic building. Council had subsequently determined that it would be better for UCL to build and operate its own student

¹ The Minutes are available via https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/governance-and-committees/governance-ucl/council/council-meetings
residences, which incurred additional costs. The Provost would bring a full update to the AB meeting of 12 February 2020.

**ACTION: Provost**

9.5 The Provost reported on a number of cross-faculty developments including the UCL School for the Health of the Public, the Institute of Mathematics and Statistics, and the School of Politics Economics and Public Policy.

9.6 It was noted that the Research Excellence Framework (REF), Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) were all due in 2020-21. Each exercise would represent a significant administrative commitment.

9.7 UCL was developing proposals to make the terms and conditions of catering, security and cleaning staff equivalent to those for directly employed staff with effect from 1 December 2019, and was currently discussing with Unison a schedule of further changes to relevant terms and conditions. These were expected to be in place by the summer of 2021 at the latest. The proposals had found strong support at SMT and Council. The estimated cost to UCL would be some £7 million per annum, which would have to be found from within existing budgets. This was welcomed by AB, and was supplemented with a request that Teaching Fellows be included in the exercise. The Provost agreed to consider this suggestion.

9.8 UCL was moving towards a fossil fuels free policy and had agreed to publish its list of investments. There might be some issues reinvesting in private equity vehicles but UCL would publish details for all public investments on an annual basis. AB was reminded that Professor Jane Rendell had proposed the original motion to AB that UCL should divest [AB Minute 24, 20 February 2016]. AB congratulated Professor Rendell and the students who had dedicated their time and efforts to the issue. The Provost added his own thanks to the current cohort of students engaged with the issue.

9.9 The Provost noted that a Brexit Town Hall would be held on 31 October, irrespective of whether Brexit had occurred on this date. It was noted that a General Election was becoming more likely. Any subsequent Conservative Government would need to decide what it intended to do with the Augar report. UCL would need to be alert to the fact that the funding situation would be subject to change.

10. **Revised Code on Personal Relationships** (Paper 1-07)

10.1 The paper was introduced by Professor Becky Francis, Director of the Institute of Education, and Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Dean of the Faculty of
Engineering Sciences, who were Chair and Deputy Chair respectively of the Preventing Sexual Misconduct Strategy Group. Professor Francis introduced the draft policies on which the Group had been working, in the context of the background to this issue both at UCL and across the sector.

10.2 A UUK taskforce in 2016 had made a range of recommendations. The ‘Me Too’ movement had had a significant impact on public discourse and had resulted in increased reporting rates. The issue of sexual misconduct had become a high-profile matter across the sector and had attracted increased media coverage. Against this background the Provost had established the Preventing Sexual Misconduct Strategy Group in September 2017. Since that time the Group had achieved a great deal. Professor Francis also paid tribute to Kelsey Paske and Fiona Ryland for their work in this area.

10.3 Both the context and notions of acceptable behaviour were changing rapidly. Other sectors had moved towards a position whereby certain kinds of relationship in the workplace were regarded as inappropriate in the context of positions of trust. UCL needed to clarify to staff and students what was deemed to be unacceptable, and to be seen to take appropriate disciplinary action where necessary. The Personal Relationships Code sought to protect staff and students and to balance the need for collegiality with firm action to mitigate the risks arising in the context of relationships where there was an imbalance of power.

10.4 Consultation on the policies had taken place over the last four months. All staff and students had been consulted for the full two weeks (which was standard for a policy consultation whilst still trying to maintain momentum) and 75 members of staff had responded. There had also been constructive engagement with the campus trades unions, where the approach had met with warm support in principle. Some very useful feedback from this exercise was reflected in the document now before AB.

10.5 Discussion followed, of which the main points were:

a. The wide range of examples of unacceptable behaviour listed in the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy risked discouraging the raising of relatively minor complaints where it was feared that these might be included alongside very serious allegations. There should be a broad and inclusive list but the language should be reviewed to clarify the distinctions between the severity of each of the examples given.
b. Consideration should be given to how members of the proposed Interim Measures Panel, which was to be convened when a complaint was made and swift action required to ensure that the parties concerned were protected in their work, could avoid conflicts of interest. Under the current wording, the Panel chair could in theory be the person against whom the allegations were being made.

c. AB applauded the model used in one department for informal reporting by postdoctoral students. It was noted that UCL had appointed 30 Dignity advisers. These were listed on the website of the Provost’s Office at https://www.ucl.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/dignity-ucl/dignity-advisors.

d. Members expressed a concern that the creation of the Interim Measures Panel may have been driven by the fact that UCL’s formal procedures for reporting and resolving cases of sexual misconduct moved too slowly; it might therefore be more effective if the Group were to focus on expediting current procedures. In response it was noted that, even where procedures worked optimally, they could still take many weeks. It was therefore important to have recourse to an Interim Measures Panel. Student members suggested the inclusion of a Sabbatical Officer on the Interim Measures Panel, provided there were no conflicts of interest.

e. Members expressed a concern that there was no clear specification of the membership or the powers of the Interim Measures Panel, and that the nature of its interaction with existing UCL policies was unclear. Proposals for the composition of the Panel had not been circulated to AB in the papers and it was suggested that it would not be possible to give a properly informed view after having seen it only on the day of the meeting.

f. It was noted that the definition of sexual misconduct at 3.11 of the policy was broad and included very different kinds of offence, ranging from violence and coercion (which were against the law) to ‘creation of atmospheres of discomfort’, which might include such behaviours as failing to include someone in a meeting. There was no clear sense of what the tariffs were for each offence. It was suggested that the issues noted above required further thought before being brought back to AB for discussion.

10.6 Professor Francis noted that the policy being proposed, even if it still required fine-tuning, was a considerable improvement on the existing policy. The resolving of outstanding issues had been precisely the purpose of bringing the proposal to AB at this stage. The Group desired constructive input but reiterated the urgency for both UCL and the sector.
10.7 AB’s warm overall support for the Personal Relationships Policy was noted, as was the suggestion that in the case of the Sexual Misconduct Policy the membership and powers of the Interim Measures Panel should be revisited by stakeholders, and the outcomes recirculated to AB.

10.8 There was some discussion as to whether the document should be returned to stakeholders and should return to AB with consensus on the membership and powers of the Interim Measures Panel, and if so whether this could be done by correspondence given the importance of the work and forward movement. The latter being acknowledged, Professor Francis welcomed further email comments as the first step to this end.

10.9 The Provost thanked Professor Francis and her team for carrying out this important piece of work.

11. **Principal Theme Two Report** (Paper 1-08)

11.1 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs), Professor Anthony Smith, thanked staff for their contributions to the education of UCL’s students in the previous year. Four out of five students had been satisfied with their time at UCL. There was more work to be done but UCL should be proud of this achievement.

11.2 In respect of Lecturecast, a group chaired by Dr Andrea Townsend-Nicholson was currently exploring all the options. The discussion had originated from a group of students who had approached Education Committee in 2015 to ask it to explore an opt-out policy, but opt-out was not the only option under consideration. Since that time, many more teaching spaces had been provided with Lecturecast facilities. An all-UCL email consultation was planned, followed by a Town Hall meeting. The Vice-Provost wished to emphasise that Lecturecast would never be used as a performance management tool and would never be used a means to undermine any future industrial action by staff. The Group would bring its outcomes to a future meeting of AB following discussion, consultation and the Town Hall.

11.3 Professor Smith acknowledged that the application of statistics to National Student Survey (NSS) scores was problematic but had produced some slides which attempted to make this clearer. It was noted that the statistics did not hold up for subject level TEF; nevertheless, the current Secretary of State for Education had asked for this to be run next year and before Dame Shirley Pearce’s independent review of the TEF had reported.
Thursday 12 December 2019
(Continuation)

MINUTES

At the meeting of Wednesday 23 October 2019 Academic Board had agreed to reconvene on a future date in order to consider the remaining items of business for discussion that had been timed out. One of those items had since been subsumed into the Special Meeting scheduled for later on 12 December, by agreement with the member concerned.

Present [12 December]:
Professor Michael Arthur, President and Provost (Chair)

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Dr Afia Ali; Ms Wendy Appleby; Ms Raphaela Armbruster; Professor David Attwell; Professor Abdel Babiker; Dr Jyoti Belur; Mr Shail Bhatt; Professor Stephanie Bird; Professor Robert Brownstone; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Alun Coker; Professor Anna Cox; Ms Sonja Curtis; Dr Jason Davies; Professor Annette Dolphin; Dr Johanna Donovan; Ms Dominique Drai; Professor Frances Edwards; Dr Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti; Dr Martin Fry; Professor Chamkaur Ghag; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Deborah Gill; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Ms Emma Grant; Dr Lucia Gunning; Professor Helen Hackett; Dr Evangelos Himonides; Dr Arne Hoffmann; Professor Robert Howard; Dr Phyllis Illari; Dr Dan Jagger; Professor Kathryn Jeffery; Dr Jens Kandt; Ms Katherine Koulle; Professor Christoph Lindner; Ms Tseng-Han Christina Lin Hou; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Ms Collette Lux; Professor Mark Marsh; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Robert Mills; Professor Yacob Mulugetta; Professor Mignon Nixon; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor Martin Oliver; Dr Adam Paige; Professor Enrico Palandri; Professor Ivan Parkin; Dr Ann Peasey; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Dr John Potter; Professor Geraint Rees; Dr Carol Rivas; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Eleanor Robson; Professor Yvonne Rydin; Ms Fiona Ryland; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Joanne Santini; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Dr Bill Sillar; Dr Nadine Simons-Weidenmaier; Professor Michael Singer; Professor Judith Suissa; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Mr Simon To; Professor Laura Vaughan; Ms Silvia Velasco Arellano; Ms Louise Vink; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor Gabriel Waksman; Professor James Wilson.

Apologies: Ms Mumtaz Abdul-Ghafoor; Ms Lina Algurashi; Mr Faisal Ali; Dr Seth Anziska; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor James Bainbridge; Mr Sam Barnes; Professor Kathryn Batchelor; Dr Jane Biddulph; Professor Albert Bressand; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor Jamie Brown; Ms Louise Brown; Professor Richard Butterwick-Pawlikowski; Dr Celia Caulcott; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Olga Ciccarelli; Professor John Collinge; Professor Susan Collins; Dr William Coppola; Dr Ruth Dann; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Professor Rohan de Silva; Professor Simon Dixon;
In attendance: Dr Clare Goudy, Ms Sandra Hinton; Mr Richard Jackson; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary).

Part II (continued)

12. Sustainability Strategy (Climate impact of UCL’s academic and organisational travel) (Paper 1-09)

12.1 The Director of Sustainability, Mr Richard Jackson, presented the paper, which related to academic and organisational travel in the context of UCL’s approach to achieving zero carbon emissions by 2030. UCL’s Sustainability Steering Group was investigating the viability of alternatives to travel, such as video conferencing, as well as seeking to optimise the usefulness of any travel deemed essential, improving the monitoring of existing travel, the use of offsetting, and the incentivisation of low-carbon alternatives.

12.2 UCL was working with travel providers to facilitate a move towards increased train travel, including through the use of improved information about the impact of air travel at the point of booking. It was also looking at improving investment in UCL’s video-conferencing facilities and investigating travel carbon budgets.
12.3 AB members were invited to give their views on a policy of not flying to domestic and Eurostar destinations as well as to the general direction of travel as indicated in the paper.

12.4 The paper received warm overall support. Discussion followed, of which the main points were:

a. Whilst expressing full support for the initiative and applauding the vision of a carbon neutral UCL by 2030, members noted that the relationship between conference attendance and career advancement meant that the proposals risked disadvantaging younger academics against their peers elsewhere. The importance of travel in building vital connections with other academics was also noted, as was the need to travel for fieldwork purposes. A change of culture across the sector would be required. Improved awareness of the carbon cost of individual journeys, and the facilitation of opportunities to offset, would be helpful in achieving this.

b. It might be possible to ensure that grant applications would seek to demonstrate how offsetting was relevant to the research. Further investigation was requested into whether increased funding for less carbon-heavy but more expensive forms of travel might also be made part of a doctoral studies grant.

c. The Department of Physics and Astronomy was currently investigating the use of digital tools with a view to potential investment for a more innovative digital platform. Greater investment in this area would be welcomed.

d. The speed and nature of changes to the culture relating to academic travel would necessarily be discipline-specific. Work to capture what was already happening around UCL in order to feed this into the conversation could be discussed further offline.

e. Members drew attention to the impact of the travel resulting from the recruitment of overseas students studying at UCL. The recent appointment of a Chair of Council who was based overseas was also noted. In respect of the latter point, the Provost reported that the arrangement was that the Chair of Council’s visits to UCL would be coordinated with existing European commitments in his diary.

f. The Director of Sustainability acknowledged that, in addition to the areas set out in the paper, it would be important to consider UCL’s approach to procurement. The Steering Group was considering this area.

g. The Director of Sustainability also confirmed that ‘core activities’ as defined in Appendix A of the proposal meant any non-grant-funded research activity. This related to departmental and divisional expenditure picked up from iExpenses and other sources. No analysis of this activity had yet been carried out and it was currently unclear why this expenditure was so high.
h. The implications for disabled staff of a move away from air travel were raised. It was hoped that disabled staff would be involved in the conversation and that any future policy would be mindful of not putting them under pressure to travel in ways which might impact them adversely.

i. More flexible working arrangements which negated long journeys into central London could be encouraged. It would be useful if UCL’s ambition to reduce carbon could be expanded to encompass support staff.

12.5 Proposals would be refined in collaboration with the Sustainability Steering Group in February 2020. Comments were currently being gathered and colleagues were encouraged to submit these by email. A broad picture of the issues would be established and the intention was to return to AB in 2020 to present either a policy or at the least a ‘routeway’ to address the issues.

Part III (23 October 2019)

13. Revised Student Complaints Procedure (Paper 1-10)
   13.1 Noted.

   14.1 Noted.

15. Appointments (Paper 1-12)
   15.1 Noted.

16. Elections to GCAB (Paper 1-13)
   16.1 Noted.

17. List of volunteers for Statute 18 Panels (Paper 1-14)
   17.1 Noted.

18. Nomination to a Statute 18 Panel (Paper 1-15)
   18.1 Noted.

19. Suspension and Exclusion of Students (Paper 1-16)
19.1 Noted.

20. **Academic Board Working Groups** (Paper 1-17)

20.1 Noted.

21. **AB Membership updates** (Paper 1-18)

21.1 Noted.

22. **Minutes of Academic Committee** (Paper 1-19)

22.1 Noted.

23. **Minutes of GCAB** (Paper 1-20)

23.1 Noted.

24. **Minutes of Council** (Paper 1-21)

24.1 Noted.

25. **Date of next meetings**

25.1 **Thursday 12 December 2019**, 15:00 – 16:00 in the Christopher Ingold XLG2 Auditorium [Special Meeting].

25.2 **Wednesday 12 February 2020**, 14:05 – 16:00 in Cruciform B304 Lecture Theatre 1.

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