



ACADEMIC BOARD

Wednesday 24 October 2012

MINUTES

*PRESENT*¹:

President and Provost (*Chair*)

Ms Sarah Alleemudder, Mr Malcolm Bailey, Dr David Batty, Ms Julie Black, Dr Bob Blizard, Dr Steven Bloch, Professor Stephen Caddick, Mr Peter Cadley, Mr Edwin Clifford Coupe, Professor Susan Collins, Mr Ben Colvill, Professor Giulio Cossu, Dr Julie Evans, Professor Susan Evans, Professor John Foot, Professor Murray Fraser, Dr Martin Fry, Professor Sebastian Gardner, Dr Katherine Holt, Dr Elina Hypponen, Mr Rex Knight, Professor Susanne Kord, Professor Alena Ledeneva, Professor Robert Lumley, Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir, Dr Virginia Mantouvalou, Dr Gesine Manuwald, Professor Martin Marshall, Dr Maria-Novella Mercuri, Mr Dante Micheaux, Professor Neil Millar, Ms Cheryl Newsome, Mr Tony Overbury, Mr Frank Penter, Professor Stephen Perkins, Dr Hynek Pikhart, Dr Andrew Pink, Ms Kuen Yip Porter, Professor David Price, Professor Sarah Price, Professor Sara Randall, Professor Jane Rendall, Dr Prince Saprai, Dr Chris Scotton, Professor Alwyn Seeds, Professor David Shanks, Dr Ruth Siddall, Professor Lucia Sivilotti, Dr Joy Sleeman, Professor Anthony Smith, Dr David Stevens, Ms Olga Thomas, Professor Derek Tocher, Professor Nick Tyler, Professor Rosemary Varley, Professor Albert Weale, Dr Katherine Woolf.

In attendance: Mr Jason Clarke (*Secretary*), Mr Bill Fleming, Ms Dominique Fourniol, Ms Natasha Gorodnitski, Mr Andrew Grainger, Ms Sarah Guise, Mr Adam Harman, Mr Pete Hart, Mr Stephen Haus, Ms Valerie Hogg, Mr Nick McGhee, Mr Ed Nash, Mr Mike Sainsbury, Mr Ben Towse, Mr Oscar Webb.

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Paul Ayris, Professor James Bainbridge, Professor Martin Birchall, Professor Peter Bishop, Professor Graziella Branduardi Raymont, Professor Franco Cacialli, Professor David Coen, Professor John Collinge, Professor Jane Dacre, Professor Tariq Enver, Professor Bryony Franklin, Ms Abby Garner, Professor Marcus Giaquinto, Professor Helen Hackett, Professor Cecile Laborde, Professor Monica Lakharpaul, Professor Seymour Laxon, Professor Paul Longley, Professor Bradley Love, Professor Charles Marson, Professor Usha Menon, Professor Kevin Middlebrook, Professor Frédéric Migayrou, Dr Sara Mole, Professor Iwan Morgan, Dr Jenny Morgan, Professor Véronique Munoz-Dardé, Professor Andrew Nevins, Dr Nicholas Ovenden, Professor Ivan Parkin, Ms Laura Parrett, Mr Tim Perry, Dr Matthew Piper, Professor Stephen Quirke, Professor Jennifer Robinson, Professor Christiana Ruhrberg, Dr Kerstin Sailer, Professor Lorraine Sherr, Dr Christina Smith, Professor Iain Stevenson, Dr Sudhin Thayyil, Professor Laura Vaughan, Mr Nigel Waugh, Dr Gavin Winston, Professor Michael Worton.

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 – h.lilley@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
ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
DTC	Departmental Teaching Committee
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources (Division)
IRIS	Institutional Research Information Service
NSS	National Student Survey
SCAF	Standing Committee on Academic Freedom
UCU	University and College Union

1 ACADEMIC BOARD: TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND 2012-13 MEMBERSHIP

Noted:

- 1.1 At ^{*2} AB 1-1 (12-13) AB's terms of reference.
- 1.2 At * AB 1-2 (12-13) AB's constitution and membership for the 2012-13 session.
- 1.3 At AB 1-3 (12-13) a note by the AB Secretary on AB Standing Orders, for information.

2 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF 23 MAY AND 10 JULY 2012

Confirmed:

- 2.1 The Minutes of the AB meetings held on 23 May 2012 [*AB Minutes 24-37, 2011-12*] and the special meeting of 10 July 2012 [*AB Minutes 38-39, 2011-12*].

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES [*see also Minute 5 below*]

3A Council approval of Academic Board recommendations [*AB Minutes 31 and 35, 2011-12*]

Noted:

- 3A.1 At its meeting on 4 July 2012 Council had approved, on the recommendation of AB:
- Lead Officers' reports on (i) Careers and Employability, (ii) Student Accommodation, and (iii) Student Welfare Co-ordination;
 - the Graduate School's Annual Report for 2010-11.

4 AWARDS TO UCL STAFF

Noted:

- 4.1 At AB 1-5 (12-13) a note on the award of major prizes *etc* to members of the academic community of UCL since the last meeting of AB.
- 4.2 In addition to the awards listed in the paper, the Provost drew the attention of AB to the appointment of Professor Dmitri Rusakov (Institute of Neurology) and Professor Lars Stixrude (Department of Earth Sciences) as members of Academia Europaea.

² An appendix reference preceded by an asterisk indicates that, for the sake of economy, the document was not issued with the Agenda but is filed with these Minutes.

5 REFORM OF STATUTE 18 [AB Min.68, 5.7.12]

Noted:

- 5.1 At AB 1-6 (12-13) a briefing note on progress in the development of proposals for the reform of Statute 18, introduced by the Provost and Professor Anthony Finkelstein, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering Sciences.

Reported:

- 5.2 The Provost noted that reform of Statute 18 had been discussed at AB meetings on 23 May and 10 July 2012. He drew the attention of AB to the following minute of the special AB meeting of 10 July [*Minute 38.13, 2011-12*]:

Having verified that all AB members who wished to speak had done so, the Provost thanked AB for a useful discussion and confirmed that he would now reflect on the feedback with a view to working out a way forward. He noted in particular the support for the idea of a standing committee of the Council charged with protecting academic freedom. It would be necessary to liaise with HR colleagues and legal advisors concerning the legal implications of suggestions raised at the meeting, and to consult with Trade Unions on the detail of some of these suggestions. Consideration would then be given to extending the consultation period.

The Provost then invited Professor Finkelstein to update AB on progress since the 10 July meeting.

- 5.3 Professor Finkelstein noted that it was clear from the discussions at the May and July meetings of AB that the original proposals for the reform of Statute 18 required further thought and development. Following the July meeting, it had been agreed to extend the consultation process (it had originally been intended to submit proposals for the reform of Statute 18 to Council at its meeting on 1 October 2012) in particular to allow time for reflection on the suggestion that a committee of Council be established with the remit to protect academic freedom. This further period of consultation had included extensive consultation with the campus Trade Unions and had resulted in the revised proposals now before AB. Although acceptance of those proposals had seemed to have been reached with Trade Union representatives at the last consultation meeting, they had subsequently been rejected at a vote of UCU members, which was disappointing in view of the positive discussions that had taken place.
- 5.4 The Provost reiterated that there had been discussion of the reform of Statute 18 at the May and July meetings of AB, that the consultation period had been extended, the proposals had been revised in light of concerns expressed by members of AB and others, and following the constructive discussions which had taken place with the representatives of the campus Trade Unions. It was now intended to take the revised proposals to the 28 November meeting of Council, at which Council would be informed as to AB's views on the revised proposals given AB's advisory role under UCL's Statutes.

Discussion:

- 5.5 A member of AB noted that, in accordance with AB's Standing Orders, a group of 13 AB members had submitted two motions to the Secretary late on 22 October noting that members of AB had not had sufficient time to consider the revised proposals ahead of those proposals being submitted to Council and outlining a number of specific objections to the proposals, with a request that these be added to the agenda. The Secretary advised, *via* the Chair, that the provisions in the Standing

Orders which had been referred to related to the requisitioning of a Special Meeting by a minimum of ten AB members, not for the placing of a new item on an agenda that had already been approved and circulated.

- 5.6 The Provost then invited members of the Board to comment on the substance of the revised proposals at AB 1-6 (12-13).
- 5.7 Individual AB members raised a number of specific concerns relating to the role of the Standing Committee on Academic Freedom (SCAF) as set out in the proposed Statute, including:
- that its remit would be purely advisory. Some AB members requested that the findings of the SCAF be regarded as binding. It was noted in response that this would not be possible as decisions might reflect wider issues than academic freedom alone, all of which would need to be taken into account in any particular case;
 - that the SCAF would only be established, in the case of a panel potentially leading to individual redundancy, dismissal or loss of academic privileges, at the request of the Chair of the panel concerned;
 - that, in the case of an Organisational Change Procedure involving redundancy, the SCAF would only be established in the event of an objection on the grounds of academic freedom not being resolved in consultation with the Trade Unions. It was noted in response that the Trade Unions would have the option of referring the matter to the SCAF;
 - that the responsibilities of the SCAF extended only to the specific provisions relating to academic freedom outlined in paragraph 4(i) of the proposed Statute. Professor Finkelstein noted in response that the SCAF would not hear the full circumstances of a particular case and therefore could do no more than act in an advisory capacity on the issue of academic freedom; to suggest that the SCAF should itself hear the case in question was to usurp the function of the disciplinary (*etc*) panel, provision for which was made elsewhere in UCL's procedures.
- 5.8 Concern was expressed about the removal from Statute of an explicit right to legal representation. Professor Finkelstein explained that, in accordance with ACAS guidance, which should be followed by UCL, formal legal representation was not appropriate at grievance and redundancy hearings, as the exposure of staff to cross-examination by a professional lawyer, possibly an experienced QC, retained by the institution was thought unlikely to be constructive. Although there was an expectation of union representation, it was noted by a member of AB that staff going through this process would not necessarily be members of a union and that they should, therefore, have a right to have a legal representative present at a hearing to offer legal advice. Professor Finkelstein confirmed that all staff have the right to seek legal advice in preparing their case. The issue would certainly be taken seriously if AB was to take the view that further clarification would be of assistance.
- 5.9 It was suggested that one of the initial aims of the reform of Statute 18, the opportunity to bring about equity between academic and non-academic staff, was not enshrined in the latest draft. Although the draft Statute acknowledged the need to extend protection of academic freedom to 'any employee of UCL who is employed to engage directly in, or carry out, teaching or academic research' (paragraphs 4(i)/5), the SCAF would only apply in the case of 'core' academic staff as defined in

paragraph 6^[1]. Professor Finkelstein noted that, whereas cases of redundancy in respect of ‘core’ academic staff were extremely rare, HEIs regularly needed to make new research staff redundant as their funding ended; it was therefore necessary to ensure that there was an expeditious process for dealing with that situation.

- 5.10 An AB member suggested that one of the major concerns expressed at the meeting on 10 July 2012, namely the perceived change to the relationship between academic staff and the Head of Department under the proposals [AB Minute 38.7, 2011-12], had not been addressed. Members also raised the issues of the potential for open-ended delay of the process while legal advice was taken, and the lack of a built-in appeals procedure.
- 5.11 An AB member drew the attention of the Board to the Statutory responsibility of AB to ‘consider and advise the Council upon the conditions and tenure of appointment of Members of the Academic Staff’ (Statute 7). Although the latest draft was the result of an extended period of consultation, it was suggested that the draft was fundamentally different from previous drafts and so required a level of detailed consideration by AB members that had not been possible in the time available. A new member of AB noted that she, and other new members, had not been involved in the discussions at the May and July meetings about the reform of Statute 18 and would welcome more time in which to consider the latest proposals.
- 5.12 The Medical and Postgraduate Students’ Officer of the UCL Union commented that, from a student perspective, UCL’s reputation had been built up by its academic staff. If the Provost and senior management were to proceed with taking the proposed reforms to Council in light of the lack of support from the UCU members and from AB itself, then this could result in students losing respect for UCL’s senior management team.
- 5.13 The acting convenor of the non-professorial academic group had been requested by the group to propose to AB that the current proposals for the reform of Statute 18 be discarded and that the process should begin afresh.
- 5.14 The Provost noted that given the constructive discussions which had taken place over the summer with the representatives of the campus Trade Unions, it had been hoped that the revised proposals before AB would be broadly acceptable. However, in light of the comments expressed during the meeting, the Provost invited AB to consider two propositions: (1) that the current proposals be rejected and the process of reforming Statute 18 be abandoned, and (2) that further consultation take place on the latest proposals. In order to gauge the mood of the meeting, the Provost asked for a show of hands on the two propositions. Following a show of hands, the Provost noted AB’s view that there should be further consultation on the revised proposals and that in light of that he would reflect further on next steps. The Provost also reminded colleagues that under its Standing Orders there was a provision for members to call a special meeting of AB.

^[1] ‘Professors, Readers, Senior Lecturers, Senior Clinical Lecturers, Lecturers, Clinical Lecturers or persons holding any other appointment (other than an honorary appointment) designated as an appointment on the Academic Staff of UCL by the Council’.

6 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY

Noted:

- 6.1 An oral report and presentation (saved with these Minutes as AB 1-13 (12-13)) by Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education), on UCL's performance in the 2012 NSS, including action that could be taken by departments, faculties and UCL institutionally on the issues raised by UCL's students.

Reported:

- 6.2 Professor Smith drew AB's attention to the aim in the White Paper³ to 'aim to be in the top three institutions in the country for all measures of educational excellence, including retention, value added, student satisfaction and employability'. UCL was ranked 73rd in the UK in the NSS 2012, 15th in London and 20th in the Russell Group. This declining position had already had a negative impact in terms of the Sunday Times university tables, in which UCL had fallen from 7th to 13th place. Professor Smith cited as a particular cause for concern UCL's failure to match the improvements in assessment and feedback scores seen across the sector. Whatever the shortcomings of the survey method, the NSS was of vital importance in light of the anticipated competitive nature of the coming recruitment round, when the lifting of the restrictions on student numbers would be extended to students with A-level grades of ABB or equivalent.

Discussion:

- 6.3 AB members noted a number of deficiencies in the NSS survey method and resulting data: NSS data were not always easily interpreted; the range of feedback from students on a single programme could be very broad; the extent of random variation was not known; the questions were so formulated that it could be difficult for students to communicate what they wished to say.
- 6.4 AB members suggested that a failure to manage expectation – for example in ensuring that the name of a programme accurately reflected its content – had potentially serious impact in terms of feedback. Some departments had found it useful to discuss NSS feedback with students, for example at a meeting of the DTC, in order to develop a better understanding of the underlying issues.
- 6.5 In referring to the need to motivate staff towards better teaching, an AB member noted that the Provost's Teaching Awards were made for teaching innovation, not teaching excellence. It was suggested that IRIS might usefully be amended to incorporate details of teaching responsibilities in order that staff could better understand what their colleagues were doing. It was also suggested that the data reflected the increasing proportion of teaching undertaken by Teaching Fellows, and was proposed that this should be investigated further.
- 6.6 A member of AB acknowledged the methodological shortcomings of the NSS, but encouraged colleagues to look seriously at the results and discuss them with staff and students, on the basis that although they are difficult to interpret, they can be of use in identifying areas for improvement.

³

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/white-paper/>

- 6.7 Professor Smith thanked members for their comments on the NSS results which would inform his ongoing discussions with faculties and departments about how UCL should respond to the issues arising from the survey outcomes.

[Professor David Price, Vice-Provost (Research), was in the Chair from this stage of the meeting onwards]

7 NEW CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

Noted:

- 7.1 An oral report and a presentation by Professor Nick Tyler, Chair of the Academic Steering Group, saved with these Minutes as AB 1-14 (12-13).

Reported:

- 7.2 In the context of UCL's radical history, Professor Tyler outlined the challenges and possibilities of the suggestion that UCL might develop facilities outside Bloomsbury on a substantial scale, in particular the opportunities presented by the possible campus development at Stratford.

Discussion:

- 7.3 The acting convenor of the non-professorial academic group noted a request from the group to see a business case for the project. It was noted that the proposals were currently at an early stage, but that both Finance Committee and Council would wish to be satisfied with the business case for any proposed major development such as the project at Stratford.
- 7.4 AB's attention was drawn to the issue of the relocation of residents of the Carpenters Estate and the recent statement⁴ of UCL's UrbanLab on the matter.

8 VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH) – ANNUAL REPORT

Reported:

- 8.1 Due to lack of time Professor Price's oral report was postponed to the meeting of 20 February 2013. The annual report would in the meantime be made available on the AB web page.

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<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/urbanlab/en2/index.php?page=1.3.0&getlistarticle=185&listrange=current>

9 FACULTIES AND ACADEMIC UNITS OF UCL

Noted:

- 9.1 Proposals for the establishment of academic units of UCL as set out in the note at AB 1-7 12-13).

RECOMMENDED – to Council

- 9.2 That, in accordance with Statute 10(1), the following proposals for the establishment of academic units of UCL be approved:
- That the Institute for Global Health be established as an academic unit of UCL within the Faculty of Population Health Sciences, with effect from 1 January 2013.
 - That (i) the MRC Cell Biology Unit transfer to UCL and be established as an academic unit of UCL (to be called the MRC Laboratory for Molecular Cell Biology) within the Faculty of Life Sciences with effect from 1 April 2013, and (ii) the MRC Clinical Trials Unit be established as an academic unit of UCL within the Faculty of Population Health Sciences, with effect from 1 August 2013.

10 LIBRARY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT

Noted:

- 10.1 At AB 1-8 (12-13) the annual report of the Library Committee for session 2011-12.

RECOMMENDED – to Council

- 10.2 That the Library Committee annual report 2011-12 be approved.

11 SCHEDULE OF DELEGATED POWERS – REVISION

Noted:

- 11.1 At AB 1/12 (12-13) a draft updated schedule of delegated powers for AB.

Reported:

- 11.2 Due to lack of time, consideration of this matter was postponed to the AB meeting of 20 February 2013.

12 APPOINTMENTS

Noted:

- 12.1 At AB 1-9 (12-13) a list of recent appointments (i) of Deans of Faculty, (ii) of Heads of Academic Departments and (iii) to established Chairs and Readership tenable at UCL.

13 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC BOARD

Noted:

13.1 The Chair had taken action on behalf of AB to approve:

- the renaming of the Chair of Biomaterials as the Bonfield Chair of Biomaterials;
- the appointment of Professor Lisa Jardine to the Chair of Renaissance Studies;
- the appointment of Professor Ralf Stanewsky to the Chair of Drosophila Molecular Genetics;
- the establishment of the Chilver Chair of Civil Engineering.

13A Academic Board Working Groups on Established Chairs and Readerships tenable at UCL

Noted:

13A.1 The Chair had taken action on behalf of AB to approve the membership of the AB Working Groups on established Chairs and Readerships tenable at UCL listed at * AB 1-10 (12-13).

14 APPOINTMENT OF PRO-PROVOSTS

Noted:

14.1 In support of UCL's International Strategy, applications had been invited by the Vice-Provost (International), Professor Michael Worton, for the two posts of Pro-Provost for Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and Pro-Provost for Africa and Middle East. Further details were at AB 1-11 (12-13) and were also available at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/global/contact-us/pro-provost-vacancies>.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

15.1 The next meeting of AB was scheduled for **Wednesday 20 February 2013 at 4.00pm** in the **Christopher Ingold XLG2 Auditorium, Chemistry Building**.

JASON CLARKE

Secretary to Academic Board

xi/2012

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