



Academic Board

Thursday 29 October 2020¹

MINUTES

Present: Professor Michael Arthur, President and Provost (Chair).

Professor Bas Aarts; Dr Samer Abdelnour; Dr Ali Abolfathi; Mr Adnan Ali; Dr Mark Altaweel; Dr Seth Anziska; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Manuel Arroyo-Kalin; Professor David Atkinson; Ms Marie Augustin; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Sunny Bains; Professor Yolande Barnes; Professor Kathryn Batchelor; Dr Cecile Bats; Mr Ayman Benmati; Professor Robert Biel; Dr Matthew Blain; Dr Geraldine Brodie; Professor Clare Brooks; Dr Nicole Brown; Professor Robert Brownstone; Professor David Burrows; Professor Jonathan Butterworth; Mr Tadhg Caffrey; Dr Jelena Calic; Dr Alisia Carnemolla; Dr Celia Caulcott; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Tao Cheng; Dr Evangelia Chryssikou; Dr Alun Coker; Professor Susan Collins; Professor Claire Colomb; Professor Stephen Colvin; Professor Barbara Conradt; Dr Sonya Crowe; Ms Sonja Curtis; Professor Caroline Daly; Professor Bert De Reyck; Professor Wei Di; Dr Elton Dias; Professor Paul Dodds; Professor Annette Dolphin; Ms Dominique Draï; Professor Paulo Drinot; Professor Sandra Dunsmuir; Professor Frances Edwards; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Professor Mark Emberton; Professor Joanna Evans; Dr Russell Evans; Professor Susan Evans; Ms Pascale Fanning-Tichborne; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Professor Elizabeth Fisher; Dr Bettina Friedrich; Professor Paul Fromme; Dr David Frost; Dr Martin Fry; Dr Eduardo Garciadiego Ortega; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Adam Gibson; Professor Deborah Gill; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Mr James Gorridge; Dr Ryan Grammenos; Ms Emma Grant; Ms Amanda Greene; Professor Alistair Greig; Professor Lee Grieveson; Dr Anne Grydehoj; Professor Francois Guesnet; Professor Patrick Haggard; Mr Martin Hall; Professor Penelope Haralambidou; Professor Kenneth Harris; Professor Graham Hart; Professor Mark Hewitson; Professor Robin Hickman; Professor Evangelos Himonides; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Katherine Holt; Dr Quentin Huys-Gavric; Dr Alan Ingram; Dr Dan Jagger; Professor Germ Janmaat; Mr Rafid Jawad; Professor Lily Kahn; Dr Jens Kandt; Mr Peter Kelly; Dr John Kelsey; Mr Joshua Kerr; Dr Maki Kimura; Professor Jeffrey King; Professor John King; Professor Robert Kleta; Professor Patty Kostkova; Dr Ghita Kouadri Mostefaoui; Ms Katherine Koulle; Dr Eirini Koutoumanou; Dr Fiona Kyle; Dr Danielle Lamb; Professor Alan Latham; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Professor Paola Lettieri; Professor Christoph Lindner; Dr Emma Liu; Professor Annemaree Lloyd-Zantiotis; Professor David Lomas; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Ms Collette Lux; Dr Isabel Mackay; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Dr Juliana Martins; Dr Luca Mazzei; Dr Claire McAndrew; Dr Ruth McGinity; Professor Jacqueline McGlade; Professor Andrew McQuillin; Dr

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Usha Menon; Professor Robert Mills; Professor Zoran Milutinovic; Professor Jenny Mindell; Professor John Mitchell; Professor Sara Mole; Dr Dafne Zuleima Morgado Ramirez; Professor Sharon Morris; Professor John Mullan; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Ms Marga Navarrete; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Alex Norori-McCormac; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Professor John O'Keefe; Professor Moses Oketch; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor John O'Regan; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Enrico Palandri; Professor Amos Paran; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Nora Pashayan; Dr Kamna Patel; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Dr Olga Perski; Professor Arthur Petersen; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Dr Michaela Pollock; Professor John Potter; Dr Stephen Potts; Professor David Price; Professor Sarah Price; Professor Raman Prinja; Dr Samantha Rayner; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor William Richardson; Professor Helen Roberts; Dr Flaminia Ronca; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Professor Karin Ruggaber; Ms Fiona Ryland; Dr John Sabapathy; Professor Amelie Saintonge; Professor Patricia Salinas; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici; Professor Francesco Saverio Tedesco; Dr Tim Scanlon; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Katrina Scior; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Dr Michael Short; Ms Maria Sibiryakova; Mr Justin Siefker; Dr Bill Sillar; Professor Angus Silver; Professor Michael Singer; Ms Thushyanthi Sivagnanam; Professor Lucia Sivilotti; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Sam Smidt; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Umber Soueid; Professor Catalina Spataru; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Sacha Stern; Dr Allison Stielau; Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Ms Joanna Stroud; Professor Judith Suissa; Professor Seirian Sumner; Professor Adam Swift; Mr Bryan Taylor; Professor Alan Thompson; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Jordan Timothy; Dr Matteo Tiratelli; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Ahmed Toosy; Mr Martyn Towner; Ms Helen Tsui; Professor Liz Varga; Professor Laura Vaughan; Dr Nalini Vittal; Dr Bella Vivat; Ms Yasmin Walker; Dr Ryan Wang; Professor Johanna Waters; Dr Hayley Whitaker; Ms Breege Whiten; Professor Amanda Williams; Professor Owen Williams; Professor James Wilson; Ms Tor Wright; Dr Ozgur Yazaydin; Dr Sophie Zadeh; Dr Vedran Zerjav; Dr Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Dr Clare Goudy; Mr Phil Harding; Dr Efrosyni Konstantinou; Dr Dewi Lewis; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary to Academic Board); Ms Abigail Smith; Ms Kirsty Walker; Ms Olivia Whiteley.

Part I: Preliminary Formal Business

1 ACADEMIC BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE 2020-21 (Paper 1-01)

1.1 Noted.

2 ACADEMIC BOARD CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP (Paper 1-02)

2.1 Noted. The Chair reported that AB now had over 1,700 members. Heads of Department had been reminded that staff could put themselves forward for vacancies outside the biennial election cycle by contacting the secretary.

3 ACADEMIC COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP (Paper 1-03)

3.1 Members queried the fact that the AC Terms of Reference had not yet changed to reflect the decision of the Special Meeting of AB on 14 July 2020 to recall its delegated powers from AC. The Chair noted that AC's Terms of Reference needed to be discussed by AC and approved by Council, and that AC had not met since the Special Meeting. It was noted that AC did not have the authority to reverse the recall of powers.

4 GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE OF ACADEMIC BOARD: TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP (Paper 1-04)

4.1 Noted. The Chair congratulated Professor Ralf Schoepfer on his re-election as chair of GCAB.

5 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

5.1 It was suggested that the Minutes of 12 February 2020 did not reflect the fact that comments critical of the draft Col report were primarily made by members of the Senior Management Team or by Directors/Heads of Institutes and departments. Members were invited to notify any minor suggested changes to the Secretary after the meeting.

5.2 The minutes of the AB meeting of 12 February 2020 [AB Minutes 27-50, 2020-21] were confirmed, subject to minor amendment following discussion with members after the meeting.

5.3 The minutes of the AB meeting of 14 July 2020 [AB Minute 51, 2020-21] were confirmed.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

6 PROVOST'S BUSINESS

6A Impact of COVID-19

6A.1 48,000 students had been enrolled for 2020/21, representing 109% of the target figure. This was a remarkable achievement, particularly in view of the pessimistic view held across the sector in recent months. The Provost

recorded his gratitude to all staff for their part in helping UCL to navigate successfully what had been a particularly challenging period. Nevertheless, student over-recruitment would inevitably put additional pressure on staff. £15m was being made available to the most heavily affected departments, with a possible further £10m available in January 2021.

- 6A.2 The 2021/22 recruitment cycle was currently 18% up on the same period last year, the increase being driven by home and international student numbers. EU student recruitment for next year was currently 15.5% down, but this was seen as a relatively positive position in view of the impact of Brexit.
- 6A.3 Some universities had seen above 2,000 student cases of COVID-19. UCL had recorded 366 student cases amongst those in attendance on campus; this was currently down to approximately three cases per day, although it was too early to know whether this reflected a longer-term trend. There had been approximately 20 staff cases. There was no evidence of staff/student infection occurring in covid-secure teaching environments. This reflected the picture elsewhere in the Russell Group.

6B Temporary Operating Model

- 6B.1 During the summer UCL had adopted a temporary operating model for Term 1 of 2020/21 which involved all core teaching content being delivered online. This had required a huge amount of work, but had enabled a high proportion of students to remain at home to study. The weekly footfall on campus was currently at approximately 8% of that at the same time last year. Nevertheless, in the context of persistently high infection rates nationally and internationally it was proposed that the Temporary Operating Model be extended for Terms 2 and 3 of 2021-22. The matter would be discussed at Education Committee, Academic Committee and the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee.
- 6B.2 Members queried the decision not to extend on-campus testing for COVID-19 to asymptomatic individuals, noting the relatively high prevalence within university communities and the high proportion of infections by asymptomatic individuals. The reasoning behind UCL's approach, which had been agreed by the Public Health Advisory Panel and which reflected advice from Public Health England, was explained. At this advanced point in a generalised epidemic, pool testing would draw resources away from where they could be most effective, and the false positive rate would have a significant and unnecessary impact. Pool testing at scale also demanded prohibitively high resourcing. The matter was nevertheless being kept under constant review. UCL's case management system involved asking anyone testing positive about their close contacts, as defined by the NHS.
- 6B.3 It was noted that even in normal years a core team of staff was in place to look after the interests of students who chose to remain at UCL during the Christmas period. This year, a Task and Finish Group had been established to consider enhancing that provision in the event that a significantly higher

number of students should choose or be obliged to stay in UCL accommodation.

7 **PRINCIPAL THEME 2 REPORT** (Paper 1-05)

- 7.1 Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) introduced the report.
- 7.2 The current Education Strategy covered the period 2016-2021. As the present circumstances were not conducive to starting a conversation about the strategy for the next five years, it was proposed that this be rolled over for a further year.
- 7.3 Professor Smith thanked colleagues for their hard work and adaptability over recent months, noting in particular the contribution of the Student Union Sabbatical Officers. It was evident that the pandemic had had a significant impact on the time available for the delivery of teaching and research. This fact would have to be borne in mind in the context of promotions criteria.
- 7.4 Responding to points made by the Governance Committee of Academic Board on the report, the Vice-Provost said that approximately 5,500 students were currently registered as having a disability. Of those, 3,200 had a Statement of Reasonable Adjustments (SORA). This represented a substantial increase on the figure from the previous year (2,400). Each SORA was developed by Student Support and Wellbeing staff in consultation with the student concerned. The provisions of a SORA were not fixed but were intended to constitute a dialogue with the department.
- 7.5 The Unitu student voice platform was now available across UCL, after being piloted in a small number of departments. It was not mandatory, but was intended as a useful tool. Discussion boards were managed by Student Academic Representatives (SARs), all of whom were trained by the student union. Students were advised not to name individuals in their comments on the platform, and there was a mechanism for the exclusion of anyone repeatedly breaching such guidance. Departments could nominate staff to contribute to the platform if they wished to do so. The Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion had organised a task group to review whether disciplinary procedures were fit for purpose in the context of this online environment.
- 7.6 The Vice-Provost thanked GCAB for noting rounding errors in the data on NSS scores. These would be corrected before the report was submitted to Council.
- 7.7 The issue of the opt-in or opt-out arrangements for Lecturecast, previously discussed at Academic Board, had not yet been resolved and would be brought back for discussion by AB before any decision was taken. The Working Group, co-chaired by Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson, was due to meet once new student representatives had been identified. A group

was being convened by Professor Norbert Pachler to consider the wider implications of audio and video recording, at the request of the local Universities and Colleges Union.

- 7.8 The objective 'to review and strengthen our PGT provision in response to our changing demographics' reflected an intention to support departments and faculties if they wished to carry out a strategic consideration of Masters programmes.
- 7.9 Members noted the potential for enhancing students' academic experience by extending access to online teaching beyond their own course. This was an interesting suggestion, although there were potential issues around the academic staff in question giving the appropriate permission.
- 7.10 Members discussed the risk of the provisions of the policy being interpreted with insufficient flexibility. The importance of understanding the spirit in which particular arrangements were put in place was noted.

8 INQUIRY INTO THE HISTORY OF EUGENICS AT UCL (Paper 1-06)

- 8.1 The paper was introduced by Dr Kamna Patel, Co-Chair of the UCL Eugenics Inquiry Response Group. The Group, which met each month and included representation from each faculty, would report back in due course with a response to each of the 26 recommendations, including a series of costed proposals.

9 WORKING GROUP ON RACISM AND PREJUDICE

- 9.1 The Chair of the Working Group on Racism and Prejudice, Dr Seth Anziska, gave an oral update on the Working Group's progress.
- 9.2 The Working Group had been established at a Special Meeting of Academic Board on 12 December 2019 [AB Minute 26, 2019-20], and was charged with advising on the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism in the context of issues of academic freedom at UCL. The group had since met seven times, and had consulted a wide range of colleagues and students, mindful of the political and social context in which the broader discussion of the IHRA definition was taking place as well as the need to ensure a robust and cohesive understanding of the implications of adoption at UCL.
- 9.3 The Working Group was now finalising its report, which would address how reporting on group prejudice functioned, and would make suggestions for how procedures can be improved. The report would be brought to a meeting of Academic Board on 16 December 2020.

Part III: Other Business for approval or Information

10 STANDING ORDERS OF ACADEMIC BOARD (Paper 1-07)

10.1 The proposed amendments to the Standing Orders were approved.

11 ELECTIONS (Paper 1-08)

11.1 Noted.

12 SUSPENSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS OF STUDENTS (Paper 1-09)

12.1 Noted.

13 MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 1-10)

13.1 Noted.

14 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

14.1 Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 1130-1330.

Nick McGhee
Secretary to Academic Board
Tel: [+44] (0)20 3108 8217
Email: n.mcghee@ucl.ac.uk