



COUNCIL

Thursday 9 July 2015

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Dame DeAnne Julius (*Chair*)

Professor Michael Arthur
(*President and Provost*)

Lord Clement-Jones

Dr John Hurst

Mr Lukmaan Kolia

Mr Simon Melliss (*Treasurer*)

Ms Vivienne Parry

Mr Philip Sturrock

Baroness Valentine

Professor David Attwell

Mr Ven Balakrishnan

Dr Martin Fry

Mr Omar Khan

Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia

Ms Lindsay Nicholson

Dr Gill Samuels

Professor Nick Tyler

Baroness Warwick

In attendance: Mr Mohammad Ali (UCLU Sustainability, Engagement & Operations Officer-elect) [*for Minutes 68-74*]; Ms Wendy Appleby (Secretary to Council); Dame Nicola Brewer (Vice-Provost (International)); Mr Philip Harding (Director of Finance and Business Affairs); Professor Chris Husbands (Vice-Provost (Academic Development and London)); Mr Rex Knight (Vice-Provost (Operations)); Mr Nick McGhee (Assistant Secretary to Council); Professor David Price (Vice-Provost (Research and Enterprise)); Ms Wahida Samie (UCLU Education and Campaigns Officer-elect) [*for Minutes 68-74*]; Professor Anthony Smith (Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs)).

Apologies for absence were received from: Professor David Coen, Ms Nahid Majid and Professor Sir John Tooke (Vice-Provost (Health)).

Key to abbreviations used in these Minutes:

BASc	Bachelor of Arts and Sciences Degree
BME	black and minority ethnic
FC	Finance Committee
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IoE	Institute of Education
KPI	key performance indicators
KWI	key workforce indicators
QR	Quality Research Funding
REF	Research Excellence Framework
UCLU	UCL (Students') Union

Preliminary Formal Business

68 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

68.1 No interests were declared.

69 **MINUTES**

69.1 **Approved:** the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 May 2015 [Council Minutes 48-67, 2014-15], confirmed by Council and signed by the Chair.

70 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

[see Minutes 72 and 77 below]

Matters for discussion

71 **PROVOST'S BUSINESS**

71A **UCL's year**

71A.1 The Provost noted the remarkable range of successes achieved over the past year, including: improved ratings in the National Student Survey; the award of a Nobel Prize to Professor John O'Keefe; the go-ahead for UCL East; the merger with the Institute of Education; the centenary celebrations of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies; the launch of the new Global Engagement Strategy; and UCL's remarkable success in the REF 2014. He also drew attention to the awards to members of the UCL community in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours; the graduation of the first cohort from the BAsC (Liberal Arts and Sciences) programme; the increasing success of the Global Citizenship programme¹; the opening of Bidborough House and 66-72 Gower Street, and UCL's achievement as the highest-placed UK institution in the EU 2020 Horizon performance table.

71B **(UK) Budget 2015-16**

71B.1 In the Budget delivered on 8 July the Chancellor had signalled the Government's intention to apply inflationary increases to the maximum £9,000 home/EU undergraduate fee from 2018, but also that HEIs would be required to demonstrate teaching excellence in order to qualify for the higher fee threshold. The Government was therefore consulting with the sector on the creation of a Teaching Excellence framework; the Provost had been invited to join an advisory group on the matter. It was understood

¹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/global-citizenship>

that the concept of ‘added value’ was likely to form a key element of the framework.

- 71B.2 The Chancellor had announced the replacement of student maintenance grants with a loans system, along with an increase to £8,200 of the maximum amount per annum and a £21,000 income repayment threshold. The Budget also removed the current loophole enabling HEIs and charities to claim R&D tax credits, although this would not be retrospectively applied. The Budget did not include the £450m cuts in funding to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills announced in June, which could be expected to hit the teaching and widening participation budgets.
- 71B.3 A number of Regius Professorships would be created across England but with the emphasis on the North, Midlands and South-West.
- 71B.4 The Government had welcomed the outcome of the Dowling Review. UCL had been the leading co-ordinating centre in a successful bid for up to £128m for the UK Collaboration for Research in Infrastructure and Cities.

71C **Overseas student recruitment**

- 71C.1 Council noted the risk posed to the recruitment of overseas students by recent falls in the Chinese stock market, although overseas applications were currently up 8% on the same point last year. The value of UCL’s strategy in seeking to increase the diversity of its overseas market was noted.

71D **Life Study**

- 71D.1 The Life Study was not currently recruiting at the necessary rate. The Provost paid tribute to the support being provided by UCL Partners in expanding the number of hospitals through which volunteers could be recruited.

72 **UCLU**

[PAPER 5-49, 2014-15]

- 72.1 **Received:** an oral report from Mr Lukmaan Kolia and Mr Omar Khan, outgoing Education & Campaigns Officer and Ethics, Environment & Operations Officer respectively. Paper 5-49 included proposals for the merger of UCLU and the IoE Students’ Union, and proposed revisions to the UCLU bye-laws. Copies of the UCLU Impact Report 2014-15 were tabled at the meeting.
- 72.2 UCLU had had a productive year. A strategic plan had been developed and governance procedures reviewed. The newly-appointed General Manager was addressing the issue of the Union’s financial sustainability. Although UCLU was budgeting for a £360,000 deficit position in 2015-16, financial performance was improving, notably with staffing costs reduced by £22,000.
- 72.3 The draft Budget incorporated a £2.87m grant from UCL, comprised of £2.5m in respect of UCLU, £210,000 in respect of the IOE Students’ Union and an additional one-off grant request of £160,000 to cover the costs of

merging the two bodies. At its meeting on 2 July, Finance Committee had recommended that the budget be approved with the exception of the additional £160k sum. FC proposed that a decision on this matter be deferred pending further review of more concrete proposals from the UCLU General Manager at its next meeting. The Treasurer characterised this recommendation as a practical approach recognising the need for the Union to get on with running its activities whilst signalling UCL's expectation that a more sustainable financial performance be achieved.

- 72.4 Council members welcomed progress in reducing the size of the budgeted deficit. It was suggested however that KPIs and detail of actions taken to meet them were necessary for members to understand more fully the future direction of the Union. It was agreed that these would be produced in time for discussion in the autumn.

RESOLVED

- 72.5 **That Council approve the UCLU draft Budget for 2015-16, incorporating a grant from UCL of £2.71m, but that the request for an additional £160,000 funding be reconsidered in the autumn;**
- 72.6 **That the proposed merger of UCLU and the IoE Students' Union with effect from 1 August 2015 be approved;**
- 72.7 **That the proposed revised UCLU bye-laws be approved.**

73 **HR DATA REPORT; EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY**
[PAPER 5-50, 2014-15]

- 73.1 **Received:** an oral introduction to the paper from Mr Rex Knight, Vice-Provost (Operations).
- 73.2 The paper incorporated an update on UCL's Key Workforce Indicators (KWIs), and the Equalities and Diversity Strategy 2015-2020. The new Strategy, covering both staff and students, included a smaller and more focussed series of objectives than its predecessor, which was welcomed by Council.
- 73.3 UCL had achieved its aim of an annual 1% rise in the proportion of women at grades 9 and 10. Departmental initiatives designed to meet the requirements of the Athena Swan Charter were having a notable impact across the institution. Council noted however that, whereas there was no gender gap in the appointment of applicants in 2013-14, BME candidates had accounted for 41% of applicants but only 23% of those appointed. Council also noted that the BME student attainment gap persisted even once all other pertinent factors, such as socio-economic background, had been accounted for. A number of measures had been introduced to address the situation, including an increase in the proportion of staff taking unconscious bias training. In recent months the recruitment process for all Professional Services posts had been anonymised up to the point of interview; early indications were that there had been a small improvement in the appointment rate.

- 73.4 It was suggested that in future reports a benchmark against the rest of the sector would be useful, as would absolute numbers alongside the proportions stated. Council noted the difficulty of bringing about a transformation of the composition of the workforce when staff turnover was low, as well as the adverse impact of the withdrawal of the statutory retirement age. It was suggested also that recruitment strategies in the run-up to the REF were likely to mitigate against improvements in the area.

RESOLVED

- 73.5 **That the UCL Equalities and Diversity Strategy 2015-2020 be approved.**

74 **UCL BUDGET 2015-16**
[PAPER 5-51, 2014-15]

- 74.1 **Received:** an oral introduction to the paper from Mr Simon Melliss, Treasurer, and Mr Phil Harding, Director of Finance and Business Affairs.
- 74.2 At its meeting on 2 July, Finance Committee had recommended that the Budget be approved. It was consistent with the required trajectory in order to achieve a 5.5% surplus by 2017-18, which would place UCL (at current levels) near the median for the sector. In the context of a £33m shortfall between the three-year faculty projections and the target level of surplus by 2017-18, Finance Committee had discussed in detail the major 'big ticket' items that fell outside the more stable core income of QR and UK/EU undergraduate fees. These included: unregulated (overseas / postgraduate) tuition fees, and particularly their relationship with those charged by other institutions; the rate of research overhead recovery; and efficiency measures to contain costs, particularly those relating to the estate. The ongoing relocation of Professional Services staff to Bidborough House and 1-19 Torrington Place, and the move to agile working, was noted in this latter respect.
- 74.3 Council welcomed the format of the budget paper and the quality of the financial information. Council members were aware of the scale of the challenge faced in seeking to deliver the budget, and it was noted that the HEFCE Financial Forecasts [Paper 5-54] outlined the levers available to the institution. It was agreed that it would be helpful for Council to be advised of student recruitment data as early as possible in the new academic year.

RESOLVED

- 74.4 **That the UCL Budget 2015-16 be approved.**

Matters for approval or information
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75 **NEW STUDENT CENTRE**

[PAPER 5-52, 2014-15]

RESOLVED – on the recommendation of the Finance Committee

75.1 **That the proposal to build a New Student Centre be approved.**

76 **ASTOR COLLEGE REFURBISHMENT**

[PAPER 5-53, 2014-15]

RESOLVED – on the recommendation of the Finance Committee

76.1 **That the business case for the refurbishment and extension of Astor College be approved.**

77 **HEFCE FINANCIAL FORECASTS**

[PAPER 5-54, 2014-15]

RESOLVED – on the recommendation of the Finance Committee

77.1 **That the annual accountability returns to be submitted to HEFCE be approved.**

78 **ACADEMIC COMMITTEE REPORT ON NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY**

[PAPER 5-55, 2014-15]

78.1 **Received** – the annual report of programmes withdrawn and approved, in accordance with Academic Committee's schedule of delegated powers.

79 **MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL 2015-16**

[PAPER 5-56, 2014-15]

79.1 **Received** – details of the membership of Council in 2015-16.

RESOLVED

79.2 **That Mr Andrew Gould and Mr Dominic Blakemore be appointed members of Council for an initial term extending from 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2018.**

80 **DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS 2015-16**

[PAPER 5-57, 2014-15]

80.1 **Received** – details of Council meeting date to the end of the calendar year 2016.

81 **ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

[PAPER 5-58, 2014-15]

81.1 **Received** – a note of action taken by the Chair on behalf of Council since the last report.

82 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

82.1 The next Council meeting would be held on **Thursday 15 October 2015** at 3pm.

Wendy Appleby
Secretary to Council
July 2015