



COUNCIL

Thursday 11 February 2016¹

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Dame DeAnne Julius (*Chair*)

Professor Michael Arthur
(*President and Provost*)

Professor Lucie Clapp

Professor David Coen

Dr Andrew Gould

Ms Nahid Majid

Mr Mohammad Ali Mumtaz

Ms Wahida Samie

Baroness Valentine

Mr Ven Balakrishnan

Mr Dominic Blakemore

Lord Clement-Jones

Dr Martin Fry

Dr John Hurst

Mr Simon Melliss (*Treasurer*)

Ms Lindsay Nicholson

Mr Philip Sturrock

Baroness Warwick (*Vice-Chair*)

In attendance: Ms Wendy Appleby (Secretary to Council); Dr Celia Caulcott (Vice-Provost (Enterprise)); Mr Philip Harding (Director of Finance and Business Affairs); Mr Rex Knight (Vice-Provost (Operations)); Professor David Lomas (Vice-Provost (Health)); Mr Nick McGhee (Assistant Secretary to Council); Professor David Price (Vice-Provost (Research)); Professor Anthony Smith (Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs)).

Apologies for absence were received from Dame Nicola Brewer, Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia and Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker.

Key to abbreviations used in these Minutes:

AB	Academic Board
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
HE	higher education
NUS	National Union of Students
MOOC	massive open online course
OBL	Object-based learning
PACE	(UCL) Public and Cultural Engagement
QA	Quality Research Funding
RCUK	Research Councils UK
REF	Research Excellence Framework

¹ *Secretary's note:* this meeting took place on the 190th anniversary of the signature of UCL's Deed of Settlement on 11 February 1826.

Preliminary Formal Business

35 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

35.1 No interests were declared.

36 **MINUTES**

36.1 **Approved:** the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 November 2015
[*Council Minutes 16-34, 2015-16*], confirmed by Council and signed by the Chair.

37 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

[*see Minutes 39 and 45 below*]

Matters for discussion

38 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

38.1 The Chair updated Council on the progress of the Effectiveness Review, and advised members and those in attendance that they would shortly receive a request to complete a survey.

38.2 The Chair outlined her approach to requests from members of the UCL community for circulation of material to Council. It was important to balance the need for communication with considerations of protecting members' time, as well as maintaining a focus on appropriately strategic issues and seeking to avoid interference with internal management discussions or giving a partial view of any given issue. Members would have an opportunity to comment on the issue of communication in their responses to the survey.

38.3 An additional item of Chair's business was taken under confidential business
[*Minute 47*].

39 **PROVOST'S BUSINESS**

39A **Awards and honours**

39A.1 Several members of the UCL community had been recognised in the New Year's Honours List 2016². These included DBEs for Professor Georgina Mace and Professor Henrietta Moore, and a knighthood for Dr Michael Jacobs. The Provost also noted the award of the 2015 Klaus J. Jacobs Research Prize to Professor

² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0116/060116-new-year-honours>

Sarah-Jayne Blakemore³, and a 'Posters in Parliament' Research Prize to a recent UCL graduate, Amanda Campbell.

39A.2 Council congratulated the Provost on his award of a Principal Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy for strategic leadership in teaching and learning in Higher Education⁴.

39B Director of the Institute of Education

39B.1 Interviews had recently been held for the post of Director of the Institute of Education and the Provost expected to be in a position to make an announcement in the near future.

39C Higher Education Green Paper

[Council Minute 19, 2015-16]

39C.1 Along with much of the rest of the sector, including the Russell Group and Universities UK, UCL had submitted a critical response to the Government's HE Green Paper. The principal concerns had been: the creation of separate regulatory structures for education and research; the creation of a link between teaching excellence and student fee levels, as well as the proposed framework by which teaching excellence would be measured; and the withdrawal of the minimum student numbers threshold for new private institutions. In view of the complexity and volume of the feedback it was envisaged that a response from the Government would not now be received until June 2016.

39D Planning Round

39D.1 The planning round for Professional Services and Vice-Provosts' offices was now completed. An investment plan had been developed for the student experience, particularly in respect of IT provision. Stringent contribution targets consistent with UCL's financial sustainability goal had been agreed with the Deans.

39E Capital developments

39E.1 The Provost had recently attended the topping-out ceremony for 22 Gordon Square (formerly Wates House). The rebuild would generate a 70% increase in floor space. The development was on time and on budget, as were the refurbishment works at the Kathleen Lonsdale Building and the Physics Yard.

39E.2 The Bloomsbury Theatre was currently in a period of planned closure in order to allow for the construction of the neighbouring Student Centre. Following the discovery of asbestos, however, it would now be necessary to keep the theatre closed until January 2018 at the earliest. Alternative venues were being identified for student activities. In light of this extended closure period, the opportunity had been taken to carry out a review of the theatre's usage model. This had been incorrectly interpreted in some quarters as a decision to close the Bloomsbury Theatre; the Provost reiterated that UCL had no intention of doing so.

³ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/pals/pals-news/sarah-jayne-blakemore-awarded-2015-klaus-j-jacobs-research-prize>

⁴ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/tl-news/provost-michael-arthur-arena-principal-fellowship>

39F Innovations Fund

39F.1 The Provost drew attention to the excellent progress that had been made with the recent establishment of two innovations funds; the Technology Fund⁵ and the Apollo Therapeutics Consortium⁶.

39G Rent Strike

39G.1 A group of students resident at Max Rayne Hall had declared a rent strike. Their principal objection was to the rate of rent increase in recent years. UCL's view was that UCL rent had risen 40% since 2009 as against 48% across the UK sector. The Provost further noted that UCL had recently been commended in an NUS Unipol survey⁷ for maintaining a high number of low-cost rooms. UCL did not make a profit from rental accommodation but needed to generate funds for reinvestment in its hall stock; there was a risk that if UCL was not permitted to charge rents at an appropriate level the private sector would take over, which would almost certainly result in significant rent increases. The Provost acknowledged a backlog in refurbishment of Student Residences, but noted that a plan was in place to address this, including an imminent £30m expenditure programme on Astor College.

39H Fossil Fuels investment

39H.1 At a meeting on 11 February Academic Board had voted 50:18 in favour of a motion 'That UCL should commit to divesting from the fossil fuel industry and to shifting those funds to ethical investments in renewable energy in 5 years.' This view would be communicated to the Investment Committee and the Ethical Investment Review Committee.

39I Expenses and discretionary accounts

39I.1 Council members had received in recent days correspondence from members of the academic community in respect of UCL's expenses policy. The issue had arisen following an internal audit request that the Senior Management Team look at the implementation of the policy. This had been done, and a benchmarking exercise had found UCL's practice to be within the mainstream for the sector. The policy had not been changed, but the guidelines had been reissued to staff, which had drawn attention to a number of issues. Work to review the guidance had since commenced.

39I.2 The Provost outlined the purpose and function of discretionary accounts at UCL, the total value of which was at present approximately £70m. Staff had the option of paying income from non-core activity (such as consultancy or other fees) into discretionary accounts which could then be used for specific defined purposes, as an alternative to treating it as personal taxable income. Although discretionary accounts were named, they were nevertheless on the UCL balance sheet, and UCL had a legal responsibility to account for them appropriately. As discretionary accounts affected the bottom line, it was necessary for the institution to have sight of expenditure from these accounts in order to be able to plan accordingly. This

⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/enterprise/enterprise-news/ucl-launches-50-million-technology-investment-fund>

⁶ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/translational-research/funding-opps/external-funding>

⁷ http://www.unipol.org.uk/documents/publications/unipol_nus_accommodationcostssurvey2015.aspx

had been misinterpreted by some staff as an attempt to impose new controls on those funds.

40 RESEARCH AND UCL EAST UPDATE

[PAPER 3-24, 2015-16]

40A Research

40A.1 Professor David Price, Vice-Provost (Research), reported on a continued strong research performance across the institution. Highlights included:

- UCL's consistently high performance in the main global league tables;
- A 9% rise in the research spend over the past year, to £409m, which represented a significant increase in market share in the context of a flat-cash settlement from Government;
- UCL's total £150m awards from RCUK over the past year, representing the highest level ever achieved by any Institution;
- UCL's achievement in winning €49.9m from the European Commission's *Horizon 2020* programme, more than any other institution in Europe. Council noted however the potential challenge this represented in the prospect of a UK withdrawal from the EU.

40A.2 Professor Price outlined UCL's efforts to maximise overhead recovery, and the obstacles to full recovery of these costs. Despite the fact that research activity will continue to lose money overall, such activity was fundamental to the rest of UCL's operation as the driver for league tables and (particularly) overseas student recruitment.

40A.3 Council discussed several issues arising in the report, including: the impact of partnerships on the apparent discrepancy between total grant income and the budgeted figure; the difficulty of accurately benchmarking REF performance, particularly in the case of Oxford University where some staff were supported against philanthropic income and there was a high proportion of undeclared researchers; the evidence for an increase in media hostility to universities; the means of balancing the research portfolio in order to maximise the rate of overhead contribution whilst retaining sources of funding across all kinds of research activity; and preparations for the next REF, expected in 2021.

40A.4 Council noted the UCL Research Integrity Statement for 2014-15.

40B UCL East

40B.1 Professor Price outlined the process for the development of the academic vision for UCL East. The UCL East Academic Programme Board had met on 28 January 2016 and recommended the four scenarios outlined in the paper. Consultation with the UCL community on these scenarios would close on 22 February, and the matter would then be submitted to the Provost for a decision. Detailed work could then commence with architects and planners.

40B.2 As required under the terms of the agreement with the London Legacy Development Corporation, UCL East would be a home for new types of activity rather than the relocation of activity from Bloomsbury; it was nevertheless envisaged that it would be developed through the existing Faculty structure.

40B.3 Council noted the opportunity provided by UCL East for constructive engagement with London stakeholders. External consultation was planned but could not commence until UCL had a clearer idea of the type of activity planned for the space.

41 **INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION: ANNUAL UPDATE ON MERGER**

[PAPER 3-25, 2015-16]

[Professor Andrew Brown, Acting Director, Institute of Education, and Ms Kay Jones, Director of Operations, Institute of Education, were in attendance for this item].

41.1 The paper set out a number of early achievements from the merger process including the Institute's leading role in the ESRC Bloomsbury Doctoral Training Centre and the ongoing work to bid for ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership status. A range of joint funding applications listed in the report gave evidence of the academic synergies cited as a key driver of the merger. There was no indication of a decline in student applications across the relevant academic elements of the two institutions; for some programmes, there had been a significant increase in applications. An Operations Integration Group and an Academic Integration Group were being established, and an internal academic restructure process had been carried out.

41.2 Noting that this would be the first of ten annual updates following the merger, Council members requested that future reports refer to the metrics set out in the business case, and include an update on the merger of the two student union bodies. Members also suggested that future reports incorporate a view of progress from the rest of UCL outside the Institute itself. In this latter respect the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) noted that the merger had already brought about a significant improvement in UCL's digital pedagogical capabilities, with UCL's first MOOC due to launch at the end of February.

41.3 UCL had gained valuable experience in carrying out mergers in recent years, including with the School of Pharmacy and three MRC units. Council noted the intention to bring the 'Size and Shape' project to the away day for discussion.

42 **PUBLIC AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

[PAPER 3-26, 2015-16]

[Mr Simon Cane, Director of UCL Public and Cultural Engagement, was in attendance for this item].

42.1 UCL Public and Cultural Engagement (PACE) had responsibility for the university's museums and collections, the Bloomsbury Theatre and Studio, and the Public Engagement Unit. It sought to use a combination of resources and activities in innovative ways, to engage the public actively in UCL's research, for example through Bright Club⁸ or the Focus on the Positive⁹ events. Taken together, activities and events within PACE's remit had attracted 165,000 visitors to UCL in 2014. PACE activities therefore made a significant contribution to UCL's impact, which was of particular interest to the Research Councils.

42.2 PACE activities also include contributing to the student learning experience through the delivery of Object Based Learning (OBL) modules which actively supported UCL's Connected Curriculum initiative. PACE staff had also developed a track record in the area of health and wellbeing research, particularly the

⁸ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/brightclub>

⁹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/public-engagement/focusonthepositive>

positive impact of cultural interactions, as realised through programmes such as 'Museums on Prescription'.

- 42.3 Council noted that PACE is a net financial cost to UCL and discussed the difficulty of quantifying the positive contribution of these activities. The Vice-Provost (Research) noted that approximately one quarter of UCL's annual £85m QA income was derived from impact, and of this approximately one quarter (£5m) was derived from case studies.
- 42.4 PACE was making a key contribution to public engagement activities at UCL East, and would continue to do so in partnership with the academic units concerned. Mr Cane was a member of the UCL East Programme Board.

43 **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

[PAPER 3-27, 2015-16]

[Mr Mark Sudbury, Director of Communications and Marketing, was in attendance for this item].

- 43.1 The paper summarised progress in developing a communications strategy, following Council discussion of the Tim Hunt affair at the meeting of 9 July 2015, as well as the results of a recent Stakeholder Perceptions Survey. A Communications Strategy Review Group had been established and it was expected that this would make its recommendations in April.
- 43.2 In discussions, Council queried the purely external scope of the perceptions survey. Mr Sudbury noted that UCL's internal communications strategy was still relatively new, but it was likely that there would be implications for internal communications arising out of the Review. Council also discussed the need for systems to deal with reputation crisis management, and the role of social media, both of which would be considered by the Review Group.

Matters for approval or information
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44 **EDUCATION STRATEGY**

[PAPER 3-28, 2015-16]

- 44.1 **Received:** the draft Education Strategy, due to be submitted to Academic Committee for formal approval on 17 March. Council members were invited to submit comments to the office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).

45 **ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR**

[PAPER 3-29, 2015-16]

- 45.1 **Received:** a note of action taken by the Chair on behalf of Council since the last report.

46 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 46.1 The next Council meeting would be held on **17 March 2016** at 3pm.

Wendy Appleby
Secretary to Council
February 2016