



Council

Monday 13 September 2021 at 10:00am

Video-Conferencing meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present Members:

Mr Victor Chu CBE (Chair); Mr Ayman Benmati; Mr Dominic Blakemore; Professor Lucie Clapp; Dr Alun Coker; Dr Martin Fry; Dr Andrew Gould; Ms Lindsay Nicholson MBE; Mr Turlogh O'Brien CBE; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Lord Sharkey; Dr Michael Spence; Mr Philip Sturrock MBE; Mr Osman Teklies; Dr Justin Turner QC; Baroness Valentine; Ms Sarah Whitney.

Attendees:

For Minutes 160-171: Dr Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff, President & Provost's Office
For Minutes 160-171: Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Faculties)
For Minutes 160-171: Professor Geraint Rees, Pro-Provost (Academic Planning)

Observers:

Professor Stephanie Bird
Professor Jonathan Butterworth

Apologies:

Professor Annette Dolphin

Officer(s):

Ms Wendy Appleby, Secretary to Council
Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane, Assistant Secretary to Council
Ms Olivia Whiteley, Governance Officer
Ms Freya Markwell, Governance Support Officer

Part I: Preliminary Business

160. Operation of the Meeting

160.1. Owing to the lockdown imposed by the Government as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to convene a meeting in person of Council. Therefore, members of Council were participating in a video conference, using tools that enabled all members to see and hear each other

simultaneously. Decisions would be ratified by Chair's Action after the meeting.

161. Introduction

161.1. The Chair of Council welcomed the following incoming members to the meeting as observers:

- a. Professor Stephanie Bird, incoming elected professorial member of Council. Professor Bird would be joining Council on 1 October 2021.
- b. Professor Jonathan Butterworth, incoming elected professorial member of Council. Professor Butterworth would be joining Council on 1 October 2021.

161.2. The Chair of Council noted that this would be Professors Lucie Clapp and Annette Dolphin's last Council meeting as Council members. They would be finishing their terms on the 30 September 2021. Council thanked Professors Lucie Clapp and Annette Dolphin for their extraordinary service as UCL Council members.

161.3. The Chair of Council noted that this would be Ms Wendy Appleby's last meeting as Secretary to Council. Ms Appleby would be leaving UCL on 30 September 2021 and taking up the role of Vice-President (Operations) at the University of Southampton. Council congratulated Ms Wendy Appleby and thanked her for her outstanding support and guidance provided to Council throughout her time as Secretary to Council.

161.4. The Chair of Council paid tribute to Professor Sir Eric Ash, Head of the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering (1980 – 1985) and former Rector of Imperial College (1985 – 1993) who had passed away peacefully on 22 August 2021 at the age of 93¹. Council expressed their deep condolences to Professor Sir Eric Ash's family and friends.

162. Declaration of Interests

162.1. The Chair of Council invited Council to declare any new interests they may have or any interests they had in the items being considered at the meeting.

162.2. There were no new declarations of interests declared.

163. Minutes (13-01)

163.1. Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021.

¹ Secretary's Footnote: The Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering have subsequently published the following tribute to Professor Sir Eric Ash: 4 October 2021 - [Remembering Professor Sir Eric Ash \(1928 - 2021\)](#)

163.2. Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 9 August 2021.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

164. Provost's Report to Council (13-02)

164.1. Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost, introduced the Provost's Report to Council.

164.2. During discussion the following key points were made:

- a. The USS Joint Negotiating Committee had accepted a package of recommendations from Universities UK (UUK) with some modifications meaning that, if the proposal was approved by the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) Trustee, there would be a 60-day consultation with members of the scheme. Following a question on next steps in the process, the Provost advised that UCL could assert its views when UUK consulted with employers. UCL's views on the rolling notice period of 20 years to exit the scheme were likely to be at odds with the sector. The Provost confirmed that a set of instructions had been prepared to seek legal advice on a range of issues and once a counsel opinion had been received, the matter would be brought back to Council.
- b. In response to a question about the performance of undergraduate admissions, the Vice-Provost (Faculties) advised that there had been a 30 per cent reduction in offers; the overshooting in recruitment had been beyond UCL's control. There was now a second bulge which was pronounced in certain disciplines such as in Life and Biomedical Sciences. Resource had been released immediately to deal with this and plans were being put in place to deal with the associated issues such as the impact on the estate. The Provost noted that the overshooting of undergraduate recruitment targets was a national problem. An evaluation of the admissions system was underway which was welcomed by the Admissions Team.
- c. An audit of the ventilation in rooms needed to be undertaken and policies to address the impact of long-Covid needed to be developed. The Provost advised that UCL was taking a relatively cautious approach with face coverings required on campus and regular lateral flow testing. Individuals would be encouraged but not required to be at a distance. There would be special accommodations for vulnerable staff.
- d. In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that UCL's policy and advice aligned with the Independent Sage Report on Universities and Colleges to a great extent.

164.3. Council received the Provost's Report to Council.

165. Confidential: Strategy Discussion (13-03)

165.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

165.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

165.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

165.4. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

165.5. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

165.6. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

165.7. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

166. To Receive The Following Reports

OfS Standing Report to Council (13-04)

166.1. Council received the OfS Standing Report to Council.

Action Taken by the Chair (13-05)

166.2. Council received the report on Action Taken by the Chair. Action was taken as follows:

- a. In accordance with discussions at the Council meeting of 8 July 2021, the following action was taken by the Chair:
 - i. Approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2021 subject to a number of changes being made.
 - ii. Approved the Response from the Governance Working Group (GWG) to the AB Commission of Inquiry Implementation Group.
 - iii. Approved the Students' Union (SU) UCL Budget 2021/22.
 - iv. Approved the proposed Acorn Access and Participation Plan (APP) targets for submission to the Office for Students (OfS).
- b. Approved the following nominations to recruitment panels:
 - i. Professor Jon Butterworth (Council member from 1 October and former UCL Head of Department) for the Vice-Provost (Education & Student Experience) selection panel.
 - ii. Sarah Whitney for the Vice-President (Strategy & Planning) selection panel; and
 - iii. Baroness Jo Valentine for the Vice-President (Advancement) selection panel.

- c. Pending a view from Council, particularly on the moratorium issue, the Chair of Council approved the following response to the USS Employer Pensions Consultation:

In terms of the options presented, UCL could only agree to the revised USS model as the least worst scenario. On that basis the covenant support measures are acceptable.

It is proposed that any agreement as indicated above would be conditional on urgently developing proposals to move to a conditional indexation model which we hope would allow a better benefit model in the future, a review of the scheme governance and the creation of an optional low-cost scheme section to address concerns on affordability and the high opt out rate.

We still wish to see more detail on the effect of the 2021 valuation on the liabilities and future costs, albeit that USS have outlined that, in their view, this does not change the picture significantly from the 2020 valuation.

166.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minute.

Confidential: UCL Seal Report (13-06)

166.4. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minute.

167. To approve changes to Committee Terms of Reference and Composition

Academic Committee – Proposed Changes to the Terms of Reference and Constitution (13-07)

167.1. Council approved the proposed changes to the Terms of Reference and Constitution of Academic Committee.

Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee – Proposed Change to the Constitution (13-08)

167.2. Council approved the proposed changes to the Constitution of Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee.

168. Amendments to the Regulations for Management (13-09)

168.1. Council approved the proposed changes to the Regulations for Management.

169. Appointments

Re-appointment of External Council Member and Appointments to Council Committees (13-10)

169.1. Council approved the re-appointment of Baroness Valentine as an external Council member from 1 January 2022 until 31 July 2022.

169.2. Council approved the appointment of Dr Martin Fry as a member of Audit Committee from 1 October 2021 for the duration of his term of office as a Council member.

169.3. Council approved the appointment of Dr Martin Fry as a member of Nominations Committee from 1 October 2021 for the duration of his term of office as a Council member.

Re-appointments and Affirmations of Appointment to Council Committees (13-11)

169.4. Council:

- a. Approved the re-appointment of Mr Philip Sturrock MBE and Ms Lindsay Nicholson MBE to Nominations Committee for the duration of their terms on Council.
- b. Affirmed, in line with protocols on long service, Mr Dominic Blakemore's appointment to Audit Committee for the duration of his term on Council.
- c. Approved the re-appointment of Ms Lindsay Nicholson MBE to the Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee for the duration of her term on Council.
- d. Approved retrospective re-appointments to the Remuneration and Human Resources Strategy Committee as follows:
 - i. Ms Lindsay Nicholson MBE, for the duration of her term on Council;
 - ii. Mr Turlogh O'Brien CBE, for a second three-year term ending on 30 September 2023; and
 - iii. Lord Sharkey, for the duration of his term on Council.

Secretary to Council (13-12)

169.5. Council de-appointed Ms Wendy Appleby as Secretary to Council with effect from 30 September 2021.

169.6. Following the resignation of the current Secretary to Council, Council noted that it had been agreed that the Assistant Secretary to Council, Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane, would carry out the duties of the Secretary to Council as set out in UCL's Charter, Statutes and Regulations for Management on an interim basis with effect from 30 September 2021 pending the appointment of the new Secretary to Council.

170. Confidential: Requests for Use of the UCL Brand (13-13)

170.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minute.

171. Date of the next Meeting

171.1. The next meeting of Council would take place on Friday 22 October 2021 at 9:00am.

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Ms Wendy Appleby, Secretary to Council
September 2021