



Council

Monday 19 June 2023 at 2pm

Council Room, South Wing / via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Present Members:

Victor Chu CBE (present for Minutes 100-117 and Chair for Minutes 100-102 & 106-117); Hamza Ahmed; Deniz Akinci; Dominic Blakemore (Chair for Minutes 95-99 & 103-105); Professor Jon Butterworth; Dr Alun Coker (for Minutes 95-103.3 & 104-117); Dr Martin Fry; Tania Holt; Lindsay Nicholson MBE; Turlogh O'Brien CBE; Christine Ohuruogu MBE; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Lord Sharkey; Dr Michael Spence; Sarah Whitney.

Apologies:

Professor Stephanie Bird; Phil Clark; Tina Harris; Dr Justin Turner KC.

In attendance:

Aimie Chapple, Vice-President (Operations); Charu Gorasia, Chief Financial Officer; Dr Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff; Natasha Lewis, General Counsel; Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Faculties).

For Minute 100: Kirsty Walker, Vice-President (External Engagement); Steven O'Neil, Head of Public Affairs; Marc Stears, Director UCL Policy Lab.

For Minute 101: Jessica Yuille, Director of Financial Planning & Analysis.

For Minute 105: Dr Patrick Ward, Interim Executive Director of Health and Safety; Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health.

Officers:

Edward Hossack, Assistant Secretary to Council
David Pacey, University Secretary
Olivia Whiteley, Governance Officer

Part I: Preliminary Business

95. Welcome

- 95.1. David Pacey, University Secretary and Aimie Chapple, Vice-President (Operations) were introduced to Council.

96. Operation of the meeting

- 96.1. UCL was given notification on 23 May 2023 that the Supplemental Charter had been sealed on 17 April 2023 meaning UCL now had University Title status. It was also confirmed on 23 May 2023 the updated Statutes, permitting the use of remote or hybrid meetings had become effective on 17 April 2023.
- 96.2. The meeting was held in a hybrid format. Some members of Council participated by video conference and some attended together face to face, using tools that enabled all members to see and hear each other simultaneously. It was noted that a quorum was achieved by all those Council members who attended the hybrid meeting.
- 96.3. While some items on the agenda were considered by Victor Chu CBE as Chair, the minutes reflect the order of the agenda.

97. Declaration of Interests

- 97.1. The Chair of Council invited Council members to declare any new interests they may have or any interests they had in the items being considered at the meeting.
- 97.2. In respect of Minute 103, Dr Alun Coker declared an interest as an officer of UCL UCU. In respect of Minute 103 Professor Helen Roberts, Dr Martin Fry and Professor Ralf Schoepfer declared their interest as members of UCL UCU. Lord Sharkey, Dr Justin Turner and Dominic Blakemore declared their interests in respect of Minute 106. Sarah Whitney declared her interest in respect of Minute 106 and Minute 107.

98. Minutes (6-01)

- 98.1. Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2023.

99. Matters Arising

- 99.1. No matters arising were identified.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

100. Public Affairs Engagement Report (6-02)

- 100.1. Kirsty Walker, Vice-President (External Engagement), introduced the paper setting out Public Affairs activities and priorities across UCL, and introduced to Council Steven O’Neil, Head of Public Affairs, and Marc Stears, Director, UCL Policy Lab.
- 100.2. The following points were made during the presentation:
- a. The Vice-President (External Engagement) and Provost indicated that the paper and presentation were an opportunity for Council to provide feedback. Provost noted that his regular communications with Council gave a flavour of these activities: it had been intended that the discussion would be an opportunity for greater involvement by Council.
 - b. The main area of focus noted in the report had been the establishment of UCL’s reputation with policymakers and other leaders and to build institutional profile through the development of thought leadership and by ensuring that UCL’s research has broad reach and influence. Work had been undertaken on the public affairs function in order to better incorporate and share knowledge through internal and external stakeholder engagement, and increase capabilities to plan and host events with these external policy stakeholders.
 - c. The Head of Public Affairs noted the quality of relationships established and built over the past year. These had included cross-party politicians and senior political leaders. Internationally, the Provost’s time in China had been beneficial, combined with the co-ordination of activities within UCL as a key feature. The Provost commented on the skills of the Public Affairs function and quality of connections made.
 - d. The Director of UCL Policy Lab informed Council of his positivity about opportunities at UCL, and the ability to convene top-level conversations with senior academics, politicians and policy-makers.
- 100.3. The following points were raised in discussion:
- a. Council provided positive feedback about the work undertaken and the report, and noted the importance of consideration of past success. Provost noted that UCL’s past success in public policy had been considered an outcome of the involvement of its academics, and that an ambition existed to build on this success for UCL as an institution by enabling conversations with politicians and policy makers at the leadership level.
 - b. Responding to a question from Council about the importance of protecting the culture of creative challenge, the Vice-President (External Engagement) noted that diversity and academic freedom of speech had

been priorities, including an aim to engage academic expertise from areas outside UCL.

- c. It was also noted that the work of the Policy Lab had been to provide support to address the challenge of maintaining diversity of opinion (embraced by external stakeholders in the political arena in particular).. The work undertaken with Government and Opposition parties was also noted as a consideration of the breadth of UCL's ambitions in this arena. Council agreed that it was important that UCL continues to be politically independent.
- d. Council noted UCL as a global university, and an inquiry was made about the level of engagement with thought-leaders and politicians internationally, in addition to existing engagement and activities in China. In response, Council was informed of the work in collaboration with UCL's Global Engagement function.
- e. The discussion identified the question of the measurement of effectiveness and success in public affairs activities. The Vice-President (External Engagement) informed Council that measurement was targeted on specific aims of the public affairs agenda. Provost agreed the importance of having a clear time-frame for activities as a means of the measurement of success.
- f. The Vice-President (External Engagement) indicated that a report on brand perception would be made to Council at a later stage.
- g. Members of Council expressed a desire to see UCL academics involved with international debates about the influence of AI and implications for modes of education.

100.4. Council received the Public Affairs Engagement report.

101. Confidential: Multi-Year Budgets 2023/24 to 2026/27 (6-03)

101.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

101.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

101.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

101.4. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

102. Provost's Report to Council (6-04)

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

102.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. Council considered the support provided for students' mental health, and were informed that some provisions were funded with a focus in

particular on first-year undergraduates. Council were informed that a review was underway of the model of delivering support to students. A report would be made to Council in due course. Provost noted the need to consider a new approach for the next generation of students, and that his report made reference to highlighting work on next steps over and above the University Mental Health Charter.

- b. Responding to a question from Council about the potential role of People Committee in addressing mental health issues, the Chair provided details to Council that Nominations Committee had identified a member of Professional Services staff and external HR expert to be recommended for appointment to People Committee by Council.
- c. A concern was raised in connection with the potential group litigation claim about UCL's capacity to deal with the volume of complaints that it may receive in a short time. The General Counsel explained that SRS, ISD and Legal Services were working closely to ensure that the Student Complaints Team had sufficient resource, both in terms of staff and appropriate IT systems to be able to deal efficiently with the complaints that may arise.

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

103. Confidential: Marking and Assessment Boycott

103.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

103.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

103.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

104. Equality Monitoring Report (6-05)

104.1. Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost, introduced the Equality Monitoring Report.

104.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. Council noted that reference to the proportion of disabled PGR students had risen 'from 11% to 13%' (not 'to 133%'). It was agreed that the Report be corrected to reflect this.
- b. Responding to a comment from Council about the matter of disability and emergency access, the Provost confirmed to Council that matters relating to disability were a priority for the Pro-Provost (Equity and Inclusion) who would be joining UCL in July.
- c. A member of Council noted the turnover of staff in the EDI department. The Provost commented that this reflected a period of change for the team but was now stabilising. It would be a priority for the CPO to

support the team through the transition with the arrival of the Pro-
Provost (Equity and Inclusion).

- d. Council noted the role of People Committee in the context of Equality Monitoring, and the need for clarity about Council's role and priorities for People Committee.
- e. Council sought feedback about the level of non-continuance of students who had joined the University through widening participation schemes in comparison to other students. Provost repeated the commitment to broadening access to the University more generally, and noted that because the scheme was new data was not yet available to provide information to Council.

104.3. Council received the Equality Monitoring Report.

105. Workplace Health and Safety Report (6-06)

105.1. Dr Patrick Ward, Interim Executive Director of Health and Safety, and Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health, presented the Workplace Health and Safety Report for March and April 2023.

105.2. The following points were made in the presentation and discussion:

- a. Provost informed Council that addressing matters concerning fire safety were priorities and a fuller report would be brought to Council at its next meeting.
- b. The Interim Executive Director of Health and Safety commented that while the number of staff injury reports was increasing, the levels and instances remained below the sector benchmark and pre-pandemic levels. Student injury reports had been higher than the same period in 2022 but have remained relatively stable and similarly below pre-pandemic levels. There had been an improvement in the rates of incident reviews.
- c. Council was informed that changes to the review of data were anticipated. Council suggested the potential benefit of receiving more detailed reporting on significant incidents and what an outline of what could be learnt from any such incidents.
- d. The Director of Workplace Health informed Council that mental health remained the most significant factor in sickness absence, and that stress risk assessments were being reported to the University Management Committee.

105.3. Council noted the Workplace Health and Safety Report.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

106. Council reappointments (6-07)

- 106.1. Council approved that:
- a. Lord Sharkey be reappointed for a third term with effect from 1 October 2023
 - b. Dr Justin Turner be reappointed for a third term with effect from 1 October 2023
 - c. Sarah Whitney be reappointed for a third term with effect from 1 October 2023
 - d. Dominic Blakemore be reappointed for a fourth term with effect from 1 October 2024.

107. Retrospective re-election of Treasurer (6-08)

- 107.1. Council approved the retrospective re-election of Sarah Whitney as Treasurer from 1 October 2022.

108. Confidential: Fire Safety (6-09)

- 108.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

109. Confidential: April 2023 (P9) Month End Management Accounts (6-10)

- 109.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

110. Students' Union UCL: Revisions to Memorandum and Articles of Association (6-11)

- 110.1. Council noted that the paper had been withdrawn. This matter would be considered at a future meeting.

111. Safety & Compliance Task & Finish Group: Change to Group Membership (6-12)

- 111.1. Council approved changes to membership of the Group as set out in the paper.

112. Confidential: Statute 18: Proposed Appointment of two Tribunals (6-13)

- 112.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 112.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes

113. To Receive the Following Reports:

OfS Standing Report (6-14)

113.1. Council received the OfS Standing Report.

Action Taken by the Chair (6-15)

113.2. Council received the report on action taken by the Chair since the last report to Council.

113.3. In accordance with discussions at the Council meeting of 21 April 2023, the following action was taken by the Chair to approve:

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2023, subject to a number of changes being made.
- b. The establishment of a Safety and Compliance Task & Finish Group with the purpose, Terms of Reference and Membership as set out in Appendix 1 of the paper (Council 5-06, 2022-23).
- c. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Confidential: UCL Seal Report (6-16)

113.4. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Confidential: Current Litigation Summary (6-17)

113.5. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Confidential: Annual Report (2021/22) of Nominations Committee (6-18)

113.6. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

114. To Receive the Following Committee Minutes:

Audit Committee Unconfirmed Minutes, 3 April 2023 (6-19)

114.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Finance Committee Confirmed Minutes, 27 March 2023 (6-20)

114.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Finance Committee Unconfirmed Minutes, 22 May 2023 (6-21)

114.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Academic Board Unconfirmed Minutes, 10 May 2023 (6-22)

114.4. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

115. Council Schedule 2023/24 (6-23)

115.1. Council received and noted the schedule of dates for Council in 2023/24.

116. Any Other Business

- 116.1. A member of Council made a request for an update on work undertaken on the definition of Antisemitism. Provost undertook to provide an update following the meeting.

117. Date of the Next Meeting

- 117.1. The date of the next meeting of Council would be Thursday 13 July 2023.

Edward Hossack
Assistant Secretary to Council
June 2023