



COUNCIL

Wednesday 19 October 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Dame DeAnne Julius (*Chair*)

Professor Michael Arthur
(*President and Provost*)
Professor Lucie Clapp
Professor David Coen
Dr Martin Fry
Dr John Hurst
Mr Simon Melliss (*Treasurer*)
Ms Lindsay Nicholson
Baroness Warwick (*Vice-Chair*)

Mr Ven Balakrishnan
Ms Halima Begum
Lord Clement-Jones
Professor Annette Dolphin
Dr Andrew Gould
Ms Nahid Majid
Mr Zakariya Mohran
Mr Philip Sturrock
Dr Andrew Wills

In attendance: Ms Wendy Appleby (Secretary to Council); Dr Celia Caulcott (Vice-Provost (Enterprise and London)); Mr Philip Harding (Director of Finance and Business Affairs); Professor Graham Hart (Dean, Faculty of Population Health Sciences); Mrs Lori Houlihan (Vice-Provost (Development)); Mr Rex Knight (Vice-Provost (Operations)); Professor David Lomas (Vice-Provost (Health)); Mr Nick McGhee (Assistant Secretary to Council); Mrs Angharad Milenkovic (Deputy Director of Development); Professor David Price (Vice-Provost (Research)); Professor Anthony Smith (Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs)).

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Dominic Blakemore, Dame Nicola Brewer (Vice-Provost (International)) and Baroness Valentine.

Key to abbreviations used in these Minutes:

ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
BRC	Biomedical Research Centre
FRS	Financial Reporting Standard
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IoE	UCL Institute of Education
NIHR	National Institute for Health Research
NSS	National Student Survey
PGR	postgraduate research
PGT	postgraduate taught student
RDEC	R&D Expenditure Credit
SAUL	Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UCLU	UCL (Students') Union
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation
USS	Universities Superannuation Service

Preliminary Formal Business

1 INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed the two new elected members of Council, Professor Annette Dolphin and Dr Andrew Wills, and the two new student members, Ms Halima Begum and Mr Zakariya Mohran.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 No interests were declared.

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 **Approved:** the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12 July 2016 [*Council Minutes 62-80, 2015-16*], were confirmed by Council and signed by the Chair.

4 MATTERS ARISING

- 4.1 Three matters arising from the meeting of 12 July 2016 were carried over to the meeting of 29 November 2016. These related to the Council Effectiveness Review, the Regulations for Management, and the Terms of Reference and constitution/membership of other committees.

Matters for discussion

5 PROVOST'S BUSINESS

5A Student numbers

- 5A.1 15,745 students had graduated from UCL in the period September 2015–August 2016. This comprised 4,618 undergraduates, 9,604 postgraduate taught, and 1,523 postgraduate research students. 38,664 students had been enrolled, including 18,796 new enrolments. Student Residences and Student and Registry Services had delivered an improved student welcome process.

5B UCL Campaign

- 5B.1 The UCL Campaign, *It's all Academic*, had been launched on 15 September [*see Minute 16 below*] at an event attended by 1,600 people. £250m towards the £600m total had already been raised, with £4.5m raised in the week following the launch.

5C NIHR funding

5C.1 UCL's three biomedical research centres (BRCs) had won £167.8m funding from the latest five-yearly cycle of funding for health research from NIHR. This represented a significantly improved performance, particularly in comparison with some key competitors.

5D Brexit

5D.1 Two recent open meetings on the issue of Brexit had drawn attention to ongoing deep concern in the UCL community – and particularly amongst EU staff – regarding the impact of the Brexit vote. A series of clinics was being organised in order to provide staff with access to expert legal advice.

5D.2 The government had indicated that EU students enrolled at UK universities in 2017/18 would continue to be treated like UK students, and would have access to the loan book. Early indications were that there had been no downturn in interest from EU students in applying to UCL in 2017/18.

5D.3 The Chancellor had announced that the government would honour any existing EU research grants awarded once the UK had left the EU. The sector continued to have deep concerns however about the impact of the loss of access to European Research Council funding, notably in respect of its career development and research excellence awards. Concern was also being expressed about the apparent loss of autonomy for universities embodied in the HE bill currently progressing through parliament, as well as the proximity of the new UKRI to government.

5D.4 It was increasingly likely that the Teaching Excellence Framework would be adopted. This would permit a rise in fees to £9,250 and £9,500 in the first and second years respectively. Maximum fee levels would thereafter be linked to TEF results, which would be expressed by way of a gold, silver or bronze designation for each institution. This could in time result in differentiated fees for different groups of students. Universities would furthermore be required to develop a relationship with an academy, a free school or a failing school if they were to charge above the minimum fee level. UCL already had complex relationships with a number of schools as well as being sponsor of the UCL Academy, but early indications suggested that this would be deemed insufficient under the new requirements.

5E League tables

5E.1 The Provost summarised results of recent university league tables. UCL's position in international tables was generally holding steady, with an improvement in 2017 UK tables such as the Complete University Guide (10th) and the Sunday Times University tables (6th).

6 STUDENT EXPERIENCE – UPDATE

UCL 2034 THEME 2 / ENABLER A

[PAPER 1-01, 2016-17]

- 6.1 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) updated Council on progress towards achieving Principal Theme 2, 'A global leader in the integration of research and education, underpinning an inspirational student experience.'
- 6.2 The Education Strategy, setting out how UCL would deliver the Principal Theme, had been agreed during the past year [*Council Minute 44, 2015-16*]. The ASER process had been a significant success in helping departments to reflect on the delivery of education to students. NSS scores had improved by 1%, notably with the first significant improvements in scores for assessment and feedback for some time. The QAA five-yearly review in May 2016 had resulted in a positive outcome for UCL, with the Connected Curriculum, UCL Changemakers, and the Doctoral School's framework for postgraduate research identified as features of good practice.
- 6.3 Council discussed the factors behind the red traffic light assigned to progress against the objective 'to develop a teaching estate that is fit for purpose'. The KPIs were being considered and a revised suite would be submitted to Council in due course. It was noted that, in view of the wide divergence between the NSS scores of departments using the same central facilities, it was important not to allow issues with the teaching estate to mask the impact of other concerns on NSS scores.
- 6.4 'Assessment and Feedback' had been designated green as progress in this area was on target. Mandatory actions had been introduced at departmental level. Council noted however that UCL's performance in this area had been poor over a number of years, and that this was one element that was entirely within the institution's control.
- 6.5 The Registrar introduced the update on Enabler A, 'Giving our students the best support, facilities and opportunities'. It was intended that work would be done to capture and summarise the relevant strategies as part of a communication exercise with students. Over the coming year, an action plan would be developed for addressing student mental health issues. Student and Registry Services were working in partnership with UCLU on the earlier release of examination timetables and the wider student experience.
- 6.6 Data showed that PGT student satisfaction levels were lower than those of undergraduates. This was a particular challenge as most PGT students were at UCL for only a year, and were a growing population.

7 FINANCIAL UPDATE

UCL 2034 ENABLER C

[PAPER 1-02, 2016-17]

- 7.1 The Director of Finance and Business Affairs reported that the draft financial results for 2015-16 indicated an operating surplus of £45.6m or 3.5% of income, a little above forecast and budget for the year and on track towards the target of a 5.5% surplus by 2017-18. Each School was above the final forecast, though with some variation at Faculty level, and end of year cash balances were higher than forecast. It had not been necessary to call on the debt facility during 2015-16 as

expected, although £30m had been drawn down since the end of the financial year.

- 7.2 Mr Harding drew attention to the one-off and exceptional items contributing to the result, notably the complications around claiming RDEC tax credits. UCL was in discussion with its auditors about how to recognise income from a claim for tax credits in 2014-15. It was anticipated that the surplus figure would be confirmed as approximately £55m once the adjustments for these items had been made.
- 7.3 The new FRS 102 reporting standard would have a significant impact on reported results from 2015-16, principally in two respects: (1) the requirement to recognise UCL's share of USS and SAUL pension deficits (a liability of around £140m), and (2) the new requirement to recognise capital grant income for non-governmental grants as a single receipt, rather than phased to match depreciation. This would result in a significant spike in the income and expenditure accounts in 2015-16. It would therefore be necessary to provide an explanatory note in order to facilitate comparison with previous years.
- 7.4 The Treasurer congratulated UCL on hitting budget, but noted that there was still work to be done on improving in-year forecasting.

8 STAFF SURVEY

[PAPER 1-05, 2016-17]

Professor Graham Hart, Dean of the Faculty of Population Health Sciences (and Chair, SMT Staff Survey Group), was in attendance for this item.

- 8.1 The biennial UCL Staff Survey was most recently carried out in November 2015. Responses presented a mixed but generally positive picture. The overall engagement index was 72% with an especially high score of 84% of staff saying that their work gave them a sense of personal accomplishment. Compared to other UK universities, UCL exceeded the average by more than 5% on 10 questions and fell at least 5% below the average on 7 questions. However, Professor Hart noted the fall to a 42% completion rate, from 57% in 2013. Significant contributory factors were thought to include: the merger with the IoE (whose staff at that time would not yet have developed a strong view of UCL); the Service Effectiveness Review that had taken place shortly beforehand; and the campus trades unions' decision to advise members not to complete the survey.
- 8.2 Council thanked Professor Hart for the report, noting that it would be useful in future to have a headline breakdown between academic and professional services staff, and also high-level comparators against the Russell Group. Some members suggested that consideration be given to carrying out the survey annually in order to monitor changes in staff morale more closely.

Matters for approval or information

9 **COUNCIL: TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP; DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

[PAPER 1-06, 2016-17]

- 9.1 **Received** – Council’s Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for the year 2016-17. The ‘Duties and Responsibilities of members of Council’ document was also reissued for information.

10 **REGISTER OF INTERESTS 2016-17**

[PAPER 1-07, 2016-17]

- 10.1 **Received** – the annual declarations from Council members in the Register of Interests.
- 10.2 Council members and those in attendance signed their own entries in the Register during the course of the meeting.

11 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND CONSITUTIONS**

[PAPER 1-11, 2016-17]

[Council was inquorate for this item. The matter was discussed but no formal decision was taken.]

- 11.1 It was suggested that Council should consider the appointment of a student representative as a member of, rather than an observer at, the Investments Committee. The Treasurer noted that Investments Committee membership was contingent on investment expertise; it would also be difficult for a student member to develop any significant background knowledge in only a year in the role. It was suggested that the proposed arrangement be trialled and reviewed in a year’s time.
- 11.2 The matter would come back to Council for formal approval at the meeting on 29 November 2016.

12 **HEFCE DESIGNATION ORDER**

[PAPER 1-12, 2016-17]

- 12.1 **Received** – correspondence from HEFCE in relation to the designation of UCL as eligible for HEFCE funding.

13 **UCL SEAL – ANNUAL REPORT**

[PAPER 1-13, 2016-17]

- 13.1 **Received** – a report of sealings carried out between 1 October 2015 and 30 September 2016.

14 **MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES**
[PAPER 1-15, 2016-17]

14.1 **Received** – a note of minutes of Council committees received since the last report.

15 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

15.1 The next meeting was scheduled for 29 November 2016 at 4pm in the Council Room. *[Council members are asked to note the late start time].*

Wendy Appleby
Secretary to Council
October 2016