



COUNCIL

Tuesday 20 May 2014

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Sir Stephen Wall (*Chair*)

Professor Michael Arthur
(*President and Provost*)
Mr Mohammed Zayyan Butt
Ms Philippa Foster-Back
Mr Keir Gallagher
Mr Simon Melliss (*Treasurer*)
Dr Gill Samuels
Professor Chris Thompson
Baroness Warwick

Professor David Attwell
Mr Ven Balakrishnan
Lord Clement-Jones
Dr Martin Fry
Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia
Ms Vivienne Parry (*Vice-Chair*)
Dr Stephanie Schorge
Professor Nick Tyler

In attendance: Dame Nicola Brewer (Vice-Provost (International)); Mr Phil Harding (Director of Finance and Business Affairs); Dame DeAnne Julius (Chair-elect); Mr Rex Knight (Vice-Provost (Operations)); Mr Nick McGhee (Acting Secretary to Council); Professor Anthony Smith (Vice-Provost (Education)); Professor Sir John Tooke (Vice-Provost (Health)) and Mr Nigel Waugh (Director of Human Resources) [*for Minute 105*].

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Stephen Caddick (Vice-Provost (Enterprise)), Ms Carol Lake, Professor David Price (Vice-Provost (Research)), Ms Katharine Roseveare and Professor Maria Wyke.

Key to abbreviations used in these Minutes:

BME	black and minority ethnic
CCP	Centralised Complaints Procedure
FTE	full time equivalent
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IoE	Institute of Education
KCL	King's College London
KWI	Key Workforce Indicators
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
NSS	National Student Survey
SMT	Senior Management Team
UCLU	UCL (Students') Union

Preliminary Formal Business

98 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Noted

98.1 Any member of Council who had (or who knew of a family member who had) a material, personal, financial or other beneficial interest in any item on the Agenda was requested to declare that interest at the beginning of the meeting in order that such declaration could be recorded in these minutes. No such interests were declared.

Reported

98.2 The Chair requested that members inform the Secretary of any changes to their entry in the Register of Interests, last updated in October 2013.

99 **MINUTES**

99A **Minutes of the last meeting**

Approved

99A.1 The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 March 2014 [*Council Minutes 76-97, 2013-14*] were confirmed by Council and signed by the Chair.

100 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

[*See Minutes 101 and 103 below*]

Matters for discussion

101 **PROVOST'S BUSINESS**

Received

101.1 An oral report from Professor Michael Arthur, President and Provost.

101A **Appointments**

Reported

101A.1 The Provost drew attention to two recent key decanal appointments: Professor Nick Brook (University of Bristol) as Dean of the Faculty of

Mathematical and Physical Sciences, in succession to Professor Richard Catlow, and Professor Geraint Rees (Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, UCL) as Dean of the Faculty of Life Sciences, in succession to Professor Mary Collins.

101B National Student Survey

[Council Minute 57F, 2013-14]

Reported

101B.1 The NSS 2014 was now closed. UCL's response rate of 74% was above the national average for the first time, and was a significant improvement on the 62% response achieved in 2013. The Provost thanked Deans, Heads of Departments and the UCLU Sabbatical Officers for their hard work in achieving this result.

101C UCL 2034

[Council Minute 57D, 2013-14]

Reported

101C.1 The consultation process on UCL 2034 was now drawing to a close. Useful discussions had taken place at meetings of Academic Committee and Academic Board on 8 and 14 May respectively. The Provost commended in particular the feedback from the UCLU Sabbatical Officers. It was intended that a final draft be submitted to the SMT and then to the Council meeting on 8 July 2014.

101D Integrated Planning Exercise

Reported

101D.1 An integrated planning exercise, incorporating a significantly greater element of academic input than in previous planning rounds, was now under way. The exercise had revealed a general anticipation of additional academic posts that was not consistent with the budgetary realities. The planning exercise would inform the budget that was due to be submitted to the Council meeting on 8 July 2014.

101E Olympic Park

[Council Minute 97, 2013-14]

Reported

101E.1 The Interim Business Case for the Olympic Park project would be submitted to the Finance Committee meeting of 10 June and the Council meeting of 8 July. A feasibility project had been initiated in respect of the principal philanthropic prospects.

Discussion

101.2 A Council member requested that at a future meeting the Provost include, under Provost's Business, a summary of his view of the five principal risks facing the institution. This was agreed.

102 FINANCIAL UPDATE

Received

- 102.1 An oral report from Mr Phil Harding, Director of Finance and Business Affairs.

Reported

- 102.2 Provisional figures for Q3 suggested the surplus was ahead of budget in overall terms. This was attributable in part to higher than budgeted returns from property disposals, although the underlying operating performance was still positive.
- 102.3 In addition to the backdated reduction in the recurrent teaching grant discussed at the last meeting [*Council Minute 80E, 2013-14*], HEFCE had recently informed UCL that during an exercise to reconcile student data for 2011/12 a minor discrepancy in a single module had been discovered. This had the effect of changing the credit status of that module, which in turn had an impact on UCL's unit resource, resulting in a recalculation of the T-grant in respect of 'old regime' students for the three years 2011/12-2013/14. The impact was a further reduction of £1.4m in the current year. Noting that the error had previously been corrected, and that HEFCE had confirmed there were no issues with the years in question, Mr Harding confirmed that UCL would be appealing the decision on the grounds of its being disproportionate.

Discussion

- 102.4 Although the update reflected an improved financial performance, the rate of improvement was not yet as rapid as was demanded by a challenging target surplus. As noted at the last meeting, staff recruited ahead of the REF had not generated research income as quickly as had been projected, and there had been delays in securing the transfer of some existing research income [*Council Minute 81.9, 2013-14*]. Nevertheless, UCL had every financial lever required to address the situation.
- 102.5 The benchmarking exercise discussed at the last meeting [*Council Minute 81.6, 2013-14*] was under way. The first stage would generate information on the basis of publically available data on the LSE, Imperial and KCL. These results would then be used to focus attention on particular areas of interest. It was expected that a paper would be submitted to the Finance Committee in September.
- 102.6 Council discussed the appropriate metrics for monitoring the relative levels of investment in the estate and in staff. A range of new KPIs was currently under discussion. UCL did not at present have an adequate mechanism for disincentivising academic growth within departments where the full economic cost of such expansion was not being adequately recognised.

103 **VICE-PROVOST (INTERNATIONAL) REPORT**

Received

- 103.1 APPENDIX C 5/78 (13-14) – a report from the Vice-Provost (International).
- 103.2 Oral reports from Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education) and outgoing Vice-Provost (International), and Dame Nicola Brewer, newly appointed Vice-Provost (International).

Discussion

- 103.3 It was confirmed that the proposal for a new consultancy contract with the Nazarbayev University School of Engineering was not intended to extend beyond the summer of 2015.
- 103.4 A student member of Council raised concerns held by some of the student body in relation to interactions between UCL Australia and industry, particularly with reference to academic staff carrying out research that was of potential interest to donor organisations. The paramount importance of academic freedom, and the fundamental need for academic staff to be free to carry out research in whatever fields they felt appropriate, was noted.
- 103.5 The newly appointed Vice-Provost (International), Dame Nicola Brewer, reported that she was currently engaged in developing an understanding of the extent and nature of UCL's overseas activities. She would then embark on a consultation on the future of the International Strategy, working in partnership with the International Strategy Board, and informed by the UCL 2034 strategy. Dame Nicola would also wish to reconsider in due course whether UCL's internal structures were appropriate for delivery of the strategy.
- 103.6 The Chair welcomed Dame Nicola to UCL, and thanked Professor Anthony Smith, on behalf of Council, for his work as Vice-Provost (International) over the past seven months.

104 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE – UPDATE**

Received

- 104.1 APPENDIX C 5/79 (13-14) – an update on progress in managing the provision of learning and teaching spaces in the context of increasing student numbers (at Annexe 1); and steps being taken to improve the student experience (at Annexe 2).
- 104.2 Oral reports from Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education) and Mr Rex Knight, Vice-Provost (Operations).

Discussion

- 104.3 Two space utilisation surveys had indicated that there was scope for improvement in the utilisation rates of UCL facilities. It was also clear that the space available was not ideally suited to the range of class sizes. The acquisition of Bidborough House had given significant flexibility in managing the projected increases in student numbers.
- 104.4 Council noted the results of the recent THE Student Experience Survey 2014. The number of UCL students responding to this particular survey had been low; unlike the NSS, the Student Experience Survey did not require statistically significant response rates in order for the results to be published. It was agreed that the Vice-Provost (Education) would include data from the more useful Student Barometer in his next report to Council.
- 104.5 Noting the launch of UCL Arena, Council discussed the training of teaching staff and the inclusion of development activities as a key part of the portfolio of evidence in promotion criteria.
- 104.6 At its meeting on 27 November 2013 Council had discussed UCL's NSS 2013 satisfaction score for student union facilities. It was noted that the Union had since undertaken extensive market research to help it address the issue [*Council Minute 27.8, 2013-14*].
- 104.7 Council discussed the potential contribution of the UCLU to the development of understanding of issues relating to the student experience. It was suggested that there was scope for practical feedback in this regard in the oral report from outgoing student members scheduled for the final meeting of the academic year [*Council Minute 60.5, 2013-14*].

105 KEY WORKFORCE INDICATORS / EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

Received

- 105.1 APPENDIX C 5/80 (13-14) – The Key Workforce Indicators (KWI) Report for 2014, a summary list of agreed actions arising from the KWI report (at Annexe 1) and an annual report on Equalities and Diversity (at Annexe 2).
- 105.2 An oral report from Mr Nigel Waugh, Director of Human Resources.

Reported

- 105.3 The accountability framework for equalities and diversity had now been in place for a year. Copies of the action plans development by Faculties and Vice-Provosts' offices were available on the Council Sharepoint.
- 105.4 Mr Waugh drew particular attention to: UCL's relatively low staff turnover; the steady reduction in the professorial gender pay gap; a rise in the proportion of female academic promotions; and a 22% rise in the workforce in the last two years, such that UCL was now fourth in

the UK on staff FTEs. Two serious issues were highlighted in the report: the disappointing completion rates for staff appraisals, and the success rates of job applicants from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds. Council was urged to remain mindful however of what could realistically be achieved within the legal framework and against the background of UCL's low staff turnover. Progress had to be evolutionary.

Discussion

- 105.5 Council members expressed their deep concern at the data presented in the report relating to application, shortlisting and appointment rates for BME candidates, although it was suggested that the data would be more useful if unqualified applicants were first discounted. UCL had recently introduced anonymised applications for administrative, technical and manual positions. A requirement for all appointment panels to include a minimum of 25% women had been introduced, and completion of fair recruitment training was mandatory for members of interview panels. It was agreed that the data would be sent to Heads of Department with a request that they disseminate it to staff. It was observed that no good reason had been advanced why progress should not be revolutionary rather than evolutionary.
- 105.6 Council discussed the options for sanction in the case of poor rate of completion of staff appraisals by managers; it was noted, however, that the completion of appraisals could not be linked by decision of senior management to the awarding of pay increases as this would amount to a change in terms and conditions, which would require the agreement of the campus trade unions.
- 105.7 It was noted that greater diversity of speakers at UCL conferences, or of the shortlists for prizes, would also constitute important statements of UCL's commitment in this area.
- 105.8 Council was informed of the concerns of an increasing minority of staff, principally Teaching Fellows and Postdoctoral Research Associates, over the perceived ambiguity of their status, and the sense of disenfranchisement arising from their exclusion from the membership of certain senior bodies.
- 105.9 With respect to UCL's ageing workforce, it was noted that the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had introduced an Employer Justified Retirement Age, but that this had yet to be subject to legal challenge.
- 105.10 Despite concerns over the rate of progress in some areas, Council congratulated the Director of HR and his colleagues on the quality of the management information, and noted the significant achievement of getting the Faculty action plans in place.
- 105.11 Summing up, the Chair congratulated HR on capturing the data. Real progress has been made in some faculties but, at the present rate of progress, it would take UCL decades to reach its employment targets for women in senior academic posts and for the recruitment of BME staff.

Progress in this area had to be a high priority; Council attached importance to the implementation of the new arrangements whereby Vice-Provosts and Deans had responsibility under their objectives for achieving that progress. The Chair would not necessarily characterise progress needed as revolutionary but it certainly needed, in Council's view, to be radical. The decline in completion of staff appraisals was inexcusable.

106 INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

Received

- 106.1 APPENDIX C 5/81 (13-14) – an update on the proposed merger of the Institute of Education and UCL, with a proposal that the parties move to formal negotiations on the merger.

Discussion

- 106.2 The student unions of the two institutions were autonomous bodies and it would be for them to decide on their preferred arrangements if the merger were to proceed. In view of the intention to effect a minimal change from the date of merger, however, it was anticipated that the two unions would continue to operate as distinct bodies for the remainder of the academic year 2014-15.

RESOLVED – on recommendation of Academic Board

- 106.3 **That Council approve the recommendation that UCL continue with negotiations, undertake due diligence and carry out whatever other steps the Provost considers necessary with preparing for potential merger, as outlined at APPENDIX C 5/81 (13-14).**

Matters for approval or information
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107 REPLACEMENT OF CENTRALISED COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Received

- 107.1 APPENDIX C 5/82 (13-14) – a note summarising the history of UCL's Centralised Complaints Procedure (CCP) and proposing its discontinuation with effect from 1 June 2014, subject to implementation with effect from the same date of arrangements set out for dealing with complaints about UCL from those who were not current staff or students of UCL.

RESOLVED

- 107.2 **That the discontinuation of the Centralised Complaints Procedure with effect from 1 June 2014 be approved.**

108 **REGULATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT**

Received

- 108.1 APPENDIX C 5/83 (13-14) –proposed amendments to UCL Regulation for Management 9 which governs the award of UCL Honorary Degrees and Honorary Fellowships.

RESOLVED – *on recommendation of the Provost*

- 108.2 **That the proposed amendments to UCL Regulation for Management 9 be approved.**

109 **LAY MEMBERSHIP OF FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Received

- 109.1 APPENDIX C 5/84 (13-14) – the proposed appointment of two lay members of Finance Committee with effect from 1 October 2014.

RESOLVED – *on recommendation of Nominations Committee*

- 109.2 **That the proposed appointments of Ms Sarah Whitney and Mr Richard Smothers as lay members of Finance Committee be approved.**

110 **INSTITUTE OF HEALTH INFORMATICS**

Received

- 110.1 APPENDIX C 5/85 (13-14) – a proposal to establish an Institute of Health Informatics, as an academic unit of UCL as defined in Statute 10, with effect from 1 August 2014.

RESOLVED – *on recommendation of Academic Board*

- 110.2 **That the proposal to establish the Institute of Health Informatics as an academic unit of UCL be approved.**

111 **REVIEW OF LEAD OFFICER ARRANGEMENTS**

Received

- 111.1 APPENDIX C 5/86 (13-14) – an effectiveness review of the Lead Officer arrangements which were put in place following the disestablishment of a number of UCL's standing committees following the 2010 review of the UCL committee system.

RESOLVED – on recommendation of Academic Board

111.2 **That the effectiveness review of the Lead Officer arrangements at APPENDIX C 5/86 (13-14) be approved.**

112 HEFCE ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL RISK

Received

112.1 APPENDIX C 5/87 (13-14) – a letter from the Chief Executive of HEFCE to the Provost, regarding HEFCE’s risk assessment of UCL.

113 AWARDS AND HONOURS

Noted

113.1 APPENDIX C 5/88 (13-14) – the details of awards, appointments, elections and honours relating to UCL staff since the last report to Council.

114 CHAIR’S ACTION

Noted

114.1 APPENDIX C 5/89 (13-14) – details of action taken by the Chair on behalf of Council since the previous update.

115 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted

115.1 The next meeting of Council was scheduled for Tuesday 8 July at 4pm.

Nick McGhee
Acting Secretary to Council
May 2014