



Financial Performance Committee

Wednesday 12 January 2022, 2:00pm
Web conferencing meeting via MS Teams

Minutes

Present Members:

Ms Beth Beasant; Professor D'Maris Coffman; Ms Sara Collins; Mr Geoff Dunk; Ms Charu Gorasia; Ms Tansy Jones; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Professor Anthony Smith; Ms Julie Smith.

Apologies:

Mr Simon Buller
Dr Thea Gibbs
Ms Fiona Ryland

In attendance

Dr Matthew Blain – Chief People Officer [for minutes 1 – 6]
Ms Elizabeth Francis - Director of Financial Planning and Analysis [for minutes 1 – 6]
Mr Ian Galloway – Director, Commercial Operations [for minutes 1 – 6]
Ms Clare Glen – Executive Director, Research and Innovation Services [for minutes 1 – 6]
Dr Clare Goudy – Provost's Chief of Staff [for minutes 1 – 6]
Ms Natasha Lewis – Nominee of General Counsel [for minutes 1 – 6]
Mr Derfel Owen – Registrar and Director of Student and Registry Services [for minute 4]
Ms Kate Pearce - Director of Finance Business Partnering [for minutes 1 – 6]
Dr Michael Spence – President and Provost [for minutes 1 – 6]

Officer:

Ms Freya Markwell – Secretary to FPC

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1. The Provost welcomed attendees to the inaugural meeting of the new Financial Performance Committee (FPC) and provided a brief overview of the purpose of the committee. By tracking UCL's financial performance against budgets, reviewing core cost drivers in UCL's activities and making recommendations to the University Management Committee (UMC), the

establishment of this new committee would tighten financial controls across the institution and help to identify where resources might be reallocated to carry out new projects.

2. Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership (1-01)

- 2.1. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented a set of proposed amendments to the FPC's Terms of Reference, constitution and membership for the committee's consideration and approval. The following key points were highlighted:
- a. The proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference were intended to set out more clearly the active role to be played by the FPC in monitoring and overseeing the management of finances at UCL.
 - b. On the question of the distinction between the role of the FPC and the existing Finance Committee, it was explained that the Finance Committee was a non-executive committee made up of members of Council, whilst the FPC was made up of an executive membership. Additionally, the focus of Finance Committee was primarily institutional whereas the focus of the FPC would be more intra-institutional.
 - c. Whilst members of FPC were on the committee as representatives of their individual business areas or faculties, it was important that as a corporate decision-making body, the FPC retained a focus on the institution as a whole.
 - d. One key change to the membership was the addition of the Provost as Chair of the committee; this was to help set the tone from the start, given the cultural change and significance to the institution of this new committee.
- 2.2. A number of points were raised during discussion, including:
- a. A question was raised regarding the committee's relationship with Estates Management Committee (EMC). The CFO confirmed this was being looked into with a review of the delegations across the committees; it was anticipated that EMC would have some delegations on approvals.
 - b. In response to a question, the CFO confirmed that the £5m referenced within the amended Terms of Reference represented a total lifecycle value as opposed to an annual figure. This would be clarified within the amended Terms of Reference.
 - c. The Terms of Reference would be updated to clarify the committee's position in relation to research. Whilst it was not anticipated that individual research grant awards would be scrutinised, it was noted that research played a key part in the institution's finances which should be taken into account.
 - d. A concern was raised as to how prescriptive the FPC would be in its recommendations. It was suggested that this was something to be worked out as the committee establishes itself.

- e. There was discussion over the definition of ‘business case’ for the purposes of determining whether a project needed to be brought to the FPC for review, and how these would be kept track of. The Provost suggested that this be tested out in collaboration with the finance officers within faculties in the first instance.
- 2.3. FPC approved the proposed amendments to its Terms of Reference, constitution and membership as outlined within the paper, subject to three further clarifications to be incorporated within the Terms of Reference as follows:
- a. That the FPC will not look at individual research grant applications; except where the total UCL contribution over the lifetime of the award is £5m or higher.
 - b. FPC will look at financial performance of research income and spend as a key element of the overall UCL financial performance, this may include reviewing individual grant awards, funder portfolios or other data where it supports understanding the financial performance of research income and spend.
 - c. That the £5m referred to within the amended Terms of Reference item 5 represents total contract value not annual value, for clarity this includes innovation contracts.
- The amendments would be submitted to the UMC for formal approval.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

3. Confidential: Financial Report Dashboards for month end 30 November 2021 (1-02)

- 3.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 3.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 3.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

4. Confidential: Follow Up: Student Number Planning (1-03)

- 4.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 4.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
- 4.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

5. Date of the next meeting

5.1. February 2022 (specific date TBC)

Freya Markwell, FPC Secretary
January 2022