



Academic Board

Wednesday 7 February 2024¹

MINUTES

Present: Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost (Chair).

Dr Ali Abolfathi; Professor Ibrahim Abubakar; Dr Simona Aimar; Jennifer Akinola; Dr Bojan Aleksov; Professor Daniel Alexander; Dr Tamara Alhilfi; Adnan Ali; Professor Nazif Alic; Professor Gareth Ambler; Professor Aida Andres; Professor Lynn Ang; Professor Haki Antonsson; Professor Kathleen Armour; Professor Tomaso Aste; Dr Glory Atilola; Professor Juliette Atkinson; Professor David Attwell; Professor Jan Axmacher; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Sakiru Badmos; Professor Gianluca Baio; Professor Torsten Baldeweg; Professor Yolande Barnes; Professor Kathryn Batchelor; Dr Neha Batura; Dr Hanna Baumann; Professor Polina Bayvel; Professor Mette Berg; Preetika Bharti; Professor Zoltan Biedermann; Professor Stephanie Bird; Professor Martin Bobak; Robert Bodden; Professor Jan Boehm; Kate Boldry; Professor Noemie Bouhana; Dr Neus Bover Fonts; Dr Jeff Bowersox; Professor Alice Bradbury; Dr Raina Brands; Professor Annie Britton; Professor Jamie Brown; Professor Rob Brownstone; Professor Alex Bryson; Dr Suzy Buckley; Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo; Professor Tim Button; Dr Boyana Buyuklieva; Professor Fabio Caccioli; Tadhg Caffrey; Professor Lisa Calderwood; Noël Caliste; Professor Licia Capra; Professor Matteo Carandini; Professor Tom Carlson; Professor Claire Carmalt; Professor Madeline Carr; Professor Paola Ceccarelli; Dr Edith Chan; Professor Richard Chandler; Dr Declan Chard; Nidhi Chaudhary; Shaban Chaudhary; Professor Umber Cheema; Professor Julian Childs; Dr Evangelia Chrysikou; Professor Vijay Chudasama; Andrew Churchill; Professor Olga Ciccarelli; Professor Beverley Clark; Professor D'Maris Coffman; Professor Barbara Conradt; Professor Andrew Copp; Kimberly Cornfield; Dr Sarah Correia; Dr Ludovic Coupaye; Dr Damian Cummings; Professor Izzat Darwazeh; Dr Jason Davies; Professor Sally Day; Professor Dina D'Ayala; Professor Jan Derry; Professor Dagmara Dimitriou; Professor Jason Dittmer; Professor Snezana Djordjevic; Dr Alex Donovan; Elizabeth Dow; Dominique Draï; Professor Adam Dubis; Professor Karen Duff; Professor Oliver Duke-Williams; Professor Ian Eames; Professor Simon Eaton; Dr Karen Edge; Professor Michael Ehrenstein; Dr Alex Elwick; Dr Andrew Embleton-Thirsk; Dr Emily Emmott; Professor Rebecca Empson; Professor Susan Evans; Dr Lorenzo Fabrizi; Professor Joanna Faure Walker; Professor Carina Fearnley; Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Professor Emla Fitzsimons; Dr Andrew Flinn; Dr David Foster; Professor Eric Fraga; Dr Lisa Fridkin; Dr Bettina Friedrich; Professor David Frost; Dr Federico Galvanin; Professor Caroline Garaway; Professor Sebastian Gardner; Dr Anna Garnett; Professor Haidy

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference.

Geismar; Professor Mark Geller; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Guido Germano; Hayley Gewer; Professor Alasdair Gibb; Professor Shirli Gilbert; Professor Sam Gilbert; Professor Faye Gishen; Polly Glegg; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Dr Rebecca Gordon; Professor Eric Gordy; Professor Lesley Gourlay; Professor John Gray; Professor Alistair Greig; Professor Lewis Griffin; Professor Ann Griffin; Professor Michael Grubb; Professor Francois Guesnet; Professor David Guile; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Dr Hassan Haghparast-Bidgoli; Professor Stephen Hailes; Martin Hall; Rachel Hall; Jesper Hansen; Professor Kirstine Hansen; Professor Kenneth Harris; Professor Adham Hashibon; Professor Michael Heinrich; Dr Katie Hemer; Professor Mark Hewitson; Professor Rachel Hiller; Professor Evangelos Himonides; Dr Joshua Hollands; Professor Jie Huang; Dr Charles Inskip; Professor Richard Jackman; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Professor Helene Joffe; Professor Heather Jones; Professor Tim Jordan; George Joseph; Professor Yvonne Kelly; Professor Nicoletta Kessarais; Dr Amit Khandelwal; Leigh Kilpert; Professor John King; Professor James Kirkbride; Professor Martin Koltzenburg; Professor Nikolaos Konstantinidis; Professor Alison Koslowski; Edyta Kostanek; Professor Kristen Kreider; Dr Danielle Lamb; Dr Sandra Leaton Gray; Professor Alena Ledeneva; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Professor Paola Lettieri; Dr Jonathan Lezmy; Professor Li Wei; Amy Lightstone; Professor Allison Littlejohn; Professor Vladimir Litvak; Professor Chaozong Liu; Professor Alison Lloyd; Dr Kris Lockyear; Dr Lorenzo Lotti; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Dr Antony Makrinos; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Professor Miriam Manchin; Professor Virginia Mantouvalou; Dr Joanne Marks; Professor Christos Masouros; Professor Manolis Mavrikis; Connor Mawer; Professor Margaret Mayston; Dr Claire McAndrew; Dr Ruth McGinity; Dr Jennifer McGowan; Dr Alison McKinlay; Professor Anne McMunn; Professor Francesca Medda; Dr Clare Melhuish; Professor Jing Meng; Professor Susan Michie; Professor Grant Mills; Professor John Mitchell; Professor Richard Mole; Professor Sara Mole; Professor Ruth Morgan; Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti; Professor Gemma Moss; Dr Guy Moss; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde; Professor Steven Murdoch; Professor Mirco Musolesi; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Dr Marga Navarrete; Dr H el ene Neveu Kringelbach; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Mengyan Nie; Professor Mignon Nixon; Professor Lorraine Noble; Dr Alex Norori-McCormac; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Susan O'Neill; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Ben Page; Dr Ioannis Papaioannou; Professor Amos Paran; Professor Jenny Parkes; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Sandip Patel; Professor Hira Patra; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Jane Perryman; Professor Justyna Petke; Professor James Phillips; Professor Franck Pichaud; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Dr Anna Ponomareva; Professor John Potter; Alexandra Potts; Dr Ayanna Prevatt-Goldstein; Professor David Pym; Professor Slavo Radosevic; Dr Sangaralingam Ramesh; Professor Lele Rangaka; Professor Davide Ravasi; Dr Padhmaja Ravichandar; Professor Margaret Rawes; Professor Samantha Rayner; Professor Kieren Reed; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Rebecca Rees; Dr Jill Reese; Professor Anna Remington; Professor Jane Rendell; Dr Ruth Reynolds; Professor Antonella Riccio; Professor Mary Richardson; Dr Miguel Rivera; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Jennifer Rodd; Dr Anna Roffey; Dr Igor Rogelja; Professor Caine Rolleston; Dr Suzanne Ruddy; Professor Patricia Salinas; Dr John-Paul Salter; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Alexander Samson; Professor Timothy Scanlon; Professor Ingrid Schoon; Professor Stephanie Schorge; Professor Eloise Scotford; Professor Toby Seddon; Professor Andrea Sella; Professor Alessio

Serafini; Professor Mala Shah; Professor Lion Shahab; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Dr Miranda Sheild Johansson; Professor Nicola Shelton; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Professor Lorraine Sherr; Dr Victoria Showunmi; Justin Siefker; Professor Talvinder Sihra; Professor Ricardo Silva; Professor Michael Singer; Professor Jolene Skordis-Worrall; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Issy Smith; Dr Daphne Sobolev; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Judy Stephenson; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Fiona Stevenson; Professor Jack Stilgoe; Professor Sabine Storp; Professor Joshua Stott; Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Dorota Studniarczyk; Dr Mike Sulu; Dr Bugra Susler; Professor Alastair Sutcliffe; Bryan Taylor; Dr Becky Taylor; Professor Irving Taylor; Professor Olga Thomas; Professor James Thomas; Professor Jon Thomson; Professor Ulrich Tiedau; Dr Eleanor Tillett; Dr Matteo Tiratelli; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Simon To; Martyn Towner; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Kimberley Trapp; Professor Georgios Tsakos; Dr Helen Tsui; Professor Coşkun Tunçer; Dr Richard Tunwell; Professor Katherine Twamley; Professor Liz Varga; Professor Laura Vaughan; Dr Michael Veale; Dr Nalini Vittal; Dr Julia Wagner; Dr Zachary Walker; Professor Nicola Walshe; Breege Whiten; Professor Edward Wild; Professor Duncan Wilson; Georgina Wilson-Cousins; Dr Elliott Wimmer; Professor Matthew Wing; Dr Nick Witham; Michael Wozniak; Dr Punam Yadav; Dr Victoria Yorke-Edwards; Dr Anselm Zdebik; Professor Shi Zhou; Professor Stan Zochowski.

In attendance: Simon Buller; Aimie Chapple; Professor Parama Chaudhury; Natalie Connor; Sarah Cowls; Donna Dalrymple; Ian Dancy; Charu Gorasia; Dr Clare Goudy; Ed Hossack; Nick McGhee; Angharad Milenkovic; Turlogh O'Brien; David Pacey; Andy Smith; Lizzie Vinton; Kirsty Walker; Julie Whetton; Olivia Whiteley; Dr Kathryn Woods.

Part I: Preliminary Business

15 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

- 15.1 The minutes of the meeting of 1 November 2023 [AB Minutes 1-14, 2023-24] were confirmed.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

16 PROVOST'S REPORT (Paper 2-01)

- 16.1 The Provost briefed Academic Board on the development of a suite of 11 priority projects for 2023-24 in support of the programme of change underpinning the commitments made in the Strategic Plan. This work would facilitate consideration of the interdependencies between the projects alongside key business-as-usual service improvement activity, as well as addressing the question of the most appropriate pace of change and the burden on staff.
- 16.2 The work could be grouped into three thematic areas: (i) staff and student experience (including: the head of department role; disciplinary reform; EDI

strategic review; functions); (ii) giving staff the tools to do the job (including: delegations; digital strategy; estates masterplan; programme excellence [see Minute 17 below]); and (iii) planning for the future (including: admissions and student number planning; shape). Some of the elements listed in the paper constituted a single stage of a longer process, in which case further discussions at Academic Board would be required as the projects progressed.

- 16.3 In respect of the working groups mentioned in the paper, the Provost noted the need for the membership to reflect the nature of the project and to include not only experts on the issue in question, but also those who could give the perspective of staff with no particular vested interest in the matter.
- 16.4 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Experience) summarised the recent guidance on AI and Assessment. This suggested that from 2024-25 at least 50% of assessment in each module should wherever possible be in an ‘AI-proof’ format. This was not mandatory, not least because of the discipline-specific nature of the best solutions in each area. Members urged that the question of AI be considered in the context of a broader framework than that of assessment alone, as it raised wider issues about the quality of critical thinking inculcated in students. AB also discussed the resourcing of any return to in-person exams, particularly with reference to the question of handwritten or typed scripts. Making provision for the latter would be costly but would nevertheless be considered further. Members also noted the value of investment in staff training on assessment literacy in the context of the challenges of AI.
- 16.5 The Provost’s report addressed the issue of activities on campus relating to the conflict in the Middle East. A member expressed concerns about the prominence given in the report to the management of campus events, particularly the question of what could and could not be said at such events, and queried the reasons for UCL’s having considered as unacceptable some of the language used in motions issued by the UCU in October. The Provost acknowledged the concerns but noted that the report was not a comprehensive statement of what UCL was doing to support student groups affected by the conflict. UCL was attempting to be as neutral as possible in the application of the rules. Members drew attention to the complexity of the conflict and the unhelpful nature of any discourse that characterised it as necessarily dualistic. The Provost also noted the issue of the psychological impact on Muslim students of the Prevent Duty.
- 16.6 Members also raised the following issues in response to the Provost’s report:
- a) The shortfall in home PGT student recruitment in 2023/24 in the context of the post-pandemic conversations about online delivery and outreach to potential UK and EU students. The Provost acknowledged that the 2023/24 experience, whilst reflecting changes in the home PGT market, has also drawn attention to structural weaknesses in UCL’s approach to admissions and that with hindsight there was more that could have been done to mitigate a challenging situation. A briefing on this issue would be provided to Academic Board.

- b) A member raised the issue of inefficiencies in the use of energy on campus, including in new buildings. The Provost asked the Vice-President (Operations) to liaise with the member concerned on this question.
- c) In response to a question it was confirmed that UCL had no ongoing contracts with Fujitsu.
- d) In response to a query regarding the referencing of the IHRA definition of antisemitism in a letter to a student about an ongoing disciplinary case, the Provost confirmed that the approach taken had been reviewed to ensure that it was in accordance with UCL's position that the definition was to be used for educative purposes and did not supersede existing law and UCL policy.
- e) The Provost noted that progress was being made on the research contract approval process, and that UCL was in the process of developing clearer benchmarks and improvement customer satisfaction data.

17 PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE (Paper 2-02)

17.1 As the meeting was short of time, Academic Board did not discuss this item in detail. In response to a question it was confirmed that ownership of the question of cognate programmes would reside at departmental level.

17.2 Slides on this item would be made available to Academic Board.

18 EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (Paper 2-03)

18.1 As the meeting was short of time, Academic Board did not discuss this item, but it was confirmed that written answers to the questions set out in the GCAB memo would be circulated to Academic Board.

19 IOE ESTATES MASTERPLAN (Paper 2-04)

19.1 Members of the IoE's Social Research Institute and the Department of Psychology and Human Development outlined their concerns about their experience of a recent relocation following exits from leased buildings on Woburn Square, and the need to consider how this kind of process could be improved for the future.

19.2 The project had been delivered within the framework of the IoE Masterplan, which had been launched in 2018. The logic behind the Masterplan, ie the search for efficient use of space and the bringing together of fragmented departments, was accepted by the departments concerned. However staff reported that the process had not worked well and that this had resulted in poor outcomes with space that was in some respects not fit for purpose. The problems were generally considered to have originated in the concept and approach to the project; members recorded their thanks to individual colleagues from Estates for their work in seeking to address those problems at the later stages of the process. It was suggested however that this would not have been necessary if the process had been better designed and conceived from the outset.

- 19.3 Members considered that the process had been under-resourced and over-hasty. Conceptualising it as a logistics challenge failed to take account of the pedagogic needs particular to the academic fields in question. Members suggested that the departments had been largely excluded from decision-making, with insufficient attention paid to departmental needs. The impacts of this had included the necessity of moving office hours for students online, and a failure to account for specific equality and diversity needs. A number of suggestions were made for the improvement of such projects in future, including a more strategic leadership role for the Dean and for HoDs, and the need for consultation not only to be carried out but listened to.
- 19.4 It was explained that the IoE masterplan itself had involved extensive staff and student engagement. The Masterplan Board had been chaired by the Dean and had included HoDs on the membership. However the relocation of the two departments from Woburn Square had been added to the Masterplan project in late 2020 and governed through the Project Board. In hindsight, it was considered that a separate governance process was likely to have been more effective.
- 19.5 In the course of discussion the following additional points were made:
- a) The culture in commercial real estate was shifting away from ‘top down’ masterplans towards a greater focus on communication with end-users. Traditional project management practices were less important than day-to-day management of people in space, but this was inherently a resource-intensive area.
 - b) Academic staff should be involved in shaping the environment they were working in. Processes of this type should start with co-design, not simply consultation. This was challenging in view of the mismatch between the level at which a scarce, common pool of resource had to be managed in order to work for the institution as a whole, and the interests of a specific community of co-designers. UMC had a role to play in addressing that gap.
 - c) It was suggested that in view of the discipline-specific nature of academic space utilisation it would be useful to start with a generic statement of the baseline facilities that were needed for a productive academic environment, which could then be extended to incorporate the additional requirements of individual academic communities.
- 19.6 The Provost concluded by noting the need to discuss the set of principles for the development of the campus with a group including members of Academic Board in order to develop these into the principles for this kind of process involving concentric communities of practice.

20 **ACADEMIC BOARD MEMBERSHIP: TERM 2 UPDATE** (Paper 2-05)

- 20.1 The Chair of GCAB raised the issue of the current absence of a full complement of Faculty Tutors, due to changes in personnel and a trend away from using the Faculty Tutor title for education leads. The Provost confirmed that this would be reviewed.

Part III: Other business for approval or information

- 21 **ELECTIONS TO AND FROM ACADEMIC BOARD** (Paper 2-06)
21.1 Noted.
- 22 **SUSPENSION AND EXCLUSION OF STUDENTS** (Paper 2-07)
22.1 Noted.
- 23 **STATUTE 18 WORKING GROUP – MEMBERSHIP** (Paper 2-08)
23.1 Noted.
- 24 **MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES** (Paper 2-09)
24.1 Noted.
- 25 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**
25.1 Wednesday 8 May 2024 at 2-4pm.

Nick McGhee
Secretary to Academic Board
Tel: [+44] (0)20 3108 8217 / email: n.mcghee@ucl.ac.uk