



Academic Board

Wednesday 8 May 2024¹

MINUTES

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

Dr Mojtaba Abdi-Jalebi; Dr Ali Abolfathi; Dr Simona Aimar; Dr Bojan Aleksov; Professor Gareth Ambler; Dr Jake Anders; Professor Kathleen Armour; Professor Jonathan Ashmore; Professor Tomaso Aste; Dr Glory Atilola; Professor Juliette Atkinson; Professor Jan Axmacher; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Jurg Bahler; Professor Gianluca Baio; Dr Neha Batura; Professor Yasminah Beebeejaun; Emily Bellshaw; Professor Mette Berg; Professor Michael Berkowitz; Professor Jeff Bezemer; Professor Stephanie Bird; Robert Bodden; Dr Neus Bover Fonts; Dr Jeff Bowersox; Professor Steven Bramwell; Dr Raina Brands; Professor Tanya Bressey; Dr Damian Bright; Professor Annie Britton; Professor Geraldine Brodie; Professor Jamie Brown; Professor Rob Brownstone; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Suzy Buckley; Professor Richard Bucknall; Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo; Professor Gaetano Burriesci; Professor Jon Butterworth; Dr Boyana Buyuklieva; Tadhg Caffrey; Noël Caliste; Professor Benjamin Caplin; Professor Licia Capra; Dr Velia Cardin; Professor Claire Carmalt; Professor Madeline Carr; Professor David Cassidy; Professor Paola Ceccarelli; Dr Edith Chan; Professor Richard Chandler; Dr Declan Chard; Professor Elaine Chase; Shaban Chaudhary; Professor Umber Cheema; Professor Julian Childs; Professor Beverley Clark; Professor Benjamin Clifford; Professor D'Maris Coffman; Dr Alun Coker; Dr Silvie Cooper; Kimberly Cornfield; Dr Sarah Correia; Professor Nicola Countouris; Dr Ludovic Coupaye; Professor Alessandro Cozzi-Lepri; Dr Hélène Crutzen; Dr Jason Davies; Professor Sally Day; Professor Jan Derry; Dr Duygu Dikicioglu; Professor Snezana Djordjevic; Professor Annette Dolphin; Dr Alex Donovan; Dr Johanna Donovan; Elizabeth Dow; Dominique Draï; Professor Paulo Drinot; Professor Oliver Duke-Williams; Dr Karen Edge; Professor Sohier Elneil; Dr Alex Elwick; Professor Marc Esteve; Professor Susan Evans; Shirui Fan; Professor Suzanne Farid; Professor Joanna Faure Walker; Professor Carina Fearnley; Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes; Dr Liory Fern-Pollak; Professor Margot Finn; Professor Elizabeth Fisher; Dr Andrew Flinn; Dr David Foster; Professor Becky Francis; Dr Richard Freeman; Dr Lisa Fridkin; Dr Bettina Friedrich; Professor David Frost; Professor Jonathan Gale; Dr Federico Galvanin; Dr Anna Garnett; Professor Guido Germano; Professor Adam Gibson; Professor Shirli Gilbert; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Dr Rebecca Gordon; Professor Eric Gordy; Professor Lewis Griffin; Professor Ann Griffin; Professor François Guesnet; Professor Ana Guinote; Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning; Dr Oliver Hadelar; Professor Patrick Haggard; Professor Stephen Hailes; Martin Hall; Rachel Hall; Professor Sue

¹ This meeting was held via videoconference.

Hamilton; Professor Kirsten Harvey; Professor Angela Hassiotis; Professor Michael Heinrich; Dr Katie Hemer; Professor Evangelos Himonides; Dr Joshua Hollands; Dr Pam Houston; Professor Jie Huang; Professor Andrew Hudson-Smith; Professor Alun Hughes; Dr Charles Inskip; Dr Talia Isaacs; Dr Joana Jacob Ramalho; Professor Dan Jagger; Professor Helene Joffe; Professor Philip Jones; Professor Lily Kahn; Dr Jens Kandt; Professor Tony Kenyon; Professor Nicoletta Kessar; Dr John Kiappes; Professor John King; Professor Josef Kittler; Professor Nikolaos Konstantinidis; Edyta Kostanek; Dr Sandra Leaton Gray; Dr Borja Legarra Herrero; Professor Paola Lettieri; Dr Jonathan Lezmy; Amy Lightstone; Professor Claire Lindsay; Professor Vladimir Litvak; Professor Alison Lloyd; Dr Kris Lockyear; Dr Lorenzo Lotti; Professor Robert Lowe; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Professor Mairead MacSweeney; Dr Antony Makrinos; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Professor Virginia Mantouvalou; Dr Joanne Marks; Professor Louise Marston; Professor Manolis Mavrikis; Professor Margaret Mayston; Dr Jenny McArthur; Dr Ruth McGinity; Dr Jennifer McGowan; Professor Francesca Medda; Professor Jing Meng; Professor Usha Menon; Professor Susan Michie; Professor Grant Mills; Professor Mehran Moazen; Professor Sara Mole; Professor Richard Mole; Professor Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti; Professor Sharon Morris; Dr Guy Moss; Professor Gemma Moss; Dr Dale Moulding; Professor Vivek Mudera; Professor Julius Mugwagwa; Professor John Mullan; Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde; Professor Steven Murdoch; Professor Mirco Musolesi; Professor Florian Mussgnug; Dr Claudia Naeser; Dr Marga Navarrete; Dr H el ene Neveu Kringelbach; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Mengyan Nie; Professor Lorraine Noble; Dr Alex Norori-McCormac; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Dr Ademola Odunsi; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Martin Oliver; Professor Susan O'Neill; Professor Norbert Pachler; Dr Ioannis Papaioannou; Professor Ioannis Papakonstantinou; Professor Amos Paran; Professor Jayne Parker; Dr Aaron Parkhurst; Professor Sandip Patel; Professor Richard Pearson; Dr Anne Peasey; Professor Paola Pedarzani; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Jane Perryman; Professor Tejendra Pherali; Professor Hynes Pikhart; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Dr Anna Ponomareva; Professor Mike Porter; Alexandra Potts; Professor Stephen Price; Professor David Pym; Professor Ahad Rahim; Professor Greta Rait; Dr Sangaralingam Ramesh; Dr Padhmaja Ravichandar; Professor Margaret Rawes; Professor Samantha Rayner; Dr Sophie Read; Professor Kieren Reed; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Rebecca Rees; Dr Jill Reese; Professor Graeme Reid; Professor Jane Rendell; Professor Mary Richardson; Dr Miguel Rivera; Professor Aeli Roberts; Dr Anna Roffey; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Rachel Rosen; Dr Stefano Rossoni; Professor Dimitrios Rovas; Professor John Sabapathy; Professor Patricia Salinas; Dr Benet Salway; Dr Andrei Samsonov; Professor Prince Saprai; Professor Federica Sarro; Professor Timothy Scanlon; Professor Stephanie Schorge; Professor Eloise Scottford; Professor Toby Seddon; Professor Andrea Sella; Dr Antonio Sennis; Professor Mala Shah; Professor Lion Shahab; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Professor Nicola Shelton; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Professor Graham Shields; Dr Victoria Showunmi; Justin Siefker; Professor Ricardo Silva; Dr Henrik Singmann; Professor Jolene Skordis-Worrall; Professor Joy Sleeman; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Anthony Smith; Issy Smith; Professor Alex Sobolev; Dr Daphne Sobolev; Professor Samuel Solomon; Professor Pam Sonnenberg; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Catalina Spataru; Professor Aimee Spector; Professor Sarah Spurgeon; Professor Judy Stephenson; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Fiona Stevenson; Professor Michael Stewart; Professor Jack Stilgoe; Professor Joshua Stott; Dr

Sherrill Stroschein; Dorota Studniarczyk; Professor Alastair Sutcliffe; Professor Irving Taylor; Dr Becky Taylor; Bryan Taylor; Professor Olga Thomas; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Julian Thompson; Dr Amy Thornton; Professor Ulrich Tiedau; Dr Eleanor Tillett; Professor Manish Tiwari; Simon To; Professor Ahmed Toosy; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Kimberley Trapp; Dr Helen Tsui; Dr Richard Tunwell; Professor Gert van der Heijden; Dr Renée Van Craenenbroeck; Professor Liz Varga; Professor Laura Vaughan; Dr Michael Veale; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor Christian Von Wagner; Dr Julia Wagner; Dr Tone Walford; Dr Zachary Walker; Professor Michael Walls; Professor David Waters; Professor Finn Werner; Professor Amanda Williams; Professor Duncan Wilson; Georgina Wilson-Cousins; Dr Nick Witham; Michael Wozniak; Professor Ian Zachary; Dr Anselm Zdebik; Dr Davide Zecchin; Professor Fangzhu Zhang; Rong Zhou; Professor Stan Zochowski; Professor Martijn Zwijnenburg.

In attendance: Alex Brace; Aimie Chapple; Sarah Cowls; Donna Dalrymple; Geoff Dunk; Dr Clare Goudy; Natasha Lewis; Nick McGhee; Angharad Milenkovic; Dr Martin Mortensen; David Pacey; Vincent Preece; Lorren Rea; Olivia Whiteley.

Part I: Preliminary Business

26 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES

26.1 The minutes of the meeting of 7 February 2024 [AB Minutes 15-25, 2023-24] were confirmed.

27 MATTERS ARISING

See also Minute 41 below.

27.1 AB noted the following matters arising from the meeting of 7 February:

- a) Minute 16.6(a): a summary of the position on student numbers was included in the Provost's report (see Minute 28);
- b) Minute 16.6(b): The Vice-President (Operations) had met with the member concerned to discuss his concerns on energy inefficiencies;
- c) Minute 17: the presentation intended for this timed-out item was circulated to members on 19 March;
- d) Minute 18: answers to the questions in the GCAB memo were circulated to members on 19 March;
- e) Minute 19: Estates were working through a list of concerns relating to the IoE relocation. An internal audit of the implementation of the IoE Masterplan had been commissioned in order to ensure that lessons were learned and reflected in future planning;
- f) Minute 20: The question of Faculty Tutors would be brought back to a future meeting.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

28 PROVOST'S BUSINESS (Paper 3-01)

- 28.1 The Provost briefed Academic Board on his meeting with students who had occupied the Jeremy Bentham Room. Matters discussed had included working arrangements with refugee academics and the provision of scholarships for students affected by the Israel / Gaza conflict. UCL's understanding was that UK discrimination law meant that it was difficult for a university itself to establish nationality-specific scholarships. Those nationality-specific scholarships that had been identified appeared to be funded from philanthropic sources. The Provost noted that protests in the JBR and in the quadrangle had been peaceful and protesters had cooperated with the university on a number of occasions.
- 28.2 Academic Board discussed the broader question of UCL's relationships with organisations connected with the conflict, noting the complex issues arising from the nature and proximity of those relationships. The Provost hoped to be in a position to write to staff and students on this matter shortly, once it had been possible to review existing arrangements across the university. Members highlighted the importance of academics being well-informed on UCL's position if they were to engage constructively with students.
- 28.3 Members enquired about the decision-making process in respect of UCL's approach to investments, noting that UCL had formerly had an Ethical Investments Review Committee². UCL had a Socially Responsible Investment Policy³, and the terms of reference of the Investments Committee⁴ included monitoring UCL's approach to responsible investment.
- 28.4 Members queried whether UCL had a view on the outcome of the UKRI investigation⁵ into concerns expressed by Secretary of State about social media posts by members of its EDI Expert Advisory Group, including a member of UCL staff. The Provost welcomed the review's conclusion that there was no evidence of a breach of the Group's terms of reference or of any failure to uphold the Nolan Principles. Members discussed UCL's decision not to make a public statement on the matter. It was noted that UCL had publicised the review and that support had been provided to the member of staff concerned. UCL would be giving further consideration to the support it could provide to staff in respect of the exercise of free speech in third-party roles.
- 28.5 A member asked that the issue of the recruitment of Early Career Researchers be included in UCL's representations to government and others regarding measures impacting the graduate visa route and minimum salary thresholds.

² See AB Minute 45A, 27.04.2016.

³ [socially-responsible-investment-policy.pdf \(ucl.ac.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Investments Committee | Governance and compliance - UCL – University College London](#)

⁵ [Outcome of investigation: Research England EDI Expert Advisory Group – UKRI](#)

29 **SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY** (Paper 3-02)

- 29.1 Professor Stella Bruzzi, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, introduced the paper and invited the Board's input into a potential reshaping of the sabbatical leave policy. It was intended that, following further consultation with stakeholders, a costings group would be established and proposals brought back to Academic Board with an academic impact statement.
- 29.2 Academic Board welcomed the paper. The following key issues were discussed:
- a) Several members spoke in favour of the extension of the sabbatical leave policy (or a related policy) to staff on teaching contracts. It was also suggested that some research staff working a mixed portfolio of teaching and research were currently excluded from the policy.
 - b) Some members felt that the issue of non-compliance with the current policy should be addressed before attention turned to extending the scope of the policy.
 - c) The practicalities of organising sabbatical leave were not straightforward, particularly in respect of the covering of teaching duties. Members highlighted the risk that an increase in sabbatical leave would disproportionately impact particular groups, and potentially exacerbate the perceived lack of parity and esteem between staff on teaching contracts and teaching/research contracts. Members also drew attention to variations in practicability across the institution, potentially resulting in inequitable application in practice. It was noted however that the review could present an opportunity to address some inequities in the current system.
- 29.3 The proposals would be developed further in light of feedback from Academic Board, mindful of a related piece of work being carried out by the Academic Leadership Group regarding staff workload. The Provost encouraged AB members to engage in later stages of the consultation process.

30 **ACADEMIC BOARD STANDING ORDERS** (Paper 3-03)

- 30.1 Members were invited to comment on proposed amendments to the Standing Orders by contacting Dr Benet Salway, chair of GCAB. The proposals would then come back for a second reading at one of the two meetings later in the term.

31 **ELECTIONS TO ACADEMIC BOARD: CONSTITUENCY SIZES** (Paper 3-04)

- 31.1 Under Regulation 3.2h, Academic Board **approved** a temporary 50% increase the number of places in the teaching constituency and the two professional services constituencies for the two academic years 2024/25 and 2025/26 (to 105 teaching places and 15 places for each of the two professional services constituencies), and to allow up to 11 technical staff nominations from whichever faculty.

- 31.2 The Chair noted the perennial shortfall in the nominations for non-professorial academic members and highlighted the need to continue to encourage colleagues to engage with the work of the Board.
- 31.3 A number of members queried the reasons for the structure of the Board's membership. It was suggested that consideration should be given to professorial research fellows and professors (teaching) being included in the ex officio membership. The Board was advised that a number of professors (teaching) had decided to boycott the upcoming Academic Board cycle.
- 31.4 The Chair asked that GCAB consider the matter further, with a view to Academic Board discussing at a future meeting whether it wished to request that Council amend the Regulations governing the constitution of the Board.

32 **JOINT ADVISORY GROUPS** (Paper 3-05)

- 32.1 The Provost clarified that the function of the Joint Advisory Groups was to draw on the expertise of UMC and AB members at an early stage, not to usurp the role of those two bodies in advising Council. In order for such advice to be given the matters would necessarily need to go to UMC and Academic Board meetings.
- 32.2 It was intended that the Space Planning Group would consider the recent discussions about the IoE Masterplan (see Minute 27.1e). The Terms of Reference would be reviewed to ensure that this was appropriately reflected.
- 32.3 The Provost agreed with a suggestion from GCAB that each of the two groups should have an additional Head of Department member.

33 **UKDRIHQ: DISESTABLISHMENT AS AN ACADEMIC UNIT** (Paper 3-06)

- 33.1 AB was advised of the reasons for the approach taken in establishing the UKDRIHQ as an academic unit in 2020 [AB Minute 39, 12.02.20] and the employment arrangements for the staff concerned. Under current arrangements however it was considered that the proposal reflected the most pragmatic approach.

34 **MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES** (Paper 3-07)

- 34.1 GCAB had raised the issue of the proportion of Council business marked as confidential, and queried whether a different approach could be taken, potentially involving considerations such as time limits, partial confidentiality, or the inclusion of a statement of the reasons for confidentiality in the minutes.
- 34.2 The University Secretary confirmed that, following a recent discussion at Council, it was intended that the reasons for confidentiality would be stated in the minutes as on papers themselves. It was also confirmed that the Chairs of GCAB and ExComAB were being invited to contribute to the ongoing Council Effectiveness Review.

35 MEMBERS' ITEMS

- 35.1 A member queried whether there was any plan to return to in-person meetings of Academic Board. The Provost noted that this had been discussed at the end of the covid period and the general view at that time had been in favour of continuing online; the online era had also seen a significant increase in attendance. Nevertheless he asked that GCAB consider the issue.
- 35.2 A member queried the governance process behind the most recent review of the academic misconduct regulations in September 2023. The Provost asked that a report be submitted to the Board about the history of the change.
- 35.3 Members of the Sustainability Committee raised concerns about a lack of clarity over the governance structure and prioritisation in that area. A paper would be brought to an upcoming meeting about the issue.

Part III: Other business for approval or information

36 ACADEMIC BOARD MEMBERSHIP: TERM 3 UPDATE (Paper 3-08)

36.1 Noted.

37 EXCOMAB EXTERNAL ADVISERS (Paper 3-09)

37.1 Approved.

38 ACADEMIC BOARD STATUTE 18 WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP (Paper 3-10)

38.1 Noted.

39 INSTITUTE OF RISK AND DISASTER REDUCTION RENAMING (Paper 3-11)

39.1 Noted.

40 STUDENT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE (Paper 3-12)

40.1 Noted.

41 OFS CONSULTATIONS ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH (Paper 3-13)

41.1 Noted.

42 ANNUAL REPORT: LIBRARY COMMITTEE (Paper 3-14)

42.1 Noted.

43 **ANNUAL REPORT: ACADEMIC COMMITTEE** (Paper 3-15)

43.1 Noted.

44 **ANNUAL REPORT: CAREERS SERVICE** (Paper 3-16)

44.1 Noted.

45 **ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR** (Paper 3-17)

45.1 Noted.

46 **GCAB NOMINATION UNDER STANDING ORDER 6** (Paper 3-18)

46.1 Noted.

47 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

47.1 Tuesday 18 June (14:30-16:30) and Wednesday 3 July (14:00-16:00).

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