



## Academic Board

Tuesday 18 June 2024<sup>1</sup>

### MINUTES

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

Professor Bas Aarts, Dr Mojtaba Abdi-Jalebi, Dr Ali Abolfathi, Professor Daniel Alexander, Mr Adnan Ali, Professor Afia Ali, Professor Nazif Alic, Dr Jake Anders, Professor Lynn Ang, Professor Tomaso Aste, Dr Glory Atilola, Professor Juliette Atkinson, Professor Jan Axmacher, Dr Paul Ayris, Professor Kristin Bakke, Professor Yolande Barnes, Professor Kathryn Batchelor, Dr Neha Batura, Ms Emily Bellshaw, Professor Martin Benning, Professor Mette Berg, Professor Michael Berkowitz, Professor Robert Biel, Mr Robert Bodden, Dr Neus Bover Fonts, Dr Jeff Bowersox, Dr Raina Brands, Dr Damian Bright, Professor Annie Britton, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Dr Suzy Buckley, Professor Vishwanie Budhram-Mahadeo, Professor Jonathan Butterworth, Professor Fabio Caccioli, Mr Tadhg Caffrey, Mr Noël Caliste, Professor Benjamin Caplin, Professor Licia Capra, Professor Matteo Carandini, Dr Brent Carnell, Professor Madeline Carr, Professor David Cassidy, Professor Paola Ceccarelli, Dr Edith Chan, Professor Richard Chandler, Dr Declan Chard, Mr Andrew Churchill, Professor Olga Ciccarelli, Professor Chris Clack, Professor Lucie Clapp, Professor Beverley Clark, Dr Silvie Cooper, Ms Kimberly Cornfield, Dr Sarah Correia, Professor Nicola Countouris, Dr Ludovic Coupaye, Dr Helene Crutzen, Dr Jason Davies, Professor Edward Denison, Professor Janice Derry, Dr Duygu Dikicioglu, Professor Snezana Djordjevic, Dr Alex Donovan, Dr Johanna Donovan, Miss Elizabeth Dow, Ms Dominique Draï, Professor Paulo Drinot, Professor Karen Duff, Professor Ian Eames, Dr Alex Elwick, Professor Rebecca Empson, Dr Russell Evans, Mary Evans, Dr Alexander Fedorec, Professor Delmiro Fernandez-Reyes, Dr Liory Fern-Pollak, Professor Margot Finn, Professor Federico Foschi, Dr Richard Freeman, Dr Lisa Fridkin, Dr Bettina Friedrich, Professor David Frost, Professor Jonathan Gale, Dr Federico Galvanin, Professor Caroline Garaway, Dr Anna Garnett, Professor Mark Geller, Professor Guido Germano, Ms Hayley Gewer, Professor Shirli Gilbert, Professor Nikolaos Gonis, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Dr Anne Grydehøj, Manya Gupta, Professor Helen Hackett, Professor Patrick Haggard, Dr Hassan Haghparast Bidgoli, Professor Stephen Hailes, Miss Rachel Hall, Professor Sean Hanna, Mr Jesper Hansen, Professor Kenneth Harris, Professor John Hartley, Professor Michael Heinrich, Professor Robin Hickman, Professor Evangelos Himonides, Professor Stephen Hogan, Dr Amy Horton, Dr Pam Houston, Professor Richard Jackman, Professor Dan Jagger, Dr Thomas Kador, Professor Nicoletta Kessarar, Ms Leigh Kilpert, Professor John King, Professor James Kirkbride, Professor Josef Kittler, Professor Martin Koltzenburg, Professor Andreas Korn, Dr

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<sup>1</sup> This meeting was held via videoconference.

Danielle Lamb, Dr Sandra Leaton Gray, Professor Alena Ledeneva, Yolanee Lee, Dr Borja Legarra Herrero, Professor Paola Lettieri, Professor Rebecca Lever, Dr Jonathan Lezmy, Professor Chwen Lim, Professor Allison Littlejohn, Dr Lorenzo Lotti, Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir, Professor Ruth Mace, Professor Sandy MacRobert, Professor Mairead MacSweeney, Dr Merle Mahon, Professor Eleanor Main, Dr Antony Makrinos, Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva, Professor Ioanna Manolopoulou, Professor Yeoryia Manolopoulou, Professor Virginia Mantouvalou, Dr Joanne Marks, Professor Deborah Martin, Connor Mawer, Professor John McArthur, Dr Jennifer McGowan, Professor James Mckinley, Professor Francesca Medda, Dr Clare Melhuish, Professor Grant Mills, Professor John Mitchell, Professor Sara Mole, Dr Dale Moulding, Professor Julius Mugwagwa, Professor Veronique Munoz-Darde, Professor Steven Murdoch, Professor Mirco Musolesi, Dr Marga Navarrete, Dr Héléne Neveu Kringelbach, Dr Mark Newman, Dr Mengyan Nie, Professor Andrew Nisbet, Professor Lorraine Noble, Dr Abel Nyamapfene, Dr Ademola Odunsi, Professor Moses Oketch, Professor Martin Oliver, Professor Paola Oliveri, Professor John O'Regan, Professor Ioannis Papakonstantinou, Dr Aaron Parkhurst, Dr Anne Peasey, Professor Alan Penn, Professor Jane Perryman, Professor Justyna Petke, Professor James Phillips, Professor Ann Phoenix, Professor Hynek Pikhart, Dr Jeffrey Pittaway, Dr Anna Ponomareva, Professor John Potter, Dr Stephen Potts, Professor Sophia Psarra, Professor David Pym, Professor Slavo Radosevic, Dr Sangaralingam Ramesh, Padhmaja Varadaraj Ravichandar, Professor Margaret Rawes, Professor Kieren Reed, Professor Geraint Rees, Dr Jill Reese, Professor Graeme Reid, Professor Antonella Riccio, Professor Mary Richardson, Dr Miguel Rivera, Professor Helen Roberts, Professor Aeli Roberts, Professor Claire Robins, Dr Flaminia Ronca, Professor Patricia Salinas, Dr John-Paul Salter, Dr Benet Salway, Professor Vieri Samek-Lodovici, Professor Prince Saprai, Professor Stephanie Schorge, Professor Katrina Scior, Professor Alessio Serafini, Professor Mala Shah, Professor Sonu Shamdasani, Dr Ala'a Shehabi, Professor Robert Sheil, Dr Miranda Sheild Johansson, Professor Elizabeth Shepherd, Mr Justin Siefker, Professor Jolene Skordis-Worrall, Professor Trevor Smart, Professor Anthony Smith, Dr Daphne Sobolev, Professor Samuel Solomon, Professor Aimee Spector, Professor Maarten Speekenbrink, Professor Michael Stacey, Dr Uta Staiger, Professor Judy Stephenson, Professor Claudio Stern, Professor Michael Stewart, Professor Jack Stilgoe, Professor Joshua Stott, Professor Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen, Dr Sherrill Stroschein, Dr Mike Sulu, Dr Bugra Susler, Professor Irving Taylor, Mr Bryan Taylor, Dr Becky Taylor, Professor Cheryl Thomas, Professor Olga Thomas, Professor Alan Thompson, Dr Amy Thornton, Professor Ulrich Tiedau, Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Professor Helena Titheridge, Professor Ahmed Toosy, Dr Helen Tsui, Dr Richard Tunwell, Professor Gert Van Der Heijden, Dr Renée Vancaenenbroeck, Professor Liz Varga, Professor Laura Vaughan, Dr Michael Veale, Dr Nalini Vittal, Dr Bella Vivat, Professor Kirill Volynski, Professor Christian Von Wagner, Dr Julia Wagner, Dr Zachary Walker, Professor Michael Walls, Professor David Waters, Professor Li Wei, Professor Finn Werner, Ms Breege Whiten, Professor Andrew Wills, Georgina Wilson-Cousins, Dr Elliott Wimmer, Mr Michael Wozniak, Dr Punam Yadav, Dr Davide Zecchin, Professor Fangzhu Zhang, Professor Stan Zochowski.

**In attendance:** Gail Adams, Director of Compliance and Assurance, Research and Innovation Services (for Minute 52); Alex Brace; Donna Dalrymple, Chief People Officer (for Minute 53); Clare Goudy, Claire Hartill, Head of Student Casework (for

Minute 55); Nick McGhee (secretary); Angharad Milenkovic; Turlogh O'Brien, David Pacey; Mark Rice, Head of Reward (for Minute 53), Olivia Whiteley.

## Part I: Preliminary Business

### 48 **ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES**

48.1 The minutes of the meeting of 8 May 2024 [AB Minutes 26-47, 2023-24] were confirmed.

### 49 **MATTERS ARISING** (Paper 4-01) *See also Minutes 50, 58 and 59 below.*

49.1 Noted.

## Part II: Matters for Discussion

### 50 **PROVOST'S REPORT** (Paper 4-02)

50.1 In response to a question about the events alluded to in his message to the UCL community of 4 June<sup>2</sup>, the Provost explained that the communication had been motivated by a troubling shift in the nature of the actions of some protestors. The university's duty to uphold the right to protest must be balanced with the need to protect the safety and wellbeing of the community and to maintain an open, diverse and welcoming campus.

### 51 **AB STANDING ORDERS (FIRST READING)** (Paper 4-03)

51.1 The Chair of GCAB presented the paper. This constituted a first reading of new proposals in addition to those considered at the last meeting [AB Minute 30, 08.05.24]. The proposals involved minor clarificatory changes to SO4 and a new Standing Order relating to the elected membership of Education Committee and the use of AB delegated powers, developed in part in response to the questions posed to Academic Board in the Education Committee's annual report [Paper 2-03, 07.02.24]. The proposed changes from this and the last meeting would return for a second reading at the meeting of 3 July.

51.2 It was noted that the draft Standing Order 19 made reference to 15 elected members whereas there were currently 12. It was confirmed that the former was an aspirational number, as the constitution lay with EdCom itself and with Academic Committee.

51.3 Members were invited to submit any further comments in writing to the Chair of GCAB.

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<sup>2</sup> [Provost's update: responding to recent events on campus | UCL News - UCL – University College London](#)

52 **RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SECURITY (Paper 4-04)**

- 52.1 The Vice-Provost (Research, Innovation and Global Engagement) and the Director of Compliance and Assurance, Research and Innovation Services, presented a paper on recent changes to the legal and regulatory environment. Two key developments were the National Security and Investment Act and the strengthening of export controls, both of which had implications for the freedom of academic staff to question and test received wisdom within the law. As a global university, UCL sought to carry out the highest quality research in collaboration with those best placed to contribute to it, wherever they happened to be located, unless there was a specific reason not to do so. The challenge was in meeting the requirements of the new legislation without an undue chilling effect on such global partnerships.
- 52.2 The Research and Innovation Security Committee had been established to co-ordinate activities in this area, and a Compliance and Assurance Team was now in place to support academics by providing oversight and training, and to facilitate export control licence applications. Due diligence processes at the point of setting up a new partner or funder on Worktribe had been expanded. To date, approximately 4% of organisations checked through this process had been identified as higher risk.
- 52.3 Academic Board discussed the lack of clarity in some areas of the legislation, including the application of the rules to documents or software stored in the cloud, and the question of anonymous peer review where academics had no control over, or knowledge of, the identity of reviewers. There was no indication that a different approach was likely to be taken by any administration after the general election. UCL was engaging proactively with government and regulatory authorities on refining the boundaries in such grey areas, as well as in respect of questions of dual-use research.
- 52.4 Two significant exemptions to the controls were noted: basic research; and material already in the public domain. The latter was particularly relevant to UCL as the second biggest global publisher of open access research, although it was noted that export controls applied up to the point of publication. Open export license arrangements were available for material shared with the EU or the US, obviating the need for individual licences in some cases.
- 52.5 Members discussed the interaction between these processes and the wider framework in place for assessing risk with respect to the law, including the approach to security for teaching and research students within the UK. The question of research students was a lower priority as a degree of protection was already afforded by the Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS). The challenge of the central tracking and recording of honorary contracts outside the institution was noted.

53 **PROFESSORIAL BANDING** (Paper 4-05)

53.1 The Chief People Officer and the Director of Reward presented proposals and an Academic Impact Statement on the extension of the professorial banding arrangements to Grade 10 teaching and research staff. This constituted one element of an ongoing programme of work seeking to establish greater parity of status and esteem, building on the work started with the Teaching Concordat.

53.2 The current mix of research and teaching rebanding criteria were designed expressly for staff on academic contracts, and it would consequently be difficult for staff on specialised research or education contracts to meet them. It was proposed that a single set of criteria be retained, at least for now, but that a specialist pathway be introduced, albeit incorporating an element of scholarship for teaching staff and of student experience for research staff.

53.3 The particular issue addressed in this paper affected a relatively small cohort of approximately 100 Professors (Teaching) and Professorial Research Fellows. Typically 5-10% of eligible staff submitted applications for rebanding each year, so the increase in workload associated with these proposals was expected to be relatively small.

53.4 In the course of discussion the following key points were raised:

- a) it was recognised that wider points of inconsistency within the Academic Careers Framework remained to be addressed in the future;
- b) members queried the relevance and feasibility of the Band 4 requirement for world leading research for education specialists. It was suggested that there was significant variation between disciplinary areas. Members also queried the suitability of this requirement as a proxy for a more generalised indicator of quality. This issue would be considered as part of any future review of the Academic Careers Framework.
- c) the lack of provision for independent scholarship in education contracts and the implications of a different approach for workload management. It was agreed that the proposed criteria should link to any future activity addressing academic workload allocation.

53.5 Academic Board voted as follows on the question of whether, in principle, they supported the proposed criteria as set out in the paper:

|         |     |       |
|---------|-----|-------|
| Yes     | 127 | 63.8% |
| No      | 40  | 20.1% |
| Abstain | 32  | 16.1% |

Members were invited to send any other comments in writing to Mark Rice.

54 **AB STATUTE 18 WORKING GROUP** (Paper 4-06)

- 54.1 In November 2023 Academic Board approved the establishment of a Working Group on Statute 18 [AB Minute 5, 01.11.23]. The membership had been confirmed at the meeting of 7 February [AB Minute 23, 07.02.24]. The Working Group had been meeting weekly since that time with a focus on two priorities: to develop an understanding of the functioning and problems in the Statute 18 processes and procedures, and to identify solutions to emerging issues.
- 54.2 The Group's preliminary conclusion on the first question was that Statute 18 processes were affected by significant delays, primarily in the investigation and tribunal stages, as well as a lack of procedural transparency. Despite such problems, the job security provided by Statute 18 played a vital function as one of the foundations of academic freedom.
- 54.3 The Working Group had considered potential solutions to these issues, particularly in connection with the membership of the tribunal panels, and the absence of any Regulations as required by paragraphs 17 and 29 of the Statute. A first draft of such Regulations was provided in the paper.
- 54.4 The draft Regulations had been shared with HR and with the Task and Finish Group on Disciplinary Procedures [AB Minute 4, 01.11.23] for feedback. The Task and Finish Group was considering disciplinary procedures in the round, with a view to making recommendations in the autumn term. The Provost noted that the matter would need further discussion at Academic Board in due course as well as legal review. It was possible that the Group would need to look again at the draft Regulations having completed their own piece of work.
- 54.5 Members of AB were invited to send any comments on the draft to the Chair of the Working Group, Professor Nicola Countouris.

55 **STUDENT DISCIPLINARY CODE AND PROCEDURE** (Paper 4-07)

- 55.1 In accordance with Statute 13 the Head of Student Casework invited the advice of Academic Board on the current review of the Student Disciplinary Code and Procedure. Some useful feedback had already been received from GCAB, and discussions with Legal Services colleagues and with the Students' Union were ongoing.
- 55.2 During the course of discussion the following points were raised:
- a) Particular care should be taken in respect of activities explicitly protected by legislation, such as the right to freedom of speech and the right to peaceful protest. Members highlighted in this context the use of the term 'disruption'. It was noted that the Regulations had to operate within the law and nothing infringed on the lawful right to protest. The concurrence of the current review with the ongoing protests on campus was coincidental.
  - b) Members noted the issue of the interaction with the Freedom of Speech Act and the guidance of the OfS on broadly-worded student codes of conduct. Legal advice would be sought on this question.

- c) Members noted the potential exclusion from full investigation of matters reported more than two months after the incident except where there were reasonable grounds for this, and contrasted this with the three months afforded under the staff grievance policy. It was confirmed that this provision sought to encourage timely reporting in order to maximise access to evidence, but that a trauma-informed approach was taken and that there was no formal cut-off for reporting.

## 56 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 56.1 A member requested that the use of polls in AB Zoom meetings be mandated in preference to the use of reaction buttons. It was noted that the Standing Orders provided for the chair to invite a 'show of hands', the nearest equivalent of which in an electronic forum was the reactions buttons, and also for the use of the poll feature. The Chair asked GCAB to consider the issue.
- 56.2 A member requested at least one face-to-face meeting of the Board each year. The Provost noted that AB had been asked about this on the return from lockdown and had expressed a preference for online meetings, but that the question should be revisited. He asked that GCAB consider the matter, and noted the potential value of a networking event.
- 56.3 A member contrasted the over-subscription of the Professional Services places on the Board with the high number of vacancies in the non-professorial academic constituency and suggested this indicated a need to reconsider the constitution of the Board. The Provost noted that this spoke to the fundamental question of the purpose and nature of the business of the Board. GCAB were scheduled to consider the matter at a forthcoming meeting.

## Part III: Other business for approval or information

### 57 FREEDOM OF SPEECH ACT: REVISED CODE OF PRACTICE (Paper 4-08)

- 57.1 Noted. The Chair of GCAB has asked for two extra academic places on Working Group, which had been accepted.

### 58 JOINT ADVISORY GROUPS: AB NOMINEES (Paper 4-09)

- 58.1 Noted.

### 59 AB ELECTION UPDATE (Paper 4-10)

- 59.1 Noted. An update on the outcomes of ballots had been circulated earlier in the day. Members were invited to encourage colleagues to apply out of cycle.

### 60 MINUTES OF OTHER COMMITTEES (Paper 4-11)

- 60.1 Noted.

61 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

61.1 Wednesday 3 July 2024 at 2pm.

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