

Council Minutes – 8 July 2021

Observers:

Professor Stephanie Bird
Professor Jonathan Butterworth
Mr Osman Teklies

Officers:

139.3. The Chair of Council informed Council that Mr Mintoo Bhandari had written to the Chair to advise him that he would be stepping down as an external Council member. Council thanked Mr Bhandari for his great service as a UCL Council member for the last two years including his contribution to improving the quality of Council papers.

139.4. The Chair of Council congratulated Ms Wendy Appleby on her new appointment as Vice-President (Operations) at University of Southampton. Council thanked Wendy for her valuable advice and support over the last six years as Secretary to Council.

140. Declaration of Interests

140.1. Ms Carol Paige and Mr Ayman Benmati reported an interest in Item 10, Students' Union UCL Annual Report 2021 and Budget 2021/22.

141. Minutes

141.1. Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2021 subject to the following changes being made:

- a. Minute 127.2.d.: Insert the following sentence at end of paragraph, "In response to a question, the Provost confirmed that should a conflict arise between an external organisation's policies and UCL's own policies, UCL's policies would always take precedence; there had been no evidence this had occurred before."
- b. Minute 127.2.j.: Remove "However" from the beginning of the second sentence.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

142. Confidential: Security Services at UCL (11-02)

142.1. Exempt from publication, ple26008(2600o 294.2)-2(xe)-3(m).1publis Vas o03(.)8(s.0000088

143.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

144. Confidential: UCL East Facilities Management (11-04)

144.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

144.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

144.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

145. (11-05)

145.1. Dr Michael Spence, President and Provost, introduced the Provost's Report to Council.

145.2. During discussion the following key points were made:

- a. In response to a question on the approach to vaccinating students in the Autumn, the Vice-President (Operations) advised that there would be an extensive communication campaign to encourage vaccination uptake. It was important for international students who had not been vaccinated to be given an opportunity to be vaccinated as soon as possible.
- b. The sections in the report on student mental health were welcomed. The Students' Union was increasingly concerned about student well-being during the pandemic and recognised this was a nationwide issue. The Provost advised that UCL had good relationships with its NHS partners with the aim that students encountered seamless service provision. There would be a focus on student mental health in the new strategy.
- c. In response to a query on the mode of the delivery of teaching in the future, the Provost advised that some areas of the student body wanted face-to-face teaching while others, such as some international students, wanted a distance learning approach to be adopted. SMT were reviewing the benefits and disadvantages of hybrid learning, however, no decision had been taken about the future approach to teaching for 2022 and beyond. This matter would form part of strategy discussions.
- d. In response to a question about steps being taken after the release of Covid-19 lockdown rules on 19 July 2021, the Vice-President (Operations) advised that proposals would be considered by SMT to remove the one-way system and social distancing. Mask-wearing and Connect to Protect would continue. Symptom-free testing would continue at Bidborough House as some budget had been retained for this. The government license would also need to remain in place.
- e. In response to a question, the Provost confirmed there was no plan to pay for a proportion of costs for students travelling from red or amber-listed countries. Instead, a hardship fund would be made available to support students who required it. Students who were quarantining or in self-

isolation would continue to be routinely contacted as this aspect was also important.

- f. In response to a question, the Provost set out the reasons why the posts Vice-President (Strategy) and Vice-President (Advancement) were necessary at this level and were professional services roles. Council members were reminded that they had agreed the overall team profile in February 2021. The approach being taken would enable a very high level of expertise to be recruited to the Provost's senior team and avoid any inherent academic bias that might arise if they were not PS roles. The Provost also explained his commitment to delivering the new roles for the same amount of money and outlined some of the steps being taken to achieve this.
- g. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

145.3. Council received the Provost's Report to Council.

146. Confidential: Closure of Transforming Our Professional Services (TOPS) Business Case (11-06)

146.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

146.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

146.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

147. Governance Working Group Update

147.1. Minutes of the final Governance Working Group Meeting (11-07)

- a. Council received the minutes of the final Governance Working Group (GWG) meeting held on 19 April 2021.

147.2. Response from the GWG to the AB Commission of Inquiry Implementation Group (11-08)

- a. Baroness Valentine introduced the draft response from the Governance Working Group (GWG) to the Academic Board (AB) Commission of Inquiry Implementation Group. The following key points were raised during the presentation:
 - i. There was a section in the Provost's report which included a Senior

- ascertain how the bundle of issues that had been taken forward were bedding in.
- iii. Some key issues centred on improving the quality of the Council papers, taking forward a set of human resources (HR) issues and how best to receive advice on academic policy as it affected the academic mission. While Council should allow the Provost and his leadership team to take decisions on detailed HR issues beyond the regulations for management, it could provide advice on these matters.
 - iv. Overall, the GWG considered that the exercise of looking at the COI recommendations on HR matters had been important for building trust and providing insight. Clearly there was an ongoing exercise for Council around culture and the need for a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. The new People Matters Committee would be a space where this matter could be taken forward.
- b. During discussion the following key points were made:
- i. The work of the GWG was commended for its willingness to explore challenging issues in detail with a transparent approach.
 - ii. There were some issues that had not been resolved. These included whether there should be a separate governance committee and the terms of office of Deans and Heads of Department (HoDs).
 - iii. The GWG had expressed a view that Deans or HoDs should only be appointed for more than two terms on an exceptional basis. The rationale for this was to ensure turnover and enable greater diversity of the incumbents. The Provost advised that in most circumstances, two terms of five years would be sufficient, however, there would be occasions where, exceptionally, a further term of appointment would be necessary; flexibility should be retained to ensure this. There was also a question about the number of organisational levels below which the Council should not be directly involved in the appointment, with a view expressed that the Provost and the level beneath them would be appropriate.
 - iv. There was discussion about the merits of undertaking 360 feedback on Deans on an annual basis and whether feedback should be collected anonymously. The Provost noted that it was important to strike a balance between appropriate accountability and recognising that difficult decisions needed to be taken in complex organisations. Also, it was important to avoid setting up an industry around 360 feedback and the creation of unnecessary bureaucracy.
 - v. The Annual Report on Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct would be presented to Academic Board and Council for acknowledgement and oversight next academic year.
 - vi. There was discussion about the merits of an Ombudsman as well as the possibility for overlap with existing processes. It was noted that discussion was ongoing on this matter.

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153. Confidential: Requests for use of the UCL brand logo with external organisations (11-16)

153.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

154. Confidential: To Receive the Following Confirmed Minutes (11-17 – 11-19)

154.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

154.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

155. Council Meeting Dates 2021/22 (11-20)

155.1. Council received an update on the meeting dates for Council 2021/22.

156. Date of Next meeting

156.1. The next meeting of Council would take place on Monday 13 September 2021 at 10:00am.

Ms Wendy Appleby, Secretary to Council
July 2021