

Academic Board

23 October 2019



Actions

Ref	Action	Lead	Due Date
19/119	Put a note on the Academic Board website about the decision made to amend the terms of office of elected members to one year.	RH	ASAP
19/121	Correct the minutes of the meeting of Academic Board on 5 June.	RH	Completed
19/129	Take forward the provision of support for students studying in London in the Academic Development and Resources Committee.	KB	ASAP
19/131	Check with the interim Director of Human Resources whether recommendations from UCU were considered as part of the review of the Gender Pay Gap.	RH	ASAP
19/137	Present a 'lessons learned' paper on lecture recording to Academic Board in December.	KB	11 Dec meeting
19/143	Provide an update to Academic Board later in the year on work undertaken to close the attainment gap.	JK	March/June 2020
19/147	Link the Committees Handbook page to the Terms of Reference for new School and College committees, currently published on the academic restructuring pages.	RH	ASAP
19/148	Add the casualization of staff to topics to be considered as part of the redevelopment of the College strategy given the number of staff in the College on causal contracts.	KB	ASAP

Action from current meeting

Action completed since last meeting

Academic Board

23 October 2019

M19/116-164



Minutes

Present:	Prof P Layzell (Chair); Prof K Normington, Prof K Badcock, Prof J Knowles, Prof M Humphreys, Prof G Agyemang, Prof J Parker-Starbuck, Prof J John, Prof T Pincus, Prof B Rankov, Prof S Wright, Dr VL Greenaway, Dr A Whitelock, Dr B Lease, Prof J Powell, Prof A Chevalier, Prof A Bradshaw, Dr S Wagner, Prof V Jansen, Prof P Crang, Prof J Adam, Prof P Dalton,	Prof D Howard, Prof R Schack, Dr S West, Dr C Matos, Prof R Fitzgerald, Prof E Schafer, Prof S Ansari, Prof C Bradley, Prof M Gold, Dr D Brown, Mr A Ganz, Prof A Seltzer, Prof S Murphy, Prof V Boisvert, Dr R Cruickshank, Prof S Gerke, Dr R Hemus, Mr S Kendrick, Prof D Gilbert, Mr J O'Neill, Ms K Roberts, Ms L Simpson, Ms S Bolton
Secretary:	Mr R Hall	
In attendance:	Dr D Ashton, Ms M Ennis, Prof R Deem, Mr D Brown, Mrs A Wallis	Dr M Beck (Assistant Secretary)
Observer	Mr A Alway,	

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Principal welcomed all new members to the meeting. He also welcomed Ms V Holbrook from AdvanceHE, attending as an observer as part of the Council Effectiveness Review. 19/116

Apologies were received from the following members: Prof H Nicholson, Prof A Jashapara, Prof J Nuri, Prof O Heath, Prof C Grey, Prof S Boogert, Prof P Komisarczuk and Mr R Jago. 19/117

2. Terms of Reference and Standing Orders

2.1 The updated Terms of Reference and Standing Orders for Academic Board were RECEIVED (AB/19/58). 19/118

It was noted that the Standing Orders indicated that the Term of office for elected members was 3 years but the recent election had indicated that members would only serve one year. The Chair explained that this was to permit the Board the opportunity during the year to review its membership in the light of the change to a School structure. He confirmed that the review of membership would be discussed by the Board in the coming year. It was agreed that in the event of any changes to the membership that impacted on elected members their position in terms of serving further terms of office on the Board would be considered. The Chair undertook to put a note on the Academic Board website about the amendment of the terms of office of elected members to one year. 19/119

2.2 The updated membership list for 2019-20, AB/19/59, was RECEIVED. 19/120

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2019 were AGREED as a correct record, subject to the amendment of min. 19/060 which should read as follows: The focus at present is on updating outputs and impact ~~case studies~~ **case studies**. 19/121

4. **Matters arising**
There were no matters arising from the previous minutes. 19/122
5. **Actions taken by the Chair**
The Chair NOTED that, as per the agenda, he had approved the following since the last meeting: 19/123
- The Admissions Policy for the 2020-21 recruitment cycle;
 - The entry grades for the 2020-21 recruitment cycle; and
 - Minor regulatory changes, additional to those approved at the March meeting of Academic Board.
6. **Report on Academic Board elections**
The Secretary REPORTED that there had been 8 vacancies to fill, for which 12 nominations were received. The voting had taken place between 5 and 19 August. 19/124
7. **Reportable events**
Paper AB/19/61 was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Operations) NOTED that the Office for Students obliges the College to report any event or circumstance which might impact on its operation and its ability to meet conditions of registration with this body. Schools must inform the Deputy Principal (Operations) of any such reportable events, examples of which were listed in the paper. 19/125
8. **Unstaring of items**
The Chair NOTED that there had been requests to unstar papers. It was normal practice to only unstar papers, which might form the basis for a substantive discussion item. Should new members of the Board need clarification or information on points in starred papers they should, in the first instance, contact the (Assistant) Secretary. 19/126
9. **Principal's Report**
Paper AB/19/64 was RECEIVED. The Chair NOTED, in particular, the College's recent success in the Times/ Sunday Good University Guide, which reflected strong performance in both research and teaching, and the successful launch of the MSc Digital Marketing in London. Further expansion in London was dependent on additional space for teaching being identified. 19/127
- The Chair also NOTED the publication of the Equality and Human Rights Commission report on racial harassment on university campuses, which includes a number of recommendations on ways in which to address the issues identified. The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) has been asked to take this forward. The Chair noted that it was incumbent upon all members of the College to address the issue, rather than assuming that this would be done by a College committee. 19/128
- The Head of the London campus ADVISED that there are currently between 250 and 260 students studying in London. Welfare and other support available for these students is currently provided from the Egham campus. As the student body grows the College will have to identify what needs to be provided on a more permanent basis to ensure that these students have the same experience as those studying in Egham. This may be through dedicated support in London or buying of services from other University of London colleges. It was NOTED that welfare support, in particular, had been raised in the past in relation to programmes such as MA Creative Writing, which had been run in Bedford Square for a number of years. The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) was asked to take forward the review of support in London in the Academic Development and Resources Committee. 19/129

- It was NOTED that the College had not fared well in the People and Planet University League rankings. The Deputy Principal (Operations) is taking the lead in identifying the steps the College needs to take to improve its environmental and ethical performance. 19/130
- There was discussion on the Gender Pay Gap and the review currently being conducted by Duncan Brown. It was CONFIRMED that information from the College Gender Pay Gap group had been passed on to him but it was not clear whether recommendations in this regard from the UCU had been. The Chair agreed to raise this with the interim Director of Human Resources. Duncan Brown's report and recommendations will be submitted at the end of October and considered by Council in November. It was NOTED that it was difficult to get national data on the gender pay gap and even when these were available, College data appeared to be different, making comparisons on progress in addressing the gap difficult to make. 19/131
10. **Reports from the Senior Management Team**
- The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED ON the following:
- It is currently not clear whether the Office for Students will be requiring the College to submit for a TEF institutional award or for subject discipline awards. The College has been preparing for both options. 19/132
 - Students beginning their studies in September 2019 will be able to take a Placement year, studying abroad, working, volunteering or doing a combination of these. Careers will be driving this initiative forward. 19/133
 - There has been a significant increase in research income, with the total for last year reaching £27m. Colleagues who contributed to this success were thanked for their work. 19/134
- The Senior Vice-Principal (Education) briefly DISCUSSED the recent 'Framing our Futures' event on education entitled 'Reimagining Education' and encouraged staff who could not attend to listen to the recording of the event. 19/135
- The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) REPORTED that:
- Following on from the PGT Portfolio review Schools had been asked to reflect on their current and future PGT offerings and present their thoughts for discussion at a workshop at the end of January to be attended by Heads of Department and Schools and School PGT Directors of Education. 19/136
 - Work was done over the summer to implement lecture recording more widely. As a result there had been a five-fold increase in lecture recording in the first week of term. He thanked the implementation team in particular for their work. A 'lessons learned' paper will be presented at Academic Board in December. 19/137
 - Plans are underway for the refresh of the College Strategy. The strategy was owned and approved by Council and for this reason the refresh would begin with discussion at the November meeting of Council to identify high level strategic priorities for the College. An extensive consultation from January is being planned to which staff will be invited to contribute to inform the detail of the strategy. 19/138
11. **Report from the Students' Union**
- The President REPORTED that elections had been held for academic representatives as well as the new positions that were created through the establishment of collectives for underrepresented groups. These were in place and had started strongly. The Students' Union 19/139

was undertaking three projects this year: reviewing careers support for students; exploring the PGR student experience and a BAME project on the attainment gap.

The Head of Mathematics NOTED problems in filling academic representation positions in his department. The President indicated that this may be due to the number of new positions available to students but also to the fact that the Union had experienced some difficulties in cascading information into departments over the summer given the new administrative structures. 19/140

12. Report from the Council

12.1 Prof Ansari PROVIDED an oral report on matters discussed at the Council meeting held on 17 October, highlighting the following that were discussed: 19/141

- The financial position of the College and a freeze on new capital projects;
- The improvement in the College's position in the Times/ Sunday Times Good University Guide;
- The Gender Pay Gap, which will be discussed at the next meeting of Council on receipt of Duncan Brown's report;
- The REF update and the pleasing increase in research income;
- Work required by the College to be address environmental issues in a joined up way;
- The impact of falling entry grades;
- The impact of the school restructuring on staff and in particular the impact on the health of staff in School administrative teams.

12.2 The minutes of the Council meetings held on 4 July 2019 (AB/19/65) were RECEIVED and NOTED. 19/142

13. College's Access and Participation Plan

Paper AB/19/66 was RECEIVED. It was NOTED that the College Access and Participation Plan had recently been approved by the Office for Students. While the plan focusses on three areas of the student lifecycle, namely, access, success while at the College and progression to employment, the paper focussed on success while studying. The College generally has high continuation rates with little difference between most groups of students; however, there is gap in terms of attainment between underrepresented groups. Although there are some College and departmental initiative to address this, the College needs to do more and also ensure that there is a joined up approach across the institution. To this end a College Advisory Group had been set up. Updates on progress would be provided to the Board later in the year. The Students' Union welcomed being involved in College initiatives to address student success. 19/143

Points raised in the discussion included:

- Any measures put in place should address the needs of all underrepresented groups; 19/144
- Recognising the intersectionality of protected characteristics and their impact on attainment;
- The impact of poor mental health on attainment for all students, not only BAME students;
- Ways in which the lack of a sense of belonging amongst BAME students might impact on attainment;
- The central role of curriculum delivery in addressing success at university and the importance of involving education leads in discussions on possible initiatives to improve success for BAME and other students.

The Chair CONFIRMED that responsibility for Equality and Diversity was shared by the Senior Vice-Principal (Education) for students and the Deputy Principal (Academic) for staff. 19/145

14. **Academic restructuring** 19/146
- The Deputy Principal (Academic) REPORTED that the new School teams were now in place and that initial feedback from colleagues had been positive. Administrative teams were working very hard but there were challenges in some school offices where staff had left or had taken sick leave. The Deputy Principal (Operations) ASSURED the Board that there was ongoing monitoring of the staffing situation in Schools and he was approving the appointment of additional staff on a temporary basis or temporarily backfill posts to support School teams in this transition period. There was a discussion on the point at which a full review of the impact of the restructuring would take place, with some feeling this should be done at the end of a full academic cycle while others felt it should be done earlier. The Deputy Principal (Operations) was of the view that the latter was more appropriate, given the ongoing monitoring that was currently taking place.
- Issues that needed addressing were making available the Terms of Reference of new Committees, which did not appear on the governance webpage, and timetabling issues that had arisen. The Committees Handbook page would be linked to the Terms of Reference for new School and College Committees, currently housed on the academic restructuring pages. 19/147
15. **College Strategy** 19/148
- Paper AB/19/67 was RECEIVED. The Senior Vice-Principal (Academic Strategy, Partnerships and Resources) referred to this in his earlier oral report. Staff who wished to contribute topics for discussion as part of the development of the strategy were encouraged to do so. The addition of environmental issues was welcomed. It was suggested that the casualization of staff should be added, given the number of staff in the College on causal contracts.
16. **Update on REF preparations** 19/149
- Paper AB/19/68 was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Academic) reported that a recent audit of REF preparations had indicated 'substantial' confidence in preparations thus far. A key challenge is maintaining accurate staff lists for submissions given staff mobility. To maximise REF success there might be some moving of staff in/ out of particular units of assessment for tactical and strategic reasons.
15. **Update to College Enhancement Plan – actions from 2019 NSS** 19/150
- Paper AB/19/69 was RECEIVED, having previously been considered by the Council Academic Quality Assurance Committee. The Vice-Principal (Quality and Standards) NOTED that, overall the NSS scores were pleasing and that improvements had contributed to the recent improvement of the College in league tables. The report listed those departments which had performed particularly well and also those that would be subject to a process of enhanced monitoring during 2019-20. Two key strategic priorities for the College during 2019-20 were noted:
- A greater drive to ensure that departments explain their marking criteria to students;
 - Addressing low scores for learning resources, e.g. setting baseline standards for Moodle.
- The Vice-Principal (Quality and Standards) NOTED that with the new School structures responsibility for addressing these priorities had been devolved to Schools, with the Quality and Assurance Committee monitoring how these were being addressed.

16. **Annual report of Academic Board**
 Paper AB/19/70 was RECEIVED and it was NOTED that the report would be forwarded to Council. 19/151
17. **Student recruitment**
 Paper AB/19/71 was RECEIVED. The Deputy Principal (Operations) NOTED that the paper set out the figures for October. The final count will be known in December. He NOTED the following: 19/152
- The College had met its UG recruitment targets but had been dependent on a good performance in Clearing to do so;
 - The College made a record number of offers to PGT applicants but conversion rates had dipped so PGT recruitment targets were not met;
 - Recruitment to the Foundation Year had quite significantly exceeded the modest target set.
- Given the above the College had met overall targets in terms of recruitment and finances. Colleagues were thanked for all their hard work in contributing to this. The Deputy Principal (Operations) CONFIRMED that entry tariffs for foundation year students, did not feed into the key league tables.
- It was noted that several factors might have impacted on PGT recruitment; there were slow response times to applications for around three months during the year given the increase in UG applications, which had been prioritised; the current political climate had made the UK a less attractive study destination; the fee deposit scheme, which was under review. The Chair noted that the 2 year post-study work visa might help to reverse the current downward trend of PGT recruitment 19/153
18. **Academic promotions**
 Paper AB/19/72 was RECEIVED. The Principal congratulated staff who had been promoted and noted that a few promotion outcomes were still outstanding and successful outcomes would be reported at a future meeting. 19/154
19. **Nominations for committees**
 Paper AB/19/73 was RECEIVED. 19/155
20. **PDR reports**
 Papers AB/19/74, AB/19/75 and AB/19/76 were RECEIVED. These were the updated action plan from the School of Management and the PDR reports and action plans from the Departments of English and Economics, respectively. 19/156
21. **Academic Board Executive minutes**
 Paper AB/19/77 was RECEIVED. 19/157
22. **Academic Planning Committee minutes**
 Paper AB/19/78 was RECEIVED. 19/158

23. **Collaborative Provisions Committee minutes**
Paper AB/19/79 was RECEIVED. 19/159
24. **Research and Impact Committee minutes**
Paper AB/19/80 was RECEIVED. 19/160
25. **Teaching and Learning Strategy Committee minutes**
Paper AB/19/81 was RECEIVED. 19/161
26. **Quality Assurance and Standards Committee**
Paper AB/19/82 was RECEIVED. 19/162
27. **Any other business**
There was no other business. 19/163
28. **Date of next meeting**
Wednesday 11 December at 2pm, Moore Annexe Lecture Theatre (MX 001). 19/164