

ACADEMIC BOARD

3 October 2018

MINUTES

PRESENT¹:

Professor David Price, Vice-Provost (Research) (Acting Chair)

Dr Ali Abolfathi, Dr Bojan Aleksov, Ms Wendy Appleby, Dr Manuel Arroyo-Kalin, Professor Jonathan Ashmore, Dr Elinor Bailey, Mr Malcolm Bailey, Professor Torsen Baldeweg, Dr Simon Banks, Dr Michael Baron, Professor Gill Bates, , Dr Jyoti Belur, Professor Andrew Bevan, Professor Stephanie Bird, Professor Chris Blackman, Dr Geraldine Brodie, Dr Jamie Brown, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Professor Jon Butterworth, Professor Francesca Cacucci, Ms Elizabeth Carter, Dr Declan Chard, Dr Evangelia Chrysikou, Dr Coziana Ciurtin, Professor Lucie Clapp, Dr Ben Clifford, Ms Lori Coletti Campbell, Professor Nicola Countouris, Ms Sonja Curtis, Dr Ruth Dann, Professor Izzat Darwazeh, Professor Julio Davila, Dr Jason Davies, Dr Lee De-Wit, Dr Johanna Donovan, Ms Dominique Drai, Professor Piet Eeckhout, Ms Evelyn Eguridu, Professor Susan Evans, Dr Mechthild Fend, Dr Carlotta Ferrara degli Uberti, Dr Richard Freeman, Dr Rachael Frost, Dr Martin Fry, Professor Jonathan Gale, Professor Alasdair Gibb, Dr Hugh Goodacre, Ms Emma Grant, Professor Lee Grieveson, Dr Lucia Patrizio Gunning, Mr Martin Hall, Mr Phil Harding, Dr Jennifer Hazelton, Professor Michael Heinrich, Dr Arne Hofmann,

- 1.8 In response to questions, the Director of Finance and Business Affairs confirmed that:
- in the absence of sufficient time for the necessary statutory consultations, the current proposal for increases in employers' and members' contribution rates in April 2019 would continue to apply unless the Trustees chose to suspend the process in light of the outcome of the present consultation. This request has been made to the USS Trustees, Council could be asked to further reiterate the request to suspend USS's existing plans to escalate staff and employer contributions;
 - the savings resulting from the cessation of the matching of additional voluntary contributions by employers had already been accounted for in the projected increased contribution levels;
 - the question of the legality and ethical validity of a defined contribution scheme effectively cross-subsidising a defined benefits scheme could be raised with the USS. It was noted that it would be helpful for this to take place before the meeting of Council on 10 October.
- 1.9 AB discussed the scope for adjustment in the conventional 65/35 split of the additional contributions required to the pension scheme. Those members who spoke during the meeting expressed a view that any existing deficit in the scheme should be funded by employers. In response to a question about the options for an institution acting unilaterally in this respect, the Director of Finance and Business Affairs confirmed that, under current arrangements, member institutions negotiated a single contribution rate across the sector.
- 1.10 AB discussed the extent to which an institution was in a position to act unilaterally. It was understood that, although the JEC had solicited responses to three questions, it would be open to Council to comment more broadly and to express UCL's opinion, even if that did not align with all other universities responding. In discussions about whether UCL would be in a position to act in tandem with other institutions, it was noted that the HE landscape is heterogeneous and it could be expected that the individual circumstances of different institutions would influence their responses. It was suggested that, although other institutions would have their views, the consultation was seeking each institution's own response and UCL need not account for the assumed position of other universities.
- 1.11 The matter of the split of the additional contributions would be addressed by the JEP in the second phase of its deliberations, after the end of the current consultation during which the JEP had paused its work. Members raised the possibility of making adjustments to staff salary arrangements if it were not possible to increase the employers' contribution rate, with others taking the view that the matter was a national question of principle and national negotiation which should not be subject to locally negotiated pay agreements.
- 1.12 The Acting Chair thanked AB members for their views, which would be relayed to Council by way of these minutes.