

Council

Friday 24 March 2023, 9:00am

Council Room, South Wing with facilities to join the meeting online via Teams

Minutes

Present Members:

Victor Chu CBE (Chair); Hamza Ahmed; Deniz Akinci; Professor Stephanie Bird; Dominic Blakemore; Professor Jon Butterworth; Phil Clark; Dr Alun Coker; Dr Martin Fry; Tina Harris; Tania Holt; Lindsay Nicholson MBE; Turlogh O'Brien CBE; Christine Ohuruogu MBE; Professor Helen Roberts; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Lord Sharkey; Dr Michael Spence; Dr Justin Turner QC; Sarah Whitney.

Attendees:

For Minutes 65-72 and 74-78: Charu Gorasia, Chief Financial Officer

For Minutes 65-72, 73.1-73.6 and 74-78: Dr Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff

For Minutes 65-78: Natasha Lewis, General Counsel

For Minutes 65-72 and 74-78: Andy Smith, Interim Vice-President (Operations)

For Minutes 65-72 and 74-78: Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Faculties)

For Minute 70: Richard Jackson, Director of Sustainability

For Minute 70: Matthew Swales, Director of Finance Services

For Minute 72: Dr Patrick Ward, Interim Executive Director of Health and Safety

For Minute 72: Dr Neil Coutinho, Consultant Occupational Health Physician

For Minutes 73.1-73.6: Professor Jeff King, Chair of the Working Group on the

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the adoption of multiple definitions would weaken UCL's capacity to fight antisemitism.

- b. Members discussed whether acceptance of the Academic Board resolution was in effect a decision to reverse Council's 2019 decision to adopt the IHRA or was an expansion of definitions recognised by Council. The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism had been introduced since Council had taken its decision in 2019, thus the context of the conversation about definitions had now shifted.
- c. When Council approved the definition in 2019, it adopted it with two Select Committee caveats.
- d. No definition or definitions would protect students in the absence of a culture change at UCL, which must be led by Council. Everyone must be empowered to work towards this culture change.
- e. There was discussion about the formulation of the Academic Board resolution and whether or not the resolution fundamentally addressed the concerns of Council around tackling antisemitism at UCL.
- f. The lack of involvement of JSoc in the Working Group, and the membership of the Working Group, was considered by many Council members to be particularly regrettable.
- g. Council members understood the concerns of Academic Board around academic freedom. Any rationale for changing Council's position needed to be a powerful one, given Council's duty of care to protect the safety of its students and staff.
- h. Council members understood that Council was discussing a matter that had totemic significance for different stakeholders and any future decision taken would have a signalling effect.

Conclusion

- 73.8. Council concluded that it was not appropriate to take a decision at this time given the points raised at 73.7a above. It would be desirable to make an effort to bring the opposing views closer to a common ground in the interest of all stakeholders. To that end, it was anticipated that a further period of consultation and discussion would be needed before this matter could be revisited by Council, with this likely to include further consideration of the technical compatibility of any recommended definitions. The Provost agreed to consider how best to take this matter forward and to return to Council with recommendations.

Decision

- 73.9. Council:
- a. Received the Report of the Working Group on Definition of Antisemitism including the resolution approved by Academic Board.
 - b. Agreed that it should not reach a decision on the issue until it had received further information on (i) the opposing claims as to whether the five definitions could be held together as a matter of logic, or were inherently contradictory, and (ii) whether having more than one definition

would weaken UCL's capacity to fight antisemitism on campus. The Provost would test those claims, explore the potential for common ground, and come back with advice to Council for further consideration.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

74. Student Protection Plan (4-09)

74.1. Council

77. To Receive the