



Lemieux; Professor Paola Lettieri; Ms Ruoning Li; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor Annemaree Lloyd-Zantiotis; Professor David Lomas; Professor Laurence Lovat; Ms Collette Lux; Ms Xuanyi Ma; Dr Isabel Mackay; Professor Sandy MacRobert; Professor Eleanor Main; Dr Elvira Mambetisaeva; Professor Ruth Mandel; Professor John Martin; Dr Ruth McGinity; Professor Jacqueline Mcglade; Professor Andrew Mcquillin; Dr Saladin Meckled-Garcia; Professor Robert Mills; Professor Zoran Milutinovic; Professor John Mitchell; Professor Sara Mole; Ms Laure Montangerand; Professor Gudrun Moore; Dr Dafne Zuleima Morgado Ramirez; Professor Sharon Morris; Professor Gemma Moss; Professor Steven Murdoch; Ms Marga Navarrete; Dr Helene Neveu Kringelbach; Dr Mark Newman; Professor Thanh Nguyen; Dr Abel Nyamapfene; Professor Catherine O'Keeffe; Professor Moses Oketch; Professor Alexandra Olaya-Castro; Professor Martin Oliver; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Enrico Palandri; Professor Ioannis Papakonstantinou; Professor Amos Paran; Professor Jayne Parker; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Nora Pashayan; Dr Olga Perski; Professor Ann Phoenix; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor Deenan Pillay; Dr Jeffrey Pittaway; Dr Michaela Pollock; Professor Mike Porter; Professor John Potter; Dr Stephen Potts; Professor David Price; Professor Stephen Quirke; Dr Joana Ramalho; Dr Samantha Rayner; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor William Richardson; Professor Helen Roberts; Dr Tristan Robinson; Professor Sue Rogers; Dr Daniela Romano; Dr Flaminia Ronca; Professor William Rosenberg; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Dr Suzanne Ruddy; Professor Karin Ruggaber; Ms Fiona Ryland; Professor Alan Salama; Dr Benet Salway; Professor Prince Saprai; Professor Federica Sarro; Professor Giorgio Savini; Professor Andreas Schatzlein; Professor Ralf Schoepfer; Professor Sonu Shamdasani; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ala'a Shehabi; Professor Elizabeth Shepherd; Dr Michael Short; Mr Justin Siefker; Dr Bill Sillar; Professor Angus Silver; Ms Thushyanthi Sivagnanam; Professor Sam Smidt; Mr Andy Smith; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Alan Sokal; Professor Christophe Soligo; Professor Eva Sorensen; Professor Catalina Spataru; Professor Paul Standish; Professor Philip Stanier; Professor Hugh Starkey; Professor Claudio Stern; Professor Sacha Stern; Professor Fiona Stevenson; Professor Michael Stewart; Mr William Stewart; Dr Allison Stielau; Dr Sherrill Stroschein; Ms Joanna Stroud; Professor Judith Suissa; Professor Adam Swift; Professor Matthew Sydes; Mr Bryan Taylor; Professor Irving Taylor; Professor Francesco Saverio Tedesco; Professor Alan Thompson; Dr Amy Thornton; Dr Eleanor Tillett; Professor Jordan Timothy; Dr Matteo Tiratelli; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Ms Helen Tsui; Professor Ijeoma Uchegbu; Professor Elaine Unterhalter; Professor Martin Utley; Mr Clive Vassell; Professor Laura Vaughan; Dr Nalini Vittal; Professor Bridget Wade; Professor Michael Walls; Dr Ryan Wang; Professor Graham Welch; Ms Katherine Welch; Professor Ian White; Professor Duncan Wilson; Professor Nicholas Wood; Professor Selina Wray; Ms Tor Wright; Professor Haim Yacobi; Dr Ozgur Yazaydin; Dr Vedran Zerjav; Dr Stan Zochowski.

**In attendance:** Mr Douglas Bertram; Dr Clare Goudy; Professor David Katz; Mr Nick McGhee (Secretary); Ms Anne Marie O'Mullane; Professor Sir Mark Pepys; Ms Abigail Smith; Ms Kirsty Walker; Mr Sean Wallis; Ms Olivia Whiteley.

**Apologies:** Dr Declan Chard; Professor Lucie Clapp; Professor Frances Edwards; Professor Haidy Geismar; Professor John Gray; Dr Anne Grydehøj; Professor Stephen Hart; Dr Rhodri Jervis; Dr Helga Lúthersdóttir; Professor Charles Marson;

Dr Margaret Mayston; Professor Jennifer Mindell; Professor Sir Michael Pepper; Dr Stephen Potts; Ms Maria Sibiryakova; Professor Trevor Smart; Professor Jon Thompson; Dr Bella Vivat.

## **Part I: Preliminary Formal Business**

### **15 ACADEMIC BOARD MINUTES**

15.1 The minutes of the AB meeting of 29 October 2020 [AB Minutes 1-14, 2020-21] were confirmed.

### **16 MATTERS ARISING**

16.1 Academic Committee had discussed its Terms of Reference at a meeting on 19 November





address such behaviour presented a real and present danger to staff and students.

- 20.2 Section IV of the report gathered together the relevant policies, procedures and legislation and considered how mechanisms for tackling unacceptable behaviour could be improved, alongside parallel activity on improving the campus climate. The report therefore made a number of educational recommendations which were intended to encourage the development of a collective understanding of the functioning of racism and group prejudice at UCL, and a commitment to challenging this using the tools already available.
- 20.3 The Working Group had examined the question of Council's adoption of the IHRA definition in November 2019 and had assessed the compatibility of the definition with a university's responsibilities in respect of academic freedom. In doing so the Working Group had consulted with external experts and staff and student members of the UCL community. The Working Group regretted that the current debate was being held after rather than in advance of the adoption of the definition.
- 20.4 There was a danger of the issue of the adoption of the IHRA definition being conflated with the indisputable need to combat antisemitism. The Working Group did not consider that adopting the definition guaranteed the efficacy of such efforts. The Working Group did however have concerns about the potential for the definition to constrain legitimate free speech on campus, as well as about its compatibility with UCL policies and statutes and its enforceability through disciplinary procedures.
- 20.5 One member of the Working Group had dissented from the recommendation in favour of retraction. He explained that he considered that the negative impact of retraction would be disproportionate when set alongside the concerns about academic freedom. He noted that the definition indicated that its accompanying illustrative examples *could* amount to antisemitism when considered in context, but did not necessarily do so. The two caveats proposed by the Home Affairs Select Committee and adopted by Council explicitly recognised that antisemitic intent was required in order to meet the definition. In his view there were preferable alternatives to retraction, including AB advising Council that UCL should confirm its duty to uphold the Public Sector Equality Duty and should make clear that the definition had no legal force and should not be used in disciplinary proceedings.
- 20.6 Before opening the discussion to the floor, the Provost summarised representations received from members and others ahead of the meeting. These included: a petition from members of the Jewish Society asking that the recommendation to retract be rejected (252 signatories); a letter from students expressing concerns about the impact of the adoption on academic freedom (196 signatories); a letter from 31 alumni supporting the recommendations; and a small number of representations from individual members of staff on both sides of the debate. These had been shared with the chair of the Working Group, who confirmed his view that a reasonable summary had been given.

20.7 During the ensuing discussion individual members of Academic Board made the following points:

Some members spoke in favour of the definition, taking the view that its adoption by Council demonstrated a positive, victim-centred approach to the university's duty of care in the context of an ongoing rise in antisemitic behaviour in British society and on campus. In their view, retraction risked sending a damaging message about the institution's appetite to tackle such behaviour. It was suggested that the definition had the overwhelming support of the Jewish community, including UCL's own students, and that the report had been written without adequate consultation with Jewish students or with others who would have been in a position to give a different perspective. The proposal had caused dismay to students and staff as well as the wider community. The report subordinated their lived experience to an alleged constraint on academic freedom.

Other members took the view that the value of the definition was a symbolic rather than a practical one. The report had acknowledged this symbolic value but had also assessed in detail the practical impact of the adoption of the definition, and had concluded that the definition itself was unfit for purpose, and its accompanying examples ambiguous. Consequently

It was suggested that questions of antisemitism were all too easily conflated with issues concerning criticism of the State of Israel. The example of a protest at a Friends of Israel event on 27 October 2016 was cited. Other members felt that the report's concerns about the conflation of these questions were unfounded.

- 20.8 Due to pressure of time and the number of members wishing to speak, the chair raised the option of adjourning and reconvening in the New Year for further discussion and a vote. This would also provide the Working Group with an opportunity to give further thought to the method of voting on the various proposals, and to consider potential alternative definitions. AB agreed to