

Finance Committee

30 March 2021, 13:00pm

Minutes

Present Members:

Ms Sarah Whitney (Chair); Mr Minto Bhandari; Professor Lucie Clapp; Dr Alun Coker; Dr Andrew Gould; Professor Patrick Haggard; Ms Carol Paige; Dr Michael Spence AC; Baroness Valentine.

In attendance:

For Minutes 56-70: Ms Elizabeth Francis, Director Financial Planning and Analysis

For Minutes 56-70: Mr Phil Harding, Director of Finance and Business Affairs

For Minutes 56-70: Ms Kate Pearce, Finance Director, Central & Professional Services

For Minutes 56-70: Ms Fiona Ryland, Chief Operating Officer

For Minutes 56-70: Mr Matthew Swales, Director of Finance, Services and Reporting

For Minute 62: Professor Dame Hazel Genn, Vice-Provost (International & Advancement)

For Minute 62: Mr Martin Wedlake, Deputy Director of Strategy and Operations (OVPA)

For Minute 63: Mr Deepan Banati, BEAMS Head of Finance

For Minute 63: 63.1. Professor Bert de Reyck, Director of UCL School of Management

For Minute 63: Miss Susan Martin, Director of Online Programmes

For Minute 63: Professor Nibert Pachler, Pro-Vice-Provost (Digital Education)

For Minute 65: Ms Natasha Lewis, Director of Legal S

Part I: Preliminary Business.

56. Welcome and Operation of the Meeting

56.1. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to convene a meeting in person of Finance Committee. Therefore, members of Finance Committee were participating in a video conference, using tools that enabled all members to see and hear each other simultaneously. Chair's action would be used after the meeting to ratify the decisions.

57. Declarations of Interest

57.1. No declarations of interest were declared.

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Affairs reassured the members that UCL would not be affected by the first point as it did not take on secured debt.

- b. In response to a question about whether the scenarios took onboard the opinion of the Joint Expert Panel Committee (JEP), the Director of Finance & Business Affairs confirmed that UUK had written to the Trustees to challenge aspects of the valuation and noting where it deviated from the findings of JEP.
- c. In response to a question about opt-out rates the Director of Finance & Business Affairs informed Finance Committee that the historical opt-out rate was around 10%, which was comparable with pension schemes nationally. However, the figure was now between 15 and 20%. A significant proportion of the opt-outs at UCL were either due to staff who planned to leave the UK or were on fixed-term contract, or because staff could not afford the payments.
- d. A number of Finance Committee members questioned whether the Trustees had used overly pessimistic assumptions in their calculations. The Director of Finance & Business Affairs confirmed that trustees were obliged by law to be prudent in their assumptions.
- e. A Finance Committee member asked if there were any alternatives to negotiating on the USS proposals, but it was confirmed that the only alternative would be to exit the scheme which would require of the order of £300m to cover UCL's commitments.
- f. The President and Provost noted that a series of complex conversations would need to take place with staff and to ensure that these were meaningful a consultant would be engaged to run information sessions across UCL to explain how pension funds work.

64.3. Finance Committee noted the paper.

65. Confidential: South African Branch of UCL/AHRI Strategic Partnership Manager (5-07)

65.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

65.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

65.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

66. Confidential: Use of Interim Capital Fund (5-08)

66.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

66.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

66.3. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

