



FINANCE COMMITTEE

24 NOVEMBER 2010

Any member of the Finance Committee who has (or who knows of a family member who has) a material, personal, financial or other beneficial interest in any item on the Finance Committee agenda shall declare that interest at the beginning of the meeting, and that declaration will be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

- MINUTES -

PRESENT: Ms Anne Bulford (Chair) Mr Ven Balakrishnan
Dr Bob Barber Dr Ben Booth
Mr Matthew Burgess Mr Mark Clarke
Professor Dame Hazel Genn Professor Malcolm Grant
Professor David Ingram Ms Susannah Lloyd
Dr Andrea Townsend-Nicholson Sir Stephen Wall
Professor Jonathan Wolff

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms Nicola Arnold Professor Stephen Caddick
Mr Andrew Grainger Miss Valerie Hogg
Mr Rex Knight Ms Liz Mooney
Mrs Alison Woodhams Professor David Price
Professor Michael Worton Mrs Alison Woodhams

Additional attendees:

Ms Sue Barratt & Mr Mark Posnett (Deloitte) and Ms Lois Wells (Minute 4)
Mr Colin Plank (Minutes 7 & 11) Mr Jack Foster (Minute 8)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr John Morgan and
Professor Sir John Tooke

Key to abbreviations:

CPSC	Capital Projects Sub-Committee
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
EMC	Estates Management Committee
FPS	Federated Pension Scheme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
LUL	London Underground Limited
RFS	Royal Free Scheme
UCLB	UCL Business
USS	Universities Superannuation Scheme

- 3A.2 There was a query as to whether UCL should review arrangements; the Director of Finance confirmed that UCL reviews its VAT position on a regular basis via KPMG its tax advisor. A bigger issue regarding VAT is that HEFCE have suggested that HEIs could use shared service centres and outsource certain activities; however under current rules VAT would need to be paid and would not be able to be recovered. UCL was involved in lobbying the Government on VAT issues around these areas and updates would be provided to the committee as this develops.

- Fees went up 19%, this was because there were 7% more students and there were above inflation increases for overseas students and PGT courses;
- Overseas fee income increased to £74m;
- Research income went up 8% and contribution to overheads went up 12%, which increased UCL's margin;
- Costs were up 3.5%;
- Staff costs went up by nearly 6% and remain 60% of total costs;
- Staff numbers went up by 3%;
- Other operating expenses went up by only 1.9%;
- This was a real success story and was better than the forecast.

4.7 Balance Sheet:

- Net assets up were up 7%;
- Fixed asset additions were £40m (2009 £65m) and there were no major building acquisitions and funds were mainly spent on refurbishments;
- Cash increased by £65m to £164m, which was due to the large surplus, less capital spend and favourable movements on both debtors and creditors;
- Endowments had profited from favourable movements in the financial markets and were up by £10m to £68m (were £65m 2 years ago).

4.8 Overall, there were no exceptional items so the £30m operating surplus flowed through to the bottom line. This £30m represented almost 4% of turnover, which meant that UCL had met HEFCE's target for first time. This was the kind of surplus UCL should be making to prepare itself for the next few years where there would be some financial challenges regarding both income and capital investments (as the CIF funding was likely to go down by as much as 70%).

4.9 The main control point raised at the year end was accounting for fixed assets and the Director of Finance and the Director of Estates & Facilities had agreed to review and improve the process.

4.10 The Director of Finance thanked her team and also the School Finance Directors and Deans for their input and hard work.

4.11 The Provost endorsed the thanks to everyone involved in producing the Financial Statements and stressed that this level of surplus would need to be achieved each year in order to strengthen and maintain UCL in the future.

- 4.12 There were a couple of minor changes to be made to the accounts:
- Members of council to be listed up until the date when the Accounts were signed;
 - The student numbers figure on p. 7 should be changed to 23,000 to be consistent with p.12;
 - Academic Board should be removed from Council's list of committees on p. 17;
 - The insertion of a paragraph in the Statement of Principal Accounting Policies (p. 24) regarding the USS Pension Scheme to state that it is a "last man standing" scheme and to refer readers to the USS website, where they could find information on the latest valuations and read the USS annual report.
- 4.13 Other suggestions:
- Mention should be made in next year's Operating and Financial Review about how UCL had been working towards achieving the four principles of the global vision;
 - The research grants table explanation in the Commentary (p.3, Appendix FC 1/04 (10-11)) could provide more information on UK industry, commerce and public corporations as many research grants also contained industry funding within them.
 - There was a request for staff costs to be broken down further. The Director of Finance agreed that this would be done when presenting the management accounts to Finance Committee during the year.

Approved

- 4.14 The Committee recommended to Council that the audited Financial Statements for s

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costs. Additional controls on recruitment, put in place in July 2009, were being maintained and there were a number of restructuring projects in the CSS Divisions in progress. The full forecast would be reported presented at the January Finance Committee meeting.

6 HEFCE 5 YEAR FORECAST & COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW (CSR) OUTCOMES

Received

- 6.1 Appendix FC 1/08 (10-11) with Annexe 1.

Discussed

- 6.2 In the past, the HEFCE requirement was that the forecast should be submitted with the annual Financial Statements by 30 November each year as part of the 'Single Conversation' accountability returns.
- 6.3 HEFCE recently announced that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) could defer submission of the forecast until April 2011 when the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the Browne Review were known in more detail. However, HEIs were still required to submit a forecast of 2010-11 and a summary of the scenario planning they would be undertaking in relation to the forecast period.
- 6.4 Appendix FC 1/08 (10-11) with Annexe 1 set out the current position with respect to recent statements on changes to Higher Education funding and attempted to quantify the likely impact on UCL. It also described the modelling which had been undertaken on various actions under consideration by UCL and set out a high level forecast of the financial position using a set of current forecast assumptions which were considered reasonable, based on the information available at the current time. These forecasts would be updated periodically to reflect further information as it became known, and decisions as they were made, to form the basis of the Financial Forecasts to be submitted to HEFCE in April 2011.
- 6.5 The **Director, Financial Planning & Strategy** explained that the Committee would usually be presented with the Financial Forecasts at this meeting, but because HEFCE had agreed to change the submission date (as above) the Financial Forecast would be presented to the Committee at the March 2011 meeting (which would be submitted to HEFCE in April 2011).

7 **UCL STUDENT ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

Received

7.1 Appendix FC 1/09 (10-11).

Discussed

7.2 The above paper from the Director of Estates & Facilities, Mr Andrew Grainger and Mr Colin Plank, Chief Estates Surveyor.
The Chief Estates Surveyor

***** OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION *****

8 ACTUARIAL VALUATION - ROYAL FREE PENSION AND ASSURANCE SCHEME (RFS)

Received

8.1 Appendix FC 1/10 (10-11) with Annexe 1.

Discussed

- 8.2 The above paper from the Director - Special Projects concerning the draft actuarial report, as at 1 August 2009, for the Royal Free Pension and Assurance Scheme indicating a funding shortfall of £12.6 million. Finance Committee were aware of plans to merge RFS with the Federated Pension Scheme (FPS), but in the light of the significant deterioration in the funding position, it has been recommended that a working group be established to review the earlier rationale for merger.
- 8.3 Mr Jack Foster, Director – Special Projects, attended for this item.
- 8.4 The Chair proposed – and it was agreed – that the Pensions Working Group (Chaired by Mr Mark Clarke) be asked to reconvene, although its members should be asked to confirm their willingness to continue their membership.

***** MATTERS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL *****

9 UCL HOSPITAL - POTENTIAL PROPERTY TRANSACTION

Received

9.1 Appendix FC 1/22 (10-11) (tabled).

10 **WRITE-OFFS**

10A **NHS**

Noted

10A.1 In the financial year ended 31 July 2010 deals were done with three large partner NHS trusts (UCLH, the Royal Free (RFH) and the Royal National Orthopedic Hospital (RNOH)) to clear

11 **CAPITAL CASE FOR APPROVAL: CALEDONIAN ROAD**

Received

11.1 Appendix FC 1/11 (10-11) with Annexes 1 & 2.

Noted

11.2 At prior meetings Finance Committee and Capital Projects Sub-Committee had been advised of this student housing opportunity for which an option to purchase, now expired, had been acquired. It was reported at the June 2010 meetings that the Developer had failed to secure planning permission and an appeal was being considered. An appeal to the planning refusal had been made and the decision was expected on 24 November 2010. UCL supported the appeal and gave written and oral evidence. To secure UCL's position the Option Agreement had been renewed.

11.3 Mr Colin Plank, Chief Estates Surveyor, attended for this item.

Discussed

11.4 Some concerns were expressed about the suitability of the area for student accommodation given the current lack of amenities and personal security issues in the locality. It was however noted that Unite already had a student accommodation centre very nearby housing around 1,000 students. In the new UCL building, a small supermarket would be provided which would draw people in from around the area, and the location had excellent transport links. It was also remarked that students expected to experience London in all its forms and it was felt that the benefits of the site would outweigh the drawbacks.

11.5 It was agreed that this site would be a good opportunity for UCL and that opportunities to acquire sites like these were few and far between.

11.6 Since the Finance Committee meeting UCL has been informed that the planning appeal had been successful. However the purchase was still dependant on receiving London Underground's consent to the works. The application has been made to London Underground Limited (LUL) and a decision has not yet been made.

Approved

- 11.7 Finance Committee approved the exercise of the option to purchase and acquire a “turnkey” development of this student housing scheme (which would provide approx. 350 bedrooms together with ancillary offices (circa 7000 sq feet) and 2 ground floor retail units) at a total cost of up to £42m for the freehold, including ancillary acquisition costs.

12 **BANKING MATTERS: AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES**

Received

*** **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION** ***

13 UCL UNION FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2009-10

Received

13.1 Appendix FC 1/13 (10-11).

Noted

13.2 The annual audited financial statements of UCL Union for the year ended 31 July 2010, including the Trustees report which summarised the financial out-turn for the year on pages 5-6.

14 UCL BUSINESS PLC SUBSIDIARY & ASSOCIATED COMPANIES

Received

14.1 Appendix FC 1/14 (10-11) with Annexes 1-3.

Noted

14.2 The above report (with Annexes 1 & 2) was a summary of the draft Profit and Loss accounts and Balance Sheets, with a Commentary thereon and a Metrics illustration of UCL's subsidiary companies for the year ending 31 July 2010, for those forming part of UCL Business Management.

14.3 Annexe 3 was a completed checklist to the UCL Finance Committee, which confirmed that UCLB was compliant with all requirements, as laid out in the Memorandum of Understanding.

15 INSURANCE RENEWAL

Received

15.1 Appendix FC 1/15 (10-11) with Annexes 1 & 2.

Noted

15.2 The above paper, from the Insurance Manager, Financial Accounting, which provided information on UCL's insurance premiums for 2010-11 which totalled £1,581k (after taking account of the recharges). This represented an increase in premium costs over the previous year of 6%.

16 **CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE**

Received

16.1 Appendix FC 1/16 (10-11).

Noted

16.2 The above appendix included the Estates and Facilities Division's new Capital Project's Dashboard (which contained all live Capital Projects >£250k, as at 5 November 2010), presented at the Estates Management Committee (EMC) meeting on 24 November 2010.

17 **CAPITAL PROJECTS SUB-COMMITTEE (CPSC)**

Received

17.1 Appendix FC 1/17 (10-11).

Noted

17.2 The minutes of the final Sub-Committee meeting, held on 11

18B **Endowment Funds**

Received and noted

18B.1