



OFFICE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS

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Simon Fraser
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

14 March 2014
Ref: 1314/72

APPLICATION TO ACCEPT AN OUTSIDE APPOINTMENT: Dame Nicola Brewer

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments has been asked to consider an application from Dame Nicola Brewer, Director of the Diplomatic Academy in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, who wishes to take up a full time, paid position as Vice Provost International at University College London. Dame Nicola confirms that her role, as Vice Provost International, and as a member of the President and Provost's Senior Management Team, will have responsibility for the development and strategic leadership of UCL's international strategy. The Committee notes that Dame Nicola was offered the role following a competitive process.

Dame Nicola has been in her role in the FCO since October 2013. Prior to this she was the High Commissioner to South Africa.

In their consideration of this application, the Committee noted that the appointment may include contact with her former department. General contact could include calling on the relevant UK Head of Mission or Trade Commissioner overseas. In London, there will be contact with foreign Heads of Mission and there could be contact with the FCO and other departments interested in higher education.

The Committee observed that Dame Nicola has had official dealings with her prospective employer. She met the Provost while he was Vice Chancellor at Leeds, her former university, at an Alumnus Lecture and again at an Honorary Doctorate awards ceremony but notes that she did not have access to commercially sensitive information about her prospective employer's competitors, although she was in touch with other UK universities in the course of her posting to South Africa. Furthermore it took into account that she was involved in the development of departmental policy which could have affected UCL or its competitors. As High Commissioner to South Africa, she argued in favour of a) more government funded scholarships for overseas students b) more support for educational services exports from the UK and c) a gradual lightening of the visa regime on South Africa. It noted that she had no contact with UCL on these matters while the policy debate took place.

The Committee recommends that this application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- For two years from her last day of service Dame Nicola should not become personally involved in lobbying the UK Government on behalf of her new employers; and
- She should not draw on privileged information available to her as a Civil Servant

The Business Appointment Rules define lobbying in the following way: “Lobbying in this context means that the former civil servant should not engage in communication with Government - including Ministers, special advisers and officials - with a view to influencing a Government decision or policy in relation to their own interests, or the interests of the organisation by which they are employed, or to whom they are contracted”.

I should be grateful if, in addition to sending us a copy of your letter to Dame Nicola informing her of the outcome of her application that **you would also ensure that we are told when Dame Nicola takes up this post or, if earlier, when it is announced that she will do so.** We shall otherwise not be able to deal with any enquiries, since we do not release information about appointments that have not been taken up or announced, and this could lead to a false assumption being made about whether she had complied with the Rules. In line with our usual practice, we will then publish brief details on our website (<http://acoba.independent.gov.uk>) including, with your agreement, a copy of your letter.

Finally, I should be grateful if you would ask that Dame Nicola informs us if she proposes to change her role with UCL because, depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary for her to make a fresh application.

Michaela Greener