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## Joint Faculty Research Board

Thursday 29 November 2012

### MINUTES

**Chair:**

Dr James Steele      Vice-Dean Research, Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences

**Present:**

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|------------------------------|---|
| Dr Robin Aizlewood           | SSEES   |
| Dr Henriette Bruun           | SLASH   |
| Professor Susan Collins      | SLADE   |
| Dr Adam Cresswell            | REF   |
| Dr Paulo Drinot              | Institute of the Americas                                 |
| Dr Mark Ford                 | English   |
| Dr Martin Holbraad           | Anthropology  |
| Dr Tom Gretton               | Graduate Tutor, Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences |
| Dr Dilwyn Knox               | SELCS   |
| Dr Jacob Leveridge           | SLASH   |
| Professor Gesine Manuwald    | Greek and Latin   |
| Professor Jennifer Robinson  | Geography   |
| Ms Fatima Raja               | REF   |
| Ms Anna Schule               | Laws  |
| Professor Elisabeth Shepherd | DIS   |
| Professor Sacha Stern        | Hebrew AND Jewish Studies                                 |
| Professor Frederic Schwartz  | History of Art  |
| Professor Cheryl Thomas      | Vice-Dean for Research, Faculty of Laws                   |
| Professor Hans van Wees      | History   |
| Professor Claire Warwick     | Vice-Dean for Research, Faculty of Arts and Humanities    |
| Professor Albert Weale       | Political Science   |
| Professor Jo Wolff           | Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities                      |

1. **RECEIVED** apologies for absence were received from Professor Stephen Smith, Philippe Marliere, and Louise Martin.
2. **APPROVED** the Minutes of last meeting held on 8 May 2012.
3. Matters arising from the Minutes that are not agenda items.

**Item 3:**

Matter arising from the minutes of 21 February 2012:

- Faculty and Departmental web pages should act as an access point for information on fellowship opportunities, with a list of post-doctoral fellowship schemes and information on relevant funding. This had been done on the SHS faculty web pages (see <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/shs/fellowship-schemes/pdfs>) following liaison with Felicity Stafford, the Faculty External Communications Manager. A&H and Laws web pages might want to link to or mirror these pages. A contact name and email was needed from each Department to act as a first port of call for enquiries from potential external applicants; existing contacts listed are just to Departmental website home pages.

**ACTION:** Chair to ask for nominations from each Dept to act as the point of contact. Felicity Stafford to be requested to add Leverhulme information, perhaps with an additional news item on Faculty websites.

**ACTION:** Agendas and papers to be placed on the joint AH-SHS website. Tessa Rickards to organise.

4. **RECEIVED** the Deans' report:

i) AHRC BGP2 block grant application update

Professor Jo Wolff provided an update on the funding situation for PhD students funded through AHRC block grants. The current scheme was being replaced with a different model in which universities were encouraged to form consortia. UCL had formed such a consortium with Kings and the SAS, representing one of the three largest consortia in the Type A Studentship competition (the other two being Oxford and Cambridge). The first round had been for expressions of interest and over the next six weeks or so the full bid would be finalised. Professor Stephen Hart (Research Director, UCL School of European Languages, Culture and Society) was the ALHP administrator and leader for our consortium bid.

There were a maximum 450 studentships to award, and individual consortium bids could be made for 40-60. The AHRC were encouraging matching funds to be allocated by bidders, and 40% had been put forward in the UCL bid.

Dr Robin Aizlewood reported that the scheme also allowed consortia in certain strategic areas (Type B) and that UCL was leading the consortium in Russian and East European languages. Again the sums involved were very tight.

There was concern about the distribution of the funds. A panel would have to agree the best applicants but agreement could be difficult between the different institutions in the consortia. It was foreseen there could also be difficulties if the student had applied to both institutions.

The Institute of the Americas was concerned that they were not part of UCL when the bid was first put forward. It was confirmed that changes could still be made.

ii) AHRC Cultural Engagement fund

This was a fund of £40k which could be awarded for a scheme which should involve a local partner. Details had been sent to HoDs and around twelve proposals had been received by the Dean. There was a lack of clarity about the scheme and how 'local' was defined but it was felt that the scheme would typically provide for an early career researcher to work for three months with a local cultural partner, with deliverables. The projects had been submitted to the AHRC who had been asked for their preferences.

iii) PSDF Arts and Humanities fund and the Centre for Humanities Interdisciplinary Research Projects (CHIRP)

There remained a considerable sum of PSDF money available to fund three postdoctoral posts beginning this autumn and the same the following year. Only one of the advertised three positions had been filled for commencement last autumn, but with the arrival of Professor Lisa Jardine as Director of CHIRP, a further two post docs had been brought to the Faculty which would contribute to maintaining a critical mass. A meeting was scheduled between Lisa Jardine and Professor Mary Fulbrook to discuss the scheme; future calls for fellowship applications were likely to be confined thematically to existing areas of interdisciplinary research at UCL, and again involving at least two eligible UCL Departments. Professor Wolff reported that it would be possible to extend the budget beyond the original three year start up period, and that details of the next rounds of the other two schemes funded by this award (A&H Small Grants, and Teaching Assistance Bursary PhD Studentships) were still being finalised.

5. **RECEIVED** the School Research Facilitators' report:

i) ESRC demand management

Henriette Bruun reminded the JFRB that the ESRC has introduced a period of self-regulation as part of their demand management policy. UCL has received the latest statistics and the number of UCL submissions received from 01-06-11 to 30-09-12 (where decisions have not previously been included) was 31 of which 12 were funded. The numbers include 8 full applications to the Future Research Leaders call (there was an outline stage last year) of which 5 got funded. While the UCL success rate is high, the statistics showed that 12 applications fell within the 5-6.9 score range (the typical funding cut off is 7.5), 2 fell within the 1-4.9 score range and 1 was an ESRC office reject. Colleagues should still be encouraged to apply but it is vital that Departments ensure that the applications submitted are of as high quality as possible and undergo internal peer-review before submission (the School Research Facilitators are very willing to assist), that they fit the scheme, and that colleagues do not apply to schemes for which they are not competitive (e.g. an early career scholar applying for a Professorial Fellowship).

ii) Opportunities for collaborative A&H funding applications The AHRC will be piloting a policy to allow international researchers to act as Co-Investigators on Research Grants (bottom-up, responsive mode only). This policy will apply to proposals received between 1 December 2012 and 31 December 2014 when it will be reviewed. Detailed information about eligibility, costs and application guidance can be found within the relevant sections of the AHRC Research Funding Guide. It is expected that the policy will also apply to the Follow-on Funding scheme when it re-opens in January 2013.

6. **RECEIVED** status reports for possible new Grand Challenge and Research Frontiers initiatives (e.g. Civilizational Dynamics, Cultural Heritage, Human Evolution)

OvPR was now commissioning bids for co-ordination of interdisciplinary Research Frontiers, to complement the existing Grand Challenges portfolio of initiatives. There was a call for new initiatives. At present a 'Dynamics of Civilisation' bid, headed by Maria Wyke, had been put forward. A town meeting had also been held on 22 October 2012 to discuss a 'Cultural Heritage' bid and subsequently co-leads had been appointed to

develop specific thematic aspects. A 'Human Evolution' proposal would also be put before the Provost later in the current academic year. It was reported that the Provost was particularly keen that initiatives should be financially self-sustaining after three years. While it was appreciated that this would be difficult, particularly in the Arts and Humanities, if it was possible to show this it would make for a much stronger case. Professor Claire Warwick, who had had a successful experience bringing forward the bid for a Centre for Digital Humanities for similar UCL startup funding in the past, recommended colleagues talked with Margaret Lloyd about any proposals. Claire found Margaret particularly helpful on the sort of mechanisms that have worked well. Colleagues should also talk to the Deans before progressing a bid.

Some problems with Grand Challenge initiatives were also discussed, focusing on the ways that they privilege areas of wide thematic scope in order to incorporate greater diversity of ongoing research and of participating Departments. It was felt that this could lead to the perception that narrower thematic areas of research are not as highly rated by OVPR. It was also noted that in a recent experience-sharing visit from senior management at Utrecht University, who run similar university-wide research challenge schemes, there were evidently benefits both from recognizing and developing existing core strengths, and from letting a 'rising star' (typically first identified by a Dean of Faculty) lead the bid and its subsequent implementation. Such people were more motivated to break new ground, and to forge new networks and alliances that were suited to that specific purpose.

#### 7. **DISCUSSED** REF planning: Q&A with School REF team Adam Cresswell and Fatima Raja

- Staff selection strategy - comments/feedback/discussion

Over the past few months output selection and review meetings had taken place. The survey of submissions deadline was 28 November 2012. There was a discussion as to whether staff with papers yet to be accepted should be included and it was considered there was a need to be flexible, especially when there were also new appointments.

- Impact preparations - general feedback/discussion, and identification of any further needs for funding for evidence-gathering

The internal deadline for first drafts of the REF 3a Impact Template was 21 December 2012, and these would be redrafted with advice and feedback from the College REF team. Colleagues were also reminded that the end of July 2013 was the final allowable date for impact-generating activities that could be included in a REF Impact case study.

8. **RECEIVED** a talk by Brian Hole (founder of Ubiquity Press, see <http://www.ubiquitypress.com/>) on his activities with UCL and elsewhere in promoting open access research publications, including open access data and software publication.

Brian Hole reported that the Ubiquity Press was a small company advancing the wider dissemination of research. While it had been founded at UCL, it was now global and had expanded into ebooks, metajournals and A&H publications on the basis of open access.

The case for Open Access relates to the 'social contract of science', and as such it provides a viable alternative to the current subscription-based dissemination mechanisms. Worldwide, governments are funding research from public tax revenues but at present there is no easy and cost-free public pathway to access publications of research results. UK Research Councils are now embracing Open Access as the way forward. Open access was beneficial to the research community and potentially could include not just journals but also books, research data and software, and biobanks.

Brian Hole described the company's proposal for a high profile general Open Access journal in the areas

represented by SLASH Departments:

- A large PLoSOne-style journal
- low APCs (author's publication contribution) of the order of £100-£200
- high quality, rapid publishing
- tracking of citation/impact metrics.

Colleagues were requested to contact [brian.hole@ubiquitypress.com](mailto:brian.hole@ubiquitypress.com) with any queries.  
Further details could be found at <http://www.ubiquitypress.com/>

8. **NOTED** date of next meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at 4.00 in Gordon House room 106.

9. Any other business

None

Distribution: Members of the Joint Faculty Research Board, Deans and Vice-Deans of Faculties of Social and Historical Sciences, Laws and A&H, School Research Facilitators, Faculty Tutors and Graduate Tutors, School REF Team, Margaret Lloyd, David Price.

