

## UCL Public Engagement Beacon Bursary: Project Evaluation & Learning Form

The project evaluation and learning form aims to provide a simple way to document what the project has done and achieved. Projects are asked to reflect on their experience, explain any problems they had, summarise what they have learned, and lessons they would pass on to other projects or can be applied elsewhere. Although a template is provided, the nature and scope of the form will depend on the project undertaken.

Projects should submit a complete project evaluation and learning form no later than **one month** after the project end date.

The form will be reviewed by the UCL Public Engagement Unit and summarised to the Steering Group. As we are keen to share experiences of public engagement, completed sections of the form (with approval from the author) will be used to develop UCL public engagement case studies which will be published on the UCL website.

### Background:

<b>Name</b>	Jenny Gimpel
<b>Job Title/Course</b>	
<b>Organisation/Department</b>	
<b>Project name</b>	Donating your body to medical science
<b>Total project value (£)</b>	£1,400
<b>Beacon funding (£)</b>	£1,400
<b>Funding breakdown</b> <i>Please note the project actual spend, broken down into specific costs</i>	Venue hire £450, catering £178 Drinks with speakers £18 Dinner with speakers and guest/participant £97 Printed flyers £133, stationary and postage £63 Total = £939 spent
<b>Location</b>	Friends Meeting House, Euston Road
<b>Start and end dates</b>	August 2009 – June 2010
<b>Project partners</b> <i>(Please list partners involved in the project, include names, organisations and contact details where appropriate).</i>	Simon Edwards, Head of Policy, Royal College of Surgeons Claire Bithell, Press Officer, Human Tissue Authority

### Summary of project/activity: What happened?

We held an evening discussion on the subject of 'donating your body to medical science', with a panel of speakers and an audience made up of members of the public and those with a specialist interest. The event was held on Tuesday 20 April 2010, 7pm to 9.30pm in Friends House on Euston Road. The panel of speakers comprised:

- Vishy Mahadevan - Royal College of Surgeons (RCS)
- Wendy Birch – UCL Cell and Developmental Biology
- Shaun Griffin - Human Tissue Authority (HTA)
- Louise Evans - London Anatomy Office (LAO)
- Nic Fleming – Journalist, acting as Chair

Speakers were each given a few minutes to cover points of interest (a total of 15-20 minutes for the panel), followed by a Q&A/discussion session with the audience lasting 40-45 minutes. The audience was asked questions at the start and end of the talk, to explore their experiences of body donation. Posters were displayed for participants to add their comments to before and after the talk. Participants were emailed six weeks after the event for feedback. Information packs on body donation were made available on the day and via email to participants. A report summarising the event, evaluation and feedback was prepared and circulated to project partners.

**Who was the audience for this project? Please give details.**

Our two target audiences were local residents/workers in the Kings Cross/Camden area and people working in/benefiting from body donation. Of the thirty-five people who came to our event, 15 lived or worked locally in the Camden/Kings Cross area. These included several staff from Levertson and Sons (local funeral directors), and someone from the Housemans bookshop on Caledonian Road. Geoff Harrison, an artist working in Holborn also attended (having spotted the flyer in his community centre), along with film and documentary maker Saskia Baron, and a solicitor. Other participants included students and staff from UCL, UCLH, HTA, LAO, RCS, St George's University of London and Wellcome. Ruth Richardson, an independent researcher who had previously published a Lancet paper on the subject, also attended.

Please see accompanying report for how the marketing and invitations were targeted.

**What was the project supposed to accomplish? Please outline the aims and objectives agreed at the start of project, note if they changed during the project and the process and reasons for making those changes.**

This project aimed to:

- Raise awareness of need for body donation and its role in medical teaching.
- Enable the public to find out more about body donation.
- Enable UCL staff to explore public perception of this topic.
- Build skills of UCL staff and students to speak publicly on the subject.
- Collect information to help fill knowledge gaps about public awareness of, experiences of and attitudes towards body donation.

The following aims were stated in the application (*changes in italics*):

a) Audience voting at the start and end of the meeting will be used to record any changes in opinions/views. *We also decided to display posters for people to post comments on before and after our talk. This was included in the project plan after I went to a workshop by UCL Evaluation Officer Gemma Moore on different ways to survey your audience, and witnessed the successful use of such posters at the UCL 'Disposal' exhibition.*

b) Audience contact details will be collected and participants emailed roughly six months later to ask if have acted on anything learned at the meeting. *We altered the time frame from six months to six weeks to collect feedback, as this was felt to be a more practical response time and would enable us to contact participants before the start of the summer holidays.*

c) We hope to recruit UCL spokespeople for the UCL Experts database (at present we have none).

- d) We hope to have a medical anthropology student carry out research on the subject.
- e) We will compile a report on the meeting, circulate it and seek feedback from HTA/UCL staff and other participants – this may be combined/published with other surveys carried out by UCL researchers.

**Did the project succeed in its aims? How do you know?** *Specifically, please outline any evaluation and assessment undertaken.*

Of the above stated aims:

- a) Questions were put to the audience at the start and end of the talk – see Evaluation section of accompanying report for details. Overall, the number of people considering making a donation jumped from seven at the start of the talk to eleven by the end. Posters were also used to collect people's comments on post-it notes - see Evaluation section of accompanying report for examples of comments received.
- b) Participants were emailed roughly six weeks after the event - see Evaluation section of accompanying report for details. Of the 35 people contacted, nine responded (25% response rate). Overall, participants found the event interesting and useful, and all those who responded asked to be kept informed of future events. At least three people are pursuing further activities as a result of the meeting (an idea for a project, an idea for a documentary and a potential donation).
- c) Wendy Birch, UCL Cell and Developmental Biology, has agreed to have her details added to the UCL Experts database and the UCL press office is pursuing this.
- d) UCL student Eunice Lee researched information on the subject of body donation and wrote a white paper as part of her coursework for her anthropology module.
- e) The accompanying report was circulated to project partners, who provided feedback directly and at a post-event evaluation dinner (see Evaluation section of accompanying report).

**What things do you think worked well and why?** *When filling in this section, please try to think about all aspects of the project (e.g. initial inception, project activities and project outcomes), from a range of perspectives.*

The panel of speakers proved to be a good spread, covering the breadth of the subject from how to donate to what happens to a body after it is donated to how the process is regulated. Thus, the panel could offer advice, explain what happens 'behind the scenes' and cover what is and isn't allowed by law. Further, the panel had a range of experience in public speaking i.e. some were used to giving public talks and some had never given one before. Feedback on the speakers was positive (see accompanying report).

The envisaged mixed audience, made of up of roughly half layman and half specialists, also ensured that a wide range of questions was put to the panel, from 'What if I carry a donor card?' to 'Why don't you take obese bodies to practice surgery on, given that this is a current health problem?'. Furthermore, some audience members addressed questions put by others, thus encouraging a multi-way flow of information (rather than simply panel to audience). See accompanying report for questions and answers.

We had little idea of how many people would turn up. We thus chose a venue that could accommodate up to 100 people if necessary, with roughly half this number being the ideal number for a proper discussion. The flexibility of the chosen room, where chairs could be added or removed as necessary, meant that we could have a welcome area to

chat to people before and after the talk, encourage them to put up their comments on the posters displayed, and find out a little more about them. The posters were placed near the refreshments to encourage people to think about/post comments while eating, drinking or chatting. Wendy Birch kindly brought some plastic anatomy models to place around the room. The split room generated a more relaxed atmosphere for people to move about in and chat to each other. This is reflected in the feedback from participants (see accompanying report).

The format of talk was also structured to encourage participation; speakers were given only few minutes each to cover a maximum of three points on the subject, before opening up to the floor. Thus the panel spoke for only 15-20 minutes, leaving 40-45 minutes for a proper discussion.

Along with the information sheet on body donation which I prepared for the event, the Human Tissue Authority prepared its own information sheet, and the London Anatomy Office brought along booklets containing donation consent forms and information on the procedure for donation. Thus, participants had a range of information to take away with them and to make an informed choice from.

Coincidentally, on the same day the event was held, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics launched a consultation on the donation of bodily material. Someone from Nuffield contacted me prior to our event to ask if she could take part in the discussion and bring along some leaflets on the consultation, which I agreed to. These leaflets were made available to participants at the event.

### **What problems emerged during the project and how were they tackled?**

*Specifically, what barriers did you face and how did you overcome them? Again, please try to think about all aspects of the project, from a range of perspectives.*

Initially, it proved difficult to locate and recruit a UCL speaker from UCL Life Sciences. Of the staff members I initially approached, one was severely critical of the proposed project and sent me a long (two-page) email listing all the reasons why I should not proceed. His concerns included the sensationalisation of the subject to attract the media, insensitive treatment of the subject and those who donate, and the potential to attract negative responses from the public. I replied to his various concerns, explaining that we were not targeting the media but were carrying out a public engagement project, that I was gathering advice from different experts to ensure we treated the subject sensitively, and that we would consider and attempt to anticipate any possible negative responses. This allayed his concerns, but he still did not want to take part in the project. Eventually I found three members of staff who were fully supportive of the project, including Wendy Birch who proved invaluable in both her expertise and her contacts.

As stated in the application, the proposed speakers were:

- Prof Irving Taylor – Surgeon, UCL Medical School
- Prof Hal Cook – Wellcome Centre for History of Medicine at UCL
- UCL medical student – to be recruited closer to the time
- Ms Wendy Birch – Anatomist, UCL Cell and Developmental Biology
- Dr Shaun Griffin - Human Tissue Authority (HTA)
- Louise Evans - London Anatomy Office (LAO)
- Member of public who wants to donate/has donated
- A science journalist may be invited to chair the event.

Of the proposed speakers, Professor Irving Taylor was unable to attend the meeting due to commitments abroad. Professor Hal Cook left UCL permanently prior to the event for a position abroad, and the UCL medical student originally recruited for the event was also unable to attend. I am grateful to Professor Vishy Mahadevan, who was recruited to the panel as an expert on the subject, particularly the use of human bodies in surgical training, to replace Profs Taylor and Cook. I would also like to thank Nic Fleming for agreeing to chair the event. Instead of having someone on the panel who had a relative or had themselves made an arrangement for body donation, I encouraged those who had done so to attend the meeting as part of the audience, to share their experiences with others. This created a slightly less balanced panel (in that all speakers were effectively 'experts'), but kept the panel number low, which would give more time/leeway for the audience to take part in a discussion.

It proved difficult to recruit and retain UCL medical students to help organise the meeting. Four such students initially expressed interest but did not follow-up with any actions despite repeated contact.

A further problem was my departure from UCL in December 2009, meaning that I could not make full use of UCL services and channels through which to manage and promote my event. Had I stayed at UCL, for example, I would have set up a UCL email address for people to register for the event ([bodydonation@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:bodydonation@ucl.ac.uk)). Instead, I had to set one up in gmail ([bodydonation@gmail.com](mailto:bodydonation@gmail.com)). I would have made use of UCL press office mailing lists to target a number of journalists. I also did not have the time or resources to more actively recruit, retain and manage a pool of volunteer students to help promote and run the meeting. This could potentially have boosted the number of people who attended our event. However, I am most grateful for the support and effort of Eunice Lee, a third-year UCL student who helped me for the duration of the project, including the running of the event itself. I would also like to thank Hilary Jackson for managing the finances of this project on my behalf.

**Looking back, what things do you wish you had known when the project started?**

*Please list anything you feel would have been helpful to know at the start which could have made the project easier.*

I would like to have known the following:

- Does the need to register put people off attending an event? I was in two minds about whether to ask people to register beforehand or simply turn up on the day, but given that I had little idea of how many might come, I preferred to ask people to register by email or phone. Would more people have come if we had made the event registration-free, like the UCL lunch hour lectures?
- Websites to promote free events. I discovered these along the way, but would have posted my event up sooner on some of them.
- The difficulty of recruiting medical staff and students at UCL. I might have enlisted the help of more senior medical staff to encourage more people, especially students, from the medical faculty to come along if I had known.
- The difficulty of getting GP surgeries to put up a poster about body donation. I had assumed that they would be willing to do so, but this often proved not to be the case.

**Has the project led to any new activity or relationships?** *For example has the project led to any changes within the department or any changes in teaching or research? Please give details.*

The following have occurred as a direct result of this project:

- Saskia Baron, the documentary maker, has since approached speaker Louise Evans with a view to making a programme on the topic.
- Artist Geoff Harrison has stayed in touch with me. I have been to one of his openings and he joined us for our post-event evaluation dinner to swap ideas and discuss possible next steps from this project. We are keen to work together if we find a mutually beneficial project to collaborate on, on this or a similar subject.
- I am looking into applying for a Wellcome People's Award, to support a UCL-RCS-LAO collaboration on themed events or a themed week on body donation e.g. a UCL lunch hour and talks at the RCS Hunterian museum, possibly with Louise Evans as a visiting speaker.
- RCS Head of Policy Simon Edwards aims to gather data on the number of bodies donated nationally in the UK; this is not collated at present.
- HTA Director of Comms Shaun Griffin has raised the possibility of making body donation one of the topics of the HTA's annual meeting next year, in summer 2011.

**Which of the Beacon aim(s) did it address?** *The aims for the Beacon for Public Engagement Programme are as follows:*

Create a <b>culture</b> within HEIs and research institutes and centres where public engagement is <b>formalised</b> and <b>embedded</b> as a valued and recognised activity for staff at all levels and for students	yes
Build <b>capacity</b> for public engagement within institutions and encourage staff at all levels, postgraduate students, and undergraduates where appropriate, to become involved	
Ensure HEIs address public engagement within their <b>strategic plans</b> and that this is cascaded to departmental level	
Create <b>networks</b> within and across institutions, and with external partners, to share good practice, celebrate their work and ensure that those involved in public engagement feel supported and able to draw on shared expertise	yes
Enable HEIs to test <b>different methods</b> of supporting public engagement and to share learning	yes

**Specifically, how does the project addresses these aims?**

This project has brought together the Royal College of Surgeons, London Anatomy Office, Human Tissue Authority, UCL and other organisations that benefit from or are involved in body donation, to discuss the subject with a public audience in a venue outside their normal remit. Most meetings on this subject are held within these institutions for staff and specialist members only, such as at conferences or as part of teaching and training. The RCS, LAO and UCL are now keen to do more public engagement work on this subject, aiming at a larger public audience, preferably as a collaborative project involving all the project partners.

**More information:** *Please attach photographs of what happened, if you have one. Please also list any titles or links to more information on the project (for example reports, articles, websites).*





