



JOINT STAFF STUDENT COMMITTEE

Thursday 24 November 2011

MINUTES

PRESENT

Dr Ruth Siddall (Chair)

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Ms Candice Ashmore-Harris | Dr Jonathan Rogers |
| Mr David Ashton | Mr Maxwell Stead |
| Mr Zayyan Butt | Dr Fiona Strawbridge |
| Mr Luke Durigan | Professor Sue Hamilton |
| Professor Mike Ewing | Professor Alexi Marmot |
| Ms Rachel Eyre | Mr James Vale |
| Dr Paul Greening | Dr Adam Wojcik |
| Ms Lesley Pitman | Ms Penny Zorbas |
| Professor Raman Prinja | |

In attendance: Ms Lina Kamenova (for Ms Denise Long) Mr Alistair King (for Mr William Wilson), Ms Penny Zorbas (for Dr David Stevens) and Mr Rob Traynor (*Secretary*).

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Neil Chowdhury, Ms Ann Glasser (for Dr Ann Griffin), Professor Helen Hackett, Ms Nancy Kou, Dr Dewi Lewis, Ms Denise Long, Dr David Stevens, Dr Andrea Townsend-Nicholson, Mr Ben Towse and Mr William Wilson

<i>Key to abbreviations:</i>	
AC	Academic Committee
AS	Academic Support (Registry and Academic Services)
EdCom	Education Committee
ISB	International Student Barometer
JSSC	Joint Staff Student Committee
NSS	National Student Survey
NSSL0	National Student Survey Liaison Officer
QCR	Quiet Contemplation Room
RGI	Russell Group Institutions (high-profile research intensive group of universities)
SEQ	Student Evaluation Questionnaires
SSCC	Staff Student Consultative Committee
StARs	Student Academic Representatives
UCLU	UCL Union

		<i>Action</i>
1	TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP OF JSSC 2011-12	
	<i>Noted:</i>	
1.1	The constitution and terms of reference of the Committee at: <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/01 (11-12)</u> .	
1.2	The Chair welcomed the new student representatives to their first meeting, as well as Mr David Ashton and Ms Lina Kamenova for Ms Denise Long.	

2	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
	Confirmed:	
2.1	The minutes of the last meeting held on 19 May 2011 [<i>JSSC Mins.23-32, 2011-12.</i>]	
3	MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES	
3A	Blood Donation Facility [<i>JSSC Min. 25A, 19.05.11</i>]	
	Noted:	
3A.1	The UCLU Welfare Officer has discussed the Blood Donation facility with UCL Estates and discussions will continue next term. UCLU will be responsible for booking the space.	
3B	UCLU Part-time Students Survey [<i>JSSC Min. 25C, 19.05.11</i>]	
	Noted:	
3B.1	Last session, UCLU had raised concerns received from part-time students regarding the examination time-table and had conducted an on-line survey in order to gauge the scale of the problem, but unfortunately only 18 students had responded. UCLU continued to look at the challenges facing the part-time students.	
3B.2	The UCLU Education & Campaigns Officer reported that advice was sought from Birkbeck College students' union on examination scheduling arrangements for part-time students. Birkbeck also held examinations in day-time and could not schedule them out of term-time. Following a students' union campaign, Birkbeck agreed to announce exam dates three weeks earlier to allow its students more time to make arrangements.	
3B.3	The Director of Student Services noted that the previous UCLU part-time Students Officer and the Education and Campaigns Officer had met Registry officers to discuss the concerns. UCL also intended to set the examinations earlier and this meant that any special requests for time-tabling from students or departments needed to be received earlier too. These would be considered on a case by case basis and the deadline was 1 February 2012 .	
3C	UCL Transitions Programme [<i>JSSC Min. 25F, 19.05.11</i>]	
	Noted:	
3C.1	The UCLU Welfare Officer reported that UCL Union officers had met with the Transitions Manager in the Registry and discussed concerns. This had been a useful meeting which provided more insight into the workings of the programme, which UCLU valued, and an on-going dialogue had been established.	
3D	UCL Service Standards for Provision of Feedback to Students on Assessed Work [<i>JSSC Min. 26, 19.05.11</i>]	
3D.1	Noted:	
	The UCLU Education & Campaigns Officer noted that the suggested changes raised by JSSC at the last meeting had been made to its report, which had been circulated to UCL Faculties for consideration. It was also submitted to the Education Committee for further discussion. UCLU was considering running the student survey on the service standards on an annual basis.	
3E	International Student Barometer Summary Report [<i>JSSC Min. 28, 19.05.11</i>]	
	Noted:	
3E.1	UCLU has raised the low Refectory satisfaction scores in the ISB Summer 2011 data with the Provost.	

4	STUDENT RESIDENCES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	
	<i>Received:</i>	
4.1	The UCL Union report at <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/02 (11-12)</u> and an oral report by the UCLU Welfare Officer.	
	<i>Reported:</i>	
4.2	<p>The UCLU Welfare Officer reported that UCLU had received numerous accommodation enquiries from international students before the start of session and had conducted a survey about their experiences with student residences. The following concerns were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problems with getting through to the UCL Student Accommodation by telephone and not receiving responses to e-mail queries; • lateness of offers of accommodation with some international students reporting that they were not informed until the day before their flight. Other students reported having no accommodation on arrival at UCL, or finding expected rooms to be double-booked; • some students had to book expensive bed and breakfast rooms whilst their accommodation was arranged; • some inconsistent advice given by UCL Student Accommodation staff to students, including on deadlines for applications and extensions of deadlines, leaving students confused. <p>It was further noted that UCL Student Accommodation was very helpful in resolving problems when UCLU brought them to attention. UCLU intended to run a similar survey next year.</p>	
4.3	<p>The UCLU Welfare Officer made the following suggestions to help rectify matters next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the UCL Student Accommodation phone system utilise a frequently answered question recording for students waiting in the queue to get through. This is used by some other universities and helps to answer queries and reduce queues; • consider allocating more resources (staffing and funding) for UCL Student Accommodation if necessary; • create a forum on the Residences web-page to enable unsuccessful applicants to meet other students to search for alternative accommodation and pool resources. 	
	<i>Discussion:</i>	
4.4	<p>The UCL Student Accommodation Operations Manager welcomed the report and noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCL Student Accommodation acknowledged that although the vast majority of students were dealt with appropriately, there had been problems in the summer and apologised for any distress and inconvenience caused to students; • a new electronic system had replaced the previous paper-based system and this had come on line later than expected, resulting in delays in issuing accommodation offers; • there had also been some instances of temporary staff giving incorrect information (e.g. informing some postgraduate UK/EU students that they were guaranteed accommodation when this was not the case) and one unconnected phone-line which meant, inadvertently, that some queuing students were unable to get through to the office; • UCL Student Accommodation was working hard to ensure that the system worked as planned next year and meets the various deadlines for sending accommodation offers. The new system would be more efficient in acknowledging applications and keeping students informed of progress and outcomes. Temporary staff training had also been reviewed and improved. 	
4.5	It was noted that the University of London also offered extensive	

	information on private sector accommodation and it would be helpful to ensure that unsuccessful applicants are aware of it.	
	RESOLVED:	
4.6	That the UCL Student Accommodation note the discussion and consider incorporating the suggestions raised in the UCLU report and JSSC discussion, particularly the Student Forum and FAQ ideas.	Alistair King to note

5	JSSC ANNUAL REPORT TO ACADEMIC COMMITTEE: WORK OF THE COMMITTEE 2010-11	
	Received:	
5.1	The draft JSSC annual report at: <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/03 (11-12)</u> and an oral report by the Secretary.	
	Reported:	
5.2	The Secretary noted that JSSC, under its terms of reference, is required to submit two annual reports to AC on: (i) the work of the committee in the previous session and (ii) issues arising from student feedback mechanisms. The latter report, the Student Data Overview Report, will be submitted to the next JSSC meeting. JSSC was asked to discuss the first report at this meeting for approval and then submission to AC.	
5.3	The Secretary briefly summarised the main items discussed last year which included: StARs, Personal Tutoring, service standards on assessed work (and associated UCLU report and survey). More long-standing agenda items were also noted (such as the Quiet Contemplation Room, the Student Experience fund and blood donation facility) as well as items presented by the UCL services members such as on the Library and IT (including a useful student survey).	
	RESOLVED:	
5.4	That JSSC approve the draft report, subject to any suggested amendments (to be forwarded to the Secretary by the end of November). ¹	JSSC Members to note

6	QUIET CONTEMPLATION FACILITIES	
	Received:	
6.1	Oral reports by the UCLU Welfare Officer and by the Chair.	
	Reported:	
6.2	The UCLU Welfare Officer reported that although students were relatively pleased with the extended facilities in the QCR (Hut 34) and the long-term plans for an improved location, other concerns had arisen regarding ablution facilities. There were only two facilities available (based in toilets) for up to 2000 Moslem UCL students, often leading to 40 minute queues and in particular, problems for students attending prayers at sunset.	
6.3	The Chair noted JSSC's support for the improved QCR facilities and noted that long-term, plans were in place in the UCL Estates Master Plan to move these facilities, possibly to the new Student Centre, although this may not be ready for a number of years. The three recognised chaplains at UCL were also noted.	
	Discussion:	
6.4	The Equalities Officer noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most other universities had sufficient ablution facilities; • some UCL toilets contained notices prohibiting their use for ablutions; • an incident had occurred where female students had cut their feet on exposed tiling in one of the facilities provided. 	

¹ In the event no comments were received and the report was submitted to the December meeting of AC.

6.5	It was suggested that two more dedicated ablution facilities were required, appropriately segregated for male and female students. Simple measures, such as the availability of mops, could also help students to keep the toilets in safe order after their use for ablutions.	
	RESOLVED:	
6.6	JSSC reaffirmed its support for improvements to the QCR and for consideration to be given to extending and improving ablution facilities. It was agreed that the QCR remain a regular JSSC item.	JSSC members to note
6.7	It was agreed that the UCLU officers follow up these concerns with the Vice-Provost (Operations) officers. It was also suggested that if not done already, an accident report be filed for the two female students who cut their feet in the toilet dedicated for ablution facilities.	UCLU Officers

7	STUDENT EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES – UPDATING THE ACADEMIC MANUAL DOCUMENT	
	Received:	
7.1	The draft <i>Academic Manual</i> SEQ document: <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/04 (11-12)</u> and an oral report by the Secretary.	
	Reported:	
7.2	The Secretary reported the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a meeting has been scheduled to re-consider student feedback provision between the Chair, Dean of Students (Education)/Acting Vice-Provost (Education) and Academic Support officers in early December. The meeting will consider the main issues and how to proceed as well as suggestions from the JSSC discussion on SEQs. More input may later be requested from JSSC; • EdCom had requested that JSSC review the <i>Academic Manual</i> SEQ policy document which provides guidance and suggested questions for departments and academic units to use. This arose from the EdCom discussion of the UCLU Assessment and Feedback Report; • draft assessment questions have been added to the document and the questions reframed as statements to make the guidance more in line with the Likert 1-5 scale it suggests that departments use. 	
	Discussion:	
7.3	The following key points were made in the JSSC discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there was general agreement that the draft revised SEQ document contained too many questions and that there should be more consistency across UCL in the questions and survey system used; • the student representatives noted that students were more likely to complete shorter questionnaires; • however, there was divergent opinion on how many questions the SEQ guidelines should contain, with some members favouring a very short questionnaire similar to one run by the University of Bedfordshire which contains four broad questions and an opportunity for comment; • other members favoured reducing the current 29 questions to around 20 by avoiding repetition and/or combining similar questions; • the Library Representative was concerned not to lose questions related to library provision, as this was a vital data source used by the Library to identify student views, particularly at modular level, and was a driver for change in making improvements; • some members considered that student comments were more useful than the quantitative data as students were able to raise the matters they felt most important; • however other members noted that comments could often be contradictory and obscure prevailing views or concerns and that hard data gleaned from the questions was more useful, particularly in identifying trends between years. 	

	RESOLVED:	
7.4	That the key points above be reported to: (i) the student feedback discussions to be held between the Chair, the Dean of Students (Education)/Acting Vice-Provost (Education) and AS officers and (ii) to EdCom officers ² .	Dr Ruth Siddall, Prof Mike Ewing and Rob Traynor to note

8	STAFF STUDENT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES	
	Received:	
8.1	The guidelines for the operation of SSCCs at: <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/05 (11-12)</u> .	
	Noted:	
8.2	It was noted that JSSC is responsible for the guidelines for the operation of SSCCs and that these were circulated to Heads of Academic Departments and Chairs of SSCCs in October 2011. The SSCC minutes and SEQ student feedback data will be submitted to JSSC for consideration at its second meeting.	

9	NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY - 2011 UCL RESULTS	
	Received:	
9.1	The NSS 2011 UCL results at: <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/06 (11-12)</u> and an oral report by the Secretary.	
	Reported:	
9.2	The Secretary reported that the 2011 NSS results have been received by UCL and results digests are being disseminated to faculties, departments and other academic units. JSSC is the main committee to receive and consider the overall UCL NSS data, which forms part of the dataset providing an overview of student feedback.	
9.3	The Secretary further reported that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UCL achieved its joint highest response rate, 58%, up 7% on 2010 and noted that this was achieved through UCLU support and a new network of NSS Liaison Officers responsible for promoting the survey in each department; the UCL scores were similar to 2010, with improved overall satisfaction (88%) and high scores for Teaching; Assessment and Feedback scores, an on-going sector-wide concern, had remained stable at UCL, however Learning Resources scores had declined and a digest on these scores would be disseminated to the Library and ISD next month; UCL is placed 5th in the Russell Group Institutions and is expected to retain its position in the league tables based on the NSS scores; the NSS was set to become more prominent this year with the introduction of the Key Information Set, which would present university data including the NSS, directly in prospectuses from September 2012; this data would be given at programme level when possible and an additional question on Student Unions will also be added. 	
	Discussion:	
9.4	It was noted that there appeared to be some correlation between the scores for Teaching and Overall Satisfaction. There was some truth in this and research had indicated that students considered Teaching the most important of the question areas and thus often gave similar scores for their overall satisfaction too.	

² At the student feedback discussions it was agreed to further revise the *Academic Manual* SEQ document and submit to EdCom officers for consideration.

9.5	It was suggested that other universities should be contacted for advice on improving the response rate. The Secretary noted that UCL officers had already established a network of RGI NSS contacts and were also represented in a national NSS working group. The NSSLO idea for example, followed successful practice elsewhere.	
	RESOLVED:	
9.6	That JSSC note the NSS report and incorporate its key points in the student feedback overview report next term.	JSSC members to note

10	INTERNATIONAL STUDENT BAROMETER	
	Received:	
10.1	The International Student Barometer Summer 2011 results at: <u>APPENDIX JSSC 1/06 (11-12)</u> and an oral report by Ms Penny Zorbas, of the UCL International Office.	
	Reported:	
10.2	<p>Ms Zorbas reported that there had been changes to the data presentation and the ISB which now focussed on student usage rather than on how important they rated a question area. The main points of note were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the UCL response rate was down by 4% on the previous survey; • 88% of UCL students were satisfied with their overall UCL experience, up 1% from the Autumn 2010 wave and equal to the RGI average and above the London and UK average; • 85% of students were satisfied with their learning experience, slightly below the RGI average (86%). Scores were ahead of the RGI for online library, academic's English and research. They were less satisfied with marking criteria and performance feedback; work experience; opportunities to teach and departmental careers advice (i.e. not the UCL Careers Service); • 87% of students remained satisfied overall with the living experience, just below the RGI average (88%). Students were satisfied with internet access, transport links and UCL as a good place to be but were much less satisfied with living costs, financial support; earning money and accommodation costs; • 88% of students were again satisfied with the UCL support services, lower than the RGI (90%) but higher than the London average. Support services with the highest usage were catering, clubs and societies, IT services, UCLU facilities and the Accommodation Office. Students were satisfied with the UCLU, clubs and societies, the Graduate School and faith provision, but less satisfied with the Accommodation Office and catering; • 37% of UCL international students said that they would <i>actively encourage</i> people to apply to UCL, a decline on 2010 (41%) but still higher than the RGI (36%) and London (32%) average; • More data was available on request from Ms Claire Underwood in the International Office. 	
	Discussion:	
10.3	It was noted that the ISB provided a holistic view of the student experience and covered research and taught postgraduates as well as the undergraduates covered by the NSS. It was suggested that more use might be made of the international students' good will, shown by the large numbers that were willing to <i>actively encourage</i> people to apply to UCL.	
	RESOLVED:	
10.4	That JSSC note the ISB report and incorporate its key points in the student feedback overview report next term.	JSSC members to note

11	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	Noted:	
11.1	The Secretary noted that Ciaran Moynihan, the Project Coordinator from the UCL Digital Department is running a Digital Literacy Project for Teaching Administrators. This will require student engagement in workshops, case studies and raising awareness of the project, some of which will present paid opportunities for students. Any interested student representatives should contact Ciaran at: cfhd@ucl.ac.uk .	JSSC members to note
11.2	The Chair reported that there was a new Prevent Officer, WPC Jo Feeney, who liaised with UCL regarding the Prevent Initiative (see paragraph 2F, APPENDIX JSSC 1/03 (11-12) for more details). A short statement had been requested from WPC Feeney, but no reply had been received as yet. JSSC would continue to be kept informed of the progress with the Prevent Initiative as it arose.	JSSC members to note
11.3	The Chair also reminded members that the annual Dean of Students Reception was being held on Friday 25 November at the Richard Mully Basement Bar. All JSSC members and student representatives were invited.	JSSC members to note

12	DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS	
	Noted:	
12.1	The next meetings of JSSC are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 23 February 2012 at 4.00pm; • Thursday 17 May 2012 at 4.00pm; The venue for both meetings is Room 339, the Rockefeller Building.	JSSC members to note

Rob Traynor
Quality Assurance Officer
Academic Support
Registry and Academic Services
[telephone 020 7679 8592, UCL extension 28592, email: r.traynor@ucl.ac.uk]

14 December 2011