Academic Committee
Thursday 4th March 2021 at 10:00am

Video-conferencing meeting via MS Teams

Minutes

Present Members:
President and Provost (Chair); Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Simon Banks; Mr Ayman Benmati; Professor David Bogle; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Professor Jon Butterworth; Dr Simon Cane; Ms Yasmeen Daoud; Mr Ashley Doolan; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Professor Arne Hofmann; Professor Christoph Lindner; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor David Price; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Justin Siefker; Professor David Shanks; Professor Sam Smidt; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Professor Olga Thomas; Dr Kathryn Walsh

Attendees:
Dr Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff, Provost's Office
Mr Zak Liddell, Director of Education and Student Experience, MAPS Faculty
Ms Bella Malins, Director of Access and Admissions

Apologies:
Professor Mark Emberton; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Graham Hart; Professor David Lomas; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Meera Nath Sarin; Professor Alan Thompson; Dr Eleanor Tillett; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker

Officer:
Ms Rachel Port

Part I: Preliminary Business

19. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020

19.1. Academic Committee (AC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 [Minutes 2-18, 2020-21].

20.   Matters arising from the Minutes

20.1. There were no matters arising.

Part II: Matters for Discussion

21. Provost's Business

21.1. The Provost reported the following items to AC:

a. This was the first AC meeting to be chaired by the new President and Provost, Dr Michael Spence AD, who took up his post at UCL with effect from 11 January 2021.

b. The Provost outlined the various activities he had undertaken in his first few weeks at UCL. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Provost was working to bring UCL through the current academic session and to plan the shape of the 2021-22 session, taking account of the government's roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions.

c. It was intended that a consultation be undertaken with the UCL community in 2021-22 session as part of the development of a new institutional-wide strategy.

d. Changes had been made to the Senior Management Team, to take effect from 1 April 2021, with the reorganisation of a couple of the Vice-Provost's portfolios and the introduction of Vice-President roles.

e. The Provost also intended to reorganise UCL's management committee structure to allow for a transparent process for decision making.

f. The Provost would be happy to speak to any member of AC, who was not involved in any of the above matters as part of another group, about these activities.

22.   UCL Innovation and Enterprise Interim Strategy 2021-23 (Paper 3-12)

22.1. Dr Kathryn Walsh, Executive Director, Office of the Vice-Provost Innovation and Enterprise introduced the interim strategy. The key points made were:

a. The current Innovation and Enterprise (I&E) strategy "Transforming knowledge and ideas into action" would expire in 2021 and required revision.

b. An ongoing strategy was required for external monitoring, especially for the Knowledge Exchange Concordat and the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) Accountability Statement.

c. Given it was intended that work on developing a new UCL-wide strategy would be undertaken next session, a light touch review of the current I&E strategy had been undertaken.

d. The interim strategy covered a two-year period and allowed UCL to be agile in identifying the emerging needs in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

e. The strategy had been consulted across UCL Innovation and Enterprise, UCL Business, UCL Consultancy and with the Faculty Vice-Deans for Enterprise. It has also been shared with the Vice-Provost (Research, Innovation and Global Engagement) for advice in light of his new portfolio.

f. The objectives and frameworks for strategic direction were a continuation of the 2016-21 strategy, with a focus on refreshing and updating activity, rather than attempting to set a new or different direction at this time.

g. The interim strategy had three cross-cutting themes on sustainability, equality and diversity, and the role of place that were central to the objectives of I&E.

22.2. The following points were made in discussion:

a. In relation to a query about how the interim strategy related to public engagement, it was noted that there was some overlap in this area with what Research England called "Knowledge Exchange" (KE). Some funding schemes covered KE and I&E intended to work more closely with UCL Culture.

b. The Vice-Provost (Research, Innovation and Global Engagement) considered that the strategy was a very positive direction of travel and that UCL Culture would fall under his remit henceforward to allow for closer oversight of those respective areas' impact agendas.

c. The cross-cutting themes were to be commended, especially having one dedicated to equality and diversity.

d. In relation to the strategy being considered at Academic Board, the Chair proposed that it be issued to Board members for noting at its May 2021 meeting.

22.3. AC:
a. Agreed that the interim strategy be issued to Academic Board for information at its May meeting.
b. Approved the proposal that the interim strategy be recommended to Council for formal approval.

23.   Prevent (Paper 3-13)

23.1. Ms Bella Malins, Director of Access and Admissions introduced the annual report on the implementation of Prevent at UCL. The key points made were:

a. The Office for Students (OfS) confirmed in June 2020 that it had concluded that UCL demonstrated due regard to the Duty. At the same time, the OfS risk assessment was that UCL was not at higher risk of non-compliance with the Prevent Duty in future.

b. Due to the pandemic and events/meetings moving online from March 2020, new guidance was created for staff to follow for online events and meetings that included external speakers and this was made available on the UCL Prevent website.

c. As the majority of teaching and learning also shifted online, guidance was provided for staff on how to continue to safeguard UCL students in the online environment.

d. No reportable incidents regarding Prevent or external speakers had been discussed with the OfS since the last report to AC.

e. In the last reporting period, 55 key student facing staff had taken the online Prevent induction course. In addition, 40 staff working in areas supporting student wellbeing had received broader welfare and safeguarding training.

f. Under UCL's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech framework, no external speakers have been prevented from speaking at UCL and all events had been allowed to go ahead.

23.2. The following points were made in discussion:

a. In relation to the online Prevent induction course, the Chair noted that, as a new staff member, the mandatory training requirements during the probationary period were unclear and the amount of required training seemed quite extensive.

23.3. AC received the annual report on the implementation of Prevent at UCL.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

24. Lead Officer Report for session 2019-20 – Student Accommodation (Paper 3-14)

24.1. AC received the Lead Officer Report – Student Accommodation 2019-20.

25. Annual Report for session 2019-20 – Library Committee (Paper 3-15)

25.1. AC received the Library Committee Annual Report 2019-20.

26.   Annual Report for session 2019-20 – Student Experience Committee (Paper 3-16)

26.1. AC received the Student Experience Committee Annual Report 2019-20.

27.   Annual Report for session 2019-20 – Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee (Paper 3-17)

27.1. AC received the Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee Annual Report 2019-20.

28.   Reports of sub-committees, working groups etc of AC

28.1. AC received the following sets of minutes:

   a. The minutes of Education Committee, 30 October 2020; 3 December 2020; 8 January 2021 (unconfirmed), 5 February 2021 (unconfirmed);
   b. The minutes of Innovation and Enterprise Committee, 8 October 2020;
   c. The minutes of Library Committee, 18 November 2020;
   d. The minutes of Research Governance Committee, 2 July 2020;
   e. The minutes of Student Experience Committee, 1 December 2020.

29.   Dates of next meetings

29.1. The next meetings of Academic Committee would be held as follows:

Thursday 24 June 2021 at 10.00am
Thursday 18 November 2021 at 10.00am.

Ms Rachel Port
Secretary to Academic Committee
May 2021