ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 4 July 2013

MINUTES

PRESENT:
Professor Anthony Smith (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton	Dr Arne Hofmann
Professor David Bogle	Dr Helen Matthews
Professor Robert Brown	Mr Dante Micheaux
Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe	Dr Peter Raven
Dr Caroline Essex	Ms Mary Rimington
Dr Julie Evans	Dr Ruth Siddall
Professor Mike Ewing	Dr Eva Sorensen
Mr Marco Federighi	Ms Susan Ware
Professor David Green	Professor Jonathan Wolff
Dr Leonie Hannan	Professor Michael Worton
Dr Christine Hoffmann	

In attendance: Mr Jason Clarke (Secretary); Mr Kier Gallagher; Ms Judith Hillmore; Ms Harriet Lilley; and Mr Ben Towse.

Apologies for absence were received from: President and Provost; Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Anthony Finkelstein; Professor Alan Penn; and Mr Tim Perry.

Key to abbreviations	
AB	Academic Board
AC	Academic Committee
AM	Annual Monitoring
DLTS	Departmental Learning and Teaching Strategy
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEA	Higher Education Academy
IQR	Internal Quality Review
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
StEF	Student Experience Forum

48   RETIRING MEMBERS OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Noted:

48.1   The following members of AC would be standing down from the Committee, and in some cases also leaving UCL, before the start of the 2013-14 academic session:

- Professor Sir Malcolm Grant, Provost and President;
- Professor Michael Worton, Vice-Provost (International);
- Professor Stephen Smith, Dean of the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences;
- Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe, Education and Campaigns Officer, UCL Union;
- Mr Dante Micheaux, Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer, UCL Union.

Reported:

48.2   The Chair, on behalf of all of the members of AC, thanked the Provost and President and Professor Worton for their outstanding achievements on behalf of UCL and wished them well in their retirement. The Chair also thanked Professor Smith for his contribution to the work of AC during his tenure as Dean of the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences.

48.3   The Chair also expressed his thanks to Mr Clifford-Cope and Mr Micheaux for their contribution to AC during their time as full-time officers in the UCL Union and wished them well in their future careers.

49   MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 9 MAY 2013

Confirmed:

49.1   The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 9 May 2013 *[AC Mins. 36-47, 09.05.13]*.

50   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *[see also items 51, 52 and 55A below]*

50A   Lead Officer Reports *[AC Mins.39.5, 40.5 and 41.3, 09.05.13]*

Noted:

50A.1 The Lead Officer reports on Careers and Employability, Student Accommodation, and Student Welfare Co-ordination were approved by AB at its meeting on 22 May 2013 and would be submitted to Council at its meeting on 9 July 2013.

51   ACADEMIC COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON THE GPA *[AC Min.37B, 09.05.13]*

Noted:

51.1   The report from the AC Working Group on the GPA at AC 5-26 (12-13), introduced by the Dean of Students (Academic), as Chair of the Working Group.

Reported:

51.2   The Dean of Students (Academic), as Chair of the Working Group, noted *inter alia* the following:

- Compared to the existing degree classification system, the GPA has much greater acceptance internationally. The greater range and finer granularity of the system would allow for greater differentiation between, and recognition of, student achievement.
- The GPA would encourage students to work constantly in all of their modules.
- Introducing the GPA would have significant resource implications *eg* Portico would require substantial investment in order to ensure that it was fit-for-purpose in dealing with the new grading system.
- If UCL were to adopt the GPA, it would be necessary to engage with professional bodies, employers and other interested parties to explain the rationale for moving to the new system and how it works.
- A major modelling exercise had been conducted using a 'straw man' GPA scheme and more details on the results of that exercise were set out in the Working Group's report.
- The Working Group was recommending to AC that UCL should participate in an HEA sponsored national pilot group on the GPA, the membership of which would likely include a range of UK HEIs, including Russell Group universities. Furthermore, UCL should adopt the GPA system if it was also adopted by other HEIs following this national pilot.

Discussion:

51.3   AC members agreed in principle that UCL should join the HEA national pilot group, subject to UCL receiving more information on the details of how the pilot would be conducted, and also noted the following regarding GPA at UCL:

- Any pilot of the GPA system should run in tandem with the current Honours system.
- An institutional revision of marking practices at UCL should be viewed positively by the UCL community.
- UCL should take a leadership role in any national change to degree classification systems, in order to give a clear message to the Government that Russell Group universities were able to implement major educational change.
- The GPA system would allow for greater comparison of student achievement across the UCL faculties.
- Students, staff and employers would need to be provided with clear information on the GPA system, and a consultation should take place before UCL adopted any change to its current classification system.
- If UCL were to decide to adopt the GPA system, then this should only be once a clear institutional commitment had been given that the necessary resources would be provided to implement the system effectively, such as making the necessary upgrades to Portico.

51.4   The AC Chair thanked the GPA Working Group for the report and its substantial investigations into the GPA system.

RESOLVED:

51.5   That AC approve the report from the GPA Working Group at <u>AC 5-26 (12-13)</u>.

[ACTION: Professor Mike Ewing, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]

51.6   That UCL should in principle participate in the HEA-sponsored national pilot of the GPA, subject to UCL satisfying itself as to the details of how the pilot would operate.

[ACTION: Professor Mike Ewing, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]

51.7   That, depending on the timescale for the HEA-sponsored pilot, UCL should consider piloting the GPA system in 2014-15 (in parallel with the degree classification system) for incoming first year students.

[ACTION: Professor Mike Ewing, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]

52   ACADEMIC COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP ON PROGRAMME REVIEW *[AC Min.44, 09.05.13]*

Noted:

52.1   At its last meeting, AC noted that, further to the Council White Paper 2011-21 and the review last session of the IQR process undertaken by QMEC, a working group of AC had been established to review UCL's current processes for the annual and periodic review of programmes.

52.2   A progress report from the Working Group on Programme Review at <u>AC 5-27 (12-13)</u>, introduced by the AC Chair as Chair of the Working Group.

Reported:

52.3   The AC Chair, as Chair of the Working Group on Programme Review, noted the following in his oral report:

- The Working Group had adopted a slightly wider brief to look at both UCL's annual and periodic processes for programme review and their relationship with other processes for continuous improvement and enhancement, such as IQR.
- The interim report noted that while IQR was generally seen as a valuable developmental process, there was a need for a more meaningful periodic programme review process and a need to ensure that Annual Monitoring remained fit-for-purpose.
- The report also noted that the current Departmental Learning and Teaching Strategy process had little buy-in from departments, was seen as a sterile 'top-down' process, and did not fit well with UCL's other review processes which enjoy much greater buy-in from departments and faculties.
- It was proposed that: (i) the current Augmented Annual Monitoring process be replaced with a more meaningful programme review process which would feed into IQR; (ii) that the current Annual Monitoring reporting at departmental- and faculty-level be replaced with a simpler reporting process based on key data sets and web-based *pro forma*, which would allow for a red-amber-green flagging system to address concerns in key areas; and (iii) The DLTSs be replaced with Departmental Education and Student Experience Strategies and Implementation Plans.
- The Dean of Engineering Sciences had volunteered students in his faculty to create the new web-based annual monitoring forms. The Faculty of Mathematical and Physical Sciences would pilot this new system in 2013-14, and it was anticipated that the new system would be rolled out across UCL in 2014-15.

Discussion:

52.4   AC welcomed the changes proposed by the Working Group and agreed that the Working Group should continue to develop its proposals.

RESOLVED:

52.5 That AC approve the report from the Working Group on Programme Review at <u>AC 5-27 (12-13)</u>.

[ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith, Ms Sandra Hinton – to note]

53 ANNUAL MONITORING – REPORT FROM THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Noted:

53.1 A report from QMEC on the outcomes of the latest Annual Monitoring cycle at <u>AC 5-28 (12-13)</u>, introduced by the Dean of Students (Academic), as Chair of QMEC.

Reported:

53.2 The QMEC Chair reported that the main issues raised by departments and faculties arising from the latest AM cycle concerned fundamental issues with the UCL estate, such as inadequacy of teaching rooms and computer cluster room space, the quality of teaching spaces, overcrowding and timetabling issues. There was a perception that there was not an effective forum within UCL in which fundamental issues regarding the UCL estate could be discussed and resolved. However, it was noted that dialogue with UCL Estates had improved, for example, the Director of UCL Estates had recently attended the Summer Term meeting of QMEC to discuss issues with the estate which had been raised by departments and faculties, and which impact directly on the student experience.

Discussion:

53.3 The Chair noted that the new Student Experience Forum, the membership of which included the heads of key Professional Services and other relevant colleagues, would provide a forum in which issues relating to the impact of the estate on the student experience could be discussed and action agreed and followed-up.

53.4 On behalf of UCL Union, the Education and Campaigns Officer welcomed the establishment of the StEF and that it would include representation from UCL Union, as the Estates Management Committee had no student representation.

53.5 AC members also noted the apparent lack of an appropriate forum to discuss issues concerning the development and funding of Portico.

RESOLVED:

53.6 That AC approve the report from QMEC on the outcomes of the latest Annual Monitoring cycle at <u>AC 5-28 (12-13)</u>.

[ACTION: Professor Mike Ewing, Ms Sandra Hinton – to note]

54   CHAIR'S BUSINESS

54A   Global Citizenship Programme

Reported

54A.1   The Chair reported that the Global Citizenship post-examinations programme pilot had taken place and the students who had participated had provided positive feedback. However, there had been a discrepancy between the number of students who had signed-up to the programme and the number of students eventually taking part. A full report on the pilot would be submitted to AC next session.

54A.2   The AC Chair thanked Dr Caroline Garaway from the Department of Anthropology, Dr Tim Beasley-Murray from the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, Mr Josh Blacker, and Ms Judith Hillmore, and the PGTAs who took part in the programme, for their vital input into the pilot.

54B   Timetabling Review Group

Reported:

54B.1   The Chair reported that the Timetabling Review Group, which he had chaired, had investigated a range of issues relating to timetabling and improving the use of the estate at UCL. A report had been submitted to the Provost's Senior Management Team which had been accepted. The outcomes of the Group's work and next steps in terms of implementation of the Group's recommendations would be on the agenda of the relevant committees in the Autumn Term next academic session.

55   ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

55A   Review of Academic Committee and its Substructure *[AC Min.38.7, 09.05.13]*

Noted:

55A.1   In June 2013, the AC Chair took action on behalf of AC to approve revised proposals for the establishment of the new Student Experience Forum and the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee, which had been submitted to Council.

55B   Academic Committee Working Group on Collaborative Agreements

Noted:

55B.1   In May 2013, the AC Chair took action on behalf of the Committee to approve terms of reference and membership of the AC Working Group on Collaborative Agreements, which were, for information, at AC 5-29 (12-13).

56   ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL ON APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

Noted:

56.1   The Annual Report from EdCom, on behalf of AC, to Council on new programmes of study approved within the previous twelve months was, for information, at <u>AC 5-30 (12-13)</u>.

57   REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Noted:

57.1   The AC officers had received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:
- Education Committee - 30 April 2013;
- Joint Staff Student Committee - 15 May 2013;
- Library Committee - 16 April 2013;
- Research Governance Committee - 14 March 2013;
- Scholarships and Student Funding Committee - 4 June 2013;
- International Strategy Board - 4 June 2013.

58   DATES OF MEETINGS IN SESSION 2013-14

Noted:

58.1   As previously advised by the AC Secretary's office, meetings of AC in session 2013-14 had been scheduled as follows (venues would be confirmed in due course):

- Thursday 17 October 2013, 9.00am;
- *Tuesday* 10 December 2013, 9.00am;
- Thursday 20 March 2014, 9.00am;
- Thursday 8 May 2014, 9.00am;
- Thursday 3 July 2014, 9.00am.

59   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

59.1   The next meeting would be on **Thursday 17 October 2013** at **9.00am**.