ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 7 July 2011

MINUTES

PRESENT:
Professor Michael Worton (*Chair*)

Mr Bob Allan	Mr Marco Federighi
Mr David Ashton	Dr Nikos Konstantinidis
Dr Paul Ayris	Ms Jennie Moule (*vice* Ms Sue Bryant)
Dr Bob Barber	Mr Alex Nesbitt
Professor David Bogle	Mr Tim Perry
Professor Robert Brown	Professor Alan Penn
Dr Helen Chatterjee	Ms Mary Rimmington
Mr Michael Chessum	Dr Hilary Richards
Dr Brenda Cross	Dr Ruth Siddall
Dr Caroline Essex	Ms Soo Ware
Professor Mike Ewing	Professor Henry Woudhuysen

In attendance: Mr Jason Clarke (Secretary); Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Harriet Lilley and Dr Feng Ye.

Apologies for absence were received from: Provost and President; Ms Julia Abbott; Professor Anthony Finkelstein; Professor David Green; Dr Christine Hoffman; Professor Stephen Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; and Professor Alan Thompson.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
AM	Annual Monitoring
AugAM	Augmented Annual Monitoring
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
CEO	Committee for Equal Opportunities
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HoD	Head of Department
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
PGT	Postgraduate-taught
PoT	Peer Observation of Teaching
PTA	Provost's Teaching Award
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
RAS	Registry and Academic Services
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
SLMS	School of Life and Medical Sciences
UG	Undergraduate

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41   **MINUTES**

Approved

41.1   The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 12 May 2011 *[AC Mins. 32-40, 2010-11]* were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

42   **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

42A   **Draft UCL Access Agreement**
       [AC Min 17, 2010-11]

Received

42A.1   An oral report by the **AC Chair** on issues arising from OFFA's scrutiny of UCL's draft Access Agreement.

Reported

42A.2   UCL would hear on 8 July 2011 whether its draft Access Agreement had been approved by OFFA. There had been a dialogue with OFFA concerning UCL's plan to allocate around 30% of the additional fee income on outreach initiatives and student bursaries, rather than funding fee waivers, as suggested by Government and OFFA guidance.

42B   **Lead Officer Report – Careers and Employability**
       [AC Min 34B, 2010-11]

Noted

42B.1   The Careers Service would be contacting departments in due course, both directly and *via* the network of departmental careers advisers, to advise them as to the need to ensure that careers and employability issues feature on the agenda of departmental meetings and that departmental websites contain information for students on careers-related matters.

42C   **Lead Officer Report – Student Welfare Coordination**
       [AC Min 34D, 2010-11]

Noted

42C.1   The officers of the CEO were considering the issue of referring relevant data on student withdrawals and interruptions to that committee for consideration. The officers of EdCom and RDC had confirmed that these data would be referred to those two committees.

42C.2   Following the last meeting of AC, the AC Chair had written to the Vice-Provost (Operations) and the Director of Registry and Academic Services to communicate the Committee's view that a 'Student Welfare Committee' or 'Student Experience Committee' or similar should be established. The AC Chair was advised that his letter would be referred to the next meeting of the sub-group of Council which is overseeing the committee reform process, before it made a further report to Council on 6 July 2011.

Reported

42C.3 The Director of Registry and Academic Services reported that the Council sub-group overseeing the committee reform process had appreciated the importance of student welfare issues and the student experience, especially within the context of the Provost's Green Paper. However, the sub-group had concluded that moving away from the current Lead Officer arrangement at this time would be premature.

42C.4 Following the effectiveness review of Council and the associated review of the UCL committee system, it had been agreed by Council that AC should undertake a review of the changes which it had introduced to its own committee substructure. That review should also address the issue of the structures that UCL has in place to deal with student welfare and student experience issues. Also, it had been acknowledged that better communication between AC and Council on these issues would be desirable.

43 **REPORT FROM THE TASK FORCE ON DISTANCE LEARNING**
[AC Min 16A, 2010-11]

Noted

43.1 At its meeting on 24 March 2011, AC received the terms of reference and membership of the Task Force on Distance Learning.

Received

43.2 At <u>APPENDIX AC 4/27 (10-11)</u> – the report from the Task Force.

43.3 An oral report from the **AC Chair**, as Chair of the Task Force.

Reported

43.4 The AC Chair thanked all the members of the Task Force on Distance Learning and noted, in particular, the following:

- recommendations from the Task Force regarding distance learning were informed by existing experience of distance learning across UCL;
- following the proposal at paragraph four regarding identifying a commercial partner to support UCL's endeavours in distance learning, a partner had been identified and a memorandum of understanding had been signed between both parties. The partner would be working with UCL to investigate the best platform to deliver UCL's distance learning programmes. UCL was also in contact with the Open University regarding possible collaboration on distance learning;
- SLMS would be piloting CPD programmes in the healthcare field, which could lead to provision by distance learning of Master's programmes;
- in designing and delivering distance learning provision, it was important to remember that such provision was not intended to be a substitute for studying at UCL but a form of educational provision in its own right.

RESOLVED

43.5 That AC approve the report from the Task Force on Distance Learning at <u>APPENDIX AC 4/27 (10-11)</u>.
[ACTION: Professor Michael Worton, Ms Clare Goudy - to note]

44 **REPORT FROM THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PORTAL PROJECT BOARD**

Received

44.1 At <u>APPENDIX AC 4/28 (10-11)</u> – a progress report from the Project Board.

44.2 An oral report from the **AC Chair**.

Reported

44.3 The AC Chair reported that there should be a single point of entry to UCL's portal for teaching and learning. Following a survey of academic staff at UCL, staff appeared to be most interested in using the portal to access (i) support and advice on teaching and learning (ii) information about changes to policy and (iii) Open Educational Resources. The portal would have a soft launch in summer 2011 and be password protected. An editor for the portal to manage site content had yet to be identified.

Discussion

44.4 It was suggested that the name of the portal be changed to the 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment Portal', as this would better reflect its purpose and use.

RESOLVED

44.5 That the 'Teaching and Learning Portal' be renamed the 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment Portal'.

44.6 That AC approve the progress report from the Teaching and Learning Portal Project Board at <u>APPENDIX AC 4/28 (10-11)</u>.

[ACTION: Professor Michael Worton, Ms Clare Goudy - to note]

45 **REPORT FROM THE KEY SKILLS PROJECT BOARD**

Received

45.1 At <u>APPENDIX AC 4/29 (10-11)</u> – a report on the work of the Key Skills Project Board.

45.2 An oral report by **Professor David Bogle**, as Chair of the Project Board.

Reported

45.3 The Key Skills Project Board had been set up to implement the electronic Key Skills recording system, linked to Portico for all taught students. Recording of Key Skills was important for student development, employability and would aid personal tutors when writing references for students. The system had been rolled out to departments in 2010-11, however take up had to date had been limited, with 4% of students completing their skills profile. More promotion of the system was required and a reconfigured Key Skills Working Group would be set up, the remit of which would be, amongst other things, to promote (i) the value of the recording system to faculties, staff (particularly personal tutors) and taught students by sharing evidence and good practice, and (ii) the importance of skills

development within taught programmes at UCL generally, as well as outside UCL.

45.4 Professor Bogle thanked Ms Jennie Moule from CALT for her contribution to the work of the Project Board.

Discussion

45.5 Members of AC commented on the accessibility and ease of use of the recording system as it would require regular updating. CALT representatives noted that currently it was not possible to upload multiple entries, but that this issue was being addressed. Records of all taught students on Portico would need to be linked to their personal tutors and this should be done at departmental level.

45.6 Promotion of the Key Skills recording system and of Key Skills generally should be aided by feedback from students and personal tutors as well as by the Student Academic Representatives (StARs). The recording of skills should be student driven and this would be aided by the support of the UCL Union.

RESOLVED

45.7 That AC approve the report on Key Skills at <u>APPENDIX AC 4/29 (10-11)</u>.

[ACTION: Professor David Bogle - to note]

46 **ANNUAL MONITORING**

Noted

46.1 At its meeting on 27 June 2011, QMEC received and considered faculty summaries on the fourth year of the operation of the regularised Annual Monitoring process and the third year of operation of the Augmented Annual Monitoring process. Although QMEC would be submitting a full evaluation report to AC at its first meeting next session, the Chair of QMEC made an interim oral report to AC on key issues emerging from the operation of the AM and AugAM processes.

Received

46.2 An oral report from **Professor Mike Ewing**, as Chair of QMEC, on key issues arising from QMEC's review of the operation of the AM and AugAM processes.

Reported

46.3 Professor Ewing noted, in particular, the following in his oral report:

- AM reports had now been received from all faculties, although not all had been available in time for QMEC's June meeting. There were still some gaps in departmental records.
- Accelerated AM was now in place and departments should be commencing the process now which should be completed by December 2011. The Accelerated AM timetable was available online.
- Some faculties had noted in their AM reports that: (i) comprehensive implementation of PoT was still an issue, especially in some departments which use external lecturers.

QMEC officers would be looking into the reasons behind these issues and reporting back by December 2011;
(ii) generally postgraduate student recruitment had improved but there had been issues with the UK Border Agency changing English language requirements mid-session;
(iii) strong student recruitment had resulted in resourcing issues. In order to fully resolve issues relating to room sizes, detailed and specific information about the problems experienced by staff should be provided to UCL Estates rather than generalised comments;
(iv) there had been mixed experiences regarding the Common Timetable. EdCom would be receiving a report on the Common Timetable shortly. Now that the Common Timetable project was complete, its effectiveness, especially concerning room allocation, should be reviewed. Professor Vince Emery had agreed to lead a review of the operation of the Common Timetable.

- Where members of staff had received Provost Teaching Awards, faculties should record this in their AM reports as examples of good practice.

Discussion

46.4   Members of AC agreed that now that the Common Timetable had been in place for some time, it would be beneficial for a post-implementation evaluation to take place to consider users' experience of the system. It was also noted that rooms were allocated for teaching based on estimated student numbers. The AC Chair commented that timetabling would become more complex with the introduction of the new BASc programme and UCL would need to ensure that the Common Timetable made it possible for BASc students to be able to take the wide variety of modules offered to them.

46.5   The AC Chair commented that he had been in discussions with the Minister for Immigration regarding the impact on overseas students of the UK Border Agency's decision to change English language requirements. In discussions with the Minister, the AC Chair had highlighted the need for sufficient time to be given for changes to be disseminated to prospective students and schools. This dialogue would continue. Members of AC noted that the UK Border Agency changes had resulted in reduced numbers of overseas students on some programmes, particularly for programmes that provided a professional qualification and students required sufficient time to obtain visas.

RESOLVED

46.6   That AC note the report from the QMEC Chair on AM.

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

47   **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

47A   **Deadlines for Admissions and Enrolment**

Received

47A.1 An oral report by the **Director of Registry and Academic Services** on behalf of the AC Chair on the above for session 2011-12.

Reported

47A.2 At its meeting on 24 March 2011, AC had approved proposals in a note from the Director of Student Services and the Head of Outreach and Admissions and recommended by EdCom. AC had agreed that new students should be fully registered and engaging with their studies within two weeks of the start of session or the start of their programme; and that continuing students should have completed the online re-enrolment procedure by the end of October. AC also agreed that a deadline of three weeks before the start of session be imposed for the dispatch of offers of admission - that deadline to be varied only by express permission of the Dean of Students (Academic).   To avoid any confusion, it was proposed and agreed by AC that these deadlines be expressed as a specific date. For 2011 entry, the deadline for offers of admission to have been made was set at 2 September and the deadline for all new students to have completed the enrolment process and be registered was set at 7 October.

47A.3 On 1 June an email was sent to HoDs *et al* communicating these decisions – and also indicating that, in conjunction with these deadlines, online applications would close after 5 August. The email gave rise to queries about, in particular, (i) the deterrent effect of the 5 August closure on good applications and (ii) whether the same deadline need be applied to UK/EU students who would not require visas *etc*.

47A.4 The Head of Outreach and Admissions wrote to HoDs *et al* on 27 June, making clear that the 5 August deadline did not apply to UG applications and that, in view of the technical constraints of the online application system (which were being addressed as a high priority), MPhil/PhD programmes would not now be closed on the online system on 5 August: the prospective students website would indicate that all programmes starting in September/October 2011 would close on 5 August but, should any research applications be received for this period, these would be processed and passed to departments for consideration.

47A.5 The issue remained of whether the same 2 September deadline needed to be applied for the making of offers of admission – whether Home/EU or overseas students.   It was not yet possible to differentiate in the online application system between low fee and high fee at the point of application. Consequently, it would not be practicable to operate different deadlines for closure of the online system for different categories of PGT applicant. However, the Director had agreed that Registry and Academic Services should adopt a flexible approach, in respect of UK/EU students, to the 2 September deadline for making offers of admission - provided that the 7 October deadline for completion of enrolment/registration could still be met.

47A.6 AC was invited to note these developments and endorse the flexible approach to the 2 September making of admissions deadline as far as UK/EU applicants were concerned.

Discussion

47A.7 During the course of AC's discussion, the following points were raised:

- The Dean of Students (Academic) reminded AC of the academic rationale for not allowing students to register more than two weeks after the start of session or the start of their programme.

- Two Deans expressed concern about the deterrent effect of the 5 August deadline for receipt of online applications from prospective PGT students: traditionally, some specialist or niche PGT programmes (particularly those related to professional practice, for which there is a limited market) receive large numbers of applications in the last weeks of August and only become financially viable at that stage. Blocking off recruitment to these programmes in early August could have a detrimental impact on the financial position of some faculties. The Director of RAS hoped that in the case of those PGT programmes, a similarly flexible approach to the 5 August deadline could also be adopted.

- Concern was expressed by a number of members of AC about the inability of the application system to differentiate between low fee and high fee students at the point of application. It was pointed out that student recruitment was crucial to the financial health of faculties and that it was unsatisfactory that the student application and recruitment process was apparently being driven by the inadequacies of the admissions system. In response, the Director of RAS acknowledged that this was unsatisfactory and that this longstanding problem was being looked into as part of the ongoing Admissions System Project. Also, it was due to the deficiencies of the current system that AC was being asked to approve the flexible approach to admissions for 2011-12.

47A.8 The AC Chair noted that the Committee had raised important issues relating to the operation of application and enrolment deadlines and had highlighted the real implications of these for student recruitment and financial planning within faculties. UCL would need to review admissions processes within the broader context of the increase in student fees and business planning by faculties in session 2011-12. In light of the concerns which had been raised by AC, the Chair invited the Committee to approve the flexible approach proposed by the Director of RAS for entry in 2011 only, on the condition that (i) the Director of RAS and other colleagues review the operation of deadlines for admission and enrolment in subsequent years and (ii) submit further proposals to AC in due course. The Committee supported the Chair's proposal.

RESOLVED

47A.9 That AC approve the flexible approach to admissions and enrolment outlined in the report from the Director of RAS for entry to 2011-12; that the Director of RAS and relevant colleagues review the operation of deadlines for admission and enrolment in subsequent sessions and submit further proposals to AC in due course.

[ACTION: Mr Tim Perry - to note]

47B **Restructuring of CALT**

Received

47B.1 An oral report by the AC Chair on the above.

Reported

47B.2 The restructuring process had resulted in posts within CALT being redefined: Ms Sue Bryant had been appointed as Director of CALT;

five members of staff had been appointed as Teaching Fellows who would interact closely and more strategically with UCL's schools; interviews for the post of Deputy Director of CALT had taken place and it was anticipated that the preferred candidate would accept the offer of the post; by 2011-12 CALT would have full complement of Teaching Fellows and a Visiting Professor would be appointed shortly. The AC Chair thanked Dr Jennie Moule for her work with the restructuring of CALT.

47C   Retiring members of AC

Received

47C.1 An oral report by the **AC Chair** on the above.

Reported

47C.2 Mr Michael Chessum and Mr Alex Nesbitt, the current student members of AC would be standing down at the end of the session. The AC Chair thanked them for their contribution to the work of the Committee over the past academic year.

47D   Role of the Vice-Provost (Academic and International)/Chair of Academic Committee.

Received

47D.1 An oral report from the AC Chair on the above.

Reported

47D.2 Professor Worton noted that his current role of Vice-Provost (Academic and International) would be split into two posts – Vice-Provost (International), which he would retain, and a new post of Vice-Provost (Education) which would be advertised externally with a view to an appointment being made with effect from January 2012. In the interim, Professor Mike Ewing would take on the role until a permanent appointment had been made. Professor Ewing would therefore chair AC in the Autumn Term 2011. Professor Worton thanked members of AC and Mr Perry and Mr Clarke, as the former and current AC secretaries respectively, for their support during his time as Chair.

47D.3 The members of the Committee thanked Professor Worton for his leadership and work as Chair of AC, and its predecessor the Teaching Committee, since he assumed the role in 1998.

48   APPROVAL OF A NEW DEGREE AWARD

Noted

48.1   At its meeting on 7 July 2008, AC approved a procedure for the approval of new degree awards at UCL.

48.2   At its meeting on 26 May 2011, EdCom approved, on the recommendation of, and following full scrutiny by, the Programme and Module Approval Steering Group, a proposal that UCL establish a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences (BASc).

48.3   In accordance with the procedure for the approval of new degree awards, EdCom Resolved that the proposal be submitted to AC for approval.

RESOLVED

48.4   That AC approve formally, on the recommendation of EdCom, the creation of the following new UCL degree award:

- **Bachelor of Arts and Sciences** or **BASc**.

49   **ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE**

Noted

49.1   On 27 June 2011, the AC Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee, took action to approve the annual report from the CEO for session 2009-10, prior to its submission to Council.

Received

49.2   At <u>APPENDIX AC 4/30 (10-11)</u> – for information, the annual report from the CEO for session 2009-10.

50   **TASK FORCE ON INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**
[AC Min 16A, 2010-11]

Noted

50.1   At its meeting on 24 March 2011, AC received the terms of reference and membership of the Task Force on Innovations in Teaching and Learning.

50.2   The Task Force had met three times in session 2010-11. The meetings had ranged widely and covered a diverse range of topics, including current examples of innovation across UCL, external models for emulation, and ways of revising existing structures and practices at UCL to encourage creativity. However, in view of the recent publication of the Provost's Green Paper, and the creation of a new Vice-Provost (Education) position, it had been agreed that the Task Force should be stood down until the beginning of session 2011-12, when it would resume its work under the leadership of the new Vice-Provost (Education). AC would be kept informed of progress.

51   **TASK FORCE ON APPROACHES TO THE POST-EXAMINATION PERIOD**

Noted

51.1   Following the process of consultation at a senior level which had informed the development of the Provost's Green Paper, it had become clear that UCL should seek to explore the feasibility of a radical new approach to the period post-examinations. In view of this aspiration, it had been agreed that the establishment of the Task Force should be deferred until the 2011-12 session, and should be taken forward, on behalf of the Provost, by the new Vice-Provost (Education). AC would be kept informed of developments in this area.

52 **ESTABLISHMENT OF A HUB FOR INTERNATIONAL TEACHING COLLABORATIONS**

Noted

52.1 Work had begun to identify institutions with whom UCL could establish an international network of world-class universities which would facilitates teaching exchanges and collaborations. This network would also include institutions with whom UCL already has strong strategic links (including UCL's overseas campuses) and who are currently working on teaching, learning and assessment in innovative ways.

52.2 The Vice-Provost (Academic and International) proposed to fund a small number of short, fact-finding trips to prospective partner institutions with whom UCL does not already yet have a clear strategic relationship in teaching, learning and assessment. These trips would take place in the Autumn Term 2011 and would be undertaken by some former winners of a Provost's Teaching Award. These PTA winners would then advise the Vice-Provost (International) as he prepared a final short-list of initial partners for the hub. The PTA winners would also be expected to work with CALT on their return to disseminate the information and ideas they had gathered more widely across the university.

52.3 The Office of the Vice-Provost (International) would take responsibility for developing the hub from the 2011-12 session, working closely with the Vice-Provost (Education). AC would be kept informed of progress.

53 **QAA INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

Noted

53.1 The above report would be submitted to AC in the Autumn Term 2011.

54 **REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON SHORT COURSES ETC**

Noted

54.1 A report from the Working Group would be submitted to AC in the Autumn Term 2011.

55 **REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Noted

55.1 The AC officers had received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:

- Committee for Equal Opportunities (9 March 2011);
- Education Committee (26 May 2011);
- Joint Staff Student Committee (19 May 20110.

56 **FACULTY TEACHING COMMITTEES**

Received

56.1   At <u>APPENDIX AC 4/31 (10-11)</u> - a list of the meetings of FTCs of which the Minutes had been received by the AC Secretary on behalf of AC since the last meeting of AC.

57 **DATES OF MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE IN SESSION 2011-12**

Noted

57.1   Meetings of AC in session 2011-12 would take place as follows:

- Thursday 20 October 2011;
- Thursday 15 December 2011;
- Thursday 22 March 2012;
- Thursday 10 May 2012;
- Thursday 5 July 2012.

57.2   Venues for the above meetings, which will all commence at 9am, would be confirmed in due course.

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