



ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Tuesday 8 November 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Provost and President (Chair)

Ms Mehj Ahmed; Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Simon Banks; Ms Halima Begum; Professor David Bogle; Mr Mark Crawford; Ms Anna Douglas; Dr Caroline Essex; Professor Becky Francis; Professor Mary Fulbrook; Professor Dilly Fung; Professor Graham Hart; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Sarabajaya Kumar; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor John Mullan; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Alan Penn; Dr Hynek Pikhart; Professor David Price; Mr Tom Robinson; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Dr Andrew Wills

In attendance: Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary); Ms Chandan Shah; Professor Gabriella Vigliocco [deputising for Professor Alan Thompson]; Ms Karen Barnard, Director of UCL Careers [for item 11];

Apologies for absence: Dame Nicola Brewer; Mr Simon Caine; Dr Celia Caulcott; Dr Melanie Ehren; Professor Mark Emberton; Dr Julie Evans; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor David Lomas; Professor Jane Rendell; Ms Susan Ware.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HER	Higher Education Review
NSS	National Student Survey
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
UCLU	University College London Union

Preliminary business

1 TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2016-17 [PAPER 1-01, 2016-17]

- 1.1 **Received** – AC's terms of reference, constitution and membership for the session 2016-17 for Council's approval at its November meeting.

1.2 The Provost welcomed the following new members to AC:

- Professor John Mullan, Interim Dean of Arts and Humanities;
- Professor Ivan Parkin, Dean of MAPS;
- Dr Tracy Allen, Faculty Tutor of IoE;
- Ms Blathnaid Mahony, Faculty Tutor of Medical Sciences;
- Halima Begum, Educations & Campaigns Officer, UCL Union;
- Mehj Ahmed, Welfare and International Officer, UCL Union;
- Mark Crawford, Postgraduate Students' Officer, UCL Union;
- Dr Melanie Ehren, IoE non-professorial;
- Dr Sarabajaya Kumar, SLASH non-professorial;
- Dr Hynek Pikhart, SLMS non-professorial;
- Professor Jane Rendell, BEAMS professorial;
- Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson, SLMS professorial;
- Dr Andrew Wills, BEAMS non-professorial.

2 ACADEMIC COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEES TERMS OF REFERENCE *[PAPER 1-02, 2016-17]*

2.1 **Approved** – AC's Sub-Committees terms of reference.

3 MINUTES OF 16 JUNE 2016 MEETING

3.1 **Approved** – the Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting held on 16 June 2016
[AC Minutes 36-49, 2015-16].

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None.

Matters for discussion

5 PROVOST'S BUSINESS

5A NEW APPOINTMENT

5A.1 Professor Stella Bruzzi from the University of Warwick had been appointed as the new Dean of Arts and Humanities and would start in April 2017. The current interim Dean, Professor John Mullan would continue until then.

5B HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH BILL

5B.1 The Bill would be scrutinised in the House of Commons and the House of Lords early in the New Year, significant concerns are being raised by UniversitiesUK and the Russell Group about issues of institutional autonomy and maintaining the quality and standards of UK Higher Education.

5C UCL CAMPAIGN

5C.1 The Provost reported relationships are being developed with friends of UCL and alumni in USA and Paris. The Campaign had been launched in Shanghai, Hong

Kong and Beijing with partnerships in progress with China and major foundations in Hong Kong.

6 AC ANNUAL REPORT TO ACADEMIC BOARD AND COUNCIL

[PAPER 1-03, 2016-17]

- 6.1 **Received** – an oral update to the paper from Mr Derfel Owen, Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Committee.
- 6.2 The Director of Academic Services reported the report was a precis of the AC's business conducted in 2015/16 as formal account to Council that AC has undertaken the responsibilities delegated to it.
- 6.3 The Annual Report was **approved** for submission to Council.

7 VICE-PROVOST (EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS) ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

[PAPER 1-04, 2016-17]

- 7.1 **Received** – an oral introduction to the paper from Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).
- 7.2 The Vice-Provost explained that this paper mainly focussed on describing progress with achieving the aims of Theme 2 of the UCL 2034 Strategy and included the Education Strategy 2016-2021. Due to the scheduling of meetings, Council had already received the report at its meeting in October.
- 7.3 The report covered eight objectives of the strategy with a review of the timeframe of current plans that were in place. The Vice-Provost explained the development of the Teaching Excellence Framework provided additional focus to the aims of the education strategy, but that this focus reinforced plans already in place to grow UCL's areas of strength and to address challenges with assessment and academic support.

8 ANNUAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE REVIEW UPDATE

- 8.1 **Received** – an oral update from Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).
- 8.2 The VP reported that the ASER was a new process and Departments had engaged well in demonstrating activities relating to mandated actions. Of nine Departments that received additional support through the ASER *Intensive* process, six Departments had shown an improvement in their NSS scores. Three Departments still required support and therefore would be included in the ASER Intensive process again.
- 8.3 At the Institutional level, there had been a noticeable shift in improvements on the NSS scores, however further work was still required. In particular, this year's mandated actions would focus on the quality of feedback and the personal tutoring system.
- 8.4 In response to members' comments, the Provost commented that significant improvements in NSS scores at the score required at UCL would take time to

deliver but that there is no room for complacency as student expectations will evolve and UCL is committed to ongoing enhancement of education.

- 8.5 In response to member's comment on academic responsibility and engagement in the academic mission, the Provost reported that the importance of ASER had to be disseminated through the line management structure and was required to reach all staff.

9 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW AND ACTION PLAN – UPDATE

[PAPER 1-05¹, 2016-17]

- 9.1 **Received** – An oral update on the QAA HER from Professor Anthony Smith, Chair of Higher Education Review Group, and Mr Derfel Owen, Director of Academic Services.
- 9.2 The Chair of HER Group reported that UCL had achieved a positive outcome for the QAA Higher Education Review and that the full report was now published. A detailed action plan has been developed and approved by the HER Group, discussions were taking place with UCLU to provide more detail on the actions to address weaknesses in UCL's personal tutoring policy, the action plan would be adapted to reflect this.

10 2016 ANNUAL ASSURANCE RETURN TO HEFCE: QUALITY ASSESSMENT

[PAPER 1-06, 2016-17]

- 10.1 The Director of Academic Services reported that HEFCE had recently instituted a revised approach to Quality Assessment to replace the QAA HE Review. This requires universities to produce an annual report on quality and standards for submission to Council.
- 10.2 In response to a member's comment on escalating issues raised in Internal Quality Review reports about central professional services, the Provost reinforced the fact that all recommendations required a full response within the timescales stipulated in the IQR process.

11 LEAD OFFICER REPORT 2015-16: CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

[PAPER 1-07, 2016-17]

- 11.1 **Received** – an oral introduction to the paper from Ms Karen Barnard, Director of UCL Careers
- 11.2 The Director of UCL Careers highlighted progress since last year on PGT student engagement with the Careers Services. A pre-entry online course for PGT students had been developed and was well received with students requesting for further information. Similar bespoke courses would be offered to other groups such as graduated students and for Faculties and Departments relating to their disciplines.
- 11.3 In response to members' comments on the PGT data, the Director of UCL Careers reported that due to the volume of PGT students, it was more difficult to provide timely support in the short amount of time the students were at UCL and that the service would continue to innovate and develop additional solutions for student engagement and sharing information.

¹ [Link to the report](#)

Other matters for approval or information
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12 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

None.

13 LEAD OFFICER REPORT 2015-16: STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

[PAPER 1-08, 2016-17]

13.1 **Received** – the annual lead officer report for 2015-16.

14 ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2015-16 - EDUCATION COMMITTEE

[PAPER 1-09, 2016-17]

14.1 **Received** – the Education Committee annual report for 2015-16.

15 Annual Report for Session 2015-16 - Research Degrees Committee

[PAPER 1-10, 2016-17]

15.1 **Received** – the Research Degrees Committee annual report for 2015-16.

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

16.1 **Received** – the AC officers have received on behalf of AC the Minutes of the following:

- Education Committee – 26 April 2016, 7 June 2016, 21 July 2016
- Research Governance Committee – 9 March 2016
- Student Experience Committee – 15 March 2016

17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17.1 The next Academic Committee meeting would be held on **Tuesday 14 March 2017 at 10.00pm in the Haldane Room, Wilkins Main Building**

DERFEL OWEN

Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Committee

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11 November 2016