



ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 12 March 2015

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Provost and President (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Simon Banks; Professor David Bogle; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor Nick Brook; Professor Stephen Caddick; Ms Mariana Ceccotti; Ms Anna Douglas; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Dilly Fung; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Mr Lukmaan Kolia; Professor Raymond MacAllister; Dr Helen Matthews; Derfel Owen (Secretary); Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Don Pennington; Professor David Price; Professor Geraint Rees; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Susan Ware; Professor Jonathan Wolff

In attendance: Mr Josh Blacker; Professor Claire Carmalt; Professor Peter Delves; Professor Mark Emberton; Ms Clare Goudy; Professor Xiao Guo; Professor Ofer Lahav; Ms Caren Levy; Professor Alejandro Madrigal; Professor David McAlpine; Professor Henrietta Moore; Professor Cheryl Thomas.

Apologies for absence: Dr Brenda Cross; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Graham Hart; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Chris Husbands; Professor Michael Pitt; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Nicholas Wood

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for Advancement for Learning and Teaching
EdCom	Education Committee
HER	Higher Education Review
HoD	Heads of Departments
IoE	Institute of Education
JSSC	Joint Staff Student Committee
NSS	National Student Survey
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PMASG	Programme and Module Approval Steering Group
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SED	Self-Evaluation Document
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRS	Student and Registry Services
SU	Students' Union
UCLU	University College London Union

UUK	Universities UK
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22 CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2014-15

Noted:

22.1 The following members have joined the Committee since its last meeting:

- Dr Simon Banks, Faculty Tutor (Engineering);
- Mr Mike Rowson, Faculty Tutor (Population Health Sciences)

22.2 The Provost formally welcomed the new members to Academic Committee and the invited members; Faculty Vice-Deans; Pro Vice-Provosts (International) and colleagues with International responsibilities. The Provost also invited AC to thank Dr Marco Federighi and Professor Christine Kinnon who now stand down from the committee.

23 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 18 DECEMBER 2014

Confirmed:

23.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 18 December 2014 [AC Mins. 7-14, 18.12.14].

24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

24.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

25 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Received:

25.1 An oral report from the Provost. In addition to items already on the Agenda, the Provost highlighted the following points.

Reported:

25A Appointment of Vice-Provost

25A.1 The Provost reported that the Vice-Provost (Enterprise and London), Professor Steve Caddick, had recently been appointed as Director of Innovation at the Wellcome Trust. Academic Committee expressed its gratitude to the Vice-Provost's for his contribution and commitment to UCL during his tenure.

25A.2 The Provost explained that the post of Vice-Provost (Enterprise) would be advertised internally and externally and subject to open competition. Two key aspects of Professor Caddick's current responsibilities will be taken up by other Vice-Provosts, Professor David Price will lead UCL's activities to develop the Olympic Park and Professor Chris Husbands will lead the development of UCL's Strategy for London. In the interim period, following

Professor Caddick's departure and the new post holder arriving, Professor David Price will also act as Vice Provost (Enterprise).

25B UCL Australia

- 25B.1 The Provost reported that discussions have been initiated to explore the future of UCL's activities in Australia. Funding agreements with the partners were due to end in 2017 and therefore it is necessary to review our activities and nature of our ongoing presence and partnerships in Australia. Consultations were underway with stakeholders.
- 25B.2 AC would be kept updated on the progress on consultations and discussions with UCL Australia.

25C Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings 2015

- 25D.1 The Provost reported that the Times Higher Education had recently published the World Reputation Rankings 2015 league table. UCL was ranked in 17th position, up by 8 points from the results reported in 2014. This was a notable development for UCL as evidence had been gathered before the REF results were published.

26 GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Received:

- 26.1 At AC 3 - 1 (14-15) a draft of the Global Engagement Strategy presented by the Vice-Provost (International), Dame Nicola Brewer.

Reported:

- 26.2 The Vice-Provost (International) highlighted the key changes made to the revised draft strategy, version three, and mentioned that these were in line with the priority actions requested by Council.
- 26.3 The strategy would be presented to Council for formal approval subject to comments from AC.

Discussion:

- 26.4 A number of comments were made to clarify elements of the proposed strategy and to suggest ways in which Faculties and Departments could engage with the new strategy when it is approved by Council.
- 26.5 The Vice-Provost emphasised the deliberate and close link between the draft strategy and UCL's 2013/4 strategy, in particular themes 2, 3, 5 and 6 and Key Enabler F "*Communicating and engaging effectively with the world*". In addition to this, members of AC encouraged an approach that ensures close collaboration and interaction across all sub-strategies that will be developed to deliver UCL 2034. In particular it was noted that UCL's global impact should be more explicitly linked to the London Strategy and capitalising on the global networks and engagements that being located in central London offers.

- 26.6 Members particularly emphasised support for the focus in the draft strategy on growing UCL's global profile and reputation. The Vice-Provost explained that this was critical and that a number of initiatives would be required to ensure that UCL's global reputation reflected the impact and quality of our staff, students, research and graduates. In particular it would be important to continue to support and grow UCL's commitment to and capacity for global research collaborations. It was noted that provision of support and resources for staff would be necessary to ensure that staff were supported to grow international research links and to deliver high quality outputs.

27 QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

Received:

- 27.1 At AC 3 - 2 (14-15) a report from the Director of Academic Services, Derfel Owen.

Reported:

- 27.2 The Director of Academic Services reported that the UCL HER is scheduled to take place during the week beginning 9 May 2016. UCL will submit an evidence base in the form of a Self-Evaluation Document in February 2016, UCLU also has an opportunity to produce a student submission to accompany the University's SED.
- 27.3 The review team will likely be composed of 5 or 6 members who will evaluate the evidence presented by UCL and UCLU to reach a series of judgments about academic provision at UCL these include academic standards; the quality of student learning opportunities; the provision of information and the approach to enhancement.
- 27.4 A high-level strategy group has been established to oversee the preparation for the HER and will report periodically to SMT and Academic Committee. Academic Services will be working closely with colleagues in UCLU, Faculties and Departments to prepare UCL's SED and to build the evidence base.

Discussion:

- 27.5 The Provost emphasised to Academic Committee, the importance of this review process as an opportunity to demonstrate UCL's commitment to excellence in education and the value it can add to our approach to quality assurance. It was also emphasised that while UCL has a strong global reputation and brand, UCL must demonstrate throughout this process that it is not complacent and it has a robust set of quality assurance arrangements to support the experience of students and is committed to continuous improvement.
- 27.6 In response to a question the Director of Academic Services explained that the QAA will liaise with both UCL and UCLU through a designated contact. The Director of Academic Services will act as the Institutional Liaison contact for UCL and UCLU will appoint a Lead Student Representative to work in partnership during preparations.

28 JSSC STUDENT FEEDBACK DATA OVERVIEW REPORT

Received:

- 28.1 At AC 3 - 3 (14-15), the JSSC Student Feedback Data Overview report, introduced by Dr Ruth Siddall, as Chair of JSSC.

Reported:

- 28.2 The Chair of JSSC reported that the issues highlighted by students were common to those raised in national surveys such as the NSS and the Student Barometer. The three key areas highlighted were estates and quality of study space; timetabling and assessment and feedback.
- 28.3 Areas of good practice in teaching were also emphasised where majority of students reported excellence in teaching. An example of this from the Bartlett school where the students had recognised an increased improvement in their learning environments which, was a result of knowledge transfer sessions that staff had organised called 'learning lunches'. There was concern from JSSC that good practice needed to be disseminated through some medium, for instance, by a dedicated webpage for staff and students to benefit from.

Discussion:

- 28.4 The Provost highlighted that a major programme has been approved by Council to upgrade and develop UCL's estate, a primary focus of this is teaching facilities and study space; over a period of 10 years, over £1.2 billion has been committed to complete this work. While this work is ongoing, it is important for UCL to communicate and build awareness of the plans and to emphasise that this is happening in direct response to student and staff feedback.
- 28.5 The Registrar reported that processes for developing exam and teaching timetables have been reviewed in response to feedback from students. Colleagues in SRS would be working with the Estates Directorate to ensure that the data used to create timetables is more reliable and takes account of pressures on students such as distance between lecture theatres and compressed teaching and examination periods.
- 28.6 The Director of Library Services commented on access to resources as noted in the report. Growth in student numbers coupled with changes to student and staff needs and expectations for accessing resources mean that library space and access to hard copy books and journals is under pressure. The Library is working with staff across UCL to promote greater use of digital resources while also complying with copyright laws. In particular, it is important for staff and students to engage more actively with software available to produce digital reading lists.

Action: SMT and Deans to urge HoDs to focus on creating digital libraries for Education and Teaching.

- 28.7 In response to questions about sharing and promoting good practice, the Director of CALT alerted colleagues to [CALT's Arena programme](#) where events and resources are openly available to staff and students to assist in wider engagement and exchange of information, such as, examples of marking criterion for assessment. A particular focus of the programme is improving the clarity of marking criteria and addressing student concerns about feedback on assessment.

29 NEW QUALIFICATION

Approved:

- 29.1 At AC 3 - 4 (14-15), a proposal for a new HE qualification of Doctorate of Public Administration, approved by PMASG, EdCOM, and RDC.

30 REVIEW OF UCL'S ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORKS AND PROCESSES

Received:

- 30.1 At AC 3 - 5 (14-15), a paper outlining a comprehensive programme of changes to UCL's Regulations, as submitted and approved by EdCOM and would be discussed at RDC, introduced by the Director of Academic Services, Mr Derfel Owen.

31 LIBRARY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14

Received:

- 31.1 At AC 3 - 6 (14-15), the annual report from Library Committee for session 2013-14, introduced by the Chair of Library Committee, Professor David Price.

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

Noted:

- 32.1 Since the last meeting of AC, the AC officers have received on behalf of AC the Minutes of the following:
- Education Committee - 7 October and 2 December 2014;
 - Quality Management and Enhancement Committee – 4 November 2014;

33 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted

- 33.1 The next meeting will be on **Thursday 7 May 2015** at **9.00am** in **Wilkins Haldane Room**.
[Deadline to submit reports/papers: Wednesday 23 April 2015 by 12 noon].

DERFEL OWEN

Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Committee

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26 March 2015