



ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 15 June 2017

PRESENT:

Provost and President (Chair)

Ms Mehj Ahmed; Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Simon Banks; Ms Halima Begum; Professor David Bogle; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Celia Caulcott; Dr Melanie Ehren; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Dilly Fung; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Dr Sarabajaya Kumar; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Ivan Parkin; Dr Hynek Pikhart; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Jane Rendell; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Ms Susan Ware; Dr Andrew Wills

In attendance: Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary); Ms Siobhan Fitzgerald (Academic Services); Professor Gudrun Moore (Pro-Vice Provost International); Ms Rachel Corcoran (Programme Manager at GEO), Ms Anna Douglas (City and Islington College), Professor David Shanks (for Professor Alan Thompson)

Apologies for absence: Dr Paul Ayris; Dame Nicola Brewer; Mr Simon Caine; Professor Mark Emberton; Professor Becky Francis; Professor Mary Fulbrook; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor David Lomas; Professor Alan Penn; Professor David Price; Mr Mike Rowson; Professor Alan Thompson

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

35 MINUTES OF 14 MARCH 2017 MEETING

35.1 **Approved** –the Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting held on 14 March 2017 [AC Minutes 18-34, 2015-16].

36 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

36.1 *None.*

Matters for Discussion

37 PROVOST'S BUSINESS

37A. Outcome of General Election

37A.1 The Provost reported that the outcome of the General Election created significant uncertainty for Higher Education, in particular the implementation of Brexit and HE funding and regulatory reforms. The Provost noted that the emphasis on the TEF is likely to remain. Also noted was the delay in the release of the TEF results.

37B. University Rankings

37B.1 The Provost reported that various rankings have been released in recent days, one of which includes the QS World University Rankings, where UCL was ranked 7th, and another being the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, where UCL went from 18th to 15th in this year's league table. The Provost noted that according to the QS data UCL was scoring highly in both academic and employer reputation.

37C. Motion in favour of a new sub-committee of Academic Board: the AB Governance Committee

37C.1 At the recent special meeting of AB a motion was carried to create the AB Governance Committee, an oversight committee. Elections for this committee have been taking place. There are two places on the committee for Academic Committee members, only one nominee was put forward was Dr Simon Banks.

38 PRINCIPLE THEME SIX REPORT: VICE-PROVOST (INTERNATIONAL) ANNUAL REPORT

[PAPER 3-01, 2016-17]

38.1 **Received** – an oral introduction to the paper from Professor Gudrun Moore, Pro-Vice Provost (International). Ms Rachel Corcoran, Programme Manager, GEO, also took questions.

38.2 The Pro-Vice Provost highlighted key aspects of the report, detailing some of the proprietary actions that the Global Engagement Office (GEO) have taken in the past year in order to forward the Global Engagement Strategy (GES). It was noted that work had been done to strengthen internal networks with Pro-Vice-Provosts and Vice-Deans (International) to ensure an increased appetite across UCL for global partnerships, and to align faculty and departmental international activities with the GES. Of the total investment figure of £5.3m in GES activities, £2m was non-GEO spending. It was noted that 92% of recipients of the Global Engagement funds have already applied for additional external funding, so the money is being very well used by academics across the institution.

38.3 The Pro-Vice Provost also reported on some challenges faced by the GEO, such as the effect of Brexit, resulting in the decision to reduce the number of priority countries from 22 to 19 in order to focus more on Europe. Another challenge was the Summer School, where the enrolment target of 600 students for 2016 was not met. The target for 2017 was re-

evaluated and reduced to 350, and numbers are now ahead of target. Plans for anchor partnerships have also been temporarily put on hold.

- 38.4 The Provost commended the report and the work undertaken which has guided UCL into a very positive place internationally. The Provost noted that other universities are beginning to learn from our approach. The Provost highlighted the differentiation between strategic partnerships and strategic international projects and programmes, which are new. These projects or programmes will be focussed partnerships that are high-impact and global, with external funding.
- 38.5 In response to a member's question about the International Summer School, and difficulties encountered by lab-based modules not being able to work within the budget arrangements, the Pro-Vice Provost noted that the GEO does not directly manage the Summer School but that they are looking for new modules and it was recommended that discussions should be resumed with the Head of the Summer School.
- 38.6 In response to a member's question, the Pro-Vice Provost noted that the provision being put in place to increase academic English writing support to students would most likely not be in place until 2018/19. At present funds are still being sought, and a director will then need to be appointed.
- 38.7 In response to a member's question, the Pro-Vice Provost confirmed that the figures referring to 'international' students and staff, for example on page three of the report, combined EU and International figures. The Provost provided some further figures that separated-out these groups, noting that the current figures are: 12% of students are EU non-UK, 30% are International, leaving 58% as home students. It was noted that those proportions have not changed significantly over the last five years, though the numbers have grown. In terms of applications, the Provost noted that UCL was up across all categories, while the sector was overall down.
- 38.8 In response to a member's question about the support being provided to staff and students at UCL Qatar in light of the current situation, the Pro-Vice Provost noted that it was mainly business as usual though any students and staff affected by the situation are being supported.

39 TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK – UPDATE

- 39.1 **Received** – an oral update from Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).
- 39.2 The Vice-Provost reported on the delayed release of the results of TEF 2, and noted that as soon as the results are released to institutions they will be published on the UCL website. The Vice-Provost noted that there was no new information about TEF 3, the subject-level TEF, but plans for a one year pilot have changed to a two year pilot, which suggests that there is still no consensus about what TEF 3 will be. Regarding plans for TEF for PGT programmes, universities have been encouraging officials to ask students what information they want the TEF to find out, and base the assessment around that.
- 39.3 The Vice-Provost reported that the notion that TEF outcomes (gold, silver, bronze) will lead to differential rises in fees may still happen, but this has been pushed back until 2020. One outcome from this is that, uncoupled from NSS and TEF results, fees can be raised by inflation between now and 2020. It was noted that for UCL, any increase in fees will only be for new students.

40 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY – UPDATE

- 40.1 **Received** – an oral report from Professor Anthony Smith, Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).
- 40.2 The Vice-Provost reported on the outcome of the NSS, noting that UCL was amongst a small number of universities that at an institutional level did not reach the 50% threshold required to release results. UCL got to 49.4%. This compares to a response rate of 79% in 2016. This result was affected by the NUS and UCLU boycott of the NSS, because of its planned use in the TEF, where outcomes will be linked with rises in fees. UCL sympathised with the boycott, and made the decision to pull back on NSS promotions and incentives in order to show support to students. This outcome has presented HEFCE with a difficult position, since while statistically the results would be accurate at this level, the funding body is being pressured by those institutions that did reach the 50% threshold to not publish anything lower. It is likely that results will be published but they will be heavily caveated.
- 40.3 The Vice-Provost reported that the Education and Student Affairs office have mapped the likely outcome if students had answered the questions exactly the same as the previous year, and noted that overall satisfaction would drop by 1%, but student support would increase by 1%. However, it was noted that the survey contained new questions for 2017, so outcomes will be different, and so we must be careful when making comparisons.
- 40.4 In response to a member's question about the other institutions who failed to reach the threshold, the Vice-Provost noted that these included Oxford, Cambridge, King's College London, Manchester, Bristol, SOAS, and Goldsmiths.
- 40.5 In response to a member's question about the methods being used to listen to the student voice, the Vice-Provost noted that the Student Barometer had been dropped because it was no longer providing a useful benchmark, and had instead been replaced with the 'New to UCL' survey, the PTES, and the 'End of Year' survey for those in their penultimate year, as well as the NSS, so there were more ways to listen to the student voice in place now than previously.

41 STUDENT CASEWORK ANNUAL REPORT 2016

[PAPER 3-02 2016-17]

- 41.1 **Received** – a presentation from Mr Derfel Owen, Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Committee.
- 41.2 The Secretary to AC highlighted that this report is for the calendar year 2016 not the academic year, because of the requirements of the external body.
- 41.3 The Secretary to AC noted that the report was fact-based summarising the nature and number of student complaints in 2016. In future years, it will be more evaluative and draw out lessons learnt across the institution. It will also expand to include all types of student casework and disciplinary issues. A review will be undertaken of all student casework procedures, in order to account for the differences between complaints procedures and academic appeals. The regulations will then be clarified in this area. This review has begun at faculty and departmental level, and training and support packages will be put in place next year. In the one area of UCL that is identified by the report as having particularly high volumes of cases, active engagement with colleagues there is already taking place to ensure this is addressed.
- 41.4 It was noted that there was a relatively high number of cases where the OIA found against UCL. There are a number of reasons for this, but it was identified that improvements needed to be made in efficiency in dealing with some of the casework that comes through

to the central team. This is being reviewed by Derfel Owen and Wendy Appleby. It was noted that the reorganisation of SRS that took place last year has led to the creation of a Student Casework team, which is still being established but has already brought together expertise that is needed to support departments and to get good outcomes for students. It was noted that the team was not big enough for the volume of work. It was noted that one improvement to the process would be to provide more opportunities to allow staff and students to air their side of the complaint.

- 41.5 In response to a member's comment, the Secretary of AC noted that matters of misconduct are constantly moving and changing and any issues that do not fit with established categories should be reported to SRS. It was also noted that the report reviews cases that are handled at an institutional level, but that they also want to gather more data about cases that do not reach this level.
- 41.6 A member commented that data from this report would have been useful to feed-into IQR panel questions, and it was agreed that a link to this report during IQR would be helpful, though there were difficulties around the timing of the report and IQRs.

42 UCL/UCLB RELATIONSHIP REVIEW

[PAPER 3-03 2016-17]

- 42.1 **Received** – a presentation from Dr Celia Caulcott, Vice-Provost (Enterprise & London).
- 42.2 The Vice-Provost noted that the paper has been to SMT and will soon go to Council. It details the outcomes of extensive work over last nine months. The general outcome of consultation with the academic community is that UCLB is perceived as doing a good job overall, which is an encouraging outcome. The recommendations of the UCLB Governance Group are high-level principals, there is still detailed work to be done following them. The Vice-Provost stressed the importance of understanding that no changes to practice will be introduced until this work has been done. The benefits of these changes once implemented will be considerable, improving accountability, performance, and reporting.
- 42.3 The recommendations are as follows: 1. UCLB should remain as a wholly owned subsidiary of UCL. 2. UCLB to focus on being an excellent Technology Transfer Business for UCL (currently UCLB is involved in other activities, the review will encourage them to focus in this one space). 3. UCL expects that over a rolling period of five years UCLB will make a reliable contribution to UCL's finances (it was noted that this recommendation is still being worked on to ensure that having a financial expectation will not create inappropriate behaviour). 4. There must be clear and transparent processes for the adoption of UCL technologies by UCLB. 5. UCL must support UCLB appropriately.
- 42.4 The Provost noted that this is a tremendous piece of work and very valuable.
- 42.5 In response to a member's comment on IPR, the Vice-Provost noted that workshops will be held to discuss what happens to those ideas that UCLB decides not to develop. The Vice-Provost noted that in these cases, the UCL position is that IPR is not returned to individuals, but if it has been in the past the position will not be changed.

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

43.1 None.

44 ANNUAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE REVIEW

[PAPER 3-04 2016-17]

44.1 **Received** – the Annual Student Experience Review for 2015-16.

45 StEC STUDENT FEEDBACK DATA OVERVIEW REPORT

[PAPER 3-05 2016-17]

45.1 **Received** - the StEC Student Feedback data overview report for 2015-16.

46 PROPOSAL TO CREATE NEW UCL INCLUSION FORUM

[PAPER 3-06 2016-17]

46.1 **Approved** – Proposal to create new UCL Inclusion Forum.

47 ANNUAL REPORT FROM EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO COUNCIL ON NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY APPROVED IN 2015-16

[PAPER 3-07 2016-17]

47.1 **Received** – the annual report for 2015-16 from Education Committee to Council on new programmes of study approved in 2015-16.

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

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

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee – 21 November 2016 (unconfirmed)
- Library Committee – 13 December 2016 and 27 February 2017 (unconfirmed)
- Research Governance Committee – 19 December 2016; 15 March 2017 (unconfirmed)
- Student Experience Committee – 15 December 2016; 21 March 2017
- Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee – 28 November 2016; 9 March 2017

49 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

49.1 **None**

50 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

50.1 The dates of upcoming Academic Committee meetings are as follows:

- Thursday 2nd Nov 2017, 10am, the Haldane Room, Wilkins Main Building
- Tuesday 20th Feb 2018, 10am, the Haldane Room, Wilkins Main Building
- Thursday 14th June 2018, 10am, the Haldane Room, Wilkins Main Building
- Thursday 1st Nov 2018, 10am, the Haldane Room, Wilkins Main Building

DERFEL OWEN

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16 June 2017