ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 16 October 2014

MINUTES

PRESENT:
Provost and President (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby	Dr Christine Hoffmann
Mr David Ashton	Dr Arne Hofmann
Dr Paul Ayris	Mr Lukmaan Kolia
Professor David Bogle	Professor Raymond MacAllister
Dame Nicola Brewer	Dr Helen Matthews
Professor Robert Brown	Professor Alan Penn
Professor Nick Brook	Professor Michael Pitt
Professor Steve Caddick	Professor David Price
Ms Mariana Ceccotti	Dr Ruth Siddall
Dr Brenda Cross	Professor Elizabeth Shephard
Dr Caroline Essex	Professor Anthony Smith
Dr Julie Evans	Dr Hazel Smith
Mr Marco Federighi	Dr Olga Thomas
Professor Anthony Finkelstein	Professor Alan Thompson
Professor Mary Fulbrook	Ms Soo Ware
Dr Dilly Fung	Professor Jo Wolf
Ms Leonie Hannan	

In attendance: Ms Karen Barnard [for item 8]; Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Judith Hillmore; Mr Peter Murray.

Apologies for absence were received from Professor Stephen Caddick; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Graham Hart; Professor Christine Kinnon.

Key to abbreviations	
AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
IoE	The Institute of Education
NSS	National Student Survey
REF	Research Excellence Framework
StEF	Student Experience Forum

Preliminary Business

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1   TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND 2014-15 MEMBERSHIP

Noted:

1.1   AC's terms of reference, constitution and 2014-15 membership at <u>AC 1-1 (14-15)</u>.

Reported:

1.2   The Provost welcomed Professor Nick Brook, Dr Hazel Smith, Professor Michael Pitt, Mr Lukmaan Kolia, Ms Harkiran Dhanjal, Ms Mariana Ceccotti and Mr Derfel Owen to their first meeting of Academic Committee.

2   MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 3 JULY 2014

To confirm:

2.1   The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 3 July 2014 *[AC Mins. 23-38, 3.7.14]*.

3   MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES [See also 5 below]

3A   Student Experience Forum *[AC Min.27.7, 03.07.14]*

Reported:

3A.1   Clare Goudy reported that the StEF had agreed to establish a working group to make recommendations on UCL's use of student surveys. It is intended that the recommendations will include:
- a coherent set of principles for UCL's use and management of student surveys;
- means of enhancing UCL's processes for data collection, monitoring and reporting;
- a comprehensive plan for communicating with students about surveys and how we use their feedback to improve their experience;
- means of making UCL's module evaluation system more effective and efficient.

Business for Discussion

4 CHAIR'S BUSINESS

Received:

4.1 An oral report from the Provost. In addition to items already on the Agenda, the Provost highlighted the following developments since AC's last meeting.

4A Nobel Prize Success

Reported:

4A.1 The Provost congratulated Professor John O'Keefe, Director of the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits & Behaviour and Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Cell & Developmental Biology for being named winner of the 2014 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine.

4B Institute of Education

Reported:

4B.1 The Provost reported that discussion has continued between the two organisations to proceed with the merger, with a view to establishing the IoE as a faculty of UCL from December 2014. This would require the IoE to relinquish its own Royal Charter and Degree Awarding Powers. In early October, the IoE's Council voted overwhelmingly in favour of the merger, this would be followed by a vote at UCL's own Council on 22 October and then a final vote by IoEs Council in November.

4C Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Development

Reported:

4C.1 The Provost reported that, following recommendation by Finance Committee, Council would be discussing the full business case for the QEOP development on 20 October 2014.

5 UCL'S PERFORMANCE IN THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY *[AC Min.26, 03.07.14]*

Received:

5.1 An oral report from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs), Professor Anthony Smith, on UCL's performance in the 2014 NSS[1].

Reported:

5.2 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) reported that UCL had made steady progress in the National Student Survey. The response rate had increased to 74%, Overall Satisfaction had improved by 2% placing UCL 14th in the Russell Group and of 40 subjects reported, 18 were in the top half in the sector for overall satisfaction.

5.3 The Vice-Provost commended these improvements but emphasised that further work is required. The Vice-Provost encouraged members to read the qualitative comments and feedback left by students to gain a richer insight of the reasons that students give the

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[1] Details are available at www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/governance-and-committees/qme/qmea-z/nss.

scores they do. In particular, these comments suggest that UCL needs to focus its efforts on assessment and feedback, improving the estate and emphasising the importance of teaching as well as research.

5.4   Detailed data is available on the Academic Services website that shows subject rankings in the whole sector and against key competitors. The Vice-Provost emphasised to members the importance of engaging fully with this data and developing details action plans in partnership with student representatives.

5.5   AC will be invited to discuss UCL's performance in the NSS 2014 compared to peer institutions, the implications of those results for UCL, action that should be taken by departments, faculties and UCL institutionally to improve UCL's future performance in the NSS and to address the issues raised by UCL's students.

Discussion

5.5   During the Committee's discussion of the above report, the following points were noted.

- To overcome the perception that research is more highly valued than teaching it is important engage and involve students in UCL's research activity and to feel part of UCL's successes. An important way to achieve this will be through research led teaching being driven by the Connected Curriculum initiative.

- It is important to find ways of establishing clear expectations with students of what they can expect from their experience and how UCL can meet those expectations. This challenge is most acute with assessment where the transition from secondary to higher education is challenging. NSS scores and qualitative feedback from students emphasised the need to develop clearer and more consistent assessment criteria. Members were encouraged to learn from good practice in some subjects where criteria had been developed and tested with students for clarity.

6   A REPORT FROM THE VICE-PROVOST (RESEARCH) – PROFESSOR DAVID PRICE

Noted:

6.1   At AC 1-2 (14-15), a report from the Vice-Provost (Research).

Reported

6.2   The Vice-Provost (Research) introduced his report and emphasised that a common theme throughout was growth in income, output and impact. While the outcome of the REF exercise will be critical to UCL's future success, a number of other metrics can be cited to demonstrate the quality and impact of research output, such as:

- UCL is the 12th most cited University in the world according to Thomson Reuters Essential Science Indicators and by 'hot' papers we are the 14th-ranked university;
- UCL is 9th among Universities in the Nature Publishing Index (NPI);
- The University is currently achieving a 50% success rate in applications for Research Council funding.

6.3   A key challenge will be to maintain momentum after the peak of REF activity in 2013/14, particularly when Government funding is under threat. The University has set ambitious targets for research income and has planned expenditure on the basis of those targets, so meeting them is critical.

6.4   The Vice-Provost noted that the largest number of grants had been won for collaborative projects, demonstrating UCL's capacity for inter-disciplinary research and cross Faculty collaboration.

7   LEAD OFFICER REPORT – CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY

Noted:

7.1   At AC 1-3 (14-15), the Lead Officer report on Careers and Employability, introduced by the Director of the Careers Service.

Reported:

7.2   The Director of the Careers Service introduced her report and, in particular, sought AC's comments on the following areas:

- The Results of the GradClub Intensive programme where, in 2013/14, 6 departments with highest un/under-employment were selected as part of the pilot. The programme concentrates on students without graduate level jobs or study and provides intensive support via a dedicated careers coach, workshops, newsletters and job shortlisting. Unemployment fell by 9.5% in those 6 departments. The programme is being extended to 8 departments in 14/15.

- The Careers Group Employability MOOC that has been developed with the University of London Careers Group as a collective effort. The MOOC contains 6 modules, 'Values', 'Skill Development', 'Confidence and Resilience', 'Researching and Applying for roles', 'Interviews and Assessment Centres' and 'Professional Networking'. In the first year there have been over 79,000 active participants. UCL's Careers Service intends to take elements of this to develop an online employability course for UCL PGT students.

- DLHE Comparator data for the Russell Group; while this shows positive results for UG students, there is no room for complacency and further, targeted work is required; PGT results however are a cause for concern. The limited period of enrolment makes PGT students a more difficult group to support as many graduate scheme deadlines are within the first few months of them starting their course. A new approach to careers support for PGT students is required.

Discussion:

7.3   Members welcomed the success of the Employability MOOC and supported the development of a bespoke online course for PGT students that could be taken pre-enrolment to help them prepare for employment.

7.4   Members commended the work of the careers service to support Postgraduate Research Students and Early Career Research staff, in particular the online video case studies to promote career prospects and opportunities.

7.5   It was noted that integrating employability and career development into course design was not always given sufficient attention, in particular for PGT programmes where the style of teaching and learning does not allow a great deal of time for students to participate in extra-curricular activities. The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) explained that this is a key feature of the Connected Curriculum initiative that is being developed by CALT.

8   LEAD OFFICER REPORT – STUDENT WELFARE CO-ORDINATION

Noted:

8.1   At AC 1-4 (14-15), the Lead Officer report on Student Welfare Co-ordination, introduced by the Registrar and Head of Student and Registry Services

Reported:

8.2   The Registrar and Head of Student and Registry Services introduced the report and drew AC's attention to the fact that this is the first year that all support and wellbeing services have been integrated into a single division.

Discussion:

8.3   It was noted that a significant number of students using the wellbeing services were concentrated in a small number of Faculties. A number of explanations could be given for this; AC asked for a further breakdown of figures to help glean a fuller picture of the problems and challenges faced by students.

[Action: Wendy Appleby]

9   LEAD OFFICER REPORT – STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Noted:

9.1   At AC 1-5 (14-15), the Lead Officer report on Student Accommodation, introduced by the Director of Student Accommodation.

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

Noted:

10.1   The AC officers have received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:

- Education Committee - 19 June 2014;
- Quality Management and Enhancement Committee - 17 June 2014.

11   INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS AND PROGRAMMES

APPROVED:

11.1   At AC 1/6 (14-15) the list of Institute of Education Higher Education Qualifications approved by EdCom on 7 October.

12   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1   The Vice-Provost (International) reported that the consultation process to develop UCL's Global Strategy was well underway, a town hall meeting had been organised with staff and further discussions with faculties and professional services were planned in coming weeks.

A first draft of the strategy was being developed and would shared with Academic Committee in early 2015.

13   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted:

13.1   The next meeting will be on **Thursday 18 December 2014** at **9.00am** in **UCL Conference Suite 05, 188 Tottenham Court Road**

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22 October 2014