ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 17 March 2016

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Provost and President (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Mr David Ashton; Dr Simon Banks; Dame Nicola Brewer; Dr Celia Caulcott; Ms Anna Douglas; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Dilly Fung; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Alan Penn; Mr Mike Rowson; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Ms Suguna Wair; Ms Susan Ware; Professor Jonathan Wolff.

In attendance: Ms Clare Goudy; Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary); Ms Chandan Shah.

Apologies for absence: Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Nick Brook; Professor Andrew Brown; Mr Simon Cane; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Professor Graham Hart; Professor David Lomas; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Don Pennington; Professor Michael Pitt; Professor David Price; Professor Geraint Rees; Mr Tom Robinson; Professor Alan Thompson.

Key to abbreviations:	
AB	Academic Board
AC	Academic Committee
CALT	Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching
ESA	Education and Student Affairs
GE	Global Engagement
GES	Global Engagement Strategy
GIG	Global Implementation Group
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HE	Higher Education
HER	Higher Education Review
IoE	Institute of Education
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SED	Self-Evaluation Document
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
VP	Vice-Provost

Preliminary business

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21 MINUTES OF 10 NOVEMBER 2015 MEETING

21.1 The Provost welcomed the following new members to AC:

- Professor Andrew Brown (IoE Acting Director)
- Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker, Dean of Engineering Sciences

21.2 ***Approved*** – the Minutes of the Academic Committee meeting held on 10 November 2015 *[AC Minutes 1-20, 2015-16]*.

22 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

22.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

23 MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETING OF 2 FEBRUARY 2016

23.1 ***Approved*** – the Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Academic Committee meeting held on 2 February 2016 *[Extra-Ordinary AC Minutes 1-4, 2015-16]*.

24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRA-ORDINARY MEETNG

24.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Matters for discussion

25 PROVOST'S BUSINESS

25A The Queen's Anniversary Prize

25A.1 The Provost congratulated the IoE for the Queen's Anniversary Prize award for 2014-16, which was an outstanding achievement - recognition for its contribution to policy and practice of education with international impact.

25B UCL East

25B.1 The Provost reported that two different scenarios had been shortlisted and would further developed over the coming months, a number of similar features were prevalent in the two scenarios so planning for developing the campus would not be delayed.

25C EU Referendum

25C.1 The University sector, represented by UniversitiesUK would be seeking to making its voice heard in support of the Remain campaign during the EU Referendum. UCL would be hosting a series of events that would cover both sides of the argument, with an emphasis on the potential consequences.

25D Green Paper / Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

25D.1 The Provost reported that around 600 responses were submitted to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) in response top the Government's proposals contained in the Green Paper, the majority of which were concerned about linking student fees to institutional outcomes of the TEF.

25D.2 Initial indications from BIS indicated that the Minister for Higher Education and the Government were determined to move forward with their plans to introduce more market reforms to the sector and to introduce a TEF. UCL will therefore need to identify areas of excellence to portray to students, whether this at identified at the institutional level or at the discipline level.

25E   Budget 2016

25E.1   The recent Budget 2016 announcement, highlighted that financial loans would be made available for Postgraduate Research students from England from 2018/19, similar to the process for providing loans to Masters students. Circa £25.000 would be available to each student. The Provost commented on potential implications of these educational loans on other borrowing lines, i.e. mortgage applications and the impact on numbers of students pursuing further studies.

25F   HEFCE Funding Letter

25F.1   The Provost reported that UCL is the largest recipient of HEFCE funding in the sector. A redistribution of funding will result as the assessment of Widening Participation performance is increased. This redistribution will also link to HEFCE's responsibility to deliver TEF in year 2, therefore significant funding implications for UCL.

26   VICE-PROVOST (INTERNATIONAL) ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL
[PAPER 3-01, 2015-16]

26.1   ***Received*** – an oral introduction to the paper from Dame Nicola Brewer, Vice-Provost (International)

26.2   The VP (International) reported that the GES was a further articulation of Principal Theme six of the UCL2034 Strategy, this annual report highlighted measures of objectives and successes achieved during the first stage of its implementation and delivery.

26.3   Themes that the Global Engagement Office (GEO) are working on include; communications; internal networks - developing these through recently appointed Pro-Vice-Provosts (Regional) and Faculty Vice-Deans (International); data management – creating a comprehensive database of existing collaborations; and developing 'anchor' partnerships. A Global Implementation Group (GIG) has also been established up to maintain oversight of the strategy's implementation.

26.4   The VP (International) reported that a reconfiguration of existing partnerships to align with the GES had resulted in a revised partnership arrangement with Qatar to ensure successful completion of the contract to 2020; UCL's activities in Australia were being led by the Faculty of Engineering, the stand-alone campus would be closed in 2017 and a lasting partnership with the University of South Australia being developed to maintain some presence for UCL in the region.

26.5   The VP (International) reported that Dr Karen Edge and Professor Gudrun Moore would job share the Pro-Vice-Provost (International) post. A key aspect of the role involves working together with the academic community and international engagement activities to deliver the GES.

26.6   In response to a member's comment on validation of degrees, the VP reported that the GIG would discuss cross-institutional issues and review the varied approaches to working with international collaborations that are currently in existence, particularly with the recent IoE merger. It was noted that the GIG will work with colleagues who have validation expertise in Academic Services and Student Registry Services.

26.7   In response to a member's comment on international partnership proposals, particularly Peking University, the VP noted that more emphasis would be given on UCL providing a broad range of offer as a comprehensive university. Any existing direct engagements with the particular university, including work with the IoE Confucius Institute and teaching Mandarin in schools, would also be highlighted in external communications when discussing proposals.

27   VICE-PROVOST (ENTERPRISE AND LONDON) ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL
[PAPER 3-02, 2015-16]

27.1   *Received* – an oral introduction to the paper from Dr Celia Caulcott, Vice-Provost (Enterprise and London)

27.2   The VP (Enterprise and London) reported that the annual report covered the last five months since the VP had been in role and was of a reflective nature on current practices with projections for the future.

27.3   The VP (Enterprise and London) highlighted a number of achievements such as the recognition of research impact excellence in the REF, supporting student entrepreneurship and progress in consultancy activity through UCL Consultants.

27.4   The VP (Enterprise and London) identified future areas to focus on namely, a greater alignment with the UCL 2034 Strategy, fully embedding enterprise and innovation in the work of staff and curriculum for students and growth of UCL's engagement with Business. This would be done in partnership with faculties and departments, establishing internal networks to build capacity and focusing on the practical aspects of what UCL currently does. Another area would be compiling data on existing engagement activities that Faculties and Departments contribute to in London, to maintain an overview and explore other opportunities across UCL.

27.5   The Director of the Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching highlighted that the Education Strategy and Connected Curriculum included innovative ways to integrate education, research and innovation and provided opportunities to network internally and externally, which could be used to embed innovation and enterprise in the curriculum.

27.7   The Provost commented on the challenges ahead and commended the VP (Enterprise and London) on the progress so far in her role.

28   EDUCATION STRATEGY
[PAPER 3-03, 2015-16]

28.1   *Received* – an oral introduction to the paper from Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs), Professor Anthony Smith.

28.2   The VP (ESA) explained that the strategy would be in place from 2016 – 2021 with the purpose to deliver theme two of the UCL 2034 Strategy. Features of theme four with an educational focus have also been included which are life learning and professional development.

28.3   After a two phased consultation process that included town hall meetings, online survey, liaison with colleagues at Faculty Teaching Committees and student facing professional services, a draft was submitted to AB at its meeting on 10 February for further comments and these have been incorporated into the final version.

28.4   The VP (ESA) reported that the strategy provides opportunities for research-based education through the Connected Curriculum, with the aim to embed this concept across UCL, to bring staff and students closer to research. This approach is already generating interest in UCL as well as externally.

28.5   Nine objectives would be reviewed against three key enablers which were recognition and award of staff, systems and processes and communications across UCL. A detailed implementation plan would be used to report progress and indicators have been set up to monitor this.

   RESOLVED

28.6   AC approved the final version of the Education Strategy (2016-2021).

29   QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

29.1   ***Received*** – An oral update on the QAA HER from the Chair of the Higher Education Review Strategy Group, Professor Anthony Smith.

29.2   The Chair reported that the SED was approved at the special meeting of AC on 2 February, was received by AB for information on 10 February before being submitted to QAA on 18 February.

29.3   QAA has made a further request for additional evidence, limited to only 48 pieces, mostly in risk areas that UCL had identified in the SED. The Programme Approval Process and Academic Partnerships are likely to be of key interest to the review team.

29.4   It was reported that the QAA HER review team would be in touch around 18 April with identified groups of people, of whom, the Provost, VP (ESA), VP (International), Registrar, Pro Vice-Provost (Doctoral School) and Director of CALT would most certainly be met. Other groups of staff include, Faculty Tutors, Heads of Departments and Programme Leaders.

29.5   The importance of a positive outcome was reiterated in the context of the QAA HER being linked to entry into the TEF and to ensure UCL continue to be involved in contributing to the discussions on the TEF proposals. Internationally, the QAA HER reports are reviewed by countries such as, China, India and South America and play a key role in determining partnership collaborations with UK HE Institutions.

29.6   Academic Services would be arranging briefing meetings and providing guidance to colleagues in Faculties and Departments in the coming weeks.

29.7   In response to members' comments, it was reported that harmonisation was a major outcome from the previous report and greater efforts had been achieved to improve this. Since the last review in 2009, UCL's complexity has further increased, with the mergers of School of Pharmacy and more recently, the IoE, this area will be even more relevant.

29.8   In response to a member's comment, further details on the additional evidence requested by the review team would be provided to interested colleagues, particularly on Academic Partnerships and Programme Approval Process.

Other matters for approval or information

30   ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR ON BEHALF OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

None.

31   ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR 2013 AND 2014
[PAPER 3-04, 2015-16]

31.1   *Received –* the annual letter from the office of the Independent Adjudicator for 201-3-2014 and 2014-15.

31.2   It was noted that the UCL's internal processes were in agreement with OIA standards and student claims were closing more internally prior to going to OIA. The Student Mediator role was of particular importance to this process, in developing improvements to the overall system and enhancing the student experience.

32   ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2014-15 – LIBRARY COMMITTEE
[PAPER 3-05, 2015-16]

32.1   *Received –* the Library Committee annual report for 2014-15.

33   ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2014-15 - STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADMISSIONS AND FUNDING COMMITTEE
[PAPER 3-06, 2015-16]

33.1   *Received –* the Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee annual report for 2014-15.

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

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

- Education Committee – 6 October 2016
- Library Committee – 4 June 2015; 17 December 2015
- Student Experience Committee – 3 November 2015
- Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee – 8 June 2015; 10 December 2015

35   DATE OF NEXT MEETING

35.1   The next Academic Committee meeting would be held on **Tuesday 16 June 2016 at 10.00 in Wilkins Haldane Room**

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23 March 2016