



## ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 18 December 2014

### MINUTES

*PRESENT:*

Provost and President (Chair)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor David Bogle; Professor Robert Brown; Professor Stephen Caddick; Dr Caroline Essex; Dr Julie Evans; Professor Anthony Finkelstein; Professor Mary Fulbrook; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor Chris Husbands; Professor Christine Kinnon; Mr Lukmaan Kolia; Dr Helen Matthews; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Michael Pitt; Professor David Price; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Ms Susan Ware.

In attendance: Professor Orazio Attanasio; Professor David Attwell; Professor Jonathan Bell; Dr Stephanie Bird; Professor Judith Breuer; Dr Clare Brooks; Professor Andrew Brown; Professor Rachel Chambers; Professor Nishi Chaturvedi; Professor Stephen Conway; Professor Andrew Copp; Professor Duncan Craig; Professor Bert De Reyck; Professor Andreas Demosthenous; Mr Chris Dillon; Professor Annette Dolphin; Dr Andrew Edkins; Professor Mark Emberton; Professor Tom Fearn; Dr Matt Fisher; Professor Mark Ford; Professor Murray Fraser; Professor Alison Fuller; Professor Nick Gallent; Professor Asterios Gavriilidis; Dr Haidy Geismar; Ms Clare Goudy; Dr Lesley Gourlay; Dr Ann Griffin; Professor Sue Hamilton; Professor Mark Harman; Professor Jem Hebden; Dr Jane Hurry; Professor Tony Kenyon; Professor Susanne Kuechler; Professor Ofer Lahav; Professor Alexi Marmot; Professor Mark Marsh; Professor Timothy Mathews; Professor David McAlpine; Professor Robb McDonald; Professor Neil Millar; Dr Rob Miller; Professor Margaret O'Brien; Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary); Professor Chris Pinney; Professor Stephen Porter; Professor Slavo Radosevic; Professor Stuart Robson; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Alwyn Seeds; Ms Chandan Shah; Professor David Shanks; Professor John Shawe-Taylor; Professor Bob Sheil; Professor Elizabeth Shephard; Professor Rosalind Smyth; Professor Hans Stauss; Professor Andrew Steptoe; Professor Sacha Stern; Alice Sullivan; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Cheryl Thomas; Professor Hans Van Wees; Professor Yiannis Ventikos; Professor Steve Wilson; Ms Karen Wishart; Professor Nicholas Wood; Professor Richard Wortley; Professor Jose Zalabardo.

Apologies for absence: Professor Nick Brook; Dr Brenda Cross.

*Key to abbreviations*

AC	Academic Committee
EdCom	Education Committee
FTE	Full-time equivalent staff
GPA	Grade Point Average
JSSC	Joint Staff Student Committee
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SSFC	Scholarships and Student Funding Committee
StRAC	Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee

***Preliminary Business***

**7 TERMS OF REFERENCE, CONSTITUTION AND 2014-15 MEMBERSHIP**

***Received:***

- 7.1 AC's terms of reference, constitution and 2014-15 membership at AC 2-07 (14-15).

***Reported:***

- 7.2 The Provost welcomed all members to Academic Committee, particularly the invited members; Faculty Vice-Deans; Heads of Department and Heads of Unit of Assessment.
- 7.3 The Provost updated members on the recent successful merger with the Institute of Education and reported the membership had been adjusted to reflect this. The Provost welcomed Professor Chris Husbands (Director of UCL IoE), Professor Norbert Pachler and Professor Don Pennington who would be sharing the role of Faculty Tutor, to their first meeting of Academic Committee.

**8 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 16 OCTOBER 2014**

***Confirmed:***

- 8.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 16 October 2014 [*AC Mins. 1-6, 16.10.14*].

**9 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

***Noted:***

- 9.1 There were no matters arising from the minutes.

***Business for Discussion***

**10 CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

***Reported:***

- 10.1 There were no items for Chair's Business.

## 11 OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014

### **Received:**

- 11.1 An oral report from the Vice Provost (Research), Professor David Price, on the outcomes of the Research Excellence Framework 2014.

### **Reported:**

- 11.2 The Vice-Provost (Research) reported that UCL had achieved excellent outcomes from the 2014 REF; it was explained that the outcomes can be interpreted in a number of different ways, the Grade Point Average (GPA) and 'Power' measures were most likely to receive public attention and inform league table positions.
- 11.3 The Vice-Provost congratulated colleagues for the strong submission of 91.8% of all eligible staff, which gave a reliable representation of the breadth and depth of research excellence at UCL and reinforced the institution's position as a leading 'research-intensive' University.
- 11.4 The Grade Point Average outcome, that takes into account the average starred ranking of UCL submissions, for UCL was 3.22 (out of 4), an improvement on the outcome in 2008. The 'Power' measure which takes into account the volume of 4\* and 3\* rated submissions places UCL first, above Oxford and Cambridge in second and third place. UCL now has a market share of 5.3% of all publicly funded research, compared to 5.19% and 4.49% for Oxford and Cambridge respectively.
- 11.5 The Vice-Provost reported that the REF was divided into four panels focusing on subject areas. UCL had confirmed its position as the leading institution for medicine and biological sciences (Panel A) by having the largest share of 4\* research, in addition UCL has achieved the greatest number of 4\* research in Social Sciences (Panel C), overtaking both Oxford and LSE.
- 11.6 At subject level, a number of UCL departments have achieved significant success, in particular Economics, Psychology & Language Sciences, Neuroscience, the Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment, the Institute of Education, Chemistry and Computer Science.
- 11.7 The Vice-Provost noted his personal thanks to the Director of Research Evaluation and his team for their stellar efforts co-ordinating the REF submission processes on behalf of the University.
- 11.8 The Provost added that these outcomes are an important moment for UCL and for the history of Higher Education in UK; for the first time, Oxford and Cambridge had been supplanted at the top of a UK league table. The Provost commended the effort and commitment from academic and professional services staff and requested all staff, along with students, celebrate this major success. In particular the Provost wished to recognise the contribution of Professor Malcolm Grant who was Provost for the period running up to the REF submission and had identified and invested in the opportunity for UCL to become the UK's leading academic institution.

### **Discussion**

- 11.9 As a result of member's questions, the following points were noted.
- There had been no indication of which individual submissions were unclassified, this would not be revealed to any institution, however the panels will provide feedback that will help to identify areas of strength and weakness.
  - A number of league tables will be produced using these outcomes. The Times Higher Education had initially chosen to focus on GPA but Research Fortnight had produced a

table that focuses on research intensity and power, the broadsheet newspapers have picked this up.

- The REF outcomes will be used to distribute quality-related (QR) funding across the sector. With the application of the revised funding formula, it is expected that UCL will receive an increased budget, however the exact figures will not be available until March. The Provost highlighted that this additional funding would be invested in covering the full economic cost of managing an institution of UCL's size and complexity, this will include investments in the estates and IT infrastructure.
- As well as recognising the successes in medicine, biological sciences and social sciences, it will be important for UCL to support the opportunities and potential for growth in other STEM subjects and the arts and humanities in the run up to the next REF exercise.

## **12 A REPORT FROM THE VICE-PROVOST (EDUCATION AND STUDENT AFFAIRS) – PROFESSOR ANTHONY SMITH**

### ***Received:***

- 12.1 At AC 2-08 (14-15), a report from the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs).

### ***Reported***

- 12.2 The Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) added his commendation to staff for excellent REF outcomes and emphasised the opportunity this presents to build UCL's reputation for research-based education.
- 12.3 The Vice-Provost reported on the recent improvement in National Student Survey outcomes and thanked staff for their engagement in the action planning processes. Meetings with Heads of Departments to discuss NSS results and action plans have been scheduled and will all have taken place before the end of the year.
- 12.4 The Vice-Provost drew AC's attention to the fact that following the merger with the IoE, UCL's student body is predominantly postgraduate. This will require a fundamental shift in culture and behaviours across the University including consideration how different periods of the academic year will be managed, an example being the summer period when PG students will still be studying and expect high quality services and support to be available on campus. A particular area for concentrated effort will be employability and career support for PG students, where UCL's outcomes are not strong and the service required is quite substantially different to undergraduates.

<b><i>Business for Information</i></b>
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## **13 EDUCATION COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14**

### ***Approved:***

- 13.1 At AC 2-09 (14-15), the annual report from EdCom for session 2013-14.

## **14 RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14**

### ***Approved:***

- 14.1 At AC 2-10 (14-15), the annual report from RDC for session 2013-14.

**15 JOINT STAFF STUDENT COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14**

***Approved:***

15.1 At AC 2-11 (14-15), the annual report from JSSC for session 2013-14.

**16 QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14**

***Approved:***

16.1 At AC 2-12 (14-15), the annual report from QMEC for session 2013-14.

**17 STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14**

***Approved:***

17.1 At AC 2-13 (14-15), the annual report from StRAC for session 2013-14.

**18 SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT FUNDING COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2013-14**

***Approved:***

18.1 At AC 2-14 (14-15), the annual report from SSFC for session 2013-14.

**19 REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

***Noted:***

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

- Scholarships and Student Funding Committee (13 November 2014).
- Joint Staff Student Committee (20 November 2014).

**20 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

20.1 The Provost noted that this had been an extremely successful term for UCL, one Nobel Prize, the merger with the IOE, confirmation of plans for the Olympic Park development, improved NSS scores and the excellent REF results, and commended colleagues hard work and efforts in contributing to the success.

**21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

***Noted:***

- 21.1 The next meeting will be on **Thursday 12 March 2015** at **9.00am** in the **UCL Conference Suite 05, 188 Tottenham Court Road**.

DERFEL OWEN

Director of Academic Services and Secretary to Academic Committee

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22 December 2014