



## ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 21 March 2013

### MINUTES

*PRESENT:*

Professor Anthony Smith (*Chair*)

Mr David Ashton	Professor Robert Brown
Mr Edwin Clifford-Coupe	Dr Brenda Cross
Dr Caroline Essex	Professor Mike Ewing
Mr Marco Federighi	Professor David Green
Dr Leonie Hannan	Dr Arne Hofmann
Dr Christine Hoffmann	Ms Helen Matthews
Professor Alan Penn	Dr Peter Raven
Dr Hilary Richards	Ms Mary Rimington
Dr Eva Sorensen	Dr Ruth Siddall
Ms Olga Thomas	Ms Susan Ware
Professor Michael Worton	

In attendance: Mr Jason Clarke (Secretary); Ms Judith Hillmore; Ms Harriet Lilley; Ms Bella Malins; Ms Katy Redfern; Mr Andrew Whalley.

Apologies for absence were received from the President and Provost, Dr Paul Ayris, Professor David Bogle, Professor Steve Caddick, Ms Geraldine Davies, Dr Julie Evans, Professor Anthony Finkelstein, Mr Dante Micheaux, Mr Tim Perry, Professor Elizabeth Shepherd and Professor Jonathan Wolff.

*Key to abbreviations*

AC	Academic Committee
EdCom	Education Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPA	Grade Point Average
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
OfIA	Office for International Affairs
SSFC	Scholarships and Student Funding Committee
WP	widening participation

## 26 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 13 DECEMBER 2012

***Confirmed:***

26.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 13 December 2012 [*AC Mins. 13-25, 13.12.12*].

**27 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**27A Review of Academic Committee and its Substructure [AC Min. 15, 13.12.12]**

**Noted:**

27A.1 The AC officers, in liaison with relevant committee/administrative officers and officers of UCL Union, were taking forward the recommendations approved by AC at its previous meeting. In particular, discussions were taking place regarding the most appropriate structures that could be put in place to fill the two main gaps in the coverage of AC's current committee substructure which had been identified during the review of AC *ie* student experience and student recruitment and admissions. A progress report would be submitted to AC in the Summer Term.

**28 UCL ACCESS AGREEMENT 2014-15**

*[Ms Bella Malins, Director of Admissions, and Ms Katy Redfern, Head of Outreach, attended for this item]*

**Noted:**

28.1 AC was invited to discuss and approve the draft UCL Access Agreement for 2014-15, at AC 3-15 (12-13), which had been prepared by the Access Agreement Steering Group of AC.

**Reported:**

28.2 The draft UCL Access Agreement 2014-15 built on the 2012-13 and 2013-14 Access Agreements. The draft Agreement was ambitious and included an increase in resources to support and develop the following areas of work:

- outreach activities;
- collaborations with other institutions;
- early-years work with primary schools;
- evaluation of the success of UCL's outreach activities.

**Discussion:**

28.3 Members of AC discussed issues around on-course student support and noted that it was important to ensure that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds who accepted a place at UCL had sufficient financial support available to them throughout their entire programme of study, which included costs of living in London. Ideally, financial assistance from UCL should be provided to such students before they got into financial hardship. AC members were pleased to note the recruitment of a Money Advisor for enrolled and prospective students, and commented that in the future UCL might need to increase the number of Money Advisors available to students.

28.4 In response to a question from a member of AC, it was confirmed that the Access Agreement was informed by data on how many students receive bursaries and other financial assistance from UCL and that while this information, broken down by faculty, could be provided to AC, it was not intended to include those data in the document.

28.5 AC members reiterated the issue raised at the May 2012 meeting of AC regarding the non-alignment of student accommodation payments with Student Loan Company payments. The AC Chair undertook to look into the matter.

**RESOLVED**

- 28.6 That AC approve the draft UCL Access Agreement for 2014-15, at AC 3-15 (12-13), and that it be submitted to the Office for Fair Access.

**[ACTION: Ms Bella Malins, Ms Katy Redfern – to note]**

- 28.7 That data, broken down by faculty, on the number of students in receipt of bursaries and other financial assistance from UCL be provided to members of AC.

**[ACTION: Ms Bella Malins, Ms Katy Redfern]**

- 28.8 That the AC Chair explore the issues relating to the misalignment of student accommodation payments with Student Loan Company payments.

**[ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith]**

**29 DRAFT UCL WIDENING PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2013-18**

*[Ms Bella Malins, Director of Admissions, and Ms Katy Redfern, Head of Outreach, attended for this item]*

**Noted:**

- 29.1 AC was invited to discuss and approve the draft UCL Widening Participation Strategy 2013-18, at AC 3-16 (12-13).

**Reported:**

- 29.2 The five key aims of the draft WP Strategy, which went beyond the scope of the Access Agreement and gave a wider view of UCL's WP and Outreach activities, were: (i) Aspiration; (ii) Attainment and Admission; (iii) Retention; (iv) Evidence and Research; and (v) Promotion. WP work would be undertaken specifically with school children under the age of 14. Evidence would be needed to measure the impact of work undertaken for WP and increased resourcing was being provided for WP activities.

**Discussion:**

- 29.3 Whilst the importance of increasing aspiration amongst school children to attend university was recognised, it was argued that WP activities should also be tailored for mature students and those taking access courses for entry to higher education.
- 29.4 It was suggested that the Strategy should also address issues of gender imbalance and that this should be included in the next iteration of the Strategy, for although, it was argued, UCL performs well institutionally in terms of gender balances, at departmental-level some disciplines experience marked gender imbalances, which reflect imbalances at secondary school-level.
- 29.5 A suggestion from a member of AC that some WP students should be given lower entry offers provoked a debate within AC, with other members arguing that early interventions, mentoring and partnerships were more sustainable methods of ensuring WP students attained the entry requirements, rather than lowering entry requirements. Also efforts should be focused on providing support for WP students whilst at UCL, rather than reducing the entry offer. The Director of Admissions noted that data on WP student progression was being monitored. Furthermore, schools wanted their students to achieve the best results possible and lowering offers was unlikely to be viewed positively by schools.

**RESOLVED**

- 29.6 That AC approve the draft UCL Widening Participation Strategy 2013-18, at AC 3-16 (12-13).

**[ACTION: Ms Bella Malins, Ms Katy Redfern – to note]**

**30 SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT FUNDING COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2011-12**

**Noted:**

- 30.1 The annual report from SSFC for session 2011-12 at AC 3-17 (12-13), introduced by the Chair of SSFC, Professor Michael Worton.

**Reported:**

- 30.2 Professor Worton highlighted the following areas of the SSFC annual report:

- The Scholarships and Student Funding Strategy would be finalised shortly.
- Funds for scholarships at faculty/school level far exceeded the amounts available institutionally, and it was anticipated that institutional-level and faculty/school-level funding would be more uniformly distributed across UCL.
- UCL scholarships should be better targeted towards students from countries with low GDPs, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa. In some cases, such funding may be around £30K.
- Positive discussions were taking place with international partners and overseas scholarship funding agencies.
- Discussions were taking place with colleagues in UCL's Development and Alumni Relations Office regarding umbrella scholarship schemes which could create a stronger relationship between donors and students.
- Postgraduate scholars should be provided with opportunities to undertake teaching as part of their UCL experience.

**Discussion:**

- 30.3 In response to the expectation that postgraduate scholars should undertake teaching, members of AC noted issues around (i) undergraduate student expectations in terms of who teaches them, (ii) training available for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants, and (iii) the differences between the student contract and employment contracts.
- 30.4 AC members noted that some prospective Masters students from countries with lower GDPs might be disadvantaged by UCL's online application procedure and application fee, and therefore may not apply. Such students might be more likely to require scholarships or student funding. Professor Worton noted that funding from some international partners was very generous and costs to cover the application process could be included within the funding. The Director of Admissions noted, however, that there was no evidence to suggest that the new application fee was deterring applicants from applying to UCL.

**RESOLVED:**

- 30.5 That AC approve the annual report from SSFC for session 2011-12 at AC 3-17 (12-13).

**[ACTION: Professor Michael Worton, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]**

## 31 UCL INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION CONSULTATION

### **Noted:**

- 31.1 In order to better support faculties and staff in their internationally-related work, the Vice-Provost (International), Professor Michael Worton, and his team in the Office for International Affairs asked for feedback from members of AC about which areas of activity should be seen as priorities, any particular issues relating to UCL's off-shore presences, views on implementing the UCL International Strategy 2012-2017 (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/global/international-strategy>) and suggestions as to how OfIA can best work with faculties and departments in support of UCL's international agenda. A note with a series of questions which members of AC were asked to consider was at AC 3-18 (12-13) and introduced by Professor Worton.

### **Reported:**

- 31.2 Professor Worton noted that the six main aims of the UCL International Strategy 2012-2017<sup>1</sup> could be grouped under the following thematic headings:
- Students – UCL should look to (i) increase the quality of its international students, (ii) develop a more international mindset amongst its students, (iii) increase the number of students undertaking study abroad by at least 10%.
  - Partnerships – UCL should encourage its staff to focus on long-term strategic partnerships.
  - Positioning – UCL should improve its global position and be seen as an internationally recognised area of teaching excellence with innovative programmes of study.

### **Discussion:**

- 31.3 Members of AC provided feedback on the UCL International Strategy 2012-2017 as follows:

#### 31.3.1 *Study Abroad*

- Study abroad places were limited and those students who did not have an opportunity to study in another country should be given the opportunity to experience internationalism whilst at UCL, *via* links with overseas institutions such as module and staff exchanges.
- Students might be more receptive to shorter study abroad opportunities.
- There would be financial issues to consider around funding for year abroad placements from 2014-15, since HEIs would only be allowed to charge students 15% of fees (a 35% reduction from 2012-13). AC members also noted that UCL should avoid any perception that fees paid by International students were being used to underwrite study abroad opportunities for Home/EU students.

#### 31.3.2 *Staff and Student Opportunities*

- More staff sabbatical leave could involve spending time at an overseas university. Although staff exchanges were now easier to organise, not enough staff took up the opportunity to take part in exchanges.
- UCL could increase its provision of Summer Schools and venture into more dual degrees and module exchanges with overseas HEIs.
- UCL should reassess its current strategic partnerships with overseas HEIs, including those in the US.

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<sup>1</sup> **Global Vision** UCL International Strategy 2012-2017 – A Summary can be found at [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/global/international-strategy/International\\_Strategy\\_2012-2017\\_summary](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/global/international-strategy/International_Strategy_2012-2017_summary)

31.3.3 *Logistical Considerations*

- Advice and guidance was available to departments from the OfIA regarding how to set up programmes with international components.
- To increase efficiency and avoid duplication, faculties should oversee internationalisation activities taking place within departments (such as those noted above).

31.4 The Chair of EdCom noted that it had set up a working group on study abroad. Professor Worton requested that a member of the OfIA be added to the membership of the working group.

31.5 The consultation was an ongoing process and AC members were invited to forward any further observations on the International Strategy to Professor Worton and his team in OfIA.

**RESOLVED**

31.6 That, further to the above discussion, members of AC forward any observations on the implementation of the International Strategy to the Vice-Provost (International) and his staff in OfIA.

**[ACTION: Members of AC]**

**32 APPROVAL OF A NEW DEGREE AWARD: EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**Noted:**

32.1 At its meeting on 7 July 2008, AC approved a procedure for the approval of new degree awards at UCL.

32.2 At its meeting on 12 March 2013, EdCom approved, on the recommendation of, and following full scrutiny by, the Programme and Module Approval Steering Group, a proposal that UCL establish the a new degree award of Executive Masters in Public Administration or Executive MPA. The proposal was now being submitted to AC for formal approval.

**RESOLVED:**

32.3 That AC formally approve, on the recommendation of EdCom, the creation of the following new UCL degree award:

- **Executive Masters in Public Administration or Executive MPA.**

**[ACTION: Professor Mike Ewing, Ms Sandra Hinton, Ms Irenie Morley – to note]**

**33 WORKING GROUP ON GPA [AC Min.4, 18.10.12]**

**Noted:**

33.1 The Working Group on GPA was still undertaking the modelling exercise with the alternative GPA scheme. The written progress report from the Working Group, which was scheduled to be submitted to this meeting, would therefore now be submitted to AC in the Summer Term.

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

***Noted:***

- 34.1 The AC officers had received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:
- Education Committee - 6 December 2012;
  - International Strategy Board - 31 October 2012 and 31 October 2012;
  - Joint Staff Student Committee - 22 November 2012;
  - Library Committee - 8 November 2012;
  - Quality Management and Enhancement Committee - 7 November 2012;
  - Research Degrees Committee - 15 November 2012;
  - Scholarships and Student Funding Committee - 14 November 2012 and 15 January 2013.

**35 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

***Noted:***

- 35.1 The next meeting will be on **Thursday 9 May 2013 at 9.00am** in the **Haldane Room**.

JDC  
May 2013