



ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 24 March 2011

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Professor Michael Worton (*Chair*)

Provost and President
Mr Bob Allan
Mr David Ashton
Dr Paul Ayris
Dr Bob Barber
Professor David Bogle
Professor Robert Brown
Dr Helen Chatterjee
Dr Brenda Cross
Dr Caroline Essex
Professor Mike Ewing

Mr Marco Federighi
Professor Anthony Finkelstein
Professor David Green
Mr Alex Nesbitt
Professor Alan Penn
Mr Tim Perry
Dr Hilary Richard
Professor Stephen Smith
Ms Olga Thomas
Professor Henry Woudhuysen

In attendance: Ms Julia Abbott; Ms Yvonne Bentley (for Minute 17); Mr Jason Clarke (Secretary); Ms Clare Goudy; Ms Bella Malins (for Minutes 17 and 18); Ms Aeli Roberts; Mr Nigel Waugh.

Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Christopher Hallas; Dr Nikos Konstantinidis; Ms Mary Rimington; Dr Ruth Siddall; Professor Alan Thompson; Ms Soo Ware.

Key to abbreviations:

AC	Academic Committee
AM	Annual Monitoring
EdCom	Education Committee
FTC	Faculty Teaching Committee
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
ILTS	Institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy
JSSC	Joint Staff Student Committee
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
QMEC	Quality Management and Enhancement Committee
RDC	Research Degrees Committee
SEQ	Student evaluation questionnaire
UUK	Universities UK

14 **CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP 2010-11**

Noted

14.1 The AC Chair noted that the following members of Academic Board had been elected to serve on AC and welcomed them to the Committee:

- Professor Robert Brown;
- Dr Bob Barber;
- Dr Nikos Konstantinidis (*in absentia*).

15 **MINUTES**

Approved

15.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 21 October 2010 [*AC Mins. 1-13, 2010-11*], were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

16 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

16A **UCL Learning and Teaching Strategy**

[*AC Min 6, 2010-11*]

Noted

16A.1 At its meeting on 21 October 2010, AC noted (i) that an ILTS implementation plan had been prepared and (ii) that a number of teaching task forces would be established to develop ideas in support of the ILTS, for example, in the areas of distance learning and innovations in teaching practice.

16A.2 The ILTS implementation plan had now been finalised and the two teaching task forces mentioned above had been established.

Received

16A.3 At APPENDIX AC 2/07 (10-11) – the ILTS implementation plan, which would be disseminated following the meeting.

16A.4 At APPENDIX AC 2/08 (10-11) and APPENDIX AC 2/09 (10-11) – the terms of reference and memberships of the teaching task forces on, respectively, distance learning and innovations in teaching practice.

16A.5 An oral report by the **AC Chair** on progress with the above initiatives.

Reported

16A.6 It was anticipated that the ILTS would need to be revised following the publication of the Provost's forthcoming Green Paper, as that was likely to address a number of teaching and learning-related issues. Also, it was intended that the UCL Assessment Strategy would be incorporated into the next major revision of the ILTS, in order to create a combined learning, teaching and assessment strategy for UCL.

16.A.7 Given the importance of UCL's commitment to an academic-led strategy, the establishment of groups such as the two teaching task forces was an important means of involving junior staff in discussions about teaching and learning policy, especially if they went on to become actively involved in the institution's decision-making processes.

17 DRAFT UCL ACCESS AGREEMENT

[Ms Bella Malins and Ms Yvonne Bentley attended for this item]

Received

- 17.1 At APPENDIX AC 2/10 (10-11) – a copy of UCL's draft Access Agreement, which had been considered by the Provost's Senior Management Team and Finance Committee, and would be considered by Council at its meeting on the afternoon of 24 March 2011, prior to its submission to OFFA.
- 17.2 An oral report by the **AC Chair**.

Reported

- 17.3 Although the proposed Access Agreement had been endorsed by Finance Committee, it was still in draft from pending its approval by Council.
- 17.4 It was proposed that UCL should charge the maximum fee permissible of £9k per year from session 2012-13 onwards. Furthermore, it was proposed that 30% of the additional fee income coming into UCL would be allocated to widening participation and outreach initiatives, as well as student bursaries.
- 17.5 UCL had decided not to follow the guidance from the Government and OFFA that a proportion of fee income should be spent on fee waivers. Instead, UCL proposed to support students from less advantaged backgrounds by allocating a proportion of the additional fee income to fund student bursaries as this was seen as a more practical way of providing those students with financial support.

Discussion

- 17.6 It was noted that the new fees regime (which was, in effect, a deferred graduate tax) would be more beneficial to students than the current arrangements. This fact had often been obscured in many of the national debates about the new fees system. It was also important to emphasise that students would not have to pay any fees before or during their studies, and that they will only have to repay the fees once they meet the necessary earnings threshold.
- 17.7 Contextual data would be analysed to assess whether the introduction of the new fees regime would have an impact on UCL's recruitment.
- 17.8 The Committee supported the approach set out in the draft Access Agreement.

RESOLVED

- 17.9 That AC endorse the draft Access Agreement at APPENDIX AC 2/10 (10-11).

18 **DEADLINES FOR ADMISSIONS AND ENROLMENT**

[Ms Bella Malins attended for this item]

- 18.1 At APPENDIX AC 2/11 (10-11) – a paper from the Director of Student Services and the Head of Outreach and Admissions on the above, following discussion of this matter by EdCom at its meeting on 14 December 2010.
- 18.2 An oral report by **Professor Mike Ewing**, as Chair of EdCom.

Reported

- 18.3 The paper at APPENDIX AC 2/11 (10-11) set out the requirements for enrolment of new and continuing students and some issues relating to the operation of admissions and enrolment in session 2011-12. Specifically, AC was asked to endorse the proposal, previously approved by EdCom, that the deadline for enrolment at UCL should be two weeks after the start date of the programme for new taught students and one month after the start of session for continuing taught students, commencing in the 2011-12 session. Also, the deadline for the despatch of offer of admission letters should be set at three weeks before the start of session (2 September in the 2011-12 session), with later offers being allowed only by specific approval from the Dean of Students (Academic).
- 18.4 It was important to emphasise that the proposal was being put forward to ensure that UCL's students receive an appropriate educational experience, and not simply for administrative convenience.

Discussion

- 18.5 A member of AC asked whether, in light of the above proposal, the Admissions Office would be able to meet the published service standards for processing applications from new students. The Head of Outreach and Admissions noted that additional staff had been appointed to the Admissions Office and it was anticipated that, once those staff were fully trained, they would be able to meet the necessary admissions service standards.
- 18.6 It was agreed that the final proposals should indicate specific application and enrolment dates.

RESOLVED

- 18.7 That AC endorse the proposals from EdCom regarding deadlines for admission and enrolment as set out in APPENDIX AC 2/11 (10-11).

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

19 **FUTURE FUNDING POSITION**

Received

- 19.1 An oral report by the **Provost**.

Reported

- 19.2 HEFCE had announced the funding settlement for 2011-12. UCL's teaching grant allocation had been cut by 4.6%, against 5.4% for the sector as a whole. While research funding across the sector had been

cut by 1.07%, UCL had seen a 1.36% increase. HEFCE had announced the reinstatement of teaching capital funding, worth £1.1 million to UCL next year. Also, UCL had benefited from the ring-fencing of the science budget, although this would remain flat in cash terms.

- 19.3 In subsequent years the position was less clear as the new fees regime would be introduced and its full impact would need to be assessed. However, the introduction of fees was not additional income to universities as it would simply be replacing the funding for teaching which had been withdrawn by the Government. Also, the introduction of fees could not be used as a means of cross-subsidising research or institutional inefficiency. The introduction of increased fees was necessary to allow for the financial sustainability of UCL over the coming years and to allow for much needed investment in student residences and other student services.

Discussion

- 19.4 Concern was expressed about the implications of the £9k fee for graduate entry to medicine. The Provost noted that the Vice-Provost (Health) was alert to this issue, although it would have a far greater impact on other medical schools as they had far larger graduate entry to medicine. Discussions were taking place as to the future extent of NHS support for medical education.
- 19.5 The Provost also noted the Home Secretary's recent announcement regarding the future scheme of student visas, which would be better than previously feared. The sustainability of UCL's finances, and for those of many other universities, depended on the ability to recruit increased numbers of overseas students.

20 **UNIVERSITIES UK REPORT 'FREEDOM OF SPEECH ON CAMPUS: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN UK UNIVERSITIES**

Noted

- 20.1 The above report, prepared by a UUK Working Group which was chaired by the Provost, was published in February 2011.

Received

- 20.2 At APPENDIX AC 2/12 (10-11) – a copy of the main body of the above report¹.
- 20.3 An oral report by the **Provost**.

Reported

- 20.4 The context for the establishment of the UUK working group included the events on Christmas Day 2009 involving the former UCL student Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the issues that this case raised, and the recommendations of UCL's own Independent Inquiry Panel, chaired by Dame Fiona Caldicott.

¹ A copy of the full report will be filed with the Minutes of the meeting. The full report is also available from the UUK website at <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Default.aspx>

- 20.5 The Working Group's remit had been to look into: the role of universities in promoting academic freedom and freedom of speech; the regulation of universities and students' union as charities; maintaining security on campuses; and reconciling competing interests and demands within universities.
- 20.6 The Working Group's report concluded with a series of recommendations which would form the basis of further work to be undertaken by UUK.

Discussion

- 20.7 The UCL Union's Medical and Postgraduate Students' Officer welcomed the report's commitment to upholding freedom of speech. Nevertheless, in light of the Caldicott Report, UCL Union had tightened its procedures for vetting and approving visiting speakers. UCL Union would be working with UCL to protect freedom of speech on campus, but ensuring that this was done in a responsible way, taking note of good practice elsewhere within the sector.
- 20.8 In response to a question from a member of AC, the Provost confirmed that UCL was staking all necessary steps to implement the recommendations contained in the Caldicott Report.
- 20.9 It was agreed that universities should resist calls from outside the sector for them to become involved in the surveillance of their students. However, universities had a duty of care towards all of their students and a responsibility for providing support to them. At UCL, the new personal tutor scheme had a key role to play in maintaining regular contact between students and their academic staff.

21 **STUDENT FEEDBACK DATA OVERVIEW REPORT – REPORT FROM THE JOINT STAFF STUDENT COMMITTEE**

Noted

- 21.1 At its meeting on 24 February 2011, JSSC received the third Student Data Overview Report. The Report provided an overview and analysis of student feedback data from a number of internal and external sources.

Received

- 21.2 At APPENDIX AC 2/13 (10-11) – the Student Data Overview Report.

Discussion

- 21.3 It was noted that the issues which appeared to be of most concern to students were again assessment and feedback and the quality of UCL's learning spaces.
- 21.4 There was some discussion about the format and utility of the report. The general view among members was that while the report provided a comprehensive analysis of the issues being raised by students via the various feedback mechanisms, it would be more helpful if it also made suggestions as to how those concerns should be addressed. The report could then be used to inform institutional planning and to drive improvements in the student experience. It was also suggested that students could be asked for their views on the success of institutional initiatives or policies, which could then feed into the

relevant post-implementation reviews. It was agreed that the AC and JSSC officers should review the future format of the report.

RESOLVED

- 21.5 That AC welcome the 2010 Student Data Overview Report at APPENDIX AC 2/13 (10-11).

[ACTION: Dr Ruth Siddall, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]

- 21.6 That the AC and JSSC officers review the format of the Student Data Overview Report.

**[ACTION: Professor Michael Worton/Mr Jason Clarke, Dr Ruth Siddall/
Mr Rob Traynor]**

22 REPORT ON PROCEEDINGS OF FACULTY TEACHING COMMITTEES IN SESSION 2009-10

Noted

- 22.1 Each year, AC receives a report on FTC proceedings in the previous academic session. The report is submitted to AC *via* QMEC, in order to enable QMEC to identify any particular quality management and enhancement issues which it might itself wish to follow-up or bring to the attention of AC.
- 22.2 QMEC received and discussed the annual report on FTC proceedings in session 2009-10 at its meeting on 4 November 2010.

Received

- 22.3 At APPENDIX AC 2/14 (10-11) – the report on FTC proceedings in session 2009-10, with a covering note from QMEC.
- 22.4 An oral report by **Professor Mike Ewing**, Chair of QMEC.

Reported

- 22.5 QMEC had been concerned that FTC minutes did not make clear whether they were receiving and discussing analyses of SEQs. This requirement was subsequently included in the FTC checklist and raised in the briefing sessions for FTC secretaries provided by Academic Services. QMEC had subsequently reviewed the FTCs' role in scrutinising analyses of SEQs and had agreed that this should be done as part of the AM process. However, the AM timetable was currently too protracted to allow for the inclusion within the faculty summary of FTCs' discussion and summarising of SEQs in time for their consideration by the JSSC at its first meeting of each year. The MAPS Faculty had piloted an accelerated AM timetable in 2010-11 in which the faculty summary had been composed at a much earlier stage. As part of this pilot, the MAPS FTC had also completed a new pro forma which summarised its discussion of SEQs for inclusion in the faculty summary. At its meeting on 8 March 2011, QMEC had agreed that the accelerated timetable should be adopted and rolled out in time for the 2011-12 AM cycle.

Discussed

- 22.6 It was agreed that Deans of Faculty/Faculty Tutors should submit the report to their FTCs.

RESOLVED

- 22.7 That AC approve the report on FTC proceedings in session 2009-10 at APPENDIX AC 2/14 (10-11).

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

- 22.8 That Deans of Faculty/Faculty Tutors submit the report to their FTCs.

[ACTION: Deans of Faculty/Faculty Tutors]

23 **JOINT STAFF STUDENT COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2009-10**

Received

- 23.1 At APPENDIX AC 2/15 (10-11) – JSSC’s annual report for session 2009-10.

RESOLVED

- 23.2 That AC approve the JSSC’s annual report for session 2009-10.

[ACTION: Dr Ruth Siddall, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]

24 **QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR SESSION 2009-10**

Received

- 24.1 At APPENDIX AC 2/16 (10-11) – QMEC’s annual report for session 2009-10.

RESOLVED

- 24.2 That AC approve the QMEC’s annual report for session 2009-10.

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

25 **CHAIR’S BUSINESS**

Reported

- 25.1 The AC Chair noted that, given the recent events surrounding the LSE and its links to Libya, it was important that UCL’s protocols for establishing overseas partnerships be adhered to at all times. This was not intended to inhibit departments wishing to establish such links, but to ensure that his office could provide advice, guidance and support to departments wishing to establish a link with an overseas partner and that such links were set up only once appropriate due diligence and risk assessment had been carried out.
- 25.2 The AC Chair noted that the Academic Registrar, Mr Christopher Hallas would be leaving UCL at the end of April 2011 to take up a new post at the University of Greenwich. On behalf of AC, the Chair thanked Mr Hallas for his contribution to the work of the Committee

and UCL. The Chair also noted the appointment of Mr Tim Perry to the new post of Director of Registry and Academic Services, with effect from 3 May 2011.

26 APPROVAL OF A NEW DEGREE AWARD

Noted

- 26.1 At its meeting on 7 July 2008, AC approved a procedure for the approval of new degree awards at UCL.
- 26.2 At its meeting on 21 March 2011, the Research Degrees Committee approved, on the recommendation of, and following full scrutiny by, the Programme and Module Approval Steering Group, a proposal that UCL establish a Doctorate in Orthopaedics (Doc.Orth).
- 26.3 In accordance with the procedure for the approval of new degree awards, RDC Resolved that the proposal be submitted to AC for approval.

RESOLVED

- 26.4 That AC formally approve, on the recommendation of the RDC, the creation of the following new UCL degree award:
- Doctorate in Orthopaedics or Doc.Orth

27 SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS FOR REMAINING MEETINGS OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE IN SESSION 2010-11

Received

- 27.1 At APPENDIX AC 2/17 (10-11) – a note from the AC officers setting out a schedule of business for the two remaining meetings of AC in the current session.

28 ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE

28A Amendment to the Staff Intellectual Property Rights Policy

Noted

- 28A.1 On 26 October 2010, the AC Chair, acting on behalf of the Committee and on the recommendation of the Director of Library Services, took action to approve a minor amendment to the UCL Staff Intellectual Property Rights Policy, regarding performance rights.

28B UCL SERAus Academic Board

Noted

- 28B.1 Under Australian legislation, UCL SERAus is required to have in place its own Academic Board, comprising primarily external members from other Australian universities, in order to ensure that the School is complying with Australian academic and quality assurance requirements. On 22 February 2011, the AC Chair, acting on behalf of

the Committee, took action to approve the constitution and standing orders of the UCL SERAus Academic Board, which will report to AC. A copy would be filed with the Minutes of the meeting as APPENDIX AC 2/18 (10-11). Copies were available on request from the AC Secretary.

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

Noted

29.1 The AC officers had received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:

- Education Committee - 14 December 2010;
- Committee for Equal Opportunities- 1 December 2010;
- Joint Staff Student Committee - 25 November 2010;
- Library Committee - 26 November 2010;
- Quality Management and Enhancement Committee - 4 November 2010;
- Research Degrees Committee - 18 November 2010;
- Research Governance Committee - 9 November 2010.

30 **FACULTY TEACHING COMMITTEES**

Received

30.1 At APPENDIX AC 2/19 (10-11) - a list of the meetings of FTCs of which the Minutes had been received by the AC Secretary on behalf of AC since the Committee's meeting on 21 October 2010.

31 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted

31.1 The next meeting of AC will take place on **Thursday 12 May 2011** at **9.00am** in the **Haldane Room**.