



## ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019

### MINUTES

*PRESENT:*

Provost and President (*Chair*)

Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Simon Banks; Professor David Bogle; Dame Nicola Brewer; Dr Celia Caulcott; Mr Ashley Doolan; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Dr Arne Hofmann; Professor David Lomas; Professor John Mullan; Professor Alan Penn; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor David Price; Dr Aeli Roberts; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Dr Ruth Siddall; Dr Sam Smidt; Professor Anthony Smith; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Andrew Wills.

*In attendance:* Mr Derfel Owen (Secretary to Academic Committee); Mr Nick McGhee [for Minute 41]; Mr Turlogh O'Brien [member of UCL Council]; Ms Rachel Port (Minutes); Professor David Shanks; Ms Emma Todd [for Minute 40].

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Tracey Allen; Ms Rothna Akhtar; Mr Simon Cane; Mr Farooq Dean; Professor Mark Emberton; Dr Julie Evans; Professor Becky Francis; Professor Graham Hart; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Professor Sandra Leaton-Gray; Professor Ivan Parkin; Mr Saddiqur Rahman; Professor Geraint Rees; Mr Mike Rowson; Professor Alan Thompson; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Li Wei; Dr Stan Zochowski.

*Key to abbreviations*

AB	Academic Board
AC	Academic Committee
ASER	Annual Student Experience Review
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund
GEO	Global Engagement Office
GES	Global Engagement Strategy
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HR	Human Resources
MRC	Medical Research Council
OfS	Office for Students
OVPEA	Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs)
SLMS	School of Life and Medical Sciences
SSW	Student Support and Wellbeing
TESOF	Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework

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<b>Preliminary business</b>
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35 **MINUTES OF 19 FEBRUARY 2019 MEETING**

35.1 **Approved** – the Minutes of the AC meeting held on 19 February 2019 [AC Minutes 18-34, 2018-19].

36 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

36.1 There were no matters arising.

<b>Matters for discussion</b>
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37 **PROVOST'S BUSINESS**

37A **Rankings**

37A.1 UCL had risen two places to rank eighth in the 2020 QS World University Rankings and had also risen two places to sixth in the National Taiwan University (NTU) Ranking for the performance of scientific papers for world universities. However, UCL had slipped to 22<sup>nd</sup> position in 'The Guardian' University league tables 2020. AC noted the different methodologies used for the various rankings and therefore a sense of perspective was required in looking at UCL's results.

37B **Brexit**

37B.1 UCL's Brexit Mitigation Group had continued to meet regularly and send out communications to staff and students.

37C **Augar Review of Fees and Funding**

37C.1 The review report had been published and no action would be taken on its recommendations until a new Prime Minister had been appointed. It was considered likely however that its recommendations would not be carried forward.

38 **SLMS ANNUAL REPORT**

[PAPER 3-26 (18-19)]

38.1 **Received** – the above annual report, introduced by the Vice-Provost (Health), Professor David Lomas.

38.2 The annual report demonstrated that research was very important and underpinned the work of the School as well as partnership working with its

various partners in London. The following areas were highlighted:

- UCL retained its place as third ranked in the UK for life sciences and medicine in the QS 2019 rankings.
- Together with other London universities, UCL continued to excel in attracting research council income and attracted the highest volume of awards from the MRC in 2017-18, ahead of Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and King's.
- SLMS secured an overall satisfaction score of 80 in the 2018 NSS. A Task and Finish Group was set up to strengthen the School's teaching and learning resources, especially in the area of assessment and feedback. It was noted that a cultural change was required across the School to embed teaching excellence.
- UCL's cancer research portfolio had grown with a greater than £40m uplift in strategic cross-disciplinary funding from Cancer Research UK.
- The £25m SUMMIT study began in 2019 which involved UCL, UCLH and the US company GRAIL collaborating to deliver the largest ever UK lung cancer screening study.
- In 2017/18 SLMS accounted for 62% of UCL's total research outcome and its research income had increased by some 53% since 2013-14. SLMS had the highest research income in the UK in this area.
- In terms of its enterprise activity, SLMS in partnership with UCL Business and UCLH, GOSH and Moorfields had created a number of spinouts and partnerships which had raised over £856m.
- In relation to Athena SWAN, SLMS had 21 awards with 19 Institutes or Divisions at silver or bronze level and 2 at gold level. The Athena SWAN process was becoming harder as 3 Institutes/Divisions had that were previously silver had been accredited bronze in the latest round. It was considered that more males were needed to be involved in the application process as it fell disproportionality to female colleagues.
- SLMS had increased its annual contribution margin by 2.4% from 17.8% in 2013-14 to 20.3% in 2018-19 with the contribution increasing by some £40m to £137.6m in 2018-19.

38.3 The Chair commended the impressive report on behalf of AC which showed the continued excellence and impact of SLMS and its increase in research income was to be especially commended.

39 **UCL 2034 ENABLER A: ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL**

[PAPER 3-27 (18-19)]

39.1 **Received** – the above report, introduced by the Registrar, Wendy Appleby.

39.2 2018-19 had been very successful and one of the main highlights was the opening of the new UCL Student Centre in February 2019. Considerable progress had been made on the Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and a community of practice on student support was being established. It was noted that there remained challenges around IT projects and a priority for 2018-19 would be the delivery of the Student Success Platform project to provide an integrated system for student enquiries management, student casework and personal tutoring. There would also be a focus on actions to support a personalised student

experience. It was considered that the next annual report would focus on the activities of the Student Centre during its first year of operation.

- 39.3 It was noted that student mental health continued to pose a challenge. SSW had created four additional Mental Health Co-ordinator posts to expand capacity. This had also allowed for delivery of an expanded drop-in service that offered a wider range of support for disability, mental health and wellbeing difficulties. New training for staff, including mandatory training for all SSW staff in mental health first aid and suicide awareness, had also been developed. It was considered that Personal Tutors required support in this area but that student expectations around the role of Personal Tutors needed to be managed. Members queried whether mental health support was explicitly mentioned in the job description for academic staff but noted that all such staff were required to undertake teaching, research and enablement activities. It was noted that there had been an increase in problems experienced by PGR students and it was hoped that SSW would be able to report further on this matter to the Doctoral School in the near future.
- 39.4 Members queried whether the level of assessment on UCL programmes was too high and was creating more mental health and wellbeing problems for undergraduate students. Students in the 18-24 years age bracket suffered more with mental health problems compared to those in the same age bracket who did not attend university. It was noted that resilience training was available to students about UCL's intellectual life. An internal Assessment Review Group would look at UCL student assessment and its report would come to AC next session.

40 **PRINCIPAL THEME 6 REPORT: VICE-PROVOST (INTERNATIONAL) ANNUAL REPORT**

*[PAPER 3-28 (18-19)]*

- 40.1 **Received** – the above annual report, introduced by the Vice-Provost (International), Dame Nicola Brewer.
- 40.2 The annual report demonstrated the progress UCL had made towards the objectives of Principal Theme 6. The following areas were highlighted:
- UCL was on track to establish three to five Type 4 (anchor) partners by 2020. It currently had one Type 4 partner (Peking University) and six Type 3 (institutional) partners.
  - 29% of UCL's student body currently had some study, or experience, abroad as part of their degree programme.
  - Cities partnership programme – applications for seed funding for academic collaborations in research, teaching and learning had been received from all faculties to this scheme.
  - 122 individual awards were made to UCL academics in the fourth round of Global Engagement Funds. Consequently, £769k investment by UCL in international aspects of its academic mission had contributed to £17.3 million in extra external funds being leveraged so far.
  - A record number of 750 students would attend the UCL Summer School in 2019.
  - Brexit was a specific challenge to the delivery of the GES and Brexit mitigation work increased in 2018-19.

- UCL's total estimated investment in the GES in 2018-19 was £6m and 68% (£1m) of its non-staff budget was allocated to seed funding schemes.
- The first five-year GES would conclude in 2020. A consultation was launched in March to review how this first phase had gone. Initial feedback indicated that the work of GEO internationally was considered to be very positive and academics were keen to align with UCL's global goals. However, more work in connection with London would be welcomed and the GEO would work with the Pro-Vice-Provost (London).

40.3 AC discussed the positive impact that could be made by UCL in collaboration with its anchor and institution partners rather than acting individually. The impact of increasing affiliate student numbers in relation to option choices was noted as they were competing with home students. It was considered that to reduce the costs and time associated with global travel, suitable state-of-the-art global communication facilities were required that could allow UCL to, for example, host conferences around the world.

40.4 The Chair commended the impressive report on behalf of AC which showed the fantastic progress that had been made by UCL in delivering global impact and expressed thanks to GEO for all their work. The Vice-Provost (International) also extended especial thanks to colleagues in the GEO for preparing the report.

40A **University of Toronto – recommended 'Anchor' partner status**  
[PAPER 3-29 (18-19)]

40A.1 **Received** – the above proposal to have 'Anchor' partner status with the University of Toronto, introduced by the Vice-Provost (International), Dame Nicola Brewer.

40A.2 UCL's collaboration with UofT had accelerated and broadened significantly since 2015. UofT was a strong 'Type 3' institutional partnership for UCL, with collaboration spanning all levels with more than 30 current collaborative activities. UofT ranked second to UCL in terms of internationally co-authored papers. UCL had also exchanged 100 students with UofT which was more than with any other international partner. The Provost had led an academic delegation visit to UofT in April 2019 and it was evident that the UofT was firmly committed to a long-term partnership with UCL.

40A.3 The report at AC 3-29 (18-19) set out how the partnership met the criteria for 'Type 4' anchor partner status. AC considered that this partnership was a strong link for UCL and noted that academics could continue to collaborate with other Canadian HEIs. AC endorsed the proposal for UCL to have 'anchor' partner status with the University of Toronto to become its second anchor partner (Peking University being the first). The proposal would be subsequently considered by the Provost's SMT and Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- 40A.4 That AC endorsed the proposal for UCL to have ‘Anchor’ partner status with the University of Toronto for consideration by the Provost’s SMT and Council.

**ACTION: AC members (to note)**

41 **STUDENT COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2018**

[PAPER 3-30 (18-19)]

- 41.1 **Received** – the above annual report, introduced by the Deputy Director of Academic Services (Casework and Governance), Mr Nick McGhee.
- 41.2 The annual report covered the calendar year 2018 as the OIA reported on this basis. The number of complaints had increased by 48% to 178 compared to 120 in 2017. At UCL there was a sharp increase (81%) in the complaints from undergraduate students in 2018. This trend was across the sector and could be partly attributed to the strike action in the spring of 2018. It was noted that the OIA tended to uphold more complaints against UCL. During 2018, at the behest of the OIA, an appeal mechanism was introduced for students dissatisfied with a complaint outcome, reached between the Registrar (or nominee) and the Chair of the Complaints Panel. An external appeal mechanism already existed for outcomes determined at a hearing of the Complaints Panel. The Casework Team considered that this mechanism had proved ineffective and it was intended that the Procedure be further revised to replace both existing review mechanisms with a single, internal review stage.

41A **Amendments to UCL’s Student Complaints Procedure**

[PAPER 3-31 (18-19)]

- 41A.1 **Received** – the above amendments, introduced by the Deputy Director of Academic Services (Casework and Governance), Mr Nick McGhee.
- 41A.2 Further to the above, the main proposed change in the revision of the Procedure to take effect from 2020 was the amendments to the arrangements for appeal of a decision with the substitution of the current external appeal stage following a Complaints Panel hearing with an internal appeal mechanism. The external appeal route was problematic as it placed the final outcome beyond UCL’s control while responsibility for its implementation remained within the institution. An external appeal was problematic as it could decide on mitigation that was uninformed by or even contrary to UCL Regulations or principles. It was also difficult to secure external colleagues with appropriate experience to fulfil this function in a timely manner. A number of appendices had also been added to the revised version that set out additional guidance for students and signposting to other UCL services. Students’ Union UCL had been consulted about the proposed revisions to the Procedure and were largely supportive. However, the proposed revision to reduce the time (from two weeks to one) that students had to comment on a departmental response to a complaint was under discussion with the Union.
- 41A.3 In relation to the increase in the number of complaints last year, it was queried whether the removal of the word ‘normally’ from UCL policies might explain the increase. It was noted that external advice from the Visitor to UCL was that the word ‘normally’ be removed from across UCL’s policies. It was also noted that

there was greater visibility of the procedure whilst the backlog of complaints had been cleared by the Casework Team. The revised version would be submitted to AB and Council for formal approval with a view to being implemented in 2020. Members were invited to submit any comments on the revised version subsequent to the meeting to the Deputy Director.

**RESOLVED:**

41A.4 That AC endorsed the proposed revisions to the student complaints procedure for consideration by AB and Council.

**ACTION: AC members (to note)**

42 **LECTURECAST**  
[PAPER 3-32 (18-19)]

42.1 **Received** – a report on the above, introduced by Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson.

42.2 A Lecturecast Policy Working Group was convened in February 2019 by Education Committee to develop UCL policy, governing principles and responsibilities for the recording of education events and related usage at UCL. Lecturecast was considered to be an important part of the student experience at UCL but only 58% of centrally bookable teaching rooms had Lecturecast installed. The report at AC 3-32 (18-19) set out the Lecturecast Everywhere Project proposal which sought funding of some £490k in 2019-20 to bring the total number of Lecturecast-enabled rooms to 311. While some funding had been received towards this cost, there would be a shortfall. The proposal also sought funding to ensure steady state refresh for all the capture devices on a five year cycle which at the baseline of 311 rooms would be £189k. Lecturecast would cost £200k per annum from 2020-21 onwards and the first complete cycle of steady refresh would be achieved in 2024-25. AC commented that the resources required were quite small.

**RESOLVED:**

42.3 That AC endorsed the proposal for consideration by AB.

**ACTION: AC members (to note)**

<b>Other matters for approval or information</b>
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43 **STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE – STUDENT FEEDBACK DATA OVERVIEW REPORT**  
[PAPER 3-33 (18-19)]

43.1 **Approved** – the Student Feedback Data Overview report.

44 **ANNUAL REPORT ON NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AT UCL APPROVED IN 2018-19**

[PAPER 3-34 (18-19)]

44.1 **Received** – the annual report on new programmes of study at UCL approved in 2018-19.

45 **NEW QUALIFICATION PROPOSAL – MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

[PAPER 3-35 (18-19)]

45.1 **Approved** – the proposal for the new qualification of Master of Public Health at UCL.

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

46.1 **Received** – AC officers had received the following sets of minutes since the last meeting of AC:

- Education Committee – 6 December 2018; 25 February 2019; 25 April 2019;
- Library Committee – 5 February 2019;
- Research Degrees Committee – 12 March 2019;
- Research Governance Committee – 5 December 2018;
- Student Experience Committee – 24 January 2019;
- Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee – 17 December 2018.

47 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

47.1 The dates of upcoming AC meetings were as follows:

- **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019, 10.00am.**
- **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 10.00am**
- **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020, at 10.00am**
- **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020, 10.00am.**

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