



Academic Committee

Friday 26th June 2020 at 10:00am

Minutes

Present members:

President and Provost (Chair); Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Simon Banks; Dame Nicola Brewer; Professor David Bogle; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Celia Caulcott; Mr Ashley Doolan; Professor Piet Eeckhout; Dr Julie Evans; Dr Hugh Goodacre; Dr Christine Hoffmann; Dr Arne Hofmann; Dr Sandra Leaton-Gray; Professor Christoph Lindner; Ms Blathnaid Mahony; Ms Aatikah Malik; Dr Helen Matthews; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Professor Norbert Pachler; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Hynek Pikhart; Professor David Price; Professor Sue Rogers; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Mr Mike Rowson; Professor David Shanks; Dr Ruth Siddall; Ms Ashley Slanina-Davies; Dr Hazel Smith; Ms Olga Thomas; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker; Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson; Professor Li Wei; Professor Andrew Wills; Dr Stan Zochowski

Attendees:

Dr Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff, Provost's Office
Professor John Martin, Division of Medicine and MD (Res) Degree Review Committee Chair [for Minute 47]
Mr Derfel Owen, Director of Education Services and Transformation
Professor Deenan Pillay, Pro-Vice-Provost International
Professor Aeli Roberts, Senior Tutor, Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment
Ms Tania Trosini, Chief of Staff, Global Engagement Office

Apologies:

Dr Simon Cane
Professor Mark Emberton
Professor Graham Hart
Professor David Lomas
Professor Geraint Rees
Professor Sam Smidt
Professor Anthony Smith
Professor Alan Thompson

Officer:

Ms Rachel Port

Part I: Preliminary Business

40. Minutes

- 40.1. AC approved the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2020 [Minutes 20-35, 2019-20], 13 March 2020 [Minutes 36-37, 2019-20] and 29 May 2020 [Minute 38-39, 2019-20].

41. Matters Arising

- 41.1. There were no matters arising.

Part II: Items for Discussion

42. Provost's Business

- 42.1. The Chair reported the following items to AC:

Examinations

- a. The Chair expressed thanks to all colleagues, and especially those in UCL Examinations, for making examinations available online this session and noted that the IT system had withstood the increased usage.

Coronavirus

- b. UCL was currently prioritising three areas of work in light of the COVID-19 outbreak which were, (i) preparations for Term 1, (ii) piloting opening the campus and, (iii) finances. Some 900 members of staff had signed up for the first wave of training for improving online teaching offered by UCL Arena. The HE sector was still in debate with the government about social distancing as the Russell Group had varied opinions about whether this should remain at two metres or be one metre plus. However, safety would be UCL's guiding principle in this regard. The Provost thanked all colleagues for their efforts to ensure that UCL was ready for the start of next session, and commended the camaraderie amongst colleagues.

Student Recruitment

- c. The UCAS deadline for prospective students to confirm their acceptance of offers for 2020/21 entry had just passed. While acceptances did not translate into students being enrolled, the student recruitment figures were more pleasing than anticipated but caution was required.

Research

- d. It was anticipated that there would be an announcement by the UK government about research funding shortly and it was hoped there would

be clarity surrounding EU funding.

QS World University Rankings

- e. UCL was placed 10th in the QS World University Rankings 2021 having dropped two places from 8th place in 2020, while Imperial had crept up to 8th place.

43. Education Consultation 2020/21 (Paper 5-28)

43.1. Dr Clare Goudy, Office of the President and Provost, introduced the Education Consultation 2020/21. The key points made were:

- a. A UCL-wide consultation on the education principles for 2020-21 session was rolled out on 1st June 2020 and would close on 1st July 2020.
- b. It was intended that the consultation feedback would be used by the Education and Operations Delivery Group to help understand the views of the UCL community and to inform how best to support colleagues.
- c. It was intended that a final set of responses would be shared with Council at its meeting in July when the consultation had closed.
- d. As at 12th June 2020, 264 staff had responded to the consultation. The emerging education issues concerned the format of delivery; training and support in both technical and pedagogic areas and access to equipment. Staff were also interested in assessment for 2020-21 in terms of alternative assessments and online exams.

43.2. The following points were made in discussion:

- a. Members noted that there were limited choices about what teaching and learning activities could be undertaken next session in light of the current restrictions arising from the COVID-19 outbreak.
- b. The feedback received to date indicated that staff were keen to know about how to make teaching and learning effective rather than focusing on the technicalities about what was being proposed.

44. Lecturecast Update (Paper 5-29)

44.1. Professor Andrea Townsend-Nicholson gave an oral update on the work of the *Lecturecast Everywhere* project and the Lecturecast Policy Working Group. The key points made were:

- a. 90% of installations of UCL Lecturecast capture devices had been completed.
- b. The rapid migration to online teaching had significantly increased the institutional use of Lecturecast, through the 'Universal Capture' tool, and

had highlighted the critical need to have appropriate governance in place for all aspects of the service.

- c. The Working Group had suspended its discussion of the Opt-in/Opt-Out debate for the duration of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- d. The Echo360 system (Lecturecast) possessed a feature that would automatically provide a machine generated transcript of a lecture.
- e. Initial tests indicated that for clearly delivered speech, the output was good and required minimal editing to produce a satisfactory transcript. However, the transcripts for some would require substantial editing to be suitable.
- f. The application of ASR technology would impact on the *Lecturecast Everywhere* project and on the policy of use for the service.
- g. ASR (automatic speech recognition) could be of benefit to students with disabilities when it was part of an agreed SORA (Summary of Reasonable Adjustments) but would incur expense if turned on universally for all recordings.
- h. ECHR had placed an enforcement notice on UCL of 15 July 2020.

44.2 The following points were made in discussion:

- a. In response to a query about updating of lecture facilities, it was noted that some 35 lecture theatres had been upgraded over the past year including Logan Hall.
- b. Lecturecast was being put in place where lecture theatres were scheduled to be upgraded but some 10% of installations were still to be completed. It was suggested that the Education and Operations Delivery Group might look at the feasibility of this work being undertaken as part of improving UCL's facilities for opening up the campus.
- c. It was noted that the ability to Opt-Out of Lecturecast had been well received by staff.
- d. In terms of the accuracy of transcripts, it was suggested that podcasts could be created whereby the lecturer read out from a script. However, these would take time to prepare while not all lecturers would have a full script in advance of delivering their respective lecture.
- e. In relation to the provision of ASR transcripts, it was noted that some students had a SORA that already allowed for the provision of a scribe.
- f. It was noted that not all students with a SORA would need a transcript but that UCL needed to anticipate that a disabled student with those needs could enrol on a course at any time.
- g. The Chair considered that it was fundamentally important to support students and that transcripts for recorded content should be provided and an accompanying enforcement notice would be required.

44.3 AC:

- a. Supported the proposal that ASR be turned on universally for all recordings.

- b. Agreed that the Provost's Senior Management Team be invited to consider the issue of providing ASR transcripts for recorded content, and be informed of the consequences of not meeting an ECHR enforcement notice.

45. Confidential: Report on how the 2015-20 Global Engagement Strategy contributed to Principal Theme 6 of UCL 2034 (Paper 5-30)

- 45.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

46. Lead Officer Report 2018-19: Student Welfare (Paper 5-31)

- 46.1. The Registrar and Head of Student and Registry Services introduced the annual Lead Officer report for Student Welfare for 2018-19. The key points made were:

- a. UCL opened the new Student Centre building in February 2019 and Student Support and Wellbeing (SSW) received a steep rise in walk-in enquiries which was attributed to the Centre's prime location and much improved facilities.
- b. UCL launched the Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-21 in May 2019.
- c. The Student Success Platform Project aimed to provide a comprehensive and inclusive system for student services. The project had successfully implemented enquiry and casework management across many teams in Student and Registry Services, including SSW.
- d. The Ridgmount NHS Practice registered 5,818 new UCL students in 2018-19 session, as well as carrying out some 48,500 consultations to UCL students during the year which was a 20% increase on the previous year.
- e. It was considered that UCL needed support models that could reach students beyond Bloomsbury and over extended hours, and especially in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- f. The key priorities for 2019-20 included, (i) providing a 24 hour support service to students that would also allow for international students to access this service reasonably within their time zones, (ii) expanding the SSW Outreach Team and, (iii) further roll out and development of the student enquiries and casework management system (SID) and personal tutoring.

- 46.2. The Chair praised the development of a new 24 hour support service which was considered to be essential in light of the current pandemic. AC was unanimous in commending colleagues in SSW for providing excellent support to students as well as to staff so that staff could also support students.

47. Withdrawal of the MD(Res) programme of study (Paper 5-32)

47.1. Professor John Martin, Chair of the MD(Res) Degree Review Committee formed by Research Degrees Committee, introduced the paper that outlined the withdrawal of the programme. The key points made were:

- a. The review of the programme had taken two years and it had consulted widely as part of its work including with the NHS.
- b. The MD(Res) Degree was designed to be undertaken by registered medical practitioners.
- c. The programme did not fulfil the criteria for a doctorate as students could submit after a minimum of two years part time, whereas the Bologna Process stated that a doctorate should be three to four years of full time individual led enquiry.
- d. The programme achieved a poor completion rate at 22%.
- e. The 'MD' in the title was not recognised internationally.
- f. The paper had been to the SLMS Education Board in February 2020 and it broadly agreed that the programme should be withdrawn.
- g. It was intended that once the MD(Res) was withdrawn, clinical trainees would be encouraged to undertake a PhD. The number of students undertaking the PhD would be monitored with a view to introducing a newly designed qualification to take the place of the MD(Res) if appropriate.

47.2. The following points were made in discussion:

- a. In response to a query about student numbers on the programme, there were currently 30 students enrolled but it varied between 15-40 students each year.
- b. It was noted that a number of complaints had been received by the UCL Student Mediator over the years from students on this programme.
- c. Funding did not have to be secured prior to the start of the programme and this had been known to be problematic.

47.3. AC approved the proposal that the MD(Res) programme of study be withdrawn.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

48. Confidential: Principal Theme 3, Addressing Global Challenges Annual Report (Paper 5-33)

48.1 Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

49. IOE Annual Report 2018-19 (Paper 5-34)

49.1. AC received the Institute of Education (IOE) Annual Report 2018-19.

50. SLMS Annual Report 2018-19 (Paper 5-35)

50.1. AC received the School of Life and Medical Sciences (SLMS) Annual Report 2018-19.

51. Annual Report on New Programmes of Study approved in 2019-20 (Paper 5-36)

51.1. AC received the Annual Report on new programmes of study approved in 2019-20.

52. UCL Disclosure of Conflicts and Declarations of Interest – Policy and Training Update (Paper 5-37)

52.1. AC received the update on policy and training for UCL Disclosure of Conflicts and Declarations of Interest.

53. UCL Innovation and Enterprise Committee Forward Plan for 2020/21 (Paper 5-38)

53.1 AC received the forward plan for UCL Innovation and Enterprise Committee for 2020/21.

54. Reports of sub-committees, working groups etc of AC

54.1. AC received the following sets of minutes:

- a. The minutes of Education Committee, 25 February 2020, 30 April 2020.
- b. The minutes of Library Committee, 6 February 2020.
- c. The minutes of Research Degrees Committee, 11 March 2020.
- d. The minutes of Research Governance Committee, 26 November 2019.
- e. The minutes of Student Experience Committee, 23 March 2020, 19 May 2020 (unconfirmed).

55. Dates of meetings in 2020/21 and Autumn Term 2021/22

55.1. The dates for meetings of Academic Committee in 2020/21 session and Autumn Term 2021/22 were as follows:

- Thursday 19 November 2020 at 10.00am
- Thursday 4 March 2021 at 10.00am
- Thursday 24 June 2021 at 10.00am

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- Thursday 18 November 2021 at 10.00am.

Ms Rachel Port
Secretary to Academic Committee
July 2020