



Library Committee

Monday 4th November 2019, 14.00 to 15.30

Minutes

Present Members:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair)

Dr Paul Ayris

Mr Martin Moyle

Dr Rachel Rees

Dr Richard Freeman

Professor Diane Koenker

Mr Zak Liddell

Professor Vivek Mudera

Dr James McCafferty

Dr Harriet Shannon

Dr Simon Banks

Apologies:

Mr Benjamin Meunier

Mr Jim Onyemenam

Dr Hazel Smith

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. Terms of reference, constitution and membership (1-01)

- 1.1. Library Committee (LC) reviewed its terms of reference, constitution and membership for 2019-20. It was agreed to remove the Vice-Provost (Operations) post from the constitution and membership.

2. Minutes (1-02)

- 2.1. The Library Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2019.

3. Matters Arising

3.1. Update on the conversation with Professor Deborah Gill regarding study spaces

The Director of the Medical School was very supportive of the importance of Library Services being involved in decisions regarding study spaces at the Royal Free Campus. Meetings with design consultants to understand how to deliver an enhanced learning experience for students at the Royal Free campus were currently being arranged. The Director of Operations agreed to give the committee updates as and when they come up.

3.2. How UCL could better use Special Collections for outreach

Dr Ayris updated the committee that he would raise the question of how Special Collections could be better utilised at the next Cultural Heritage Museums subcommittee meeting, as Paul has recently become the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Public Engagement.

3.3. Update on discussion with Pro-Vice-Provost about textbooks with IOE relating to open access

Colleagues in the UCL Press team were continuing to encourage progression in discussions around open access textbooks.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

4. Report from the Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library Services) (1-03)

- 4.1. There were six key performance areas (KPA) used as part of the Library's strategy to meet the UCL 2034 goals. The Library's KPAs are: user experience; staff, equality, diversity and inclusion; finance and management information; systems, collections and processes; sustainable estate; communication, outreach and Open Science.

- 4.2. The report included a comparison of UCL Library Services against other national library activity in terms of spend, usage and impact. This was made against six Russell Group institutions using established key performance indicators. The UCL spend on information was currently £289 per head, which included buying multiple copies of textbooks as part of the provision of core readings.

- 4.3. There were two main consistent comments from students arising from student surveys, the first concerning a lack of learning spaces, and the second concerning limited copies of core textbooks. The following points were noted in relation to these concerns:
 - a. For 2019/20, it is projected that there will be 5 million visits a year to the 18 library sites within the UCL family of libraries, which would make UCL the most heavily-used University Library in the country. It was noted that the Student Centre currently had only recorded figures from February 2019 onward.
 - b. The solution to the second comment could be resolved by support for academic colleagues turning their textbooks into open access study materials through bodies such as UCL Press. To further UCL's contribution toward Open Science, Library Services were encouraging the publication of open access research monographs and textbooks to support open education alongside open research.
 - c. The current situation was that there are over a hundred students on some courses and perhaps 10 copies of particular textbooks, for which the borrowing time was limited. The solution to this was to make digital resources available as UCL had the technology to support this. There was simply no budget nor storage space to support buying more textbooks. There must be increased support of digital educational activities in an open access environment. UCL had the environment and infrastructure to deliver this effectively, although it would require a change in the current culture to create a parallel to what is already being done in the research space.
 - d. There were a dozen textbooks commissioned by UCL authors currently in the publishing pipeline. However, there were two main challenges when

asking academics to agree to making their textbooks open access. First, this output would not count towards the REF; and second, there was a perceived lack of recognition for textbook authors compared to those producing research monographs.

4.4. The following points were made in discussion:

- a. Student feedback reflected they felt that from a value-for-money perspective, core readings should be available digitally.
- b. The business model for publishing textbooks was changing. It was suggested that if every Master's module leader could compose an explanation of their module in 10-15 pages, that would be a relatively easy means of compiling a textbook. This was already being piloted in Medical Sciences. Concerns were expressed that there would be some resistance to this exercise and it was suggested that the academic promotions framework provide for it in order to create traction.
- c. It was further suggested that module teachers should prioritise digital resources over textbooks as open access would be better for the reader and author in terms of impact and visibility.

4.5. Actions for Dr Ayris:

- a. *Contact Clare Goudy to put support for digital resources on the agenda of the Leadership Forum to understand what support there may be for a shift to electronic reading materials*
- b. *To undertake some research on textbook market regarding sales figures.*
- c. *Will find out:*
- d. *Whether the library spend on information per head figured in national University League Tables.*
- e. *Look at the Tables in case there is any good practice that can be further spread around users.*

5. Analysis of libraries NSS performance (1-04)

5.1. The following points were noted:

- a. 3,153 students (69%) participated in the National Student Survey (NSS) this year.

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- b. There has been a 1.9% increase in overall levels of satisfaction. However this is 2% behind the sector benchmark.
- c. There are no significant changes across the demographics except that UCL have had a particularly weak score from part-time students at 63.6%, however only 11 part-time students contributed. The comments do not reflect anything part-time specific and UCL was scored at 100 in 18. For UCL Laws, the scores had increased by over 16.6%; for the Institute of Education, scores had improved by 5.8%. Over 30 departments scored 85% last year including 15 that scored more than 90%.
- d. There were 25 departments which had scored less than 85%, MAPS and Engineering departments accounting for 9 of these. Other departments where the scores had dropped were: Medical Physics, Biomedical Engineering, Physics, Astronomy and Earth Sciences. Nearly all the negative comments in connection to learning spaces, however, dated from prior to the Student Centre opening.
- e. Action plans would be created for all 25 departments that had reported a score below 85% this time. There was now an aim to achieve a 90% satisfaction score across the whole Library. To reach this score, the committee agreed that the Science Library would benefit from major refurbishment. Investment by UCL could create another hundred learning spaces in the Science Library, which would directly address issues raised by students in the NSS.

5.2. The following points were raised during discussion;

- a. This issue around the low NSS scores has been discussed at the MAPS Staff Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) (a correction to the Table was noted: Chemistry dropped around 6% rather than 18%). Caution should be exercised when trying to draw comparisons using the NSS data because it has many flaws. For instance, only 12.5% of the student body had answered one question and only 7% had given comments.
- b. It may be worth looking at response rates or number of responses to the NSS as well because some departments may show a 100% response rate,

but in reality there are a significantly smaller number of students in some departments than others.

- c. It would be useful moving forward to work with student course representatives to understand what their expectations of the Library are, how space is being used and what sort of study spaces there is an expectation for. There have been conversations about this with departments and it is not only the Library's responsibility. It is important to understand the student expectations for the Library since the nature of library usage has changed.
- d. When speaking with students, two main comments prevailed, first about the limited availability of textbooks in some subjects, and second around learning spaces. The question in the NSS must be examined too; if students were asked 'are you happy with library resources?', it is likely there would be significantly different answers. Focusing the question on learning spaces may skew answers towards space issues.
- e. Engineering and the Sciences required more group work than in other departments. Therefore a resources issue related to space has been identified, which together with lack of space in the department itself is highly likely to result in negative student feedback. Anthropology was an interesting scenario because that department was known for its high satisfaction scores, yet that had dropped; it might be worth investigating what had caused this. It could be worth creating focus groups.
- f. It would be better to create some sort of focus group or have a platform to ask students what their expectation of the Library and its learning space are rather than assume what they are thinking.
- g. A suggestion was made to have an instantaneous feedback system similar to in airports to capture library experiences. It would be a good idea, prior to starting any work, to create a change to the Science Library, to obtain a better idea of what is needed.
- h. 24/7 opening hours should be concentrated in particular around the Student Centre and Main Library, where there were more services and support for students.
- i. While it was acknowledged that the NSS was an imperfect tool, it is recognised as a national benchmark. It was imperative to understand the

students' perspective when completing the surveys. UCL Library Services was planning a significant reorganisation of the Science Library and would be well advised to think about the balance between quiet and collaborative working space. There were lessons to be learned from the Student Centre. Other surveys could also add value and these should not be disregarded.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

6. Overview of library usage 2018/19 (1-05)

- 6.1. There were three systems which together could give a picture of library usage: the library management system, upgraded last year; the Gallagher security system, which had been installed in more than half of UCL's libraries; and finally Occupeye, which measures seat occupancy.
- 6.2. In 18/19 the Library experienced 4,811,204 visits, 771,627 of which were in the Student Centre which opened only in February. This information had been gathered through turnstile counts. The activity on the ground floor, in the foyers, exhibition centres, passing traffic, and buildings that do not have these systems had not been included in the totals. The hard desks had been fitted with sensors to gauge when they are in use. The Student Centre had by far the busiest library service occupancy space in UCL.
- 6.3. There is 71% average occupancy at the Student Centre. The Bartlett is also well used, which may be a result of it being in close proximity to the Student Centre. When the Student Centre opened, it significantly relieved pressure on student study space elsewhere, and the data reflects the fact that six of the nearby libraries were significantly less busy (with the exception of the IOE). This was partly circumstantial due to the time of year.
- 6.4. Library-lending activities continued to occur mainly in the larger libraries such as the Main, Science and IOE libraries. Self-service use was at 85% overall. Laptop loans from UCL's libraries had been successful, with 61,442 laptop loans across the libraries in 2018/19.
- 6.5. The following points were raised during discussion;

- a. A very important part of why physical loans were declining concerned the prevalence of digital resources.
- b. The way students work is reflected in their expectations and feedback. The role of libraries has changed and it has become less about borrowing books and more about providing a safe and comfortable study environment for students. Therefore, UCL is attempting to deliver a new model with provision based on this new concept. There had been investment in a library skills programme to incorporate such training into educational programmes for core skills. Improvements in the student experience created by professional library staff also should not be overlooked. Collaborative working and co-funding with Library and departments was a potential model that had not yet been considered by the LC, but was worth incorporating into future committee discussions.

6.6. Actions for Martin Moyle:

- a. Present the policy on skills training to the committee.

6.7. Actions for Martin Moyle

- a. To present statistics related to digital usage
- b. To present figures relating to borrowing segregated into cohorts.

7. Update on library estate issues at Stanmore (1-06)

- 7.1. UCL is withdrawing the majority of its academic activity from the Stanmore campus, the library service for which is a joint service with the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Trust. Going forward, it will be difficult for UCL to continue to offer library services to Trust staff at the Stanmore site.

8. Project bidding in UCL Library Services (1-07)

- 8.1. Architects and UCL Estates had visited the Student Centre and the Cruciform Hub to understand how the concept of learning spaces in the Library has been developed. The Student Centre and Cruciform Hub could serve as models for the Royal Free estate. Updates would be provided to the committee.

9. UCL Library Committee Annual Report 2018 – 19 (1-08)

The annual report to Academic Board was approved subject to the creation of a table to encapsulate the Library's work over the last 12 months.

10. Reports from Working Groups (1-09)

- 10.1. Dr Ayris updated the committee on the work of the Bibliometrics Working Group. The Working Group has developed a policy that will work in an Open Science landscape. A draft policy went out for consultation to every department in UCL. All departments at UCL were invited to comment on it and feedback was included in policy revisions. The policy would be presented to the Academic Committee to be ratified and signed off in 2020.

11. Reports from Faculty Library Committees (1-10)

- 11.1. List of reports from Faculty Library Committees and Faculty-level committees:
- a. Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences Joint Faculty Library Committee – 20 March 2018 and 6 June 2018;
 - b. Built Environment Faculty Library Committee – 22 November 2018 and 7 February 2019;
 - c. Built Environment Faculty Research Degrees Committee – 18 November 2018;
 - d. Built Environment Faculty Teaching Committee – 26 November 2018 and 10 July 2019;
 - e. Engineering Sciences Faculty Research Degrees Committee – 17 October 2018, 20 March 2019 and 12 June 2019;
 - f. Engineering Sciences Faculty Teaching Committee – 28 November 2018, 20 February 2019 and 15 May 2019;
 - g. Faculty of Laws Library Committee – 7 March 2019 and 23 May 2019;
 - h. Mathematical and Physical Sciences – 4 December 2018;
 - i. Medical Science Faculty Teaching Committee – 25th June 2018, 15 and 17 November 2018 and 12 February 2019
 - j. Medical Science Faculty Teaching Committee (ASER) – 25th February 2019;
 - k. Publications and Press Board Minutes – 11 March 2019.

I. UCL Bibliometric Working Group – 21 May 2019.

12. Any other Business

12.1. None

13. Date of the next meeting:

13.1. The next meeting of LC would take place on 6 February 2020.

Aashika Doshi

December 2019