LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

# HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE

## Wednesday 15 January 2014

## M I N U T E S

Present:
Professor Michael Arthur (Chair)
Professor Stephen Caddick
Professor Richard Catlow
Professor Mary Collins
Professor Anthony Finkelstein
Professor Mary Fulbrook
Professor Dame Hazel Genn
Mr Phil Harding
Professor Graham Hart
Mr Rex Knight
Professor David Lomas
Professor Alan Penn
Professor David Price
Professor Anthony Smith
Professor Sir John Tooke
Professor Jo Wolff

Apologies for absence were received form Professor Alan Thompson.

In attendance: Mr Gary Hawes (Secretary); Mrs Fiona Daffern (Head of Employment Policy Development); Mr Nigel Waugh (Director of Human Resources)

**10 MINUTES OF 9 OCTOBER 2013 MEETING**

***Confirmed:***

10.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting of HRPC held on 9 October 2013 *[HRPC Mins.1-9, 9.10.13]*.

**11 MATTERS ARISING**
*[see Minute 12 below]*

**12 ACADEMIC INCENTIVE AND REWARD**
*[HRPC Min. 6, 9.10.13]*

***Received:***

12.1 At HRPC 2-1 (13-14), a note by the Director of HR.

***Reported:***

12.2 Following discussion at HRPC's previous meeting of the draft discussion paper outlining possible reforms to the academic staff nomenclature, career structure and promotion criteria, further consultation had taken place with members of HRPC outside the meeting on what had been identified as the core principles and proposals explored in the paper. The findings of this further consultation were summarised at HRPC 2-1 (13-14).

12.3 While some members of HRPC had voiced opposition to aspects of the possible reforms, the majority of members of HRPC had indicated their support for these to varying degrees. The consultation had also identified other possible reforms that were of varying degrees of interest and perceived priority to HRPC members.

12.4 The note at HRPC 2-1 (13-14) proposed the following next steps in light of the findings of the consultation with HRPC members:

- That the draft discussion paper be refined to provide a greater focus on the principles and proposals relating to the primary purpose of the possible reforms, which was to improve the parity of esteem between research and teaching;
- That the redrafting of the discussion paper and subsequent consultation process within UCL be coordinated by an Academic Promotion and Review Group, to be chaired by the Vice-Provost (Education), which would report back to HRPC's meeting on 9 July 2014;
- That the other possible reforms that had been identified through consultation with HRPC members be taken forward by HR colleagues in accordance with the standard HR policy development, review and consultation processes.

***Discussion:***

12.5 While a good deal of further development and consultation around the possible reforms outlined in the draft discussion paper received by HRPC at its October 2013 meeting would be required, it was noted that this undertaking would be consistent with the general review of UCL's Strategy that was currently being led by the Provost.

12.6 It was noted that a move to employing the three academic rank titles of Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor, which was one of the principles and proposals that had been the subject of further consultation with members of HRPC, would provide an opportunity to:

- resolve issues that were increasingly regarded as outmoded around the perceived difference in status between the Reader and Senior Lecturer titles that existed in many areas of UCL and the different approaches to promotion to these titles currently employed across UCL's range of disciplines;
- establish a hierarchy of academic titles that would be more comprehensible outside UCL and comparable to the system of academic titles used by UCL's global competitors;
- improve the parity of esteem between teaching and research by facilitating the development of clearly defined criteria for academic career progression for academic staff whose main focus of activity was teaching.

12.7 Some members of HRPC expressed concern, however, that a move to a three-stage academic career structure would have potentially undesirable implications for staff retention at the Lecturer grade in the event that this implicitly raised the bar for promotion to the Associate Professor and Professor grades and gave rise to staff remaining at Lecturer grades for longer periods. HRPC agreed that it would be important to give consideration to issues around academic staff reward and retention

at the lower academic grades as part of the further development and consultation process that would shortly take place to ensure that a move to a three-stage academic career structure would not negatively impact on UCL's ability to continue to attract and retain the best staff globally. It was further agreed that it would be important to ensure that robust performance management and appraisal processes were implemented alongside any possible reforms to academic staff promotion with a view to providing regular feedback and positive reinforcement to staff at the lower academic grades on career trajectory issues.

12.8 Some members of HRPC noted that it would be critical in terms of preserving UCL's reputation for research excellence to ensure that further development and consultation around the possible reforms took of the need for academic promotion criteria focusing on teaching to be rigorous in defining the minimum level of performance in research that would be required at each academic rank for candidates seeking promotion with teaching as their main focus of activity.

12.9 It was suggested by some members of HRPC that academic promotion criteria should give equal focus to public engagement and knowledge transfer alongside enterprise, particularly since these activities would be more applicable than enterprise in some of UCL's discipline areas, and that the 'enterprise' criterion should be expanded to indicate this.

12.10 It was agreed that once further development and consultation around the possible reforms to the academic staff nomenclature, career structure and promotion criteria had taken place, it would be important to extend this process to the consideration of other staff categories that were critical to UCL's academic mission, *eg* clinical staff and teaching and research staff.

12.11 It was noted that a number of other Russell Group HEIs had taken the step of moving from an annual academic staff promotion process to a process whereby applications for promotion could be made by academic staff and considered throughout the year. However, the meeting expressed concerns that this would have undesirable additional workload implications for Deans and senior managers if UCL were to also go down this route.

***RESOLVED:***

12.12 That the proposals set out at in the note at HRPC 2-1 (13-14) and at Minute 12.4 above be approved and taken forward by HR colleagues.

***ACTION: Nigel Waugh and HR colleagues***

## 13 REVIEW OF UCL DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCE AND HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICIES

***Received:***

13.1 At HRPC 2-2 (13-14), a note by the Head of Employment Policy Development inviting HRPC to give additional feedback and approval for proposed changes to the UCL Discipline, Grievance and Harassment and Bullying policies.

***Reported:***

13.2 Since HRPC's previous meeting, proposed revisions to the Sickness Absence Policy and Internship policy had progressed through subsequent formal consultation processes. The final versions of these documents would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of HRPC on 26 March 2013 for formal approval.

13.3 The proposed revised versions of the Discipline and Grievance policies and Harassment and Bullying policies were being resubmitted to HRPC to allow time for extended discussion prior to these being circulated for wider consultation within UCL through HRMAG, JCG and all-staff web-based fora.

13.4 Among the high-level changes proposed to these policies were:

- a reduction in the size of panel memberships that were associated with UCL's Discipline and Grievance processes, from three members to one member, with a view to facilitating the quicker convening of these panels and their ability to resolve cases earlier;
- that grievances would be raised with Heads of Department rather than the HR Director, reflecting the management responsibilities of Heads of Department;
- greater emphasis in the UCL Grievance policy on the expectation that parties would attempt mediation before progressing to the formal stage of the procedure, together with additional guidance on the types of written submission that would able to be submitted to the hearing;
- replacement of the UCL Harassment and Bullying Policy with a Dignity at Work statement, with the UCL Grievance procedure to be used for investigating allegations relating to a breach of this statement together with any allegations of harassment and bullying.

13.5 It was likely that some aspects of the revised policies, *eg* the reduced size of panel memberships, would require negotiation (as opposed to consultation) with UCL's recognised trade unions.

***Discussion:***

13.6 While HRPC welcomed the streamlining of the Disciplinary and Grievance policies and efforts to more clearly delineate details of the policies and procedures within these documents, it was noted that the expectation that Heads of Department would manage these processes would place a considerable burden of responsibility on these colleagues and underlined the need for them to receive appropriate training, guidance and support to help them in this role.

13.7 Although it was understood that the proposed reduction in the panel membership for formal grievance hearings was designed to address the unacceptable amount of time that it currently took to convene these hearings and to expedite the resolution of grievance allegations, the meeting expressed concerns that the proposed reduction in the panel memberships for formal grievance hearings would serve to leave Panel Chairs isolated and without recourse to any support from, or means of consultation with, other parties, particularly given the levels of sensitivity and complexity that could be involved in consideration of these cases.

13.8 As a means of addressing some of the concerns expressed by HRPC members and providing reassurance on the support options available to Heads of Department and other senior managers in managing these processes, it was suggested that the details of the Disciplinary and Grievance procedures should make more explicit the fact that a relevant HR Consultancy team member would be required to be copied in and involved at the outset with a view to providing professional advice and support at all stages. It was further proposed that the wider consultation process that would be initiated by HR should aim to highlight in particular the following details of the UCL Grievance procedure:

- the fact that once the need for a formal grievance hearing had been established, the Head of Department in discussion with HR Consultancy Services would be expected to appoint a trained senior manager who had not previously been

involved in the case, as Hearing Manager, to hear the grievance (and that HR already had a list of trained persons to serve in this capacity);

- the fact that in certain complex cases (*eg* a grievance allegation relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation), a three-person hearing panel would be appointed to hear the case.

13.9 Other points raised by members of HRPC during discussion included the following:

- It would be important in terms of helping them to manage the process for Heads of Department to seek to take responsibility at an early stage with a view to addressing any grievance issues informally;

- Given the range of complexity of issues that could be involved in managing and resolving grievance allegations, it would be reasonable to take account of this activity as evidence of contributing toward citizenship in a promotional context.

***RESOLVED:***

13.10 That in taking forward the next stage of the consultation process around the revised policies at HRPC 2-2 (13-14), HR colleagues take account of the various points raised by HRPC in discussion at Minutes 13.6-13.9 above.

***ACTION: Nigel Waugh and HR colleagues***

## 14 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

***Noted:***

14.1 The next meetings of HRPC in the current session were scheduled as follows:

Wednesday 26 March 2014, 8.30am
Wednesday 9 July 2014, 8:30am

[All meetings to take place in the South Wing G12 Council Room]

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