Library Committee

Friday 3rd November 2023, 2.00pm

South Wing Council Room with facilities to join the meeting online via MS Teams

Minutes - CONFIRMED

Present Members:
Professor Vivek Mudera (Chair); Dr Paul Ayris; Professor Duncan Brumby; Professor Tom Carlson; Dr Charles Inskip; Professor Rebecca Lever; Professor Richard Mole; Martin Moyle; Professor John Sabapathy; Dr Benet Salway; Dr Harriet Shannon; Thomas Turner

Apologies:
Dr Nicole Brown; Ian Caswell; Professor Ben Cox; Dr Liza Griffin; Andy Smith; Issy Smith

Attendees:
Sarah Lawson, Chief Information Security Officer (vice-Andy Smith)

Officer:
Rachel Port, Governance Manager: Research Integrity

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. Welcome

1.1. The Chair welcomed Professor Richard Mole, Director of SSEES, Shaban Chaudhary, Students' Union Education Officer, and Issy Smith, Students' Union Postgraduate Officer, to the Committee.

1.2. It was noted that Thomas Turner had recently moved roles within UCL Finance to become one of the Directors of Finance Business Partnering and that his successor would serve on LC once appointed.

2. Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership (1-01)

2.1. Library Committee (LC) approved its Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership for 2023-24.

3. Minutes (1-02a and 1-02b)

3.1. Library Committee (LC) approved the minutes of the meetings held on 7th February 2023 and 23rd May 2023.

4. Matters Arising (1-10)

4.1. LC noted the matters arising from its two previous meetings which were set out at Paper 1-10 (issued with these Minutes).

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

5. Report of the Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library, Culture, Collections and Open Science (LCCOS)) (1-03)

5.1. The Pro-Vice-Provost (LCCOS) introduced the paper setting out an update on performance against the current Key Performance Areas of the Library Strategy since the last LC meeting. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. UCL had performed extremely well in the National Student Survey (NSS) results and had scored a positivity measure of some 92% which was above the sector average in relation to questions about Library Resources.
b. The main negative feedback concerned lack of student study space across UCL.
c. The Library had also achieved outstanding results in the Teaching Excellence Framework.
d. The Trustees of Dr Williams Library (DWL) in Gordon Square had invited submissions for bids to manage the DWL collections and services going forward. UCL Library Services had submitted a joint bid in collaboration with Senate House Library to manage the DWL collections and the outcome of this first stage would be known in a few weeks' time.

5.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. In relation to managing the DWL collections, it was noted that this partnership with Senate House also presented a number of opportunities including creating a more modern DWL library service and publicising the collection more widely. However, the joint submission had made clear that UCL did not offer theology as an academic discipline.
b. It was noted that with effect from 1 October 2023, the reporting line for LCCOS had moved from the Vice-Provost (RIGE) to the Vice-Provost (Faculties). The Vice-Provost (Faculties) was aware of issues around student learning space but it was suggested that they could be more involved in the work of the Committee and could chair LC in the future.
c. The success of the Library Services Team in securing some 10 Gold, 4 Silver and 4 Bronze UCL Sustainability Awards was to be commended

and it was noted that LCCOS had a very dedicated member of staff in the area of Green Impact.

5.3. LC received the Pro-Vice-Provost (LCCOS) report.

6. Report on the LCCOS Strategy (1-04)

6.1. The Director of Services (LCCOS) introduced the paper setting out an overview of the proposed LCCOS Strategy 2023-27. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. It was intended that the LCCOS Strategy would be launched in January 2024. It supported the UCL Strategic Plan 2022-27 and it would be the first Strategy for the enlarged LCCOS department.
b. The Strategy set out six strategic areas of focus that were each underpinned by four high level goals.
c. In relation to supporting student success, one of the goals was to increase the number of high-quality learning spaces. It was also intended that LCCOS work in partnership with students to develop collections, services. cultural programmes and spaces that reflected their needs.
d. More investment was proposed in the inclusivity of UCL collections for internal and external communities.
e. In relation to arts and culture, it was hoped that some sort of vision for the arts and culture, both in UCL East Phase 2 and across the whole of UCL, could be developed.
f. As part of an overall sustainability plan, LCCOS intended to work with suppliers and publishers on ways of measuring and mitigating the environmental impact of its commitment to digital-first collecting.

6.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. In relation to increasing student learning spaces, the Library had submitted a number of bids to the Central Estates Strategy Board to extend student space provision for both the Institute of Education and the Faculty of Life Sciences.
b. It was noted that the National Student Survey (NSS) responses revealed the wish for more student study space, but that this survey only covered undergraduate students. It was suggested that the PRES and other postgraduate student surveys be examined as well to measure student demand in this area.
c. In light of the restructuring and merging of existing areas to LCCOS, it was felt that building a shared culture amongst its staff would require careful thought.
d. In relation to the wider UCL community, it was considered that the work of the enlarged LCCOS department should be highlighted in UCL's planned Bicentennial celebrations in 2026.

e. It was intended that an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan be developed with LCCOS staff to sit alongside the new Strategy.

6.3. LC approved the proposed LCCOS Strategy 2024-27.

7. Annual Library Services Statistics Report (1-05)

7.1. The Director of Services (LCCOS) introduced the paper summarising recent UCL Library Services statistics. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. The paper set out local data covering loans, occupancy and acquisitions. Physical book loans from UCL libraries had increased by 50% in 22/23 session compared to the previous session (during the covid-19 pandemic), with some 36% of those from the Main Library.
b. The paper also included national comparative data on visits, study space provision, e-resource usage and library expenditure. It was noted that average occupancy rates for library/learning spaces were highest at the Student Centre as well as the Main and Science libraries.
c. UCL was committed to digital-first collecting, so where a choice of formats existed, a digital purchase was preferred. Feedback was welcomed on this acquisitions policy.

7.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. In terms of the occupancy data, it was noted that the rate varied at certain times of day, and that collecting such time-related data might be more beneficial than showing an average rate, as some libraries in and around Bloomsbury were full at peak day times during term time.
b. Peak occupancy rates could also be linked to the examination period, given there were some 51k students at UCL. However, additional flexible space was made available during the exam period and most recently space at 1-19 Torrington Place was offered to students.
c. It was suggested that qualitative data could be obtained to see if students preferred the Student Centre and/or Science Library spaces compared to other spaces across UCL and the reasons for that.
d. In terms of types of space, it was commented that more ‘spillage space’ was needed for students to use in between lectures.
e. Members felt UCL’s Acquisitions policy worked well.

7.3. LC received the Annual Library Services Statistics report.

8. UCL Press: Journals – Open Review (1-06)

8.1. In the absence of the Journals Commissioning Editor at UCL Press, the Pro-Vice-Provost (LCCOS) introduced the paper that summarised some of the challenges and advantages of open peer review within academic journals

publishing, and action being taken by UCL Press to implement open peer review practices. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. There was a growing base of discussion on the challenges and flaws of anonymised peer review across many different academic disciplines.
b. There was a growing consensus that open peer review might be a suitable alternative to combat those issues by making the comments and decision-making process publicly available to read.
c. The challenges of moving from a closed to more open peer review process required a culture change and a change away from the status quo. It was considered to be a substantial change to current practice in the Arts and Humanities and Social Science disciplines in particular.
d. UCL Press launched a new open peer review journal model called *UCL Open Environment* in 2019; this model could be used for journal articles, but not monographs.
e. LC's views were sought on whether open peer review solved the current problems with a closed review process.

8.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. In terms of the challenges of open peer review, it was noted that a negative open review on the work of a junior scholar might impact on their career progression.
b. It was also suggested that open peer review could discourage individuals to act as reviewers, as their views would be publicly shared. The open system could also encourage reviewers to provide more commentary than required.
c. Given the high number of online journals, it was considered that the challenges in finding reviewers would remain.
d. The quality of open peer review was also noted, given individuals were not taught to act as reviewers. It was suggested that newer reviewers should be paired with more experienced reviewers.

8.3. LC received the report on open peer review within academic journals publishing.

9. Collaborative Special Collections Centre

9.1. The Pro-Vice-Provost (LCCOS) gave an oral update report on current developments in UCL Special Collections. The following points were made during the presentation:

a. UCL's Special Collections were currently stored in a siloed environment at The National Archives (TNA) located in Kew. The TNA had agreed a further 10 year contract with UCL, with the option to extend for a further 5 years.
b. It was considered preferable to bring the Special Collections back to Bloomsbury, as it was difficult to take a large class of students to the TNA

to do object-based learning or to undertake community engagement activities.

c. One possible solution was to create a Special Collections Centre in Bloomsbury. Work had started by institutions in the federal University of London to create this collaborative shared space, to be housed in the Senate House footprint. A Working Group co-chaired by the Pro-Vice-Provost (LCCOS) and of the University Librarian in Senate House Library had been established to develop this shared facility for special collections in Bloomsbury.
d. Professor Jo Cox, Pro Vice Chancellor (Research and Public Engagement) and Dean (School of Advanced Study), and Catriona Cannon, University Librarian, Senate House Library, would attend the next LC meeting to talk about the ideas being considered by the Group and possible solutions, and present a draft vision statement for the shared facility that was currently under development.
e. It was intended that academic input would be sought on the possible solutions before detailed plans were prepared for the shared facility.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

10. Project Bidding in UCL Library Services (1-07)

10.1. LC received the report on project bidding in UCL Library Services.

11. Report from Faculty Library Committees (1-08)

11.1. Since the last meeting, LC officers had received the Minutes of the following Faculty Library Committees (FLCs) or Faculty-level committees that consider Library matters:

a. Engineering Sciences Faculty Education Committee (FEdCom) – 13th September 2023 (confirmed).
b. Faculty of Laws Library Committee (Laws FLC) – 14th March 2023 (unconfirmed).
c. Joint Faculties Library Committee (JFLC) – 31st May 2023 (unconfirmed).
d. School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) Library Committee –1st February 2023 (confirmed) and 24th May 2023 (unconfirmed).

12. Reports from Working Groups (1-09)

12.1. Since the last meeting, LC officers had received the Minutes of the following Working Groups that report to LC:

a. Faculty Research Degrees Committee – 27th March 2023 (confirmed).
b. Open Science and Scholarship Committee – 27th April 2023 (confirmed).
c. Press and Publications Board – 5th May 2023 (confirmed).

d. Press and Publications Board – 5th July (unconfirmed).

13. Date of next meeting

13.1. The next meeting of LC would be held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 at 2.00pm - 4.00pm on a hybrid basis in the South Wing Council Room.

Rachel Port, Acting LC Secretary
December 2023