



Library Committee

Thursday 6 February 2020, 10.00am-12.00pm

Minutes

Present Members:

Professor Anthony Smith (Chair); Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Charles Inskip; Professor Diane Koenker; Mr Ben Meunier; Mr Martin Moyle; Professor Vivek Mudera; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Dr Rachel Rees.

Apologies:

Dr Simon Banks
Professor D'Maris Coffmann
Dr Richard Freeman
Dr Oliver Gerstenberg
Mr Zak Liddell
Dr James McCafferty
Ms Kate Pearce
Dr John Sabapathy
Dr Harriet Shannon
Ms Ashley Slanina-Davies
Professor Hazel Smith

In Attendance:

Mr Andrew Gray, Library Services

Officer(s):

Ms Aashika Doshi

Part I: Preliminary Business

14. Welcome and Apologies

14.1. The meeting was inquorate.

15. Minutes (2-01)

15.1. Library Committee (LC) approved the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2019.

16. Matters Arising

16.1. Arising from minute 4.5, the Pro-Vice-Provost provided the following updates:

Support for increased digital resources

- a. Departmental statistics on ReadingLists@UCL coverage as at December 2019 were included in the Pro-Vice-Provost's report at Paper 2-03. Overall coverage in terms of the number modules registered on Portico with an online reading list had stood at 62% for some time, while the number of visits to ReadingLists@UCL at 633,000 for the 2019-20 session was on the increase and considerably higher than at the same point last year.
- b. Target ReadingLists@UCL coverage was 75%. It was proposed by the Pro-Vice-Provost to commission work by the Teaching and Learning Support Team in Library Services to focus on helping those departments with high take-up to reach 100% coverage and to engage with departments showing very low take-up to better understand the reasons behind the low engagement with the ReadingLists@UCL system. A report would be brought back to LC in due course, most likely in the Autumn term.
- c. In light of recent work of the Academic Model Project to review and streamline the module selection process, it was suggested to check the module data underpinning the reports on ReadingLists@UCL with colleagues in Academic Services in order to ensure that all modules listed in the report were live, not dormant, and attached to the appropriate Department.

Textbook market sales

- d. In response to a query related to UCL Press moving into textbook publishing, it was noted that the print textbook market in the UK was worth around £200m a year, representing mostly sales to individuals rather than to libraries. The Vice-Provost (Research) would be encouraging UCL departments in the sciences especially to use the textbook module in UCL Press to produce textbooks via the Open Access model, with the benefit that they would then be freely available to UCL students. Research monographs at UCL had already made significant moves to this model.
- e. The Pro-Vice-Provost outlined four key reasons identified by the UCL Press Team as to why there may be a lack of appetite among UCL academics to produce textbooks. While time was one factor, another was a question of priority, as textbook outputs were not counted towards the Research Excellence Framework (REF); other reasons included the need for specialist skills in design and layout as provided by a press, as well as the misconception that textbooks were discounted in the UCL promotions framework. In discussion, it was highlighted that the lack of remuneration in the Open Access model could also be a deterrent. For these reasons

combined, a challenge would be ensuring that the narrative encouraging take-up of the UCL Press textbook module was sufficiently compelling.

Benchmarking spend per student

- f. A benchmark of UCL's spend on information resources per FTE student according to the SCONUL statistics 2018-19 was presented in the Pro-Vice-Provost's report at Paper 2-03. UCL was in the top ten in the UK in terms of proportion of spend. UCL was similarly positioned in the middle of its benchmark partners according to league tables published by The Guardian, which scored universities a mark out of 10 based on a spend per student figure. A conclusion could be drawn based on these two sources was that UCL was in the middle of the top rank of universities in terms of spend per head.
- g. A benchmark exercise using the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) statistics for North American libraries would take place over the summer and a comparison of spend per head, if available, would be provided to LC.
- h. During discussion, it was asked whether any lessons could be learnt from the league tables in terms of strengthening UCL's position. It was highlighted that there was significant pressure on the Library budget despite the Library's tremendous resources and that a narrative had been developed in the most recent planning round with bids made to cover inflation rises, particularly inflation of 6% in paper and e-resource costs.
- i. It was noted that uncertainty around the Brexit transition and scope for tariffs to be imposed on overseas resources in the post-Brexit economy represented a potential pressure on the Library budget. Library Services were focusing attention on the principles of Plan S, which major research funders were encouraging libraries to adopt in order to deliver Open Access. The Pro-Vice-Provost would raise concerns over post-Brexit tariffs with JISC as national-level negotiators in Plan S.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

17. UCL Bibliometrics Policy (2-02)

- 17.1. The Pro-Vice-Provost introduced the latest iteration of the UCL Bibliometrics Policy, highlighting the following points:
 - a. The policy, which set out a framework for the responsible use of publication and citation metrics at UCL, was the outcome of a two-year development process involving cross-UCL consultation. It would be presented to Academic Committee for approval at its upcoming meeting on 27 February 2020.
 - b. The policy was strongly related to the Open Science agenda of which one of the pillars was evaluation and integrity of research and research.

- c. The decision to create an institutional policy for UCL had first been made by the Bibliometrics Working Group in 2015 following UCL's signing, like many Russell Group institutions, of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). DORA discouraged certain approaches to research evaluation and accordingly the Bibliometrics Policy was intended to set a new baseline for a progressive change in the way in which the global research community assessed quality and content of research.
- 17.2. Mr Andrew Gray, Bibliometrics Support Officer, was invited to outline the process of consultation and drafting involved in producing the UCL Bibliometrics Policy. The following points were made:
- a. The process of drafting began in 2016 with versions then taken to consultation in 2018, firstly with the Provost and Provost's Senior Management Team (SMT) resulting in approval in broad principle. Throughout 2018, informal consultation with external and internal advisors took place to seek expert feedback on metrics and the principles of the policy. A Town Hall meeting took place at the end of 2018 at which the policy was introduced to the wider UCL academic community, feedback from which was used to revise the policy before further consultation took place engaging more than half of UCL's departments.
 - b. Following further revisions to the policy, a broader, cross-UCL consultation took place over the summer of 2019 reaching 100-150 academics, which had provided broad support for the policy and highlighted some areas of contention, among them:
 - i. The approach to journal-based metrics. This prompted a move in the policy from full discouragement of using journal-based metrics, which in practice was considered unworkable, to a more balanced approach where reasons for the use of journal-based metrics were acknowledged yet their use as a primary metric was discouraged.
 - ii. The recommendation to use, wherever possible, data from the institutional repository, Research Publications Service (RPS). This was felt to be unworkable due to a lack of confidence in the proportion of up-to-date records held in the system. It was noted that confidence in the integrity of RPS data was growing, however, as it was being used in the REF selection process.
 - c. The policy had been carefully framed to ensure its wider relevance, regardless of whether academics considered themselves to be actively engaged with Open Science or not, without imposing the use of metrics on anyone not currently choosing to use them.
 - d. The Pro-Vice-Provost added that the policy, if approved, was intended to support a gradual culture change and that there would be training provided for early career researchers. There was a possibility that research funders, as part of their policies governing research funding and as a condition of making funds available, could in future mandate an

adherence to the principles of DORA. The Bibliometrics Policy would provide a framework to support UCL in this approach.

- e. The Bibliometrics Policy, by supporting a change in practice from assessing quality in terms of journal-based indicators, would provide a framework to assess and value the work of researchers in an Open Access model where pre-prints and other means of publication were likely to be used. This was important in the context of Plan S and the requirement of major research funders to publish in compliant Open Access journals and platforms.

17.3. Library Committee received and endorsed the UCL Bibliometrics Policy.

18. Report from the Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library Services) (2-03)

18.1. The Pro-Vice-Provost, Dr Paul Ayris, highlighted key points from the report on the Library's progress in delivering the UCL Library Services Strategy 2019-22. These were as follows:

User Experience

- a. Total number of visits to UCL library sites in 2018-19 exceeded 4.8m, well above the Research Libraries UK (RLUK) mean of just under 2m and the figures for UCL's benchmark partners. By a wide margin, UCL appeared to be the most heavily used university library in the UK and Ireland. Number of visits to the Student Centre contributed significantly to the UCL figure and was a positive reflection of the level of investment made by UCL in the Library estate and service by creating this new world-class facility.

Sustainable Estate

- b. During the last UCL Christmas closure period, 20 December 2019 – 2 January 2020, the sole Library site open for business was the Student Centre and this received remarkable levels of occupation including on public holiday days, highlighting its importance in meeting the needs of a diverse student body.

18.2. In the paper, the Pro-Vice-Provost had raised a key question for discussion concerning whether the Library's model was successful for a 21st century university library. During discussion, the following points were made:

- a. A question was raised as to areas of future opportunity for the Library, particularly with the upcoming developments at UCL East and plans to reshape the Science Library, and whether the Library was going far enough in terms of provision as a research and physical resource as well as in terms of student support.
- b. The importance of a textbook offering and the challenges often faced by students in gaining access to print textbooks at the key times were highlighted. Technical issues faced by students in accessing core online

texts from different platforms were also raised. Some issues with working environments, such as the temperature of Library sites especially in the Science Library, were also been noted. These issues would be investigated. In response to issues accessing online texts, it was noted that the need to use different platforms and aggregators to make materials available was largely due to economic reasons, however the Library could develop some guidance for teachers and course leaders to help them point students to resources in a more streamlined way.

- c. A question was raised regarding provision for students with caring responsibilities, as there was ongoing discussion with the Students' Union about providing space and facilities to students who needed to bring their children with them to campus. There was currently some confusion regarding policy and whether students could bring their children to Library sites.
- d. The Library had received more than a hundred visitors to the Student Centre from other institutions around the globe, many of who were impressed by the Student Centre model and the high level of usage it received. As an area of future challenge, there was a two-phase plan to rethink the shape of the Science Library, in particular, use of the upper floors, the model for this was not working so well.
- e. Library Services had significantly developed its digital resources over recent years, however, maintaining and growing levels of provision would be a challenge with the 6% inflation. The Library would continue to focus on digital delivery in order to address difficulties meeting the needs of students to provide key textbooks at the key times, however, there were also significant challenges faced in moving to online provision without additional resource or a change in the current textbook market model.
- f. A comment was made that a move towards enhanced digital provision may require additional resources with associated costs, for example, in order to increase scope for laptop loans and screen use in the Library.
- g. Not all students used the Library in the same way; some students were more likely to access the Library remotely via their laptops, some more likely than others to use the physical resources or spaces for study. It was noted that the model for the UCL Library, including in planning for UCL East, was to have a digital 24/7 offering wherever possible and to treat the Library as a collection space, service space and a learning space for individual and group study. The Student Centre had been created through a participative process involving student and staff input, with both seen as partners in creating the building; this had been important in making sure that it was fit for purpose and a community space. There were potential lessons to be learnt from other university libraries and new ideas to be tested in this way, by consulting with the community.
- h. A member of LC highlighted the importance of investing not only in resource and content, but also in human expertise and in skilled librarians who could provide students with key information science services, helping students learn how to learn and find resources in addition to the core texts

provided via ReadingLists@UCL. It was noted that the Library had recently appointed a library skills trainer to address the training and facilitator role of Library staff. The Director of Services (UCL Library Services) planned to bring a paper on Library Skills to the next meeting of LC.

19. Internal audit of Library Services by KPMG (2-04)

- 19.1. LC received the terms of reference for an internal audit by KPMG of UCL Library Services and the Library Services Strategy 2019-22. It was agreed to postpone discussion of this item until the outcome report could be brought to LC.

20. Confidential: Federal University of London working group on future federal strategy (2-05)

- 20.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
20.2. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

21. Analysis of the usage of Senate House Library (2-06)

- 21.1. The Director of Services (UCL Library Services) presented the report on UCL's usage of the Senate House Library (SHL) over the period 2012-13 to 2018-19. The report provided details of SHL's operating subscription model and cost increases, providing some context to UCL's usage, which was at an overall reduced level on previous years with the number of UCL visits having dropped by 14% since 2012/13. The report showed that UCL had paid around 26% of the overall SHL operating budget in 2019-20.
- 21.2. During discussion, there was a question as to whether the value of learning spaces and collections held at the SHL to UCL students was in line with current costs to UCL, which were met centrally. The working principle was that both continued to be of importance, particularly for students and researchers in the Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences. Value for money and service provision in the context of 21st century research libraries were however, suggested as factors that ought to be considered. LC was reminded that study space at SHL was not provided on the same basis as in the UCL Student Centre or Cruciform Hub, or as was planned for UCL East. SHL was also not open 24/7; this was in particular an issue for the operations of the post-doctoral hub based in the SHL building. Despite UCL's contribution to operations, UCL did not have control as to the development or maintenance of SHL.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

22. Project bidding in UCL Library Services (2-07)

- 22.1. LC received the termly summary report on the Library's progress in project bidding applications.

23. Reports from Working Groups (2-08)

- 23.1. Since the previous meeting, LC had received the Minutes of the following Working Groups that reported to LC:
- a. UCL Bibliometrics Working Group – 15 October 2019.

24. Reports from Faculty Library Committees (2-09)

- 24.1. Since the previous meeting, LC had received the Minutes of the following Faculty-level or Faculty Library Committees (FLCs):
- a. Engineering Sciences Faculty Research Degrees Committee – 12 June 2019 and 6 November 2019;
 - b. Laws Faculty Library Committee – 5 December 2019;
 - c. Mathematical and Physical Sciences Faculty Library Committee – 2 July 2019.

25. Any other business

- 25.1. There was no other business to discuss.

26. Date of next meeting

- 26.1. The next meeting of LC was scheduled to take place on 12 May 2020 at 10.00am¹.

Library Committee Secretary
November 2020

¹ The meeting was later postponed to take place on 25 June 2020.