Operations Committee

3 December 2021, 11:00 – 13:00

Minutes

Present Members:
Fiona Ryland (Chair); Kevin Argent; Paul Ayris; Matthew Blain; Simon Buller; Katie Canada; Sara Collins; Ian Dancy; Geoff Dunk; Ian Galloway; Thea Gibbs; Claire Glen; Clare Goudy; Richard Jackson; Tansy Jones; Natasha Lewis; Sian Lunt; Collette Lux; Derfel Owen; Andy Smith; Julie Smith; Dean Stokes; Osman Teklies; Kathryn Walsh; Rebecca Whitham; Donna Williamson.

Apologies:
Beth Beasant
Natalie Conway
Charu Gorasia
Loren Moyse

In attendance:
Sian Minett for item 3
Duncan Palmer for item 4
Clare Foyle for item 7
Katja Lamping for item 8
Anna Cornelius for item 9
Zoe Hunter for item 10.

Officer(s):
Louise Moore, Secretary

Part I: Preliminary Business

9. Minutes (Paper 2-06)

9.1. Operations Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021.

10. Matters Arising (Paper 2-07)

10.1. Arising from minute 1.1a, Terms of Reference & Membership: Proposed changes to the membership to go to UMC for approval.
Noted: the proposed changes were sent to UMC for approval in the new year.

10.2. Arising from minute 3.3a, Start of Term Update from PS Hub: HR Services Comms to be sent out via the Leadership Briefing.
Noted/completed: the first update was included in the Leadership Briefing sent out on 12 November 2021.

10.3. Arising from minute 3.3b, Start of Term Update from PS Hub: To set up a joint working group/forum with a representative from each Faculty and the PS Hub team to address and resolve issues together.
ACTION: Chair to follow up on progress of the joint working group with Natalie Conway, Director PS Hub.

10.4. Arising from minute 3.3c, Start of Term Update from PS Hub: To raise recruitment with Matthew Blain, Chief People Officer.
Completed.

10.5. Arising from minute 5.3b, Sustainability: Net Zero Plan for UCL: To outline the business case over the next six months and to bring the business case to Operations Committee for consideration.
Noted: to be considered at Operations Committee in March 2022.

10.6. Arising from minute 5.4b, Sustainability: Net Zero Plan for UCL: To update the recommendations and UMC to note.
Noted/completed: the updated recommendations were sent to UMC to note.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

11. Bookable Spaces: Issues from 2021/22 and Proposed Approach for the Future (Paper 2-08)

11.1. Sian Minett, Director of Timetabling (Service Delivery and Improvement) introduced the paper setting out the challenges of our bookable estate and the tensions between teaching space and meeting rooms. Benefits and issues were listed in the paper and the following points were high-lighted:

a. Benefits:
    i. No spend on hiring external space.
    ii. Improvement in quality of space of AV and IT provision.
    iii. Ability to change rooming and support initiatives such as zoning.
b. Issues:
    i. Department's inability to use space for non-teaching when accessible rooms were brought under central management for teaching activity. Noted that this issue was being addressed by:
        a. Setting up more Teams enabled rooms bookable via Outlook.

   b. All teaching rooms now on CMIS Go. There was an issue initially with adding the rooms, but this had been resolved.
ii. Some departments particularly felt the challenge of a loss of space and the team were working with these departments to address this.

11.2. Noted that the desk top review had identified rooms that could be removed from the teaching pool and designated for meetings. The following plans were mentioned to support non-teaching activity:
   a. To support departments with their non-teaching activity by working differently and planning better.
   b. To have a priority booking period ahead of the general opening.
   c. To increase the stock of dedicated meeting rooms. Noted that Bernard Street would offer additional teaching rooms, which would give the flexibility to increase the number of meeting rooms.
   d. In the longer-term, to look strategically across the estate and to create a suite of meeting rooms of different sizes.
   e. To centrally manage the room stock and to ensure that meeting rooms were bookable by Outlook by all staff.

11.3. The following points were raised in discussion:
   a. Supportive of the principles of creating more meeting rooms, but dependent on where the rooms were situated, and concerns raised over safety and security.
   b. Priority booking period was welcomed and requested that this was rolled out for as long a period as possible.
   c. Important to engage with faculties and departments. Conversations with local teams were welcomed, to encourage room swaps.
   d. Pragmatic approach welcomed.
   e. Noted that some rooms were awaiting refurbishment, which needed to be done urgently so that all our room stock was available for use.
   f. Important to understand supply and demand to ensure that access was granted at the right times and working with departments to deliver.
   g. Forward planning for events so that conferences could be supported, and income generated.

11.4. Operations Committee was asked to support the approach and to approve the management arrangements.
   a. Noted: the recommendations in the paper.
   b. **Approved:** the recommendations were approved, with the caveat to address the safety and security concerns raised. Katie Canada, Director of Operations for Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences raised an objection on behalf of the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences.

12. Campus Management Plan (Paper 2-09)

12.1. Duncan Palmer, Director of Estates Operations delivered a presentation on the campus management plan.

12.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. Good to see the overall ambition. Agreed that colleagues would work with departments and promote good practice already established.
b. Noted that the plan was about fairness, with colleagues working together for the best of UCL, being equitable and avoiding 'space grab'.
c. The consultation period was noted and the question of what could be done now was raised.
d. Issue of research space was raised.
e. The importance of creating a better campus and improving the space was noted. Enabling the SU to do more activities on campus and making the campus as good as it could be, working together to run the space well.

12.3. Operations Committee:

a. Noted: the plan to engage colleagues to gather views and to agree a way forward.

13. Face Cover Review (Paper 2-10)

13.1. Ian Dancy, Executive Director of Operations, introduced the paper on face coverings. Since the paper was written the new variant had emerged and the government policy had changed on face coverings. The following points were noted:

a. The use of face coverings would continue at UCL for the foreseeable future.
b. On the advice of PHAP, UMC had changed the wording of the face covering policy to mandatory.
c. UMC would review the face coverings policy on 28 February 2022, which was the last calendar day of winter.

14. Sustainability Annual Report (Paper 2-11)

14.1. Richard Jackson, Sustainability Director introduced the paper setting out the plans for the sustainability annual report. The following points were raised:

a. Two annual reports were needed.
    i. One for our wider community detailing how we were doing against our sustainability commitments.
    ii. One for investors on the sustainable aspect of the Bond report and the impact of our spend.
b. Our progress against the sustainability commitments was good, and this was a result of Covid and there being less people on campus.

14.2. Operations Committee:
   a. **Agreed** that there should be two separate reports because they served different purposes as well as different audiences.
   b. **Agreed** the structure of both reports.
   c. **ACTION:** Richard Jackson, Sustainability Director to share the sustainability reports with CAM, and to take the reports to UMC in the new year.

15. Strategic Risk Register (Paper 2-12)

15.1. Dean Stokes, Director of Planning and Clare Foyle, Planning Manager introduced the risk register paper. The following points were made:
   a. The strategic risk register reported to Audit Committee and Council.
   b. Proposed that the risk register came to Operations Committee on a regular basis with a specific focus on the risks pertinent to Operations Committee.

15.2. The following points were raised in discussion:
   a. Supply chain risk underreported. Ian Galloway, Commercial Director to follow up with Dean Stokes, Director of Planning and Clare Foyle, Planning Manager directly.
   b. Useful to plot the risks on the schedule of works for Operations Committee to review throughout the year.

15.3. Operations Committee:
   a. **Agreed/ACTION:** Dean Stokes, Director of Planning to work with Louise Moore, Secretary to plot the risks onto the schedule of works for Operations Committee to review regularly.

16. Diversifying Student Recruitment to Increase Applications from India (Paper 2-13)

16.1. Collette Lux, Executive Director of Communications & Marketing and Katya Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment introduced the paper setting out the plans to increase applications from India, noting that India was the next biggest market after China. The following points were made:
   a. UCL's biggest competitors in the India market were Warwick, Manchester and QMUL.
   b. It was a very good time to invest, and the following proposals were mentioned:
      i. UCL already had one in-country officer in Delhi, it was proposed to increase this to three, with an officer in Mumbai and an officer in Bangalore.
      ii. To increase the UCL grade 7 post to a grade 8 to manage the in-country team.
      iii. To use the services of SRUK, a student recruitment agency.

c. Scholarships: proposed to ring-fence some scholarships for India and to work with some of the prestigious foundations in India for scholarships.

16.2. The following points were raised in discussion:
a. Data backed the positive results of the in-country officer, showing a 30% increase in applications.
b. Innovator scholarships could be promoted; Kathryn Walsh, Executive Director UCL Innovation & Enterprise to follow up with Katya Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment.
c. Question over where the admin of funded scholarships sat within UCL; Julie Smith, Director of Operations for Faculty of Arts & Humanities to follow up with Katja Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment.
d. The potential for OVPA to collaborate with CAM; Becky Whitham, Director of Strategy & Operations to follow up with Katja Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment.

16.3. Operations Committee:
a. Noted that any approvals would need to go through the financial approval process, but Operations Committee could endorse the recommendations.
b. Noted that the paper would go to StRAFC on 14 December.
c. **Endorsed:** Operations Committee endorsed the recommendations.

17. Graduations (Paper 2-14)

17.1. Collette Lux, Executive Director of Communications & Marketing and Anna Cornelius, Head of Communications, Strategy & Planning introduced the paper setting out the proposals to bring graduations back to campus. The following points were made:
a. Proposal to have smaller, more frequent ceremonies on campus, approximately 50 ceremonies.
b. The Logan Hall was the preferred venue, subject to refurbishment works, and auxiliary space for gowning etc.
c. Although there would be cost savings, as an external venue would not be hired, there would be additional costs to support and resource the ceremonies on campus.
d. Proposal for a task and finish group to be created to look at operations and logistics of graduations and to report to Operations Committee.

17.2. The following points were raised in discussion:
a. Opportunity to work with the campus experience team and to be commercially minded.
b. Opportunity to buy-in expertise to ensure successful graduations. Not necessarily reliant upon keeping everything in-house.
c. Providing the dates of the ceremonies in advance would be helpful.
d. A back-up plan in case the Logan Hall was not available would be beneficial. Noted that the Bloomsbury Theatre had been identified as a

possible back up, but this would have an impact on students use of the theatre.

e. A positive step to bring graduations back onto campus and a good opportunity to promote UCL to parents.
f. Important to look at the sequencing and timings of the capital investment work on the Logan Hall and auxiliary space: Anna Cornelius, Head of Communications, Strategy & Planning to follow up with Kevin Argent, Director of Estates Development.
g. Noted that the graduations ceremonies should be self-funded through ticket sales, but the risk would need underwriting.

17.3. Operations Committee:

a. Noted that any approvals would need to go through the financial approval process.
b. **Agreed:** to set up a task and finish group for graduations to comprise of colleagues from Operations Committee and to report to Operations Committee.

18. Admissions Review Update

18.1. Derfel Owen, Registrar and Director of Student and Registry Services delivered a presentation updating Operations Committee on the admissions review and asked for endorsement of the ambition and vision of the programme mandate. The following points were raised:

a. The driving factors for the review was the poor applicant and staff experience, plus the increase in applications.
b. A core team was being built to address the issues and to lead the transformation programme.
c. The PA report contained a wealth of recommendations, focused around these five work packages:
    i. Applicant experience.
    ii. Response to enquiries.
    iii. New ways of working.
    iv. Simplifying processes.
    v. Effective policies.
d. Important to also improve the technology and to engage with staff to shape and improve the process.
e. Plan to create an Admissions Transformation Board, involving Deans, to engage across the institution and to feed into Operations Committee.

18.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

a. The transformation approach was big and bold, essential to fix the issues.
b. Noted that support would be needed from Procurement on supply chain and other issues. Ian Galloway, Commercial Director to liaise with Derfel Owen, Registrar and Director of Student and Registry Services.
c. Noted that students had been engaged in the review, and student feedback received. There would be representative from the SU on the

Admissions Transformation Board, plus student advisors. There would be a strong focus on the student experience and our students listened to.

18.3. Operations Committee:
a. **Endorsed:** the approach and the governing structure.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

19. Schedule of Works Across the Year (Paper 2-15)

19.1. Operations Committee received the schedule of works and noted that the plan was for it to be a dynamic planning document with both business-as-usual work and new and one-off works.

19.2. Noted that there were several different iterations of change plan documents across UCL.

19.3. **ACTION:** Dean Stokes, Director of Planning to meet with the Chair and discuss an overarching change plan and to bring back to Operations Committee for review.

20. Date of the next meeting

20.1. Thursday 3 February 2022, 10:00 – 12:00

Louise Moore, Secretary
December 2021