



Operations Committee

Thursday 16 March 2023, 10:30 – 12:20

Minutes

Present Members:

Andy Smith (Chair); Suzy Adcock; Dr Paul Ayris; Jeremy Barraud; Mike Brown; Simon Buller; Georgie Cade; Sara Collins; Natalie Conway; Sarah Cowls; Donna Dalrymple; Ian Dancy; Geoff Dunk; Helen Fisher; Ian Galloway; Thea Gibbs; Claire Glen; Richard Jackson; Tansy Jones; Sarah Lawson; Natasha Lewis; Sian Lunt; Julie Smith; Dr Kathryn Walsh; Rebecca Whitham; Donna Williamson.

Apologies:

Deniz Akinci
Beth Beasant
Christine Forde
Clare Foyle
Marie Gallagher
Alice Mortlock
Ciaran Moynihan
Kate Pearce

In attendance:

For minute 32, Angela Clark, Head of Recruitment, and Jo Wilkes, HR Services Director.
For minute 33, Benita Noel, Senior Continuous Improvement Manager
For minute 34, Stephanie Esuola, Programme Director, Scheduling Transformation
For minute 35, Tracy Smith, Director of Campus Experience & Commercial Services
For minutes 30-37, Deepan Banati, Finance Business Partner and Sarah-Louise Earl, Head of Centre of Excellence.

Officer:

Louise Moore, Secretary

Part I: Preliminary Business

30. Minutes (Paper 4-19)

30.1. Operations Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2023.

31. Matters Arising (Paper 4-20)

- 31.1. Arising from minute 27.4.c, Net Zero Strategic Case: Richard Jackson, Sustainability Director, to provide an update on the progress of the Net Zero Strategic Case at a future meeting.

Response: The paper would be presented to FPPC on 28 March and UMC in April, and so an update would be provided in the summer term.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

32. HR Services Review and Improvement Plans (Paper 4-21)

- 32.1. Jo Wilkes, HR Services Director, introduced the paper and shared a presentation which high-lighted the improvement activities and how these would be developed to improve performance. The good news stories included:

- a. Recruitment activity: noted that with the introduction of Talentlink and the central recruitment team in place, the amount of time to hire had reduced significantly, with 35,000 applications received and over one thousand people hired. LinkedIn had seen a 300% increase in engagement across UCL posts. The volume of applications was high, but this ensured a good quality candidate pool across all categories of staff. The recruitment and HR Services teams were working in partnership to ensure the candidate experience continued to improve.
- b. Good customer service: the improvements across email enquiries, contact turnaround, time to hire and call drop rate were identified.

- 32.2. The work conducted by KPMG and the recent benchmarking data from the Cubane report revealed that in general HR effectiveness scores had increased, but payroll and benefits had decreased, and this would be addressed. Areas identified for further improvement included:

- Compliance
- Payroll
- Flexible workforce
- Customer Service, a programme of training would be rolled out.
- Service Level Agreements
- Automation
- Improvements (including Unitemps and payroll)
- Start of term planning

- 32.3. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. A communications plan would help to promote the improvements and positive steps made and to bust the myths around poor performance. Noted that the comms team were working on a wider campaign to

showcase the positive changes across UCL, and HR Services improvements would be an excellent case study.

- b. Overall, the progress was very positive, but what was the sequencing of improvements and what was being prioritised? Noted that Ian Galloway, Commercial Director and Angela Clark, Head of Recruitment would discuss the commercial framework of Unitemps outside the meeting.
- c. Noted that the team were engaged with other areas of improvement, to align activity and this would be discussed at Termly Increment (TI) Planning.
- d. The importance of engaging with departments across UCL, to set expectations and to build upon lessons learnt was noted. Engagement was positive and DOOs agreed to support further.
- e. Developments over the next six months would include:
 - i. More automation so that colleagues would have more time to provide a higher level of customer service.
 - ii. People Money and Insight (PMI) portfolio was key to enable change activity to feed into TI Planning.
 - iii. Working with the comms team to promote the services and to spread the good news stories widely across UCL.

32.4. Operations Committee:

- a. Noted the hard work of the teams involved to ensure the end-to-end services were as easy and user friendly as possible.
- b. Noted that there would be an agenda item on recruitment at Operations Committee on 12 May.
- c. Approved the proposed improvement plan.

33. Student Load Exercise – Project update and approval re Phase 2 (Paper 4-22)

33.1. Julie Smith, Director of Operations, Arts & Humanities, introduced the paper setting out the proposal for phase 2 of the project. It was explained that the Student Load Exercise ensured that the fees from students went to where the teaching happened, ensuring that departments received the money they should. Phase 1 of the project had significantly reduced the workload and stress, and phase 2 of the project was to automate the process and to continue improvements. The following points were made during the presentation:

- a. The necessary data was already in Portico and Portico enhancements would enable the process to be automated. Noted that this would come to TI Planning.
- b. Touchpoints would be set up within the system to ensure the methodology was correct.

33.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. Agreed that automation was the best route to follow.

- b. A sound piece of work, and transparency was importance.
- c. Important for the team to work with the Finance Systems Team as changes would have an impact. Deepan Banati, Finance Business Partner, agreed to provide the contact within the Finance Team.
- d. Noted that the general data work of the Student & Registry Services (SRS) Team was aligned, and they were already working with the Finance Team at TI Planning.
- e. Noted that the SLLO role formed just one part of a job role. Automation would allow more time for other activities.
- f. Benita Noel, Senior Continuous Improvement Manager and Lee Standen, Division Manager, were thanked for their work on the project.

33.3. Operations Committee:

- a. Approved the plans for Phase 2.
- b. Agreed with the recommendation to change the Primary Process Owner from Planning to Finance.
- c. **ACTION:** Deepan Banati, Finance Business Partner, to discuss the recommendation to change the Primary Process Owner from Planning to Finance with the Chief Financial Officer.

34. Scheduling Transformation 23/24 (Paper 4.23)

- 34.1. Sarah Cowsls, Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar, and Stephanie Esuola, Programme Director, Scheduling Transformation, introduced the paper setting out the three-year plan. The focus of year 1 was to enable soft changes to improve the timetable, then to provide an increased step change in year 2 and to introduce technological changes in year 3. The following points were made during the presentation:
- a. The four main benefits were to:
 - i. Deliver the timetable early.
 - ii. Improve the experience for students and staff.
 - iii. Increase efficiency.
 - iv. Increase space efficiency.
 - b. Noted that one of the key inputs was teaching staff availability and the data upfront allowed more information for the timetabling process. Noted that a policy was under development and being shared with stakeholder groups. Discussions with the Unions last year was positive, and the policy was important to embed equality. The aim was to have the policy in place for the start of the next academic year.
 - c. The level of engagement to reduce programme complexity was pleasing.
- 34.2. The following points were raised in discussion:
- a. A scheduling approach had been adopted at UCL East and feedback received was mostly on the complexity of programmes delivered on more than one campus, and this was the biggest challenge. Little feedback had been received on lecturer availability.

- b. Resource saving and stopping the wastage of rooms was raised and the team would have a follow up conversation with Ian Dancy, Executive Director of Operations.
- c. It was noted that the data on supply and demand for teaching rooms would be received in approximately two weeks. The timetabling exercise would be completed much earlier than previous years and would give a clear indication of size and shape. Awareness was raised about the late request for rooms, based on the experience of previous years.
- d. Engagement with the Faculties was underway, starting with an Advisory Board next week, with Faculty reps in attendance, followed by meetings with the different Faculties.
- e. The three-year project was aiming high, and it was noted that this was a UCL-wide effort and responsibility.

34.3. Operations Committee:

- a. Fully supported and endorsed the three-year plan and approved the approach to implement the lecturer availability policy.
- b. **Agreed/ ACTION:** DOOs to speak to the Deans about providing their support for the scheduling transformation proposal when it comes to UMC.

35. Confidential: Soft Services Update (Paper 4-24)

- 35.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

36. AOB

- 36.1. None raised.

37. Date of the next meeting

- 37.1. Friday 12 May 2023, 11:00-12:50

Louise Moore
March 2023