



## Operations Committee

Thursday 23 June 2022, 10:00 – 12:00

### Minutes

#### Present Members:

Fiona Ryland (Chair); Suzy Adcock; Paul Ayriss, Jeremy Barraud; Beth Beasant, Mike Brown; Simon Buller; Katie Canada; Sara Collins; Natalie Conway; Sarah Cowls; Donna Dalrymple; Ian Dancy; Helen Fisher; Ian Galloway; Thea Gibbs; Claire Glen; Tansy Jones; Natasha Lewis; Sian Lunt; Alice Mortlock; Ciaran Moynihan; Kate Pearce; Andy Smith; Julie Smith; Dean Stokes; Kathryn Walsh; Becky Whitham, Donna Williamson.

#### Apologies:

Kevin Argent  
Geoff Dunk  
Richard Jackson  
Osman Teklies

#### In attendance:

For minute 56, Bella Malins, Director of Access & Admissions and Katja Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment.  
For minute 57, Joanna Marshall-Cook, Head of Sustainability Programmes, and Louise Ellis, Consultant.  
For minute 58, Sarah Earl, Head of Centre of Excellence.  
For minute 59, Sian Minett, Director of Timetabling (Service Delivery and Improvement).  
For minute 60, Lewis Robins-Grace, Project Manager, Estates Development.  
For the whole meeting, Neil Turvey, Assistant Director Capital Projects.

#### Officer(s):

Louise Moore, Secretary

### Part I: Preliminary Business

#### 54. Minutes (Paper 6-42)

54.1. Operations Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 May 2022.

**55. Matters Arising (Paper 6-43)**

55.1. Arising from minute 44.3, Student Load Exercise: Planning should own the process with a nominated DOO as partner.

**Noted/Completed:** Julie Smith, Director of Operations Faculty of Arts & Humanities was the nominated co-lead with Dean Stokes, Director of Planning.

55.2. Arising from minute 45.3f, Review of Operations Risk Profile: Dean Stokes, Planning Director, to take forward the suggestion of disseminating the strategic risk register more widely across UCL.

**Noted:** The Strategic Risk Register went to Audit Committee (AC) on 13 June and AC made various suggestions for improvements going forward. The Strategic Risk Register would be disseminated to the risk champions and made available via the Planning/Risk SharePoint site.

55.3. Arising from minute 45.5e, Review of Operations Risk Profile: Dean Stokes, Planning Director, to take forward and implement the agreed suggestions in relation to the newly escalated risks from the local risk registers (45.5b. and 45.5c.), and to consider further the suggestion of risk profiles across areas (45.5d.).

**Noted:** The comments were incorporated into the Strategic Risk Register and/or local risk registers and/or the twice-yearly risk process. Point d. around the areas for risk profiling would be taken forward as part of devising the risk profile for the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027.

55.4. Arising from minute 45.5f, Review of Operations Risk Profile: Claire Glen, Executive Director Research & Innovation Services to work with the Planning Team to refresh the mitigation and planned actions around Research risk.

**Noted:** that work was ongoing, and Claire Glen, Executive Director Research & Innovation Services was working with Clare Foyle, Planning Manager to update the risk register.

55.5. Arising from minute 47.3b, Review of PGT applications: Chair of Operations Committee to speak to Vice-Provost (Education & Student Experience) about a mitigation plan for China student recruitment.

**Noted/Completed:** Vice-Provost (Education & Student Experience) was leading a task and finish group.

## Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

### 56. Review of Undergraduate and Postgraduate acceptances

56.1. Katja Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment delivered a presentation setting out the work of our agents (SI-UK), reflecting on the reputation of UCL amongst undergraduates and looking at the China market. The following points were made during the presentation:

- a. SI-UK were commissioned as agents for UCL and started on 31 March 2021. It was noted that this was the first time UCL had commissioned agents in its long history. The performance of SI-UK had seen significant impact in India, Thailand, Taiwan, and Japan and it was noted that commission was paid on enrolment. It was also noted that India was a particularly price-sensitive market and scholarships were important.
- b. The general perception of UCL amongst UK undergraduates was that it was more challenging to get into UCL than any other UK university, (except for Oxford and Cambridge which pre-selected their students). Extensive work was underway with guidance counsellors to ensure that UK students continued to apply to UCL.
- c. The over-reliance of the China market was noted, as was the work underway to de-risk China by building up other markets, and by establishing a strong social media presence within China to continue to attract the very best Chinese students.
- d. Feedback received on the innovative open days was very positive. Virtual topic-based sessions followed by in-person open days had proved very popular and would continue. Noted that the in-person open days were taking place on 15 and 16 July.

56.2. Bella Malins, Director of Access & Admissions, updated members on undergraduate and postgraduate acceptances compared to this point in previous years:

- a. Undergraduates: noted that the target was 6170, and current predications were projecting a 600 overshoot.
- b. Postgraduates: noted that numbers were up by 2% on previous years and this was because the team were processing applications and sending out offers at a quicker rate. The benefits were that acceptances were being received quicker and as a result Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) numbers and Visas were being issued sooner. The team were commended on their efforts. Noted that Chinese numbers were 2.5% down on previous years and this would continue to be monitored.

56.3. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. The China risk was noted, alongside the need for diversification. It was explained that the China market was not comparable with any other markets, and efforts were being intensified to retain the positive

relationship with China to ensure students would keep coming to UCL, albeit in smaller numbers.

- b. As the markets changed and UCL adapted to new markets, the impact upon the student experience was raised. Although the impact would differ from department to department it was agreed that UCL had not given enough thought to the impact upon student experience in the past. Noted that Sarah Cowls, Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar, was looking at the impact of market change upon student experience with her team.

56.4. Operations Committee:

- a. Noted the China risk and the work undertaken to mitigate the risk by diversification of markets.

**57. Sustainability: Net Zero Plan for UCL – discussion paper (Paper 6-44)**

57.1. Joanna Marshall-Cook, Head of Sustainability Programmes, and Louise Ellis, Consultant supporting the business case development for zero carbon, were welcomed to the meeting. The presentation highlighted the key challenges as well as identifying the opportunities and enablers for achieving net-zero. The following points were made during the presentation:

- a. To achieve net-zero the following Carbon emissions were included:
  - i. energy,
  - ii. organisational travel,
  - iii. products and services.

Not included:

- i. staff and student commutes,
  - ii. student travel at the start and end of term,
  - iii. emissions from investments.
- b. The key areas to achieve net-zero were identified as:
  - i. Cultural change and ensuring that green impact was owned by the UCL community. Maximising opportunities to reduce energy use out of hours.
  - ii. Infrastructure and investment across the UCL estate.
  - iii. Reducing travel and incentivising colleagues to travel less.
  - iv. Ensuring that carbon emissions were offset in the most effective way.
- c. Pace was identified as a key challenge. The importance of tackling smaller actions immediately was raised, including integrating net-zero into policies to change working practices and habits.
- d. External investment opportunities were identified.
- e. Next steps: the Consultant team would get in touch with colleagues across departments to discuss the following areas, to inform the business case:
  - i. Responsibility and accountability.
  - ii. Scope of net-zero target.
  - iii. Resourcing.

iv. Offsetting.

57.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. Out of hours building closures would be encouraged further, particularly as energy costs were increasing. Noted that an additional £25m would be spent on utilities next year because of the price hikes.
- b. Important to ensure that the numbers quoted in the paper were not misleading, and to explain ongoing costs.
- c. Important to do things differently and to spend money in the most sustainable way.
- d. Important to change behaviours across UCL and a key tool in doing this would be to provide stats on costs to keep the campus open overnight.
- e. The opportunity to lead on sustainability in research funding applications was raised and the possibility of requiring funders to provide a sustainability case, in addition to a financial case.  
**ACTION:** Claire Glen, Executive Director Research & Innovation Services to speak to Vice-Provost (Research, Innovation & Global Engagement) about the possibility of adding a sustainability case to research funding applications.
- f. The use of buildings going forwards may be challenging for Faculties, but it was important to start somewhere and to work on a model or dashboard for Faculties to follow.
- g. Suggested that net-zero and cultural change could be discussed at both a future Professional Services Leadership Group (PSLG) and a future Academic Leadership Group (ALG) meeting.

57.3. Operations Committee:

- a. Noted the next steps: consultation process with colleagues across all departments to inform the business case which would come to Operations Committee in the autumn.

**58. UCL Year Planner and Emerging Change Overview (Paper 6-45)**

58.1. Dean Stokes, Director of Planning and Sarah Earl, Head of Centre of Excellence introduced the paper, explaining that the UCL Year Planner and Emerging Change Overview would come to Operations Committee on a regular basis so that colleagues could see what was coming up. The following four current change initiatives were flagged:

- i. assessments,
- ii. recruitment project,
- iii. RIST – compliance and assurance,
- iv. student module selection.

58.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. Noted that the work would evolve to incorporate change portfolios.

- b. Noted that Research, Innovation and Global Engagement (RIGE) Committee recently undertook an audit of achievements, priorities, and challenges, and published some observations and identified issues for consideration, which would be of benefit to share with Operations Committee.

**Agreed/ACTION:** Jeremy Barraud, Director of Governance & Delivery, to share the findings from the RIGE Operations Committee Audit with Operations Committee.

58.3. Operations Committee:

- a. Agreed that the UCL Year Planner and Emerging Change Overview should come to Operations Committee on a regular basis.

**59. Timetabling, Space Use and Cost of Space (Paper 6-46)**

59.1. Ian Dancy, Executive Director of Operations, and Sian Minett, Director of Timetabling (Service Delivery and Improvement) introduced the paper, explaining that 82% of rooming requests had been roomed for 22-23 academic year, but this did not include any events under 5 weeks in duration. Concern was expressed about the risk of not delivering a roomed timetable unless action was taken. The following points were made during the presentation to mitigate the risk:

- a. Plea to Faculties to try and limit the number of changes and hours added.
- b. A written request to Faculties and Departments to maximise the use of teaching space throughout the day and across the academic year.
- c. Timetabling Team members were looking at creating new and additional teaching space within the UCL estate, with some new space achievable from September.
- d. Timetabling Team members were exploring ways to address the issue of booked space not being used. Data was collected using the occupancy sensors in the teaching rooms and currently 10% of bookings were not used, which equated to 31,500 wasted hours or the equivalent of 40 teaching rooms unused throughout the year. The significant associated energy costs and sustainability issues of unused booked space were also noted.

59.2. The following points were raised in discussion:

- a. Agreed that it was important to use internal UCL space for teaching and not to buy external space, as this was important for both the student experience as well as budgetary concerns. Noted that the only external space used was lecture theatre space at Birkbeck.
- b. Agreed that charging for unused booked space may not be the most effective deterrent and collecting and publishing data on unused booked space would be a more effective method to change behaviours. By being transparent with the data, this could drive and reinforce better behaviour.

Suggested that the data should be shared with UMC and Operations Committee in the first instance.

- c. Capturing lecturer availability to maximise teaching throughout the day was important. Agreed that it would be necessary for this initiative to be driven by the Provost and UMC.

59.3. Operations Committee:

- a. Agreed that the next step was to collect and publish data on unused booked space, to help change behaviours.
- b. **ACTION:** Sian Minett, Director of Timetabling (Service Delivery and Improvement), to collect and share the data on unused booked space with Heads of Departments, Deans and DOOs, plus UMC and Operations Committee.
- c. **ACTION:** Fiona Ryland, Vice-President (Operations) and Ian Dancy, Executive Director of Operations, to focus on budgetary concerns.

**60. Confidential: Pedestrianisation of Gordon Street (Paper 6-47)**

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

**Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information**

**61. Date of the next meeting**

- 61.1. Thursday 13 October 2022, 10:00 – 11:50

Louise Moore  
June 2022