UCL

Operations Committee

Thursday 24 November 2022, 10:00 – 11:50

Minutes

Present Members:
Andy Smith (Chair); Suzy Adcock; Deniz Akinci; Paul Ayris, Jeremy Barraud; Beth Beasant, Mike Brown; Georgina Cade; Sara Collins; Natalie Conway; Donna Dalrymple; Ian Dancy; Geoff Dunk; Helen Fisher; Clare Foyle; Thea Gibbs; Claire Glen; Clare Goudy; Katy Hamilton; Richard Jackson; Sarah Lawson; Natasha Lewis; Sian Lunt; Ciaran Moynihan; Kate Pearce; Julie Smith; Kathryn Walsh; Becky Whitham, Donna Williamson.

Apologies:
Simon Buller
Noel Caliste
Sarah Cowls
Tansy Jones
Aloma Onyemah

In attendance:
For minute 16, Katja Lamping, Director of Student Recruitment and Penny Kossifos, Head of UK/Europe Recruitment.
For minute 17, Sinead Kennedy, Director of Planning Insight and Improvement.
For minute 18, Derfel Owen, Director of Change and Improvement and Helen Sawyer, Strategic Projects Manager.

Officer(s):
Louise Moore, Secretary

Part I: Preliminary Business

13.   Minutes (Paper 2-09)

13.1. Operations Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2022.

13.2. The following members were welcomed to Operations Committee:

a. Katy Hamilton, Director of Operations, the nominated representative for the Faculty of Social & Historical Sciences as Katie Canada had now left.

b. Clare Foyle, Planning Manager, the nominated representative for VP (Strategy)
c. Noted that Suzy Adcock (already on Operations Committee) was confirmed as the permanent Director of Operations for the Faculty of Life Sciences.

14. Matters Arising (Paper 2-10)

14.1. Arising from minute 2.3, Timetabling, Space Use and Cost of Space: 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.
ACTION: Data to be circulated shortly.

14.2. Arising from minute 5.3b. Tackling UCL's Carbon Footprint: Joanna Marshall-Cook, Head of Sustainability Programmes to:
   i. provide details of what colleagues could start doing now to reduce UCL's carbon footprint.
   ii. share the data and savings of weekend and evening building closures.
ACTION: Data to be circulated shortly.

14.3. Arising from minute 6.2a. Business Continuity Management Policy: Veronique Mizgailo, Head of Business Continuity, to discuss reporting from the working group to Operations Committee with Natasha Lewis, General Counsel.
Completed: Discussion took place about reporting activities. No changes were made to the policy wording.

14.4. Arising from minute 8.3b. Timetabling, implementing scheduling to address failings in rooming an institutional timetable:
   i. Andy Smith, Vice-President (Operations), to inform the Provost that trying to implement the level of change necessary in one year would be difficult and 2-3 years was more achievable.
   Completed: Vice-President (Operations) informed the Provost and was keeping him apprised of activity.
   ii. Sian Minett, Director of Timetabling (Service Delivery and Improvement), Sarah Cowls, Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar and Beth Beasant, Interim Executive Director, Faculty Operations, to agree what to focus on in the first year to have maximum impact, to engage key colleagues and to bring back to Operations Committee and University Management Committee (UMC).
   Noted: Sarah Cowls, Executive Director of Student Services and Registrar, was taking forward the timetabling and scheduling initiative and recommendations would be presented at a future Operations Committee.

14.5. Arising from minute 9.5a. Start of academic year: lessons learnt: a paper with the lessons learnt from this year and preparations for next year would go to UMC and Operations Committee.
ACTION: Paper would be presented to Operations Committee on 26 January 2023.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

15. Operations Committee update

15.1. Andy Smith, Interim Vice-President (Operations) and Chair reflected on the importance of Operations Committee to connect the functional services to implement and progress ideas. The following points were made:
   a. Important for Operations Committee to look at the reality of UCL's operations and to ensure they were grounded and that policies were practical.
   b. To ensure the four-year strategy fitted with plans for Estates and Admissions. It was right for this committee to organise and orchestrate the strategy, with a focus on student numbers and the student experience, whilst ensuring the plans were affordable.
   c. The recent launch of TalentLink showed the positive progress of the new recruitment service. Over 2,500 applicants had applied since the launch three weeks ago, and rich EDI data was being gathered through TalentLink. It was noted that LinkedIn had generated nearly as many applications as jobs.ac.uk and was a likely key factor in the increased diversity, with:
       • 20% having declared a disability
       • 60% ethnically diverse
       • 4% identified as a gender other than their birth gender

15.2. The following points were raised in discussion about TalentLink:
   a. The hiring manager training was very useful, but at two hours in length this was off-putting for some senior academics. Suggested that a light-tough training, supplemented by FAQs could be created. Noted that Donna Dalrymple, Chief People Officer, would put the suggestion of offering light-touch hiring manager training to the TalentLink team.
   b. Noted that currently some financial approvals were not going to the correct people in Finance, but this was being rectified.
   c. Noted that TalentLink was a great success in cross-functional team working.

16. Confidential: Open Days: Planning for 2023 and Beyond (Paper 2-11)

16.1. Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

17. Research & Innovation Services Update 2022 (Paper 2-12)

17.1. Claire Glen, Executive Director Research & Innovation Services, and Sinead Kennedy, Director of Planning Insight and Improvement, delivered a presentation highlighting the recent updates in Research and Innovation Services (RIS). They explained that although UCL had the largest research operation in terms of quantity, they were not largest in staff size.
   a. A lot had been implemented and achieved over the year, including:
      i. A portal created to provide advice and guidance.
      ii. Material transfer agreements had moved from UCLB to RIS.
      iii. Establishment of the RIS advisory group.
      iv. Innovation services had been introduced, which included non-sponsored research activity.
      v. A new compliance and assurance team had been set up, with the new Director starting in January 2023.
      vi. The RIS organisation had been redesigned.
   b. It was noted that stakeholder engagement was important to success.
   c. Service provision was being addressed, with enhanced reporting procedures introduced.
   d. The next steps and phased rollout of innovation services to Faculties was noted.

18. Cubane Cost and Capacity Benchmarking Results

18.1. Helen Sawyer, Strategic Projects Manager, explained that the Cubane cost and capacity benchmarking was an international exercise looking at the costs and satisfaction of professional services across the Higher Education sector. The results for 2020/21 provided an extensive and rich programme of data, and revealed trends such as grade inflation, and high professional services costs. Trends picked out in the presentation showed areas of increased activity and costs in Legal Services, Project and Change Management, and increased spend on staff development and EDI. There was less spend on general admin such as travel, purchasing of goods and services, which was likely because of Covid. The following points were noted:
   a. With regards to Faculties, Cubane could benchmark data by discipline, and this was expected shortly.
   b. A townhall on Cubane benchmarking results would take place in January for the whole UCL community.
   c. Colleagues were asked how it would be best to package the data so it could be used most effectively.
   d. Dashboards would be available week commencing 28 November for anyone with access to Tableau.

18.2. The following points were raised in discussion:
   a. The importance of decoding the information within a UCL context was raised.

  b. The extensive and rich data needed to be understood properly and fully integrated into the UCL narrative in order to provide a proper insight into what we do.

  c. More detail on practicalities and lessons learnt from other universities would be beneficial.

  d. The question over how to corelate costs versus consistency was raised. External benchmarking was helpful, but it was also important to assess spend both internally and externally. Spend was also relative to workload and workload benchmarking to contextualise was necessary.

  e. Important to align expectations. The data was valuable but needed to be tempered against what we were already doing.

18.3 Operations Committee:

  a. Noted that the data had only been received from Cubane on 2 November and that further work was needed on the data to contextualise the information for a wider UCL audience.

  b. Colleagues who wished to go through the information in more detail were encouraged to contact Helen Sawyer, Strategic Projects Manager.

  c. **ACTION:** Beth Beasant, Interim Executive Director, Faculty Operations, to work with the Directors of Operations, Helen Sawyer, Strategic Projects Manager, Derfel Owen, Director of Change and Improvement and Kate Pearce, Director of Finance Business Partnering on Faculty benchmarking information.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

19. Sustainable UCL Annual Report 21/22 (Paper 2-13)

19.1. Operations Committee noted the paper, and no comments were raised.

19.2. Operations Committee noted that the next steps were for the report to be shared with UMC and Council.

20. Critical Incident Response Plan and Business Continuity Management Steering Group Terms of Reference (Paper 2-14)

20.1. Operations Committee noted the papers.

20.2. Operations Committee approved the papers, so they could progress to the next stage, with the following amendments/suggestions:

  a. Important to better understand the cascade of communications during a critical incident test. Noted that there would be a series of tests next year to address these issues.

b. Agreed to share critical information (e.g., phone numbers) as an incident would affect many departments. Agreed to align rich stakeholder information and to have a central repository of data.

c. UCL East campus: an interdisciplinary team across multiple departments and Faculties and the importance of testing through a UCL East lens.

d. Agreed to add Alex Hall, Legal Services Director, to the Business Continuity Management Steering Group.

e. **ACTION:** Ian Dancy, Executive Director of Operations, to feedback to Veronique Mizgailo, Head of Business Continuity, to implement the suggested amendments to the Critical Incident Response Plan and the Business Continuity Management Steering Group.

21. AOB

21.1. None raised.

22. Date of the next meeting

22.1. Thursday 26 January 2023, 10:00 – 11:50

Louise Moore
November 2022