People and Culture Committee

Wednesday 22 November 2023, 2pm -3.50pm

Minutes

Present Members:
Kate Brooks; Georgina Cade; Aimie Chapple; Sara Collins; Donna Dalrymple (Chair); Professor Peter Fonagy; Felipe Fouto; Lesley Houfe; Megan Gerrie; Professor Alison Koslowski; Fiona Naughton; Professor Kimberley Trapp; Professor Anthony Smith; Alison Saunders; Tania Trosini; Michael Walls; Joanne Wilkes.

Apologies:
Professor Kathleen Armour; Dr Tim Beasley-Murray; Paul Clark; Marie Gallagher; Professor Paola Lettieri; Professor Martin Oliver; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Jolene Skordis; Martin Wedlake; Donna Williamson; Professor Steve Wilson.

In attendance:
Sharron Alexander; Angela Clark; Rebecca Edwards; Loleta Fahad; Kate Fernandes; Helen Fisher; Charles Marson; Vincent Preece; Mark Rice; Lorren Rea; Barbara Robertson; Catherine Stow; Sarah West; Dr Kathryn Walsh

Officer(s):
Ms Hannah Swallow (Secretary)

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. Minutes (4-01)

1.1. People and Culture Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held by the People and Culture Committee on 21 June 2023 and the special meeting on 7 July 2023. There were no matters arising.

2. Updates to PCC membership (4-02)

2.1. Donna Dalrymple, Chief People Officer (Chair) confirmed the updates which have been made to the membership. The new members (Alison Koslowski, Michael Walls and Kimberely Trapp) introduced themselves to the committee.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

3. Confidential : Proposal to consider options for a staff mediator role (4-04)

3.1.   Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
3.2.   Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

4.   Confidential: Talentlink – the first 12 months (4-05)

4.1.   Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.
4.2.   Exempt from publication, please see confidential minutes.

5.   Guidance on Contracts, Hiring Workers and Third Parties (4-06)
5.1.   Lorren Rea, Head of Employment Policy presented the new guidance. The following points were made during the presentation:
   a.   It was advised that 18 months ago, procurement and HR were asked to provide more guidance on contracts, workers and third-party suppliers. An overview of the different ways of employing at UCL needed to be provided with more comprehensive guidance for managers.
   b.   The Employment policy team have worked closely with commercial and procurement, recruitment and legal services. If PCC approve this new guidance, there will be a roadshow and briefing across faculties and services for hiring managers to publicise and utilise the new guidance.

5.2.   The following points were raised in discussion:
   a.   It was asked whether the guidance covers the employment of students. It was agreed that although the guidance does cover Unitemps which is how we typically recruit students. It could be more explicit. This can be edited to included mention of students.
   b.   It was asked whether a flowchart or decision tree could be helpful to include. However, it was raised that there are often accessibility issues around these types of diagrams. It will be considered whether it is possible to create an accessible version. It was also noted that the guidance does signpost to the HMRC CEST tool which can be helpful.

People and Culture Committee approved the guidance.

6.   Centralised Ambassador Programme (4-07)
6.1.   Sarah West, Head of Marketing, Communications and Experience presented the update on the centralised ambassador programme. The following points were made during the presentation:
   a.   There are many student ambassadors working across different schemes at UCL. It has been suggested that a centralised scheme is required. This would minimise the replication of administration, legal compliance breaches, because visa working hours can currently potentially be breached as international students are employed across different schemes.
   b.   The plan would be to have a centralised scheme under Campus Experience and infrastructure.

    c.   There would need to be an ambassador manager recruited who would assist with allocating shifts, and HR administration. Individual departments or schemes would still do the training, but the allocation of the shifts would be done centrally. This would mean there would be consistency.

    d.   The work is planned to happen in 4 phases: phase 1 – the event ambassadors, phase 2 – widening participation ambassadors, phase 3 – marketing brand and content ambassadors and finally, phase 4 – faculty ambassadors.

    e.   It was noted that many institutions already have a centralised ambassador programme.

    f.   The committee was asked for feedback and a final paper would be brought to PCC in February next year.

6.2.   The following points were raised in discussion:

    a.   The committee was supportive of the idea.

    b.   It was asked how it had been received by the different stakeholders so far. It was advised that largely positive feedback has been received.

    c.   It was agreed that a centralised training programme will allow us to grow and support strategic plans too.

    d.   It was suggested that the students themselves should be considered as stakeholders as although it is a paid role with UCL, it should be considered how we can make it as beneficial to the student as well. It should be a learning opportunity and a chance to gain key skills. It was noted that there is general ambassadors and team leader roles available.

People and Culture Committee supported the work and welcomed an update coming to the committee in February.

7.   Declarations of Interest: Policy and Compliance Report 2022-23 (4-08)

7.1.   Kathryn Walsh, Executive Director, UCL Innovation and Enterprise presented the report. The following points were made during the presentation:

    a.   In response to a 2017 KPMG audit of disclosures of conflict and declarations of interest, which provided amber-red assurance, UCL developed a new Disclosure of Conflict and Declaration of Interest Policy. This was approved by Council in August 2020. Following this, a further internal audit was undertaken in September/October 2023. This audit provided an amber/green assurance with recommendations to provide non-aggregated reporting to support compliance alongside additional monitoring of compliance within faculties with lower compliance rates and ensuring the requirement for submitting an annual declaration is clear to newly appointed roles.

    b.   There have been dramatic improvements across departments with compliance with declaration of interest.

    c.   It was raised that with automated systems. It is hoped that it will continue to improve. Declaration of interests has now been included in the appraisal process.

    d.   It was noted that the KPMG report is limited to declaration of interest rather than conflict of interests. This is still at amber/red and is being worked on.

    e.   It was noted that declaration of interests has now been added to the inside UCL app.

    f.   It was advised that there is a continuous improvement exercise happening on these issues. With work to address GDPR complexities as there is often sensitive information, how the data can be released.

7.2.   The following points were raised in discussion:

    a.   It was advised that the declarations of interest are not always linked appropriately in terms of grade and job roles.

    b.   It was noted that there is work being undertaken on second jobs guidance too.

    c.   It was raised that it can be difficult to access staff members declaration. It was explained that this can be due to access and the system needs to be automated so the correct people can have access. This will be done through identity management capabilities in the system.

People and Culture Committee noted the report.

8.   Future of Work/Hybrid working guidance – dashboard (4-09)

8.1.   Charles Mason, Head of Human resources presented an update on the guidance and the data dashboard. The following points were made during the presentation:

    a.   Over the next couple of months, plans are to open discussion on hybrid working and seek further feedback.

    b.   The dashboard has metrics on retainment, absences, and access to the employee assistance programme within 12 months of joining UCL as well as other data. This type of data has not been readily available before.

    c.   It was advised that there is also work planned to look at the student survey and the links between hybrid working and availability of staff.

    d.   It was advised that a further paper will be brought back to the February meeting of People and Culture Committee.

8.2.   The following points were made in discussion:

    a.   It was advised that it will be looked at in terms of how the breakdown of hybrid working is working in practice. For example, the 20-80% rule.

    b.   It was raised that the 20-80% measure can be confusing at the recruitment stage. It doesn't necessarily capture where it could be required to do more and makes it difficult to justify when you may need to come in more than that. It was agreed that this could be better defined

and could be removed from job adverts. Charles Marson – reframe the 20-80 so we can define it more easily.

c. It was advised that there are also issues where staff consider their 20% in office days to be fixed to particular days and this can cause issues when a different day is required. This could be addressed in the definition too.

d. There were some concerns around removing the hybrid working breakdown from the advert as it would mean that you would need to have the conversation with each candidate. It was suggested that it could still be shown as hybrid but without the breakdown of percentages.

8.3.   People and Culture committee noted the dashboard update and welcomed a further update at February meeting.

9.   AOB

9.1.   It was noted that there is an additional meeting of People and Culture Committee on Friday 8 December 2023.

9.2.   It was raised that there is planned to be several updated policy documents at the next meeting. It was suggested that these should be sent out as early as possible to allow comments and questions.

Hannah Swallow
22 November 2023