RESEARCH GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday 24 March 2011

M I N U T E S

PRESENT:
Professor David Price *(Chair)*
Professor Daniel Alexander
Professor Shelley Channon
Lord Hart of Chilton
Professor Raymond MacAllister
Mr Tim Perry
Dr Mary Phillips
Dr Arad Reisberg
Dr Claire Warwick

In attendance: Ms Rachel Port *(Secretary)*

Apologies were received from Dr Brian Balmer, Professor Mary Collins, Dr Sylvie Delacroix and Mr Nigel Waugh.

Key to abbreviations used in these Minutes
CoI	Conflict of Interest
HoDs	Heads of Department
JBRU	Joint Biomedical Research Unit
REthC	Research Ethics Committee
RGC	Research Governance Committee
RSC	Research Strategy Committee
ToR	Terms of Reference
UKRIO	UK Research Integrity Office

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12   **MINUTES**

Approved:

12.1   The Minutes of RGC's meeting held on 9 November 2010 *[RGC Mins.1-8, 09.11.10],* issued previously, were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

13   **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

13A   **Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership**
        [RGC Mins.1 and 6, 09.11.10]

Noted:

13A.1   The Chair, after discussion with the Director of Academic Services and on behalf of RGC, had approved the addition of the Vice-Provost (Health) (or nominee) to RGC's *ex officio* membership. The Vice-Provost (Health)'s nominee to RGC was Professor Mary Collins.

13A.2   At its previous meeting, RGC agreed that the Director of Academic Services, with the Director of Human Resources, would arrange to: (i) increase the number of RGC's Nominated members to six; and (ii) amend RGC's ToR to include an expectation for Nominated members to act as the first point of reference for officers charged with convening research misconduct investigation panels *[see also Minute 14 below]*.

13A.3   The Chair, on behalf of RGC, had approved the inclusion as Nominated members of RGC of Professor Daniel Alexander (Faculty of Engineering Sciences), Professor Shelley Channon (Faculty of Life Sciences) and Dr Claire Warwick (Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

13A.4   The Chair, on behalf of RGC, had approved the revision of clause 5 of RGC's ToR as follows:

        'To oversee the operation of UCL's procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research, including (i) participation by members of the Committee, in accordance with the procedure, in the work of investigative panels set up under the procedure, and (ii) receipt of an annual report from the Director of Academic Services on the operation of the procedure.'

13A.5   The changes to RGC's ToR and Constitution noted at 13A.1, 13A.2 and 13A.4 above had been approved by Governance Committee.

13A.6   Ms Sarah Brant had left UCL. The new Director of Human Resources was Mr Nigel Waugh.

13A.7   The new RGC Secretary was Ms Rachel Port, following the departure of Dr Michele Dres.

Received:

13A.8   At <u>APPENDIX RGC 2/11 (10-11)</u> - the revised Terms of Reference of RGC, for information.

13A.9   At <u>APPENDIX RGC 2/12 (10-11)</u> – the revised Constitution and Membership of RGC, for information.

Reported:

13A.10 The Chair welcomed all the new members to RGC and noted the background to the formation of RGC in light of the reform of UCL's committee structure last

session. The RSC had been wound up with effect from September 2010 and the RSC Sub-Committee on Research Governance had been reconstituted as RGC with effect from the same date.

13B Establishment of the Committee
[RGC Min.1, 09.11.10]

Noted:

13B.1   At its previous meeting, RGC agreed that the RGC Secretary would check that its profile on relevant UCL web pages was sufficiently high.

13B.2   The newly-established Academic Services Research Governance webpage at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-services/resgov, which contained a link to the RGC webpage, could be accessed via direct links from the main UCL Research and Staff Support websites.

13B.3   At its previous meeting, RGC agreed that the Chair would give a presentation on RGC's work to one of the Provost's regular meetings with Heads of Department.

13B.4   A presentation on RGC's work would be given by the Chair to a future Provost's HoDs meeting.

13C Role of Heads of Departments in Research Governance
[RGC Min.3, 09.11.10]

Noted:

13C.1   At its previous meeting RGC thought it would be useful for there to be a system, in addition to staff appraisal, for ensuring researchers considered the ethics and governance of their research. RGC thought the system should be tailored to the needs of individual departments, and capable of generating a metric according to which its effectiveness could be measured. RGC agreed that the Chair would propose to Faculty Deans that they raise awareness of research governance and ethics - including issues related to CoI, and misuse of research - through an annual event of whatever format they considered most appropriate, at which attendance would constitute compliance with UCL's requirement for relevant staff to consider those matters.

Received:

13C.2   An oral report from the Chair.

Reported:

13C.3   The Chair noted that he intended to raise awareness of research governance and ethics matters - including issues related to CoI, and misuse of research - as well as the work of RGC, with Faculty Deans and subsequently give a presentation covering both matters to a future Provost's HoDs meeting to be held next term.

14   **RESEARCH MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE**
        [RGC Min.6, 09.11.10]

Received:

14.1   At <u>APPENDIX RGC 2/15 (10-11)</u> *[circulated separately ahead of the meeting and issued with these Minutes]* – an update report by the Director of Academic Services.

14.2   An oral report by Tim Perry, Director of Academic Services.

Reported:

14.3   A revised draft of UCL's procedure for investigating and resolving allegations of misconduct in academic research ('research misconduct procedure') had been prepared. The draft procedure contained a number of significant changes to the existing procedure. In particular, it was intended that in future cases - where the respondent to allegations of research misconduct was a current UCL employee and the panel set up, at the first stage of the procedure, to screen the allegations concluded that there was a case for further investigation - the matter should at that stage be taken forward by the Director of Human Resources through UCL's staff disciplinary procedure rather than by the Director of Academic Services under the research misconduct procedure.

14.4   Whilst UCL had not formally adopted the UKRIO's research misconduct procedure, it was agreed by RGC's predecessor that the UCL procedure should conform to the principles laid out in the UKRIO equivalent. In light of a meeting held in early March 2011, involving the Chair and the Director of Academic Services, other UCL officers and UKRIO officers, the Acting Head of UKRIO had agreed to look at the draft revised UCL procedure and to advise on any areas of significant divergence from the UKRIO document.

14.5   As indicated at Minute 13A.2 above, the Nominated membership of RGC had been increased from three to six and the academic staff concerned had been informed of the role envisaged for them under the revised research misconduct procedure. The Director of Academic Services noted that one of the Nominated members had made the point that the cumulative workload for staff involved in similar roles in relation to other UCL procedures such as those concerning staff discipline and grievance was potentially very time-consuming.

14.6   Pending the receipt of advice from UKRIO's Acting Head, it was intended that a final draft of the revised procedure be submitted to the next meeting of RGC on 2 June 2011 for approval, with a view to it being formally implemented with effect from 1 August 2011.

Discussion:

14.7   In response to a query, the Director of Academic Services noted that should any allegations of research misconduct conducted on UCL premises be proven against an individual who was no longer a UCL employee, the findings would continue to be reported to the individual's current employing institution under the procedure. This conformed to UKRIO's guidance, which encouraged HEIs to share as much information as possible with all relevant parties concerned, which also included funding providers.

14.8 One member reported that they had served on a panel under UCL's staff disciplinary procedure and noted the lack of guidance for academic staff involved in such roles. Members felt that academic staff required training to participate on such panels. Under the revised research misconduct procedure, the Director of Academic Services envisaged that the investigating panel would have at least one experienced panel member and a newer panel member to allow for the newer person to be mentored. However, the Director of Academic Services anticipated that the number of cases to be investigated under the revised research misconduct procedure would decrease if it were to apply only in cases where the respondent was a UCL student or was not currently a member of UCL.

14.9 In the meantime, RGC endorsed the suggestion that the Director of Academic Services liaise with the Director of Human Resources about the matter raised at Minute 14.5 above, and investigate the feasibility of creating and maintaining a central record of the staff available for and of their actual involvement in roles in connection with other relevant procedures such as staff discipline and grievance.

RESOLVED:

14.10 That the Director of Academic Services liaise with the Director of Human Resources about, (i), the workload for staff involved in similar roles in relation to other UCL procedures, and, (ii), having a central record of the staff available for and of their actual involvement in roles in relation to other UCL procedures such as staff discipline and grievance.

[ACTION: Director of Academic Services]

15 **REFORM OF THE UCL COMMITTEE SYSTEM**

Received:

15.1 At <u>APPENDIX RGC 2/17 (10-11)</u> *[circulated separately ahead of the meeting and issued with these Minutes]* – a note by the Director of Academic Services.

15.2 An oral report by Tim Perry, Director of Academic Services.

Reported:

15.3 It was noted that a review of UCL's standing committees and sub-committees was undertaken last session by the Vice-Provost (Operations) and the Director of Academic Services. Under the proposals arising from this review, Council agreed that, *inter alia*, the RSC Sub-Committee on Research Governance be reconstituted as RGC and that it be further reviewed in 2010-11 session, in conjunction with a further review of the Research Ethics Committee (REthC). Council had noted the very useful role played by REthC and that it was one of several committees in operation across UCL with research governance/ethics roles. It was proposed that the Council sub-group on committees reform be advised that REthC should continue to operate as at present but that, for the sake of consistency with other research governance/ethics committees reporting to RGC, it should no longer have the status of a formal UCL standing committee.

Discussion:

15.4   Members endorsed the proposal to reconstitute REthC as a body operating outside the structure of UCL committees established by Council and noted that its minutes should continue to be submitted to RGC for   information. The Chair expressed his thanks to all REthC officers for their service on the Committee and commended its work. The Director of Academic Services, as Secretary to Council, would take this matter forward as necessary.

RESOLVED:

15.5   That RGC approved the proposal to advise the Council sub-group on committees reform that the REthC should continue to operate as at present but that it should no longer have the status of a UCL standing committee, and that the Director of Academic Services take this matter forward.

[ACTION: RGC Officers / Director of Academic Services *(to note)*]

16   **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted:

16.1   The next meeting of RGC would take place at on **Thursday 2 June 2011** at **10.30am** in the **Ground Floor Meeting Room, 2 Taviton Street**.