



STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADMISSIONS AND FUNDING COMMITTEE

9 March 2017

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Professor Anthony Smith (*Chair*)

Ms Wendy Appleby, Mr Ian Bartlett, Dr Caroline Essex, Dr Julie Evans, Mr Neil Green, Ms Lesley Hayman, Ms Collette Lux, Ms Bella Malins, Dr Claire Maxwell, Professor John Mullan, Professor Norbert Pachler, Dr Yvo Pokern, Ms Katy Redfern, Dr David Stevens, Ms Olga Thomas and Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker

In attendance: Ms Caroline Wickenden (for Mr Tom Rowson) and Mr Rob Traynor (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Halima Begum, Mr Mark Crawford, Professor Mark Emberton, Dr Russell Hitchings, Mr Kevin King, Dr Michael Munday and Mr Tom Rowson

Key to abbreviations:

CAM	Communications and Marketing
CLIE	Centre for Languages and International Education
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
EdCom	Education Committee
FBA	Finance and Business Affairs (UCL Division of)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IOE	Institute of Education
MAPS	Mathematical and Physical Sciences
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
PGR	Postgraduate Research
SELCS	School of European Languages, Culture and Society
SLASH	School of Laws, Arts and Humanities, Social and Historical Sciences and SSEES
SMT	Senior Management Team
SRM	Student Recruitment Marketing
SSEES	School of Eastern European Studies
StRAFC	Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee
UG	Undergraduate

14 WELCOME AND CONSTITUTION 2016-17 UPDATE

- 14.1 The Chair welcomed Ms Collette Lux, the new CAM Director, to the Committee. The Chair thanked Mr Ivan Royle for his contribution to StRAFC, as CAM Interim Director, prior to Ms Lux's appointment.

- 14.2 The Chair also thanked Dr Russell Hitchings for his contribution to StRAFC. A replacement member from SLASH was being sought. It was noted that Ms Briony McArdle-Oakley, the Office of the Vice-Provost (Development) representative had been replaced by Ms Cathy Brown on the committee.

15 MINUTES OF 28 NOVEMBER 2016 MEETING

- 15.1 **Approved** – the Minutes of the StRAFC meeting held on 28 November 2016 [*StRAFC Minutes 1-13, 2016-17*].

16 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

16A Scholarships Strategy Working Group

(*StRAFC Minute 3C, 28.11.16*)

- 16A.1 The Deputy Director of Access and Admissions reported that following discussions between Planning and SRS officers, a Task and Finish Group was being set up to consider the scholarships strategy. The membership would consist of staff from relevant professional services as well as at least two colleagues from academic departments. It was intended that it would meet soon to review the strategy, which would be submitted to StRAFC for consideration early in the next session.

16B The Graduate Experience: Prospectus and Application Portal

(*StRAFC Minute 3E, 28.11.16*)

- 16B.1 The SRM Director and the Head of Student Recruitment Operations provided an update on the portal. ISD had submitted an application for funding for the portal for 2017-18. It was intended to connect the prospectus programme pages to the portal, which would improve the search function for staff and students. The improvements would also to enable greater analytic functionality, for example by allowing staff to see drop-off ratios. However, the portal would require resourcing, which StRAFC members agreed should be a priority.

RESOLVED:

- 16B.2 That the Chair advise the SMT of the need to consider resourcing provision to improve the portal and thereby the student application experience.

Action: Professor Anthony Smith

17 ADMISSIONS UPDATE

(*PAPER 2-01*)

- 17.1 **Received** – an update on the current admissions cycle by the Director of Access and Admissions, who reported:
- a) UG applications had increased by 5.7% overall compared to 2016, with increases to UK (+5.5%), Overseas (+8.3%) and EU (+0.4%) applications. This was against national trends, where total applications had decreased by 3.8% overall and in UK (-4.2%) and EU (-6.2%) numbers, though Overseas applications had risen (+1.6%).

- b) Whilst some departments had seen high application numbers, there were some worrying declines in UK applications for SELCS (-25%), the IOE (-20.6%) and Biochemical Engineering (-50.9%). Some departments had also seen a decline in EU applications, though as this had increased for UCL overall, it was not yet clear what effect Brexit was having on the institution. Recent modelling indicated that most departments would meet their targets, with those most unlikely to outlined in the paper, including the three above. Some departments would need to take “near miss” applicants in order to meet the target.
- c) PGT applications had increased by 15.6% on the same point last year, with increases to UK (+5.8%), Overseas (+17.4%) and EU (+13.3%). Two Engineering programmes, MSc Management and MSc Finance had seen an unprecedented rise in applications (over 2000 more since 2016) and consideration might be needed to introducing a premium application fee for these programmes to help manage this. The number of offers and acceptances had also increased since last year (by 6% and 4.9% respectively), though UK offers decreased by 8.3%. The acceptance increase has been fuelled by 95% increase in IOE overseas applicants, but when this figure was taken out, UCL’s total was 3.8% down.
- d) PGR applications had decreased by 11.3% on the same point last year overall, though there had been a 3.3% increase in offers made. Acceptances were at the same levels as last year so far. MRes applications had seen a similar decrease, though offers and acceptances were both up by over 25%.

17.2 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- a) Concerns were expressed regarding the UG programmes with large declines in application numbers. It was suggested that for highly specialised subjects such as Biochemical Engineering, not being able to interview applicants had a profound affect as they had provided face to face opportunities for staff to promote the programmes and enthuse applicants. The national decline in Modern Foreign Language subjects was affecting SELCS, with Brexit possibly adding to the adverse factors in the decline. Careful consideration was being given to improving the conversion rate. It was noted that one of the IOE UG programmes had been suspended and that the others were being carefully considered to see if they could make their targets. CAM will work closely with faculties to increase the numbers of high quality applicants and will consider how to tailor conversion activity.
- b) It was suggested that target figures for PGT applications would be useful to help understand the data in context. The data was complex at PGT level and the Planning and Admissions officers were trying to improve models so that the offers and target figures could be compared.

RESOLVED:

- 17.3 That the Director of Access and Admissions discuss PGT target and offer figures with colleagues in the Planning Office and provide an update to the next meeting of StRAFC.

Action: Bella Malins and Caroline Wickenden

18 UCL SUMMER SCHOOL - MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT UPDATE
(PAPER 2-02)

- 18.1 The SRM Director introduced the paper and reported the following:

- a) The pilot UCL Summer School took place in 2016, but the numbers of attendees enrolled was disappointing and somewhat below expectations. CLIE, SRM and FBA had reviewed the business plans, marketing and arrangements and had agreed a revised recruitment strategy and targets (Paper 2-02 Annex). This was closely aligned with the UCL 2034 strategy. Despite the 2016 low numbers, some of the attendees had enrolled on PGT programmes, demonstrating the potential of the Summer School in providing quality students to UCL.
- b) Monthly monitoring points had been introduced to check whether the targets were being achieved. The March 2017 figures had just been reviewed and showed 89 acceptances for the School (i.e. fully paid up students). This was a considerable advance on the same time in 2016.

- 18.2 The following point was noted in the discussion:

- a) Concern was expressed on whether the Summer School would have the necessary resources, particularly for the attendees' accommodation needs, should the numbers exceed the expected target. Discussions would be required with UCL Estates should this prove to be an issue, with the likely numbers known by early May.

RESOLVED:

- 18.3 That the Director of SRM and colleagues managing the Summer School liaise with UCL Estates as necessary to ensure plans are in place for sufficient summer lettings to cover attendees' accommodation needs. StRAFC to be kept informed of progress.

Action: Dr David Stevens

19 COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN
(PAPER 2-03)

- 19.1 The SRM Director introduced the paper and reported the following:

- a) A CMA Review Workshop, hosted by the SUMS Consultancy, had recently been held at UCL, attended by a wide range of professional services managers and academic staff, including StRAFC members.

- b) The Workshop was very productive and helped participants to discuss the implications of the CMA, its requirements and to identify the risks to UCL in not meeting them. An action plan, outlined in Paper 2-03, was agreed to begin to address these risks and to provide a coherent institutional response to the CMA requirements.
- c) The workshop had recommended that an informal group led by the Deputy Registrar and the Director of Access and Admissions be set up to coordinate this activity and to consider the formal governance structures required and it was intended that this group would submit a report to Education Committee soon. It was intended that the draft paper would be circulated to the workshop attendees first for comment.

19.2 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- a) Ensuring that CMA requirements were met was essential for UCL's recruitment activities, including the Access agreement and programme information on the prospectus and departmental webpages. A single source of truth for programme and module content would be required as this was essential information for prospective students.
- b) Consideration would be required on whether the CMA should also be made more explicit in the Institutional Risk Register.
- c) More investment was required to ensure systems met the CMA requirements, with EdCom suggested as the appropriate committee for oversight and to receive the proposed CMA group's reports (it was also suggested that this might be formalised as a steering group of EdCom). StRAFC, as the committee with oversight of recruitment and admissions matters, would also need to be kept informed of CMA matters and to discuss where necessary and as directed by EdCom or the proposed CMA group.
- d) The proposed group would also need to consider how awareness of the CMA is raised among staff and how it might foster more pro-active attitudes in dealing with the requirements. Many staff were not aware of the CMA implications, or had a shared sense of ownership and responsibility in dealing with it.

RESOLVED:

- 19.3 That the Deputy Registrar submits a report on the governance of the CMA to EdCom and requests that EdCom also consider the status of the proposed CMA group and its reporting arrangements. StRAFC to be kept informed of the progress of the group and to consider CMA matters as necessary and as directed by EdCom or the proposed group.

Action: Edel Mahoney and StRAFC members to note

20 REPORTS OF SUB-GROUPS, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF STRAFC

20.1 No minutes were received from StRAFC sub-groups and working groups since the previous meeting¹:

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21A Members Leaving StRAFC

21A.1 The Chair thanked the MAPS Faculty Tutor, who was leaving UCL after many years for a new post at the University of Nottingham. Dr Essex had made an invaluable contribution to the Committee and UCL over the years, for which the members were very grateful.

22 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

22.1 The final StRAFC meeting for 2016-17 is as follows:

17 May 2017 (2pm Room 337 Rockefeller Building) –*note this date was changed from 1 June 2017.*

Rob Traynor
StRAFC Secretary

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26 April 2017

¹ Minutes of StRAFC sub-groups etc are available, along with the other StRAFC papers, on the [StRAFC SharePoint](#).