



STUDENT RECRUITMENT, ADMISSIONS AND FUNDING COMMITTEE

11 June 2018

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Professor Anthony Smith (*Chair*)

Ms Wendy Appleby, Mr Ian Bartlett, Ms Cathy Brown, Dr Julie Evans, Mr Neil Green, Mr Kevin King, Ms Bella Malins, Dr Michael Munday, Dr Katie Quy, Ms Katy Redfern and Ms Olga Thomas

In attendance: Ms Fernanda Bates (for Professor Norbert Pachler) and Mr Rob Traynor (Secretary)

Apologies for absence were received from: Ms Sarah Al-Aride, Dr Simon Banks, Professor David Bogle, Professor Stella Bruzzi, Mr Mark Crawford, Professor Mark Emberton, Dr Elinor Jones, Ms Collette Lux, Mr Ciaran Moynihan, Professor Norbert Pachler, Mr Tom Rowson, Dr David Sim, Dr David Stevens and Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker

Key to abbreviations:

BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CAM	Communications and Marketing
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IOE	Institute of Education
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
JACS	Joint Academic Coding System
OfS	Office for Students
OVPD	Office of the Vice-Provost (Development)
PGT	Postgraduate Taught
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SLMS	School of Life Sciences, Medical Sciences, Brain Sciences and Population Health Sciences (Group of faculties)
StRAFC	Student Recruitment, Admissions and Funding Committee
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
UG	Undergraduate

PART 1: PRELIMINARY BUSINESS

13 CONSTITUTION 2017-18: WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

[PAPER 1-01]

13.1 The Chair welcomed the following new member to the Committee:

- Mr Ciaran Moynihan, Head of Global Partnerships, Global Engagement Office

14 MINUTES OF 4 DECEMBER 2017 MEETING

[StRAFC Minutes 1-12, 2017-18].

14.1 **Approved** – the Minutes of the StRAFC meeting held on 4 December 2017.

15 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(See also Item 20 below)

15A Future StRAFC Items Update

(Minute 8, 04.12.2018)

15A.1 The Secretary provided an update on the following possible items for future meetings of StRAFC:

- a) *Widening Participation Data* – the Director of Access and Admissions and the Head of Access had informed the Secretary of a visit by the Director of Fair Access (Office for Students) scheduled for October at which it was expected that UCL would be given a clearer steer on the measures the OfS wished institutions to use. The Access and Admissions officers suggested that this item and an update on the visit be added to the agenda for the first StRAFC meeting next session.
- b) *Evaluation of the PGT Student Loan Scheme* – following advice from the Head of the Student Funding Office, it was agreed that this item should be included as part of the wider discussions of trends in UK/EU applications and admissions to UCL, to be held in the next session.
- c) *Student Progression including BME students and general progression from UG to PGT* - the Head of Student Success Projects (Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) informed the Secretary that the BME Attainment Gap project, currently underway at UCL, had not considered data relating to progression. This was likely to be covered by the Student Success Strategy, currently in development with Access and Admissions officers. It may be possible to inform StRAFC about these developments at the first meeting next session. A more general discussion on progression from UG to PG (i.e. how many UCL UG students go on to PG study here) would also need to take place next session as some analysis of this data will be required.
- d) *Use of Open Days to target UCL UG Students* – it was noted that Item 19 outlined CAM's approach to international student recruitment and suggested that an item be presented to the second StRAFC meeting next session to allow the Open Days to have taken place.

RESOLVED:

15A.2 That StRAFC members note the above agenda items for the StRAFC agendas in the next session.

Action: StRAFC members to note

PART 2: MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

16 ADMISSIONS UPDATE

(PAPER 2-01)

16.1 **Received** – an update on the current admissions intake forecast by the Director of Access and Admissions, who reported:

- a) Faculties and departments had received comprehensive modelling data of the projected number of students expected to be admitted on each programme. The projections were calculated on the previous three years average conversion data at UCL and would be re-modelled again later in the cycle.
- b) It was currently projected that UG enrolments would be over 500 short of the overall target, with the UK target over 700 short, although the EU and Overseas figures projected an increase over the targets. It was anticipated that a number of “near miss” applicants would be required in order to meet the UK short-fall, but that this should bring most departments up to their targets. CAM officers were working with the small number of departments further away from the targets to develop more effective strategies to promote their subjects in schools and colleges.
Agreed – that UCL should not use UCAS Clearing to make up for any short-fall in student numbers.
- c) There was still some time for the PGT applications to run and the current projection data was indicative only and treated with caution. The current overall projection was for a the target to be 385 short, almost 1,000 short for the UK/EU target, countered by an anticipated 600 over for the Overseas target. Consideration was being given to extending application deadlines for those departments furthest away from the targets and CAM was also providing assistance and advice on maximising their recruitment over the summer. It was also noted that some programmes were already over-subscribed (e.g. Laws, Computer Science and the School of Management) whilst others were struggling for numbers (e.g. a continuing decline in Modern Language applications).
- d) The in-take target for the IOE’s ITE programme had to be lowered due to a national collapse in the numbers applying for teacher training (40% down on 2017). This had resulted in 30% fewer applications at UCL.

16.2 The following points were noted in the discussion:

- a) Concern was expressed at the increasing need to take near miss applications as this negatively affected the tariff figures used in league tables such as that produced by the Guardian. This lowered UCL’s ranking against the competitor institutions such as Bristol and Durham which had higher average tariffs. Maintaining higher tariffs was also complicated by the need to improve widening participation at UCL with some students being accepted with lower A level grades. Targeted action would be required to improve UCL’s market share of UK students to address this issue and decrease reliance on near miss applicants to meet enrolment targets.

- b) Concerns was also expressed regarding the consideration being given to also dropping the tariff for the Medical School by two grades in order to make the targets. However, it was noted that SLMS subject figures were not accurate as many NHS funded programmes would receive the majority of applications in July and August.
- c) CAM was already undertaking strategic marketing with many departments, for example working with SSEES to target schools offering Russian A-level. The approach to recruiting students to Modern Language programmes was also being re-thought and notice taken of good practice in French and Spanish, where recruitment was still strong.
- d) It was noted that scholarships and student funding was at its highest ever level at UCL with many bespoke awards also available to students. This was an important part of UCL provision which would need to be closely aligned with student recruitment strategy both overall and at a more local level.
- e) It was further noted that the data from the PGT deposits was also very useful for providing departments with a clearer picture of likely numbers, although this was still for a small number of programmes, with only one years' worth of data available at present.

RESOLVED:

16.3 **Approved:** paper 2-01 the Update on the Admissions Cycle.

17 ACADEMIC MANUAL CHAPTER 1: STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS DRAFT TEXT
(PAPER 2-02)

- 17.1 **Received** – a paper outlining the draft Chapter 1 of the Academic Manual: Student Recruitment and Admissions, from the Director of Student Recruitment Marketing. The paper was presented by the Head of Student Recruitment Media who reported the following:
- a) Academic Services and CAM officers had worked on the draft chapter following the latter's wide consultation with staff. It was agreed to add recruitment policies to the chapter as it had previously only covered selection and admissions. This would ensure that the chapter met the requirements of the QAA's Quality Code (Chapter B2, Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education) in relation to student recruitment.
 - b) It was agreed that the Chapter should relate to principles and standards for student recruitment, with the annexes containing specific policies and procedures. It was noted that the current Academic Manual already contained much of the latter, hence the main changes made were to the actual text of Chapter 1.
 - c) It was intended, subject to approval by StRAFC, for Chapter 1 to be submitted to the July meeting of Education Committee, which was considering changes for approval to the Academic Manual for 2018-19. It was expected that this would be published in August.

- 17.2 The following points were noted in the discussion:
- a) The draft chapter was welcomed by StRAFC members who commented that it would be helpful to have the student recruitment policies held together in the same chapter as admissions and selection.
 - b) It was noted that the chapter referred to data protection, particularly in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations, at Section 1.6. It was suggested that the Annexes might also cover the costs of studying.
 - c) It was further suggested that “or their nominee” be added to paragraph 1.5 on the senior membership of StRAFC.

RESOLVED:

- 17.3 **Approved:** Paper 2-02, the draft Chapter 1 of the Academic Manual: Student Recruitment and Admissions. The paper would now be submitted to EdCom for final consideration and formal approval.

Action: Ian Bartlett and StRAFC members to note

18 OFFICE OF THE VICE-PROVOST (DEVELOPMENT) SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES FUNDRAISING STRATEGY
(PAPER 2-03)

- 18.1 **Received** – Paper 2-03 introduced by the Director of Strategy and Operations (OVPD) who reported the following:
- a) The Scholarships and Bursaries Fundraising Strategy was outlined in paper 2-03, Scholarships: Transforming Lives. This was the first draft of the strategy developed by OVPD officers, which was intended to inform fundraising activities with potential donors to UCL scholarships and bursaries.
 - b) It was intended that the strategy would be continuously updated. StRAFC was asked for its views on this initial draft.
- 18.2 The following points were noted in the discussion:
- a) The use of the phrase “needs blind” scholarships confused some of the members, who suggested that it appeared to be at odds with the stated intention that there should be fully-funded scholarships aimed at those students “who need it most”. It was agreed to remove the phrase “needs blind” to prevent any confusion.
 - b) It was also suggested that references to BME students were clear that they referred to UK students, as differentiated from overseas students.
 - c) It was also suggested that it would be helpful to have clarity on what living costs would cover to ensure student expectations were clear.

RESOLVED:

- 18.3 **Approved:** Paper 2-03, draft strategy: Scholarships: Transforming Lives subject to further drafts taking note of the StRAFC discussion. The Head of Student Funding also agreed to provide comments on the draft strategy.

Action: Cathy Brown and Kevin King to note

19 THE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT

- 19.1 **Received** – A presentation by the Head of Student Recruitment Operations who noted the following:
- a) CAM was making greater use of “big data”, including planning round target data and HESA statistics.
 - b) Using the data CAM had refined its approach to international student recruitment which it had developed to be in line with the UCL key strategies on education, global engagement and the UCL 2034 strategy. A key principle was to retain the standards of student recruited.
 - c) A new approach had been developed to international recruitment prioritisation and it was proposed that a Gold, Silver and Bronze system, similar to the commonly used traffic light system, be adopted. The system would work as follows:
 - Gold – this service represented the highest level of support from CAM and would be offered to departments that were under capacity or looking to grow, and where market conditions show there is potential for significant growth.
 - Silver – this next level of support would be offered for to departments where there was potential for growth or improvements in quality or in order to assist new programmes.
 - Bronze – the standard level of service would be provided for departments where there are limited prospects for growth: Market share is high and quality is good, and there is no excess capacity or there is limited demand in the market.
 - d) CAM was also basing its approach on the Kano business model of customer satisfaction. When considering the needs of CAM's key audiences (departments and prospective students) they will be categorised according to 'basic' (most-important), 'performers' (more is better), and 'delighters' (unexpected, nice-to-haves). According to the KANO model it is the absence of the basic customer needs that is most likely to lead to dissatisfaction, so CAM will focus on ensuring that the basic student recruitment needs of departments and prospective students are addressed first before providing the performers and then the delighters.
 - e) CAM intended to work with faculties on their plans for recruitment and requested their feedback on these approaches, as well as from departments and professional services.
- 19.2 The following points were noted in the discussion:
- a) It was asked how responsive the new data might be and whether it would be possible to run modelling of recruitment data in real time. It was noted that CAM purchases HESA data on a yearly basis, and so real time data is not available. However, it should still be helpful in making decisions on recruitment priorities.
 - b) There were some concerns that the data would be based on JACS codes which were not easily relatable to UCL programmes. Whilst JACS codes were not granular enough for most individual programmes, the

data was better for larger groupings and could for example, reveal the top five countries for a particular faculty or department to help target marketing more effectively.

- c) It was questioned whether Bronze status would mean little CAM resources going to those departments which had strong recruitment from particular countries resulting in successful programmes, but had little room for further expansion. It was feared that cutting resources could prove very costly to these programmes and enable other institutions to take the market share instead. It was noted that the CAM policy would be flexible and ensure that the necessary provision was maintained to enable already successful recruitment relationships to continue.

RESOLVED:

- 19.3 That StRAFC endorse the approach taken by CAM to international student recruitment.

Action: CAM officers to note

PART 3: OTHER MATTERS FOR APPROVAL OR INFORMATION

20 UCL SCHOLARSHIPS AND STUDENT FUNDING STRATEGY
(PAPER 2-04)

- 20.1 **Received** – Paper 2-04 the updated Scholarships and Student Funding Strategy. The paper had been revised following discussion at the previous meeting and then approved by Chair's action.

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

- 21.1 **Received** – The following minutes were received from StRAFC sub-groups and working groups since the previous meeting¹:

- Admissions Requirement Panel – 9 April 2018

22 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

- 22.1 The dates for next year's StRAFC meetings are as follows (circulated following the meeting and venues to be confirmed later):
- Monday 17 December 2018 10am to 12 noon
 - Tuesday 5 March 2019 10am to 12 noon
 - Monday 10 June 2019 10am to 12 noon

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

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26 July 2018