ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Thursday 3 July 2014

MINUTES

**23   CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP - RETIRING MEMBERS OF ACAD
       COMMITTEE**

Noted:

23.1   The following members of AC would be standing down from AC at the end
       session and in some cases retiring from UCL:

       ‹   Professor Richard Catlow, Dean of the Faculty of Mathematical & F
           Sciences;

       ‹   Professor Mike Ewing, Dean of Students (Academic);

       ‹   Dr Hilary Richards, Faculty Tutor, Faculty of Life Sciences;

       ‹   Dr Eva Sorensen, elected non-professorial member of AB;

       ‹   Professor Russell Viner, elected professorial member of AB;

       ‹   Mr Keir Gallagher, Educations & Campaigns Officer, UCL Union;

       ‹   Ms Tracy Herman, Medical, Pharmacy & Health Students' Officer,

       ‹   Mr Ben Towse, Postgraduate Students' Officer, UCL Union.

23.2   The Provost thanked the above colleagues for their contributions to the wo
       UCL generally, in some cases over many years, and wished them well for

23.3   The Provost paid a special tribute to Professor Ewing for his significant co
       in his role as Dean of Students (Academic), as Chair of the Education Cor
       Chair of the Quality Management and Enhancement Committee. Professo
       been Acting Vice-Provost (Education) before Professor Smith had taken u
       in January 2012 and had chaired AC during that period. The Provost's con
       endorsed warmly by the Committee.

24   MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 8 MAY 2014

Reported:

24.1   The Secretary reported that the UCLU's Postgraduate Students' Officer, M
       requested that Minute 21.3.7 be amended as it did not reflect accurately hi
       the previous meeting. It was proposed, therefore, that this minute be amen
       follows:

           One of the UCLU officers expressed concern about the relationship betw
           Services staff and the academic community (including students) being d
           of 'customer service', when, in his view, Professional Services staff shou
           'partners' or 'colleagues' in UCL's academic mission. The Provost obser
           language had been used as it was recognised that in some areas of UC
           recognition that the principle of 'customer service' needed to be embedo

and that UCL needed to provide high-quality and professional services to the academic community. The Provost also observed that UCL should not refer to its students as 'customers' as this did not convey the relationship that a university should seek to have with its student body.

The above amendment was approved by AC.

Confirmed:

24.2 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 8 May 2014 *[AC Mins. 18-22, 08.05.14]*, subject to the correction noted at Minute 24.1 above.

25 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES *[see also Minutes 26 and 27 below]*

25A UCL 2034 Strategy *[AC Min.21, 08.05.14]*

Received:

25A.1 An oral update from the Provost on progress with developing the UCL 2034 Strategy.

Reported:

25A.2 The Strategy document had been revised and reconstructed in light of comments received during the consultation exercise, including the very helpful discussion at the last AC meeting. The updated version of the Strategy would be submitted to Council for approval at its meeting on 8 July 2014. The next stage of the process would be designing and putting in place a effective implementation plan, and work on this had already begun. It was envisaged that the plan would set out a series of objective against the themes in the UCL 2034 Strategy and these would be assigned to a senior officer as the 'theme leader' to co-ordinate. It was hoped that, wherever possible, these themes and objectives would be implemented *via* UCL's existing governance and management structures, without the need to create new structures or bodies. It was also intended that implementation of the UCL 2034 Strategy would be embedded within the standard planning cycle.

Business for Discussion

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26 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY – UPDATE FROM THE VICE-PROVOST (EDUCATION)

Received:

26.1 An update report on the NSS at <u>AC 4-15 (13-14)</u>, presented by the Vice-Provost (Education), Professor Anthony Smith.

Reported:

26.2 The report provided a summary of UCL's performance in the 2013 NSS, the actions taken to follow-up the release of the results, actions taken to enhance UCL's response rate in the 2014 NSS, and initial plans for the 2015 NSS.

26.3 The Vice-Provost (Education) expressed his thanks to Deans, Heads of Departments, and the NSS Liaison Officers for their support in trying to improve UCL's performance in the NSS, in terms the response rate and in following-up issues to emerge from the NSS

results in the form of departmental action plans. The provisional response rate for the 2014 NSS was 74%; 12% higher than the previous year. It had yet to be seen whether a higher response would result in improved results for UCL in terms of student satisfaction. A full report on the outcome of the 2014 NSS would be submitted to the first meeting of AC in the 2014-15 session.

26.4   It was proposed that from 2014-15 onwards, the NSS Steering Group would be formalised within the UCL committee system, with a reporting line to QMEC.

Discussion:

26.5   AC commended the Vice-Provost (Education), his office and staff across faculties and departments or their efforts in trying to improve UCL's performance in the NSS. Also, it was noted that addressing some of the issues identified by, or as a result of the analysis of, the NSS results might have resource implications for UCL, either centrally or within faculties.

*RESOLVED***:**

26.6   That AC welcome the update report on the NSS at <u>AC 4-15 (13-14)</u>.

[ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith – to note]

26.7   That an update report on the NSS be submitted to AC at its October 2014 meeting.

[ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith]

27   **STUDENT EXPERIENCE FORUM – UPDATE REPORT TO ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Received:

27.1   An update report from the StEF at <u>AC 4-16 (13-14)</u>, presented by the Chair of the StEF, Professor Anthony Smith.

Reported:

27.2   The report provided an overview of the first year of operation of the StEF, including details of its membership, issues addressed in its meetings, and follow-up actions taken.

Discussion:

27.3   A member, noting that the StEF reviews data gained from the NSS and Student Barometer surveys, expressed a concern that students might be experiencing 'survey fatigue', as they are also invited to complete a range of internal questionnaires. In response, the Director of

recently succeeded in acquiring Bidborough House, which comprised ready-to-use office space which would enable Professional Services staff to relocate from the main site, thus releasing a significant amount of space for teaching and learning and other academic activities. These were first steps in a major plan to address a legacy of under-investment in UCL's estate, especially its facilities for teaching and learning. The longer term solution to those issues would be the development at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which would see a major transformation of the UCL estate.

28.5   The question was raised of whether the introduction of deposits or pre-payment of fees for postgraduate-taught students would assist in student number planning, as it would deter non-serious applications. It was agreed that there were a number of issues which this would raise, including the possible disincentive to students from poorer backgrounds, which would need to be considered carefully. It was agreed that the Scholarships and Student Funding Committee should consider UCL's policy on this, taking note of practice elsewhere in the sector, and report back to AC in due course.

RESOLVED:

28.6   That AC welcome the sixth Student Data Overview Report at <u>AC 4-17 (13-14)</u>.

[ACTION: Dr Ruth Siddall, Mr Rob Traynor – to note]

28.7   That EdCom review the operation of the Personal Tutor Scheme in session 2014-15 and report back to AC.

[ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith, Ms Sandra Hinton]

28.8   That the SSFC review the issue of pre-payment of fees or deposits by postgraduate-taught students, taking note of practice in other universities, and report back to AC.

[ACTION: Professor Anthony Smith, Mr Rob Traynor]

29   CONNECTED CURRICULUM – TRANSFORMING EDUCATION AT UCL

Received:

29.1   A paper on the above at <u>AC 4-18 (13-14)</u>, presented by the Director of CALT, Dr Dilly Fung.

Reported:

29.2   In introducing the paper, the Director of CALT outlined: the principles behind the idea of 'research-based education' and how it could be defined; the Connected Curriculum, which would provide a flexible means whereby faculties and departments could apply the idea of 'research-based education' to their own programmes of study; and the various implications of the initiative for UCL.

29.3   It was proposed that the initiative would be taken forward by a steering group of EdCom, which would then, in turn, report to AC on progress.

Discussion:

29.4   There was strong support within AC for the Connected Curriculum initiative and the paper was endorsed, with the following caveats: it would be important for academic staff in departments to feel that they own the initiative and that this is not something which is being imposed on them 'from above'; examples of existing departmental good practice are recognised and disseminated more widely; that there is sufficient flexibility built into the

scheme so that genuine pedagogical differences between disciplines can be recognised and a rigid uniformity is not imposed on faculties and departments.

29.5 The Provost commended the paper and noted that the Connected Curriculum initiative was a key element in taking forward the UCL 2034 Strategy.

RESOLVED:

29.6 That AC approve the paper at AC 4-18 (13-14) and the proposals contained therein.

[ACTION: Dr Dilly Fung – to note]

30 REVAMP OF THE UCL INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

Received:

30.1 An oral report from the Vice-Provost (International), Dame Nicola Brewer, on the revamp of the UCL International Strategy.

Reported:

30.2 In her oral report, the Vice-Provost (International) noted that since her appointment she had held discussions about UCL's current and future International Strategy with a range of external and internal stakeholders. Key themes or issues to emerge in those discussions included, *inter alia*, the following:

- the need to identify the international dimensions of other UCL strategies and initiatives, such as Global Citizenship, work-based learning *etc*;

- the need to integrate the student experience more fully into the International Strategy;

- raising awareness of UCL's current range of international activities;

- ensuring that all of UCL's international activities were consistent with UCL's core values and principles;

- the need for more effective mapping of UCL's international activities and links at department-, faculty-, and institutional-level.

30.3 The Vice-Provost (International) and her staff would be reflecting on the above issues over the summer, before consulting with the UCL community (*eg* in a number of town hall meetings) on the principles and objectives for a revamped International Strategy.

Discussion:

30.4 AC welcomed the update report from the Vice-Provost (International) and looked forward to the next stage in updating the International Strategy.

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34   ANNUAL REPORT FROM EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO COUNCIL ON NEW PROGRAMMES OF STUDY APPROVED IN 2012-13

Received:

34.1   At <u>AC 4-22 (13-14)</u>, for information, a copy of the above report which would be received by Council at its meeting on 8 July 2014.

35   ACADEMIC PROMOTION AND REWARD REVIEW GROUP

Noted:

35.1   An Academic Promotion and Reward Review Group, reporting to the Human Resources Policy Committee, had been established to review UCL's existing promotion and reward processes. The note at <u>AC 4-23 (13-14)</u> set out a timetable for the Group's work.

36   REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

Noted:

36.1   The AC officers had received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:

‹ Education Committee (14 May 2014);
‹ Quality Management and Enhancement Committee (15 April 2014);
‹ Research Degrees Committee (5 March 2014);
‹ Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee (10 March 2014).

37   ANY OTHER BUSINESS

37A   Secretary to AC

Reported:

37A.1 The Provost noted that this was Mr Clarke's last meeting of AC as Secretary, as he would