



UCL

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32 **MINUTES**

**Approved**

- 32.1 The Minutes of the meeting of AC held on 24 March 2011 [AC Mins. 14-31, 2010-11], were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair.

33 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

33A **UCL Learning and Teaching Strategy**

[AC Min 16A, 2010-11]

**Noted**

- 33A.1 The ILTS implementation plan had been disseminated. A progress report on the implementation plan would be made to AC in the Autumn Term 2011.

33B **Draft UCL Access Agreement**

[AC Min 17, 2010-11]

**Noted**

- 33B.1 UCL's draft Access Agreement, which had been considered by AC at its meeting on 24 March 2011, was approved by Council at its meeting later that same day and subsequently submitted to OFFA.

34 **LEAD OFFICER REPORTS**

**Noted**

- 34.1 One of the recommendations approved by Council following the 2010 review of the UCL committee system was that in certain cases where a standing committee was to be disestablished, a 'Lead Officer' arrangement would be put in place. Under such an arrangement, the officer(s) with key responsibility for an area previously covered by a standing committee would, *inter alia*, prepare an annual report on developments within that area, which would be submitted to AC, AB and Council.
- 34.2 Lead officer arrangements had been put in place for the following areas:
- Research Strategy;
  - Careers and Employability;
  - Student Accommodation;
  - Student Welfare Co-ordination;
  - Recruitment and Admission of Students.
- 34.3 AC was to receive and consider lead officer reports on the above areas (with the exception of Recruitment and Admission of Students – see Minute 34E below) prior to their submission to AB and Council.

34A **RESEARCH STRATEGY**

**Received**

34A.1 At APPENDIX AC 3/20 (10-11) – the Lead Officer report on Research Strategy, prepared by the Vice-Provost (Research).

34A.2 An oral report by **Professor David Price**, Vice-Provost (Research).

**Reported**

34A.3 In his oral report, the Vice-Provost (Research) noted, *inter alia*, the following:

- The paper at APPENDIX AC 3/20 (10-11) provided an interim report on UCL's Research Strategy and a summary of the range of activities and initiatives that had been undertaken over the last twelve months in support of the Strategy. The role of the Vice-Provost's Office was to facilitate those activities and initiatives.
- UCL's success in terms of its research performance was due to the excellence and commitment of its research staff. The Research Strategy had three main aims: (i) to support excellence; (ii) to foster cross-disciplinarity; and (iii) to increase the impact of UCL's research in terms of its relevance and practical application to the wider world.
- A revised Research Strategy was being prepared, with a view to this being integrated with the forthcoming Green Paper.
- UCL's research income had shown a significant growth over recent years, although there had been a worrying decline
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### **Discussion**

- 34C.4 The AC Chair noted that it had been the Committee's position for several years that UCL's infrastructure was inadequate for the size of its student population. It was imperative that the Masterplanning process gave careful consideration to the question of what should UCL be providing to its students and what it is realistically capable of providing given its estate and infrastructure.
- 34C.5 Other members of AC noted that the absence of a proper system for central student number planning over several years, compounded by the failure to adhere to agreed targets, was causing problems in other areas as well. This was having a detrimental effect on the student experience. It was unlikely that students would tolerate such conditions, especially after the introduction of £9k fees in 2012-13. Also, the UCL Union's Education Officer noted that, unlike tuition fees, accommodation fees had to be paid by students in advance so these sums had to be found.
- 34C.6 There was some discussion relating to the Student Accommodation Office's business planning and financial forecasts, although it was agreed that these matters fell outwith the Committee's remit.

### **RESOLVED**

- 34C.7 That AC approve the Lead Officer report on Student Accommodation at APPENDIX AC 3/22 (10-11)

**[ACTION: Mr William Wilson, Mr Tim Perry (as Secretary to AB and Council) – to note]**

## **34D STUDENT WELFARE COORDINATION**

### **Received**

- 34D.1 At APPENDIX AC 3/23 (10-11) – the Lead Officer report on Student Welfare Coordination, prepared by the Dean of Students (Welfare).
- 34D.2 An oral report by **Dr Ruth Siddall**, Dean of Students (Welfare).

### **Reported**

- 34D.3 In her oral report, the Dean of Students (Welfare) noted, *inter alia*, the following:
- The Student Counselling Service had changed its name to Student Psychological Services to better reflect the type and range of support it provided.
  - Work had begun to develop a Religious Equality Policy for Students.
  - Data on student interruptions and withdrawals showed that, when analysed by ethnicity, students of black, Caribbean or African origin were most likely to interrupt or withdraw from studies in all areas.
  - The Gower Place Practice, which was the second largest GP practice in Camden and which catered mainly for UCL students, continued to provide an excellent service to UCL's

students. The practice had successfully made a bid to its PCT to be able to continue to treat UCL students even when they moved out of its catchment area, thus ensuring continuity of medical care. The practice was due to be re-located under the Estates Masterplan and it was key that the practice remained on the main UCL site.

- The Dean of Students noted that the SWCC had provided a better structure for the collation and consideration of data and issues affecting the welfare of UCL's students. Also, given the dispersed nature of UCL's student services provision, the Committee had provided a forum within which staff from the key areas could come together to discuss matters. The disestablishment of the SWCC had had a negative effect in terms of information sharing as it had become less convenient for representatives of the various departments to meet as a group.

### **Discussion**

34D.4 The Committee agreed that it was imperative that the Gower Place Practice remain on the main UCL site.

34D.5 Regarding the analysis by ethnicity of the data on student withdrawals and interruptions, clarification was sought as to where this data would be considered in greater detail, now that the SWCC did not exist. It was suggested that the Committee for Equal Opportunities could discuss this matter further, or perhaps the Education Committee and Research Degrees Committee in relation to, respectively, taught and research students.

34D.6 The Committee endorsed the comments by the Dean of Students (Welfare) regarding the negative impact of the disestablishment of the former SWCC. The Committee agreed that, given the crucial importance of student welfare issues, there was a need within UCL for a 'student welfare committee', 'student experience committee' or similar.

### **RESOLVED**

34D.7 That AC approve the Lead Officer report on Student Welfare Coordination at APPENDIX AC 3/23 (10-11)

***[ACTION: Dr Ruth Siddall, Mr Tim Perry (as Secretary to AB and Council) – to note]***

34D.8 That the officers of the CEO, EdCom and RDC consider referring relevant data on student withdrawals and interruptions to those committees for consideration.

***[ACTION: Professor Stephen Smith, Ms Rachel Port, Professor Mike Ewing, Ms Sandra Hinton, Professor David Bogle, Ms Karen Wishart - to note]***

34D.9 That the AC Chair write on behalf of AC to the appropriate senior UCL officers, proposing that a 'Student Welfare Committee' or 'Student Experience Committee' or similar be established.

***[ACTION: Professor Michael Worton/Mr Jason Clarke]***

34E **RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION OF STUDENTS**

***Noted***

34E.1 The arrangements in this area had been prepared on the assumption that Lead Officer responsibilities could be assigned to a single officer. That assumption was reasonable at the time but subsequent organisational change at UCL meant that responsibility for the areas in question was split between different parts of the Corporate Support Services (CSS). Although the arrangements were nevertheless agreed by Council with the Academic Registrar as Lead Officer, no report on the operation of these arrangements was produced prior to the Lead Officer's departure from UCL at the beginning of May 2011. Against this background, the Director of Registry and Academic Services was now in the process of reviewing the Lead Officer arrangements in this area, in consultation with the other CSS colleagues concerned. It was hoped to submit revised proposals to Council for approval at its meeting on 6 July 2011 and a report on the operation of Lead Officer arrangements to meetings of AC, AB and Council in the Autumn Term 2011.

***Discussed***

34E.2 Several members of AC argued that this was another area of UCL's operations where the disestablishment of the relevant standing committee (the former Committee for the Recruitment and Admission of Students) had had a negative impact on coordination and communication. Those members called for the re-establishment of CRAS or a similar body in order to provide an official forum in which matters relating to UCL's admissions and recruitment policies and operations can be discussed. The Committee's earlier discussion about the very real difficulties in planning student accommodation and other student services caused by the lack of a proper student number planning framework was seen as highlighting the need for such a successor body to the former CRAS.

34E.3 The AC Chair expressed concern that in some areas of UCL's operations, it appeared that the disestablishment of the relevant committee and its replacement with a Lead Officer arrangement had had a detrimental effect on effective policy development, coordination and communication, rather than a positive one. However, the view was also expressed that many of the issues which arose in these areas were essentially management issues that did not require consideration by a formal committee.

35 **PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE HEAR WORKING GROUP**

***Received***

35.1 At APPENDIX AC 3/24 (10-11) – a progress report from the working group established by AC to take forward the development of the HEAR.

35.2 An oral report by **Professor Mike Ewing**, as Chair of the Working Group.



**Reported**

- 35.3 Much of the Working Group's recent work had focused on the detailed means of verifying and recording students' extra-curricular activities. The UCL Union and the VSU had been closely involved in this work. Also, funding had been provided to allow for the purchase of a new online tool (GradIntel) which would provide the functionality to produce an electronic HEAR. The HEAR would be introduced for undergraduate students starting in session 2011-12. It was possible for the HEAR to be extended to postgraduate students, although it was intended to evaluate how the HEAR had operated for undergraduate students before making a decision as to whether to extend it to all students.

**Discussion**

- 35.4 It was confirmed that non-UCL extra-curricular activities could be recorded on the HEAR provided that these could be verified.  
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37 **CHAIR'S BUSINESS**

***Reported***

- 37.1 UCL had achieved a response rate of 59% in the 2011 National Student Survey, an increase of 8% on the previous year. Also, virtually all subject areas had achieved the NSS publication threshold of 50% and at least 23 students. It was assumed that this improvement was due to the creation of a network of departmental NSS liaison officers and the Chair thanked all those colleagues who had undertaken that role. The NSS results would be available in August and a full analysis would be prepared.

38 **REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS ETC OF ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

***Noted***

- 38.1 The AC officers had received on behalf of AC, since the last meeting of AC, Minutes of the following:
- Education Committee - 14 March 2011;
  - Joint Staff Student Committee - 24 February 2011;
  - Quality Management and Enhancement Committee - 8 March 2011;
  - Research Degrees Committee - 21 March 2011;
  - Research Governance Committee - 24 March 2011.