

Human Resources Policy Committee

11 November 2020, 10:00am

Minutes

Present Members:

Professor Michael Arthur (Chair); Ms Wendy Appleby; Dr Paul Ayris; Dr Matthew Blain; Professor Stella Bruzzi; Dr Celia Caulcott; Professor Dame Hazel Genn; Mr Phil Harding; Professor Christoph Lindner; Professor David Lomas; Ms Collette Lux; Professor Ivan Parkin; Professor Geraint Rees; Professor Sasha Roseneil; Ms Fiona Ryland; Mr Andy Smith; Professor Anthony Smith; Professor Nigel Titchener-Hooker.

Apologies:

Professor Piet Eeckhout
Professor Graham Hart
Professor Sue Rogers
Professor Alan Thompson

In attendance:

For item 1 - 7 Ms Clare Goudy, Chief of Staff, President and Provost
For item 1 - 3: Mr Mike Higgins, Employment Policy Manager
For item 1 - 7: Mr Max Hill, Director of Workplace Health
For item 1 - 7: Ms Shelley McPherson, Employment Policy Advisor
For item 1 - 3: Ms Chloe Milano, Director of Employee Relations, Planning and Policy
For item 1 - 7: Ms Karen Smith, Head of Workplace Wellbeing at UCL
For item 1 - 7: Mr Paul Stirk, Head of Safety

Officer(s):

Ms Hannah Swallow, Senior Compliance Officer

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. **Terms of Reference, Constitution and Membership of Human Resources Policy Committee (1-01)**
 - 1.1. Human Resources Policy Committee (HRPC) received its terms of reference, constitution and membership for 2020/21. HRPC noted that Mr Andy Smith, Chief Information Officer and Director of IT Services should be included in the membership of HRPC.

- a. The cleaning and security labour market was under increasing pressure.
 - b. While Professional Services Hub and HR Services staff were skilled up to provide assessments, there was a question whether the assessment of eligibility would make the recruitment stage lengthier or whether there was a risk of job offers being made where an individual was not eligible. Dr Matthew Blain, Executive Director of HR Services advised that the matter of eligibility would be assessed by HR Services through the recruitment process so that it could be determined before the job offer. An individual must have right to work before proceeding to employment. The resident labour market test would no longer apply; the test had posed some issues from time to time. Mr Mike Higgins, Employment Policy Manager, advised that the new process ought to make assessment more straightforward with previously ineligible applicants receiving points for salaries and PhDs. However, there was more work to be undertaken on systems to accommodate the changes.
 - c. Mr Mike Higgins, Employment Policy Manager, advised that training would be key to operationalising the new rules. As part of the joined up approach, HR Services Compliance Officer, Ashwyn Shaw, would also be attending briefing sessions with Departments.
- 3.3. HRPC noted the new immigration rules coming into effect from 1 January 2021.

4. Annual Report of the Health & Safety Committee (1-04)

- 4.1. Mr Paul Stirk, Head of Safety, introduced the Annual Report of the Health & Safety Committee 2019/20. The following key points were made during the presentation:
 - a. An update was provided on how UCL responded quickly and flexibly to safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Health and Safety

reporting injury. Falls from height was the leading cause of injury at UCL for both 2019/20 and 2018/19 while lifting and carrying heavy loads was the main cause of work-related injuries in the university sector. There were online resources, working safely with chemical.

- c. Fire alarm activations decreased significantly in this period in comparison with the previous year, for both Student Accommodation and other buildings and could be attributable to reduced activity and the presence of staff and students on site because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- d. In January 2020 Safety Services became aware of a historic radiation store at the School of Pharmacy (SoP). Upon inspection the store contained a number of historic radioactive items that UCL was not permitted to hold. Safety Services conducted a full radiation audit with the external Radioactive Waste Adviser and as an outcome of that audit, recommended to the department that the permit be surrendered. SoP

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6. Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan (1-06)

- 6.1. Ms Karen Smith, Head of Workplace Wellbeing, introduced the paper, which sets out a draft Staff Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2020-22. The following key points were made during the presentation:
- a. The Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan outlined 10 steps to improve the psychological health and wellbeing of our staff community. It replaced the existing wellbeing strategy, Wellbeing at UCL, launched in 2017 and included longer term aims and interventions beyond 2021.
 - b. Professor Peter Fonagy had produced a forward for the Staff Health and Wellbeing Plan. The plan had been developed in a collaborative manner with input from the Vice Dean Wellbeing for Arts & Humanities, Dr Samantha Rayner, as well as Professor Steptoe, Professor Tony David and other academics. As a result, the plan reflected the latest research.
 - c. The plan contained four objectives which sat across the three themes of Healthy Mind, Healthy Body and Healthy Environment. The accompanying graphic was intended to demonstrate the breadth of support at UCL and would be used to initiate dialogue and campaigns.
 - d. Objective One was about a whole-university approach to staff mental health and wellbeing. Objective Two was about reducing stigma and creating simplified pathways to support. Objective Three was about working towards/maintaining Healthy Body and would involve working with UCL to deliver on the objective. Objective Four was about healthy behaviours. The plan had a number of appendices, which included a delivery plan and timescales for delivery.
 - e. Budget had been approved by the Crisis Leadership Team for a number of interventions including line manager development opportunities in team mental health and wellbeing and mental health awareness development for staff in student facing roles. These interventions had been in demand.

6.2.

stress. HR Business Partners were facilitating the focus groups and data would be shared with the Health and Safety Committee. Workload was considered to be a likely high driver of stress.

- d. There was discussion about the return to campus and the anxiety of some colleagues with returning and the need to have a strategy to encourage people back. Ms Karen Smith, Head of Workplace Wellbeing confirmed there was a longer term piece of work planned to address this with offerings being built into the Silver Cloud Platform around health anxiety and social anxiety.
- e. There was discussion about workload. The communications framework
- f. The Step Challenge was very much welcomed and more of that type of activity was encouraged.
- g. In response to a question on benchmarking, Ms Karen Smith, Head of Workplace Wellbeing confirmed benchmarking had taken place across the UK and information from Universities UK along with the use of links and networks. Some other institutions had much greater resources and people to deliver interventions. The Committee confirmed that they were interested in hearing how the plan benchmarked against comparator institutions in London.

6.3. HRPC approved the Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan for 2020-22.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

7. Date of the next meeting

7.1. The next meeting of HRPC would take place on 31 March 2021 at 10:00am.