LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2012

MINUTES

Professor David Bogle *(Chair)*

Professor Mike Ewing

14 **RDC MEMBERSHIP**

Noted

14.1 Dr Stephen Marshall, Faculty Graduate Tutor, Built Environment, was on sabbatical. Dr Julio Davila attended RDC on behalf of Dr Marshall. The Chair welcomed Dr Davilato the Committee.

15 **MINUTES**

Approved

15.1 The Minutes of the meeting of RDC held on 13 October 2011 *[RDC Minutes 1-11, 2011-12*], issued previously, were confirmed by RDC and signed by the Chair.

16 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

16A **Student Academic Representatives (StARs)**
[*RDC Minute 4.2, 13.10.11*]

Noted

16A.1 Simon To, UCLU reported that the JSSC had a StARs steering group which had agreed a communication strategy for handling information about StARs. Each Faculty had appointed a contact for maintaining up-to-date information of StARs in their Faculties. A list of Faculty contacts for StARs could be obtained from the RDC Secretary on request. There were currently 57 research student StARs.

16A.2 The UCLU Postgraduate Association Officer reported that the UCLU provided

Reported

at the appropriate level and were working towards the required completion date, and that it is important for all to reinforce the new regulations, introduced in March 2009, requiring upgrade between 12-18 months.

18.5 The Head of Student Data Services confirmed that the upgrade date entered into

electronic PhD theses with UCL Library Services. In this model, students would upload their digital theses, their Deposit Agreement, and any accompanying files directly to RPS. This would supersede the current arrangement, under which students are required to provide electronic theses on a CD-ROM accompanying their bound copies, for subsequent upload by Library Services staff.

23.2 The requested change related only to the mode of delivery of the electronic copy of the thesis. The requirement for students to submit both a print and electronic copy of the thesis, and the rights and permissions framework previously agreed by RDC, would remained unchanged.

23.3 UCL Discovery staff would prepare on-line documentation on how to upload a thesis and Agreement form to RPS, and support individual students thereafter according to need.

23.4 Registry and Academic Services (RAS) staff would be required to check that the electronic copy of the thesis had been submitted before sanctioning the award. Such checks would be made in RPS. UCL Discovery staff would provide appropriate training for RAS staff.

23.5 The Director of Student Administration confirmed that this was approved in principle by RAS and the details of how the process would work were being discussed.

Action: RDC Secretary to report on progress

24 POSTGRADUATE EMPLOYMENT CHARTER

Noted

24.1 The NUS, in conjunction with the UCU had published a *Postgraduate Employment Charter* which outlined good practice in the employment of postgraduate students. The full document was at: http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/l/r/postgrademploymentcharter.pdf. The key points noted in the charter were:

Fair and equal appointment processes;
a fair rate of pay for all hours worked;
supervision or mentoring and line management;
formal and informal feedback on performance;
induction and training;
support for appropriate continuing professional development;
representation within the institution and by a trade union;
integration into the profCID 28 BDCiTcBDempic cultu ;

25 **REPORT FROM THE RDC WG ON MPHIL/PHD EXAMINER GUIDELINES AND TRAINING**

Received

25.1 At the RDC meeting on 18 November 2010 *[Minute 5]* it was agreed that a Working Group should be established to review the guidance provided to MPhil/PhD candidates and examiners on the *viva voce* examination. The report of the WG was at APPENDIX RDC 2/08 (11-12) along with the revised *Procedures for Viva Examination for Research Degrees*.

25.2 The Chair noted that RDC members were invited to contact him with any comments regarding training for MPhil/PhD examiners.

26 **GRADUATE SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT**

Received

26.1 At APPENDIX RDC 2/09 (11-12) the Graduate School Annual Report for information.

27 **RDC ANNUAL REPORT 2010-2011 TO ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

Received

27.1 At APPENDIX RDC 2/10 (11-12) the RDC Annual Report 2010-2011 for information. This was approved by AC at its meeting on 15 December 2011.

28 **CHAIRS REPORT**

28A **Approval of new degree programmes**

Noted

28A.1 Since the previous RDC meeting on 13 October 2011, the following new programmes had been approved by the Chair on behalf of RDC:

MRes Biodiversity, Evolution and Conservation
MRes Web Science

28B **Research Student Log Uptake Data**

Received

28B.1 At APPENDIX RDC 2/11 (11-12) a report on the number of PGR students using the Research Student Log.

Reported

28B.2 The Chair reported that uptake of the Research Student Log, although good in some departments, was lower than desired. He noted that the Log was a useful

tool for monitoring student progress and that the skills self-assessment section of the Log had been enhanced for the beginning of the 2011/12 session to incorporate the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

29 **ENGAGEMENT MONITORING**
[RDC Minute 28, 21 March 2011]

Noted

29.1 At the RDC meeting on 13 October 2011, the Director of Student Services noted that it was essential for UCL to comply with the requirements of the UK Border Agency for UCL as a highly trusted sponsor. A memorandum was sent to Faculty Tutors and Faculty Graduate Tutors on 23 September 2011 outlining the monitoring requirements for all students and the procedure for 2011-2012

Reported

29.2 The Director of Registry Information and Data Services reported that checks were being made in Portico to identify departments which were not complying with Engagement Monitoring. A report would be made to Faculties who should liaise with non compliant departments.

30 **NEXT MEETING**

Noted

30.1 The final meeting of RDC this session would be on Monday 11 June 2012 at 10am in the South Wing Council Room.

30.2 With effect from 19 March 2012 Mr Gary Hawes, Senior Academic Support Officer, RAS, would be assuming the role of Secretary to RDC.

Karen Wishart
Academic Support
19 March 2012