LONDON'S GLOBAL UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH DEGREES COMMITTEE

9 October 201 8

Professor Tania Monteiro; Dr Simon Banks

; Professor Stephen Marshall, Mr Saddiqur Rahman; Dr Andrew Stoker; Dr Jill Norman; Dr Hynek Pikhart; Professor Andrew Wills; Dr Ruth Siddal; Dr Patti Adank.

In attendance: Mr Darren Payne (Secretary); Mr Adnan Ali (Doctoral School), Ms Aniina Wikmann (item 6), Ms Alex Standen (item7), and Mr Simon To (item 9)

Apologies for absence were received from: Dr Sally Leevers; Dr Virginia Mantouvalou

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Key to abbreviations

CRS   Completing Research Status
FRDC   Faculty Research Degrees Committee
HRPC   Human Resources Policy Committee
PRES   Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
RDC   Research Degrees Committee
SMT   Senior Management Team

Preliminary business

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in November ready for next RDC.

1.4 One vacancy in elected staff was noted.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 Approved : The minutes of the meeting held 5 June 2018.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 There were matters arising from the 5 June 2018 RDC minutes.

Matters for discussion

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4.1 The Chair informed members of RDC that the 2018/19 Regulations for Research Degree Programmes are now published in the Academic Manual.

4.2 There is still a list of substantive issues raised in the review last year that remain to be resolved with the Research Degree regulations. The Chair will be in contact with members of RDC to be part of a newly formed working group that will look into this, with a view to have a new set of regulations ready in time for the 2019/20 academic session.

ACTION: the Chair

4.3 T K H 5 ' & F K D L U S U H V H Q W H G D V X P P D U \ R I W K H 3 5 (6 U H
which resulted in increased interest in the research degree experience by Deans.

4.4 The Provost is concerned that despite UCL having a better response rate, the institution remains in the bottom half of the Russell Group Universities. Although it was expected that the results would improve with a higher response rate this proved not to be the case indicating that the results are a reliable reflection.

4.5 Faculties and most key Professional Services division had also responded with actions to address PRES concerns. Responses were still outstanding from ISD, Registry, and Estates. Space was a particular concern in many cases. Estates has recently recruited a new director. The chair will meet with the new Director to press for more consideration for Research Student in any new estates strategy.

5   MRES/MPHIL/PHD APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS REPORT

   5.1   Received : MRES/MPHIL/PHD Applications and Admissions Report at RDC 1-
            02

drastically at different institutions. Negotiation with partners would be necessary to ensure that, even if there is a slight variance to the assessment process that UCL students would otherwise have followed, there is an assurance that UCL academic standards are maintained.

6.6   The Faculty Graduate Tutor for Engineering said the Faculty of Engineering is strongly in favour of UCL allowing these programmes, as they have a great deal of interest from potential partner institutions. They currently envisage these types of programmes working in the same way as Taught programmes, so feel it should be possible, whilst fairly difficult, to work out in practice. Whilst there are difficulties reaching a consensus between institutions, the burden largely falls on the team putting together the proposal, with Academic Services guidance. Proper due diligence, and clear justifications as to the benefits and clarity about processes to deal with difficulties are required to ensure that there

budgets to support or to seek external finance.

6.11   Agreed: that UCL would begin considering proposals for Joint and Double Award programmes, but take a suitably cautious approach. Proposals that are already being developed will be looked at first, and they will be monitored closely to ensure the process are further developed and refined. The Chair will organise a sub-committee of RDC to begin designing the guidance and ?ed lines ; and to approve any proposals for official approval by RDC.

<u>ACTION: the Chair</u>

7   SUPERVISOR TRAINING

7.1   RDC was briefed by UCL Arena on updates to Supervisor Training. In subsequent discussions three key issues from all Faculties came out in relation to supervision that the training would need to address. Firstly, that supervisors need to be clear on expectations and possible changes to these through the course of a project. Secondly, the importance of networks and connections beyond V W X G immediate environments should be highlighted. Thirdly, the course should emphasise the importance of supervisors to support the development of students as future research leaders and facilitate and support their wellbeing in addition to research excellence.

7.2   The new online provision, developed and now available in UCL Extend covers the mandated regulatory and administrative processes and information, but also covers skills and career development for students. It has 6 sections in total, with a final quiz being compulsory to prompt reflection and ensure completion.

7.3   Launched on 20th September, it received 240 signups in the first two weeks, with 83 competing the final quiz within that time span.

7.4   Members of RDC queried what would happen to completion data, and it was confirmed that this would be circulated to Faculty Graduate Tutors. There is an onus on supervisors to download the completion certificate to keep as proof of completion. Linking completion data into EROS is currently not possible. It was acknowledged that ISD will need to work in order to try and tie in these system

parts of UCL to attend these sessions as part of their induction into the practices and culture of UCL. For such external institutions it is one of the conditions for

Academic Representatives ¶had been welcomed by students, and particularly by research students who did not like the old STaRs acronym.

9.3   UCL now has more Academic Representatives than previously, with 1600 overall, and with more engagement from them with 70% being fully trained at the time the report was submitted. Lead Departmental Representatives are particularly helping this, and it is often the case that research students are covering this as it is provides more experience of leadership roles.

9.4   Last year there had been a dip in the number of PGR Academic Representatives, but this has now climbed to 192. In the future there is a need for more tailored individual support to the Representatives from the Students Union and parts of UCL to ensure that students see a positive benefit to becoming an Academic Representative.

9.5   The 2020 vision for the role of Academic Representative has as one of its focuses the way in which PGR students best represent the academic interests of Research Degree students. Members of RDC will be approached to explore this further, and to highlight any mechanism that can be drawn on. There is also a wish to address barriers to the take up of leadership roles, particularly for BME students. This is being explored in more depth E\ 6WXGHQWV¶ 8QLRQ 8

9.6   A question was raised as to how the Students Union deal with cases where elected Academic Representatives do not engage or participate in activities that are expected of them in the role. It was noted that information is available regarding students ¶attendance and voting records but it was difficult to monitor engagement overall. There are procedures to recall Academic Representatives that are open to the students that they represent.

10   POSTGRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT ACTION PLAN AND CODE OF PRACTICE UPDATE

10.1   Received ±Postgraduate Teaching Assistant Action Plan and Code of Practice Update paper at RDC 1-06 (18-19).

10.2   A brief update was received by RDC. It was noted that the Code of Practice for PGTAs is being published this academic year, and the revision of contracts for PGTAs will start after Easter of this academic year.

10.3   Delays in getting this out were mainly due to the large volume of feedback received. RDC sought more information about the feedback and in particular the issues that were not taken into consideration as this was not clear from the update provided. The Secretary will follow-up with Human Resources to get a written report on this.

16   DATES OF NEXT MEETING

- x Tuesday 13 March 2018, 11am to 1pm, IOE - Bedford Way (20) ±804.
- x Tuesday 5 June 2018, 11am to 1pm, Malet Place Engineering Building 1.20.

DARREN PAYNE
Secretary to Research Degrees Committee
Policy Advisor (Regulations and Quality Assurance), Academic Services
darren.j.b.payne@ucl.ac.uk
05/11/2018