

Report

UC/16/R1

UCAS Council

Report of the seventh UCAS Council meeting, held on Thursday 16 June 2016.

Introduction

The seventh meeting of the UCAS Council ('Council') was held on Thursday 16 June 2016 at BMA House, London. The meeting was chaired by Paul Jagger MBE (previously Pro-Chancellor and Council Chair, University of Bradford), and was attended by 23 Council members ('Members'), including two alternates, the UCAS Chair, the UCAS Chief Executive ('CEO'), Director of Technology and Operations, Director of External Relations, and Director of Analysis and Research. The full delegate list is attached to this report.

Report from the UCAS Chair and Chief Executive

Membership

New members Lysandre de-la-Haye, Shakira Martin, and Mhairi Moore had recently been appointed to Council and were present at the meeting.

The Chair, Paul Jagger, and UCAS' CEO, Mary Curnock Cook, welcomed Christian Brodie (Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor, University of Sussex, and Chair of the Student Loans Company) to his first Council meeting. Council noted that the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) had nominated Christian as the new Chair of Council, with effect from July 2016.

The full list of Council members is available on ucas.com.

Executive accountabilities

Council noted that following the resignations of the Managing Director of UCAS Media (UM) and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services earlier in the year, Andrew Hargreaves, Director of Customer Experience and Marketing (CXM) had executive accountability for UM, and Iain Moore (formerly Chief Financial Officer, IMI Plc) had been appointed as UCAS' new Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

Development of UCAS' products and services

Mary Curnock Cook highlighted that UCAS' new postgraduate search and collection tools had been launched and the products would continue to be enhanced based on customer feedback. It was noted that this was a major achievement for UCAS and the first strategic delivery towards a UCAS-powered go-to place for people wanting to study at postgraduate level in the UK.

Data issues and the UUK sector agencies review

The UCAS Chair, Sir Steve Smith, summarised two key issues – the various demands on UCAS to publish or make available admissions data, and the UUK sector agencies review – adding that the UCAS Board was due to discuss these items at its next meeting on 5 July 2016, and reminding Council that its advice was valued and would be considered carefully by the UCAS Board.

The 2016 and 2017 admissions cycles

The Director of Technology and Operations, Fatuma Mahad, gave an overview of the delivery of the 2016 admissions cycle, focussing on preparations for Confirmation and Clearing (C&C) in August, and a forward look to the 2017 admissions cycle.

Fatuma Mahad highlighted that for the 2016 cycle, all schemes had progressed well, all milestones had been met successfully, application processing deadlines had been completed earlier than in previous cycles, and the search tool and Apply 2017 had been successfully launched in May.

She also summarised key activities that had taken place since the last meeting in November 2015. This included the increased engagement with awarding organisations to improve the efficiency of examination results processing, the annual programme of work that was underway to remediate known IT risks and ensure readiness for C&C, and the focus on ensuring effective cyber security measures were in place.

UCAS' financial and business model

The Director of External Relations, Helen Thorne, and Director of Analysis and Research, Mark Corver, provided an overview of UCAS' financial model, which was in response to requests from Members for more information about demographic trends, the demand for HE, and to inform a better understanding of the rationale for increases in fees for the undergraduate admissions service. Full details can be found in UCAS' annual report and accounts on ucas.com.

The Higher Education White Paper and Higher Education and Research Bill

Helen Thorne introduced this item by reminding Council that its advice would inform a discussion by the UCAS Board at its meeting on 5 July 2016.

Council was given an overview of the main implications for UCAS, the admissions community, and learners resulting from the HE White Paper and associated HE and Research Bill. While many of the changes would have indirect impacts on UCAS and the admissions community, the Director of External Relations highlighted the key areas which were expected/likely to have a direct operational impact.

Council was invited to discuss and provide advice on the actions that UCAS was proposing to take to respond to the White Paper and HE Bill, and made a number of useful comments which would be duly considered.

Paul Jagger and Helen Thorne thanked the Members for their useful feedback.

Using admissions data to understand and support equality

Mark Corver provided an overview of the analytical work that UCAS was undertaking regarding equality and admissions to HE, and how this could be used to inform contextualised admissions.

Following Council's discussion of UCAS' work in this area, Paul Jagger thanked the Members for their helpful comments and noted that this would be an area for Council to return to at a later date.

Chair's business

Paul Jagger thanked the Members for their contributions, acknowledging the value of Council's consideration of the substantive issues, and confirming that the outputs from the UCAS Board at its meeting in July 2016 would be shared with Council in due course.

He also thanked Members Philip Bloor, Hassun El Zafar, Professor Nigel Healey, Lee Pearson, Bob Savill, and Robert Wilson for their valuable contributions to Council, as their terms were coming to an end after the meeting.

Mary Curnock Cook offered her thanks to Paul, on behalf of the UCAS Board and the Executive, for chairing Council for four years, since its inception in 2013.

Next meeting

The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 at Rosehill, Cheltenham.

Delegate list

UCAS Council meeting held on Thursday 16 June 2016

Present:

Paul Jagger MBE, Council Chair; previously Pro-Chancellor and Council Chair, University of Bradford
Philip Bloor, Head of Admissions, Sheffield Hallam University, and Chair of the UCAS Teacher Training (UTT) Advisory Group
Christian Brodie, Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor of the University of Sussex, and Chair of the Student Loans Company
Lysandre de-la-Haye, Deputy Registrar, Newman University
Jennifer Dwyer, Head of Admissions and Access Service, Queen's University Belfast
Marie-Noël Earley, Assistant Registrar, University of St. Andrews
Hassun El Zafar, Education Officer, Sheffield Hallam Students' Union
Rod Francis, Head of Milford Haven School (Wales)
Heidi Fraser-Krauss, Director of Information, University of York
Christine Giles, Deputy Academic Registrar, University of Portsmouth
Janet Graham, Director of Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)
Sir Michael Griffiths, Previously Head of Northampton School for Boys (England), and Past President of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)
William Hammonds, Programme Manager, Policy Group, Universities UK
Professor Richard Harvey, Academic Director of Admissions, University of East Anglia
Professor Nigel Healey, Pro Vice Chancellor (International) Nottingham Trent University
Dr Mark Mabey, Principal of the London College UCK
Shakira Martin, Vice President Further Education, NUS
Mhairi Moore, Adviser, Higher Education, School Leaders Scotland
Lee Pearson, President of Hull College Students' Union
Professor Patricia Price, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Student Experience and Academic Standards, Cardiff University
Dr Steven Quigley, Academic Registrar, Regents University, and Member of the Association of University Administrators Board of Trustees
Dr Millan Sachania, Head Master of Streatham and Clapham High School
Robert Wilson, Principal of Limavady Grammar School (NI)

Alternates:

Michelle Magee, Senior Admissions Manager, University of Westminster

Katie Shaw, Policy and Campaigns Manager, NUS

Apologies:

Matthew Andrews, University Secretary and Academic Registrar, University of Gloucestershire

Martyn Annis, Chair of the Academic Registrars Council Admissions Practitioner Group, and Director of Academic Services, University of Brighton

Dr David Ashton, UCAS Trustee, and Vice-President and Registrar, University of Surrey

Hilary Boulding, Chair of Conservatoires UK (CUK), and Principal of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Jonathan Godfrey, Hereford Sixth Form College Principal

Mike Nicholson, UK Chair of the HE Liaison Officers Association (HELOA), and Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, University of Bath

Bob Savill, Head of Admissions, University of Chichester, and Chair of the Undergraduate Advisory Group (UAG)

Dr Wendy Webster, Operations Manager, University of Dundee, and Chair of the Postgraduate Advisory Group

Alastair Wilson, Head of HE, South Devon College

Dr Tim Westlake, Deputy Council Chair, and Director for the Student Experience, University of Manchester

In attendance:

Professor Sir Steve Smith, Chair of the UCAS Board, and Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive, University of Exeter

Mary Curnock Cook, Chief Executive, UCAS

Fatuma Mahad, Director of Technology and Operations, UCAS

Helen Thorne, Director of External Relations, UCAS

Margaret Farragher, Head of Policy and Qualifications, UCAS

Sara Smith, Corporate Governance Coordinator/Council Secretary, UCAS

Danya Young, Corporate Governance Manager, UCAS