Library Committee

Wednesday 18 November 2020, 10.15am
Web-conferencing meeting via MS Teams

Minutes

Present Members:
Dr Paul Ayris (Chair for items 1-6); Dr Richard Freeman; Dr Liza Griffin; Professor Diane Koenker; Mr Ben Meunier (Chair for items 7-14); Mr Martin Moyle; Professor Vivek Mudera; Mr Jim Onyemenam; Dr John Sabapathy; Dr Harriet Shannon; Mr Andy Smith; Dr Hazel Smith.

Apologies:
Dr Simon Banks
Mr Ayman Benmati
Dr Oliver Gerstenberg
Mr Zak Liddell
Professor David Price
Dr Rachel Rees

In Attendance:
Mr Vincenzo Carrara (Finance and Business Affairs)

Officer(s):
Olivia Whiteley, Secretary

Part I: Preliminary Business

1. Terms of reference, constitution and membership (1-01)

1.1. LC received the paper setting out its terms of reference, constitution and 2020-21 membership.

2. Minutes of the last meetings: 6 February 2020 and 25 June 2020 (1-02)

2.1. Library Committee:
   a. Approved the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020.
   b. Approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2020.

3.   Matters Arising

Confidential: Opening hours in Library Services

3.1.   Exempt from publication, see confidential minutes.

Part II: Strategic Items for Discussion

4.   Report from the Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library Services) (1-03)

4.1.   The Pro-Vice-Provost (UCL Library Services) introduced the report setting out the performance made by the Library against the six Key Performance Areas (KPAs) of the Library Services Strategy 2019-22 since the last meeting of LC, as well as key developments in Library operations in respo 107ations in respo 107ations in r

working group tasked with exploring how to achieve the right physical and digital environments for UCL researchers and students. A pilot, co-funded by UCL, the Library and ISD, would be carried out to introduce virtual meeting spaces and Library environments, with a view to surveying UCL students and researchers and moving forward with a recommended solution by January 2021. There had been some research within UCL on the impact of the acoustic environment on study. The pilot would enable livestreaming of study sessions or parts of the library, applying a visual and sound filter overlaid with an audio track reflective of the physical environment.

e. During the pandemic a 'digital first' policy for education had emerged to ensure Library support for students working remotely, both in the UK or abroad. This followed a move made by the Library some years ago to pursue a 'digital first' policy to support research, such as through investment in electronic textbooks.

4.2. During discussion, the following key points were made:

a. There was a need to consider the extent to which not only current restrictions but also student movement to and from campus during the pandemic should steer Library investment in digital resources and learning spaces in the short and long terms. There would be an impact on demand for spaces should students returning to their homes during Reading Week continue to work remotely from home, rather than return to campus before the winter break.

b. There were a number of factors to consider in creating a learning space. There were benefits to learners being able to see others working around them in(the)]Tf.6 4 e 1 128.72 3oy (ronments,)-3(.)3(tuN)5heles

f.   In response to a question posed regarding a model for UCL Press textbooks, a suggestion was made to coordinate with the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education and Student Affairs) and programme and module leads, with the objective of producing bespoke module summaries for programmes of study that could be provided freely to students upon enrolment. It was recognised that this would entail a gradual change of model, but one with the potential for UCL to be a brand leader in future textbook production.

g.   Library Services was commended for the Library's improved performance in the NSS, especially relative to benchmark institutions in the Russell Group, and encouraged to look closely at how this achievement could be sustained. LC was reminded that the predominant themes arising from the student surveys concerned meeting demands for textbooks and learning spaces. While the Library was seeking to address textbook provision and had impacted positively on learning space availability through the completion of the Student Centre, it was hoped that by developing a blended learning space offering, the Library could further improve upon satisfaction rates.

4.3.   The Pro-Vice-Provost would provide a further outline of plans for the future

c. Library sites were open on a best-effort basis with the risk that they may require closure at short notice should staff numbers be impacted by the need for self-isolation or due to caring responsibilities during the pandemic. Contingency and communication plans had been prepared should closure be required. In response to a question, it was noted that there had been no material impact to the Library budget as a result of staffing pressures; rather, as a mitigation measure to enable staff to work from home where necessary, opening hours were being adjusted or sites closed.

d. It was currently planned that the Student Centre would remain open throughout the winter closure period. If, after modelling and projections, it was concluded that additional space was needed, Library Services planned to continue opening Bidborough House and 1-19 Torrington Place rather than other library sites.

e. A number of costs associated with the safety measures required to support operations during lockdown, including purchase of resources such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), amounted to a substantial overhead for the Library. Library Services would be seeking to request funding from central finance to meet the cost of maintaining these measures.

f. It had been difficult to provide an accurate forecast of space delivery given the uncertain and changing environment of the pandemic; in order to manage expectations, Library Services had deliberately avoided early communications regarding the opening of sites until they were physically open. In the case of the opening of Bidborough House and 1-19 Torrington Place, this lag in communication to students had resulted in slow take-up of learning spaces initially. LC was advised that students should be pointed to the Library webpages, which were updated daily, as a single and accurate source of information on space availability.

5.2. During discussion, the following key points were made:

a. Library Services was strongly commended for the prudent and responsible way in which it had dealt with reopening and communicating about Library sites.

b. Given that face-to-face teaching contact was limited and students were generally spending less time on campus, students would benefit from 'on the day' advice about which Library sites were open to them. It was

unmet demand for space. It was suggested that a survey of students might be undertaken to understand whether there was unmet demand during the pandemic, particularly as spaces on campus provided an important pastoral as well as pedagogical function.

6. Service provision during lockdown (1-05)

6.1. The Director of Services (UCL Library Services) introduced the paper summarising the major developments in Library service provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following key points from the report were highlighted:

a. A major project, supported by new funding from UCL, was undertaken across the Library teams during the summer of 2020 to enhance digital resource provision. In total, more than 3,500 new electronic textbooks had been purchased to support learning and teaching across all disciplines, including significant new packages such as OUP's Law Trove collection of some 200 textbooks. This represented a significant but transformational investment, with the benefit that a number of essential readings, required by over 1,000 students in some cases, could be accessed freely and easily online. It was, however, noted that not all resources could be procured due to cost intensiveness and, furthermore, there were some poorly formed access models that would not support UCL usage. Library Services was monitoring the spread and usage of investment with a view to providing LC with a fuller report in the spring or summer of 2021.

b. The Library had also implemented a 'click and collect' loan service over the summer of 2020. The volume of lending through the service, at nearly 14,000 loans for the period 1 August – 5 November 2020, was nowhere near the level of borrowing for the equivalent period of 2019 (at near 79,000 loans), which could be attributed in part to the success of the Library's provision of digital materials.

c. Primarily as a service for students who could not make it to campus, the Library had additionally launched an on-demand digital scanning service, 'Scan and Send', for resources from the Main and Science Library collections (copyright permitting). The service would be expanded to further libraries in November 2020 with the IOE Library collection the next in scope.

d. Following assessment in 2020, Library Services had received reaccreditation for Customer Service Excellence with an elevated rating on the previous year through the award of 'Compliance Plus', which specifically acknowledged three areas of the Library's work: supporting disabled users, work on customer insight through management reporting, and communication and service development during the pandemic.

(Action: Director of Services (UCL Library Services))

6.2. LC was asked to reflect on the strategic question of whether there were other service enhancements that ought to be considered by the Library during the pandemic. During discussion, the following comments were made:
   a. The 'Scan and Send' model was a welcome innovation that would prove useful to students using resources that were not digitally available or that were difficult to access.
   b. It was likely that a number of the e-textbooks in which the Library had made significant investment would be useful to staff and students beyond those using them as core readings and that, with some communication to staff about availability, readership could be more widely extended. It was noted that this could also help streamline and avoid duplication of investment.

7. Open Science and Scholarship (1-06)

7.1. This item would be postponed until the February 2021 meeting of LC.

Part III: Other Business for Approval or Information

8. UCL Library Committee Annual Report 2019-20 (1-07)

8.1. LC approved the UCL Library Committee Annual Report 2019-20.

9. Internal audit of the Library Services Strategy (1-08)

9.1. LC received the internal audit of the Library Services Strategy, which had received a rating of significant assurance.

10. Project bidding in UCL Library Services (1-09)

10.1. LC received the termly summary report on the Library's progress in project bidding applications.

11. Reports from Working Groups (1-10)

11.1. Since the previous meeting, LC had received the Minutes of the following Working Groups that reported to LC:
   a. Bibliometrics Working Group – 14 May 2020;
   b. Open Science and Scholarship Committee – 12 March 2020;
   c. Press and Publications Board – 20 January 2020.

12. Reports from Faculty Library Committees (1-11)

12.1. Since the previous meeting, LC had received the Minutes of the following Faculty-level or Faculty Library Committees (FLCs):

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