

## Centre for Alternative Technology

### Minutes of Academic Council Meeting – January 2021

#### Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 10.30am

(Minutes of previous Academic Council meetings are available from the [Quality Assurance](#) section of the GSE website)

**Present:** N/A – meeting held online

**In Attendance:** Adrian Watson (AW); John Carter (JC); Tim Coleridge (TC); Jane Fisher (JF); Alison Pooley (AP); Sarah Dalrymple (SD, LJMU Link Tutor), Luana Parisi (LP, UEL Link Tutor); Alice Read (AR); GSE Student Representatives.

Alice Read (AR) (minutes)

**Apologies:** Peter Tyldesley (PT)

#### 1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

- 1.1. Introductions to New Members of Academic Council: Luana Parisi, new UEL link tutor (Senior Lecturer in Construction, Engineering and Management); Alison Pooley (Programme Leader for MArch in Sustainable Architecture); Sarah Dalrymple, LJMU Link Tutor (Programme Leader for Wildlife Conservation); Isobel Bruning, Student Rep (MSc Sustainability & Ecology); Isobel Monk, Student Rep (MSc Sustainability & Behaviour Change) Henry Blomstrand, Student Rep (Sustainability & Ecology); Olivia Harrison, Student Rep (MArch) and Alice Read, Student Support Manager.
- 1.2. John Carter, Current Programme Leader for MArch will be handing over to Alison Pooley on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and staying on as Senior Lecturer on the programme.
- 1.3. Review of the Terms of Reference. Academic Council takes place to generally uphold academic standards. During the meeting it reviews qualifications, Programme Committee Meeting (PCM) minutes, student progression, academic integrity breaches and discusses academic standards and policies. Intends to be a two-way flow of information between student body, academics and University representatives.

#### 2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 2.1. The draft minutes of the Academic Council meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 were accepted as an accurate record. **Action: AR to publish minutes of the October 2020 Academic Council meeting on the GSE website. Action Complete**

#### 3. Matters Arising

(NB: bracketed references are from previous minutes)

- (2.1) Action complete: MS advised that minutes of the June 2020 Academic Council meeting were amended as agreed and published on the GSE website.
- (4.6.) Action Complete: Progression data updated in Agenda point 4.
- (8.1) Ongoing: AP on the SCHOSA Council ad will attend the next meeting 29.1.21 Architects prescription is likely to be a country by country decision.
- (8.8) Action complete: National Library of Wales membership. CAT students can apply for a reader membership but may need a postcode in Wales to access other facilities.
- (9.3) Ongoing: AW will include AP in any UEL Academic Framework discussions.
- (10.1) Action complete: QAA review later this year will tackle any concerns.
- (12.7) Ongoing: AW to present teaching and learning strategy at April 2021 AC meeting.
- (12.4) Action complete: AW confirmed that module booking arrangements have been agreed.
- (12.7) Ongoing: AW advised that the Teaching and Learning Strategy will require additional work and considerations due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and requested that this item be carried forward to the next meeting: **Action: AW to review GSE Teaching and Learning Strategy. Action Complete**

#### 4 Student Enrolment and Progression

- 4.1 AW & AR Presented some rough data on n students who have applied for extenuating circumstances, module deferral and module cancellations in the first term of the academic year compared against last year and n citing Covid as cause of application. Indicates impacts of progression in the coming years when students may be awarded later or move to part time mode of study. **Action AR to circulate % comparison to student headcount. Ongoing**
- 4.2 AW & AR presented progression data for 2017/18 and 2018/19 across all courses. Clear differences between retention rate for UEL Msc Programmes and LJMU programmes, MArch and SEPDM, programmes with specific destinations.
- 4.3 In response to a request for comment on the data JF commented that there has historically been an atmosphere of more flexibility for students on UEL courses whereas LJMU regulations are more fixed. Reps reported that before starting a course students believed there would be more flexibility. TC noted that since SA/SABE/SAP was written the trend seems to have changed. Time to take stock and reconsider the broader courses. Student body will be consulted and invited to aid in this process.
- 4.4 Reps commented that different university regulations across the same modules can cause confusion. TC queried whether CAT could have more freedom to apply a more consistent approach to regulations. MArchs need clarification over extenuating circumstances process. SD was not aware that there were shared modules across the 2 universities. SD agreed with TC that CAT should aim to give students a more consistent approach within the set university regulations. AW raised that there is some ambiguity about access to support through the University services. TC also noted QAA had suggested best practice of partnerships to be involved in policy decisions at universities. Although SD noted that even on-site

LJMU staff do not get involved in these decisions. AW commented that UEL does not give opportunity to feedback into policies whereas LJMU have accepted feedback for example offering a Part time dissertation to CAT students in response to student feedback.

**Action: AR to send extenuating circumstances clarification email to MArch students**

## 5 Covid 19 Impacts

- 5.1 LP noted that UELs position is that staff should give extra support to students who may be feeling isolated or lost due to the pandemic and distance learning. There should be no diminishment of standards.
- 5.2 GSE would like to get back on-site as soon as possible but seems unlikely before March. March considering on-site testing. AW announced to students this week they have access to CAT's Employee Assistance Programme (24hr counselling service). Confidential service and therefore student support should still be contacted regarding extenuation etc. **Action: Student Reps to circulate this offer through student social networks. Action Complete**
- 5.3 OH raised that now MSc student numbers have risen there is less overlap between March and MSc modules. March students miss this network.

## 6 Academic Integrity Policy

- 6.1 AW presented and reviewed updated policy combining LJMU and UEL AI policies. Changes have been made to the pronouns.
- 6.2 SD confirmed that LJMU students with a first AI offence do not have this recorded on their record.
- 6.3 Board approved updates but requested in future any documents are circulated prior to AC meeting. **Action: Will use MS Teams to aid file sharing. Action Complete**

## 7 Quinquennial Review - UEL

- 7.1 Starting the 5 year review this year with an aim to be recruiting students to the approved courses in September 2022. This will impact both March and UEL MScs. The review would be an ideal time to consider more focused courses, less courses, crossover between March and MSc, a Green Jobs Recovery. Students will be invited to participate in this process.
- 7.3 AP emphasized the importance of employer liaison within GSEs teaching networks in order to gauge the direction of travel for professions.

## 8 Link Tutor Updates

### 8.1 LJMU

SD there are imminent changes being made o the LJMU no-detriment framework. LJMU have confirmed that they will be delivering teaching on-line for the rest of

this semester. A timetable of LJMU Collaborative Provision on-line events coming up. **Action Complete**

## 8.2 UEL

LP UEL introduce a new Covid-19 test site. New term at UEL starts on-line next week. Announced a new section on-line for mentors – professionally and pastorally. **LP to follow up whether CAT students can access this service. LP confirmed CAT students can access mentoring with their UEL student number.**

## 9 Programme Leader Updates

### 9.1 MArch

- JC reported that while March is doing well, everyone is missing CAT and the practical aspects of the modules are stacking up for the return to site. Study Trip, normally scheduled in February, likely to take place in September.
- Still issues for part time students seeking funding. Particularly difficult in current covid climate when students wish to change to part time due to other responsibilities.
- The response to UELs CAM report this year was to increase the MArch intake. So far, a good level of applicant and interest in the course.

### 9.2 UEL MSc

- TC welcomes new teaching staff John Leah, Rebecca Upton, Scott Leatham & Ivor Davies. A great mix of expertise and all settling in.
- Thanks to the outgoing MSc student reps for their services over the last year: Arran Yardley, Anna Crowder, Josie Fitzgibbon, Natasha Linfield. Welcome to the new reps Isobel Monk, Isabel Bruning, Henry Blomstrand, Liam Letheren and Vivian Krieg.
- Points of interest from the recent PCM. Timing of student loan payments to students does not tally with module fee payments. AW is working with CATs financial controller to add an additional payment schedule if possible.
- Students would like to see more evidence of response to student feedback – perhaps an FAQ or You said, we did.
- CAM sent to UEL for 19/20. Final revisions due in February.
- Action from EE report to engage more with the MSc team. Arrangements in place to meet on-line in the coming months and with students on-site hopefully in June.

### 9.3 LJMU MSc

- JF is due to complete Quality Reports in March. Still awaiting access to the last reports due to some technical issues.

- There has been an ongoing issue of students losing access to LJMU resources/software and not being forewarned (SPSS, Sage and MDrive)
- Could we request a comprehensive list of resources available to CAT students prior to each Academic Year. AW commented UEL supply a student entitlement letter, suggested something akin to this. **Action for AW to follow up.**

10 Any Other Business

10.1 IB requested updates on student finance progress (see above)

10.2 AP Suggested an Academic Council Microsoft Team as a repository for associated documents. **Action: AR to set up Academic Council Team** Set up following meeting

AR to create and invite members.

Complete link to Academic Council Team:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/channel/19%3abb507141d36642baa4717bcabfe233ab%40t%40hread.tacv2/General?groupId=342a6241-2962-47cc-a857-99cfdb44a14d&tenantId=8ac70f3a-fb59-4438-9a5d-43f02f0ba7fc>

10.3 Thanks noted to the new student support team.

**Next Meeting April 29<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am on Teams.**

[END]