

# Plenary Business Meeting

Friday 18 January 2019, 10.30 – 12.00

Churchill Room, Europe House, 32 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3EU



## MINUTES

*NB Reports were posted in advance on the UCML website at <https://ucml.ac.uk/2018/11/26/ucml-winter-plenary-2019-planning-the-future-research-policy/>*

*All initials can be found on pp. 5–6.*

1. Welcome CG

2. Apologies for absence (Exec members only) NS  
Apologies had been received from SB, CEC, CD, FF, DH, PK, RK, ML & FW; JC attended by skype.

3. Minutes of last meetings CG

3.a UCML Executive meeting of 2 November 2018

- Accuracy & approval

No points were raised.

3.b UCML Plenary AGM of 29 June 2018

- Accuracy & approval

No points were raised.

- Matters arising

An update on Action points was provided.

4. Reports from UCML Steering Group

**4.a Chair** CG

CG amplified her report.

4.a.i She has been involved working with 5 round tables to review landscape of languages in the UK, discussing devolved education, and the situation in England. There will be a workshop in mid Feb to put together recommendations for a combined voice of the devolved nations. They are pushing for a clear set of policies for languages.

4.a.ii The survey & UCML online newsletter: colleagues are invited to review/comment.

4.a.iii University of Hull: our letter was signed by a large number of colleagues; good response so far; liaison continues, including with UCU. Together with CF, CG is developing a toolkit for when a department comes under threat. **Action: all colleagues** to discuss.

4.a.iv OneHE is a platform bringing together ML communities.  
There were no questions.

**4.b Vice-chair Languages & intercultural education** EP

EP amplified her report.

4.b.i News from UCAS will come out in 10 days.

- 4.b.ii The 'Granularity project', data on JH degrees: we have received a new quote for the data which is substantially higher; we must choose: **Action: EP & CSJE** to decide which languages to select. Colleagues are invited to give their views on which languages we should use & by what criteria: **Action: all**; a deadline of 31 Jan was agreed. Meantime CSJE will liaise with UCAS to see if there is a way to get price down without removing languages.
- 4.b.iii Mapping project: UCML, with AULC and Language Acts have published a report on data-collected on different areas of the sector.
- 4.b.iv Re the future of the VC Education role: the new VC starting in July will have a heavy workload - sharing between two would be better, eg by resurrecting the Language Teaching role or by providing support. It was agreed that data-gathering is very important, but that it currently takes a lot of work; also in future the chairing of the Routes sub-committee would be added. **Action: SG** to discuss at its March meeting.
- 4.b.v OFQUAL decision not to adjust A level grading: the curriculum has improved but exams are still inaccessible. At the Coventry meeting OFQUAL was not 100% positive in response but hopeful. Meantime the GCSE curriculum is going to be revised: OFQUAL are asking for views: UCML will be challenging the expectations that are placed on students. They are not relevant or appropriate for the student population.
- 4.b.vi Colleagues invited to share positive news about languages, so we can publicise it! CG noted that the University of York has opened a new Centre on language pedagogy.

In discussion: OGC noted that the AULC report shows 80% of lang activity is in 20% of langs, & this shows the importance of accurate data. ChB stressed that UCML, as a unifying voice, can make a greater impact than individual lang subject associations [SAs]; CG noted that this point had been made repeatedly in her survey. It was agreed that both have a role, but it was also felt that SAs often do not know what UCML does. Again, it is important for the sector to have a united voice. IN re granularity: GP & HO emphasised the importance of liaising with other subjects, eg history. Returning to the OFQUAL issue, it was felt that the demands on students at school are excessive, with intellectual expression required that they could often not achieve in their own lang; there is then a gap btw this and what they have to do at HEI. Academics should have input when school curricula & exams were decided. This might be a workshop topic at future Plenary: **Action: SG & Exec.**

It was agreed that UCML is a source of broad information, & that the website should elicit the views of students too.

#### 4.c Vice-chair Research

JP

JP amplified his report.

- 4.c.i AMLUK: CG has attended. We are still not sure where we fit within this association.
- 4.c.ii AHRC letter: we need to continue challenging the monolingual paradigm.

In discussion, CG reminded members that IMLR has some funding available, so colleagues encouraged to get in touch with CD. JP thanks UCML and will continue to attend; CG thanks both JP & EP for their major contribution to UCML.

#### 4.d Vice-chair External Communication & Engagement

AdM

AdM amplified her report.

- 4.d.i The community has come together around Hull: CG's letter had been picked up by BBC in Hull, and on facebook there were many appreciative comments from former students etc. – good mobilisation.
- 4.d.ii The Newsletter is up on the UCML website: this is an opportunity to comment, and also=0 to suggest topics: **Action: all.**

#### 4.e Hon. Secretary

NS

NS amplified her report.

She thanked the 6 colleagues who are leaving us this year. Colleagues should look at job descriptions and flag any issues. There will be a call for nominations soon.

#### 4.f Hon. Treasurer

OG

OGC amplified her report.

- 4.f.i She now has access to the whole system of subscriptions, it is robust and in place. Travel/hospitality has gone up, but this is well within our possibilities. We are operating at a surplus/within budget.
- 4.f.ii Income has been coming in: the deadline for 2018 subs is today. Subscriptions are still coming in and HEIs can pay for 2 years, which means we will have more coming in now and less later.
- 4.f.iii The SG had decided to offer the nations the opportunity to bid for £300-500 of UCML funding pa. Our net assets are quite high, there are lots of things to do and we could spend this money on initiatives, related to CG's survey. NS suggested that we should pay for an assistant to the VC Education.

#### 5. National reports

##### 5.a Northern Ireland

SB

In the absence of SB her report was accepted without discussion.

##### 5.b Scotland

JC

- 5.b.i Word Wizard (the spelling bee): this had been lost because of administrative resourcing, & because it was not reaching state school pupils any more.
- 5.b.ii National ML Network meeting: the 'Mind the gap' talk by JC was not as well received as would have hoped. He had made the point that Scottish pupils often do one year of languages but not the whole higher, thus having a problematic gap compared to English pupils. This explains the downturn in applications from Scottish students. JC was asked to send his ppt to put up on the website; **Action: JC → CSJE.**

##### 5.c Wales

LWO

- 5.c.i 2016–18 Evaluation of Routes Cymru: there are systemic barriers to messaging/timetabling.
- 5.c.ii LWO has spoken to colleagues from Bangor/Swansea re funding: perhaps it could go towards an event in Cardiff on recruitment.
- 5.c.iii LWO was pleased to announce that the Welsh assembly is putting an extra £24 million into languages, not just English and Welsh: it is a long term approach. The new curriculum will start from 2022, developing a holistic approach with international languages as core element. Welsh Assembly Minister Kirsty Williams made a strong case for languages.

#### 6. Other UCML activities

##### 6.a UCML's proposed ownership of *Routes into Languages*

CG

We are developing a transfer of the brand of *Routes* into UCML: UCML would liaise, oversee and monitor the programme, running a *Routes* sub-committee to ensure compliance & maintenance of standards. There was a draft Deed of transfer and licensing arrangements. This will be brought to the July 2019 AGM for approval. **Action: NS/CSJE** to put FW's proposal in post-meeting docs.

##### 6.b Gender in Language learning

AdM

The Gender Action movement is run by KCL, the Institute of Education, the Institute of Physics & UCML; for this year it is supported by the Mayor & GLA. Working with several London schools, they have been signing up, & feedback has been very positive. An inaugural Teachers' Meeting takes place on 9 February. The idea is to fight gender stereotypes in schools (physics: too few girls; langs: too few boys). Some HEIs are developing modules for students to do service (credited)

working with schools in small projects around the area of gender: this will start next September & 2018/19 is the year for data collection, to be used nationally later. Social media is going positively.

There were no questions, but AdM was thanked for involving UCML in this.

### **6.c Outcome of UCML members' survey & proposed Action Plan**

**CG**

CG presented a powerpoint & summarised the response, which was from a broad range of members.

Proposed activities:

- mythbust the idea that languages are difficult and/or not useful;
- support actions like ERASMUS+ with one voice;
- recruitment in lesser-taught languages – eg Russian, Japanese, Portuguese – were particular concerns;
- fear that the smaller departments would be cut out;
- lack of understanding about language programmes by senior leaders;
- clarify the misapprehension that ML at HE is teaching only.

Priorities:

- Widening participation
- lobby government
- career trajectory of students, linking study to career paths
- sustainable projects for smaller languages in a monetary, marketised environment.

Suggestions for addressing issues:

- Who speaks when and where, as the sector spokesperson to provide a unifying voice?
- work with those who are not motivated to do a language;
- role model for the media to put forward a positive brand for languages;
- diverse language programme, constructive supportive environment around languages.

It was agreed to write a ca 800-word blog for public voice of languages for the 'non-convinced', which would be visible within non-languages environments.

UCML's priorities:

- support and cooperation rather than competition, regardless of the language;
- combined programme for HE and beyond;
- we should broaden into eg ESRC, tap into social sciences as well as AH;
- we should be proactive rather than reactive: preempt issues rather than respond to them; and do so quickly;
- we should not view change as decline, but as a global paradigm shift: things are challenging, but this is a time to get ahead of the curve;
- we should now develop an action plan.

In the discussion that followed, GP highlighted the potential of working with schools, eg an Italian teachers' day which attracts 16 teachers each year. This could be replicated for all languages in key regional areas: we should aim to transform the secondary classroom.

CG introduced the Sir Robert Taylor Society (<https://srts.mml.ox.ac.uk/>) conference which 100 people attend: it brings together academics & teachers of ML.

It was noted that there is a lack of understanding within HEIs about how ML operates: ML needs to be clearer about its disciplinary framework, methodology, rationale, impact etc need to be made clearer. Language and culture coming together. NS pointed out that other subjects like English or history ignore that we do what they do, plus langs. Such depts use translations without recognising the linguistic input behind them. In relation to this, PB suggested rebranding ML as global communication, which would avoid negative views of other subjects or self-marginalisation.

It was agreed that UCML ought to communicate the essential place of ML & ML depts to HE management, as well as the importance of the 'ML pipeline'. Again the need for a unified voice was stressed.

SW suggested that in the July 2019 plenary workshop, instead of having presentations etc, we should run breakout sessions to discuss practical actions for UCML: **Action: SG & Exec** planning July 2019 Plenary.

## 7. Any Other Business

There was no AOB

***A sandwich lunch was provided from 12 noon;  
the afternoon Workshop follows from 13.00 to 16.30.***

## WORKSHOP

## PLANNING THE FUTURE: RESEARCH & POLICY

### 13.00 – 14.30 *REF2021 update*

- *Professor Charles Forsdick* (Chair, REF2021 UoA 26 MLL)
- *Professor Susan Hodgett* (Chair, REF2021 UoA 25 Area Studies)

followed by Q&A

14.30 – 15.00

tea-break

### 15.00 – 16.30 *Round table on working with UK government & policy-makers*

- *Professor Wendy Ayres-Bennett* (Cambridge University, OWRI Lead, MEITS)
- *Professor Janice Carruthers* (AHRC Leadership Fellow, ML)
- *Professor Neil Kenny* (British Academy, Lead Fellow for Languages)
- *Bernadette Holmes MBE* (Director, Speak to the Future)

followed by Q&A

## ATTENDEE LIST

<b>surname</b>	<b>first</b>	<b>member org</b>	<b>role</b>	<b>abbr</b>
Alvarez	Inma	OU		IA
Archer	Leona	Surrey		LA
Ayres-Bennett	Wendy	Cambridge	speaker	WAB
Beaven	Tita	OU		TB
Bishop	Paul	Glasgow		PB
Boettcher	Silke	DAAD		SB
Boyle	Catherine	KCL		CB
Brandao	Renata	KCL		RB
Burdett	Charles	Durham		ChB
Carlisle	Ann	CIOL		AC
Carruthers	Janice	Belfast	speaker	JanC
Carson <i>(by skype)</i>	Joe	St Andrews	Exec	JC
Cazzoli	Marcela	Durham		MC
Cerdá	Yolanda	Sussex		YC
Davies	Catherine	IMLR		CaD
De Medeiros	Ana	KCL	Exec	AdM

Dobson	Julia	Sheffield		JuD
Drugan	Joanna	UEA	Exec	JD
Fiddler	Allyson	Lancaster	Exec	AF
Forsdick	Charles	Liverpool	speaker	CF
Gomez-Cash	Olga	Lancaster	Exec	OGC
Gorrara	Claire	Cardiff	Exec	CG
Harris	Chris	Warwick		CH
Herrero	Carmen	MMU		CaH
Hicks	Jeremy	QMUL		JH
Hodgett	Susan	UEA	speaker	SH
Holmes	Bernardette	Speak to the F.	speaker	BH
James	Katie	DAAD		KJ
Karatsareas	Petros	Westminster		PK
Kelly	Debra	Westminster		DK
Kenny	Neil	Oxford/BA	speaker	NK
Labeau	Emmanuelle	Aston/AFLS		EL
Langford	Rachael	Cardiff		RL
Lindsay	Claire	UCL		CL
Long-Levasseur	Imogen	Hull	Exec	ILL
Louis	Anja	SHU		AL
MacDiarmid	Carole	Glasgow	Exec	CMacD
Melcion	Lourdes	Roehampton		LM
Owen	Hilary	Manchester	Exec	HO
Pieri	Giuliana	RHUL	Exec	GP
Polisca	Elena	Lancaster	Exec	EP
Preece	Julian	Swansea	Exec	JP
Puntil	Donata	KCL		DP
Rolls	Assia	Regent's Univ		AR
Sarha	Jennifer	QMUL		JS
Schroeder-Rossell	Anette	KCL		ASR
Scott	Rachel	KCL		RS
Segal	Naomi	Birkbeck	Exec	NS
Shilton	Siobhán	Bristol		SS
Smith	Richard	BAAL		RS
Spence	Paul	KCL		PS
St John Eve	Claire	UCNL Admin	Exec	CSJE
Standing	Alison	LSE		AS
Stefanutti	Isabella	Bath		IS
Stevens	Sophie	KCL		SoS
Taylor	Claire	AHGBI		CT
Vialleton	Elodie	OU		EV
Wharton	Steve	Bath/ASMCF		SW
Wielander	Gerda	Westminster		GW
Wislocka Breit	Bozena	QMUL		BWB
Wren-Owens	Liz	Cardiff	Exec	LWO
Wright	Sarah	RHUL		SW
Wright	Vicky	Soton		VW