

UCML Executive Committee

Friday 26 April 2019

12.30 – 16.00

Room C60b/c, InfoLab21
School of Computing & Communications
Lancaster University, LA1 4WA



Item 3 Chair's report

November 2018 to 16 April 2019

1. *Policy intervention: Roundtable participant at the final meeting of the British Academy-led project to create a UK wide National Languages Strategy on 14 February 2019.* This will propose a list of recommendations aimed at shaping a UK-wide national languages strategy. The resultant British Academy statement on languages in the UK was well timed to coincide with a BBC UK-wide Education set of reports on the decline of languages in the UK in late February. I am contributing to the final iteration of a UK National Languages Strategy document due for dissemination in the Spring 2019.

Erasmus+: Launch of a change.org campaign to protest the potential loss of Erasmus+ in a No Deal Brexit scenario and letter to Rt Hon Damien Hinds, Minister of Education, to urge for the safeguarding of the Erasmus+ programme. Petition has over 2,500 signatures to date and a response from the DfE was posted on the UCML social media pages. Further Erasmus+ updates from UK Government have been forthcoming due to the extension to Brexit discussion accorded by the EU27.

2. *Strategic planning and development*
Presentation at the UCML AGM in January on the member survey. There is clear support for coordinated lobbying around languages and the importance of contributing to a sector-wide communications campaign on the scale and importance of STEM. It will be important to combine this campaign with the final UK National Languages strategy (as above) for optimal success.
3. *Institutional support for modern language departments*
Coordinated a Letter regarding the decision by the University of Reading to reconfigure and downsize its Language programmes on 18 February 2019, with signatures from Heads of Associations and Heads of Schools and departments of modern languages. I did not receive a response as UCML Chair, although letters have been sent to other campaigning organisations. I have been passed a copy. I am in contact with a senior colleague at Reading on the current proposals for implementation and consultation on change to Languages provision. I have been **supporting the senior languages lead at Hull** on the relaunch of Languages and their discussions with University leaders.
4. *National representation and support*

Presentation at the University of Bristol on 20 February 2019: 'Languages Advocacy and Activism: The View from Wales'

Media interviews in the context of the BBC Education's reports on languages week of 27 February, including Buzzfeed: <https://www.buzzfeed.com/hazelshearing/language-students-erasmus-no-deal-brexit>

Presentation at University of Hull on 27 March 2019 on 'Languages Advocacy and Activism in Wales and the UK'

5. *Project work*

Continuing liaison with Elena Polisca, VC Languages and Intercultural Education, on UCML **joining the new OneHE platform as part of its Languages and Linguistics Global Subject Centre**. Elena and have liaising with Katrin Kohl of Oxford on a letter to **OFQUAL protesting at the severe grading for MFL** at A level, above all German. This will hopefully be accompanied by a feature in *The Guardian* in April/May I am also working in Wales to lobby over **the new Welsh curriculum where the place of international languages** is unclear. I am meeting the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams, in June, with Tonia Antoniazzi, MP for Gower and Deputy Chair of the APPG for Languages.

Looking Forward

1. **Wales: meeting with Kirsty Williams, AM**, 3 June on languages and the new curriculum in Wales
2. **Alliance of Modern Languages UK: meeting of Modern Languages, Area Studies and Linguistics subject associations** at the IMLR on 27 June