

WIHEA Teaching Recognition and Reward Symposium, 13 December 2017

Executive Summary

Context

The research undertaken by the WIHEA Teaching Recognition & Reward Learning Circle and events attended by members identified some examples of best practice in this area both in a national and international context. A symposium was therefore organised to build on this experience in order to feed into discussions taking place at Warwick.

John Brady, Director of HR, University of Reading

Reading is a considerable way ahead of Warwick and has revised all academic contracts to recognise and reward the diverse contributions of staff. Brady's presentation sought to highlight some of the challenges they had faced. The decision was to take an initial 'leap of faith' to reclassify all teaching, research and teaching/research staff as 'academic staff'. There was a recognition that academic careers move through different phases with more emphasis on some activities than others in different years/cycles. The process of revising contracts was challenging with resistance from some staff and the UCU. However, once consultations had taken place the response from staff and unions was positive. Brady advised consulting widely and having strong academic sponsors from both T&L and R perspectives.

Once contracts were revised it was clear that promotion processes also had to change (particularly to full professor) as it was clear that strong teaching and learning contributions were not being recognised appropriately. In addition unsuccessful applicants received poor feedback and the process was not transparent.

Reading's solution was to make FHEA or equivalent mandatory for all promotions to Associate Prof/Prof. Promotion cases to professor then needed to meet ten criteria overall. All applicants needed to meet three criteria for Academic citizenship and leadership; all needed to meet the criterion for 'sustained quality' and then Teaching Intensive staff needed to meet four mandatory teaching criteria and two from either the teaching or research lists. T&R staff could put forward a combination of their choice from both the teaching and research lists. In addition each school had a promotions mentor and all applicants were given full written feedback based on the criteria.

In spite of these successes Brady still felt Reading needed to improve – in particular changing culture at School level. They have kept learning and refining the criteria, have established a teaching intensive working group, take care to celebrate successes and to highlight role models.

Professor Stephen McHanwell, Director of Faculty of Medical Sciences, Education, Research, Development and Practice Unit, National Teaching Fellow

McHanwell was a co-investigator on the HEA project *Promotion Teaching* which worked with universities in the UK and Australia to produce a benchmarking template to aid institutions in

developing promotion procedures to recognize teaching excellence (although he acknowledged ‘excellence’ in this context was a contested term). He identified a number of best practices for institutions: institutional policies support teaching promotion; those in leadership roles have a sound understanding of how to evidence teaching; promotion committees are well-prepared; and there is clear advice and support for applicants.

He argued that it is important in a rapidly changing HE sector to establish a common language around the complexity of expert teaching and ways of evidencing this from a range of sources. He grouped these into three areas: scope of activity (which included professional learning, student engagement, curriculum development, research and scholarship and leadership and collaboration); sources of evidence; and sphere of influence (impact) which could be global, at a community level, at university level or within disciplines and faculties.

At Newcastle this had led to the creation of an evidence base for achievement in teaching for use in promotions applications and a re-focusing of professional learning for all staff who teach. Professional development programmes often poorly engaged with by academic staff but are important to support and develop teaching academics. Thus by using an action research model academics could undertake professional enquiries (eg to tackle curriculum change or improvement of practice such as employability) which might lead to publications or reports and effect meaningful change.

Professor Dilly Fung, Professor of Higher Education Development, UCL Arena Centre for Research-based Education

Fung discussed her HEA funded project on rewarding educators in research-intensive universities. One key focus of her presentation was the need to change terminology to help change culture. Thus she suggested using the work **education** (rather than teaching and learning); **educators** (all those who teach in Russell group institutions); and **education leaders** (academics/teaching fellows who make a significant impact through established or atypical roles).

The project established a series of recommendations many of which echoed practices at Reading and Newcastle and were being implemented at UCL. These recommendations included the need to develop a credible narrative regarding the importance of education to the institution; reviewing titles so all staff engaged in education are defined as academics; and a revision of promotion criteria to recognise contributions of educators.

Fung has also undertaken research on academic education leadership which might help devise criteria for promotion to a professorial post. These criteria fall into five areas: intentionality; internal connectivity; external connectivity; research-education synergies; and overall impact.

UCL with the full support of the VC (who himself achieved accreditation as a PFHEA) have adopted these recommendations and Fung’s work on the connected curriculum which presents a holistic solution for institutions to break down the structural and conceptual divides between research and education.