

University of Cambridge Conservation Leadership Alumni Network (UCCLAN)

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The University of Cambridge Conservation Leadership Alumni Network (UCCLAN) Council (hereforth the Council) is based on a collegiate agreement between each alumni cohort and the Department of Geography, MPhil Conservation Leadership Programme.

Background

The MPhil in Conservation Leadership was created in 2007 by eight internationally renowned conservation organisations, the Cambridge Conservation Forum (CCF) and the University of Cambridge, with the first cohort of students commencing in 2010. The course aims to deliver a world-class interdisciplinary education in Conservation Leadership, delivered in partnership by world leading conservation practitioners and researchers from university departments and conservation organizations.

The Council was established after a 2018 reunion of the first eight cohorts to progress objectives identified by the collective alumni during this time. This was facilitated by the Conservation Leadership (CL) Team.

Purpose and Role

The purpose of the Council is to progress the alumni network and strengthen its collective impact in conservation across the globe. The Council is accountable for establishing a shared vision for the future of the network through consultation with their cohorts and development and delivery of a strategic plan. Council members will provide guidance on how this will be achieved and support an evaluation process, provide advice and recommendations for the network as required. It is anticipated that these recommendations will be considered by the MPhil Team and other relevant stakeholders to lead the advancement of the alumni network and its members where appropriate.

Key objectives during the establishment of the Council:

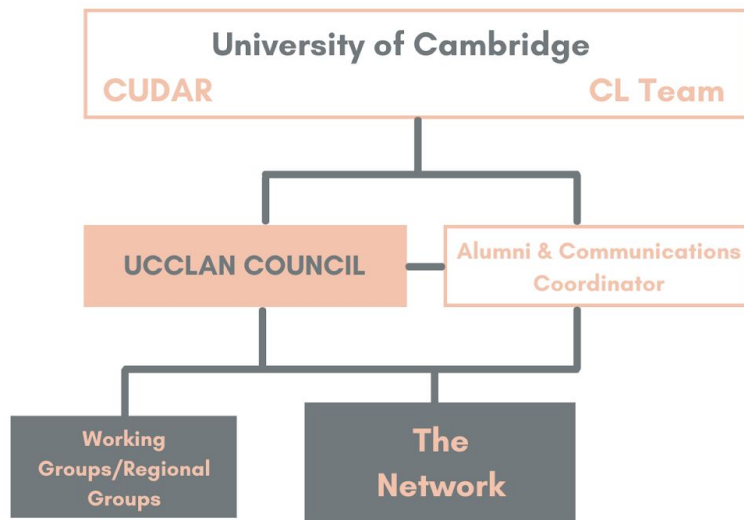
- Develop a shared vision and mission for the network
- Establish and endorse principles and culture
- Establish appropriate platforms to connect, inform and engage with the network
- Define the relationship with CCI and Cambridge University Development and Alumni Relations Office (CUDAR)
- Support research to highlight the impact of alumni beyond the MPhil

The Council will seek to secure a consensus view for matters important to the alumni network, allowing for diverse opinions. Council members are responsible for conferring with their respective cohorts regarding issues for decision.

The Council can appoint subcommittees and/or working groups to address key needs in consultation with their cohorts as required. Membership of such groups can comprise of interested parties across the network and communicate progress to the Council periodically.

Governance Framework

The figure below illustrates the current governance arrangements in place for the Council. Secretariat support will be provided by the Alumni and Communications Coordinator.



UCCLAN GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Membership

The Council is comprised of the following:

- One nominated representative from each cohort
- A representative from the current student cohort (for meetings between January and July each year)
- A member of the Conservation Leadership team
- Additional members will be included at the invitation of the Chairperson.

Appointment of Council Members:

An individual representative can volunteer on behalf of their cohort for the Council. The selection process of the cohort representative will be the responsibility of the cohort. In case of conflicts of interest or any other issues, a network member can address their concerns via the grievance mechanism to the Secretariat. Each cohort nominates a representative for a period of two years to the Council. Representatives can deputise council duties within their cohort as required if they are unable to attend meetings. If changes to council membership do not occur through natural attrition, the Council is required to rotate no more than 50% representation to maintain knowledge and continuity at the beginning of each calendar year. Members who wish to step down or have exceeded their two year term should engage their cohort to find a replacement for the Council and formally notify the Secretariat.

Role of Council Members:

Council members are responsible for the following:

- Promote the UCCLAN Strategy
- Support the delivery of targeted communications to their respective cohorts
- Attend online meetings and progress actions out of session

A Council member can represent their respective cohorts by tabling topics, issues or proposals for discussion at Council meetings.

Council Chair

The Council Chair is responsible for the following:

- Chair meetings

- Work alongside the CL Alumni and Communications Coordinator (CLACC) to provide strategic support including the preparation of meeting agendas, associated papers and follow up on key actions
- Promote the UCCLAN Strategy
- Provide support to Council members as required
- Act as external spokesperson and signatory for the UCCLAN as required

The role of the Council Chair is appointed for 12 months. Candidates for Council Chair must be existing Council members who have contributed for 12 months before nominating themselves via a written statement to the Secretariat. Council members will elect a Chair through an anonymous vote. Nominations for Chair from sitting Vice Chairs will be looked at favourably.

Council Vice Chair

The Vice Chair is responsible for the following:

- Deputise for the Chair's responsibilities as required
- Maintain continuous communication with the Chair and provide support as required.

The role of the Council Vice Chair is appointed for 12 months. Candidates for Vice Chair may be new to the Council and can nominate themselves via a written statement to the Secretariat if the role is vacant. Council members will elect the Vice Chair through an anonymous vote.

Commitment

Members are expected to attend at least 4 out of 6 meetings annually and actively participate, distributing any work equitably. If this minimum attendance is not met, another representative from the respective cohort may be elected.

Confidentiality

Information obtained during the course of duties on the Council should be treated with due sensitivity and not be used for personal or private gain for political or financial purposes. Council members may be asked to sign confidentiality agreements/memorandum of understanding.

Conflict of Interest

Council members must take all reasonable steps to avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest with the Council. Council representatives are required to declare conflicts of interest where they occur and remove themselves from decision making where appropriate. This will be documented in the meeting minutes.

Meetings

Meeting frequency

The Council will meet on the third Thursday of every second month, rotating through global time zones, totalling a minimum of six 1 hr meetings each year. The Secretariat and Chair must ensure, as far as practicable, that every member has adequate opportunity to participate in discussions. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Council where required.

Meeting Quorum

Half of the current Council members are required to be present to constitute a quorum. If a representative is unable to attend, best efforts should be made to facilitate deputisation from their respective cohort.

Agenda

Council members can suggest agenda items in conjunction with the Secretariat and Chair. An agenda will be prepared and distributed one week prior to meetings. The Secretariat is responsible for the preparation and circulation of papers in consultation with the Chair.

Minutes

The Secretariat will take minutes during each meeting and work with the Chair to confirm them prior to distribution within two weeks of each meeting.

Communique

A communique of key messages and decisions from Council meetings will be prepared and promoted through SLACK and other network communications as appropriate.

Unless through agreement and/or direction from the Director of the MPhil Conservation Leadership, Council members should not speak to or engage with external media on behalf of the UCCLAN or the Conservation Leadership MPhil.

Council Contact

A specific email address to communicate with the Council will be established. This email address and any information related to that email address will only be accessible to the Council Chair, Vice Chair and Secretariat.

Guests and Observers

Meetings may be attended by invited guests and observers where appropriate.

Council performance

The Council will reflect on its own performance and the performance of any subcommittees on a biennial basis, in addition to feedback from network members to evaluate progress and performance.

Document Management

Version 2.0 January 2021. Authored by the Council members.

ToR should be reviewed in January 2023 and every two years thereafter.