BIRKBECK COLLEGE
University of London

MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD

14 November 2016

Present
Professor David Latchman (Chair), Professor Matthew Innes, Professor Julian Swann, Professor Philip Powell, Dr Stewart Motha, Professor Nick Keep, Professor Matthew Davies, Dr Kate MacKenzie Davey, Dr Joanne Leal, Mr Robert Atkinson, Dr Eddie Bruce-Jones, Dr Jasbir Gill, Mr Mike Berlin, Dr Jan Etienne, Dr Tim Markham, Dr Luisa Cale, Dr Anita Walsh, Dr Sarah Lamble, Professor Gerald Roberts, Professor Marjorie Lorch, Professor Deborah Mabbett, Dr Serafina Cuomo, Dr Luciana Martins, Professor Lynda Nead, Professor Alison Finlay, Dr Jennifer Baird, Professor Ron Smith, Dr Katherine Thompson, Dr Sanjib Bhakta, Dr Lesley McFayden, Dr Martin Shipway, Dr Eddie Davelaar, Dr Alessandro Provetti, Dr Margarita Palacios, Dr Ana Parejo Vadillo

In Attendance
Mr Keith Harrison, Mrs Katharine Bock, Mr Fraser Keir, Ms Mara Arts, Ms Lucy Heming, Mr Kashim Barick

1 MINUTES
Received and confirmed
1.1 The minutes of the Academic Board meeting of 16 June 2016 (AB 2016 01)

2 REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD
Noted
2.1 The Academic Board Report made to the Governors on 30 June 2016 (AB 2016 02)

3 SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP
Noted
3.1 The Academic Board’s membership for 2016/17 (AB 2016 03)

4 MASTER’S REPORT
Noted
4.1 Academic Board welcomed Professor Matthew Davies, the new Executive Dean of the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy. Professor Diane Houston who is the Head of the Graduate School of the University of Kent will be joining Birkbeck in early December, as Pro Vice Master Education.

4.2 Members congratulated Professor Alison Finlay and Dr Jennifer Baird for being elected as Academic Board Governors.

Noted
4.3 Members noted that there is an ongoing programme to review the College’s Schools and departments. A number of reviews have already been conducted including that of the Economics Mathematics & Statistics and Modern Languages departments and most
recently, the School of Law. Reports have been circulated amongst colleagues within the Schools.

4.4 It was reported that 3 year full time undergraduate student recruitment has been very positive and it is expected that the recovery of part time student recruitment will begin once maintenance loans are introduced.

4.5 Members heard that the College performed remarkably well recruiting full and part time postgraduate students. This has been significantly influenced by the availability of postgraduate loans which is now capped at age 60 rather than 30. Up to 60% of Birkbeck postgraduate students applied for the loan.

Noted
4.6 The Committee noted that the College will be introducing a £500K strategic initiative fund to celebrate the success of postgraduate recruitment. The fund will specifically focus on initiatives associated with postgraduate and Masters programmes and recruitment.

4.7 Academic Board heard that the government has extended its commitment for U.K. fee and loan status for EU students starting an undergraduate or postgraduate programme in 2017/18. Fees will be charged at 'home fee' rates and students will be allowed to apply for loans for the full duration of their courses. The status of students starting in 2018/19 is not yet confirmed.

5 ACADEMIC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
Received and confirmed
5.1 The minutes of the 27th October 2016 Academic Board Executive Committee (ABExCo) meeting. Members of ABExCo present at Academic Board confirmed the minutes (AB 2016 04)

6 RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Received
6.1 Members received an update on the ongoing work of the Research Committee (AB 2016 05).

6.2 The Research Committee reported that the College has been successful with its applications for the UCL Bloomsbury ESRC Doctoral training partnership and the next round of the Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF) funding.

Noted
6.3 It was noted that the Stern report on the next Research Excellence Framework (REF) had been published during the summer. There will be a 14 week consultation period on the recommendations. The next REF will take place in 2020 with submissions due by December 2020 following which, a REF report will be produced in 2021.

Approved
6.4 Academic Board approved the establishment of the Centre for Race and Law and the Centre for Political Economy and Instructional Studies. Academic Board also approved a suite of Research Data Management policies which govern the use of the College’s data repository.
Endorsed

6.5 Academic Board endorsed the Research Committee’s recommendation that the College consults further with the academic base to consider signing up to the UK Scholarly Communications Licence (SCL). The UK SCL seeks to remove many of the issues associated with publishing research outputs in a way that complies with the rules of the funder of the research and the eligibility rules for the next REF exercise, therefore simplifying the process for the College’s academics and library staff. The SCL also solves issues associated with researchers inadvertently breaching copyright agreements made with publishers.

Approved

6.6 Academic Board approved the following recommendations of the Research Committee;

- Signing up to the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA). The declaration recognises that classical metrics can discourage researchers from open access outlets and encourages institutions to assess research outputs in wider terms.
- Adopting the ORCID online ID system. Increasingly Research Councils are requiring that individuals have an ORCID ID in order to be eligible for funding. ORCID is also HEFCE’s preferred method of entry for REF and this is likely to be part of the upcoming consultation exercise.

7 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

Received

7.1 Academic Board received an update on the ongoing work of the Student Engagement & Widening Participation (SEWP) Committee (AB 2016 06).

7.2 Members heard that the SEWP Committee are managing a number of student retention projects particularly focusing on the following;

- Query Resolution
- Personal Tutors Policy
- Competitions and Markets Authority compliance

Approved

7.3 Academic Board approved SEWP’s recommendation to consider Social Media Principles. These principles are not intended to place restrictions on freedom of speech, but to provide guidance for those who use official College or Student Union social media accounts and to offset the risk of disputes over social media comments.

7.4 SEWP reported that it had developed a widening participation framework and the objective of the framework is to get WP students more engaged with support the College already offers.

8 TEACHING & QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Received

8.1 The report of the Teaching & Quality Enhancement Committee (AB 2016 07).

8.2 TQEC reported on the Teaching Excellence Framework. Submissions will now be due towards the end of January 2017. The award badging has changed from “meets expectations”, “excellent” and “outstanding” to “bronze, silver and gold”.
New, Suspended and Withdrawn Programmes

8.3 Academic Board agreed to the approval, suspension and withdrawal of the following programmes:

Programme Approved
- BA Psychology for Education Professionals (top up) programme
- Grad Cert in Psychodynamic Practice
- Grad Cert in Planetary Science

Programme Withdrawals
- MRes Politics<Language> (a collaborative programme with SOAS)
- MSc International Business and the European Union
- MSc Career Management and Coaching (full time mode only)
- BSc Business (Stratford language pathways)
- BSc Business and Portuguese
- BSc Business and pathway <Accounting; Management; French; German; Japanese; Spanish; Human Resource Management; Information Systems; Marketing>
- BSc Business Accounting (decelerated)
- MA Medical Humanities

New Programmes Approved by TQEC Chair’s Action:
- Grad Cert in Planetary Science
- Cert of Professional Education in Organizational and Business Psychology
- BA Arts and Humanities with Foundation Year
- BSc Social Sciences with Foundation Year
- BSc Accounting with Business Year
- BSc Business with Foundation Year
- BSc Economics and Business with Foundation Year
- BSc Mathematics with Foundation Year
- BSc Biomedicine with Foundation Year
- BSc Psychology with Foundation Year
- BSc Structural Molecular Biology with Foundation Year

8.4 Academic Board approved the following policy and procedures;
- Personal Tutors Policy - Currently there are no clear policies on what Birkbeck students can expect from a Personal Tutor and how a student should engage with this element of support offered by the college. This policy confirms expectations for the personal tutor role.
- Appeals Policy and Procedure for Research Students - This covers examiners’ decisions on degree award and upgrade from MPhil to PhD, and termination of registration on academic grounds.

9 FEES, BURSARIES & SCHOLARSHIPS COMMITTEE

Received

9.1 The annual report of the Fees, Bursaries & Scholarship Committee (AB 2016 08).

9.2 Academic Board received the annual report of the FBSC. Members noted that in response to the Government’s change to tuition fee upper limits announced in summer
2016, the College has decided to increase undergraduate fees for first year students starting in 2017/18 to £9,250 for full time and £6,750 for part time.

9.3 Fees for existing students will be maintained at £9,000/£6,000 and it is expected that the majority of the sector will do the same. In light of CMA expectations, fees below the regulatory cap which covers HE Certificates and some Foundation degrees, will not be changed for 2017/18 but will be reviewed going further ahead.

9.4 Academic Board heard that Leslie Topp and Caroline McDonald were commended by the Fees, Bursaries & Scholarships Committee for their innovative work to offer a programme of fee and academic support to asylum seekers. The Transition Programme will offer a programme of advice, guidance and support events, at the end of which students will have the option to apply and receive support for a number of academic options.

10 CONFERMENT OF EMERITUS TITLE
Noted
10.1 To consider proposals for the conferment of Emeritus titles (AB 2016 09)

10.2 Academic Board warmly endorsed a proposal to confer Emeritus titles on Professor Sue Jackson and Professor Joni Lovenduski. Both have held key roles in the College, Sue Jackson was the Pro Vice Master for Lifelong Learning and Joni Lovenduski was the Dean of the Politics department. Members expressed their thanks to Professors Jackson and Lovenduski for their services to the College.

11 VISITING PROFESSORS
Received and noted
11.1 Members noted the extension of the visiting Professors (AB 2016 10)

12 CHAIR’S ACTIONS
Received and approved
12.1 A report on the action taken by the Chair on behalf of the Board since the last meeting. (AB 2016 11)

12.2 The Master approved all suspensions of regulations as listed in the paper.

13 ACADEMIC DRESS AT GRADUATION
Noted
13.1 Academic Board discussed the College’s approach for Academic Dress at Graduation. Birkbeck currently does not have a policy on what College graduands should wear during graduation ceremonies although the convention is for academic dress.

13.2 Members agreed not to introduce formal policy for academic dress, but to make it clear in the invitation to graduation ceremonies that students will be expected to wear academic dress.

14 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS
Noted
14.1 The dates for meetings of the Academic Board in year 2016-17:
   • 9 March 2017, at 2pm
   • 22 June 2017, at 2pm