ABExCo Minutes

Summary
These are the minutes of the ABExCo meeting of 24 October, which were confirmed at the November meeting of the Academic Board.

Recommended Action
The Committee is asked to note these minutes; no further action is required.

Trevor Pearce
February 2012
BIRKBECK
University of London

Minutes of the Academic Board Executive Committee
24 October 2012

Present:
Professor David Latchman (Chair), Professor Philip Dewe, Professor Stephen Frosh, Professor Hilary Fraser, Ms Tricia King, Professor Nicholas Keep, Professor Philip Powell, Professor Patricia Tuit, Professor Miriam Zukas, Jed Keenan, Pierre Smith Khanna

By invitation:
Dr Jasbir Gill (Director of IT services), Mr Philip Payne (Director of Library and Media Services)
Dr Anita Walsh (Chair of the College Boards of Examiners), Dr Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos (Chair of the College Boards of Examiners)

In attendance:
Ms Katharine Bock (Deputy Clerk to the Governors), Mr Keith Harrison (Secretary and Clerk to the Governors), Ms Naina Patel (Director of Human Resources), Mr Trevor Pearce (Deputy Academic Registrar),

Apologies for absence:
Mr Dean Pateman, Dr Rebecca Gumbrell-McCormick, Professor Costas Douzinas, Professor Matthew Innes, Professor Matthew Weait, Professor Julian Swann, Professor Sue Jackson, Professor Li Wei, Ms Megan Reeves

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCHEME OF MEMBERSHIP (X 1 2012/13)
   Received:
   1.1 The Terms of Reference and Scheme of Membership for ABExCo for 2012/13.

   Noted:
   1.2 The Chairman welcomed Jed Keenan and Pierre Smith Khanna to their first meeting of the Committee.

2. MINUTES (X 2 2012/13; X 3 (2012/13))
   Received:
   2.1 (i) The minutes of the meeting of 24 May 2012, which were confirmed at the Academic Board on 19 June 2012 by the members of the Committee who were present;

   (ii) the unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Board meeting of 19 June 2012.

   Noted:
   2.2 The following recommendations from the ABExCo meeting of 24 May 2012 were endorsed on the 19 June 2012 by the Academic Board:
• Fitness to Study Policy
• Revised Student Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure
• Policy on Personal Tutoring
• Policy on the Recording of Lectures and Other Teaching Sessions
• The Policy on Intercollegiate Study, subject to consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee
• Modifications to the MA Archaeology
• The new Cert HE Combined Studies
• The new BA in Accountancy and Business, which had been approved by Chair’s action on behalf of the Programmes Committee and TQEC

3. MATTERS ARISING

Noted:

3.1 (i) That the College’s Code of Practice for the Selection of Staff for the REF had been approved by HEFCE;

(ii) that the Three Term Learning Pilot had begun, with programmes delivered by the Department of Management;

(iii) that the College was moving to a new virtual learning environment, and that while there was technical capacity to expand the virtual offering, there were a number of logistical issues to resolve before further expansion could be undertaken. It was proposed that a Project Group be established to investigate the expansion of the College’s technology infrastructure.

Action
Dr Jasbir Gill to investigate with Professor Sue Jackson the formation of a Project Group and report back to ABExCo and to the Strategic Planning Committee.

4. MASTERS REPORT

Reported by the Master:

4.1 (i) That, for the second year in succession, the College had made a surplus. This was noted as being very significant in light of the government funding cuts;

(ii) that, although three year undergraduate programmes had been recruiting well, recruitment to part time undergraduate degrees was substantially down; it was not clear whether the improved recruitment to three year degrees was at the expense of the College’s four year offering and the College would analyse data. The College would continue to lobby stakeholders and seek to influence government to support part time study;

(iii) that the College would continue to make efforts to recruit international Masters students and to raise the profile and distinguishing features of the College to potential students.

Noted:

4.2 The view that Academic Board should discuss fully the strategic direction of the College in relation to its part-time and three year offering

Action
To discuss the Master’s Strategy paper presented to the Governors in September 2012 to the November 2012 Academic Board.

5.  RESEARCH COMMITTEE (X 4 – 2012/13)
Received:
5.1 The Report of the Research Committee meeting of 11 October 2012.

Reported by the Pro-vice Master (Research):
5.2 That the Open Access changes detailed in the Finch Report had potentially significant implications for Birkbeck staff. Funding from the Open Access Budget Grant and Research Councils UK would allocated to the College and the College would need to put structures in place to manage any funding. The College would establish an Open Access Working Group, reporting to the Research Committee, to oversee the College’s preparations for implementation of the recommendations of the Finch Report.

Agreed:
5.3 To recommend the following for approval by Academic Board:

- The establishment of the History and Theory of Photography Research Centre
- The establishment of the Centre for Cognitive & Computational Modelling
- To adopt the Research Student Admissions Policy
- The amendment to the MPhil / PhD Regulations to permit the examination of practice-based research degrees towards the award of MPhil or PhD
- The formation of a new Birkbeck Centre for Applied Macroeconomics

6.  STUDENT EXPERIENCE & WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE (X 5 – 2012/13)
Received:
6.1 The Report of the Student Experience & Widening Participation Committee meeting of 10 October 2012.

Reported by the Pro-vice Master (Student Experience):
6.2 (i) that Universities UK had agreed to a undertake a full review of part-time provision.
(ii) that the Open University has experienced a downturn in enrolment in England whilst numbers for Wales and Scotland had increased; this suggested that the new funding methodology, that did not apply in Scotland or Wales, had had a significant impact on recruitment.

Agreed:
6.3 To recommend the draft Guidelines on Student Communications for Approval by Academic Board:

7.  TEACHING & QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT (X 6 – 2012/13)
Agreed:
7.1 (i) To recommend the following for approval by Academic Board:
• The proposed Minimum Virtual Learning Environment Standards (subject to an amendment to paragraph 2.4 to provide for HTML to be an acceptable format for submissions)
• The proposal to amend the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study to facilitate the delivery of programmes of longer than 7 years (undergraduate) / 5 years (postgraduate)
• The revised Assessment Offences Policy
• The Institutional Partnership Agreement template

(ii) To refer the proposal to amend the criteria for promotion from Lecturer A to Lecturer B back; it was not clear what the original criteria were. In addition, ABExCo considered that the proposal should also be submitted to the Human Resource Strategy Committee for approval. It was proposed that the process for consideration of promotions from Lecturer A to Lecturer B should be reviewed in its entirety, with any revised proposal submitted to the HR Strategy Committee for review.

8. FEES, BURSARIES & SCHOLARSHIPS COMMITTEE (X 7 – 2012/13)
Received and Noted
8.1 The annual report of the Fees, Bursaries & Scholarships Committee.

9. EMERITUS TITLES (X 8 – 2012-13)
Agreed:
9.1 To recommend approval of the proposals to nominate John Shepherd as Emeritus Professor and Martin Frost as Emeritus Reader of the College.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS
Noted
10.1 Future meetings of the Committee would take place on the 14 February and 29 May.

Meeting Concluded.