MINUTES OF THE ACADEMIC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

18 February 2016

Present
Professor David Latchman (Chair), Professor Julian Swann, Professor Philip Powell,
Professor Nicholas Keep, Professor Miriam Zukas, Dr Tim Markham (for Professor Sue
Jackson), Professor Stephen Frosh, Dr Joanne Leal, Dr Kate Mackenzie Davey

In Attendance
Dr Martin Shipway, Dr Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos, Mr David Kirkman, Mr Keith Harrison
Mrs Katharine Bock, Mr Fraser Keir, Dr Anita Walsh, Mr Robert Atkinson, Dr Jasbir Gill,
Ms Megan Reeves, Mr John Kempton, Mr Kashim Barick

Apologies
Professor Matthew Innes, Professor Sue Jackson, Professor Hilary Fraser, Professor Patricia
Tuit, Professor Costas Douzinas, Professor Sasha Roseneil, Luc Sei, Jon Warner

12 MINUTES AND REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD
Received and noted
12.1 The confirmed minutes of the Academic Board Executive Committee 22 October
2015 (X 2015 10)

12.2 Academic Board’s report to Governors on 5 November 2015 (X 2015 11)

12.3 The draft minutes of the Academic Board 5 November 2015 (X 2015 12)

13 MASTER’S REPORT
Noted
13.1 Members heard that despite the volatile nature of the current HE policy
environment, indications from the College’s recent political lobbying activity,
including a meeting with the Minister of State for Universities and Science, suggested
that there was a generally positive attitude towards part time students. The College
is continuing with its lobbying efforts.

13.2 Members noted that the College may face increasing competition from other
institutions offering part time provision that allows work to be combined with study,
particularly if the new degree apprenticeship scheme becomes popular. Birkbeck was
considering its own approach to the scheme, which it was felt offered the potential
for the College to offer new provision that was consistent with its mission.

14 RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Received
14.1 The Report of the Research Committee (X 2015 13)
Members heard that the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) bid has been submitted by the 16th February deadline. The bid is a joint collaboration between Birkbeck, UCL, SOAS, LSHTM and UEL. The Committee thanked Professor Sasha Roseneil and Dr Rosie Campbell for their work in preparing the bid.

**Action**

14.3 (JS) Circulate the final version of the bid to enable preparation of the necessary infrastructure to begin.

The College was putting together a response to the call for evidence for Lord Stern’s independent review of the Research Excellence Framework.

**Agreed**

14.5 To recommend that Academic Board approve a proposal to establish a new Centre for the Study of Internationalism. The Centre would be a strong addition to the College’s research centres: internationalism was a topical area, and one which constituted an area of strength in the College, and would unite scholars from different departments and Schools.

15 **TEACHING & QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Received**

15.1 The Report of the Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committee *(X 2015 14)*

**Agreed**

15.2 To recommend that Academic Board approve the introduction, amendment, suspension and withdrawal of the following programmes:

Programme Approval:
- Cert HE Introduction to History (Full time)
- Cert HE Introduction to Social Sciences (Full time)
- PG Dip Philosophy
- MRes Philosophy
- MA Investigative Reporting
- MSc Data Science (confirmed by Chair’s Action)
- BA Criminal Law Policy and Practice (confirmed by Chair’s Action)

Programme Amendment:
- MSc Finance
- Grad Dip Finance

Programme Suspension:
- MA Social and Cultural Geography (2016-17 only)

Programme Withdrawals:
- DPsych Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy
- Graduate Diploma Arts Management
Noted

15.3 TQEC recommended approval of the revised Policy and Procedure for Termination of a Student’s Registration, which removed the separate appeals process for academic termination decisions; removed the distinction between mid-year termination and progression points; clarified the terminology of ‘termination of registration’ and clarified the reasons for non-academic grounds for termination.

15.4 TQEC recommended approval of revision to the Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy to: remove the separate appeals process for APL decisions, clarify the terminology of accreditation of prior learning, as reflected in the change to the policy title from Assessment of Prior Learning; reflect revisions to other policies, and introduce the possibility for mark transfer for approved Erasmus+ and Study Abroad activity.

Agreed

15.5 To recommend that Academic Board approve the revised Policy and Procedure for Termination of a Student’s Registration and Accreditation of Prior Learning Policy, subject to feedback from Executive Deans to be made before Academic Board.

Noted

15.6 A report on complaints, appeals and student discipline 2014-15. Members thanked the Registry for the useful monthly reports that were produced on complaints within the Schools. The Committee asked for future reports to include longitudinal comparisons with previous years’ figures alongside a commentary on the significance of any changes, to add context when the report was forwarded to the Governors via the Academic Board.

16 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

Noted

16.1 The Student Engagement and Widening Participation Committee had met the day before ABExCo, so a verbal update was made to the Committee.

16.2 The Committee had considered a Student Services Strategy, which outlined key strategic objectives for Student Services; a paper on the development of a Widening Participation Framework; and progress reports on three of the Student Engagement projects: the personal tutors project, the query resolution project, and the project to replace the existing ‘My Birkbeck’ website and improve personalised information for students.

16.3 It was agreed that a written report of the meeting would be circulated to ABExCo members in time to allow for comments to be made before Academic Board.

17 COLLEGE BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

Received

17.1 The annual report of the College Boards of Examiners (X 2015 15)
The College Boards reiterated their recommendation for all Schools to consider the reorganisation of their postgraduate sub-boards to ensure greater (a) consistency in the application of College rules and (b) efficiencies and economies of scale, in particular sub-boards that have responsibility for small numbers of students.

The UG College Board timetable will be amended to include a meeting in the first week of August to accommodate the approval of awards of three term learning programmes (including CertHEs) and to schedule the September meeting of the UG College Board in the final week of the month, in order to be able to include the approval of awards made after reassessment.

The requirements for the award of a distinction at Master's level, and the definition of a 'dissertation', will be considered at the annual meeting of the Learning and Teaching working group including Chairs of College Boards, scheduled for March. In addition, the possibility of allowing compensated fails on exit awards will be considered.

The College Boards asked for College-level documents (regulation, policy, guidance and/or templates) to be amended as appropriate so as to better reflect the information required by them, in particular reporting on discretion decisions and CAS regulation 43.4.

ABExCo members noted that the names of the College Boards are not fully aligned with the names of the Schools represented on them, and agreed that further discussion to resolve this should take place outside the meeting.

To recommend that Academic Board approve an amendment of the College Board scheme of membership to include a Deputy Chair from existing membership, to remove representatives from SSHP from the membership of the UG and PG College Boards for Arts and Law, and to appoint an extra School of Arts representative for the UG College Board for Arts and Law. These changes would provide greater clarity and transparency and streamline the current structure.

Noted

18.1 The date of the next meeting of the Academic Board Executive Committee
- 2 June 2016