Academic Board Minutes

Summary
These are the unconfirmed minutes of the Academic Board meeting of 6 March 2013.

Recommended Action
The Board is asked to confirm the minutes.

William Scott
March 2013
BIRKBECK
University of London

Minutes of the ACADEMIC BOARD

06 March 2013

Present
Prof David Latchman (Chair), Professor Trevor Fenner, Professor Sue Jackson, Professor Nicholas Keep, Professor Philip Powell, Professor Miriam Zukas, Dr Dick Rayne, Dr Jennifer Baird, Prof Stephen Frosh, Professor Li Wei, Chiara Barontini, Dr Anita Walsh, Robert Atkinson, Tricia King, Dr Diane Horn, Professor Matthew Innes, Professor Julian Swann, Dr Dermot Hodson, Dr Scott Rodgers, Dr Dionyssis Dimitrakopoulos, Dr Joanne Leal, Prof Alex Poulavassilis, Dr Linda Trenberth, Dr Sarah Hart, Professor Zhu Hua, Professor Mark Levene, Professor Philip Dewe, Prof Hilary Fraser

In Attendance
Katharine Bock, Jasbir Gill, Keith Harrison, Trevor Pearce, William Scott

Apologies for Absence
Apologies were received from 10 members

15 MINUTES
Received and confirmed:
15.1 The minutes of the meeting of 15 November 2012 (AB 12 – 2012/13).

16 REPORT TO GOVERNORS
Received and noted:
16.1 The report to Governors of the Academic Board meeting of 15 November 2012 (AB 13 – 2012/13).

17. MATTERS ARISING
Noted:
17.1 That one nomination had been received for the position of Vice-Master, to replace Professor Philip Dewe from 31 July 2014. Professor Matthew Innes had been nominated; the nomination would be considered at the next Governors’ meeting.

18. MASTERS REPORT
Reported by the Master:
18.1 (i) That there had been a national decline in applications for part-time courses, which had impacted upon the College; the College would continue to engage with ministers to address issues relating to funding for part-time study;

(ii) That applications for four-year courses had declined. Applications for three-year courses had risen but student numbers were still likely to be down for 2013/14;
that the College had over-recruited to its three-year courses last year but had successfully appealed the fine of £440,000 originally levied by HEFCE and had negotiated extra student numbers on these programmes for 2013/14;

(iv) that the College had bid for “Catalyst Funding” to develop more three-year part-time programmes.

19 ACADEMIC BOARD GOVERNOR’S REPORT
Reported by the Academic Board Representative to the Governors:
19.1 That the Governors had reviewed the College’s student recruitment position and the Stratford developments at their last meeting.

20 ACADEMIC BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
Received and confirmed:
20.1 The minutes of the meeting of 29 November 2012 (AB 14 – 2012/13).

21 RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Received:
21.1 The report of the Research Committee meeting of 17 January 2013 (AB 15 – 2012/13)

Reported by the Pro-vice Master (Research):
21.2 (i) That HEFCE was undertaking a consultation on Open Access; the College would be responding and stressing that any policy should be supportive of the position that decisions on the best place to publish outputs should be taken by the author and based on academic merit alone;

(ii) that work on the College’s REF submission continued, and staff were being notified of inclusion / exclusion decisions, together with the appeal process.

Noted:
21.4 That, under current proposals, all Research Council-funded research would be eligible for funding to support open access to the outputs of the research, although it was questionable that the funding provided would be sufficient.

21.5 That the Committee had recommended approval of the Policy on Write Up / Examination Only Status for International Students, but that ABExCo had recommended a further review of write up status for all students take place before approval. Academic Board did not therefore adopt this recommendation.

21.6 That the College had not subscribed to SCOPUS; conversations were continuing to identify possible sources of funding to enable subscription.

Agreed:
21.7 (i) To approve the proposal to establish the Centre for Social Change and Transformation in Higher Education as a Research Centre of the College;
(ii) To endorse the recommendations of the Open Access Working Group;
(iii) To adopt the amended Policy on Maternity Leave for Research Students
22. STUDENT EXPERIENCE & WIDENING PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE

Received:
22.1 The report of the Student Experience & Widening Participation Committee meeting of 22 January 2013 (AB 16 -2012/13)

Reported by the Pro-vice Master (Student Experience):
22.2 That the College continued its efforts to ensure that support for Part Time education was considered at government level. Representatives from the College would meet shortly with representatives of the Welsh Government, who had committed to continuing funding for part-time study, to identify themes that could be used from their consideration to support a similar approach from HEFCE.

23. TEACHING & QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Received:
23.1 The report of the Teaching & Quality Enhancement Committee meeting of 10 January 2013 (AB 17 – 2012/13)

Reported by the Pro-Vice Master (Learning & Teaching):
23.2 (i) that the 3-Term Learning Pilot had continued, and a survey conducted by the Department of Management had indicated student support for the project. 77% of students responding to the survey indicated that they preferred evening exams and 90% preferred exams to be in the same term as the module.

Noted:
23.3 The view that setting separate assessments for students unable to take Saturday examinations for religious reasons could be perceived as indirectly discriminatory; further advice would be sought from the Academic Registrar on this issue.

Agreed:
23.3 That the following recommendations on three term learning were endorsed:
(i) That a standard timetable model for three term learning programmes should be adopted, with any formal examinations that were managed by the Examinations Unit of the Registry to be held at the end of each term;
(ii) that examinations would normally take place on the timetabled day for teaching the module concerned in the final week of term;
(iii) that the Strategic Planning Committee confirm in January of each year the deadline date for enrolment for the following academic year (this recommendation would be forwarded to the Strategic Planning Committee for consideration;
(iv) that programmes wishing to move to the three term learning model for 2013/14 confirm their wish to do so to the Academic Registrar by 28 February 2013, and by 31 January each year for subsequent years.

23.4 That the following Policies were approved:
(i) The revised approach to resit and retake fees;
(ii) The Policy on Peer Review of Teaching;
(iii) The Policy on Students Under the Age of 18 Years;
(iv) The revised regulations for the MPhilStud.

23.5 That the proposal to publish all external examiner reports, together with responses was referred back for further consideration and advice on responses from other institutions.
24 CHAIRS ACTIONS
Received and noted:
24.1 Details of actions taken on behalf of the Board by the Chair since the Board’s last meeting (AB 18 – 2012/13).

25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Noted:
25.1 That the next meeting of the Board would take place on Thursday 20th June 2013.