MINUTES

Summary

These are the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board of 19 June 2012.

Recommended Action

The Board is asked to confirm these minutes.

Trevor Pearce
November 2012
19 TRESS PRIZE
Noted
19.1 Political economist Ronald Tress was Master of the College from 1968 to 1977. The Tress Prize was awarded annually for research of high quality carried out by a lecturer in the College with not more than three years post-probationary experience as a University lecturer. The Prize was rotated between subject areas and awarded in 2012 in the arts.

19.2 The winners of the 2012 prize were Dr Zoltan Bierdermann, Lecturer in Iberian Studies from the Department of Iberian and Latin American Studies, School of Arts, and Dr Ann Lewis, Lecturer in French Studies from the Department of European Culture and Languages, School of Arts. The Master noted that the standard of entries had been very high, featuring the work of a number of excellent early career academics.

19.3 The Master would award the prize at the next meeting of the Academic Board on 15 November 2012.

20 MINUTES
Confirmed
20.1 The minutes of the meeting of 27 February 2012.

21 REPORT TO THE GOVERNORS
Noted

22 **MASTER’S REPORT**
Noted
22.1 The Master noted and commended initiatives at School and College level to promote recruitment. Schools were working hard to ensure the conversion of application to offers, and of offers to enrolment. The College was lobbying the government and other bodies on the issue of public information on part time student finance.

22.2 The Master had reached an agreement in principle with the Minister for Universities and Science that there should be a campaign to improve information for part time students. The current indications were that this could be implemented for 2013-14 recruitment. There were national concerns about the fall in mature and part time student intake across the sector.

22.3 Enrolment was open at Birkbeck. Full time students were able to apply online for student loans. The Student Loans Company had announced that part time students would be able to apply using a paper based system in August. In the meantime, part time enrolment was open on the basis of the “Our Promise to You” campaign, which assured students that if they were eligible for and applied for a loan the College would not pursue them for payment if the SLC took some time to process their application. This could affect cashflow, but provision in the bank accounts had been made to put the College in a position to deal with temporarily reduced cashflow.

23 **ACADEMIC BOARD GOVERNORS’ REPORT**
Noted
23.1 Professor Swann reported Governors’ discussion of the extent to which the new fee and funding system and increasing recruitment through UCAS might change the demographic of students in the College. The evidence so far suggested that it was not having a significant impact. Governors would continue to monitor this.

23.2 The impact of the three term learning pilot project and the new online enrolment system were also being monitored.

23.3 The Governors were interested in prospects for partnerships to acquire new space, including the new development of Senate House North block in conjunction with SOAS and the discussions with Friends House on the possibility of shared use of their lecture hall in return for a contribution to the cost of refurbishment.

24 **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SELECTION OF STAFF FOR THE REF**
Noted
24.1 The Code of Practice had been endorsed by ABExCo. It was an equal opportunities document intended to ensure fairness and equal treatment of staff throughout the process through which staff were selected for the REF submission. It did not set out criteria or thresholds for inclusions, as these would be defined separately.

**Recommended to Governors**
24.2 Approval of the Code of Practice for selection of staff for the Research Excellence Framework. (AB 2011 17)
The Minutes of ABExCo’s meeting of 24 May 2012 (AB 2011 18) by the members of ABExCo attending Academic Board.

The following, which had been considered and recommended by the Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committee:

26.1.1 Approval of the Fitness to Study Policy.

26.1.2 Approval of the Revised Student Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure. The revised policy codified the role of the companion in student dispute resolution. It was noted that Birkbeck’s policy was liberal compared to that of many other HE institutions.

26.1.3 Approval of the Policy on Personal Tutoring.

26.1.4 Approval of the Policy on the Recording of Lectures and Other Teaching Sessions. It was noted that the policy did not forbid students from recording lectures for personal use, but required them to ask permission from the lecturer first and not to distribute recordings or post them online. Issues considered while formulating the policy included data protection for students speaking during lectures and copyright issues. It was noted that the Earth and Planetary Sciences department recorded all of their lectures for students to access. The student representative abstained from the decision to approve the Policy.

26.1.5 Approval of the Policy on Intercollegiate Study, subject to consideration of resource issues by the Strategic Planning Committee.

26.1.6 Approval of modifications to the MA Archaeology.

26.1.7 Approval of the new Cert HE Combined Studies.

26.1.8 Approval of the new BSc in Applied Accounting and Business. It was noted that this programme was the outcome of a new partnership with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales to incorporate work based learning, accountancy training and Birkbeck modules into a programme for trainee accountants. Programme teams were asked to consider further similar initiatives to support the College’s mission to provide higher education for working people.

The formal pilot stage of the three term learning project was being launched across the Schools for 2012-13.
26.3 Revised arrangements for degree ceremonies as reported by TQUEC included provision for graduation from foundation degrees. Each group of degrees would have a designated ceremony, but this did not preclude students attending other graduation ceremonies than their assigned one if necessary.

Approved

26.4 The following, which had been considered and recommended by the Research Committee:

26.4.1 The revised Policy on Maternity Leave for Research Students.

Noted

26.5 The Report of the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee (AB 2011 21)

26.6 SEWP had approved the initiation of Phase 2 of the Student Retention strategy, embedding successful initiatives for first years including pedagogy, technological support and mentoring, as well as a new focus on the transition from year 1 to year 2.

26.7 The first postgraduate ‘Get Ahead’ day had been held and had proved popular, with over 300 attendees.

27 COLLEGE BOARDS OF EXAMINERS 2010-11

Received

27.1 The Report of the four College Boards of Examiners on activity from the 2010-11 assessment and award rounds (AB 2011 22).

28 CHAIR’S ACTION

Noted

28.1 Action taken by the Master as Chair of the Academic Board to approve the following suspensions of Regulations:

28.1.1 Suspension of Regulation 2 of the Regulations of the Degrees of MPhil and PhD to enable two part time students to submit after less than three calendar years of study.

28.1.2 MSc Career Management and Counselling: permit credit obtained more than five years ago to count towards the award.

28.1.3 MSc Climate Change and Management: permit concurrent registration on an MSc programme at SOAS.

28.1.4 MSc Global Politics: enable a student to submit a dissertation and complete after a break in study of more than two years.

28.1.5 MA Victorian Studies: enable an award date other than as specified in the Regulation, subject to satisfactory completion of the academic requirements of the programme.
29 DATES OF MEETINGS

Noted

29.1 The dates of meetings for 2012-13:

- Thursday 15th November 2012 at 2pm
- Wednesday 6th March 2013 at 2pm
- Thursday 20th June 2013 at 2pm