13 APOLOGIES
13.1 Apologies for absence were noted as above

14 MINUTES
Confirmed
14.1 The minutes of the meeting of 22 October 2013 (SEWPC 2013 08)

15 REPORT TO ACADEMIC BOARD
Noted
15.1 The report made to Academic Board after the 22 October meeting (SEWPC 2013 09)

16 CHAIR’S REPORT
Noted
16.1 The Chair reported on recent HE policy developments. Following a delay in confirming the grant funding available to HEFCE to distribute to universities in 2014-14, OFFA and HEFCE had decided not to continue with the implementation of the Strategy for Access and Student Success, which OFFA and HEFCE had been briefing institutions about for the past year. Instead, institutions would be asked to submit Access Agreements.

16.2 The grant to HEFCE had been confirmed, retaining the widening participation funding stream which had been threatened, although its longer term future was still uncertain in terms of how HEFCE would find the £1.25M savings that had been required by BIS. Birkbeck was allocated £2.4M of widening participation funding in 2013-14. The College had contributed considerably to campaigns to improve the policy and funding situation for part time students and courses. While these campaigns had been widely supported and promoted, they had not had an impact on the Government’s approach.
16.3 The new fee and funding regime had effectively led to universities operating as private sector organisations. It was the strategy to develop three year undergraduate programmes, rather than Government policy or intervention, that had secured the College's financial viability. The new need was to respond to the changed profile of the student body, with larger numbers of three year students; and the current opportunity was to develop responses that work for our students rather than responses that reacted to regulation.

17 **REVISED TITLE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Considered**

17.1 Revised Terms of Reference *(SEWPC 2013 10)*

**Noted**

17.2 Concern for the student experience would be a continuous strand running through all the activities overseen by SEWPC, involving students, donors, advocates and staff. Members endorsed the notion of connectivity and continuity between these different groups and at every step of the student experience.

17.3 The proposed new title was Student Engagement rather than student experience, to make it distinct from the student experience of learning and teaching that is the remit of TQEC.

**Agreed**

17.4 To forward the revised title and terms of reference to Academic Board for approval.

18 **ALUMNI DEVELOPMENT**

**Noted**

18.1 The Committee received a briefing on work with alumni. As well as making financial donations, alumni were involved in the wider work of the College. They lobbied on our behalf, advocate with key partners, volunteered in a variety of ways including attending open evenings for prospective students; provided individual advice, for example on getting into a particular profession or sector; and participated in the mentoring and buddy schemes being set up including initiatives in the School of BEI and with the East London Business Alliance (ELBA). There was also an active international alumni programme

18.2 The alumni team aimed to scale up the mentoring and support work so that it could reach more students. A project was under way to augment the Alumni database with a facility enabling alumni and other friends to enter and share information about themselves and their potential contributions, with the ultimate aim of supporting a “matching” service between students and mentors. This work was related to the Linking Work and Study strand of the Catalyst project.

18.3 An annual phone fundraising campaign involved students asking alumni for donations to the alumni fund. The fund was used for student financial support and student experience/engagement activities. Schools and departments were invited to bid for projects annually and the 2014 round was about to be launched. The bids were considered by a committee chaired by the College Dean.

**ACTION**

18.4 (Alumni team) Publicise the fund more to students, in order to promote their contributing to it in the future when they have become alumni.

19 **STRATEGY FOR ACCESS AND STUDENT SUPPORT**
Considered

19.1 A report on the emerging new national requirement for institutional strategy and reporting on student access and outcomes (SEWPC 2013 11)

Noted

19.2 Following the postponement of the Strategy for Access and Student support, the College was focusing on preparing its own strategy. There would still be a need to define, measure and support student success, especially for under-represented groups. This work linked to a Catalyst project strand, on student recruitment and progression.

20 STUDENT SURVEYS AND STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS

Considered

20.1 School responses to issues emerging from the 2013 National Student Survey (SEWPC 2013 12)
A note of the student surveys undertaken by Registry Services (SEWPC 2013 13)

Noted

20.2 Schools had engaged reflectively with the NSS feedback and were evaluating a number of ideas including redefining statements framing student expectations, reviewing personal tutor systems, developments around employability and employment and the potential for increasing student engagement. It had been difficult to get engagement with traditional staff student consultative groups, probably because students were busy, but alternative ways of involving students were being considered. The next step would be for Schools to develop action plans. The outcome would be consolidated on a web page for students.

20.3 Registry Services and External Relations were working together to create a more integrated approach to student surveys. A spring season of surveys had launched, including the National Student Survey for final year undergraduates, the HE Academy-run Postgraduate Taught Student Survey (which Birkbeck would run for the first time) and a new Birkbeck undergraduate survey for students in earlier years.

20.4 The Birkbeck survey would have questions parallel to those in the NSS, enabling students to get familiar with NSS questions and enabling the College to identify and address issues from student feedback garnered before the NSS. The Birkbeck survey would also ask broader questions of all our students to promote better understanding of our new student body.

20.5 Birkbeck also participated in the biennial Postgraduate Research Student Survey.

20.6 A student and staff communications programme was supporting academic and student engagement with the surveys. High participation and good scores in the NSS were a critical contributor to Birkbeck's reputation and its ability to recruit students.

20.7 The HE Academy was exploring the use of surveys measuring and promoting student engagement (as opposed to student satisfaction). These surveys were likely to complement rather than replace NSS. At present Birkbeck would continue using student satisfaction survey techniques, but would keep an overview of the work on student engagement surveys.

20.8 SEWPC would continue to maintain an overview of student surveys and promote College’s different student surveys, including NSS, ITS, Library, and classroom user surveys among others, from the students’ point of view.
21 STUDENT CHARTER DEVELOPMENT
Considered
21.1 An updated draft of the Student Charter (SEWPC 2013 15)

Noted
21.2 The draft Charter had been amended and re-circulated following feedback received last term. Members reviewed and reconfirmed the purpose of the charter: to set out both aspirations and expectations. The Charter should embody the mission of the College and the character of its community and express this in terms of College, student and Students’ Union roles. It should also serve as a brief summary of the responsibilities set out in more detail in Regulations and terms and conditions of enrolment.

21.3 The draft Charter was due for discussion at the Students’ Union AGM in March. Members noted the desirability of having student involvement in the development of the Charter and advocacy during its implementation.

21.4 The Charter would be reviewed in light of the continuing discussion, through Strategic Planning Committee, of the College’s stated mission and current purpose.

22 WIDENING ACCESS
Considered
22.1 An update on the development of Widening Access and Retention strategy (SEWPC 2013 16)

Noted
22.2 The strategy would merge and replace the current Widening Access strategy and Student Retention Strategies. It would take into account current developments in the national student access and success agenda. Progress would be reported at subsequent meetings of the Committee.

22.3 The College had submitted the annual monitoring return on the Widening Participation Strategic Statement and Access Agreement for 2012-13. (SEWPC 2013 17)

23 STUDENT COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE
Considered
23.1 A report on student complaints and student discipline in 2012-13. (SEWPC 2013 18)

Noted
23.2 The Student Services team was working on an analysis of the trends in student complaints and improvements to the procedures for handling them.

24 FUTURE MEETINGS
Noted
24.1 The date of the next meeting of the Committee: Thursday 22nd May 2014 at 2.30 p.m.