BIRKBECK
University of London

Minutes of the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

8 November 2010

Present
David Latchman (Chair), John Annette, Costas Douzinas, Philip Dewe, Stephen Frosh, Keith Harrison, Matthew Innes, Tricia King, Sue Jackson, Naina Patel, Peter Westley, David McGhie, Dean Pateman

By invitation
Hilary Fraser, Nicholas Keep, Philip Powell, Miriam Zukas

In attendance
Katharine Bock, Esther McKaig, Nick Head, Julia Lerch, Emily Rubython

Apologies for absence
Patricia Tuitt

16 MINUTES
Confirmed
16.1 Minutes of the last meeting, subject to amending the list of those present to include the Academic Registrar.

17 ACTION SHEET
Noted
17.1 Action taken following the last meeting. (SP 2010 15)

17.2 The PVM Student Experience had met with the Chair of UCAS. It was not yet clear what mechanism would be used to regulate student numbers nationally in the post 2012 fee system. Use of a UCAS tariff system, as originally suggested in the Browne review, seemed increasingly unlikely.

17.3 Work was ongoing on the report on student complaints and feedback requested by the Committee.

17.4 The Awayday meeting had been scheduled for 7 December.

17.5 Schools were continuing their discussions on postgraduate scholarship spending for 2010-11 and were considering partial fee remission as a potentially more cost-effective way of allocating studentship spending.

17.6 The working party to develop cross-College and interdisciplinary degrees had been convened. The working party included representation from Schools. As part of its work, it would be considering documentation on how income and cost was shared between collaborating Schools.
18 STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Received

18.1 A report on student recruitment 2010-11. (SP 2010 16)

18.2 An initial report on the fundable student number reconciliation 2009-10. (SP 2010 17)

Noted

18.3 The overall recruitment level for 2010-11 was 84% of target, including a strong performance for degree/certificate/diploma programmes and a less strong performance for modular provision and ELQ student recruitment, where tuition fees had been raised more steeply. Further evaluation would be needed to determine whether this was caused by price sensitivity, recession or diversion of ELQ applicants onto other programmes.

18.4 In the long term, a review of Certificate of HE and modular provision was needed. In the short term consideration could be given to removing the ELQ premium from modular programme fees.

18.5 HEFCE fundable student recruitment had been particularly strong, with a projected fundable completion rate of 4,935, 230 short of the target of 5,165 which included all the Additional Student Numbers (ASNs) allocated by HEFCE during the Strategic Review. There had been 4,223 fundable completions in 2009-10.

18.6 From 2012-13, HEFCE policies and regulations around fundable student numbers would change, but in the interim it would be critical to maintain fundable numbers, to maintain the College’s position in the period before the introduction of higher fees. To support this, monitoring reports of student numbers would be issued regularly throughout the year so that issues could be identified and action taken promptly.

Agreed

18.7 To undertake an additional recruitment drive to secure as many of the remaining 230 fundable FTEs in 2010-11 via courses starting in January and April. Recruitment should focus on foundation degrees, short courses, repeats of popular courses and summer programmes (provided these started before 31 July).

ACTION (PVM Student Experience)

18.8 Convene a working group with academic representation to maximise recruitment in January, April and summer programmes.

ACTION (Dean of SSHP)

18.9 Consider the basis of a review of modular and Certificate of HE programmes and report to the Awayday meeting.

19 ACCELERATED UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES (UCAS)

Considered

19.1 A report on the College’s participation in UCAS for admission to accelerated undergraduate degree programmes. (SP 2010 18)
19.2 43 students had enrolled for LLB Law, 32 for BA Philosophy and 46 for BSc Psychology. Geology and History degrees had been added to the UCAS offer for 2011-12.

19.3 Expanding the portfolio of accelerated part-time programmes should increase student numbers. However, as participation in UCAS was resource intensive administratively, it would be important to be sure that provision offered in this way could recruit sufficient students to make the activity cost-effective.

19.4 The ratio of offers to enrolments for UCAS programmes was higher than for Birkbeck’s standard enrolment process, because UCAS students shortlisted five institutions.

19.5 Although not all students on these programmes were aged 18, the proportion of 18-21 year olds was higher than in the College generally. More attention needed to be paid to their experience and retention. Issues to consider included blended learning and timing of classes.

19.6 The structure of the accelerated programmes was compliant with international student visa requirements, so there was also a potential opportunity to expand international undergraduate numbers.

AGREED
19.7 To give further consideration to accelerated part-time programmes at the Away Day.

ACTION
19.8 (International Working Group) Investigate recruitment of international students to accelerated part-time programmes, differentiating between students based abroad and students already based in London.

20 PERFORMANCE MONITORING, REVIEW AND PLANNING FOR 2011-12
Considered

20.1 A note on portfolio review, performance monitoring, budget review and forward planning for 2010-11. (SP 2010 19)

Noted

20.2 The key stages of the planning cycle:

Stage 1: (November/December)
Performance monitoring 2010-11 (light touch portfolio review)

Stage 2a: (December/January)
Setting the parameters for planning (SPC Away Day)

Stage 2b: (December/January)
Mid year budget review

Stage 3: (January - March)
Planning and recruitment target setting for 2011-12

20.3 Data on student numbers and income required for these exercises would be produced centrally and issued to Schools

**ACTION**

20.4 (Executive Deans) report on portfolio review to SPC on 19 January.

21 **SPC AWAYDAY AGENDA**

Noted

21.1 The developing agenda for the SPC awayday. *(SP 2010 20)*

21.2 SPC explored the aspects of developing strategy that would be discussed at the meeting:

- Birkbeck’s traditional mission
- Data on:
  - the current student body
  - the impact of funding cuts and fee increases
- Teaching patterns
- Student experience
- Portfolio development
- Fees and fee structure
- Strategic positioning in relation to competitors
- Communication of new strategy

22 **FOUNDATION DEGREES**

Considered

22.1 A report on the review of Foundation Degrees. *(SP 2010 21)*

Noted

22.2 The report put forward a number of recommendations. Foundation degrees were currently recruiting well and there was potential for further development. This would however require resource for both pedagogical and work placement development.

22.3 HEFCE had announced that ‘Foundation Degree Forward’ would no longer be funded. The College would need to consider the impact of this on foundation degree development.

**ACTION (Executive Deans)**

22.4 Consider with School executive groups potential expansion of Foundation Degree provision and feed back to SPC.

23 **INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP**

Considered

23.1 A report from the International Working Group. *(SP 2010 22)*

Noted

23.2 IWG had endorsed a proposal for further development of international bursaries and scholarships to be used for marketing and recruitment. It considered it appropriate to invest approximately 5% of international fee income into international
student bursaries. Bursaries for Masters programmes should be considered as well as bursaries for PhDs.

23.3 IWG had recommended integrated consideration of the award of scholarships and bursaries and the proportion of tuition fee income, for taught and research students and for home and international students, that should be used for scholarships. SPC endorsed this approach.

**Agreed**

23.4 To invite the Fee Bursary and Scholarship Committee to undertake further consideration and integration of home and international scholarships and bursaries.

**Noted**

23.5 IWG reported sustained increases in enrolments and invoiced fees. All Schools had exceeded or were close to reaching their 2010-11 recruitment targets. SPC endorsed IWG’s commendation of the International Office and the Schools on this excellent outcome.

24 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Noted**

24.1 Executive Deans were invited to attend all meetings this session.

- Awayday 7 December 2010 10am – 4pm
- Wednesday 19 January 2011 at 2pm
- Tuesday 15 February 2011 at 2pm
- Thursday 5 May 2011 at 2pm
- Wednesday 1 June 2011 at 2pm