Minutes of the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

19 January 2011

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

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

In attendance
Katharine Bock, Nick Head, Julia Lerch

Apologies for absence
Peter Westley

25 MINUTES
Received
25.1 The Minutes of the last meeting.

26 REPORT to F&GPC
Noted
26.1 SPC’s autumn term report made to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. (SP 2010 23)

27 ACTION SHEET
Noted
27.1 Action taken following the last meeting. (SP 2010 24)

28 MASTER’S REPORT
Noted
Political environment
28.1 A positive aspect of the Government’s changes to HE finance was the increased level of support for part-time study. Birkbeck was pursuing a strategy of working with the Government and liaising with civil servants to help them understand part time issues and ensure that their implementation of policy would not have unintended effects.

28.2 Birkbeck’s strategy had already contributed to significant concessions for part-time, such as the Government’s decision to lower the threshold of eligibility for student loans from 33% to 25% if full time intensity, the equivalent of 30 credits per year. Issues still to be resolved included the pay-back point for loans where Birkbeck was continuing its strategy of lobbying and advising the government.
Student protests
28.3 In view of the recent occupation and the possibility of continuing student protests, building access and security measures had recently been put into place at the College. Access to the Council Room corridor had been restricted and, on occasion, students staff and visitors had been asked to show identification. This level of security was comparable to other HEIs in London. All staff, including senior staff, should be in a position to show their identification when asked.

Remuneration
28.4 The Remuneration Committee would meet this year as it had not convened the previous year. However the expectation was that, given the current financial environment, senior management would not routinely apply for additional awards.

29 STRATEGIC STATEMENT
Considered
29.1 A draft statement for staff on the development of strategy and proposals for new projects. (SP 2010 25)

Noted
29.2 The statement had been drafted in response to changes in tuition fees and funding, reflecting the outcome of the SPC Awayday meeting in December. The purpose of the statement was to provide a context and focus for the discussions the Master would be having with staff and students over the coming weeks. A briefing note was appended to the paper which set out the latest information the College had in the key areas affecting it; this would be particularly important to ensure staff and students were fully informed about the anticipated changes.

29.3 The statement would be posted on the Intranet before staff and student meetings with the Master. Executive Deans were asked to ensure these meetings were attended by as many staff as possible, including sessional lecturers.

29.4 Members commented on the draft, noting the need to balance the existing and new priorities identified, as well as the need for tailored summary statements for different audiences including staff, students, donors and supporters.

ACTION
29.5 (Keith Harrison, Katharine Bock, Matt Innes, Sue Jackson) Re-work the strategic statement according to the comments noted above and re-circulate among SPC.

29.6 (Tricia King) Prepare the summary paper for students (and donors/supporters).

30 PORTFOLIO REVIEW
Received
30.1 The reports of the Executive Deans on portfolio review 2010-11 and a note containing a summary of outcomes and actions of the Portfolio Reviews. (SP 2010 26)

Noted
30.2 SPC commended Schools on the hard and productive work that had gone into the Reviews.
30.3 SPC endorsed the outcomes and actions, to be taken forward through the School plans and where appropriate through the programme approval and amendment procedures overseen by the Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committee. Further discussion and feedback would be integrated with the mid-year budget review.

30.4 Decisions on staffing proposals would be taken by the Master as Chair of SPC on the basis of business cases integrated with School plans, recruited student numbers and the College’s financial position.

31 TEACHING SPACE AND TEACHING PATTERNS

31.1 A note from the Pro Vice Master Learning and Teaching on teaching space and teaching patterns. (SP 2010 27)

Noted

31.2 SPC commented on the following outline proposals that were being considered and developed at the Teaching Patterns sub-group:
   o Teaching slots on Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays
   o Shorter teaching slots
   o Teaching across all three terms

Note: A detailed proposal will be made to SPC on 15 February

31.3 SPC also endorsed the further consideration and development of the proposals to develop longer, thinner modules across two full terms for those modules currently taught across a term and a half, to use intensive modules during the summer period, to develop more online delivery and to continue prioritising 1st year undergraduates for central teaching space.

32 ACCELERATED UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES (UCAS)

Noted

32.1 SPC reviewed progress on accelerated undergraduate programmes with admission via UCAS, considering data on the age distribution in UCAS programmes, as well as data on enrolments, withdrawals and transfer from these programmes. The majority of students on UCAS programmes were aged between 21 and 30.

32.2 The Master and colleagues had met with Mary Curnock Cook, the Chief Executive of UCAS. It was likely that there would be a unified university entry system in future. Whilst such a system would not be live for part-time until 2013-14, the College would be able to list its standard part-time provision alongside the accelerated UCAS equivalents the year before.

32.3 SPC asked Schools to give consideration to what additional programmes could be offered in an accelerated mode for UCAS entry. The Committee stressed that only programmes which could confidently be run full-time and attract significant student numbers should be considered.

ACTION

32.4 (Executive Deans) Advise the Academic Registrar of additional programmes to be considered for UCAS entry as soon as possible.
33 PROGRESSION
Considered
33.1 A report on numbers of students progressing from Certificates of Higher Education to higher level programmes at Birkbeck. (SP 2010 28)

Noted
33.2 The report underlined the significant diversity of the College's certificate provision and of students in these programmes. The Committee heard that in spite of current low progression rates, there was the potential to increase opportunities for progression. Some advances had been made in understanding and further developing progression routes as part of the Portfolio Review but more progress was needed.

33.3 Development of progression routes was linked to the review of Certificates of HE and the development of accelerated and de-celerated routes through the Common Award System being undertaken as part of the College's strategic response to the Browne Review.

ACTIONS
33.4 (Nick Head) Annual report on progression from Certificates of HE.
33.5 (Miriam Zukas, Executive Deans) Continue work on understanding and developing progression routes from Certificates.

34 FEE, BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
Considered
34.1 The report of the FBS Committee. (SP 2010 29)

Approved
34.2 Addition of the Head of International Recruitment and Retention to the Scheme of Membership of the FBSC.

Endorsed and Recommended for Approval by F&GPC and Governors
34.3 Proposed tuition fee tiers for 2011-12 as set out below, subject to the confirmation of SIVs (Strategically Important and Vulnerable Subjects) in March and rounding to accommodate instalment and direct debit payments.

Undergraduate part time degree fees (non ELQ)
Tier 1 £2,477 per annum 20% increase
Tier 2 £2,735 per annum 15% increase
Tier 3 £3,091 per annum 15% increase

Undergraduate part time degree fees (ELQ)
Tier 1 £2972 per annum 15% increase
Tier 2 £3008 per annum 14% increase
Tier 3 £3400 per annum 13% increase
Tier 4 £4771 per annum 3% increase
Tier 5 £8436 per annum 3% increase

Postgraduate taught part time programme fees
Tier 1 £2824 per annum 3% increase
Tier 2 £3770 per annum 3% increase
Tier 3 £3770 per annum 3% increase
Tier 4 £4771 per annum 3% increase
Tier 5 £8436 per annum 3% increase
Postgraduate taught part time programmes fees for ELQ students for subjects in HEFCE price groups B and C
Tier 1 £3107 per annum 3% increase
Tier 2 £4147 per annum 3% increase

Postgraduate taught programme full time fees for 2011-12
Tier 1 £4,660 33% increase
Tier 2 £6,220 37% increase
Tier 3 £7,540 13% increase
Tier 4 £9,542 3% increase
Tier 5 £16,871 3% increase

Certificate of Higher Education fees for 2011-12 per 30 credits (non ELQ)
Tier 1 £300
Tier 2 £450
Tier 3 £600
Tier 4 £750

Certificate of Higher Education fees for 2011-12 per 30 credits (ELQ)
Tier 1 £400
Tier 2 £600
Tier 3 £800
Tier 4 £950

34.4 Fees for continuing non-ELQ students, as in previous years, to be based on the previous year’s fee with a 5% uplift. This principle should also apply to continuing students on programmes moving to a higher fee tier. However, fees for continuing ELQ undergraduates would be the same as fees for new ELQ undergraduates, with higher percentage increases year on year.

34.5 SPC agreed in principle; and delegated to FBSC the implementation of, the following:

34.5.1 Students should be permitted to pay in advance for a defined programme, but that they should not be permitted to defer or transfer and that the facility to pay in advance should not be advertised.

34.5.2 There should be a mechanism for students carrying credit from modular provision to complete sufficient credit for a Certificate of HE at continuing student prices within a reasonable time limit.

35 INCOME DISTRIBUTION MODEL: MID YEAR REVIEW
Received
35.1 A report on the 2010-11 Income Distribution Model budget and the mid-year budget review. (SP 2010 30)

Noted
35.2 As confirmed at the last meeting of SPC, the 2010-11 budget was being managed in two stages with a review of income and spending at the mid-point. To support this process, the IDM had been re-issued to take account of actual and predicted student numbers from the HESES 10 return, invoiced tuition fee income, actual spending to November 2010 and predicted spending to the end of the financial year.
35.3 The Pro Vice Master (Strategy), Director of Finance, Deputy Secretary and Director of Planning would be meeting with each School and the Professional Services to review income and expenditure against forecasts. The aim of the review would be to:

- Consider actual and forecast income compared with original estimates
- Review spending to date and identify potential savings that can be made in-year
- Review any areas of spending deferred last summer
- Agree revised spending allocations for 201-11

35.4 The specific aim this year would be to continue to support necessary growth while avoiding or minimising deficit in preparation for the financial challenges ahead, particularly given the anticipated in-year cut in HEFCE funding. Following the review meetings a further report on the IDM with revised spending allocations would be produced and reported to SPC at its next meeting.

36 STUDENT NUMBERS 2010-11

Noted

36.1 The College’s HESES estimate of fundable student numbers in 2010-11. (SP 2010 31)

36.2 The College’s HESES10 return to HEFCE had been submitted on 9 December 2010 and had shown a predicted out-turn of 4,899 fundable FTEs, 266 fundable FTEs lower than our target of 5,165 fundable FTEs and close to the estimate of 4,935 fundable FTEs reported to SPC in November. The final out-turn figure would be confirmed in October 2011 when the 2010-11 HESA return was submitted.

36.3 If 4,899 FTEs was achieved, this would represent a 16% increase on the 2009-10 HESA out-turn of 4,223 fundable FTEs and confirmation that the College had secured all of the first tranche of its additional funded Student Numbers from the SDF award.

36.4 The HEFCE targets for 2011-12 would be available when notification had been received of the College’s provisional allocation of recurrent grant from HEFCE on 14 March 2011.

Noted

36.5 Enrolments on January start programmes and modules (SP 2010 32)

36.6 Early indications (as at 13 January 2011) showed that spring term start enrolments had met 100% of Foundation Degree targets and 84% of modular enrolment targets. In order to meet or exceed the predicted out-turn of 4,899 fundable FTEs, the recruitment drive needed to be continued throughout the spring and summer terms.

37 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted

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

- Tuesday 15 February 2011 at 2pm
- Thursday 19 May 2011 at 11am
- Wednesday 1 June 2011 at 2pm