BIRKBECK
University of London

Minutes of the STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

22 February 2012

Present
David Latchman (Chair), Philip Dewe, Keith Harrison, Matthew Innes, Sue Jackson, Tricia
King, Naina Patel, Matthew Weait, Li Wei, Peter Westley

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

In attendance
Katharine Bock, Nick Head, Roisin Lynch

Apologies for absence
Costas Douzinas, David McGhie, Dean Pateman

35 MINUTES
Approved
35.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 2nd November 2011.

36 ACTION SHEET
Noted
36.1 The following progress on actions:

36.2 Agree and publish tuition fees for 2012-13 – Completed.

36.3 Review strategy for pro rata for credit fee framework – A meeting had taken place and a
discussion paper would be prepared for the summer term.

36.4 Academic partnerships – Development of the strategy was ongoing and meetings with
several potential academic partners had taken place. The possibility of offering
Masters programme fee reductions to tutors at FE Colleges was being discussed.

36.5 There would be a presentation and a stand for FE students at future Open Days.

Action
36.6 (MW) Draft a strategy document on Academic Partnerships for consideration at the
next meeting of SPC.
37  MASTER’S REPORT

Noted

37.1 There had been a meeting between the Heads of London institutions and the Chief Executive of HEFCE. The message of the meeting was generally positive, with more optimism than previously expressed about preserving some funding streams.

37.2 The College’s Our Promise to You campaign had launched, to reassure prospective Birkbeck students about the availability of part time loans.

38  FEE, BURSARY AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Considered

38.1 Proposed strategy for fee reductions (SP 2011 30)

Noted

38.2 An increasing number of targeted fee reduction offers were being proposed. It was necessary to have a governance structure for approving proposals, integrated as much as possible into the planning cycle, with a mechanism for identifying and tracking students with reduced fees.

38.3 Proposals for fee reduction offers should be considered and approved by the Fees Bursaries and Scholarships Committee. There would be a formal proposal process and agreed deadline tied into the annual fee setting cycle. FBSC would consider proposals on a case by case basis outside of this deadline.

38.4 Proposals should make a strategic case and be initially time limited to facilitate tracking.

38.5 The strategy would apply to fee reductions linked to individual programmes and fee reductions targeted to particular groups of students.

Agreed

38.6 Strategy for fee reductions as proposed in SP 2011 30, with the additional condition that student debtors should be prohibited from receiving fee reductions.

Received

38.7 The proposed Debtor Policy (SPC 2011 31)

Noted

38.8 The purpose of the Debtor Policy was to ensure clarity and equity in dealing with student debtors, replacing the previous ad hoc approach to granting concessions to students who had defaulted on their fees.

38.9 Members asked for the policy to be amended to take account of the “our Promise to You” campaign, so that students who had satisfied the College process of checking eligibility for a loan should not be considered to be debtors while they were waiting for the Student Loans Company to confirm their loan and pay the College.

38.10 It was also suggested that the policy should include an explicit provision for those students who had lied about their eligibility for a loan or other financial support.
Received and Approved

38.11 The proposed Fee Assessment Policy (SP 2011 32)

Received

38.12 The final tuition fee list for 2012-13 (SP 2011 32)

39 PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Received

39.1 The Schools' final Portfolio Review reports, to be forwarded to Finance and General Purposes Committee (SP 2011 34)

40 MID YEAR INCOME DISTRIBUTION MODEL 2011-12

Endorsed

40.1 The Income Distribution Model 2011-12, with income and spending forecasts adjusted following the mid year budget review. (SP 2011 35)

41 PLANNING FOR 2012-13

Received

41.1 An update on the actions agreed at the SPC Awayday held on 2 February (SP 2011 36)

Noted

41.2 The most immediate action relating to student recruitment was the 'Our Promise to You' campaign, which had been launched. The next piece of work would be conversion of applications to enrolments, overseen by the Recruitment Monitoring Group.

41.3 Monthly updates on income and expenditure enabling tracking of original and current year-end predictions were now being produced.

41.4 Members further discussed the possibility of reopening the Voluntary Severance and Early Retirement Scheme. It was confirmed that the option of discussing voluntary severance was always open, although no decision had been made on whether to re-open the defined package scheme offered the previous year. The advent of the new fees regime could affect the viability of some areas and the possibility of redundancy could not be ruled out.

41.5 The negotiations around pay and conditions for sessional lecturers were ongoing.

Master's meetings with the Schools

41.6 The Master had so far met with Professional Services, the School of Social Sciences, History and Philosophy, and the School of Science, to discuss the build-up to 2012-13. There had been discussion of the ‘Our Promise to You’ campaign and the need to make it as visible as possible on the website and course listings.

2012-13 Planning Round

Received
41.7 An updated version of a paper on the Planning Cycle and Governance 2012-13 (*SP 2011 07* revised)

Noted

41.8 The Planning Tool would go live on the 23rd February 2012.

41.9 Schools were monitoring early recruitment trends and using these, plus the scenario 1 model discussed at the Awayday with a 35% decrease in new part time undergraduate enrolments, as the basis for planning, at programme, department and School level.

41.10 Financial planning involved student number predictions which were not necessarily the same as recruitment targets. Financial predictions should be realistic but recruitment teams should be aiming high.

42 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Noted

42.1 The dates of the meeting for the remainder of the 2011-2 session:

- Wednesday 9 May 2012 at 2.00 pm
- Thursday 31 May 2012 at 2.00 pm