

Minutes of the ACADEMIC BOARD

23 February 2011

Present:

Prof D Latchman (Chair); Prof P Dewe; Prof S Frosh; Mrs T King; Prof S Jackson; Prof H Fraser;
Prof P Powell; Prof M Zukas; Dr M Shipway; Prof M Wood; Dr A Liefoghe; Prof E
Leslie; Dr A Schutz; Dr C Bristow; Dr J Nicklin; Prof A Jones; Prof H Downes; Prof A
Finlay; Prof J Henderson; Prof L Moran; Dr T Fenner; Mr r Atkinson; Dr R Gumbrell-
McCormick; Mr P Payne; Dr A Walsh; Dr L Milbourne; Dr V Eatough; Dr S Arnold-de
Simine; Dr I Fremeaux; Dr M Allen;

In attendance:

Mr D Pateman – Academic Registrar; Mr K Harrison - Secretary and Clerk to the Governors;
Mrs K Bock – Head of Governance and Corporate Support; Ms J Lerch – Corporate
Support Intern.

Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from 18 Colleagues.

13 MINUTES

Confirmed

- 13.1 The Minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2010.

14 REPORT TO THE GOVERNORS

Noted

- 14.1 Governors' receipt of the Report of the Academic Board of 10 November 2010. **(AB 2010 15)**

15 TRESS PRIZE

Noted

- 15.1 The Master presented the 2010 Tress Prize. Political economist Ronald Tress was Master of the College from 1968 to 1977 and the Tress Prize was awarded annually for research of high quality by a Lecturer in the College with not more than three years of post-probationary experience as a University teacher. The award was made in the areas of Arts, Science and Social Sciences in rotation.
- 15.2 The 2010 Prize was for Science and was awarded to Dr Pieter Vermeesch in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences and Dr Salvador Tomas in the Department of Biological Sciences. Academic Board commended the winners.
- 15.3 Dr Vermeesch's work involved development of methods to study the dynamics of desert sand over time scales ranging from decades to millions of years, using a combination of satellite imagery and radiometric geochronology.
- 15.4 Dr Tomas' research focused on the study of molecular assembly phenomena in water, with special emphasis in the role played by lipid-based membranes. The overall aim was threefold:

- (i) to advance understanding of how living systems were regulated
- (ii) to advance understanding of how living systems originated
- (iii) the development of soft nanotechnology-based materials.

16 MASTER'S REPORT

Noted

- 16.1 The document [Next Steps for Birkbeck: An invitation to discussion](#) had been published on the staff Intranet. The paper outlined the potential impact on Birkbeck of the impending changes to the public funding of university teaching and student finance and identified a range of proposed responses. The Master had met School and Professional Services staff and students to discuss the document.
- 16.2 The Master thanked all academic staff involved in the mid year budget review which had resulted in significant savings; and noted that the College would need to continue to do all it could to contain costs and recruit as many students as possible in 2011-12.
- 16.3 The College was continuing to work with external bodies to ensure the best possible outcome for part time provision and students as new policies are developed, including eligibility for loans and loan repayments. The Education Bill was currently passing through Parliament. If passed, it would make provision for part time students to have access to student loans and would regulate part time fees at pro rata to the £6K and £9K full time fee caps. The publication of the White Paper had been postponed, with likely publication in the summer.
- 16.4 The College would need to remain competitive with other HE institutions in setting postgraduate taught programme fees.
- 16.5 Fees would be held at current levels for students progressing from Foundation Degree and Certificates of Higher Education to Bachelors degrees between 2011-12 and 2012-13, in programmes where there was an established and explicit progression route without any repeat of level. Continuing student fees would also apply to students who had a break in study provided it was approved according to College regulations.

17 ACADEMIC BOARD GOVERNORS' REPORT

Noted

- 17.1 This report would be circulated after the meeting.

18 ABExCo MINUTES

Received and **confirmed by members of ABExCo**

- 18.1 The Minutes of ABExCo's meeting of 9 February 2011. **(AB 2010 08)**

19 COMMON AWARDS SCHEME POLICIES

Approved

- 19.1 College Policy on Feedback on Assessed Work **(AB 2010 09)**;
- 19.2 College Admissions Policy, subject to increased emphasis on the role of admission tutors and programme directors in admissions and definition of candidates and applicants **(AB 2010 10)**;
- 19.3 Revised College Policy on the Operation of Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners, subject to inclusion of a reference to the role of Sub-Boards in admissions **(AB 2010 12)**;

19.4 College Policy and Procedure for the Termination of a Student's Registration (AB 2010 13).

20 REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF COMMITTEES

Noted

20.1 The Reports of the Research Committee, the Teaching and Quality Enhancement Committee and the Student Experience and Widening Participation Committee, which had been made available on the Committees website and were accessible from [this link](#).

Approved

20.2 Establishment of the Vasari Research Centre in the Department of the History of Art & Screen Media, School of Arts, as recommended by Research Committee and endorsed by Academic Board Executive Committee.

Noted

Research Committee

20.3 Report on preparations for the Research Excellence Framework 2014.

20.4 Report of award of a joint Bloomsbury Consortium ESRC Doctoral Training Centre. Academic Board congratulated those involved in securing the award. Birkbeck was leading on Psychology, Economics and Politics and its share of the awards was 26 per year.

20.5 Report of consideration of the role of the Birkbeck Graduate Research School in the context of the research cultures and research student communities developing in the five Schools.

Teaching & Quality Enhancement Committee

20.6 Report of withdrawn and suspended programmes.

20.7 Proposed establishment of a Technology-Enhanced Learning Working Group of TQEC, which would establish how the College would meet minimum standards for Virtual Learning Environment provision as required by the QAA and develop technology enhanced learning. A two-year part time academic secondment had been agreed to support this and a job description would be produced.

20.8 Reports on

- the 2010 National Student Survey
- analysis of internal student surveys
- responses to Internal Review
- student complaints and the code of student discipline.
- assessment offences and appeals

20.9 The Chair of TQEC reported on work on teaching space and teaching patterns. Following evaluation of the College's use of teaching space, it had become apparent that if teaching were spread more evenly across three terms there would be less need to hire external space to teach students in. As well as the logistical benefits, there were academic, pedagogical and student experience implications to consider including flexibility of programme delivery; links between the timing of learning and assessment; and staff and student workload. A consultation paper would be produced for consideration by the academic committees.

Student Experience & Widening Participation Committee

20.10 Reports on

- delivery of the Student Retention Strategy
- development of draft guidelines for communications with students
- consideration of draft policy and procedures for resolution of disputes with students.

20.11 Confirmation of the need for an increased response rate to the National Student Survey, which had been issued to all final year Certificate and degree students.

21 SUSPENSION OF REGULATIONS

Noted

21.1 Action taken by the Master as Chair of the Academic Board to approve the following suspensions of Regulations. All supporting paper work for these suspensions was available from the Registry and had been considered by the Master prior to his decision.

- MSc Management: permission to receive credit from a module taken at London Metropolitan University, with the award classification calculated by use of the student's Birkbeck results;
- MSc Computer Science: permit the award of compensated fail for two modules to four students and for a single module to one student;
- BA Theatre Studies & English: permit the sub-board of examiners discretion to use the Portfolio mark in calculating the degree classification index for three students;
- MSc Business Strategy & the Environment: permit the award of a compensated fail for a single module;
- MSc Psychodynamic Counselling: permission to re-submit work during academic year 2009/10;
- MSc Computer Science: permit the award of a compensated fail for two modules;
- MSc Financial Engineering: permission to submit dissertation in 2010/11;
- PGCE: HE; permission to undertake reassessment in a single module to two students;
- MSc Family & Systemic Psychotherapy: permission for third attempt at passing the dissertation module;
- MSc Computer Science: permission to undertake this degree whilst on a break in study from student's research degrees in mathematics;
- Specialist Doctorate in Psychotherapy: permission to provide for two copies of any successful thesis to be submitted to the College Library;
- MSc Finance: permission to submit dissertation and be examined for this degree;
- BSc Economic & Social Policy: permit the award of compensated fail in a single module and consequent award of a third class degree for this program;
- Certificate of HE: to permit the award of a Certificate of HE in Psychology;
- Graduate Certificate: to permit the award of a Graduate Certificate in Statistics.

22 DATES OF MEETINGS

Noted

22.1 The date of the summer term meeting:

- Tuesday 21 June 2011 at 2p.m.