



Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2016

Present: Professor P Layzell (Chair), Professor S Ansari, Professor T Armstrong, Ms N Barrett, Professor J Champion, Professor R Deem, Ms Z Edwards, Professor J Fiadeiro, , Professor M Gold, Professor S Halperin, Professor P Hogg, Professor J John, Professor R Kemp, Dr C Kremmydas, Professor D Matthey, Professor K Mayes, Professor E McGirr, Professor R Meek, Dr D Morritt, Professor H Nicholson, Professor K Normington, Professor B O’Keefe, Professor T Pincus, Professor B Rankov, Professor C Rees, Dr H Rui, Professor E Schafer, Ms S Simon, Professor M Spagat, Professor P Teixeira-Dias, Mr J Tuck, Dr D Watling, Dr S Wright, Dr Y Zheng

In Attendance: Dr D Ashton

Secretary: Mrs A Sendall

Observers: Miss C Cartwright, Ms J Roberts, Ms J Gawthrope

Apologies: Ms E Ancelin, Professor G Agyemang, Professor J Bennett, Professor S Downes, Professor T Evans, Professor D Gilbert, Professor D Howard, Mr S Kendrick, Professor G Pieri, Professor K Rastle, Professor K Willis

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted apologies. The Chair thanked Professor Mike Spagat and Professor Stephen Downes for their service on Academic Board as this was their last meeting as Heads of Department. 16/169

The Chair welcomed the newly elected members of Professor Chris Rees, Dr Yu Zheng and Dr Huaichuan Rui to their first meeting of Academic Board. 16/170

It was noted that although there had been seven vacancies to fill on Academic Board, only three nominations had been received and so an election had not been required. The three members had been elected unopposed to the Board and a further election would be held in the Spring Term to fill the remaining vacancies. 16/171

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on **Monday 5 September 2016** (M16/121-M16/136) were approved. 16/172

It was noted that comments had been received about the Minutes of the meeting held on **Thursday 27 October 2016** which were under discussion. These Minutes would be brought to the next meeting of Academic Board in March for formal approval. 16/173

3. Matters Arising

It was noted that the matter of first year weighting which had been discussed at the meeting of Academic Board in June 2016 had been raised. The Deans were continuing to discuss the matters with their respective faculties. 16/174

4. Actions Taken by the Chair

The Board noted that the Chair had agreed amendments to the Fitness to Practice procedures on 12 July 2016. 16/175

5. Unstarring Of Items

No items were unstarred. 16/176

6. Formal Reports

6.1 Principal's Report

The Principal informed members that he had recently attended a meeting with Home Office officials with regards to immigration and international student recruitment. He advised that there was presently no intention to place a limit on the number of international students who could enter the country but the Home Office was seeking to clarify which institutions were allowed to admit international students. There is currently no intention to link the admittance of international student numbers to TEF results. 16/177

The Principal congratulated the members of staff who had worked on the programme, 'Enabling Women Academics Through the Promotion Process' which had recently been recognised at the Times Higher Education awards. 16/178

An update was provided on the major incident involving an attempted arson attack on the Founder's Building on 1 December 2016. 16/179

6.2 Reports from the Deputy Principal and the Vice-Principals

The Deputy Principal advised that the investment case for the new Science building had been approved and work would begin in January 2017. 16/180

The Board discussed whether the rooms in the building would be available for all departments and it was confirmed that they would be managed through centralised timetabling. 16/181

The Vice-Principal (Staffing) and Dean of Arts and Social Sciences advised that the College was currently preparing the application for an institutional Athena Swan Silver award. Colleagues were also reminded that the call for academic promotions had been issued. 16/182

The Vice-Principal (Education) and Dean of the Doctoral School reminded the Board that consultation was ongoing regarding doctoral loans of up to £25,000 and responses should be sent to her and Dr Philip Taylor as soon as possible. 16/183

The Vice-Principal (Research and Enterprise) and Dean of Science informed the Board that the College had recently had great success in being awarded research grants, with over £4m being awarded in one week alone. 16/184

6.3 Report from the Students' Union President

The SU President updated the Board on the SU's activities relating to education which had taken place in the first term of 2016-17. This included appointing an Education Co-Ordinator, training 175 new course representatives, appointing a number of postgraduate students to the SU's education council and ensuring that students engage with the TEF. The President advised that the SU was not planning to boycott the NSS. 16/185

6.4 Report from the Council

Academic Board received the minutes of the meetings of Council which had been held on 11 May and 6 July 2016. 16/186

An oral report was delivered about the meeting which had taken place on 24 November 2016. The Board were informed that Council had received and considered the report on academic quality assurance and had been satisfied with the information presented to them. Council had also discussed the changes to the governing documentation of the College, the new Science Building and the restructuring of the College Executive team. 16/187

7. **The Royal Holloway and Bedford New College Bill 2017**

The Board were informed that following advice from the Charity Commission, the College would no longer be able to pursue a Private Member's Bill to amend the current RHBNC Act 1985 as the proposed changes could be achieved through a Parliamentary Scheme made pursuant to the RHBNC Act 1985. 16/188

It confirmed that the College was seeking new legal representation for this work and it was hoped that time could be recouped as the process for approving a Scheme was shorter than for approving a Bill. 16/189

The Board were informed that the work would begin again and that the College was now only seeking changes to the RHBNC Act 1985 which would enable it to achieve university status, to leave the University of London only in extremis, to provide for a Pro-Chancellor instead of a Visitor and to enable Council to have more than one Vice Chair. No other changes would be made. 16/190

The Board discussed the matter of the fees which had been paid to the first law firm and why the University of London had been allowed to pursue a Bill when we had not. It was confirmed that the matter of fees was under discussion and that the changes that the University of London wished to make could not be achieved by using a Scheme. 16/191

The Board noted that it was disappointing that the work which had been undertaken on the proposed Bill and the time of the Board in considering it had been wasted. 16/192

The Board discussed whether there would be any changes to the Statutes as a result of the Scheme and it was confirmed that changes would take place to facilitate the introduction of more than one Vice Chair of Council. It was noted that an additional statute would be created to confirm membership of the University of London. 16/193

8. **College Rankings Working Group**

The Board received a report from the working group tasked to address the College's position in league tables. 16/194

The Vice-Principal (External Engagement) and Dean of Management, Economics and Law who chaired the group presented the report to the Board. It was noted that the report was the result of an exercise to look at the College's performance solely based on league table metrics and what actions might be taken if there were no restraints. 16/195

The Board discussed the awarding of good degrees and how this metric might be improved without compromising academic standards. There was evidence of improved results as a 16/196

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| consequence of embedded support from CeDAS within degree programmes as well as the use of a categorical marking schemes. | 16/197 |
| The Board discussed graduate employment. It was noted that the change from surveying graduates 6 months after graduation to surveying them 18-24 months after graduation will benefit the College. | 16/198 |
| The Board discussed the College's spend on Academic Services and Facilities and whether it was possible to improve these. It was acknowledged that due to our relatively small size, it was more difficult for the College to compete in this category. The Board were informed that work was being undertaken to benchmark the College's spend on administration to ensure that this was operating as effectively as possible. | 16/199 |
| It was concluded that while there are areas which are outside of the College's direct control due to economies of scale, there are areas in which notable improvements can be made such as the NSS scores, assessment and feedback. | |
| 9. Student First | |
| The Board received an update on the Student First project. The panel of students, RH100, have already met three times and it was thought this is the largest focus group of students in the country. It was noted that work was currently being undertaken to ensure that the services available from the new Library and Student Services Centre were adequately signposted and that similar signage would be available in departments. | 16/200 |
| 10. Teaching Excellence Framework | |
| The Board received an update on the timetable for the Teaching Excellence Framework submission which will be completed in time for the deadline in January 2017. | 16/201 |
| The Board received the consultation questions from the Department for Education about Subject Level TEF and were asked to submit their thoughts on the questions to the Principal and the Director of Strategic Planning and Change by 19 December. | 16/202 |
| 11. Quality Assurance | |
| The Board received the final version of the report on academic quality assurance which had been submitted to Council at its meeting on 24 November which had been amended slightly following the meeting of Academic Board on 27 October. | 16/203 |
| The Board were advised that the Council Quality Assurance Working Group would meet in January to discuss how the process would work for the submission in December 2017 and how Council could be assured throughout the year about College processes. | 16/204 |
| 12. Student Recruitment | |
| The Board received the student intake numbers for 2015-16 and were informed that the Chief Operating Officer was currently conducting a review of the College's strategic approach to the recruitment of students. | 16/205 |
| The Board were informed that a number of recommendations had already been identified, primarily around marketing. The College would seek data from UCAS about the types of students who applied to the College in the past, those who were applying currently and what our likely applicant type would be in the future. | 16/206 |

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| | The pilot scheme for making unconditional offers had been successful this year and had been extended to almost every department. | 16/207 |
| 13. Regulations | | |
| | The Board received a report on the suspension of undergraduate and postgraduate regulations in 2015-16. It was noted that the overall number submitted was very high this year but this was primarily due to a one-off technical matter which would not reoccur. | 16/208 |
| 14. College Board Of Examiners Executive Committee | | |
| | The Board received a report on the key areas of business considered by the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee during 2015-16. | 16/209 |
| | It was noted that a large number of requests for suspensions of the regulations had arisen as a result of mental health, particularly in the writing up year for PhD students. The Committee had considered whether it might be possible to allow students who interrupted for mental health reasons to continue to access College facilities to ease some of the pressure and this would continue to be explored. | 16/210 |
| 15. Dates of Term | | |
| | The Board approved the term dates for 2018-19, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 including dates of Summer and Winter Graduation ceremonies. | 16/211 |
| 16. Procedural Business | | |
| | The Board noted the upcoming effectiveness review which would take place in 2017. Any comments on the scope of the review should be directed to the Secretary. | 16/212 |
| 17. Proposed Changes to College Executive | | |
| | The Deputy Principal, Vice-Principals and Associate Deans left the meeting at this item. | 16/213 |
| | The Board discussed the proposed changes. Concern was expressed that the remits of teaching and research had been given to one individual and that there was no longer a person with specific responsibility for enterprise. While the Board welcomed the support which would be available from Faculty Deans, there was some concern that there could be an uneven approach to research with this decentralisation. | 16/214 |
| | The Board noted that the flexible Vice-Principal roles were intended to draw on the expertise which was available within the College to address particular issues on a fixed-term basis. | 16/215 |
| 18. Student Recruitment | | |
| | The Board approved the standard entry requirements and the English Language entry requirements for UG for entry in 2017-18. | 16/216 |
| 19. Proposed Changes To Constitutions And Terms Of Reference | | |
| | The Board approved amendments to the Terms of Reference for Academic Board Executive Committee and to the Terms of Reference for the Arts and Social Sciences Faculty Board. | 16/217 |
| 20. Publication | | |

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| | The Board agreed that no items required broad dissemination around the College. | 16/218 |
| 21. Faculty Boards | | |
| | The Board received a combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in November 2016. | 16/219 |
| 22. Periodic Departmental Reviews | | |
| 22.1 | The Board received the PDR schedule | 16/220 |
| 22.2 | The Board received the PDR Report and Action Plan following the Department of Media Arts Periodic Departmental Review held in October 2015 | 16/221 |
| 22.3 | The Board received the PDR Report and Action Plan following the Department of Social Work Periodic Departmental Review held in April 2015 | 16/222 |
| 22.4 | The Board received the PDR Report and Action Plan following the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance Periodic Departmental Review held in February 2016 | 16/223 |
| 22.5 | The Board received the updated Action Plan following the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures Periodic Departmental Review held in February 2015 | 16/224 |
| 23. Academic Planning Committee | | |
| | The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Academic Planning Committee held on 10 May and 15 September 2016. | 16/225 |
| 24. Collaborative Provisions Committee | | |
| | The Board received the minutes of the meeting of the Collaborative Provision Committee held on 26 January, 12 May and 18 October 2016. | 16/226 |
| 25. Departmental Grants Group | | |
| | The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Departmental Grants Group held on 17 May and 17 October 2016 | 16/227 |
| 26. Research Committee | | |
| | The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Research Committee held on 25 April and 26 May 2016. | 16/228 |
| 27. Learning, Teaching And Quality Committee | | |
| | The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee held on 18 May 2016. | 16/229 |
| 28. Date of the Next Meeting | | |
| | The Board noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 15 March at 2pm in Moore Annexe 001 | 16/230 |