

**ROYAL HOLLOWAY**  
University of London

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board, held on 9 December 2010**

Present:

Professor P Layzell (In the Chair)	Professor K Normington
Dr S Ansari	Ms R Pearson
Dr B Baker	Mr P Phillips
Professor C Bradley	Ms S Rahman
Professor P Bramley	Ms B Rowley
Dr G Bush-Bailey	Professor R Schack
Professor J Davison	Dr A Sheppard
Professor R Deem	Professor D Simon
Dr N Gascoigne	Ms S Simon
Ms L Gibbs	Professor A Tickell
Dr A Gupta	Mr J Tuck
Dr G Gutin	Dr A Varty
Mr C Howorth (for Professor C Smith)	Professor R Walker
Professor J Johnson	Dr D Waltham
Professor R Kemp	Dr N Widder
Dr P Leman	Professor J Zanker

With: Dr P McGeevor (Secretary)

In attendance:	Ms S Kay	Head of Strategic Development
	Ms D Salsbury	Academic Development Officer
	Ms A Sendall	Head of Academic Development
	Ms E Wilkinson	Head of College Careers Service

Apologies:	Professor P Beesley	Mr J Powell
	Mr J Brannan	Dr R Pym
	Dr F Fordham	Professor J Saunders
	Professor M Fowler	Professor C Smith
	Professor J Frank	Professor G Ward
	Ms M Freeman	

**1. MEMBERSHIP**

- 1.1 The Board received the updated membership list (AB/10/37) and noted the apologies received by the Secretary in advance of the meeting. The Board welcomed new elected members Professor Jane Davison, Dr Finn Fordham, Dr Neil Gascoigne and Dr Patrick Leman and congratulated them on their successful elections as Elected Members of the Board. Their terms of office run to 30 September 2013. 10/107
- 1.2 The Board received one nomination for Professor Johannes Zanker as a member of Academic Board to serve on Council. Since Professor Zanker's nomination was 10/108

unopposed he was duly elected.

## 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on **Thursday, 3 June 2010** (M 10/047 - M 10/106), 10/110  
were confirmed and signed.

## 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

## 4. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

4.1 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, agreed by Chair's Action to permit Professor Felix Driver to extend his term of office and attend the Council meeting on 13 October 2010. 10/111

4.2 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, established a Regulations Working Group to start work immediately. The membership and Terms of Reference for the group were presented for approval under item 16. 10/112

4.3 The Board noted that the Principal, on behalf of the Academic Board, approved paper AB/10/38 outlining the attendance monitoring and reporting requirements for our Highly Trusted Sponsor status with the United Kingdom Border Agency. The Deputy Principal reported that the College has received notification confirming our Highly Trusted Sponsor status. 10/113

## 5. UNSTARRING OF ITEMS

There was no unstarring of items.

## 6. FORMAL REPORTS

6.1 Principal's Report 10/114

The Principal noted that earlier that day he had spoken at the Staff Open Meeting on the subject of university funding and student fees. He said that we are on the cusp of a different environment for higher education funding, the significance of which goes beyond the financial aspect. The emphasis must be on putting the student experience at the heart of what we do. Royal Holloway is fortunate to have academics who are leaders in their field and this informs their teaching practice. It is important that we have a good return in the REF, and ensure that the student experience reflects the quality of the College.

He noted that Parliament were in the process of voting to approve plans to raise tuition fees in England to a maximum of £9,000, but many of the details had still be worked out. However, the government is expecting only a few universities to raise their fees to the maximum £9,000. The College is losing a substantial amount from its teaching grants, and to make this deficit up we would need to charge at least £8,000 in tuition fees to meet the cash loss. However, we need to consider the real cost of raising the fees, for example, in terms of how this will impact widening participation. Universities charging more than £6,000 will have to commit to access agreements, negotiated with the Office For Fair Access (Offa), to commit them to programmes to recruit students

from poorer backgrounds.

Raising the tuition fees from £3,000 to even £6,000 means the student experience will need to be further improved. Issues such as library provision, study space, accommodation and sports facilities will need to be addressed, but this will be at additional cost so we will need to generate more income just to stand still. When the funding cuts come into effect in April 2011 the College may lose £5,000,000 for the year April 2011 to April 2012.

The Principal said we were starting from a position of strength. We were strong academically with good staff and RAE results, and financial resources in reserve. We had the resources and talent to tackle the issues and remain a strong institution.

10/115

## 6.2 Report from Council

The Board received the minutes from the meetings of the Council, held on 31 March 2010 (AB/10/39a) and 23 June 2010 (AB/10/39b).

## 7 **STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

7.1 The Board considered the report on the position of student intake numbers for 2010-11 (AB/10/40). HEFCE had imposed strict limits in student numbers for 2010-11 entry. A Student Number Control Limit was introduced with a fine of £3,700 per student for institutions that went over their limit. Clearing had to be closely monitored on a daily basis. Overseas recruitment was more than 100 students below target and the College would be looking this issue. Student number targets for 2011-12 have not been clarified yet, but it is expected that the government will enforce controls on numbers again. 10/116

7.2 The Board considered the report on UG and PG applications received to date for admission in 2011 (AB/10/41). The total number of undergraduate applications received compared with the same period last year has increased by 18%. It is expected that there will be fewer applications deferring their places to 2012 in view of the increased tuition fees. The postgraduate taught applications have increased by 12%. The postgraduate research applications are below what they were this time last year, but due to the nature of research applications it is too early at this stage to make judgments. It is also too early to comment on the number of offers made, but early indications are that we are making more offers compared with this time last year. 10/117

7.3 The Board approved the entry requirements for 2012/13 (paper AB/10/42), and noted that these were based on the recommendations of the Academic Development Committee. 10/118

## 8. **INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT**

The Board received a briefing paper from the Deputy Principal on the Institutional Audit (AB/10/43). The paper outlined a summary of the processes and consequences of the upcoming audit. The key periods will be 29-30 March when the audit team will pay an initial briefing visit to the College, and 16-20 May when the main audit visit will take place. The documentation to be provided to the audit team includes a briefing paper referenced to appropriate committee minutes and policy documents; a written submission from the Students' Union; reports from Regulatory Bodies (e.g. General Social Care Council, QAA [DAP]); teaching quality information (e.g. National Student Survey). The briefing paper is currently being drafted and will be circulated to members 10/119

of Academic Board for comments in the New Year. The Deputy Principal suggested that there was no need to have the Special Academic Board meeting in February, which was initially requested to approve the briefing paper. The Board agreed to cancel the additional meeting scheduled for February 2011 and would consider the briefing paper by circulation instead. The Principal thanked the Deputy Principal and Head of Academic Development for the work they are doing in preparation for the audit.

## 9. **STUDENT EXPERIENCE GROUPS**

The Board received a paper from the Deputy Principal on Student Experience Working Groups (AB/10/44). The Student Experience Working Groups have grown in stature over the last few years. The College reached the final of the Times Higher Education Awards for the most improved student experience. This was particularly pleasing as it was the one award that was based directly on student opinion. The paper outlined the changes made over the last year and identifies key issues and longer term aspirations and where we can make improvements. The groups are now focussing on implementing the recommendations and developing long term plans. They will be reporting back to the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee in February 2011. The Deputy Principal commended the work of these groups. 10/120

## 10. **NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY**

10.1 The Board received a paper from the Deputy Principal on our 'Response to the 2010 National Student Survey' (AB/10/45). The Deputy Principal had met with academic representatives from departments and identified areas of concern. In response the departments had suggested ways forward and had provided action plans which the Deans will carry forward. The Deputy Principal was appreciative of the response from departments. He said that everyone engaged fully and useful feedback and ideas came out of it. 10/120

10.2 The Board received an oral report from the Deputy Principal on plans for the 2011 National Student Survey. The Deputy Principal will contact Heads of Department shortly regarding the 2011 National Student Survey, which will start on 24 January and must be completed by 30 April 2011. Students will be given incentives to take part, for example, last year they were entered into a draw to win Summer Ball tickets. Departments need to encourage their students to take part. 10/121

## 11. **LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY**

The College's Learning and Teaching Strategy (AB/10/46) was presented for approval. The Deputy Principal said that work on this paper began a year ago and input from departments and faculties has been incorporated into it. The Strategy has been separated from the operational plan. The College will work towards the Strategy over the next few years, whilst the operational plan is more fluid and adaptable. The Board approved the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy. 10/122

## 12. **PROPOSED CHANGES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIPS**

12.1 The Board approved the proposed changes to the Terms of References of the Academic Development Committee and the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (AB/10/47). The remit of both Committees has been reviewed in order to clarify the distinction between them. All matters relating to the delivery and monitoring of the academic provision have been transferred to the Learning, 10/123

Teaching and Quality Committee, whilst the Academic Development Committee will focus on academic strategy and planning.

- 12.2 The Board approved the proposed changes to the Arts Faculty Board's Constitution to reflect the change of departmental name from 'Classics' to 'Classics and Philosophy' (AB/10/48). 10/124

### 13. **PROGRESS REPORTS & REVIEW**

- 13.1 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the School of Biological Sciences Periodic Departmental Review (October 2009) (AB/10/49a,b). It was noted that the School of Biological Sciences was commended particularly on the accessibility of staff to students and the exceptional quality of the support given to postgraduate students. One of the points for consideration is to build on the work already undertaken to improve NSS results, which the Action Plan addressed to the satisfaction of the Academic Development Committee. 10/125

- 13.2 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Health and Social Care Periodic Departmental Review Follow Up (January 2010) (AB/10/50a,b). The Dean of HSS reported that the Health and Social Care Department satisfactorily addressed all the issues and she was pleased with the outcome. The Principal acknowledged that the Department had made good progress. 10/126

- 13.3 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures Periodic Departmental Review (November 2009) (AB/10/51a,b). It was noted that the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures was commended particularly on unifying practice across the School, on staff being awarded College teaching prizes, and the development of the undergraduate programmes in Comparative Literature. 10/127

- 13.4 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Media Arts Periodic Departmental Review (March 2010) (AB/10/52a,b). The Media Arts Department had a notably good Periodic Departmental Review, and was commended particularly on the good relationship between students and staff, and the range and quality of its Masters programmes. One of the points for consideration was to review the use made of the Summer term, since Media Arts students to not have exams in the Summer term, and need to ensure that students are given structured work during this time, such as work placements. 10/128

- 13.5 The Board considered the Periodic Departmental Review report, together with the Action Plan following the Drama Periodic Departmental Review (May 2010) (AB/10/53a,b). The Drama Department was commended particularly on the good relationship between students and staff and the strong pastoral support for students, and its excellent research support. As with Media Arts, one of the points for consideration was to review the use made of the Summer term. 10/129

### 14. **STUDENT AND ACADEMIC SERVICES REVIEW**

- The Board received an update on progress in the Student and Academic Services Review (SASR) (AB/10/54). The key principles are service ownership and accountability, indentifying and engaging service-users, agreed and publicised service standards, regular service review, and service vision, with 'road-maps' and 'investment 10/130

gateways'. A similar approach to service review using these key principles is shortly to commence in Finance and HR. One of the areas being looked at is the use of the JAMES system. The Examinations process currently relies on the JAMES system and it has been decided that it will be replaced. We will be using an intermediate system for the current academic year. The Deputy Principal will send a message to Heads of Department shortly confirming that we will have a new system for 2011-12.

15. **DATES OF TERM**

The Board approved dates of terms for 2012-13 and considered the provisional dates for 2013-14 and 2014-15 (AB/10/55). 10/131

16. **REGULATIONS REVIEW WORKING GROUP**

The Board approved the Terms of Reference and membership of the Regulations Review Working Group, and the noted the schedule of business for 2010-11 and the report from the first meeting of the Regulations Review Working Group held on 10 November 2010 (AB/10/56). The Deputy Principal expressed his gratitude to the volunteers across the faculties who have contributed to the working group. The working group looked at issues from departments and faculties and Registry. The first meeting dealt with minor items to be brought to future Academic Board meetings. The schedule of business for 2010-11 will be tidying up regulations in cases where many waivers have been issued. The Academic Registrar advised the Board that postgraduate taught programmes are currently entered on Banner as 51-week programmes. The Board agreed to the recommendation to amend this to 52 weeks as this would eliminate some problems encountered by students regarding their student visa status. The Principal thanked all those who had volunteered for the working group. 10/132

17. **REGULATIONS**

The Board considered a report on the suspension of regulations in 2009/0 (AB/10/57). The Academic Registrar advised the Board that he did not consider that any of the issues reported on were cause for serious concern. The Regulations Working Group would take forward changes that might lessen the need for waivers. 10/133

18. **ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

The Board received reports from the meetings of the Academic Development Committee held on 3 March, 27 April, 28 September and 26 October 2010 (AB/10/58a, b, c & d). 10/134

19. **FACULTY BOARDS**

The Board received a combined report from the meetings of the Faculty Boards held in November 2010 (AB/10/59). 10/135

20. **DEPARTMENTAL GRANTS**

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Departmental Grants Group held on 12 May and 13 October 2010 (AB/10/60a, b). 10/136

21. **INFORMATION SERVICES ADVISORY GROUP**
- The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the Information Services Advisory Group (ISAG) held on 13 July 2010 (AB/10/61), and noted that the meeting for this term has been delayed to later in December so the minutes will not be available until the next Academic Board meeting. 10/137
22. **RESEARCH**
- The Board received report from the meetings of the Research Committee held on 31 March, 24 June, 15 September and 13 October 2010 (AB/10/62). 10/138
23. **LEARNING, TEACHING & QUALITY COMMITTEE**
- The Board received a report from the meetings of the Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee held on 6 July, 19 October and 11 November 2010 (AB/10/63). 10/139
24. **ACADEMIC AWARDS GROUP**
- The Board received a report of the awards and prizes awarded during 2010 (AB/10/64). 10/140
25. **CONFERMENT OF TITLES**
- The Board received a list of the conferment of titles for 2009-10 (AB/10/65). 10/141
26. **HONORARY TITLES**
- 26.1 The Board approved the proposals to confer the Honorary Titles of Visiting Professors on: 10/142
- Dr Trevor Burchette, from the Department of Earth Sciences (AB/10/66a);
  - Dr David Grimshaw, from the Department of Geography (AB/10/66b);
  - Professor Richard C Laughlin, from the School of Management (AB/10/66c).
- 26.2 The Board received a paper on the conferral of honorary titles and the award of titles to Royal Holloway staff (AB/10/67). 10/143
27. **QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**
- The Board received a copy of the latest edition (Issue 33, July 2010) of the *Higher Quality* newsletter (AB/10/68), and noted that this will be the last edition of *Higher Quality* that QAA will be producing. 10/144
28. **PUBLICATION**
- 28.1 The Board agreed that no papers require broad dissemination around the College. 10/145
- 28.2 The Board confirmed that no papers required exemption from the Freedom of Information Act requirements. 10/146

29. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Principal reported that this was last Academic Board meeting for Professor Adam Tickell, who will shortly be taking a senior role with the University of Birmingham, and Dr Phil McGeevor, who will be retiring at the end of this month. The Principal wished both well for the future. 10/147

29. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday, 16 March 2011 at 3pm in MX001 10/148

Dr P.A. McGeevor  
Academic Registrar  
13 December 2010