

BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION
Executive Committee meeting

Monday 13 September 2010
Senate House, Malet St, London

CONFIRMED MINUTES

Present: Maria Alvarez, Helen Beebee, Michael Brady, Gillian Howie, Adrian Moore, M. M. McCabe, Jeremy Butterfield, Chris Hookway

1. Apologies: Mark Addis, David Bain, Tom Sorell, Alessandra Tanesini, Gordon Finlayson, John Callanan

2. Minutes of the last meeting: Approved

3. Matters arising

Item 3/3/8, Philosophy in schools: HB had not contacted the IP re involvement with the Answers website, but it was agreed that since schoolteaching falls outside the IP's remit, she would not pursue this.

Item 3/3/12, AHRC 'Future Directions' consultation: HB had not yet got information from the AHRC concerning the way that impact statements are used in funding decisions; however she would be a member of the AHRC panel in December so it was agreed that she would wait until after that in order to see how the processes work and feed back to the exec at the next meeting.

ACTION: HB

Item 3/8, BIS review of UK postgraduate provision: HB had not yet responded to the BIS review; it was agreed that she would do this once the current correspondence with David Willetts had been concluded.

ACTION: HB

Item 3/11, AOB (staff on temporary contracts): HB had met with an employment lawyer and would relay her findings to the working group on contract staff in due course.

Item 5(c), KCL cuts: David Papineau had communicated with the subject community via Philos-L on the outcome of the KCL proposals. MM agreed to liaise with DP to find a form of words that could be used for inclusion in BPA literature on its activities.

ACTION: MM

Item 6, Subject Centre update: (b) Action on collaboration on impact with PRS currently on hold until the situation becomes clearer. (c) (HEA review) and (d): aspiring academics/contract staff: Mark A to report back at a later date.

ACTION: Mark A

Item 9, Philosophy in schools update: (a) HB confirmed that the cost of running the Answers site was currently manageable, but usage data would be monitored and reported to the next meeting.

ACTION: HB

(b) HB noted that the proposals re philosophy graduates and teaching careers had been overtaken by the election result; however it was agreed that MM and TS would have a similar meeting with the new Education Secretary, Michael Gove, and that the construction of a leaflet/poster and possible PRS involvement would be reconsidered after this had taken place.

ACTION: MM, TS

Item 10, New universities update: HB reported that pursuing information from publishers re consortia agreements had hit a brick wall and it was agreed that it was not a good use of Mark A's time to pursue this issue further. The web listings for philosophers and philosophy UG and PG programmes in new universities were now on the website, though the programme listings still needed to be completed.

ACTION: HB

4. Committee members and officers 10-11

HB confirmed that the three committee slots had been filled as follows: Mark A and Maria A re-elected; John Callanan (replacing MM) elected. MM and HB would be supernumerary members for the year. Subject to final approval by the 11-12 committee, MB had agreed to replace HB as Director from July 2011.

5. Financial report

HB circulated the 10-11 financial report, which had not been ready in time for the AGM due to some prior record-keeping problems. There was a net loss for the year of about £1200; this was due to failure to pursue renewals for institutional members. As of 31 May, the bank balance was nearly £13,000.

There was a discussion of individual membership, which stands at about 250 and has only increased by about 10% over the last 2-3 years despite the annual newsletter and generally growing awareness of and a positive attitude towards the BPA's activities. The following actions were agreed.

HB to:

- check whether a pdf of the newsletter was sent to all members, and to send it if not;
- post a link to the newsletter to Philos-L;
- investigate asking Mind, the Aristotelian Society, the BSPS, etc. whether they would consider including an ad in their journals; also asking the AS to include a link to the BPA encouraging people to join in one of their regular emails to members;
- update the 'why join' section of the website (including spiel from KCL, see item 3/5(c) above), and ask HoDs to forward the link to their staff (wait until just after the book & journal leaflet has been sent out to members so that people can tell whether or not they are members);
- investigate the Save KCL/Middx Facebook groups to see whether there's a way of advertising the BPA on them;
- once the effectiveness of these emerge, to consider getting exec members to email people personally.

ACTION: HB

6. Director's report

(a) MPs: HB, MM and MB had had an email discussion about trying to get suitable MPs involved in the BPA's activities where appropriate. Two had been identified (Norman and Pugh) but HB had taken no action. HB to approach them.

ACTION: HB

(b) Middlesex: HB noted that the CRMEP had moved to Kingston, while the remaining two years of UG cohort were being taught out by the two remaining non-professorial staff (and a new one-year appointment) at Middlesex. It was agreed that HB should email the remaining staff asking whether the BPA could do anything to assist them.

ACTION: HB

(c) REF

(i) Sub-panels: HEFCE had decided, partly in the light of the letter from the BPA/AUDTRS, to keep the Philosophy and T&R sub-panels separate. This decision had been welcomed widely by both disciplines.

(ii) Impact: HB had written to Willetts in July, arguing that impact should not be included for philosophy; the letter was sent on behalf of the BPA, about 15 learned societies, and over 40 HoDs. No reply had been received and HB had recently re-sent the letter. (CUCD had also sent a similar letter but had received a reply; HB to get a copy of this.) No other action on impact had been taken; it was agreed that any further action should be delayed until the inclusion of impact in the REF for philosophy had been confirmed and/or a response had been received from Willetts.

ACTION: HB

(iii) Sub-panel Chair: HB had written a letter of support for a candidate for the position of sub-panel Chair; she had secured the support of all other members of the RAE 2008 sub-panel, and had persuaded several learned societies to write in support as well.

(d) Heads of Department meeting: It had been agreed that HB would set up a meeting for all HoDs, but she hadn't got any further with this, partly because she was unsure when it would be best to have it given current issues (especially REF, WiP, contract staff). REF appointments will be finished by the end of 2010, with panel meetings due to start in early 2011; it was therefore agreed to wait until then, and to then have a HoD meeting at which the sub-panel chair could make a presentation and answer questions.

7. WiP committee/contract staff working group

(a) WiP committee: HB reported that this was going well. Havi Carel and Drew Howat had now joined; Drew was also gathering data from HESA etc. The committee aims to produce a report including both data and recommendations by next summer, and (subject to approval) to launch a joint SWiP/BPA mentoring scheme for junior women philosophers. HB to send round the draft minutes to the exec.

ACTION: HB

(b) Contract staff working group: HB had forgotten to send Dawn's report around to the exec and would do so. There had been a brief discussion about contract staff after the AGM. The concrete upshot had been a discussion with the Mind Association concerning their Fellowships scheme; Mind have now increased the level of funding and made it a requirement that the HoD commit to using all the money to pay for replacement teaching (rather than leaving open the possibility of using only some of the money for casual hourly teaching). No meetings for this working group had yet been scheduled and only MB had volunteered to be a member. It was agreed that a meeting would be set up for HB, MB, Dawn, and two or three HoDs, using the report as a basis for discussion, and to draw up a report with some

recommendations and guidelines on 'best practice' – preferably in time for the HoD meeting (see item 6 above).

8. Conference/media lunch

It was generally agreed that both a conference on the value of arts and humanities and a 'media philosophy lunch' would be a good idea. Combining the two (in the temporal sense) was also agreed to be a good idea, since the conference would provide a context and a venue for the lunch.

It was agreed that MM, GF and Maria A would get together and try to make some progress on the conference (together with any other exec members who would like to be involved). Various names were suggested for suitable speakers, as well as possible venues (RSA, BA). It was also agreed that the media lunch could be followed by a public lecture by a big-name philosopher, to which the media people would be invited. Short talks from suitable philosophers would also be needed for the lunch, and again some names were suggested. The AAP's 'media prize' was suggested as something the BPA could emulate, with the presentation being made at the lunch.

Major financial assistance would be required; once things have progressed a little more and venue options explored, HB to draw up a rough budget and request support from the wealthier learned societies.

ACTION: MM, GF, Maria A, HB

9. REF sub-panel nominations

HB reported that a handful of people had emailed her asking to be nominated by the BPA for sub-panel membership. The committee took the view that it was not in a position to make judgements as to the suitability of particular people; that it would not be appropriate to nominate people solely on the basis that they had requested this; and that the most useful role the BPA could play would be simply to provide names and specialisms of people who were willing to serve. In the light of this, it was agreed that HB would email all HoDs asking for one or two names of colleagues who are willing to serve and who satisfy the criteria for membership; she would also compile a list of all RAE 2008 sub-panel members who were willing to do the job again. The whole list would then be passed on to HEFCE. (The committee to look at the list to check that it includes sufficiently many representatives of relevant constituencies, e.g. a good spread of specialisms, women, staff in new universities, and consider encouraging other people to be nominated where there were obvious gaps).

ACTION: HB

10. Departmental and LS membership fees

HB reported that one HoD from a smaller department had pointed out the inequity in having a flat fee irrespective of the size of department. It was agreed that there would be 3 different fees based on size of department from 10-11; HB to decide on the precise amounts in a way that does not significantly reduce income.

ACTION: HB

11. AOB: None