

BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION
Executive Committee meeting

Thursday 8 September 2011, 12.00-4.00pm
ST276, 2nd floor, Stewart House, Malet St., London

DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Mark Addis, Anita Avramides, Michael Brady, John Callanan, Chris Hookway, Gillian Howie.

1. Apologies

Maria Alvarez, David Bain, Havi Carel, Tim Crane, M.M. McCabe, Tom Sorrell, Alessandra Tanesini

2. Minutes of the last meeting

There was one correction to the minutes on **item 3/9, REF sub-panel nominations**. Mark A noted that only two philosophers from new universities were nominated, one was approached and declined, and as such there was no representation of new universities on the sub-panel. Numbers were not therefore 'sufficient.' MB has changed the minutes, and otherwise the minutes were approved.

3. Matters arising (MB)

Item 3/3/3/12, AHRC applications: MB was to arrange a discussion of good practice for writing and peer reviewing. This didn't happen at the HoD meeting, and the 2012 AGM is likely to be sparsely attended, so MB will ask various members of peer review college and AHRC grant-holders to contribute to a document on good practice, to be circulated to departments.

ACTION: MB

Item 3/3/5(c) KCL cuts: MM to liaise with DP to find a form of words to be used for inclusion in BPA literature on its activities (e.g. website, 2012 newsletter).

ACTION: MM

Item 3/3/10, New universities update: Herjeet Marway, the BPA Administrator, has collated a list of courses for those new universities who had returned a questionnaire and sent out more questionnaires using UCAS/Postgraduate lists, but there are still a lot of unreturned forms; as such, the list is not as yet very comprehensive. Nevertheless, it is important that we put these online soon, given that visibility is a key problem for philosophy and philosophers in new universities.

ACTION: MB, HM

Item 3/6 (a), MPs: MB, MM to discuss. MB to contact Thom Brookes in Newcastle to discuss links with MPs.

ACTION: MB, MM

Item 3/8, Conference/media lunch: MB to liaise with Barry Smith about this possibility.

ACTION: MB

Item 3/10, Departmental and LS membership fees: LS sliding scale has been implemented, but not departmental. Reminders already sent out for this year, so will have to wait until 2012-13. (See later for Financial Report.)

Item 4, PRS Subject Centre: Mark A reports that the Subject Centre will close on 31st December 2011 and actually ceased to exist in its current form before September 2011. The half-time appointee will not be in post by the time it is shut. The funding for the legacy activities (£4,000) was received. £3,000 of this is being used for website redesign, and in particular redesign of the 'resources' section, which will now incorporate some material currently on the PRS site. Chris Tebb has nearly finished redesigning this.

MB will liaise with Helen Beebee about The National Philosophy Open Day in Birmingham.

GH will liaise with 'Philosophy in Pubs' in Liverpool, and will ask what the BPA might do to help set up similar projects on a national scale.

ACTION: MB, HB, GH

Item 5(e), Valuing Philosophy: MB raised the issue at the HOD meeting, and stressed the importance of ensuring that philosophy continues to be promoted widely. The proposed Open Day and website redesign, which will incorporate a section on Valuing Philosophy, are a start, but we should all continue to think of ways in which philosophers can promote themselves and the subject to external and institutional audiences.

AA suggested that we use already existing structures and events – such as A-level recruitment fairs – to promote philosophy. This might make more sense than setting up our own Open Days, given the prevalence of recruitment fairs, and the relative ease of getting philosophical representation at such things. AA to consider how to take this forward.

ACTION: AA, ALL

Item 8, A level philosophy/Ebacc: Mark A reported that the shrinking provision of philosophy at AS and A level was noted by Clare Saunders as having been raised at the BUPs and at the Subject Centre's last advisory board meeting. Brian Gates, Professor of Religious and Moral Education at Cumbria University, and Chair of the RE Council of England and Wales, contacted Clare about this. He indicated that the exclusion of religious studies from the EBacc has already lead to a dramatic shift in the number of schools offering GCSE religious studies and staffing priorities for religious education. MB to ask whether TS can get more information about this.

ACTION: MB

Item 10, Impact and the REF: MB to consult Alexander Bird once consultation period is over and guideliness and criteria have been fixed.

ACTION: MB

4. Committee members and officers 11-12 (MB)

AA, HC, TC and MB have been approved by the Exec by email; and MA, MM and MB have been approved as officers.

5. Director's report (MB)

(a) Consultations: The BPA will be providing feedback on the REF Consultation on draft panel criteria and working methods, and will be adding its support to existing campaigns against the Government's White Paper on Higher Education.

(b) HOD meetings: MB organised two meetings for September 7th, one with HODs of new universities, one with HODs of all universities in the UK. The main item for discussion at the former was the threat to philosophy provision and philosophy jobs in the new universities – mainly as a result of a managerial push for a shift from combined or joint honours degrees to single honours – and what philosophers in new universities, and the BPA, could do in order to resist this trend. It was agreed that we will set up a joint BPA-new universities working group, to meet every six months, to focus on these issues. Mark A will chair and invite members of the BPA Exec, and representatives from new universities, to join. Reports from the working group will be posted on the BPA website.

The main items of discussion at the HOD meeting for all universities were (i) the REF consultation; Katherine Hawley and Robert Stern presented an overview of the current criteria, working methods and guidelines, and answered questions; (ii) the BPA/SWIP report on Women in Philosophy; (iii) the White Paper; and (iv) TS's briefing paper on Philosophy in Schools. (More on these later.)

The meetings were well-attended, well-received, and will now be an annual event. Thanks to Katherine Hawley and Bob Stern, and the Institute of Philosophy for hosting the meetings.

ACTION: MARK A

(c) Website redesign: The £3,000 from the PRS Centre has been used to redesign and update the website. The main changes are to the Resources Section, and these should be live soon.

6. Finance report (Mark A)

Mark A reported that we now have 326 members, and over £15,000 in reserves. However, this includes £4,000 from the PRS Centre for hosting of web resources and the Open Day, so we have £11,000 in general funds. This is running down as yearly expenditure is more than yearly income. The fact that we are spending more than we are generating is obviously problematic in the long-term. But in the shorter term there is a need to generate more income; Herjeet is currently doing her full hours, and it would be very helpful if we had the money to pay her to do more. (See below.) A number of actions were agreed in order to address this issue.

- We should aim have reserves of £10,000.
- Departmental membership fees should increase. Membership has remained fairly static despite several recruitment drives, and Mark A thinks that it is unlikely to significantly increase in the near future. There are reasonable grounds for raising departmental membership fees from £40 to, say, £100, given the amount that the BPA does for departments – these are the primary beneficiaries of our work, and there are a number of departments who are benefitting from our work without contributing. So one possibility is to tell departments that paying the departmental fee is necessary in order to receive BPA representation: for instance, departments must join if they are to be invited to the HOD meetings, briefed about the REF consultation, receive support and advice when threatened with closure, and so on.
- Seek to recruit postgraduate students (at a reduced membership fee), and get a postgraduate representative on the Executive Committee as a supernumerary member. Given costs, it would make sense if this was someone already based in London, and the PG representative could also help with organising meetings, etc. JC will think of someone suitable and invite them.
- Ask Howard to help with the advertising. At present, Howard gets paid for 10 hours per month for work on the Answers site. Although this is valuable, it doesn't in itself generate any money for us. As such, some of Howard's time might be used on something that does generate funds.
- It was agreed that Mark A should have greater responsibility as Treasurer, and be more involved with policy. In particular, it was agreed that Mark should take more of a hand in managing financial issues, including membership issues and advertising, and should be line-manager for Herj and Howard on this. Two items in particular are pressing: (i) we should have a yearly financial report, with income and expenditure, so that our financial situation is transparent; and (ii) we need a clearer list of members, which is multiply sortable, and a clearer list of philosophers currently working in the UK. AA suggested that we should circulate the list and then contact any non-members that we know and persuade them to join.

ACTION: MARK A, JC, MB

7. White Paper Consultation (MB)

There was some discussion of the White Paper on Higher Education, but most were already familiar with the contents. It was agreed that the BPA should join existing national campaigns against the paper – such as that being conducted by the Campaign for the Public University – rather than drafting an individual BPA response. MB will get in touch with CRE, OUCHE.

ACTION: MB

8. Women in Philosophy Report (MB)

MB reported that he introduced the report at the HOD meeting as an extremely valuable document, written by a sub-committee of the BPA and SWIP, with important practical suggestions, and that the report should be disseminated widely. This did not amount to an

endorsement by the BPA Exec, as it did not imply that MB or anyone else on the Exec agreed with everything in the report. The Report received very strong support from HODs.

There was some discussion of the section on Sexual Harassment, in light of worries raised by AA and TC. Since the report has been published, it is not possible to cut the section from the document, even if the Exec were minded to do so; and many on the Exec thought that the relevant section should remain, and that it was good that harassment is acknowledged. It was agreed that any future update could stress the procedures that are in place (or should be set in place) to deal with sexual harassment, and perhaps the BPA/SWIP working group could suggest a different example to the anecdote in place. It was agreed that we should see what the feedback to the Report is, and perhaps might discuss this further at the next meeting in May.

9. Philosophy in Schools (TS)

MB reported that TS's paper was discussed at the HoD meeting, and that the improvements TS secured with the AQA received widespread support. On the issue of departmental initiatives in teacher training, GS reported (and confirmed what Katherine Hawley reported at the HOD meeting) that the pool of teachers is quite limited, and as such MA programmes or courses are difficult to sustain. Part of the problem is that there is no real pathway for philosophy as an option for teachers, when compared to a subject like religious studies. CH suggested that having teacher training as a module in a general philosophy MA might address GH's worry. As at the HOD meeting, MB asked all to keep him informed of any proposals for courses for philosophy teachers, and will liaise with TS about this.

ACTION: MB, TS

10. REF consultation exercise (MB)

The consultation exercise finishes on October 5th, and MB will respond on behalf of the BPA before then. MB reported on the REF consultation exercise and the meeting with HODs on September 7th. It was agreed that the BPA will fully support the proposal by SWIP on Individual Staff Circumstances, namely that staff who had periods of maternity leave during the assessment period may reduce the number of outputs by one for each discrete period of leave. It was also agreed that the criteria should be further revised to allow for a reduction of one output for each period of adoption leave.

GH suggested that the SWIP proposal could be circulated to other subject associations.

It was agreed that MB would ask for clarification on various questions to do with Impact: in particular, whether economic impact of publishing papers and books, and of journal editing, will count; whether talks to philosophers at other HEIs will count as a way of promoting understanding; and how we should understand notions such as 'interim impact' and 'diffuse and non-linear' pathways.

The possibility of a closed REF/Impact blog on the BPA site was raised, and thought to be a good idea. MB to check with Chris Tebb as to the feasibility and cost.

ACTION: MB