

**BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION**  
**Executive Committee meeting**

Tuesday 15 May 2012, 12.00-3.00pm  
S264, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Senate House, London

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Maria Alvarez, Anita Avramides, David Bain, Michael Brady, John Callanan, Havi Carel, Tim Crane, Chris Hookway, Roxanna Lynch, Tom Sorrell.

**1. Apologies**

Mark Addis, Gillian Howie, Herjeet Marway, M.M. McCabe, Alessandra Tanesini.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting**

Approved.

**3. Matters arising (MB)**

**Item 3/3/3/12, AHRC applications:** MB to arrange a session at the next HOD meeting in September 2012 for informal advice on grant applications. TS to speak; MB will ask Helen Beebee and Greg Currie if they can participate and lead discussion.

ACTION: MB

**Item 3/3/10, New universities update:** The updated list is now on our website. The webpage title has been changed to: Philosophy outside 'old' universities or named departments.

**Item 3/3/6 (a), MPs:** There was little support for taking this further.

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

ACTION: MB

**Item 3/4, PRS Subject Centre:** The redesign and updating of the website is almost completed; work was delayed due to hacking and limitations with word press. Helen Beebee is moving to Manchester and will organize a National Philosophy Open Day there for some time during the 2012-13 academic year. GH reports that the 'Philosophy in Pubs' organizers are interested in collaborating, so we will think about what we can do for them.

ACTION: MB, GH

**Item 3/8, A level philosophy/Ebacc:** TS reported that he had contacted the AQA, and figures show not a shrinkage in numbers for Philosophy but an increase. Entry figures for AS in Philosophy grew from 5926 in 2010 to 6646 in 2011; A level entries were more static, from 3273 in 2010 to 3289 in 2011.

**Item 3/10:** The departmental sliding scale has now been implemented.

**Item 5 (b):** Mark A reported that the new universities working group has been set up. The advice leaflet for departments should be completed soon.

**Item 6, Finance report:** Mark A reported that all the agreed actions have been completed. He noted that Howard has been helping with the advertisers and has approached several publishers, including Routledge, but reported that the latter declined to proceed on the grounds of the level of website traffic. Unless this can be raised it is very unlikely that we can secure significant advertising revenues via the site. Mark also reported that the new line management of Herjeet and Howard is working well and resulting in more efficient completion of tasks. There will also be a yearly financial report to be circulated every August, and multiply sortable lists of members and philosophers working have been produced and circulated to the Exec.

Regarding Postgraduate recruitment, JC proposed that Roxanna Lynch join the Exec as a co-opted member and postgraduate representative. The Committee endorsed this.

Finally, MB proposed that Herjeet Marway also join the Exec as a co-opted member, given her expertise in all matters administrative. The Committee endorsed this.

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

MM's term of office as President will finish in July 2012. The Exec discussed who might be a suitable candidate to replace MM; MB will ask and then nominate the preferred candidate.

DB, CH, GH, AT, and TS are at the end of their three-year terms in July 2012. DB and CH wish to continue for a second term. TS has served for nine years and so cannot remain on the Exec. But since TS continues to do very important work on Philosophy in Schools – for which we are very grateful – it was decided that he would return to the Exec in July 2013 as a co-opted member.

#### **5. Director's report (MB)**

**(a) Northampton:** The University of Northampton will stop accepting Philosophy students as of September 2012 and will phase out teaching of the subject over the next three years. MB wrote to the Vice-Chancellor and Northampton MPs, and liaised with David Wall at the University, but the University is committed to closing the Department.

**(a) REF Consultation:** MB is liaising with Alexander Bird about REF preparation and how best the Philosophy community can be served. (See item 9 below.)

#### **6. Finance report (Mark A)**

Mark A reported that the BPA currently has funds of just over £14,000, which is reasonably well above the level of desired reserves. A detailed yearly financial report will be circulated in August. Herjeet will routinely check that all existing advertisers who need to renew have done so, and will approach major philosophy publishers asking if they would like to offer a discount. Improvements in the organization of financial processes and reporting have been completed. We need to renew our efforts to gain members on the basis of the updated lists; MB will organize another recruitment drive.

ACTION: MB

## **7. GTA Employment (RL)**

RL presented the findings of the 2012 BPPA Nationwide Survey on Graduate Teaching Assistant Terms of Employment. These included (i) that a number of universities appear to fail to pay GTAs the minimum wage, (ii) there is a wide divergence in rates of pay, (iii) not all GTAs received holiday or sickness pay, and (iv) there is often ambiguity and lack of clarity when it comes to the hours GTAs are expected to work. RL reported that the BPPA would like the BPA to raise awareness of these issues among members and suggest ways forward. In particular, the BPPA would like GTA pay to better reflect number of hours worked, and for there to be clearer contracts stating exactly what is required in terms of hours teaching and marking, whether attending lectures is required in terms of employment, and the like.

After discussing the issues the Exec proposed that the BPA produce two documents to be circulated to departments, one intended for staff, the other for GTAs. The first document would aim at setting out best practice and good policy with respect to different aspects GTA employment, and might include some positive examples of how departments have responded to GTA issues. The second document would aim at giving PG students advice on employment and teaching issues. This might include clarification on how many hours students should spend teaching and marking, what is expected of them as GTAs, examples of common pitfalls, and examples of ways in which problems have been successfully dealt with by permanent staff and universities. MB and RL to liaise about this, and will circulate drafts to the Exec for feedback.

ACTION: MB, RL

## **8. Philosophy and Religious Studies**

Hugh Pyper, formerly on the Advisory Board for the Philosophy and Religious Studies Subject Centre, spoke to the Exec in his new role as subject lead for PRS, which will continue to offer support for philosophy. In particular, the body has funds to employ philosophers for consultancy work (such as lectures on employability), small grants to support workshops and conferences related to teaching, and much larger grants (up to £35,000) for projects on teaching and learning, the student experience, the development of learning materials, and for disseminating best practice and delivery. The Exec agreed to advertise this at the HOD meeting, and ask people to look at the new PRS Resources section on our website for information about the kinds of issues and projects that might be supported in these ways.

ACTION: MB

**9. REF matters (MB)**

Alexander Bird has been in touch to ask how he, along with the BPA, can best ensure that everyone is up to speed with what the REF requires, and how with the BPA's assistance he might help, in a general and impartial way, the community to prepare itself. It was decided that we would have a dedicated session for Alexander to speak at the HOD meeting early in September. MB will liaise with Alexander about this.

ACTION: MB

**10. AOB**

Mark A raised the issue of whether we could support the Philosophy Foundation, a charity that does good work in promoting philosophy in schools, business and the community, in terms of publicity. (Their website is here: <http://www.philosophy-foundation.org/>) It was decided that we should have a closer look at the Foundation prior to providing support and advertising.

ACTION: MB