1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The Committee welcomed Mr Simon Higman (Registrar and Director of Operations) to his first meeting. 11/03

1.2 The Committee reviewed and noted the Committee membership (ACC/11/01). No changes were made. 11/04

1.3 The Committee approved the revised Terms of Reference for submission to Council subject to an amendment to include the Registrar and Director of Operations as 'in attendance' (ACC/11/02). 11/05

Although a number of related policies already referred to the UK Bribery Act the College should develop comprehensive policy, procedures and training. The Ministry of Justice was due to publish guidance on the UK Bribery Act shortly. It was

AGREED

That the College Secretary would circulate a paper about the UK Bribery Act and the College’s plans for implementing its requirements.
2. MINUTES

2.1 The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2010 (M10/83 – M10/124). It was 

AGREED

The Committee Secretary would send a confirmed copy to the Chair to sign.

2.2 The Committee confirmed the Minutes of the additional meeting held on 26 January 2011 (M11/01 – 11/02) 11/08

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 It was confirmed that an item referring to Treasury Management had been included in the Principal Risk Register (M10/87) and that the Principal Risk Register would be circulated to the Committee in July. 11/09

3.2 The Assistant Director of Finance updated the Committee on the exercise to remove stale credit balances (as noted in M10/91). It was 

NOTED

That the exercise should be completed by the end of the financial year and that a policy would be developed.

3.3 The Committee received an update from the Assistant Director of Finance about the review of other HEI Financial Statements. It was 

AGREED

That this would be completed as part of the preparation for the 2011 Financial Accounts in August/September 2011.

3.4 The College Secretary confirmed that a letter had been sent to HEFCE regarding the Committee's concerns about the Annual Report and that this letter had been circulated to all Council members. 11/12

3.5 The Committee received and noted the completed Action Plan (Annex A of the HEFCE Audit of the 2009-10 HESES return) (ACC/11/06 and ACC/11/06a). 11/13

4. INTERNAL AUDIT

4.1 The Committee received the Internal Auditor’s operational 11/14
report (ACC/11/03). The main items in the report were outlined for the Committee.

Five final reports had been issued since the last meeting. These included the long outstanding report on IT project management. The delay was attributed to the vacancy in the department of the individual managing this area. It was not known if this vacancy was now filled.

The audit of Compliance with the Obligations under the Universities UK Code for the Management of Student Accommodation, which the College is obliged to undertake, was being prepared.

The Internal Auditor expected to receive the formal management comments for the draft report to support the consideration of the RHUL return of TRAC data by the Committee soon.

The Internal Auditor outlined some issues that the college needed to address.

The Committee noted that the review of draft audit reports by the Management Co-ordination group had not been taking place and that the Group was under review. It was AGREED that the Internal Auditor would copy the Registrar and Director of Operations into draft audit reports and that they would meet regularly to ensure that managers took individual responsibility for audit comments and actions.

The Committee discussed the process for finalising audit reports when Management disagreed with an audit recommendation. It was AGREED that in future the final audit report will indicate that the management view has been accepted.

The Internal Auditor outlined his investigations into two recent cases of financial irregularities and clarified the procedures relating to the issue, use and regulation of College payment cards. The Committee AGREED that the College needs to address the control failure which
led to the irregularities, possibly by issuing a reminder to all staff about the importance of checking payment logs and reconciling statements accurately.

4.2 The College Secretary provided an update on the plans for additional Audit resources.

It was

NOTED

That Grant Thornton had been appointed to provide extra resource. The Committee was satisfied that Grant Thornton’s had sufficient knowledge and experience of the HE sector to undertake the outstanding Audits.

4.3 The Principal updated the Committee on the review of the Internal Audit function.

The Southern University Management Service (SUMS) is due to report to College management in March. The report would consider the best practice in the sector and options for managing and resourcing the Internal Audit function. It was

AGREED

That the finalised SUMS report would be circulated to the Committee.

That an additional meeting would be held mid-May to consider the College’s response to the SUMS report and its proposals for the future management of Internal Audit. The 2011-12 audit plan would be presented to the Committee in July and would take the above proposal into account.

5. INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

The Committee noted that the Institutional Audit documentation was submitted on time. The process remained as outlined in the paper submitted to the Council on 8th December 2010 (CL/10/101).

It was confirmed that the College was preparing for the Audit as fully as it can and that preparation and training would take place for staff who are involved. The University of London was also being audited and these report outcomes would be considered by the College.
6. COMPLIANCE

Research Ethics

6.1 The Committee noted that the 8th February meeting of the Research Ethics Committee did not take place.  11/27

Health and Safety

6.2 The Committee noted that the Health and Safety Committee met on 3 February 2011 and

AGREED

That the Minutes would be circulated as soon as they are available.  11/28

6.3 The Health and Safety Adviser presented the Annual Report from the Health and Safety Committee, which was received by the Audit and Compliance Committee (ACC/11/04).

Accident statistics remained low and compared favourably to other institutions. All accidents were investigated by departmental health and safety co-ordinators who involved the Deputy Health and Safety Officer when it was appropriate.

The College system for a number of legislative compliance subjects, including Control of Substances Hazardous to health ‘COSHH’ and Display Screen Assessment were paper-based. The methodologies would be improved and made more efficient if they were replaced by computerised systems.

The Health and Safety Office comprised of three full time members of staff and two part-time. These staff led a comprehensive range of formal training courses to equip staff and students with the skills necessary to undertake their duties safely and effectively. The Auditor is full time but the contract expires later this year and the Health and Safety Officer recommended that the post continued part time. The post will be reviewed by the next Health and Safety Committee.

The Committee were encouraged by the report and expressed their confidence in the Health and Safety Office.  11/33

The Health and Safety Adviser updated the Committee on the first charge of corporate manslaughter which was against
a small private sector organisation. It was

AGREED

That measures need to be implemented to ensure that Heads of Departments are accountable for Health and Safety matters. The Registrar and Director of Operations agreed to use the appraisal procedures to help achieve this.

Risk Management

6.4 The Committee received the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Risk Management Committee held on 9th February 201 (ACC/11/05).

The Committee expressed a concern that the Risk Registers focused on internal issues rather than wider external factors. A number of external factors had been included in the Principal Risk Register including the forthcoming funding reductions and changes to government policy. The Committee will be asked to approve the register at the July meeting.

The Committee discussed other areas of risk including student occupations and funding from sources outside the UK. It was

NOTED

That the College insurers had asked whether the College had received funding from any country that could threaten the reputation of the College, but that there were no known concerns about the acceptance of donations. The College had policies regarding the acceptance of gifts from major donors and the funding of research contracts. These are currently being reviewed to check that they are fit for purpose.

Following the occupation of the College’s Bedford Square site work was ongoing to manage similar risks.

It was felt that risk management issues were currently being dealt with in a compartmentalised manner and that it would be more desirable to embed responsibilities into staff roles. One way to achieve this would be to link risks to the College objectives, which would then feed into staff performance objectives.
7. COMMUNICATION

Items for dissemination in the College

7.1 It would be appropriate to circulate a message to remind staff about procedures relating to reconciling credit card statements.

Items not for publication under the Freedom of Information Act

7.2 No items were identified

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates for an Additional Meeting for Committee lay members would be circulated to discuss the review of the Internal Audit function.

The Committee noted that the next meeting will be on 20th July at 10am in the Principal’s Meeting room.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business

David Spence
Chair
20 July 2011