

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Friday 11 June 2004

MINUTES

Mr J F Taylor (Chair)	
Professor R Finnegan (Vice-Chair)	
Mr R D A Pick (Honorary Treasurer)	
Professor C J Bundy (Director and Principal)	
Ms S Adamjee*	Sir Joseph Hotung
The Lord Bagri	Dr K D Howard
Mr J Bevan	Sir David John
Professor S Bassnett	Mr A Joumaa
Mr A Bhanji	Lady Barbara Thomas Judge
Mr D W Brewer	Dr Nasser D Khalili*
Professor J Brown	Professor M A Knibb
Professor S Chan	Professor D Latchman
Professor E J Croll	Professor P Robb
Dr P Deans	Professor B R Tomlinson
Mr M French	Ms E Wright
Professor G Furniss	
Professor M Hockx*	

In attendance: Mr F L Dabell (Clerk to the Governing Body)
Mr A Keeble (Director of Finance & Administration)
Ms J Halliday (Minute secretary)

**those marked with an asterisk were unable to be present.*

38 Welcomes, thanks, and valedictions

Governing Body welcomed new members: Mr James Bevan (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and Professor David Latchman (Master of Birkbeck College). The Governing Body noted with deep regret the death of Professor Ben Pimlott (formerly Warden of Goldsmiths College and a member of SOAS Governing Body). It was noted that Mr Michael French would be succeeding Mr Robert Pick as Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee and the outgoing Chair was thanked for his substantial contribution to the work of that Committee and of this Governing Body. Members noted that this was the last meeting of Governing Body for Professor Graham Furniss (Dean of Faculty of Languages and Cultures) and Mr Awad Joumaa and Ms Sakeena Adamjee (student members) and they were all warmly thanked for their contributions. It was further noted that Professor Ruth Finnegan and Professor Judith Brown would be serving further terms of office.

39 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2004 were **APPROVED** and signed.

40 Matters Arising

40.1 QAA Institutional Audit (minute 26.1)

Governing Body received and noted the action plan for the nine main recommendations made in the QAA's report on the Institutional Audit of the School which had taken place in April 2003 [Appendix A]. It was noted that all recommendations were being addressed and that the action plan would be updated on a rolling basis. Governing Body welcomed sight of the action plan and wished to be kept informed of the School's work in respect of the QAA's recommendations. It was noted that Academic Board's Quality Audit and Assurance Committee presented, as did other committees, a brief annual report to Academic Board in each autumn term and governors requested that that report should also be presented to Governing Body. It was also noted that QA information on the School would progressively be put on the web.

40.2 HEFCE policy on minority Subject (minute 30.4)

Governing Body received a letter dated 2 June 2004, tabled by the Director and Principal, from the Chief Executive of HEFCE in response to previous correspondence between the School and HEFCE on Minority Subject Funding. Governing Body did not accept the arguments put by Sir Howard Newby in his letter which placed the School in an unfavourable position relative to previous expectations. Governing Body **ENDORSED** its strong support for the School in pursuing this matter, noting that the 2 June letter from Sir Howard Newby alluded to the proposed review of the School's funding alongside the Minority Subjects Review and the Teaching Funding Review in 2005. The letter indicated the possibility that these reviews would be linked with 'a more general review of specialist subjects of strategic importance to the nation'. It was **AGREED** that all possibilities for lobbying HEFCE and the Department for Education and Skills should be explored, the School's and this Governing Body's position on record being effectively a 'marker in the sand', prior to the review in 2005. It was noted that key negotiations in the government on its spending round for the next three years would be happening over the next few weeks and Governing Body lent its unanimous support to the School's officers in presenting the School's case as strongly as possible.

40.3 Industrial dispute AUT

It was noted that there had been a national settlement of the dispute with the AUT and that pay awards had been implemented at the end of May, backdated to August 2003. It was noted that implementing the national agreement formed an important part of the School's HR strategy in its submission to HEFCE on Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education phase two.

41 Director and Principal's Report

Governing Body received a report [Appendix B] from the Director and the Principal and the following points were highlighted in discussion:

41.1 Undergraduate and postgraduate applications

The encouraging news on strong student applications and conversion rates to enrolments to the School for the academic year 2004/05 were noted and this meant that the School was well on its way to achieving the recruitment targets set. The breakdown between UK and EU and Overseas undergraduate students and the corresponding target were noted. Governors welcomed the buoyant application rates but were mindful of the risk factor if targets were not met and stressed the need to consider student recruitment within the wider strategic planning undertaken by the School last year and on an ongoing basis.

41.2 The financial situation

Governing Body noted with pleasure that the School was currently forecasting a modest operating surplus for 2003/04, having turned round the unfavourable situation from last year.

41.3 Development and fundraising

Governing Body was pleased to note the activities of the Development Committee and the dinner held at the House of Lords on 19 April 2004 to help launch an International Advisory Board for the School. The list of IAB members would be provided, once complete, to the Governing Body for information.

41.4 Award of Honorary Degree at graduation ceremony

Governing Body noted that the School would confer the degree of D.Lit. (*honoris causa*) on Dr Lisbet Rausing at the postgraduate graduation ceremony on 22 July 2004. Governors would be invited to attend the ceremony and the lunch at 12.30pm to which Dr Rausing had been invited and would be present.

41.5 Service to the School

Governing Body noted that this was the last meeting at which Robert Pick was attending in his capacity as Honorary Treasurer. The Director and Principal recorded his personal thanks to Mr Pick for the important contribution he had made and Governing Body **ENDORSED** these thanks. It was also noted that this was the last meeting of Governing Body being attended by Professor Graham Furniss in his capacity of Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures. The Director and Principal recorded his personal thanks and the Governing Body endorsed these thanks to Professor Furniss for his outstanding academic leadership during the initial stages of the new Faculty structures. Governing Body was pleased to note that Dr Michael Hutt

(currently an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Languages and Cultures) had been appointed as the new Dean of that Faculty with effect from 1 August 2004 and would become a member of this Governing Body.

41.6 Director's Travel

The Director and Principal reported on his visit to the US, which had included an event held to launch a New York branch of SOAS Alumni.

41.7 League Tables

The Director and Principal reported on the School's position in various League Tables in the press, notably that SOAS had achieved fourth position in the Guardian's tables. Governing Body noted that the tables were all derived from the same HESA data although were weighted in differing ways. It was noted that no other specialist small HEI matched the SOAS position.

41.8 Top-up fees and student bursaries

Governing Body noted that, if the Higher Education Bill became law, the School would be considering like all other HEIs setting student undergraduate fees of up to £3,000 with effect from 2006. The Bill allowed HEIs to set differential fees for courses within an institution but this would be difficult and not desirable within SOAS as so many courses interrelated. It was therefore likely to be the case that the School would be proposing the same fee across all undergraduate subjects. In order to mitigate against fees being a deterrent to widening participation, the School in common with all other HEIs was considering what proportion of the additional income it should commit to student bursaries. The School's Executive Board had considered setting a student bursary at £500 each. It was noted that discussion and consultation on the subject of top-fees and student bursaries was yet to take place within the School through various discussions, the committee structure and consultation with various parties, including the Students Union, and these discussions and consultations would take place over the forthcoming autumn term, with a view to meeting prospectus deadlines at the end of the calendar year 2004. It was noted that the School's officers would bring a formal proposal to Governing Body at its December 2004 meeting but that an indication of this matter needed to be lodged with this meeting of the Governing Body. Governors urged the School officers to consider carefully the appropriate level of extra support for students, whether through student bursaries, additional hardship funds and other support for the quality of the student experience.

42 Governing Body membership

The Governing Body received an oral report on its membership, noting that the Academic Board had **APPROVED** the nomination of Dr Farouk Topan (Department of the Languages and Cultures of Africa) in place of Professor Tom Tomlinson who would now be in attendance, Dr Michael Hutt in place of Professor Graham Furniss, and the continued membership of Professor Michel Hockx. It was noted that there would be a bunching of vacancies in two or

three years time as several members of Governing Body would finish their terms of office at the same time and that this issue would need to be revisited at a later stage.

43 Finance

43.1 Forecast Outturn and Budget for the financial year 2003/4

Governing Body received a report on the Forecast Outturn Budget for the financial year 2003/4 [Appendix C], noting with pleasure the forecast operating surplus standing at some £250,000 and noting that the update included the addition of £50,000 of funding for the Library as agreed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

43.2 Report and recommendations on the budget for the financial year 2004/5

Governing Body received a report and recommendations on the budget for the financial year 2004/5 [Appendix D], noting that the expectation and resource requirements described had been reviewed for reasonableness by a budget panel. The resulting draft budget had achieved the target of breaking even at the historical cost level set by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Governing Body. Governing Body noted the major assumptions and the outstanding matters detailed in the paper, including the information that the School had received some £353,000 of funding under the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF2). The Governing Body **ENDORSED** the approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the draft budget for 2004/05.

43.3 Assumptions to underpin the five years financial forecasts

Governing Body considered a paper detailing assumptions underpinning the five year financial forecasts [Appendix E]. It was noted with pleasure that the first two targets of the financial strategy – breaking even at the operating and then historical cost levels – were now within the School’s grasp. However, it was noted that there was still work to be done to strengthen the School’s financial stability and various constraints, challenges and opportunities, plus risk factors, were noted. It was **AGREED** that a working group be formed to review forecasts.

44 Privy Council matters

44.1 Amendment to the Charter of Incorporation

Consideration was given to the proposed amendments to the Charter [Appendix F]. Following discussions it was

RESOLVED:

To request to Privy Council changes to the following Articles of the Charter of Incorporation:

- (a) ARTICLE IV.9
- (b) ARTICLE V.1 (i) and (j)
- (c) ARTICLE VI.1(d)

44.2 Revised Model Statute

Consideration was given to the new Standing Order based upon the Revised Model Statute as drafted by the Universities and Colleges Employers' Association (UCEA) and Privy Council. It was reported that Privy Council had requested that the SOAS Governing Body authorise Privy Council to make any further minor amendments to the wording of Standing Order should it be necessary without further recourse to the SOAS Governing Body. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the Standing Order entitled "Academic Staff: Dismissal, Discipline and Grievance Procedure and Related Matters."
- (ii) To authorise Privy Council to make any necessary minor amendments to this Standing Order without further recourse to the SOAS Governing Body.

45 Standing Orders

45.1 Amendment of Standing Orders

Governing Body considered the amendment of Standing Orders, as detailed in the papers [Appendix H].

45.2 Audit Committee

Governing Body considered and **APPROVED** proposals for the amendment of Standing Orders in respect of Audit Committee [Appendix I].

46 Internal Audit

Governing Body received and **APPROVED** the revised terms of reference for internal audit [Appendix J].

47 Governance

Governing Body considered a paper on governance issues arising from the Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) report on the effectiveness of Governing Bodies, the White Paper, the Lambert Committee Report and the School's response to the HEFCE questionnaire on Effective Financial Management [Appendix K]. It was **AGREED** that a formal review of the effectiveness of Governing Body be conducted, through a questionnaire to be distributed to all members of Governing Body to complete in the autumn of 2004.

48 School of Languages

Governing Body received a paper which had been considered and approved by Academic Board at its meeting on 26 May 2004, proposing to establish a School of Languages [Appendix L]. The Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures introduced the proposal and briefed governors on the background thinking and progress to date. He drew attention to the further work to be done, including work on career structures for teaching-only staff, negotiations with individuals and trades unions, and cost implications. This work would be carried forward by a working group, subject to Governing Body support of the proposal in principle. It was noted that the proposal had the support of academic staff in the Faculty, albeit with issues still to be resolved, and had the support of Academic Board. It was also noted that the proposal linked with the joint SOAS/UCL bid to HEFCE to become a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, on which news was awaited. Governors thought that the scheme was exciting, while posing challenges both in terms of intellectual and HR issues, and **APPROVED** the proposal in principle.

49 Estates Matters

Governing Body received a report on estate matters [Appendix M], noting the developments set out in the paper with regard to 200 Pentonville Road (and the information provided in a tabled press cutting), Vernon Square, the library archives, and other projects detailed. It was noted that with regard to 200 Pentonville Road it was possible that news on the planning application would now be available in late July. With regard to paragraph four of the report, the Master of Birkbeck College indicated that he would be willing to share their College's experience of extending its main building by adding floors to the top, but that the difficulties should not be underestimated. It was noted that there would be a special meeting of Estates Committee in July to consider all these developments. It was envisaged that an updated Estates Strategy would be drafted and available later in 2004.

50 Risk Management

Governing Body received and **APPROVED** a report on the School's risk management [Appendix N], subject to amendments already indicated by the Executive Board and subject to any amendments members of Governing Body

should email to the Director of Finance and Administration. Members asked him to take into account the following matters:

- paragraph nineteen – this went beyond equal opportunities monitoring and should include the difficulty of affordability of accommodation in London and related issues; this should be cross-referenced to the RDS proposal (later on the agenda);
- the deletion throughout of the post of Director of Information Systems and Strategy. (In the context of the loss of this post, Governing Body asked that a line management structure diagram be made available, and the Pro-Director indicated that a list of responsibilities was being currently drawn up for the School's Calendar and would be circulated to governors in due course.)

It was noted that progress on the Risk Register would be updated and reported back regularly to Governing Body and that risk considerations had been built into the School's Strategic Plan for the next five years.

51 Equality Committee

Governing Body considered a draft Equality and Diversity Policy, presented by the Chair of the Equality Committee Professor Lisa Croll, as approved by Equality Committee and Executive Board for proposed publication from September 2004 [Appendix O]. It was noted that the document was an umbrella policy, sign posting readers to other documents and policies either existing or in process of preparation. It was noted that the purpose of the document was to ensure the School's compliance with legal requirements, to meet HEFCE standards, and most importantly to ensure that equality and diversity was addressed throughout the School especially in view of the multicultural ethos of the institution. It was noted that establishing the policy was an important stage towards implementation and monitoring of the School's activities, for example its academic promotions policy and practice. Governing Body **APPROVED** the Equality and Diversity Policy, emphasising that this was an important area of the School's work in which governors took an interest. Governing Body warmly **ENDORSED** the thanks expressed by the Chair of the Equality Committee to the School's Diversity Advisor for her substantial and high quality work since she had been in post. Governing Body asked the School's officers to ensure that the policy was checked finally by the School's solicitors prior to publication.

52 Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education Phase 2

Governing Body received the SOAS submission to HEFCE for special funding under the Rewarding and Developing Staff in Higher Education Phase 2 special initiative [Appendix P], comprising the statement of investment under RDS1 2003-2004 and a revised institutional human resources strategy 2004-2006, as approved by the School's Executive Board. Governing Body received

a presentation on the submission from the Director of Human Resources who highlighted key aspects of progress achieved to date and key features of the revised HR strategy and bid. Governing Body **ENDORSED** the submission made to HEFCE and expressed its interest in being kept informed on the progress of this important area of the School's work.

53 Annual Operating Statement

Governing Body received an oral report from the Clerk to the Governing Body who was co-ordinating the annual return to HEFCE to be submitted by the end of July 2004. Governors would be circulated with the completed documentation over the summer months.

54 Students' Union

Governing Body received a report of the fully audited accounts of the Students' Union for the financial years to 31 July 2002 and 31 July 2003, noting that they had been received and approved by Finance and General Purposes Committee [Appendix Q]. Governing Body recorded its thanks to the Students' Union General Manager and successive Co-Presidents for ensuring that the financial situation of the Union was in good order.

55 Matters to report

55.1 Minutes of the Academic Board

Governing Body received the minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 26 May 2004 [Appendix R].

55.2 Annual Report of the Percival David Foundation

Governing Body received the annual report of the Percival David Foundation [Appendix S].

55.3 Minutes of the Audit Committee

Governing Body received the minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 May 2004 [Appendix T].

55.4 Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Governing Body received the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25 May 2004 [Appendix U].

55.5 Financial Reports

Governing Body received a cash flow projection [Appendix V], a Capital and Debt statement [Appendix W], and a report on short-term deposits [Appendix X].

56 Student Regulations

Governing Body **APPROVED** proposed changes to student regulations [Appendix Y].

57 Dates of meetings next session

Governing Body noted that its meetings next session had been scheduled to be held on:

Friday 10 December 2004

Friday 18 March 2005

Friday 10 June 2005

starting at 11.00am followed by lunch.