

# SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

## GOVERNING BODY

Friday 15 June 2007

### MINUTES

Lady Barbara Thomas Judge (Chair)  
Professor M A Knibb (Vice-Chair)  
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)  
Professor P Webley (Director & Principal)  
The Lord Bagri\*                      Sir David John\*  
Professor S Bassnett                  Professor D N Khalili\*  
Mr A Bhanji\*                              Mr K Kutay  
Sir David Brewer                      Professor D Latchman  
Professor J Brown                      Mr P Lea-Wilson\*  
Professor S Chan                        Mr A Lloyd\*  
Professor C Clunas                      Dr D Martinez  
Professor E J Croll                      Mr R Pick  
Professor R Finnegan                  Professor P Robb  
Mr J Footitt                                Ms C Solomon  
Mr J Hughes-Hallett\*                  Professor B R Tomlinson  
Professor B Ingham                      Dr L Welchman

Ms E Wright  
In attendance: Mr F L Dabell (Clerk to the Governing Body)  
Professor M Hutt (Dean of Languages and Cultures)  
Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance)  
Ms S Page (Registrar)  
Ms A Puhlmann (Students' Union Co-President  
Sports & Societies elect, 2007-8)  
Ms J Halliday (Deputy Secretary) [minute secretary]

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

#### 39 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2007 were **APPROVED** and signed, subject to the correction of minute 28 (vii) in respect of:

- (i) the name of the incoming Dean of Law and Social Sciences to Professor Matthew Craven;
- (ii) the start date for both new Deans to be 1 July 2007.

#### 40 Matters arising

*Minute 31: Governing Body*

It was reported that the effectiveness review of Governing Body would now take place next session, 2007/8.

In this connection, governors asked the School's officers to consider whether the increasing volume of papers being sent to Governing Body was

appropriate and whether the volume should either be reduced or some sent further in advance.

*Minute 32 (ii): Finance*

It was reported that the meetings with Faculties on the Financial Strategy had gone well.

**41 SOAS Master Plan**

Governors reported that they had enjoyed the presentation earlier that morning by John McAslan & Partners, the appointed master planners for the estate. The School's officers were pleased with the work the master planners had done in consulting widely throughout the School and drafting a plan which could now be taken forward by working up five distinct projects. It would be ensured that this would be consonant with the overall Strategic Plan and sub-strategies.

**42 Director & Principal's Report**

Governing Body received a report from the Director and Principal [Appendix A]. Arising from the report:

(i) *HEFCE: visit of Chief Executive*

It was noted that the School's special role had been recognised by HEFCE and that the latter was inclined to be supportive but on condition that the School (a) maintained itself as a world-class research-intensive university, (b) was well-managed, and (c) became financially sustainable.

(ii) *HEFCE: review of research libraries special funding*

This special funding was important for the School as it comprised a considerable proportion of the funding. The aspiration of full and retrospective conversion to computerised records had been discussed.

(iv) *HEFCE: additional student numbers (ASNs)*

It was noted that options for submitting a further bid for additional numbers (over and above the 30 recently received) were being explored.

(v) *HEFCE: review of special teaching funding*

The importance of this funding was noted as the School receives 13% per student on top of the sum received by other higher education institutions outside this special funding.

(vi) *Wye*

Negotiations with Imperial College over the transfer of the Wye distance-learning programme and associated staff to SOAS had reached the final stage and the School hoped to sign the final agreement shortly with the transfer taking place with effect from 1 August 2007. Governing Body **AUTHORISED** the School's officers to complete proceedings, subject to final terms being agreed by Chair's action.

(vi) *Student residences*

The School was working with some of the other Bloomsbury Colleges to secure some student places at a development already built at Green Lanes, managed by the student housing provider Unite. Negotiations were proceeding with the same provider on a much bigger new build development at Tottenham Hale.

(vii) *London Middle East Institute (LMEI)*

The Director and Principal reported that the School had been working on a restructuring of the relationship with the LMEI, with a view to giving SOAS the controlling interest in the LMEI. This would involve setting up a new Board of Trustees who would report and make recommendations to the School's Governing Body, and the drawing up of a management agreement between the two charities. It was noted that the School's Executive Board had supported the Director and Principal taking forward negotiations with LMEI on this basis. Governing Body **ENDORSED** the School's action and **AUTHORISED** the Director and Principal to proceed in this way.

(viii) *Framework Agreement*

The Director and Principal reported that the School-wide job evaluation exercise was going well and on schedule, with co-operation from the trades' unions. The initial work should be completed by 1 August, followed by more detailed work before the new structure could be put in place. Negotiations on fixed-term part-time hourly-paid staff were proving to be challenging.

(ix) *New Chairs*

In addition to the appointment of the three Chairs noted in the paper, the Director and Principal reported that Professor Peter Sells had been appointed Professor of Linguistics at SOAS.

(x) *Retiring members*

Governing Body noted the external and internal members of Governing Body who were retiring after this meeting and warmly thanked the retiring governors for their substantial service.

## 43 **Governing Body Membership Committee**

An oral report was received from the Vice-Chair on the two meetings of Governing Body Membership Committee held since the last Governing Body meeting. Considerable progress had been made in identifying suitable candidates to fill the six external vacancies, and it was noted that gender balance was an important consideration. Governing Body **APPROVED** two nominations: Mr John Griffith-Jones, senior partner at KPMG; and Mr Alan Parker, from the Brunswick Group. Governing Body **AUTHORISED** its Chair to take action to appoint the remaining external and internal new governors, and to appoint nominees to Governing Body's sub-committees, subject to Governing Body's approval of the new committee structure later on this agenda. Governing Body **APPROVED** the recommendation that Mr

James Hughes-Hallett serve for one year on the Audit Committee, pending a longer term replacement being found, and thanked him for agreeing to this.

#### **44 Finance**

(i) Governing Body **APPROVED** the draft budget 2007/8, noting that it presented a break-even position once the additional resourcing for the School's capital campaign was excluded [Appendix B].

(ii) Governing Body noted that the School had to submit Annual Monitoring and Corporate Planning Statements and Financial Forecasts 2007 to HEFCE by either 27 July or 3 December 2007. The latter date would be used from 2008 onwards by HEFCE in line with its 'single conversion' initiative [Appendix C]. Governing Body **AGREED** that the statements be submitted by the later deadline to allow actual student enrolment figures to be taken into account. As this date would be before the next meeting of Governing Body, it **AUTHORISED** the Chair and Treasurer to consider these statements on its behalf and, if satisfactory, to approve them to be submitted to HEFCE by the due date.

#### **45 International Development Centre**

Consideration was given to a report on the International Development Centre [Appendix D]. Governing Body noted the progress made in setting up the Centre and the financial arrangements and managed risks involved and **AUTHORISED** the School to enter into the agreement for the Centre.

#### **46 The new Committee Structure**

Governing Body noted that, at its last meeting, it had approved outline recommendations and principles for the presentation of a new committee structure [Appendix E]. The detailed terms of reference were now before Governing Body, having been presented to and approved by the School's Executive Board and Academic Board, subject to comments received throughout the consultation process which had been duly considered. It was noted that some final comments had been received after Governing Body papers had been dispatched and Governing Body **AGREED** the following amendments:

- External Relations Committee: add a lay member of Governing Body
- Nominations Committee: that there be a Nominations Committee and a separate Honorary Degrees and Fellowships Committee with revised terms of reference, the latter to include student membership
- Senior Staff Remuneration Committee: to add a minor amendment.

Governing Body **APPROVED** the terms of reference and memberships of the new committees, including Executive Board, subject to the above additional

changes, noting that the new committee structure would be reviewed in one year's time.

Governing Body **APPROVED** the consequent and related changes to Standing Orders.

Governing Body **RESOLVED TO APPROVE** the changes to Standing Orders relating to the role of committee members, noting that, on the retirement of the Clerk to Governing Body by the end of June, the Registrar would become the Registrar and Secretary and would be considered to be the Clerk to the Governing Body pending Standing Orders' revision [Appendix F].

#### **47 Outline sub-strategies**

Governing Body received and **APPROVED** outline sub-strategies [Appendix G], noting that a further process of development, refinement and integration would take place in the remainder of this calendar year through the revised committee structure. It was noted that the Academic, Student Experience, and Research Strategies in particular would need to be further refined. A final set of sub-strategies would be presented to Governing Body for approval in December 2007.

#### **48 QAA Institutional Audit 2007**

Governing Body received the QAA's draft summary report and a cover paper from School officers [Appendix H] on the QAA Institutional Audit recently carried out on the School. Governors noted with extreme displeasure that the School had received a 'limited confidence' judgement on the management of the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. It was noted that on the second count on which the QAA passed judgement - the management of the academic standards of awards - the School had been deemed sound. It was noted that the 'limited confidence' judgement was not about the quality of teaching at SOAS, but rather reflected the QAA's limited confidence in the systematic management and timely implementation of processes associated with, supporting, and informing teaching and learning and QA. The School had taken the judgement with great seriousness. Executive Board and Academic Board had recognised the issues raised as a collective failure which the School was determined to put right. Accountability and the academic management of systems to ensure compliance needed to flow from the Director and Principal to the Pro-Director, to Deans, to Heads of Department and all staff. Roles needed to be clarified and appropriate support given.

The School had initiated the production of an Action Plan, as required by the QAA, and set up a working group to discuss the actions and monitor implementation. An extraordinary meeting of the Academic Board would consider progress in October, prior to dispatch of the Action Plan to the QAA in November. Some matters raised by the QAA, for example the need to

relate QA more closely to learning and teaching systems, had already been addressed by the School in the strategic and committee reviews.

Governing Body explored how such serious failings could have been accepted within the School and the need for robust management was emphasised. Governing Body recognised their own duty and ultimate responsibility in holding the School to account. The School would in its revised structures (and notably with the appointment of a Head of Planning) be better informed about its internal workings and better able to correct deficiencies. It was agreed that these matters should be considered as part of the coming effectiveness review of Governing Body.

#### **49 Student Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures**

Governing Body welcomed the greater clarity of the proposed revised Student Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures [Appendix I], which it **APPROVED**, subject to any minor amendments to be forwarded to the Deputy Secretary.

#### **50 Equality and Diversity**

Governing Body received and noted an annual report on progress made in the Disability Equality Action Plan, in pursuance of the School's Disability Equality Scheme approved by Governing Body in December 2006 [Appendix J].

Governing Body **APPROVED** the Gender Equality Scheme and Action Plan [Appendix K], noting the key importance of gender equality as part of the School's diversity agenda.

The Diversity Advisor was thanked for the work she had carried out in respect of these papers and related issues.

#### **51 Estates Matters**

Governing Body received and noted a report from Estates Committee [Appendix L] and **AUTHORISED** the School to appoint (a) King Sturge and R & M Projects to pre-sell the Vernon Square new build student residences development on the School's behalf, and (b) a contractor to construct the residences subject to the agreement of satisfactory terms, and to appoint other professional advisers as necessary.

#### **52 HEFCE**

Governing Body noted a letter dated 30 April 2007 from HEFCE, which expressed an overall satisfactory assessment that the School was not at higher institutional risk [Appendix M].

**53 University of London proposed new Statutes**

Governing Body received and noted a progress report by the Vice-Chancellor from the Constitutional Review Working Group [Appendix N]. It noted that it would receive the revised Statutes at its December meeting, and that the Governing Body of every College in the University would need to approve these, for the revised structure to come into effect.

**54 Academic Board**

The draft minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 30 May 2007 were received [Appendix O].

**55 Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 22 May 2007 were received [Appendix P].

**56 Any other business**

- (i) *SOAS 2016: A Vision and Strategy for the Centennial*

Governors noted the bound version of the document tabled.

- (ii) *Retirement of Mr Frank Dabell, Clerk to the Governing Body*

Governing Body warmly thanked Mr Frank Dabell, who was retiring from the School at the end of June 2007, for his considerable contributions to the School, especially in the development of its physical estate. Governors wished him well for his retirement.

**57 Date of meetings next session**

These were scheduled as follows, starting at 11.00am followed by lunch:

Friday 14 December 2007

Friday 14 March 2008

Friday 13 June 2008.