

These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the committee.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Friday 14 March 2008

MINUTES

Lady Barbara Thomas Judge (Chair)*
Professor M A Knibb (Vice-Chair) (Chair for this meeting)
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)
Professor P Webley (Director & Principal)
Professor S Bassnett* Mr A Lloyd*
Mr A Bhanji Dr D Martinez
Sir D Brewer* Mr A Parker*
Professor M Craven Ms A Puhlman
Professor Sir I Crewe Professor P Robb
Dr B Fortna Professor A Saad Filho
Mr J Griffith-Jones Ms C Solomon (minutes 22-26 only)
Dr R Harrison* Professor S Subedi
Mr J Hughes-Hallett Ms Z Weaver
Professor M Hutt Ms E Wright
Mr K Kutay (mins 35-36 only)
Professor D Latchman
Mr P Lea-Wilson*

In attendance: Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance)
 Professor I Brown (Dean, Faculty of Arts & Humanities)
 Ms S Page (Registrar & Secretary)
 Ms J Halliday (Deputy Secretary) [minute secretary]

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

22 Welcome

The Chair welcomed new members Professor Sir Ivor Crewe and Ms Zoe Weaver to Governing Body. It was noted that Ms Weaver had also agreed to be appointed as lay member of the Human Resources Committee, to which she would bring her wide HR expertise.

23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2007 were **approved** and signed, subject to the correction of Professor Latchman's title.

24 Matters arising

Minute 8: Proposed new University Statutes

Governing Body **noted** that minute 8 now stood correctly amended following advice from the University of London, and that the University's Council had that week unanimously approved the new University Statutes.

Minute 9: QAA Institutional Audit 2007

Governing Body **noted** that an action plan had been submitted to QAA in line with requirements, that actions were being progressed with regular reports through the School committee processes, and that a more detailed report would be submitted to Academic Board and Governing Body at their next meetings. Governing Body expressed its wish to receive a summary executive report, and to have access to the more detailed action plan via the web. The action plan was required to be finally signed off by the QAA by March 2009.

Minute 10: Director of Development & Alumni Relations

Governing Body **noted** that Fiona McWilliams had been appointed to this post and members were favourably impressed with progress of her work.

25 Director & Principal's Report

Governing Body **received** a report from the Director and Principal [Appendix A] and the following additional comments were noted:

- (i) *Honorary degree University of London*
Governing Body noted that Professor Cowan, Director of SOAS from 1976-89, and Honorary Fellow of the School, had been awarded an honorary degree of the University of London for his role in revitalising the University of London external system.
- (ii) *Charitable foundation collaboration with SOAS*
Governing Body was pleased to note that the W Charitable Foundation had contributed £300,000 to a project to undertake social sciences research that will inform current and future policy making in Africa on the subject of water supply. It was noted that this had been facilitated by Professor David Khalili, a previous member of Governing Body.
- (iii) *Admissions and recruitment 2008*
Overall recruitment figures were very good to date although the fact that the major part of the increase was in one Faculty (Law & Social Sciences) was a cause for concern. The Deans of the Faculties of Arts & Humanities and Languages & Cultures gave updates on how they were addressing this issue. It was also noted that there had been a

faster turnaround of Masters and research degree applications this year. Governing Body asked for an update report on student retention at its next meeting. Members noted that the withdrawal of funding for equivalent or lower qualifications (ELQs) would be likely to have an effect on recruitment to the School, and noted that a student recruitment group was reviewing targets with this and other factors in mind.

(iv) *HEFCE: Review of funding for research libraries*

Governing Body was pleased to note the designation of the SOAS Library as a national research library (NRL), one of only five in the country.

Governing Body noted the three main issues that would need to be addressed for the SOAS Library. It was noted that a new (interim) Librarian, David Perrow, had recently taken up his post at SOAS, and was working on a project plan and timetable to develop a strategy for addressing the issues raised in the HEFCE Library Review report. This would be a major item at the next meetings of Academic Board and Governing Body.

It was noted that the Director and Principal was a member of the small steering group set up by the University of London to provide oversight of the review of Senate House Library (SHL).

(v) *HEFCE: HEIF 4*

It was noted that the School's funding allocations would increase from £235,000 to £390,000 in 2008/9, rising to £580,000 in 2010/11.

(vi) *Pro-Director and Vice-Principal roles*

It was noted that the interviews for the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) would take place on 19 March and those for the Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise) on 24 April 2008.

(vii) *The PDF*

The School had now obtained its own valuation of 53 Gordon Square and negotiations would proceed to a final figure, with the aim of finalising the transfer of the PDF collection to the British Museum in early autumn 2008.

(viii) *London Middle East Institute*

The new arrangements were on track to be in place by 1 August 2008.

(ix) *Vernon Square Halls of Residence*

It was noted that the capital sum the School had received for this development would make a significant contribution to the first phase of the Masterplan. It was noted that the rents for the new halls would be based on market rates, rather than at a rate effectively providing a subsidy to students in halls, as it was fairer to put in place a system of bursaries and other support for students in need.

- (x) *University of London Union (ULU)*
The review group's recommendations had been agreed by the University Council on 12 March 2008. The future of the space to be vacated as a result of the reduction in ULU accommodation was being considered.
- (xi) *The Framework Agreement*
The Agreement was finalised with union local branches on 10 March, subject to some detailed matters being resolved, and there would be a local ballot in mid-April. All being well, the new pay spine and salaries would be reflected in salaries paid at the end of May, with the backpay being paid at the end of June. Governing Body congratulated the Human Resources Department and all those involved in the negotiations in reaching this conclusion.
- (xii) *Visits*
It was noted that the visit to India had been particularly positive. Ideas for future visits abroad by the Director & Principal were being considered.

26 Planning

Governing Body **noted** a report on the planning process for 2008/9 [Appendix B]. Following an internal redeployment to the role of Head of Planning, phase two of developing an integrated planning process at SOAS was now underway.

27 Finance

- (i) Governing Body **received** the financial forecast for 2007/8 [Appendix C], noting with pleasure that this showed a projected surplus of just over £1m, amounting to 2% of turnover which was on the way to the target of 4%.
- (ii) Governing Body **received** reports on cash flow projection, capital and debt statement, and short-term deposits [Appendix D]. It was noted that the next meeting of the Investment Advisory Panel in May would be receiving a report on reviewing investment options.

28 Estates Matters

Governing Body **received** a report on recent estates developments [Appendix E], noting that a decision was expected to be forthcoming on 20 Russell Square by the end of April. Progress on other aspects of the Centenary

Masterplan was noted, including the refurbishment of the Fourth Floor, which would allow offices to be relocated by the end of summer 2008 from the ‘infill’ area of the ground floor of the College buildings at the rear of the reception area, enabling the usage and security needs of that whole ground floor area to be reconsidered. Developments on the Vernon Square student residences were noted. The Estates and Infrastructure Strategy had now been enhanced to include more IT infrastructure matters.

29 Equality Committee

Governing Body **received** the annual report 2006/7 from the (then) Equality Committee [Appendix F], noting the substantial amount of work undertaken in that year and since on bringing policies up to date as required by changing legislation. Governing Body underlined the importance of this area of work in the School, highlighting the work being done to investigate equality and diversity in staff recruitment, progression and promotion. The Director and Principal reported that the School’s Executive Board had recently received a presentation on the Under-represented staff project and was taking an active interest in the development of this work. It was noted that work was in hand on devising KPIs, to be monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee, so that Governing Body and the School’s other committees could receive regular reports and gauge progress towards agreed targets. Governing Body stressed the importance of setting targets if progress was to be made.

30 Health & Safety Committee

Governing Body **received** a report from the Health & Safety Committee [Appendix G]. It was noted that, as part of the effectiveness review of Governing Body to be undertaken over the next academic year, Governing Body would be advised on a range of legal liabilities and compliance issues, in so far as they impacted on its responsibilities. A project plan on the effectiveness review would be presented to Governing Body at its next meeting in June 2008.

31 Committee Membership

Governing Body **noted** the appointment of new lay committee members and welcomed them to the work of the School [Appendix H].

32 Academic Board

Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2008 [Appendix I].

33 Resources & Planning Committee

Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2008, together with a commentary at Appendix 1 on the HEFCE recurrent grant letter recently received [Appendix J – tabled]. Governing Body noted from the minutes that good progress was being made in putting into place necessary strategies, structures and systems in the School. The seriousness of the likely impact of pension and other rising costs outside the School's control was noted. From Appendix 1, Governing Body noted that overall the figures represented a real fall of -2.9%. Governing Body urged the School to lobby with other institutions on (a) the issue of positioning with reference to the tolerance band and (b) on the effect on arts, humanities and social science areas of preferential government support of STEM subjects for research.

34 Committee meeting dates 2008/9

Governing Body **noted** the dates of committees with lay membership in 2008/9 [Appendix K]. It was brought to Governing Body's attention that its meeting in December 2008 was unusually on a Wednesday, that is on Wednesday 10 December 2008.

35 Any other business

(i) *Students' Union Co-Presidents 2008/9*
Resulting from the recent Students' Union elections, the names of the three Co-Presidents elect were tabled (tabled paper).

36 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of Governing Body would be held on Friday 13 June 2008 starting at 11.00am, followed by lunch.

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Action Points

Minute	Item	Action	By whom	By when
24	Matters arising <i>Minute 9: QAA</i> <i>Minute 10: Director of D&AR</i>	Draft a summary executive report, putting detailed action plan on web Send minute to Fiona Mc Williams	Pro-Director, Deputy Secretary, QA Manager Deputy Secretary	GB next meeting 13.06.08 (submission of papers deadline 23.05.08) 10.04.08
25	Director & Principal's Report: <i>(iii) Admissions and recruitment 2008: student retention</i>	Update report on student retention (via Student Experience Committee's annual report)	Pro-Director, Head of Learning & Teaching Strategy, Widening Participation Co-ordinator	GB next meeting 13.06.08 (submission of papers deadline 23.05.08) [via SEC 12.05.08]
	<i>(iv) HEFCE: Review of funding for research libraries</i>	Send minute to Interim Librarian, David Perrow; report major item next GB	Deputy Secretary to Interim Librarian	GB next meeting 13.06.08 (submission of papers deadline 23.05.08) [via Academic Board 28.05.08]
	<i>(xi) Framework Agreement</i>	Send minute to HR Director	Deputy Secretary	10.04.08
29	Equality Committee	Send minute to Diversity Advisor and Chair of E & D Committee	Deputy Secretary	10.04.08

30	Health & Safety Committee: <i>GB effectiveness review</i>	Present project plan to next GB	Registrar & Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Secretariat Manager	GB next meeting 13.06.08 (submission of papers deadline 23.05.08)
33	Resources & Planning Committee	Lobby on (a) & (b) & report back to next GB in D & P's report	Director & Principal	GB next meeting 13.06.08 (submission of papers deadline 23.05.08)