

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 13 June 2008

MINUTES

Lady Barbara Thomas Judge (Chair)
Professor M A Knibb (Vice-Chair)
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
Dr R Harrison Professor S Subedi*
Mr J Hughes-Hallett Ms Z Weaver
Professor M Hutt Ms E Wright
Mr K Kutay
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)
 Mr B Sellers (SU Co-President Sports & Societies 2008/9)
 Mr N Uddin (SU Co-President Finance & Comms 2008/9)
 Ms J Halliday (Deputy Secretary) [minute secretary]
 Mr D Perrow (Interim Librarian) [for minute 43 only]

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

37 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2008 were **approved** and signed.

38 Matters arising

There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

39 Director & Principal's Report

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

- (i) *The Framework Agreement*
Governing Body noted that the UNISON and UCU local ballots had voted in favour of the agreement reached and that assimilation to the new pay spine was therefore now being implemented.
- (ii) *HEFCE: Review of special funding*
Once HEFCE had finalised the principles, the School would be submitting a statement on how it met the criteria for special funding, which was likely to be a significant amount so was important for the School.
- (iii) *HEFCE: Matched funding scheme for voluntary giving 2008-11*
Executive Board was considering this matter the following Monday and was likely to recommend that the School should go for tier 3.
- (iv) *New Pro-Director and new Vice-Principal*
Governing Body was pleased to note the appointments of Professor Graham Furniss as Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise) and Professor Nirmala Rao as Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning), with effect from 1 August 2008.
- (v) *Admissions and recruitment 2008*
Governing Body was pleased to note the improvements in application and recruitment figures.
- (vi) *The PDF*
The joint working party was meeting on 25 June. The proposals on 53 Gordon Square needed to be signed off before the School could conclude matters.
- (vii) *University of London: finance*
Governing Body noted the impact of the University's subscriptions and charges for 2008/9, which resulted in particular pressure on the smaller colleges (of which SOAS was not one).
- (viii) *Centre for Professional Education*
The initiative was noted.
- (ix) *Sainsbury Institute of the Study of Japanese Art & Culture (SISJAC)*
Renewal of the agreement for a further four years was noted with pleasure.
- (x) *Armenian Studies*
The gift to enable Armenian Studies to be offered at SOAS was noted with pleasure. Staffing would be put in place in September 2008 to develop courses, with a view to a September 2009 start, possibly offered as a Certificate programme.

- (xi) *Visits*
The Director & Principal's visits and proposals for forthcoming visits were noted.
- (xii) *Pro-Director*
The Director & Principal recorded his warm personal thanks to the Pro-Director who was completing his term of office with effect 31 July 2008.

In addition, Governing Body received and considered a late urgent item, which had been emailed to Governors the previous day and was tabled here in hard copy, on the following matter:

- (xiii) *London Middle East Institute (LMEI)*
Governing Body:

- noted the progress made in bringing the LMEI back under School direction and that original sponsors were aware of the changes
- **passed** a Written Resolution, as sole shareholder of the LMEI, to approve a revised Memorandum and Articles of Association and **authorised** the Chair to sign the Written Resolution on Governing Body's behalf
- **authorised** the Registrar and Secretary to finalise and sign a Management Agreement between SOAS and the LMEI formalising arrangements between the two charities in respect of financial subsidy, provision of premises and services, secondment of staff, and related matters.

It was noted that the principles of the new arrangements were to be put before the LMEI Board of Trustees on 18 June 2008.

40 Finance

- (i) Given the financial statements had to be submitted as from next session to HEFCE by 1 December, Governing Body **approved** the delegation of authority to its Chair and the Honorary Treasurer to approve the financial statements on behalf of Governing Body, after full consideration by the November meetings of Resources and Planning Committee and Audit Committee [Appendix B].
- (iii) Governing Body **approved** the draft revenue and capital budgets for 2008/9 [Appendix C], noting that there had been full debate at Resources and Planning Committee. Although the School continued to move in the right direction financially and strategically, it was important to note that this was the last year the budget would benefit from income from one-off windfalls (such as sale of property) and, if this was discounted, the budget was actually in deficit. Some planned enhancements had had to be curtailed to ensure that a surplus budget was produced. The financial situation therefore remained extremely tight. The implementation of the resource allocation model (RAM)

would enable the School to allocate costs and income appropriately in the future. It was noted that it would be challenging to bring staffing costs to a more appropriate proportion of the School's overall expenditure, given the significant increases in this area and the likely increases in pension costs in the future. It was noted that it was essential to meet student fee income targets as, with a small planned surplus, there was very little room for manoeuvre.

41 Strategic Planning

Governing Body noted the planning process and timetable for 2008/9 and **received** a digest on the annual reports on sub-strategies received and approved by Resources and Planning Committee and Academic Board [Appendix D]. Governing Body congratulated the Registrar and Secretary on progress to date in putting into place a strategic planning process. It was recognised that there was still much more work to be done in this area, notably on KPIs.

42 Effectiveness Review

Governing Body **approved** a project plan for the effectiveness review of Governing Body to take place in 2008/9 [Appendix E], noting that the committee structure would also be reviewed next session.

43 Library Strategic Plan

Governing Body welcomed the Interim Librarian, noting from the report [Appendix F] that the recent Crewe report had recommended that HEFCE continue SOAS' current funding of £1M for its status as a national research library (NRL) for the next two years, but that continued funding for the following five years was conditional upon SOAS producing a Library Strategic Plan to reduce the costs on staffing and increase spend on library materials.

The Interim Librarian had thus been appointed and had produced the Library Strategy 'White Paper' which had been preceded by a consultation 'Green Paper'. The latter had been discussed with library staff, Faculty Boards, Executive Board, the Students' Union and trades' unions in late April. Feedback had been broadly favourable and was presented in the appendices to the paper. The Interim Librarian drew attention to three main sets of issues:

- Library budget imbalance, high staff costs in relation to non-staff costs, especially in relation to materials (as indicated in the HEFCE review)
- Space problems, large research collection on open shelves, this being unusual in comparison to similar libraries, therefore limiting the space for other learning purposes

- Need for modernisation and increased efficiency, e.g. investment in IT software, building improvements needed in plumbing and lighting, etc (noting that monies for this had been included in the budget, see Annex C of Appendix C above).

Governing Body warmly commended the Interim Librarian on the report and the full consultation process undertaken, noting that Academic Board had been completely supportive of the recommendations. It was noted that the collection agreements with the British Library, Oxford and Cambridge would need to be revisited, once the SOAS Library's internal policy on acquisitions had been agreed. It was noted that tracking the cost of activities would be extremely important from now on.

In conclusion, Governing Body **approved** the recommendations in the Library Strategic Plan and noted and supported the operational plan.

44 QAA

Governing Body received a summary executive report on the School's progress in meeting the recommendations made by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) from the Institutional Audit of the School in 2007 [Appendix G]. It was noted with pleasure that, following a recent visit to the School to assess progress, the QAA officers would be recommending to the QAA's Board on 16 July 2008, subject to their approval, that the School's Action Plan be signed off with immediate effect, that is ahead of the March 2009 completion date originally set by the QAA.

45 Student Retention

Governing Body received a report on student retention [Appendix H], noting progress made and specifically in the area of degrees with a language to minimise drop-out. If feasible, it would be useful to compare data on drop-out in SOAS languages to patterns of retention in similar provision in other universities.

46 Health & Safety Committee

Governing Body received a report from the Health & Safety Committee [Appendix I].

47 SOAS/SU Code of Practice

Governing Body **approved** the minor amendment to the Code [Appendix J].

48 Terms of Reference of the Development Advisory Board

Governing Body **approved** the terms of reference of the Development Advisory Board [Appendix K] and looked forward to reports in due course.

49 Standing Orders

Governing Body **approved** the recommendation of Resources and Planning Committee that appropriate resultant changes be made to Standing Orders as soon as the relevant information regarding the impact of the new Statutes and Ordinances of the University of London and amendments to job titles and job descriptions as a result of reorganisations within the School becomes available [Appendix L].

50 Committee Membership

Governing Body noted action taken relating to committee memberships, thanked James Hughes-Hallett for serving on Audit Committee for the past year, and **approved** the nomination of Sir David Brewer to be his replacement on Audit Committee for one year only, as the constitution of the Committee would be reviewed in the forthcoming committee and effectiveness reviews [Appendix M].

51 HEFCE – Assessment of Institutional Risk

Governing Body noted the letter from HEFCE stating that SOAS is ‘not at high risk’ [Appendix N].

52 Honorary Degree

Governing Body noted with pleasure that Sir David Brewer would be awarded an Honorary Degree of the University of London at Foundation Day.

53 Academic Board

Governing Body received the draft minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 28 May 2008 [Appendix O].

54 Resources and Planning Committee

Governing Body received the draft minutes of the Resources and Planning Committee meeting held on 20 May 2008 [Appendix P].

55 Any other business

(i) *Farewells*

The Chair thanked governors retiring from the Board at the end of this session, namely:

- Professor Susan Bassnett
- Mr Andrew Lloyd
- Professor Peter Robb
- Ms Aileen Puhlman (student governor)
- Ms Clare Solomon (student governor)

56 Dates of next meetings

The meetings of Governing Body for 2008/9 were as follows:

- **Wednesday** 10 December 2008
 - Friday 20 March 2008
 - Friday 12 June 2008
- all starting at 11.00am, followed by lunch.

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GOVERNING BODY

Friday 13 June 2008

Action Points

Minute	Item	Action	By whom	By when
25	Director & Principal's Report:			
	(ii) <i>HEFCE: Review of special funding</i>	Submit statement to HEFCE & report back to GB	Director & Principal	GB next meeting 10.12.08 (submission of papers deadline 24.11.08) [via D & P's report]
	(iii) <i>HEFCE: Matched funding scheme for voluntary giving</i>	Report back to next GB	Director & Principal	GB next meeting 10.12.08 (submission of papers deadline 24.11.08) [via D & P's report]
	(vi) <i>PDF</i>	Report back to next GB	Director & Principal	GB next meeting 10.12.08 (submission of papers deadline 24.11.08) [via D & P's report]
	(xiii) <i>LMEI</i>	Chair to sign Written Resolution	Chair	With immediate effect
		Finalise & sign Management Agreement	Registrar & Secretary	After 18.06.08
41	Strategic Planning	Take work forward on KPIs	Head of Planning	According to planning timetable & action plan

42	Effectiveness Review	Take work forward	Deputy Secretary (Secretary)	2008/9
	Committee Review	Take work forward	Vice-Principal (Chair) Secretariat Manager (Secretary)	2008/9
43	Library Strategic Plan	Send Interim Librarian the minute & GB thanks	Deputy Secretary	18.07.08
		Take work forward	Interim Librarian	According to action plan
44	QAA	Report outcome of QAA Board 16.07.08 back to next GB	Director & Principal	GB next meeting 10.12.08 (submission of papers deadline 24.11.08) [via D & P's report]
47	SOAS/SU Code of Practice	Amend & publish	Deputy Secretary	In line with deadline for Student Handbooks, summer 2008
48	Development Advisory Board	Send minute to Director of Development & Alumni Relations	Deputy Secretary	18.07.08
49	Standing Orders	Send minute to Secretariat Manager	Deputy Secretary	18.07.08
50	Committee Membership	Send minute to Secretariat Manager	Deputy Secretary	18.07.08