

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 30 April 2010

MINUTES

Dr Tim Miller (Chairman)
Professor M A Knibb (Vice-Chair)*
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)
Professor P Webley (Director & Principal)
Mr A Bhanji
Sir David Brewer*
Professor I Brown
Professor S Chan
Professor M Craven
Professor Sir Ivor Crewe
Dr B Fortna
Sir Graham Fry
Professor G Furniss
Mr J Griffith-Jones*
Professor B Harriss-White

Mr J Hughes-Hallett*
Professor P Jaggar
Mr K Kutay*
Mr N Lerner
Mr S Lillo
Professor N Rao
Mr B Sellers
Professor S Subedi
Ms Z Weaver
Professor H West
Ms E Wright

In attendance: Mr Donald Beaton (Registrar & Secretary)
Professor M Hutt
(Dean of Faculty of Languages & Cultures)
Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)
Ms J Halliday (Deputy Secretary)
[minute secretary]

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

22 Welcome

Governing Body welcomed Dr Tim Miller, as its new Chairman, and Mr Donald Beaton as the School's new Registrar and Secretary.

23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2009 were **approved** and signed.

24 Matters arising

(i) *Minute 13 (i): Degree Awarding Powers*

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The Vice Principal reported that the QAA assessors had attended various boards, committees and meetings at both School and faculty levels. The assessment was now entering its concluding phase with some examination boards being observed this term. There would also be meetings on 26 and 27 May with some senior colleagues and governors. QAA would then prepare a report, which would be sent to the School in draft for comment on accuracy, prior to presentation to the relevant QAA committee. A final decision would be received in the autumn.

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) *Revised Charter and Articles*
It was noted that Privy Council approval had now been received for the amendments to the Charter and Articles, and that these amendments and subsequent amendments to Standing Orders would be carried out by the secretariat over the summer 2010.
- (ii) *Pensions*
It was noted that the joint UUK/UCU review group for USS had failed to reach agreement.
- (iii) *Pay*
Governing Body noted that the employers had made an offer of a non-consolidated sum equal to 0.25% of the wage bill and had not changed their offer at the national negotiating committee meeting on 5 May. The campus unions had previously submitted a jointly agreed claim of a minimum of 4%. Agreement had not therefore currently been reached.
- (iv) *HEFCE: funding and the future*
It was noted that any 'across the board' cut in undergraduate student numbers would have proportionately much less impact on SOAS than on some other institutions, although some more targeted cuts in funding would.
- (v) *Recruitment 2010/11*
It was noted that recruitment figures so far for 2010/11 were on target.
- (vi) *Library funding issues*
It was noted that Academic Board and Governing Body would be receiving an update paper on the SOAS Library strategic plan at their next meetings.
- (vii) *The Language Centre*
It was noted that the Language Centre was currently being reviewed, given the concern expressed by the Resources and Planning Committee as to the Centre's problematic financial situation. A working group had met and its report would be released to the School, followed by a period of consultation and meetings with those concerned.

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26 Financial matters

Governing Body **received** and considered the following papers from Resources and Planning Committee:

(i) Forecast financial out-turn for 2009/10

Governing Body **noted** that the forecast out-turn showed a surplus of £1,526k, that is £273k better than budgeted [Appendix B].

(ii) Budget scoping for 2010/11

Governing Body **noted** the projected surplus of £542,000. It was noted that Resources and Planning Committee had decided not to impose a tougher target on the School at this stage but that contingency plans could be brought into play if needed at a later stage. Governing Body **approved** the projected surplus as an appropriate minimum target from which detailed budgets could be prepared [Appendix C].

(iii) Cash Flow Projection, Capital & Debt, and Short-term Deposits Statements

Governing Body **received** the Cash Flow Projection, the Capital & Debt statement, and the statement on Short-term Deposits, as had been reviewed in detail and approved by the Resources and Planning Committee [Appendices D, E & F]. Governors **noted** that it would not be possible to fund major estates and infrastructure initiatives (as contained in Appendix G, Annex 2, later on the agenda) from the School's cash flow but that these would be dependent on fundraising activity, and would be planned and costed in detail on a case by case basis as and when affordable.

27 Sub-strategies

Governing Body **received** sub-strategies for Student Administration & Support, Estates & Infrastructure, and External Relations [Appendix G, Annexes 1, 2 & 3].

(i) Student Administration & Support

It was noted that this sub-strategy took on board areas of the former Student Experience sub-strategy not covered in the Learning and Teaching sub-strategy, already approved by Governing Body. A major theme of the sub-strategy was to enhance services to students and governors were interested in how this would improve the KPI on student retention. Governors queried how the ambitious set of action points could be achieved and were informed that they would be monitored via appropriate School sub-committees. The action plan would be updated on an ongoing basis. Governing Body **approved** the Student Administration & Support sub-strategy.

(ii) Estates & Infrastructure

Governors noted that this draft sub-strategy demonstrated major advances in strategic planning in this area, whilst recognising that the plan would undergo further refinement through appropriate sub-committees. It was noted that

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specific projects, such as phase two of the Library Transformation Project or the Thornhaugh Street development, would only be progressed if affordable through capital fundraising (see minute 26 above) and Governing Body approval would be sought in each case. Further detailed work was being done on space and energy efficiency plans and a Carbon Management Strategy would be brought to the next meeting. Governing Body **approved** the Estates & Infrastructure sub-strategy, subject to its further consideration and refinement through the relevant sub-committees.

(iii) External Relations

Governors noted the major advances that had been made in strategic planning and implementation in this area and congratulated those concerned on progress made, noting in particular recent developments better to engage alumni. Governing Body **approved** the External Relations sub-strategy.

28 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Governing Body **received** an update report on KPIs [Appendix H]. With regard to KPI 4, members asked that in future the distinction between 'targets' as opposed to 'quotas' be clarified. Distance learning student numbers had not been included but it was agreed would be in future. Governors asked if the presentation of the KPIs could be set out in a more accessible format, such as by showing achievement or otherwise through a 'traffic light' system. Governors needed to be enabled to interpret the data and the findings to be drawn, via some form of commentary. Governors would find it helpful to have more detail, such as on a Faculty basis. Governors asked how the KPIs related to the Risk Register, and it was noted that the latter would be presented to Audit Committee and Governing Body at their next meetings. The Director of Finance and Planning agreed that in future the KPIs report would contain more accessible commentary as to why targets were set and whether they were being achieved and an update would be provided on a summary sheet. Consideration would be given to the possibility of using a 'traffic lights' system.

29 Learning and Teaching reports

(i) Portfolio Review

Governing Body **received** a report from Academic Board on the Portfolio Review [Appendix I]. Governors noted the process for rationalising undergraduate course provision which had been undertaken, and the findings and recommendations agreed by Academic Board at its meeting on 17 March 2010, and subsequent action taken. It was noted that the process had been undertaken with Faculty involvement and with careful attention to the importance of minority areas. Courses had been rationalised, for reasons of overlap, duplication, etc, but no degree programmes had been cut. Alongside this rationalisation programme there was a system to consider new programme development where this was feasible within existing resources. The Vice Principal thanked the Director of Academic Development and her team for their sensitive and purposeful approach to the task. It was noted that a system had been developed to monitor undergraduate course provision in future on an annual basis, as part of the School's quality assurance procedures.

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(ii) *Student Experience at SOAS: Progression, Retention and Satisfaction*
Governing Body **received** a report from Academic Board on the Student Experience [Appendix J]. It was noted that further work needed to be done on progression rates and improving support for students, whilst managing expectations. It was noted that the School might want to propose that Governing Body approve revising the KPI on student retention (which was currently 4.6 as opposed to the sector norm of 4). Governors asked the School to look into why the percentage of First and Upper Second Class Honours degrees had risen so dramatically (as shown in table 5 of the paper) between 2005/6 and 2006/7.

30 Sub-committees

(i) *Academic Board*
Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on 17 March 2010 [Appendix K].

(ii) *Resources and Planning Committee*
Governing Body **received** the draft minutes of the Resources and Planning Committee meeting held on 16 March 2010 [Appendix L].

31 HEFCE Assurance Review

Governing Body **received** the HEFCE Assurance Review final report [Appendix M], noting that HEFCE had concluded that the School was in the second category of assurance. The two recommendations made were being addressed. It was noted that HEFCE would be carrying out its next assurance review of the School early in 2011.

32 Standing Orders

Governing Body **approved** an amendment to the membership of the Senior Staff Remuneration Committee [Appendix N], an amendment to the membership of the Estates and Infrastructure Committee [Appendix O], and amendments to the membership and terms of reference of the Faculty Boards [Appendix P].

33 Meetings schedule 2010/11

Governing Body **noted** the meetings schedule for Governing Body and committees with lay members for 2010/11.

34 Date of next meeting

It was **noted** that the next meeting of Governing Body would be held on **Friday 9 July 2010**, starting at 11.00am followed by lunch at approximately 1pm.

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Action Points

Minute	Item	Action	By whom	By when
24 (i)	Degree Awarding Powers	Oral report on progress to next meeting of GB, under Matters Arising	Vice Principal	09.07.10
25	Director & Principal's report	Update on all matters to next GB	Director & Principal	09.07.10
	(vi) Library funding issues	Paper to next AB & GB	Director of Library & Information Services	09.07.10
27	Sub-strategies	Notify those concerned & put up on website	Deputy Secretary	21.05.10
	(ii) Estates & Infrastructure	Present to relevant committees	Director of Estates & Facilities	E&IC: 27.05.10 RPC: 15.06.10
28	KPIs	Revise detail and format for next report to GB	Head of Planning	GB: 09.07.10
		Present Risk Register to Audit Committee & GB	Deputy Secretary	AC: 17.05.10 GB: 09.07.10
29	Learning & teaching reports			
	(i) Portfolio Review	Send minute to & thank Director of Academic Development	Deputy Secretary	21.05.10
	(ii) Student Experience at SOAS: Progression, Retention & Satisfaction	Send minute to Director of Academic Development, Head of Planning, Director of Student & Registry Services	Deputy Secretary	21.05.10
32	Standing Orders	Notify Secretariat Manager	Deputy Secretary	21.05.10