

# SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

## GOVERNING BODY

Friday 9 July 2010

### MINUTES

Dr T Miller (Chairman)  
Professor M A Knibb (Vice-Chair)  
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)  
Professor P Webley (Director & Principal)  
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 D Beaton (Registrar & Secretary)  
Professor M Hutt  
(Dean of Faculty of Languages & Cultures)  
Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)  
Mr C Ilako  
Ms R Mortuza  
Mr J Kain  
Ms J Halliday (Deputy Secretary)  
[minute secretary]

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

#### 35 Welcome

Governing Body welcomed Mr Charles Ilako and Ms Rosna.Mortuza (lay governors elect) and Mr Jasper Kain (student governor elect) as observers, noting that their terms of office as governors would take effect from 1 September 2010.

#### 36 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2010 were **approved** and signed, subject to the following amendment to minute 29 (ii), line 5:

delete the words 'student retention' and insert instead the words 'student satisfaction/NSS survey'.

## 37 Matters arising

### *(i) Minute 24 (i): Degree Awarding Powers*

The Vice Principal reported that the QAA assessors had now completed their attendance at meetings and boards within the School and had met with the Chairman and some other members of Governing Body and senior management of the School at their last visit on 26-27 May 2010. The School had received the draft report and would be making comments on accuracy to the QAA as required by 12 August, prior to presentation of the report to the QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree-Awarding Powers (ACDAP) meeting on 30 September. The report recognised the positive changes that had been led and managed within the School in the last few years and that SOAS was on a trajectory towards improvement in governance, academic management, QA and the other areas covered by the DAPs process. It was noted that the final report would be received by Governing Body in due course. The Chairman expressed Governing Body's thanks to the Vice Principal and the Director of Academic Development and her team for their hard work in the management of the DAPs process.

### *(ii) Minute 29 (ii): Learning and teaching reports – Student Experience at SOAS: Progression, Retention and Satisfaction*

Governors had asked the School to look into why the percentage of First and Upper Second Class Honours degrees had risen so dramatically between 2005/6 and 2006/7 (as had been shown in table 5 of Appendix J, presented at the meeting on 30 April 2010). The Vice Principal reported that this was due to a mistake in the reporting. The correct situation was set out on a paper tabled for members' information (tabled paper, attached as annex 1).

## 38 Director & Principal's Report

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

### *(i) Funding issues*

Governing Body noted the uncertain funding situation nationally for higher education. The three strands to the School's measured approach to the funding challenges ahead were noted. The School was currently identifying a range of funding scenarios and the mitigating actions that could be taken. It was envisaged that the implications of the cuts would be clearer by March 2011.

### *(ii) Pensions*

It was noted that the Chair of the joint UUK/UCU review group had used his casting vote in favour of the option preferred by the employers. This recommendation would be put to the USS trustees on 22 July with a view to consultation being carried out in the autumn and a new system being implemented from 1 April 2011.

### *(iii) Pay*

Governing Body noted that the employers had improved their offer to 0.4% consolidated. It was noted that now only one university – South Bank – had exited national pay bargaining.

- (iv) *University of London news*  
It was noted that, in addition to those departures mentioned, the Principal of the Royal Veterinary College had recently announced his retirement.
- (v) *Personalia*  
Governing Body noted with pleasure the honours awarded and warmly congratulated those concerned.
- (vi) *Research Excellence Framework (REF)*  
It was understood that the Minister of State for Universities and Science would be announcing later today a one-year delay to the implementation of the REF to allow the Government to consider it further.

### 39 Financial matters

Governing Body **received** and considered a paper on the draft revenue and capital budgets for 2010/11, as recommended by Resources and Planning Committee [Appendix B]. It was noted that the revised revenue budget surplus was £562,701 which, if achieved, would mark a position of surplus for the fifth year running, although the School was by no means complacent, given the ongoing financial climate. It was noted that the budget assumed a 2% reduction in the HEFCE teaching grant and that to date a reduction of 1.1% had been confirmed. This reduction was for the HEFCE budgetary year 2010-11 (ending 31 March 2011) and a further reduction was anticipated from this date onwards. It was noted that the School intended to retain some of the contingency budget to mitigate any further cuts in the teaching grant. It was noted that the School was currently on track to achieve those student recruitment targets contained within the budget.

With regard to the capital budget, Governing Body supported the position of Resources and Planning Committee which recommended the provision of £1.5m to be made against long-term maintenance projects, with specific project budgets to be approved by Executive Board, following consideration by Estates & Infrastructure Committee. It was further noted that an initial provision of £1.05m had been set aside for other capital projects, which would be brought forward to Executive Board and Governing Body in due course.

Governing Body **approved** the draft revenue and capital budgets for 2010/11.

### 40 Capital projects

Governing Body **received** and considered papers on other capital projects, as recommended by Resources and Planning Committee [Appendices C & D].

With regard to carbon management, it was noted that a working group (detailed in Appendix C) would take the project forward and consider how to embed carbon management into SOAS plans and activities. Governing Body **approved** the project and plan.

With regard to the three projects at Appendix D, Governing Body noted that all three – namely, 53 Gordon Square, 31 Tavistock Square, and the Library

Transformation Project Phase 1 – contributed to the achievement of the School's strategic objectives.

Governing Body **approved** the proposal and associated capital budget for the lease and refurbishment of 53 Gordon Square and 31 Tavistock Square. Approval for the latter project was to be contingent on the receipt of a signed gift agreement from a benefactor who had generously offered to fund £1m of the project costs.

It was reported that **Chair's action** had been taken to **approve** the Library Transformation Project Phase 1 and associated capital budget, following consideration of this project at the last meeting of Resources and Planning Committee. It was noted that Chair's action had been necessary in order that the relevant contracts could be signed during the week beginning 28 June 2010 to ensure that works could be completed on time.

#### **41 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

Governing Body **received** and considered an update report on KPIs [Appendix E]. It was **agreed** that Executive Board would review the composition, definition and presentation of the School's KPIs and whether an annual or more frequent reporting to Governing Body would be more appropriate, for consideration by Governing Body at its next meeting. Governors asked that matters raised in the DAPs report should be taken into consideration in the review of KPIs. It was **agreed** that distance learning figures needed to be reflected in the reporting of KPIs/PIs.

#### **42 Committee Review**

Governing Body **received** a detailed report on the review of committees and thanked those who had completed it [Appendix F]. Governing Body

- a) **approved** the recommendations of the review, as set out in the report, and the amendments to Standing Orders necessary to enact these recommendations;
- b) **agreed** the size of Academic Board to be 24 members.

#### **43 Risk Assessment**

##### *(i) Risk Register*

Governing Body **received** and considered a revised Risk Register [Appendix G], which had been developed by the School's Executive Board, in a process supported by the School's Internal Auditors, and reviewed and considered by the Audit Committee. It was noted that the Register was fuller than before and now used a traffic lights system. With regard to risk 2, the Director & Principal **agreed** to circulate a note to Governing Body about the issue to enable them to lobby on the School's behalf. Governors asked that in future the format of the Register include an indication as to whether or not each risk had increased or decreased in terms of likelihood and impact. Governing Body **approved** the Risk Register.

(ii) *HEFCE's assessment of institutional risk*

Governing Body **noted** HEFCE's assessment letter of institutional risk [Appendix H], noting that SOAS was 'not at higher risk', this being the highest rating HEFCE gave. It was noted that the School had resubmitted the Capital Investment Framework assessment. Governing Body also **noted** that the School's surplus was roughly in line with the sector mean, that it had greater liquidity than most, less borrowing and more discretionary reserves, and that SOAS staff costs as a percentage of total income were much higher than average.

**44 Standing Orders**

Governing Body **approved** amendments to the membership of the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees [Appendix I].

**45 Library Strategy**

Governing Body **noted** a report on progress with the Library Strategy, as considered by Academic Board [Appendix J]. Governors noted the importance of the plan and the significant progress and achievements made since 2008. It was noted that the Library was now approaching the sector norm with regard to spend on the materials budget but that more work would be needed to reduce the proportion of Library spend on staffing in line with the agreed plan.

**46 Language Centre**

Governing Body **noted** the report of the Language Centre review, as considered by Academic Board [Appendix K]. The timeframe of the review was set out in the paper from which it was noted that the consultation paper had been posted on the School's website until 28 May 2010. Further consultation meetings had taken place with staff and unions and agreed revisions to the report had been incorporated. It was noted that Executive Board had approved a reduction in staff costs equivalent to £355,000 by 31 July 2013, of which £220,000 needed to be achieved by 31 July 2011. The Vice Principal reported that Executive Board anticipated that recurrent annual staff savings of £199,000 would be achieved by September 2010. Governing Body discussed the benefits for the SOAS mission of retaining a Language Centre at the School, although it was stressed that the commercial competition was substantial.

**47 Planning**

Governing Body **noted** a paper on the planning process and timetable for 2010/11, as approved by Resources & Planning Committee [Appendix L].

## 48 Sub-committees

### (i) *Academic Board*

Governing Body **noted** the draft minutes of the meeting of Academic Board held on 16 June 2010 [Appendix M].

### (ii) *Resources and Planning Committee*

Governing Body **noted** the draft minutes of the meeting of Resources and Planning Committee held on 15 June 2010 [Appendix N].

### (iii) *Health and Safety Committee*

Governing Body **noted** the minutes of the meetings of Health and Safety Committee held on 10 March and 2 June 2010 [Appendices O & P]. It was **agreed** that there should be a full discussion of Governing Body's health and safety responsibilities at least once a year and that this should be structured into Governing Body's annual plan of business.

### (iv) *Audit Committee*

Governing Body **noted** the minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 17 May 2010 [Appendix Q].

## 49 Equality and Diversity

Governing Body **noted** a briefing on the Equality Act 2010, as received by Academic Board and Resources and Planning Committee [Appendix R]. It was **agreed** that there should be a full discussion of Governing Body's equality and diversity responsibilities at least once a year and that this should be structured into Governing Body's annual plan of business.

## 50 Membership of Governing Body

Governing Body **noted** the approval by circulation of its new members, as recommended by Nominations Committee [Appendix S].

## 51 Emeritus status

Governing Body **noted** with pleasure those awarded emeritus status in 2010 [Appendix T].

## 52 Valedictions

Governing Body **noted** that this was the last meeting of three lay governors, whose terms of office would finish on 31 August 2010 and the Chair thanked each in turn.

### (i) *Sir David Brewer*

Governors noted that Sir David had become a lay governor of SOAS in September 2000. In his capacity as nominee of the Corporation of the City of London, he had generously used his civic, business and other expertise to promote and support SOAS in London and internationally, helping in particular to promote Chinese/British links.

He had also served on the School's Audit Committee from 2008. Governing Body warmly thanked Sir David for the knowledge and expertise he had brought to the School.

*(ii) James Hughes-Hallett*

Governors noted that Mr Hughes-Hallett had become a lay governor in September 2005, bringing with him valuable business expertise and knowledge of the Far East. He had been a member of the GB Membership Committee in 2006 and of the Audit Committee from 2007 to 2008. His contribution to the work of the School had been much appreciated.

*(iii) Professor Michael Knibb*

Governors noted that Professor Knibb had been a SOAS governor since 2000, as the member nominated by the British Academy. Professor Knibb was a distinguished academic, latterly being Professor of Old Testament Studies at King's College London. He had also been a member of Resources & Planning Committee (and its precursor committee) since 2000, and Governing Body Vice-Chair since September 2006. In addition, he had served on the Senior Staff Remuneration Committee since 2007, and *ex officio* on the Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee and the Nominations Committee since 2006. Professor Knibb had also contributed to numerous working parties and School events and projects. The Chairman particularly acknowledged the fact that Professor Knibb had been such an invaluable source of information, wise judgement and advice to the previous Chair and to himself in supporting and promoting good governance in the School. The Director & Principal also acknowledged the invaluable support Professor Knibb had given him and other senior managers in the School.

Governing Body also noted that this was the last meeting of one of the student governors, Ben Sellers. It was noted that Mr Sellers had been a student governor since September 2008. He had served as the Students' Union Co-President, Sports & Societies, for two years and would be succeeded by Mr Jasper Kain who had recently been elected to that post and would serve on GB from September 2010. Mr Sellers had graduated with a BA in Music Studies in 2008. Governors thanked him for his contributions to Governing Body and wished him well in his future career.

Governing Body also noted that this was the last meeting of the Dean of the Faculty of Languages & Cultures, Professor Michael Hutt. It was noted that Professor Hutt had been in attendance at Governing Body this year, having been an *ex officio* member in previous years since he became Dean in 2004. In addition to his distinguished academic work, Governing Body acknowledged that Professor Hutt had made an enormous contribution to the School in his six years as Dean and that they had very much appreciated his contribution to the work of Governing Body and the advice he had given.

It was noted that Governing Body's membership currently had provision for eight members of Academic Board. Within that, the staff members who had served this year were: Professor Stephen Chan, Dr Ben Fortna, Professor Philip Jaggard and Professor Harry West. Governing Body thanked them warmly for their service as governors.

It was noted that the Deputy Secretary, Jo Halliday, was retiring shortly and Governing Body thanked her for her support.

**53 Date of meetings next session**

It was **noted** that the dates of the meetings of Governing Body next session were as follows, all starting at 11.00am followed by lunch at approximately 1pm:

Friday 1 October 2010  
Friday 3 December 2010  
Friday 29 April 2011  
Friday 8 July 2011.

**Addendum to the report on Student Progression presented to Governing Body at its meeting of 30 April 2010 (Minute 27 (ii))**

Following the meeting of Governing Body on 30 April 2010, and the request that the School 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, the data set has been reviewed. All the individual data rows were correct, but a technical error in the spreadsheets used to compile the data resulted in the percentages being misrepresented as can be seen when the cohort totals are included:

**Table 5 : Number of Degrees and First and Upper Second Class Honours awarded by cohort: 2000/1 – 2006/7  
Percentages updated and corrected**

<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Total Cohort</b>	<b>Number of degrees awarded after 3 years</b>	<b>Percent 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 awarded after 3 years</b>	<b>Number of degrees awarded after 4 years</b>	<b>Percent 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 awarded after 4 years</b>
<b>2006/07</b>	710	346	49%	N/A	N/A
<b>2005/06</b>	721	380	53%	525	73%
<b>2004/05</b>	631	297	47%	452	72%
<b>2003/04</b>	630	266	42%	430	68%
<b>2002/03</b>	536	258	48%	366	68%
<b>2001/02</b>	576	282	49%	394	68%
<b>2000/01</b>	446	235	53%	314	70%

**Table 5 : Number of Degrees and First and Upper Second Class Honours awarded by cohort: 2000/1 – 2006/7  
Original version for comparison**

<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Number of degrees awarded after 3 years</b>	<b>Percent 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 awarded after 3 years</b>	<b>Number of degrees awarded after 4 years</b>	<b>Percent 1<sup>st</sup>/2.1 awarded after 4 years</b>
2006/7	346	78	-	-
2005/6	380	56	525	76
2004/5	297	50	452	75
2003/4	266	41	430	64
2002/3	258	48	366	66
2001/2	282	50	394	67
2000/1	235	52	314	69

**SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES**

**GOVERNING BODY**

**Friday 9 July 2010**

**Action Points**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>By when</b>
36	Minutes	Make amendment in minute book	Deputy Secretary	09.07.10
37 (i)	Degree Awarding Powers	QAA report to next meeting of GB after receipt of final report	Vice Principal	GB: 01/10/10 (deadline for papers: 15/09/10) <u>OR</u> GB: 03/12/10 (deadline for papers: 17/11/10)
		Thanks to Vice Principal & Director of Academic Development	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
37 (ii)	Learning & teaching reports	Attach tabled paper to minutes	Deputy Secretary	09.07.10
38	Director & Principal's report	Update on all matters to next GB	Director & Principal	GB: 01/10/10 (deadline for papers: 15/09/10)
39	Financial matters	Copy minute to Director of Finance & Planning and to Director of Estates & Facilities	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
40	Capital projects	Copy minute to Director of Finance & Planning and to Director of Estates & Facilities	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
41	KPIs	Copy minute to Director of Finance & Planning and to Head of Planning; EB to review before next report to GB	Deputy Secretary; Head of Planning and Director of Finance & Planning	EB: 23.08.10  GB: 01/10/10 (deadline for papers: 15/09/10)
42	Committee Review	Copy minute to Secretariat Manager	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
43	Risk Register	Circulate note re risk 2 to GB	Director & Principal	30.07.10
		Amend format of Register as minuted	Secretary to Audit Cttee	30.09.10

44	Standing Orders	Notify Secretariat Manager	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
45	Library Strategy	Notify Director of Library & Information Services	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
46	Language Centre	Report back to next meeting of GB under matters arising or in Director's report	Vice Principal/ Director & Principal	GB: 01/10/10 (deadline for papers: 15/09/10)
48 (iii)	Health & Safety	Send minute to Director of Estates & Facilities; structure into GB's annual plan of business	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10
49	Equality & Diversity	Send minute to Diversity Adviser; structure into GB's annual plan of business	Deputy Secretary	30.07.10