

**SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
GOVERNING BODY**

AGENDA
Friday 8 April 2011 from 11am – 2pm
Room 116

I	Minutes	
	To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2010	[Attached]
II	Actions Taken	
	To receive: updates on action taken	
III	Matters Arising / Matters for Report	
	<i>Min 24 – Students Union Constitution</i>	[Appendix A]
IV	Director's Report	
	To consider: A report from the Director	[Appendix B]
V	Finance	
	To approve: (i) Commentary and Financial Forecasts 2010/11 – 2014/15 for submission to HEFCE	[Appendix C, Annex 1]
	To note: (ii) Schools Financial position 2010-11 mid-year financial forecast	[Appendix D, Annex 1-3]
VI	Draft OFFA Proposals	
	To consider: the draft proposal for the schools OFFA agreement	[Appendix E]
VII	Dignity at SOAS Policy	
	To approve: The Dignity at SOAS Policy	[Appendix F]
VIII	Equality & Diversity: Annual report	
	To approve: The Equality & Diversity Annual Report	[Appendix G]
IX	Board Progress Update	
	To consider: an oral report from The Chairman	[Oral]
X	Staff Survey 2010: Thematic Report	
	To consider: results from the 2010 staff survey	[Appendix H, Annex 1-2]
XI	Standing Order relating to Academic Staff	
	To note: a decision of a disciplinary panel	[Appendix I]
XII	HEFCE Assurance Review	
	To note: (i) Draft HEFCE report of the HEFCE Assurance Review 8 Feb	[Appendix J]
	To note: (ii) Draft HEFCE Assurance Review Letter	[Appendix K]
XIII	Nominations Committee	
	To note: a paper from the Nominations Committee	[Appendix L]
XIV	Committee Reports	
	To receive: Minutes/reports/items to note from the following sub-committees:	
	(i) Academic Board Minutes 16.03.11	[Appendix M]
	(ii) Resources & Planning Committee Open Minutes 11.03.11	[Appendix N]
XV	Any other business	
XVI	Date of next meeting	
	To note: Next meeting of Governing Body is on Friday 8 July 2011, starting at 11am followed by lunch at approximately 1pm.	

The Director is hosting lunch from 1-2pm. Please let John Ahearne know (020 7898 4015 or email sec-officer@soas.ac.uk / ja54@soas.ac.uk whether or not you are able to attend the lunch.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Friday 8th April 2011

OPEN MINUTES

Dr T Miller (Chairman)
Ms E Wright (Vice-Chair)
Professor P Webley (Director)
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)

Dr F Adamson	Ms R Mortuza
Professor G Furniss	Professor N Rao
Professor B Harriss-White	Mr J Robinson
Mr C Ilako	Mr S Uribe
Mr J Kain	Ms Z Weaver

In attendance:

Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)
Mr D Beaton (Registrar & Secretary)
Professor M Craven (Dean of Law & Social Sciences)
Dr N Varey (Minutes)

Apologies:

Professor I Brown (Dean of Arts & Humanities)
Sir Ivor Crewe
Sir Graham Fry
Mr K Kutay
Professor A Pauwels (Dean of Languages & Cultures)
Mr N Lerner
Dr J Parker
Professor S Subedi

30. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Governing Body members and recognised that this meeting had been re-arranged because of the forthcoming Royal Wedding.

31. Apologies

Apologies above were **noted**

32. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2010 were **approved** and signed as a true record.

33. Actions Taken

(i) Minutes 19 Additional Meetings of the Governing Body and the Resource Planning Committee, and Minute 26 Special Meeting to discuss Degree Awarding Powers.

The GB **noted** that special meeting of the Governing Body had been held on the 10th February 2011 to discuss the implications for the School of the report from the Degree Awarding Powers assessors and the latest thinking of the Executive Board and

Resources & Planning Committee on the School's Financial Plan. An additional meeting had also been held of the Resource & Planning Committee on the 3rd February 2011 to discuss an early draft of the financial plan. The Governing Body further **noted** that the Minutes of this were Item V on the Reserved Agenda.

(ii) Minute 25 Staff Survey Results

The Governing Body **noted** that this was to be considered as Item X Open Agenda.

34. Matters arising

(i) Students Union Constitution

The Registrar & Secretary reminded the Governing Body that at its meeting in December 2010 the Governing Body **approved** the draft of a revised constitution for the Students Union subject to the Union reconsidering its decision not to include a lay member on its Board of Trustees and that it was agreed that the Chairman would meet with the sabbatical officers to consider the Union's response.

The Governing Body **noted** that the Chairman had met with the sabbatical officers following a discussion at a Student Union General Meeting of a motion proposing the inclusion of a lay trustee. The Governing Body **noted** that the sabbatical officers spoke in favour of the proposition but nevertheless the Union General Meeting resolved not to approve the motion. The Registrar & Secretary advised the Governing Body that he understood that approximately 80% of student unions have adopted constitutions which include a lay trustee, however, it was expected that the Charities Commission would be unlikely to reject a constitution that did not follow this pattern.

The Governing Body **noted** the Chair's action to **approve** the Student Union's Constitution on the basis that both the Student Union and the Governing Body would review the situation in a year's time.

There were no other matters arising.

35. Director's Report

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

(i) Audits, reviews, and the QAA Institutional review

The Governing Body **noted** that the HEFCE Audit Review (HAR) took place in early February with an excellent outcome.

The Director advised the Governing Body that confirmation had been received from QAA that the School's next institutional review will take place in academic year 2012-13.

(ii) Application for Degree Awarding Powers

The Governing Body **noted** that there were eleven key issues on which the School was expected to respond to the QAA in order to progress the School's application for Degree Awarding Powers. The first of these had been addressed by the successful conclusion of the HEFCE Assurance Review, as was the second issue, on the effectiveness of Governing Body.

The next meeting of the Academic Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) is scheduled for 10 June and the deadline for the submission of a response is 20 May.

The School is on target to make a full response for the June meeting and an update will be provided to the next meeting of the Governing Body in the summer term.

The Director advised that even with a positive outcome to the June meeting of ACDAP the School would not be able to use its degree awarding powers until 2012 at the earliest given the length of time to conclude the formal approval process.

(iii) Review of the Student Immigration System

The Director advised that the final outcome was relatively good, with the potential impact on the School now much reduced from what had first been thought likely. The biggest impact will be on private non-University providers and this could adversely affect universities in the longer term through reduced numbers of students from these private providers going on to study for degrees in UK universities.

The Director provided clarification on the terminology used in the new immigration regime: Tier 4 covers permission for students to enter the UK for the purpose of study and Tier 2 covers permission for graduates who have a job offer at the end of their programme who will be able to apply for a Tier 2 (work) visa without returning home.

(iv) Review of Key Performance Indicators

The Governing Body **noted** that a full and revised set of KPIs will be presented to Governing Body in July.

(v) UCU industrial action

The Governing Body **noted** that UCU was in dispute with universities employers on two fronts: the level of pay increase offered in 2010 and the proposed changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) to new entrants from a final salary to a career average scheme. UCU has successfully balloted its members on industrial action include days of strikes and as yet unspecified action short of a strike. Two one-day strikes were held in March supported by a number of students. UCU has indicated that further strikes will be timed to coincide with the examination period in May. The impact of the strikes on students is a major concern for the School. Given the nature of these disputes it is unlikely that there will be an early resolution.

Governing Body noted that in relation to the dispute on pay all trades unions other than UCU and the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) have accepted the 2010 pay offer and the increase has been implemented for all staff. Negotiations on any cost of living increase in 2011 will commence shortly. The implementation of the proposed changes to USS has been delayed by the decision of UCU members of scheme committees not to attend meetings thus rendering them in-quorate. The USS Trustees have written to UCU indicating that the disruption to the governance arrangement of the Scheme was not sustainable and that unless UCU representatives resume participation in the work of committees legal action will start with a view to resolving the impasse. The Director advised the Governing Body that UCU had written to Vice Chancellors requesting that they put pressure on the USS to withdraw the threat of legal action against the UCU representatives involved in USS.

The Governing Body **agreed** that the interests of students should be paramount in the School's response to this difficult situation. The School was taking action to ameliorate the possible impact of the dispute, particularly for final year students. However members acknowledged there was little that could be done if, for example, examination papers were not marked.

(vi) The Bloomsbury Colleges: ESRC Doctoral Training Centre

The Governing Body noted the excellent news the School as part of a consortium of Bloomsbury Colleges had been awarded an ESRC Doctoral Training Centre. The ESRC recognition acted as a form of “kite” marking of quality and that would help the School in its dealings with other Government agencies and funding bodies.

(vii) Recruitment 2011-12

The Governing Body **noted** that:

- Undergraduate applications compared to last year were encouraging with growth in the numbers of applications, particularly from overseas. UG Applications have increased by 4% overall which was better than many of the Schools competitors. With a large increase in Overseas UG applications centred in Laws and Social Science programme areas up by 60 (8.4%). Most of this increase was from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Pakistan and Singapore.
- Applications for Masters Programmes were currently running at the same level as last year. Encouragingly the number of offers made was 5% higher than at this point last year, slightly up for both home and overseas students. The Director advised the Governing Body that there was nothing to indicate at this point that recruitment targets would not be met, however recruitment was not a precise matter and other factors could affect the final outcome

The Governing Body **noted** that in terms of the new student immigration rules the School had been awarded the status of “Highly Trusted Sponsor”. Under the new rules one of the areas of concern has been the level of English that had to be obtained in order for a student to be given permission to study in the UK. As the School already sets some the highest requirements for English language competence it is unlikely that the increased standards contained in the new immigration rules will have an adverse impact on our ability to recruit students from overseas. There was concern, however, that the perception created by the new immigration regime that the UK no longer welcomed students from overseas could result in a decline in overseas student numbers.

The Governing Body noted that currently it could take the School up to 59 days to process applications. In part the reason for such lengthy timescales was that the School’s degree structures often meant that a number of different departments had to consider each application before a decision could be made. GB **noted** that it was extremely important that the School reviewed its processes to ensure that applications were processed in a much shorter time. This could include extending the current arrangements for centralised processing of admissions. There was anecdotal evidence that some applicants accepted offers from other institutions that are able to reach decisions much more speedily than the School. The Pro Director (Learning and Teaching) indicated that the School should have as its target a turn around time for applications of 7 working days.

The Governing Body **noted** that there was a correlation between the application process time and take up and therefore this was an area where the Schools services had to be improved. This was an example of an area where faculties and central service departments must work collaboratively if rapid solutions were to be found.

(vii) Proposals for a New Academic Structure for SOAS

The Governing Body **noted** the School would not be taking forward proposals to reduce the number of faculties from three to two as set out in the paper on *The New Academic*

Structures for SOAS. However the Academic Board at its meeting on 16 March had approved the following three restructuring principles:

- Small academic units should be brought into larger units
- All academic staff should be members of departments
- Departments may move from one faculty to another subject to the agreement of both Deans involved.

GB **noted** that the Pro Director (Learning and Teaching) and the Deans and Professor Rao would take forward the implementation of these principles.

(viii) Engagement with Other Countries

The Director reported that following recent coverage in The Guardian of the School's teaching activities in Libya the Director of External Relations had lodged a complaint to The Guardian about the misleading nature of the report. The Guardian printed a correction nevertheless a certain amount of damage has been done to the School's reputation. The Director reported that he had had an opportunity to raise his concerns informally with the Editor of Guardian.

The Director noted the increased media focus and public discussion about the nature of the connections British Universities have with overseas countries whose regimes do not meet the UK's standards of governance or human rights. When considering whether or not to accept gifts from donors the School has a policy which ensures that due diligence is carried out and that the ethical dimensions of accepting donations are considered. The Governing Body discussed whether a similar approach could be used to review the School's affiliations with countries and the acceptance on degree programmes of individual students related to members of particular regimes. In relation to individual students it would be feasible, for example, to prevent those on the HMT list from enrolling in courses. The Governing Body recognized that these are complex matters which impact on concepts of academic freedom. The freedom to pursue academic enquiry within the law is an important cornerstone of the UK higher education. Similarly the School has previously held fast to the notion of accepting students based on their academic ability alone; selection influenced by the political affiliations of particular candidates could set an unfortunate precedent.

Governing Body **agreed** that the School must be thoughtful about how it manages its relations with governments and regimes overseas. It was clear that there should be no changes to the process for admitting students to degree programmes. On the wider issue of the ethical implications of affiliations with countries overseas the Governing Body remained skeptical that a formal policy would be helpful or practicable, however, it was agreed that there should be further discussion of this matter within the School.

(ix) The PDF and 53 Gordon Square

The Governing Body **noted** that the lease and associated documents would be signed in the next two months as now all parties appeared in agreement.

(x) Fund-raising

The Governing Body **noted** that the School was on target to raise funds to achieve the maximum out of matched funding

(xi) Personalalia

The Governing Body **noted** and congratulated Professor Matthew Craven on his appointment for a second term as Dean of the Faculty of Law and Social Science, with Professor Stephen Chan to be acting Dean for the year 2010-11, whilst Professor Craven is on research leave.

The Governing Body congratulated the Director on his election as Chair of UKCISA (the UK Council for International Student Affairs) and it was noted that this was with the consent of the Chairman.

36. Finance

(i) Commentary and Financial Forecasts 2010/11 – 2014/15 for submission to HEFCE

The Governing Body **received** the Commentary and Financial Forecasts 2010/11 – 2014/15 which are to be submitted to HEFCE by 15 April 2011. The Chairman reminded the Governing Body that these proposals had been developed over a long period of time including two special meetings of the Governing Body (November and February) and three meetings of the Resources and Planning Committee (one of which had been a special meeting in February). The Resources and Planning Committee at its meeting on 11 March 2011 had considered the forecasts in detail, including the assumption on undergraduate home/EU fees, and now recommended their approval. Since the Resources and Planning Committee had considered these forecasts the School had received details of its grant from HEFCE and the level of resources required to support the School's Access Agreement had become clearer. Both these result in a marginal improvement in the projected financial outturn. The impacts of these changes were included in the papers before the Governing Body. The Chairman thanked the Finance Director and his team for their work in preparing these plans.

The Finance Director noted that in terms of the School's HEFCE grant:

- Teaching funding will be withdrawn completely over a three year period starting 2012/13 with reductions in the School's grant from HEFCE taking effect from the last quarter of the current financial year.
- Research rated as 2* will no longer be funded with effect from 2012/13
- Capital Funding had been reduced by 80%.
- Funding for the School's library as a National Research Library (NRL) has been reduced by 44% in 2011/12, however, HEFCE has offset this reduction by a matching increase to the School's funding through the London Whole Institution Fund. The continuation of this funding stream will be reviewed by HEFCE in the near future meaning that there can be no assumption that the School will be cushioned long-term from the impact of the reduction in NRL funding.

The Finance Director summarised the key aspects of the financial forecast as follows:

- On the basis of the assumptions set out in this paper, the School is forecast to fall sharply into deficit (of £1.0m) in 2011/12, reduce this deficit (£0.2m) in 2012/13, return to surplus (of £2.4m) in 2013/14 and achieve the (revised) target rate of surplus (of £2.9m, 3.5% of income) by 2014/15
- The improvement in financial position is heavily dependent on setting an undergraduate fee of £9,000 from September 2012, the achievement of student recruitment targets and implementing actions to improve cost efficiencies.
- Cost efficiencies of £1.5m by 2014/15 are to be sought within staffing costs (£0.8m) and other operating expenditure (£0.7m) equivalent to 2% of the School's income by the end of the planning period
- Cost reductions of this magnitude should not have a detrimental impact on the School's activities

- Plans include a significant investment of £30.8m in the School's current estate during the planning period, £22.9m of this to be funded from retained reserves.
- It is expected that student expectations shall rise in line with fees hence future capital plans will focus on upgrading teaching facilities and estates infrastructure as well as addressing the backlog in long term maintenance.
- Savings at of this magnitude would not be detrimental on the School's activities.

The Governing Body discussed proposed financial forecasts in detail. Members noted that on previous occasions they and the Resources and Planning Committee had evaluated a number of different scenarios based around fee levels varying from £6,000, £7,500 and £8,000. Income based on either of the two lower fee levels resulted in significant long-term deficits for the School where the only response would be significant efficiency savings which in practice meant reductions in both academic and professional services staff as well as other investment in developing the School. Similarly at the £8,000 fee level the School would still require significant efficiency savings which would mean cutting back significantly on investment plans and reducing expenditure on salaries. Governing Body recognised that the most robust financial model was that based on the highest fee. Even with a fee at this level as the sensitivity analysis showed the School faced significant risks that its income would be lower than anticipated. For example failure to grow student numbers as anticipated in the plan would result in a loss of income of £3.5M. The Treasurer reminded Governing Body that the School's plans even with a fee at £9,000 would be highly sensitive to external events which may still require the School to take cost-cutting measures which would impact adversely on it academic activities. The School would need to be vigilant over the coming years if it is to deliver the performance set out in these forecasts.

At previous meetings members had challenged both the growth in student numbers and increases in postgraduate taught fees for UK students. Governing Body had accepted that on the basis of the School's current understanding of its UK undergraduate market it was reasonable to assume that there would not be a drop in numbers of qualified students being accepted to the School even after the introduction of the new fee regime. The Financial Forecast sets out as a sensitivity the impact of incremental reductions in numbers of these students and the Executive Board will plan how to respond to a reduction in these numbers should this occur. There was concern over the planned growth in PGT numbers especially in the UK market where the plan also required progressive increases in fees for this group. The postgraduate market is more complicated than at undergraduate level and it is more difficult to obtain robust data about the reasons underlying student choice. Governing Body encouraged the School to extend the work it is already undertaking to understand trends in this area of recruitment. Concern was also expressed about the School's fee policy in this area. From 2012/13 the home/EU undergraduate fee will be substantially higher than many of the School's PGT degree programmes. The current strategy called for a 10% increase in PGT fees each year. On this basis the fees would remain lower than undergraduate for a number of years. The strategy is based on a cautious assumption about how students at this level will react to increases in fees. In an ideal world the School would prefer a greater convergence of its fees both for home and overseas students. Practical difficulties will prevent the School from moving quickly in this direction. The policy on PGT fees will be reviewed each year and modified as required.

The forecasts contained an assumption about voluntary severance which led some members to ask if the School had plans to reduce staff numbers. The inclusion of costs for voluntary severance in the Financial Forecasts was purely so that if at any point over the next four years the School wished to consider requests for voluntary severance resources had been set aside to fund these. Governing Body appreciated that it was important to understand that a financial forecast is put together to ensure resources are

available to cover a range of possible eventualities. Governing Body discussed ways in which expenditure on staff salaries might be reduced so as to enable fees to be set at a lower level. In particular student members raised the issue of cutting the salaries of top managers as a way of reducing costs so as to charge students a lower fee. This view was also expressed in a letter from twelve students submitted to the Governing Body by Sebillio Lillo. The Director explained that the School only had two members earning over £100,000, himself and the Registrar and Secretary (note subsequent to the meeting it has been established that 3 members of the School earn over this figure the additional person being the Pro Director (Learning and Teaching)). A reduction in two salaries would make no material difference to the forecasts. Theoretically it would be possible to review the salaries of senior staff in the School – professorial colleagues and directors of professional services – but it was unclear to Governing Body that this would help the School in the long term. It was certainly the case that in some sectors of the economy employers and trades unions had worked together to overcome financial difficulties by agreeing to freeze increments or for all employees to take a reduction in salary for a period. However, as far as Governing Body was aware none of the trades unions in the Higher Education sector had agreed to such strategies. Indeed Governing Body observed that UCU was currently in dispute with universities in pursuit of a higher salary increase from 2010. Governing Body understood that numbers of students actively campaigned with UCU in favour of higher salaries. In these circumstances it seemed unlikely that there was scope for agreement between employers and trades unions to agree on salary reductions albeit on a temporary basis as a strategy to moderate fee levels. It also appeared that there was no consensus amongst the School's students on this point. The information available to the School did not suggest that its salaries were out of line with its comparators.

Governing Body's attention was drawn to the level of capital spending. The Treasurer reminded members that the Resources and Planning Committee and the Estates and Infrastructure Committee had considered in detail the School's plans in this area and that this had led to significant changes. While committed to the need to preserve an adequate level of expenditure in order to maintain and develop the School's facilities the capital expenditure plan has been reduced so that the second phase of the Library Transformation Project had been delayed until after 2015/16 and the possible purchase of 31 Tavistock Place abandoned. The guiding principle for the expenditure plans that remain will be to address important maintenance issues and focus any developments on areas that will have the greatest positive impact on students. Governing Body recognised the superficial attractiveness of cutting spending in this area and noted that this was an issue raised in the letter from the group of students. However, Governing Body agreed that a reduction in this area would be a false economy. On previous occasions the School had weathered difficult financial circumstances by cutting back on capital expenditure the result of which has in the long run led to higher maintenance costs and facilities which lag behind those of comparable universities. Governing Body was firmly of the view that the levels of investment in the estate proposed were essential.

The Governing Body **approved** the Commentary and Financial Forecast 2010/11 – 2014/15 for submission to HEFCE noting that the Director would provide details in due course as to how the level of efficiency savings required would be delivered. It would also be important that the School had plans in place to handle the adverse sensitivities were any of these to materialise.

(ii) Schools Financial Position 2010-11 mid-year financial

The Governing Body **noted** the improved forecast budget surplus from £1.1m to £1.86M due to one-off positive variances which were unlikely to be repeated in future years.

The Governing Body noted that this improved financial position was the base line used for preparing the Financial Forecast approved above.

The Governing Body **noted** the Schools Financial Position.

37. Undergraduate Fee level and Access Agreement

The Director introduced this paper which had four recommendations:

- An undergraduate home/EU fee of £9,000 from 2012/13
- The commitment of 28% of the additional fee income in excess of £6,000 to fund improved widening participation activities including fee waivers
- Authority for the Director and Chair of Governing Body to approve the final text of the Access Agreement which must be submitted to the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) by 19 April
- Agree that the 28% of fee income in excess of £6,000 should broadly be allocated between the various access activities as follows: 70% of fee waivers & bursaries, 20% on outreach activities and 10% on retention.

The Governing Body had previously discussed what fee to charge at its ordinary meeting in December and at both its special meetings in November and February. On all these occasions members had been very aware of the potential impact on prospective students of the decision it would make. The recommendation on a fee before Governing Body was not based on notions around the School's reputation but on achieving a level of income that would enable the School to continue to deliver an excellent academic experience to its students. The decision on what fee the School should charge was driven by its financial position in which all of the Teaching Funding is being withdrawn coupled with a reduction of 80% in Capital funding and reductions in research funding. In these circumstances for the School to be sustainable it needs to charge an undergraduate fee at the level proposed. Were Governing Body to set a lower fee the School would need to accept that this would result in the need to implement far greater efficiency savings than the proposed £1.5m. These could only be achieved by significant redundancies and reducing the much-needed investment in the facilities which are key to improving the student experience.

The Director reminded the Governing Body that historically fees charged to overseas students were higher than those levied on UK students because the School received significant levels of funding from HEFCE as a contribution to the real costs of providing an undergraduate degree programme. Now that state funding has been withdrawn it is inevitable that a realistic fee will have to be set. Any failure to do so could only result in pressure to increase other unregulated fees (such as overseas or PGT) to compensate. This would be very undesirable.

Governing Body had on previous occasions debated the extent to which the proposed fee level was sustainable. Analysis of the School's home/EU undergraduate market had clearly shown that the School's key competitors (universities that students chose as an alternative to the School) were almost exclusively Russell Group (excluding Oxford and Cambridge) and 1994 Group institutions. Governing Body noted that to-date all the universities in these groups that had declared fees had decided to charge at the top rate. Were the Governing Body to decide to charge a lower rate this could require the School to make damaging savings while at the same time making it increasingly difficult for us to provide the facilities that would attract staff and students.

The Director emphasised that the recommendation for a fee of £9,000 was that which was required to provide a robust financial plan for the School. This would be supported

by a significant commitment of resources to expand widening participation activities. Waivers and bursaries would enable the School to offer significant reductions in the fee level for students from under-represented groups. The proposal also included a significantly reduced fee for students while on their year abroad.

The Chair reminded members of the significance of their decision and drew their attention again to the letter submitted to Governing Body by a group of twelve students. Governing Body recognised the financial imperative that had led to the fee recommendation; however, members explored a number of options that might have offered a realistic way to set a lower fee. Currently PGT fees are generally low in the School and it would be possible to increase these significantly as a method of improving the School's financial position. The financial forecasts envisaged increases at 10% per annum. While it would be possible to raise these fees much faster Governing Body was not persuaded that in practice student demand and ability to finance these studies would support such a strategy. The impact on recruitment to PGT courses of the new fee levels would be closely monitored. There were no plans at present to similarly increase postgraduate research (PGR) fees.

In some instances other universities have varied their undergraduate fee by course of study. This was considered as an option for the School, however, it was discounted. Students on many occasions took courses from a number of departments and indeed from different faculties. If each degree programme or faculty had its own fee structure this would be likely to limit the ability of students to pick a range of courses or at the very least create an unhelpful level of complexity. Additionally the cost structures of most of the School's degree programmes were broadly similar which would reduce the justification for any significant differentiation of fees.

Governing Body noted that in order to charge the fee proposed it would have to submit details to OFFA setting out its arrangements for ensuring that students from under-represented groups were still able to study in the School. Members agreed that it was essential that the School took its obligations in this regard seriously. The new fee levels presented a serious risk that students would be discouraged from studying in higher education by the level of debt and associated costs of attending university. Some members reflected that they themselves might have found it harder to attend university under the new financial arrangements. Members sought reassurance that the School's approach to widening participation would enable increasing numbers of potential students from under-represented groups to study at university. Governing Body noted that under the new draft Access Agreement the School was proposing to increase focussed work with students from low participation neighbourhoods (LPN) and from state schools where there was a high incidence of free school meals. The step change between the School's current activities and what is proposed are significant increases in the resources and the use of individual mentoring and support of students still in school, most especially for those from LPNs. In addition existing successful initiatives (i.e. bridging courses, taster sessions, summer schools) would be continue to be provided. It is also proposed to introduce high value fee waivers for students from LPNs and appropriate state schools. These would reduce the fee for such students to between £4,500 and £6,000 per year. Ambitious but achievable targets would be set for increasing the numbers of students from these categories and OFFA would monitor the extent to which the School met these.

The Governing Body **noted** these proposals and the increase in financial commitment from £761K to £1.3M. It would be important that as well as increasing the resources available well thought out programmes are put in place to improve the breadth of recruitment at undergraduate level.

Members accepted the structure of the draft Access Agreement, the level of resources and intended strategies and **agreed** that these were appropriate in the circumstances. Governing Body revisited the terms of the financial forecasts and particularly the capital expenditure. It was noted that the focus would be on those projects that would benefit students and that, for example the reference to student services was not a refurbishment of the professional directorate of that name but a general heading meant to indicate that the sums allocated would be used to improve services/facilities (i.e. seminar and lecture rooms) used directly by students. The precise details would be discussed with the SU and agreed via the Estates and Infrastructure Committee. In relation to these matters Governing Body took account of the discussion in the previous item about the importance of maintaining a reasonable level of capital expenditure. On the basis that the investment would be student-facing and bearing in mind the significant under-investment in the School's estate the Governing Body **agreed** that the capital expenditure should remain at the level set in the financial forecasts.

Governing Body noted that the School's Access Agreement had to be submitted to OFFA by 19 April. Thereafter OFFA would discuss the agreement with the School requesting amendments as necessary. Final approval of the details of the agreement will be given by OFFA by late July.

Having considered these matters the Governing Body **approved** *nem con* the four recommendations and agreed that the final text of the Access Agreement should be approved by the Chairman and Director with a copy circulated to members. Further it was **agreed** that the Secretary should write on Governing Body's behalf to the students who had submitted the letter through the Students Union.

38. Dignity at SOAS Policy

Governing Body received the draft policy on Dignity at Work which had been endorsed by the HR Committee and the Equality and Diversity Committee. It approval was now recommended by the Resources and Planning Committee. The Dean (Law & Social Sciences) as Chair of the Equality and Diversity Committee advised the Governing Body that this Policy was the result of a long and exacting process and recommended its adoption.

The Governing Body **approved** the Policy.

39. Equality and Diversity Annual Report

The Governing Body **agreed** to defer to its July 2011 meeting discussion of the Equality and Diversity Annual Report.

40. Board Progress Report

The Governing Body **agreed** to defer to its July 2011 meeting a report from the Chairman with regards to the Boards Progress Report.

41. Staff Survey 2010: Thematic Report

The Governing Body **agreed** to defer to its July 2011 meeting discussion of the Staff Survey.

42. Standing Orders relating to Academic Staff

The Governing Body **noted** the Standing Orders relating to Academic Staff.

43. Hefce Assurance review

The Governing Body **noted** the very positive outcome.

44. Committee Reports

The Governing Body **received** the Committee reports.

45. Any other business

There was no other business.

46. Date of next meeting

It was **noted** that the date of the next meeting of Governing Body was the 8th July 2011.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Friday 4 April 2011

Action Points 2010/11

Minute	Item	Action	Deadline For Report	By
17	<i>KPI's</i>	Staff based KPI, Alumni Relations KPI and a Student Experience KPI to be discussed by the relevant Committees and forward recommendations to Governing Body	8/07/11	DB
	<i>Board Effectiveness Reviews</i>	Summary Report	8/07/11	TM
23 (i)	Equal Pay Audit	School's Equal Pay Audit the key results to be highlighted	08/07/11	MC
24	Student Union Constitution	Co-Presidents would discuss with the Chairman the issue of including one lay trustee.	End 12/10	TM
25	Staff Survey Results	Revision of report based on a more thematic presentation of the results and an indication of the actions that will be taken.	08/07/11	DB