

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

**AGENDA – Part 1
Friday 8 July 2011 from 11am – 2pm**

Vernon Square Common Room – WC1X 9EW

I	Minutes	
	To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2011	[Attached]
II	Actions Taken	
	To receive: updates on action taken	
III	Matters Arising / Matters for Report	
IV	Director's Report	
	To consider: a report from the Director	[Appendix A]
V	Revenue & Capital Budgets for 2011/12	
	To approve: the Revenue & Capital Budgets for 2011/12	[Appendix B]
VI	League Table Report	
	To receive: a report on the League Tables	[Appendix C]
VII	Key Performance Indicators	
	To receive: a review of SOAS Key Performance Indicators	[Appendix D]
VIII	Students' Union Co-President Paper	
	To receive: a paper from the Co-President of the Students' Union	[Appendix E]
IX	2010/11 Governing Body Questionnaire Feedback	
	To receive: a report on the recent Governing Body Questionnaire from the Chairman	[Appendix F]
X	HEFCE Assessment of Institutional Risk	
	To note: HEFCE's recent letter confirming SOAS's current Institutional Risk status	[Appendix G]
XI	OFFA Agreement	
	To note: the Schools submission to OFFA	[Appendix H]
XII	Academic Promotions	
	To receive: an oral update from the Director	
	To note: the external report on the School's Promotion Procedure for 2010/11	[Appendix I]
	To approve: the Academic Promotions nominees	[Appendix I, Annex 1]
XIII	Staff Survey 2010: Thematic Report	
	To consider: results from the 2010 Staff Survey	[Appendix J, Annex 1-2]

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GOVERNING BODY**

**AGENDA – Part 2
Friday 8 July 2011 from 11am – 2pm**

Vernon Square Common Room – WC1V 9EW

XIV	Carbon Management Plan	
	To approve: HECM Carbon Management Plan	[Appendix K]
XV	Staffing	
	To note: the award of Emeritus Status to:	
	i. Professor Colin Shindler	
	ii. Professor Peter Robb	
XVI	Standing Orders	
	To approve: amendments to the Standing Orders as recommended by Academic Board	[Appendix L]
XVII	Nominations Committee Procedure Change	
	To approve: a change in the procedure for selecting Lay Committee Members	[Appendix M]
XVIII	Equality & Diversity: Annual report	
	To approve: The Equality & Diversity Annual Report	[Appendix N]
XIX	Student Grievance Procedure	
	To approve: a revised Student Grievance Procedure	[Appendix O]
XX	Committee Reports	
	To receive: Minutes/reports/items to note from the following sub-committees:	
	i. Academic Board 15.06.11	[Appendix P]
	ii. Resource and Planning Committee 14.06.11	[Appendix Q]
	iii. Audit Committee 19.05.11	[Appendix R]
XXI	Any other business	
XXII	Date of next meeting	
	To note: Next meeting of Governing Body is on Monday 3 rd October 2011, starting at 2pm with a lunch before hand at 1pm	

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Friday 8th July 2011

OPEN MINUTES

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

Dr F Adamson	Mr N Lerner
Mr G Dalal	Ms R Mortuza
Sir Graham Fry	Professor N Rao
Professor G Furniss	Mr J Robinson
Professor B Harriss-White	Professor S Subedi
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 I Brown (Dean of Arts & Humanities)
Professor M Craven (Dean of Law & Social Sciences)
Professor A Pauwels (Dean of Languages & Cultures)
Mr. Peter Mitchell (HR Director)
Dr N Varey (Minutes)

Apologies: Sir Ivor Crewe
Dr J Parker

47. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the Governing Body members and asked the meeting to join with him to congratulate Professor Nirmala Rao on the award of her OBE.

48. Apologies

Apologies above were **noted**

49. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2011 were **approved** and signed as a true record.

50. Actions Taken

- (i) 17 Staff based KPI, Alumni Relations KPI and a Student Experience KPI
See Minute 56.
- (ii) 23(i) Board Effectiveness Review
See Minute 58.
- (iii) Staff Survey Results
See Minute 62.

51. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

52. Director's Report

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

(i) Office for Fair Access (OFFA) Agreement

The Director advised that OFFA had provided an initial assessment of the School's access agreement in mid-June and had identified two issues which needed to be addressed: the total proposed spend of 26.7% in 2015-16 was a little below OFFA's expectations and the School's targets around disability required some clarification. The School agreed some small changes to the access agreement which raised expenditure in steady state from the proposed 29.2% to 30.1%. OFFA is satisfied with this change along with further information provided with regard to the School's disability target. The GB **noted** that most of the 1994 Group Universities had received similar requests to increase spend and that most had responded accordingly.

The Director advised the GB that resources provided through the access agreement would be used primarily to fund fee waivers and scholarships for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and to support the additional outreach work needed to recruit increasing numbers of students from such backgrounds. There was some concern about the impact of this additional work on academic staff. While acknowledging the importance of meeting its obligations under widening participation GB noted that much of the actual work with schools and young people would be carried out by Student Ambassadors who the GB recognised as being powerful advocates.

(ii) Government Policy (the White Paper).

The Director advised the GB that this long expected paper was not a policy statement for Higher Education but was primarily focussed on issues around undergraduate teaching. Its principal aims appeared to be to create a market by loosening student number control (for students with A levels or equivalent at AAB or higher) and introducing a measure of competition as a mechanism for reducing costs while at the same time improving quality. Much of the detailed provisions in the White Paper were subject to individual consultation exercises and until these had been completed it was difficult to be certain how the White Paper would be translated into a Bill. The Director explained, however, that many of the measures contained in the White Paper did not require primary legislation for them to be introduced; the government merely had to instruct HEFCE.

The GB **noted** the new competitive regime would have an impact on the School if other Russell Group and 1994 Group universities decided to increase their recruitment of undergraduate students with A levels at AAB or higher recruitment to SOAS could be adversely affected. Similarly, the requirement for universities to produce a Key Information Set (KIS) of data is intended to create a more discerning market amongst students. In practice it is unclear how such information will affect student choice. GB noted that the School is modelling its likely performance in the KIS data. A key issue for the School would be whether or not to increase its undergraduate numbers in those departments with significant numbers of highly qualified students. The Director reminded GB that the School had always wished to maintain a balance between UG and PG numbers but as a result of the previous cap on the number of undergraduate UK students it had not been possible to achieve this. Now that it was proposed to introduce a measure of flexibility in these numbers the School would consider carefully whether or not to increase undergraduate UK student numbers.

(iii) Pay & Pensions

The Director advised that the current pay offer for 2011 was a flat rate increase of £100 and that this was unlikely to increase significantly. The likelihood was that UCU would reject the final offer but the reaction of the other trades unions was at present unclear.

On pensions the GB **noted** that UCU is balloting its members for a second time on industrial action over the decision by the USS Trustees to move the scheme to a career average basis for new entrants and to increase employee contribution rates. The ballot on the USS dispute is disaggregated so that the results for individual institutions will be declared. It is likely that some universities will not vote for industrial action of any kind, however, the Director expected that staff at the School would vote in favour. As a consequence the School could expect disruptions at the beginning of, and during, the next academic year. The danger for the School is that in the new fee regime parents and students may favour HEIs that are not seen as being prone to industrial disputes.

53. Revenue & Capital Budgets for 2011/12

The Finance Director introduced the paper and advised the GB that the draft budget previously presented to the GB had now been updated to reflect the outcome of budget holder meetings since held which reviewed the underlying assumptions and where efficiency savings could be identified.

The GB **noted** that within professional Services the savings target of £540k had been exceeded by £87.5k through restructuring of distance learning, estate cost savings through the relocation of CeDEP from Wye to Russell Square, the move from 3-year lease arrangements for PCs to purchasing on a 5-year replacement cycle and the termination of a student health service contract.

In addition, the Finance Director advised that within the draft budget an amount of £341k had been provided to Professional Services to fund an increase in activities resulting from planned growth in student and staff numbers, and that as only £198k was now required the balance of the provision, £143k, had been released to the bottom line as a further efficiency saving, with other (non controllable) budgetary changes contributing a further £125k. GB noted that the £198k would only be committed to projects after these had been evaluated and approved by EB.

The GB queried the rationale for the level of contingency. The level of contingency was based on trends over previous years. GB also noted that changes in accountancy standards did not underlie differences between previous estimates and the revenue budget now proposed for 2011/12.

The GB **approved** the revised revenue budget for 2011/12.

The Finance Director introduced the Capital Budget with the GB **noting** that the refurbishment projects were currently being developed for approval and highlighted the Long Term Maintenance Budget requirements for the prioritised projects for the replacement of the College Building windows and the electrical infrastructure.

The GB **approved** the Long Term Maintenance Budget.

The Finance Director advised the GB that a provision of £1.85M had been set aside for capital equipment which included purchasing desk top computers rather than leasing and the School's telephone system.

The Governing Body **approved** the Capital Equipment Budget and **delegated** authority for this expenditure to the Executive Board.

54. Student Experience – Progression, Retention and Satisfaction

The Pro-Director (Learning & Teaching) reported on the Student Progression, Retention and Satisfaction statistics, asked the GB to note the general pattern and the variations in retention and highlighted the following:

- The data for 2009/10 cohort showed an increase in withdrawal rate and a decrease in student progression. This was being investigated to determine the reasons and to better understand how these students could be supported.
- The lack of progress particularly in the progressing of students in language programmes which remains low when compared to those without languages. The GB **noted** that some of those who do not continue with languages remain in the School transferring to other programmes.
- Females students are more likely to progress than male students
- There is no apparent difference in progression between white and BME students
- The most significant reasons for student withdrawal were “Academic failure,” “Other personal reasons,” “Transferred to another institutions” or “No reasons given”

The GB **noted** that in the National Students Survey (NSS) SOAS had dropped 7 places on feedback but that the School continued to score well on teaching. The scores on feedback continued to be poor and did not appear to be improving.

GB discussed ways in which it might be possible to encourage improvements in feedback through measures such as links with the promotion process and improvements in the School’s personal tutoring systems. GB was of the view that progress in this area was important if the School were to meet its aspiration of improving the experience of its students. .

The correlation between Student retention and Student Satisfaction was discussed and it was accepted that further work was needed here to provide better information to the Heads of Departments.

55. League Table Report

The GB **noted** that the School had moved from 27th to 23rd in the Times Good University guide while there had been a slight decrease in its position in the Guardian table (from 11th to 13th) and in the Complete University Guide (from 15th to 18th). GB **noted** with concern the School’s position on the measures for completion, graduate prospects and student satisfaction. The position on research also showed a decline relative to other universities.

GB noted that generally within the sector the Times League Table was considered to be the most influential for undergraduate applicants. It was **agreed** that the School should make every effort to ensure that the statistical returns, on which league tables are based, as accurately as possible reflected to School’s performance. While acknowledging that many academic staff would challenge the methodology behind the league tables the reality was that many students and teachers used these tables as a basis for deciding university choices. This was particularly true overseas and the disappearance of the School from all the main international league tables was of concern.

The GB **agreed** that it would receive at its next meeting an action plan for improving the School’s performance in the main league tables.

56. Key performance Indicators

The Finance Director presented the paper on the School's eleven Key Performance Indicators. GB focussed its attention on KPI7 (Income per academic staff fte) and KPI 8 (Research income per academic fte), both of which were evaluated as being at risk.

The Pro-Director (Enterprise & Research) expressed his concern over KPI 8 and the GB **noted** that the School had a range of strategies in place to address the issue of research performance. In particular the School was carefully evaluating its likely performance in the REF, work was on-going to establish thematic research clusters as a way of enhancing the School's ability to attract external research funding and some internal funding has been established to replace the British Academy Small Grant Funding which has been withdrawn. There were £11M of outstanding research grant applications and the School would know the extent to which any of these had been successful over the coming months. Last year overheads from research grants were £700k and this was expected to have increased to £1.1M for the current year reflecting the level of activity undertaken. GB noted that research funding from UK research councils was becoming increasingly more competitive and that in a university based solely around arts, humanities and social science much excellent research could be carried out without significant external grants.

While accepting that much research could be carried out by individuals working alone, GB noted that there were many opportunities to build interesting and topical areas of research that involved a range of disciplines (some of which could involve collaboration with other universities so as to access academic disciplines not available in SOAS). The work of the London International Development Centre (LIDC) indicated the potential for increasing this sort of activity.

The GB **agreed** noted that it would continue to receive a regular KPI report, and agreed particular reference should be made to progress made regarding KPI 8 (Research income per academic fte).

The GB **approved** the introduction of a Staff KPI based on an annual brief staff survey carried out by Capita and of a Student Experience KPI which surveys the entire SOAS student body each year regarding their overall satisfaction with the student support provided and the updating of the NSS KPI to reflect the SOAS undergraduate competitor group identified by the Director of Student & Registry Services.

57. Student Union Co-President Paper

GB received a paper from one of the SU Co-Presidents reporting a motion of no confidence by the Students Union in the Minister of Universities and Science. The Co-President invited GB to comment on the SU motion explaining that since the wave of student protests at the end of 2010 many SOAS students felt that their grievances had not been duly factored into the School's stance on government policies. There was a desire to develop robust responses to government policy in line with what has happened elsewhere in the public sector.

GB understood why the SU was concerned about the impact of government policy and noted that under the new fee regime no student would pay for undergraduate education up front. In many respects the "fee" regime was in reality a form of graduate tax. The changes to the fee regime have to-date been poorly explained to potential students and it will be important that the facts of the new arrangements are made clear in the coming months. The School's focus was on building a dialogue with government ministers pressing the importance of the disciplines represented in SOAS and in particular teaching and research in languages. The focus should be on ensuring that the School has a sustainable academic and financial model given current government policy. The

current administration has moved more quickly than previous governments and this rate of change has of itself been challenging; and the GB **noted** that there are concerns about the coherence of the government policy towards higher education. The School needs to focus its efforts on strategies that maintain its ability to provide excellent learning, teaching and research for its students

GB noted the SU motion and empathised with the concern about the impact of higher fees. The School's Access Agreement is intended to enhance participation in higher education of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Going forward it would be important to provide good support packages for those attending from disadvantaged backgrounds. The focus for GB would remain on the sustainability of the institution and working with government and other sector groups to ensure that due recognition is given to strategic and vulnerable subjects which the School offers.

58. 201/11 Governing Body Questionnaire Feedback

The GB **received** a report on the recent Governing Body Questionnaire from the Chairman and **agreed** the action points.

59 HEFCE Assessment of Institutional Risk

The GB **noted** HEFCE's recent letter confirming SOAS's current Institutional Risk status

60. OFFA Agreement

The GB **noted** the Schools submission to OFFA

61. Academic Promotions

The GB **noted** the external report on the School's Promotion Procedure for 2010/11 and **approved** the Academic Promotions nominees.

62. Staff Survey 2010: Thematic Report

The HR Director introduced the paper which comprised an executive summary highlighting the key issues supported by a detailed thematic analysis and an action plan.

The GB **noted** the encouraging results for the School, demonstrating real progress being made in many areas since 2007. However, GB acknowledged that there remained much work still to do in areas where the School is still below the HE benchmark.

The HR Director highlighted performance management, managing change, rewarding excellence, improving management capability and customer care as key areas to focus upon.

63. Carbon Management Plan

The GB **approved** the HECM Carbon Management Plan.

64. Staffing

The GB **noted** the awards of Emeritus Status.

65. Standing orders

The GB **approved** the amendments to the Standing Orders as recommended by Academic Board

66. Nominations Committee

The GB **approved** a change in the procedure for selecting Lay Committee Members as recommended by the Nominations Committee.

67. Equality and Diversity Annual Report

The paper was introduced by the Dean (Law & Social Sciences) as Chair of the School's Equality and Diversity Committee, who advised the GB that the Equal Pay Audit 2011 & the Executive Summary of the Equal Pay Audit which highlights the key results has been published and will also be made available to members.

The GB **noted** that a working group had been established to respond to differential performance, one such example was that between white and BME students in degree results with the introduction of anonymous examination papers to rectify any possible prejudice. That in future the committee would introduce PIs so that progress could be better measured

The GB **approved** the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

68 Student Complaints Procedure

The GB **approved** a revision to the Student Grievance Procedure, now retitled Student Complaint Procedure .

69. Committee Reports

The Governing Body **received** the Committee reports from the Academic Board, Resource and Planning committee and the Audit Committee.

70 . Any other business

There was no other business.

71. Date of next meeting

It was **noted** that the date of the next meeting of Governing Body was the 3rd October 2011.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES**GOVERNING BODY****Friday 8 July 2011****Action Points 2010/11**

Minute	Item	Action	Deadline For Report	By
24	Student Union Constitution	Co-Presidents would discuss with the Chairman the issue of including one lay trustee.	25/11/11	TM
55.	League Table Report	Action plan for improving the School's performance in key league tables.	25/11/11	DB
56	Key performance Indicators	The Following KPI's to be added: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Staff KPI based on an annual brief staff survey – Student Experience KPI which surveys the entire SOAS student body each year regarding their overall satisfaction with the student support provided – Updating the NSS KPI to reflect the SOAS undergraduate competitor group 	06/07/2012	GA
58.	201/11 Governing Body Questionnaire Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The introduction of executive summaries, together with a consistent structure to papers and their attachments be introduced; ▪ The Director to provide a short monthly update to GB on email ▪ GB and committee agenda reviewed to ensure that as much time as possible is allocated to substantive discussion ▪ GB meetings to be scheduled either at the beginning or end of a day, and preferably towards the end of the week; ▪ Governors to be actively encouraged to have more informal involvement with the School 	03/10/11	DB PW
67.	Equality and Diversity Annual Report	Equal Pay Audit 2011 & the Executive Summary of the Equal Pay Audit which highlights the key results has been published and will also be made available to members.	25/11/11	MC