

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

**AGENDA
Monday 3rd October 2011 from 1600 - 1800**

Room 116, College Buildings, Thornhaugh St. Russell Square, WC1H 0XG

I	Membership, terms of reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, annual plan of work To note: Membership, terms of reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and annual plan of work	[Appendix A]
II	Minutes To approve: The minutes of the meeting held on 8 th July 2011	[Attached]
III	Actions Taken To receive: updates on action taken (i) Minute 58 Governing Body Questionnaire Feedback To note: actions completed. (ii) Minute 67 Equality and Diversity Annual Report To note: The Equal Pay Audit 2011 & the Executive Summary of the Equal Pay Audit Reports were circulated to members.	
IV	Matters Arising / Matters for Report	
V	Director's Report To consider: A report from the Acting Director	[Appendix B]
VI	Degree Awarding Powers To note: A report from the Pro Director (Learning & Teaching)	[Appendix C]
VII	QAA Institutional Review To note: A Report from the Director of Academic Development	[Appendix D]
VIII	National Student Survey To note: A Report from the Director of Academic Development	[Appendix E]
IX	Health & Safety Annual report To approve: The Annual Report form the Director of Estates & Facilities	[Appendix F]
X	Date of next meeting To note: Next meeting of Governing Body is on Friday 25 th November 2011, starting at 1100.	

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

GOVERNING BODY

Monday 3rd October 2011

OPEN MINUTES

Dr T Miller (Chairman)
Ms E Wright (Vice-Chair)
Professor N Rao (Acting Director)
Mr M French (Honorary Treasurer)

Dr F Adamson	
Sir Ivor Crewe	Mr N Lerner
Mr G Dalal	Mr C Madekwe
Professor G Furniss	Ms R Mortuza
Sir Graham Fry	Professor S Subedi
Mr A Khan	Mr J Robinson
	Ms Z Weaver

In attendance:

Mr G Appleby (Director of Finance & Planning)
Mr D Beaton (Registrar & Secretary)
Professor S Chan (Dean of Law & Social Sciences)
Dr C Ince (incoming Deputy Secretary)
Professor A Pauwels (Dean of Languages & Cultures)
Professor Gurharpal Singh (Dean of Arts & Humanities)
Dr N Varey (Minutes)

Apologies:

Mr C Ilako
Professor B Harris-White
Dr J Parker

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the new student members of the Governing Body, Mr A Khan and Mr C Madekwe and also Professor Gurharpal Singh, Professor S Chan and Dr. C Ince who would be in attendance.

2. Apologies

Apologies above were **noted**

3. Membership, Terms of Reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, annual plan of work

The GB **noted** the membership, terms of reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings and annual plan of work for the coming session.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th July 2011 were **approved** and signed as a true record.

5. Actions Taken

i) *Minute 58, Governing Body Questionnaire Feedback*

The GB **noted** that the Director now provides a short monthly update to GB on email. GB and committee agendas are reviewed by the Deputy Secretary to ensure that as much time as possible is allocated to substantive discussion. GB meetings had been re-scheduled to be more in line with preferred timings of governors. Members of GB now regularly receive notices of events at the School.

(ii) *Minute 67, Equality and Diversity Annual Report*

The GB **noted** that the Equal Pay Audit 2011 & the Executive Summary of the Equal Pay Audit Reports had been circulated to members.

6. Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Director's Report

Governing Body **received** a report from the Acting Director and the following additional comments were **noted**.

(i) *Student recruitment and admissions 2011*

The undergraduate home/EU student numbers were close to target, with overseas undergraduate numbers exceeding targets. Taught postgraduate numbers are below target by 36 but with overseas exceeding target by 13. GB noted that as the enrolment process was not yet complete further changes in these numbers could be expected.

PGR Home & EU had also exceeded targets and recruitment was still progressing.

(ii) *White Paper: Students at the Heart of the System*

The government's proposals in the White Paper: *Students at the Heart of the System* for managing student numbers could have a significant impact on the School. Currently the School is only able to recruit undergraduate home/EU students to the numbers set out by HEFCE. Under the proposals in the White Paper there would no longer be controls on the numbers of students who achieve AAB+ (or equivalent) that universities may recruit. Forty-two per cent of the School's undergraduate applicants in 2010 were at AAB or above. GB noted that this meant from 2012-13, HEFCE will reduce the School's student number quota by this amount. GB also understood that under proposal in the White Paper the School will lose further numbers (approximately 30 depending on the final mechanisms used by HEFCE) from its quota and that these will be redistributed competitively to universities which are charging fees of £7,500 or less. The School will only be able to compensate for the loss of these student numbers by recruiting additional AAB+ students.

Taken together, these measures will have a major impact on the recruitment environment and increase the likelihood of greater competition to recruit well qualified students. The proposed new arrangements offer the possibility for the School to increase its UK student numbers if the academic programmes are sufficiently attractive. GB recognised that the long term effects of this new policy were unpredictable, however, it emphasised the need for

the School to maintain its commitments to widening participation. GB was pleased to note that the School had performed well in the recent data released by OFFA.

It was **agreed** that the Acting Director would bring to the next meeting of the Governing Body the School's plans for responding to these new arrangements for student numbers.

(iii) USS Pensions and National Pay Dispute Update

GB noted that there is currently a dispute between the University and College Union (UCU) and the 67 universities (including SOAS) which participate in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) about reforms which have seen the Scheme move from final salary to career average for new entrants from 1 October 2011. There have also been adjustments to employees' contribution rates. UCU had recently announced the results of its latest industrial action ballot on this matter, with 58% of those voting supporting strike action and 77% of those voting supporting action short of a strike (ASOS). This ballot was aggregated across all the employers, so it is a multi-employer dispute, unlike the ballot in March, which was disaggregated. The turnout for the vote was 42% of the membership, up from 36% in March. GB noted that at present it was unclear what form the ASOS would take. The School would endeavour to do what it could to minimise the disruption to students.

On pay, no agreement has been reached with any of the trades unions over the 2010 pay settlement. The matter is being handled at present within the Universities and Colleges Employers Association's (UCEA) dispute resolution mechanism. Unison is in dispute while the position of UCU is unclear. Over the summer the UCU conducted a consultative ballot over the pay settlement and GB noted that 57.3% of those who voted were in favour of accepting the offer.

(iv) Executive Board Residential

GB **noted** and supported the outcomes of the Executive Board's recent residential meeting and endorsed the importance of making significant progress in all of the areas identified. The most important of these were redesigning the School's approach to recruitment, marketing and admissions structures and processes; revising the learning & teaching and research strategies; and ensuring that sufficient surpluses were generated so as to secure financial sustainability. .

(v) Resignation of Vice Chancellor of University of London

The GB **noted** that the Vice Chancellor of the University of London will step down from the role in July 2012.

(vi) Finance

The Finance Director provided a preliminary report on the School's financial outturn for the financial year ended on 31 July 2011. He reported that an initial analysis indicated a surplus of £2.4M as against a planned surplus of £1.9M. The enhanced surplus represented approximately 3.5% of turnover. The GB further **noted** that it would receive forecast and actual figures at its November meeting.

8. Degree Awarding Powers

The GB **received** a paper on the process to be followed to advise the Collegiate Council of the University of London that the School intended to use its Degree Awarding Powers from 1 August 2012. In doing so the School will remain with-in the University of London but awarding its own degrees would provide greater flexibility in establishing international partnerships and in the structure of degrees.

The GB **approved** a submission to the Collegiate Council of the University of London to activate the Schools degree Awarding powers and noted that members would receive a copy of the form which had to be submitted.

9. QAA Institutional Review

The GB **noted** that the next Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Institutional Review would take place during the week commencing 4th March 2013. The outcome of the Review is important for the academic standing of the School and its attractiveness to potential students. The format of the review is being used for the first time this academic year. The School has established a small group to oversee preparations for the visit. GB noted the details of the new assessment process and that it would receive details of the School's preparations as these were prepared. In addition the GB **noted** that of the four qualitative judgements in the institutional review two cover new areas not included in previous reviews: the quality of public information and the enhancement of students' learning opportunities. The other novel feature of the review process is the active involvement of students.

It was **agreed** that GB would receive information setting out the key milestones for the School between now and the review in March 2013.

10. National Student Survey

The GB **noted** that the overall satisfaction score for the School had increased by 1% but that over a five-year period there had been little improvement in the School's performance. In particular GB was disappointed that over a number of years there appeared to have been little improvement in student satisfaction in the areas of assessment and feedback, academic support, learning resources and careers support.

The Acting Director advised the GB that measures had been put in place to address these concerns but that it did take time for the impact of these to feed through in surveys such as the NSS. Particular initiatives that were now in place included: personal tutoring system; a three-week turn around time for the assessment of course work, the standardisation of the form of feedback to improve quality levels and introduction of careers liaison staff for all departments. Further investment has been made in support for careers in the form of an Internship Officer.

GB was pleased to note these initiatives, however, concerns remained about the reasons underlying the wide variation of levels of satisfaction between different departments. GB recognised that in some instances the number of responses involved were low which could call into question the statistical significance of some of the differences. It was agreed that the current data should be re-analysed to test for statistical significance of the results as a first step to understand the variation in scores between departments.

In the light of GB's previous discussions about the increasingly competitive environment for recruiting students concerns remained about the pace with which the School was improving its performance in the NSS. It appeared as if the sector as a whole was improving its scores at a faster rate than the School. GB **agreed** that the School needed to focus on improving as quickly as possible in the key areas of the NSS results and asked for further details on how this would be achieved to be presented to its next meeting. All concerned recognised that particular events such as the library refurbishment project or industrial action contributed to adverse student ratings, however, the results over the past 5 years indicated that there were systemic issues which the School also required to tackle.

GB **agreed** to return to this issue at future meetings.

11. Health & Safety Annual Report

The GB **noted** that there was a focus on proposals to review the Fire Evacuation Procedures and Students' Union Late Licences, with an overview of operational matters and routine reports on a number of general issues and that a Draft Health and Safety Strategy will follow for approval by the GB.

The GB **requested** that in future a fuller report, reflecting the Schools responsibility towards health & safety be reported by the Director, which would for example include more detailed accident statistics.

12. Date of next meeting

It was **noted** that the date of the next meeting of Governing Body was the 25th November 2011.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES**GOVERNING BODY****Monday 3 October 2011****Action Points 2011/12**

Minute	Item	Action	Deadline For Report	By
7	AAB+ Student Recruitment	Up-date on the School's plans to address the impact of this change in student number allocation.	25/11/11	NR
8	Degree Awarding Powers	Completed Template for Collegiate Council of the University of London to be provided	25/11/11	NR
9	QAA Institutional Review	Information setting out key milestones	25/11/11	NR
10	National Student Survey	Up-date on the process for regularly reviewing progress in this area.	25/11/11	NR
11	Health & Safety Annual Report	A more detailed annual report from the Director	10/12	PW/DB