

SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

GOVERNING BODY

Monday 30th September 2013

OPEN MINUTES

Dr T Miller (Chairman)
Ms E Wright (Vice-Chair)
Mr G Dalal (Honorary Treasurer)
Professor R Black (Pro Director)
Professor N Rao (Pro Director)

Mrs S Alier
Professor Sir I Crewe
Mr D East
Ms L Edwards
Mr C Ilako
Ms R Mortuza
Professor D Mosse
Professor C Oughton
Mr A Popham

Mr J Robinson
Mr D Skinner
Mr S Tinton
Lord Williams

In attendance: Mr G Appleby (Acting Registrar)
Professor M Craven (Dean of Law & Social Sciences)
Mr B Douglas (Acting Director of Finance)
Dr C Ince (Acting Secretary, Minutes)
Professor G Singh (Dean of Arts & Humanities)

Apologies: Mr D Beaton (Registrar & Secretary)
Sir Graham Fry
Professor A Pauwels (Dean of Languages & Cultures)
Professor P Webley (Director)
Ms Z Weaver

1. Welcome and Apologies

Governing Body **noted** the apologies and welcomed those members who were joining Governing Body for their first meeting.

2. Membership, Terms of Reference, procedures for the conduct of meetings, and annual plan of work for 2013-14 [Appendix A]

Governing Body **noted** its terms of reference and the procedures of conduct for meetings. It discussed the plan of work for the year noting the particularly heavy agenda for the November meeting.

3. Conflicts of Interest

There were no conflicts of interest stated.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 4th July 2013 were **approved**.

5. Actions Taken

(i) KPIs

The Acting Secretary **reported** that the annual report on Key Performance Indicators would be considered at the next meeting of the Governing Body. This aligned with the School's annual return of information to HEFCE.

6. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

7. Questions on the Director's Reports [Appendix B]

31st July & 27th September

The Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching **reported** on the Director's monthly reports in his absence. The latest picture on undergraduate enrolment was very positive with the School expecting to exceed its target by around 40 students. The work in confirmation and clearing had been very successful and although some lower offers had been made by departments the School was not anticipated to go outside its Student Number Control quota, for those students with grades below ABB.

Postgraduate taught and research recruitment had not reached their targets but as these students enrolled later the full picture was not yet known. The School was forecasting a shortfall in both but would be inside the fee contingency figure provided for in the budget.

An update on the student recruitment position would be circulated to members in due course.

Governing Body **noted** the very good performance in the recent league tables that had seen the School move up seven places in the combined *Times/Sunday Times* table to 24th place, and 4th in London. The School had also been ranked 26th in the world for arts and humanities in the QS international rankings. More detailed results including regional subject scores would be circulated to members. Governing Body **congratulated** the staff of the School for the excellent work in achieving this improvement, which was predominately down to the efforts made to improve student satisfaction in respect of assessment & feedback and academic support.

Governing Body **discussed** the other metrics that affected performance in league tables, such as employability where the School continued to make improvements. The research rating was mostly based on the last research assessment exercise from 2008, so this would change after the REF results. The League Table Working Group would continue to closely monitor this area and the associated action plan.

8. National Student Survey 2013 – Key Findings [Appendix C]

The Pro-Director, Learning & Teaching **reported** on the School's success in the recent National Student Survey that had seen its position improve by 44 places. As previously discussed this was due to improvements across all areas but most notably in the scores around academic support and assessment & feedback. Overall student satisfaction was at 89%.

Governing Body **discussed** the results in detail and the excellent results in some departments from which good practice would be shared across the School. The introduction of online submission of coursework and feedback along with the 3-week turnaround time was a significant factor in the improved results.

Although the results were excellent the School could not be complacent and needed to continue its efforts in this vital area. All departments had developed action plans to look at further work and these would be monitored closely.

Governing Body **noted** that the School, in common with the majority of the sector, did not directly link results in the NSS to staff performance. They were discussed with staff and used as information in the promotion process but were not linked directly to individual appraisals. The NSS results were not necessarily a good measure of an individual's performance and often reflected other factors in the School or the external environment. The Executive Board had discussed the issue of staff performance at its recent Away Day and would be looking again at the possibility of a framework for academic performance.

The Chair **thanked** the staff of the School for the work to improve the School's scores in this critical area and **agreed** he would write to the Heads of Departments with the best performance to thank them on behalf of Governing Body.

9. Governing Body Effectiveness [Appendix D]

Governing Body **noted** the update report.

10. Research and enterprise issues beyond the 2014 REF

The Pro-Director, Research & Enterprise **presented** on research and enterprise issues after the 2014 REF. The slides would be circulated to members after the meeting.

A key area for the School was to target larger research grants as these were becoming increasingly favoured by funders. The School would also need to look at how it explained the impact of its research and the professional support that was provided to academics, including marketing and communications.

Governing Body **noted** that an initial assessment of the School's REF submission was that it was of the expected standard. There was some excellent work of the highest 4* rating but decisions would need to be taken on the overall shape of the submission as only 4* and 3* research would receive any funding.

11. Dates of the Next Meetings of Governing Body

Governing Body **noted** that dates of the formal and informal meetings for the 2013/14 year. Its next meeting would take place on Monday 30 September.

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Action Points 2012/13

Minute	Item	Action	Deadline For Report	By
7	KPIs	Report to include targets for each KPI and detail on benchmarking	28/11/13	GA/CI

Action Points 2013/14

Minute	Item	Action	Deadline For Report	By
7	Director's Report	Circulate update on recruitment data	25/10/13	CI
7	Director's Report	Circulate detailed league table results including regional subjects	25/10/13	CI
8	NSS scores	Letters to best performing departments to record formal thanks of GB	28/11/13	TM
10	Research & Enterprise presentation	Circulate slides to members	25/10/13	CI