

These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the committee.

SOAS

**ACADEMIC BOARD
MINUTES**

1 February 2017 at 2.00pm, Conference Suite, Paul Webley Wing

Dr R Alexander	Dr Nadjé Al-Ali
Baroness Valerie Amos	Professor R Bachmann*
Dr B Bhandar*	Professor R Black
Professor C Bramall	Dr J Caron
Professor M W Charney	Professor A Contadini
Professor C Cramer	Ms R Everitt
Ms N Farzad	Mr M Gaskin*
Mr A Habib*	Dr S Hawthorne
Dr G Heathcote*	Professor M Hutt
Dr E Hunter	Dr M Jennings*
Dr D Johnston	Dr T Kaiser*
Dr G Kirsch	Dr M Laffey
Dr K Latham	Dr Angus Lockyer
Dr Lutz Marten	Dr B Murtagh
Dr M Nelson	Dr A Newsham
Professor I Nikolaeva	Dr S Pett
Ms N Phillips	Dr B Pizziconi
Professor R Reid	Professor A Saad Filho
Dr M Sabaratnum	Ms P Sanderson
Professor G Singh	Dr S Sperl
Professor C Tan	Mr M Taha*
Dr U Volz	

*denotes apologies

In attendance:

Mr G Appleby	Mr P Baran
Ms S Blohm	Mr C Ince
Mr R Ivermee	Ms AM O'Mullane (minutes)
Mr I Pickup	Ms M Staunton (Item)

Dr Nadjé Al-Ali was welcomed to her first meeting of Academic Board as the Director of the Doctoral School.

Minutes

AB 2016/17 3 A

The minutes of the meeting were **approved** subject to the following change: Dr Mandy Sadan did not attend Academic Board (AB) on the 12 December 2016.

Action Points

AB 2016/17 3 B

All actions have been completed.

Matters Arising/Matters for report

AB 2016/17 3 C

No matters arising were reported.

Director's Report

AB 2016/17 3 D

AB **noted** an update on the following two matters:

President Trump's executive order

The Chair noted that a communication had been circulated by the Registrar which provided guidance to staff who were travelling to America following the issuance of President Trump's executive order. Should any member of staff have any concerns, they were advised to contact Emma Jessup in the Directorate Team. Universities UK were also actively engaging with this issue.

Article in Evening Standard in Anti-Semitism

The Chair provided an update to AB on developments since the publication of an article in the Evening Standard on anti-Semitism at SOAS. The Director emphasised that the School prided itself on its diversity and is working closely with the Jewish Society to ensure that Jewish students feel welcome at SOAS. AB discussed the matter and agreed that members who were interested in contributing to the ongoing work in this area should contact the Registrar to express their interest.

Academic Board engagement with the Board of Trustees

AB 2016/17 3 E

The Chair of the Board of Trustees (BoT), Marie Staunton, provided an overview of the BoT Trustees' role, the outputs of the recent governance review and sought ideas from AB on how engagement could be enhanced between AB and the BoT. It was noted that the BoT was now meeting with a department prior to each of its meetings in order to better engage with the wider School.

AB welcomed this approach of increasing greater engagement between the two bodies. It was felt that the informal meeting between AB and BoT supported increasing engagement. It was noted that increased transparency would reduce the opportunity for confusion and potential for rumours. There had been rumours that the BoT had discussed redundancies. It was confirmed that there had been no discussion at BoT about redundancies during the term of the current Chair of the BoT or during the Director's tenure.

Members of the BoT who were AB members asked about their ability to communicate Board of Trustee decisions to colleagues as legally Board members are not allowed to represent particular interests. It was agreed that this matter would be followed up by the School Secretary. The official communications from BoT meetings were the short note of the meeting which was circulated to AB members and in the staff newsletter and also the minutes from the meeting.

Sub-Committee Report

AB 2016/17 3 F

Research & Enterprise Committee

AB **noted** a report from Research & Enterprise Committee. This was an out of cycle report from a meeting of Research & Enterprise Committee which took place on 19 October 2016. Concerns were raised by AB members about the staffing update for the Doctoral School. An update was provided on steps being taken to fill the vacant posts as well as work streams for improving IT systems and marketing.

Academic Restructuring

AB 2016/17 3 G

AB **discussed** the information circulated to the Committee on academic leadership, annual and periodic review processes, one professional service and the review of area studies. AB was asked to consider whether there was any other information required in order to support decision making at AB on the 9th February 2017.

Additional information was tabled at the meeting, the job description of heads of department, information on the cross subsidy, resource allocation models and a comment from the postgraduate student representative who was not able to attend the meeting. There was a lengthy discussion of the information circulated.

Options

The Academic Restructuring Working Group was consulted on the two options that had been circulated for informal consultation. A member of the working group provided their experience of being on the working group and indicated that they found its operation problematic. Option 2 was felt by some members to not be a meaningful option as it had several issues that did not favour its adoption. Some members felt that it was difficult to identify which was the optimum option due to the fact that particular units had not been allocated. AB was reminded that it would be deciding on the structures and not on the detailed working of the revised structure. It was confirmed that proposals on the location of the outstanding units would be brought to the next AB meeting. Members of AB indicated an interest in understanding the thoughts of colleagues from units that had to be allocated. There was also feedback that there was a gap in the documentation on how the changes would impact on the student experience.

Senate update

Academic Board noted the following outcome of the Senate vote on the options presented during the informal consultation process.

Option 1: 80 (53%)

Option 2: 14 (9%)

Neither: 56 (37%)

No preference: 1 (1%)

Total votes: 151

Academic Leadership Roles

It was planned that two Associate Deans of Research (ADRs) would work with the Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) on research matters. Four Associate Dean Learning & Teaching (ADLTs) would work with the Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching) on learning and teaching matters. It was confirmed that ADRs and ADLT would have an advisory role. ADLTs would operate on a thematic basis across the institution.

During the transitional year, two Interim Deans, respectively, for the Social Sciences and Humanities/Languages would be retained. It was confirmed that there was likely to be a need to appoint an additional Pro-Director. Queries were raised on the necessity of having a third Pro-Director role. The Chair confirmed that the third Pro-Director would likely focus on international issues/external relations as this was a strategic area that required additional focus.

A query was raised on how the sustainability agenda intersected with academic restructuring as there would be expenditure on retaining two Interim Deans during the transitional year as well as the appointment of a third Pro-Director? It was confirmed that the third pro-director would replace the current three Deans. It was also emphasised that academic restructuring was a process that contributed to the longer term sustainability agenda.

Head of Department

Feedback was sought on the current job description of the Head of Department and whether it should be retained in its current form. It was confirmed that academic restructuring would enable Heads to fulfil their current job descriptions as there were structural reasons that prevented this presently.

It was noted that the job description had not been updated since 2011 and that it was due for a review in the context of academic restructuring. It was felt that certain sections of the current job description had been added in an organic fashion and as a consequence the document lacked coherence.

Some AB members felt that there was a lack of clarity around the Head of Department's powers when it came to programme approval, recruitment both of staff and students and there should be clarification about this. Heads of Department would be members of Executive Board (EB) and would participate in decision making on student recruitment, staff recruitment and would be accountable for management of their budgets to the EB. EB would be collectively responsible for the finances of the School. This approach of collective responsibility was welcomed.

One Professional Service

The intention was to move to a single Professional Service should faculties be removed, with some services located within the new principal academic units (Schools), and others delivered centrally, but in each case providing a service to those academic units. Work from One Professional Service was currently focussed on ensuring that there was effective support for Heads of Department under the new structure. While the toolkit approach was welcomed it was emphasised by AB members that Heads of Department would need adequate administrative support in order to effectively discharge their duties.

Transitional Arrangements

It was noted that there were a number of processes currently supported by the Associate Deans and Senior Tutors that would need to continue in the new structure in order to maintain consistency and avoid over-burdening the new Schools. Some AB members felt there needed to be additional information on what processes would move to the new structures and what processes should be dealt with under transitional arrangements. It was confirmed that during the transitional year it was likely that recruitment proposals from departments would be moderated by Deans and signed off by Executive Board.

Annual and Periodic Review process

AB noted the intention to recombine practice from Annual Programme Reviews (APRs), Periodic Programme Reviews (PPRs), Departmental Curriculum Review (currently being piloted), and the former Departmental Programme Reviews (DPRs) in order to effectively address planning and strategy concerns. This approach was welcomed by Academic Board members. As part of this approach data would be supplied to departments to assist with data-based self-evaluations intended to support quality management, financial planning and strategy alignment. A query was raised on the level departmental administrators would operate at as they would be expected to support the Head of Department with analysis and planning activity and also undertake quite operational tasks also.

Area Studies

AB noted the proposal that a separate review should take place of Area studies in the summer term of 2017. Some Academic Board members felt that it was a missed opportunity as the decisions taken by Academic Board would impact on the later review of Area Studies.

Cross-Subsidy

There was agreement that the cross-subsidy process should be more transparent. There were comments that tying a cross subsidy to a certain percentage of surplus may act as a disincentive for producing a surplus. There was also a comment that there should be greater clarity on the minimum level required to fund the areas of the school that required a cross-subsidy. Funding through the catalyst fund had been pursued to support strategically vulnerable languages. Academic Board noted that the Resource Allocation Model Working Group would be looking at these matters in order to incentivise good financial management and disincentivise poor financial management as well as ensuring that resource was flowing appropriately through the school.

PhD Scholarships

Academic Board noted the comments submitted by the Postgraduate research representative. Reassurance was provided by the Pro-Director Research & Enterprise that the level of scholarships would be maintained and outlined activity intended to enlarge the amount of scholarships and grants made available.

Other Matters

Health, Safety & Security Committee was omitted from the academic management structures diagram (Annexe 4).

Senate Terms of Reference

AB 2016/17 3 H

AB **agreed** to recommend to the BoT, a change to the Standing Orders, Procedures for the Conduct of Committee Meetings, Annexe XIV in order to reduce the quorum of Senate from 100 to 30.

Committee Membership

AB 2016/17 3 I

AB **noted** that Professor Chris Cramer, Department of Development Studies, had filled the vacancy on Honorary Degrees & Fellowships Committee and Professor Michael Charney, had filled the vacancy for a member of the BoT (from AB) on Resources & Planning Committee.

Electronic Academic Board Meeting

AB 2016/17 3 J

AB **approved** the conduct of an electronic AB meeting in March to approve the School's annual REF review and progress overall.

Board of Trustee Minutes

AB 2016/17 3 K

AB **noted** the open minutes from a meeting of the BoT held on 29th November 2016. As this was a starred item it was not discussed during the meeting.

Actions

Item	Action Detail	When?	By?
Decolonising the SOAS: Developing a Strategic Vision AB 2016/17 2 I	Academic Board agreed the Decolonising the SOAS Vision Statement should be sent to Department consideration for approval. Academic Board requested an accompanying summary of points raised at Department and Faculty Management Group meetings be available to AB members.	05.05.2017	Decolonising WG
Academic Restructuring AB 2016/17 3 G	Pro-Director Research & Enterprise to use feedback to help with the preparation of papers for the meeting on 9 February 2017	09.02.17	RB
Senate Terms of Reference AB 2016/17 3 H	Academic Boards agreed to recommend the following change to the Board of Trustees: Standing Orders, Procedures for the Conduct of Committee Meetings, Annexe XIV in order to reduce the quorum of Senate from 100 to 30.	04.04.2017	CI
Electronic Academic Board Meeting AB 2016/17 3 J	AB approved the conduct of an electronic Academic Board meeting in March to approve the School's annual REF review and progress overall.	March 2017	AMOM