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SOAS

**ACADEMIC BOARD
MINUTES**

05 May 2017 at 2.00pm, Conference Suite, Paul Webley Wing

Dr R Alexander*	Professor Nadjie 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	Dr Mandy Sadan*
Ms P Sanderson*	Professor G Singh
Dr S Sperl	Mr M Taha
Professor C Tan	Dr U Volz

*denotes apologies

In attendance:

Mr G Appleby	Ms K Brayman
Ms S Blohm	Mr G Davies
Ms F Hill (Item F)	Dr C Ince
Mr R Ivermee	Ms AM O'Mullane (minutes)
Dr I Pickup	Mr R Poulson (Item F)

Minutes

AB 2016/17 6 A

The minutes of the meeting were **approved** subject to the following changes:

On page 2, under Working Group No. 3 the sentence, 'An indication of what their role should cover was included in the Working Group Report' should be changed to 'A job role for both has been drafted by the Working Group and included in the Report'.

Under the summary of points of clarification/comments the sentence, 'It was confirmed that the Director of HR...Learning and Teaching Coordinator' should be changed to, 'It was confirmed that the Director of HR would be available to work with Heads of School to draft job roles for Associate Heads of Department where a School requires such a role'.

Action Points

AB 2016/17 6 B

Academic Board **were advised** that feedback from the distribution of the draft Decolonising SOAS Vision to faculties and departments would be brought to the June meeting of Academic Board. All other actions had been completed.

Matters Arising/Matters for report

AB 2016/17 6 C

No matters arising were reported.

Academic Restructuring - Update

AB 2016/17 6 D

Academic Board **noted** the update on developments with Academic Restructuring. There was a suggestion during discussion that the devolution of budget should be added to the Resource Allocation Model's Working Group's terms of reference. It was confirmed that the devolution of budgets would be a matter for the expanded Executive Board to discuss and make a decision on.

It was queried whether the purchase of a workload model software should take place after the principles for the workload model were developed. It was confirmed that the Director of Finance & Planning and the Head of Department would work together on the sequencing of these matters. It was also important that any purchased software was compatible with future planned investments. It was noted that Mark Laffey would be willing to take the lead for the development of the principles for the workload model. It was agreed that the Pro-Director Research and Enterprise would follow up with the Director of Finance & Planning about the inclusion of the Head of IFCELS in the discussion of workload as there were be different needs for lecturers.

It was raised that the Student Experience Committee was a useful committee as it brought academics and professional services staff together to focus on supporting the student experience. It was confirmed that the approach that was being taken was to embed the roles of the Student Experience Committee across the school committee structures as well as within the proposed Teaching and Student Engagement Committee.

With regard to the revised committee structure, this was a matter still under discussion and the working group would be reconvened to consider the matter. A query was also raised about student representation on department committees. While it was up to departments to organise themselves in terms of committees, it was confirmed that there would be an expectation for student representation on the department committee(s).

The positioning of Islamic Studies within the new academic structure was discussed. It was confirmed that all programmes would be convened by the current programme conveners.

Review of Area Studies

AB 2016/17 6 E

AB **approved** the terms of reference for the Review of Area Studies subject to the following changes:

- That the review would benchmark with other institutions when identifying the School's distinctive approach to "area studies" in the 21st Century.
- Inclusion of the Head of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Head of the School Languages, Cultures and Linguistics and Head of the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures in the membership for the review.

Teaching Strategy and Estate Implication

AB 2016/17 6 F

The Director of Estates and Facilities and the Assistant Director, Estates and Facilities (Capital Projects) presented on the School's Learning and Teaching Strategy and the implications for the development of an Estate Strategy. AB was informed that the Estate Strategy was undergoing revision. This revision was taking place within a context of financial and spatial constraints.

The development of the estates strategy would focus on the requirements that emerged from the teaching strategy and the curriculum reviews as it would be important that the Estates Strategy delivered the right outcomes. It was important to use our existing space to the best purpose and that it supported future teaching and learning requirements. Room sizes needed to be appropriate for seminar purposes and feature the technology required for classroom learning.

The Paul Webley Wing had demonstrated the need for a mixture of formal and informal learning spaces as well as group work spaces. There was a slight improvement in the Times Higher Student Experience Survey scores for the 'environment' following the opening of PWW. AB was informed of the plans for the refurbishment of the Philip's Building which was in the detailed planning phase.

AB **discussed** the School's Learning and Teaching Strategy and the implications for the development of an Estate strategy. The following matters were raised:

Philips Building Decant

AB asked for further information on the process for decant from the Philips Building. Levels 2 to four of the Phillips Building would be refurbished at the same. When designing the refurbishment plan the academic cycle was taken into consideration in order to mitigate the impact on students. There would be a certain level of disruption which would require a decant of levels 2 to four. The decant plan prioritised keeping academic teaching staff on site although they may not have individual office space. The decant would most likely take place between May and June 2018 with some elements of non-core student facing services being decanted earlier to facilitate this. The decant would be sequential with groups moving to Vernon Square first, followed by the occupants of Philips Building moving into their vacated spaces. It was noted that there would be some disruption to the library as there would be work taking place on the roof.

Development of Informal Spaces in the Philips Building

AB welcomed the proposal for breakout spaces for departments, being developed as part of the refurbishment. It was explained that it would not be possible to make every corner space associated with a department on the fifth floor as there were building regulation restrictions. The Assistant Director, Estates and Strategy would welcome feedback on how to use the informal spaces generated as a result of the refurbishment.

Support for Multimedia

It was confirmed that the estates strategy intended to deliver an environment to support multimedia installed by the IT Directorate. The focus would be on flexible and general multimedia support rather than specificity as it would cause bottlenecks for timetabling rooms.

Aims of the Estates Strategy

Ultimately the aim overall was to deliver a responsive estate that could adapt to an ever changing student body and the needs of the undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts. Currently there was a need for larger lecture theatres and it was noted that the Brunei Gallery had been released for teaching all week next year. It was noted that the estate was also important for the staff experience. It was confirmed there was no plan to change work practices and shift for example to a hot-desking model.

Consultation on the Estates Strategy

To input into the consultation on the Estates Strategy, AB members were advised to contact the Assistant Director, Estates and Facilities (Capital Projects) and the Director of Estates and Facilities. An update would be provided to AB on the outcome from the consultation.

Other Matters

The Assistant Director, Estates and Strategy agreed to follow up with the PGR Student representative on the matter of a leak.

International Strategy

AB 2016/17 6 G

AB members welcomed the report of the working group on “internationalisation” and **agreed** to its broad direction of travel. As part of AB’s approval to the broad direction of travel, AB supported the need for dedicated resource to support International Office. AB also noted that this would form part of the discussion at the Board of Trustees Informal meeting.

During the discussion, it was queried whether anything can be done about the cap on fees for the year abroad. It was noted that the School was operating within a regulated fee regime for the year abroad. A working group had been set up to review this issue. It was noted that the Doctoral School was interested in transnational education e.g. blended and online provision and delivery of joint degrees.

It was queried what the benefit was to offer a year abroad student experience to every student? The Pro-Director (Learning and Teaching) confirmed that while a high number of students are international students, it was important to offer an opportunity outside the language programmes to have an international experience. It would be important for the opportunities to be fair, affordable and meaningful. It was noted that some areas did offer this opportunity.

It was confirmed that the use of the word complementarity to describe research partners was appropriate as it was important to work with institutions that had different disciplines and backgrounds that researched shared interests and challenges but in different ways. It was **agreed** that Australia should be included in the list of countries/regions with which the school should develop deep, meaningful and effective research partnerships.

While the possibility of semesterisation to support shorter chunks of experience abroad was suggested, it was felt that the current academic year structure was appropriate to support a substantial overseas experience. It was noted that space could be created in the curriculum to accommodate the opportunity for an international experience. It was noted that it would be important to be informed of the quality assurance requirements when engaging in this activity.

SOAS Recordings/Capture Policy

AB 2016/17 6 H

AB **approved** the SOAS Recordings/Capture Policy which had been discussed and approved by the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee.

Suspension of Regulations

AB 2016/17 6 I

Academic Board had a discussion on whether the academic regulations should be suspended to allow an alternative marking schema for relevant modules. It was noted that the suspension of regulations would only be available for use in limited circumstances:

- Modules that had finalists, year abroad students or intercollegiate students
- Where the head of department deemed that the suspension of regulations was appropriate
- Permission had been sought from the students affected by the suspension of regulations.

The School had sought legal advice surrounding the matter of seeking permission from students and was waiting to be advised on this. It was confirmed that the suspension would only be permitted for this year's summer exam boards. AB was advised of the financial and legal risks for not pursuing the suspension of regulations.

The outcome of the vote taken on whether the academic regulations should be suspended to allow an alternative marking schema for relevant modules was as follows:

Yes: 13

No: 4

Abstain: 3

Maternity and Paternity Policy for Students at SOAS

AB 2016/17 6 J

Academic Board noted that the Maternity and Paternity Policy had been approved by the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee, 21 February 2017. Academic Board requested that the following change be made to the policy: that clarification be provided on retrospective or late applications for maternity or paternity related leaves of absence.

Minutes and Reports from AB Sub-Committees

AB 2016/17 6 K

AB noted the minutes and reports from the following committees: Academic Development Committee (8 February 2017), Equality and Diversity Committee (15 February 2017), Research and Enterprise Committee (22 February 2017) and Senate (9 March 2017).

Awards of Emeritus Professor: Professor Charles Tripp*

AB 2016/17 6 L

AB noted the award of Emeritus Professor to Professor Charles Tripp.

Electronic Business conducted since the last meeting*

AB 2016/17 6 M

AB noted the approval by electronic business of the REF Progress Report 2021 for onward circulation to the Board of Trustees.

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 - Update AB 2016/17 6 D	The Pro-Director Research and Enterprise would follow up with the Director of Finance & Planning about the inclusion of the Head of IFCELS in the discussion of workload	15.06.17	RB
Review of Area Studies AB 2016/17 6 E	The following changes should be made to the terms of reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That the review would benchmark with other institutions when identifying the School's distinctive approach to "area studies" in the 21st Century. - Inclusion of the Head of the School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Head of the School Languages, Cultures and Linguistics and Head of the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultures in the membership for the review. 	19.05.17	RB
Teaching Strategy and Estates Implication AB 2016/17 6 F	An update would be provided to AB on the outcome from the consultation on the Estates Strategy The Assistant Director, Estates was to follow up with the PGR Student representative on the matter of a leak.	October 2017 15.06.2017	RP FH
International Strategy AB 2016/17 6 G	Australia should be included in the list of regions with which the school should develop deep, meaningful and effective research partnerships.	18.05.2017	RB
Maternity and Paternity Policy for Students at SOAS	Clarification should be provided on retrospective or late applications for maternity or paternity related leaves of absence in the policy	15.06.2017	DJ