

## SOAS

### EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Friday 24 February 2012, Room 116, 1.15pm - 3.15pm

#### AGENDA

- |      |  |            |
|------|--|------------|
| I    | <b>Minutes</b><br>To approve: minutes of the ERC meeting held on 21 October 2011   | Attached   |
| II   | <b>Matters Arising</b>   |            |
| III  | <b>Remit of ERC</b><br>To approve: proposal from Directors of ERD and LIS to move the responsibility for Internal Communications from Information and Internal Communications Committee to ERC   | Appendix A |
| IV   | <b>Admissions and Recruitment Project Board</b><br>To receive: Oral update from Chair on work of the Admissions and Recruitment Project Board, including the review of Student Marketing and Recruitment                               |            |
| V    | <b>External Relations Strategy 2011-14</b><br>To receive: Oral update from Chair on new SOAS Vision and Strategy and update from the Director of ERD on the development of the SOAS centenary campaign and External Relations Strategy | Appendix B |
| VI   | <b>Alumni Relations</b><br>To receive: Update from Alumni Relations Manager on SOAS Alumni Relations activities and to consider proposed definition of SOAS Alumni   | Appendix C |
| VII  | <b>Reputation and Identity Review and Market Research and Intelligence</b><br>To receive: Update from Head of Marketing on progress towards a new visual identity and market research and intelligence function                        | Appendix D |
| VIII | <b>Media Relations/Internal Communications</b><br>To note: Update from Communications Manager on the Internal Communications action plan and timeline  | Appendix E |
| IX   | <b>Date of next meeting 2012</b><br><br>To note: 18 May 2012 Room 116 at 1.15pm  |            |

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, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**  
**EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

Friday 24 February 2012 - 1.15pm in Room 116

**Chair:** Mr Donald Beaton (Chair)

**Members:** Mr David Christmas  
Professor Rachel Dwyer  
Professor Graham Furniss  
Mr Evan Hancock  
Mr John Hollingworth  
Dr Charlotte Horlyck  
Mr Ali Khan  
Dr Dina Matar \*  
Ms Fiona McWilliams  
Professor Anne Pauwels  
Professor Iain Scobbie\*  
Ms Elizabeth Wright

**In attendance:** Ms Johannah Flaherty  
Mr Paulo Gomes  
Mr Michael Sherry

\*Those members whose names are marked with an asterisk were unable to be present.

**1. ERC Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2011 were **approved**.

**2. Matters Arising**

The Head of Development and Alumni Relations gave an update on the tax implications relating to donations received by SOAS from US donors. It is very likely that any donations received from any US donor will come through AFSOAS rather than be paid directly to SOAS, This will ensure that SOAS maximises the return on the donations due to US tax laws.

**3. Remit of ERC**

The proposal to move the responsibility for internal communications strategy from the Information and Internal Communications Committee (IICC) to ERC was discussed. It was agreed that to have all internal communications issues under the umbrella of one committee was sensible and the proposal was therefore **approved**.

The paper from the Director of External Relations and Development (Appendix A) suggested that the new name should be the 'External Relations and Communications

Committee'. The Chair asked for any other suggestions to be emailed to the External Relations Officer and the name would be decided at the next meeting (**action**).

#### **4. Admissions and Recruitment Project Board**

Regarding Admissions, the Chair gave a verbal update on the work of the Admissions and Recruitment Project Board and reported that four suppliers had demonstrated their online admissions software packages for post graduate admissions. One had been chosen and would be recommended to Executive Board on 27 March 2012.

The Pro-Director for Research and Enterprise welcomed this and commented that the new IT system for post graduate students would improve the conversion rate.

The Chair also informed members that the review of Student Marketing and Recruitment had been completed. The results were currently being considered by the Admissions and Recruitment Project Board.

The Communications Manager was asked to report on the ongoing work between Communications and Events and Admissions. She outlined the activities undertaken including drafting a communications plan mapping activities around the admissions cycle; and finalising plans for an 'Insight Day' for offer holders on 19 March 2012, allowing them to get a more in-depth understanding of life at SOAS. The response to the Insight Day from academic departments had been very positive. As part of 'keeping warm' activities, a follow-up telephone campaign is scheduled for April which will be carried out by student ambassadors.

#### **5. External Relations Strategy 2011 - 14**

The Head of Development and Alumni Relations gave an update on the centenary fundraising campaign as it will be a key component of the new External Relations Strategy.

An away afternoon brainstorming session to hear academic ideas had been held in December 2011 with a range of academics and professional services staff attending. A draft Case for Support for the fundraising campaign will be produced shortly, a feasibility study will be commissioned and possible prospects will be identified.

The Chair asked for a timeline of the centenary plans (showing key milestones) to be presented at the next meeting (**action**).

The Dean of the Faculty of Languages and Cultures asked whether it would be possible to name the North Block if SOAS received a large donation from a particular donor. It was noted that the University of London would need to be consulted about naming opportunities for the whole building but it would certainly be possible to name different areas within the building.

#### **6. Alumni Relations**

The Head of Development and Alumni Relations spoke to the report on Alumni Relations activities (Appendix C) and the proposed definition of SOAS alumni.

There was a discussion about increasing awareness of the Alumni programme within the current student body and the Student Union Co-President for Finance and Communications suggested that all final year students should receive SOAS World and the e-lumni bulletin as matter of course. This was agreed and will be implemented in the next session.

The committee approved and supported the increase in Alumni Relations activities and the engagement of alumni to support various SOAS events and undertakings.

The Head of Careers reported that Alumni Relations and Careers had been working together closely on a number of successful activities including:-

- an Alumni mentoring programme;
- a 'themed week' of Alumni events such as a Networking Evening for students with alumni which had taken place earlier in February; and
- digital Career Case Studies (which would be published on the SOAS website shortly).

The proposed definition of SOAS alumni was discussed. It was agreed that it is important to have a clear distinction between a SOAS alumna/us and a SOAS graduate.

It was agreed that the definition of SOAS alumni should be as inclusive as possible to include former staff and a wide range of students whilst not decreasing the value of holding a SOAS degree.

The Chair confirmed that the proposed definition of SOAS alumni was approved in principle. The definition will be further refined by External Relations and the Head of Development and Alumni Relations would report back on progress at the next meeting (**action**).

## **7. Reputation and Identity Review and Market Research and Intelligence**

The Head of Marketing outlined the final phase of the Reputation and Identity Review (RIR) project. The School's visual identity is being 'refreshed' (not re-invented) using the findings from the research carried out last year. Style guidelines are being developed to ensure that the refreshed visual identity is applied consistently across SOAS.

Design experts, Lloyd Northover have been appointed and will present creative concepts for the refreshed visual identity to the RIR Steering Group on 27 March. An update Report and Visuals will be brought to the next meeting (**action**).

## **8. Media Relations/Internal Communications**

The Communications Manager reported on the Internal Communications Action Plan which focuses on the six priorities highlighted by staff which came out of the internal communications review, including the development of the new intranet. The Chair asked if the intranet would be ready by May 2012. The Communications Manager confirmed that the intranet platform would be chosen by the end of May 2012 but the development of the intranet itself will take several months.

The Director of External Relations and Development reported that at the IICC meeting earlier that day it had been agreed that 'My SOAS' would be a good name for the staff intranet. It was agreed that the Director of External Relations and Communications will report back at the next meeting with an update on the intranet (**action**).

It was noted that there will be guidelines and templates for 'all staff' emails to make their use more targeted and that the Internal Communications Working Group had a productive meeting which discussed the tender for the installation of the new telephone system. There will also be a meeting to improve the internal newsletter, SOAS e-News.

There was a discussion about the need for departments to keep the content of their webpages current and the Director of External Relations and Development reported that the first Web Policy Board (WPB) meeting had taken place on 15 February 2012 and a Web Action Group (WAG) had also been set up. A representative from each department would sit on the WAG and be responsible for ensuring that their department's webpages were kept up to date, an initiative which was widely approved and endorsed by members.

The Communications Manager added that a draft social media policy and guidelines had been put to the WPB at that first meeting with a view to finalising the guidelines in the summer term.

The Communications Manager will report back on all these activities at the next meeting together with an update on the Internal Communications action plan and timeline (**action**).

## **9. Update on Brunei Gallery activities from the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager**

The Galleries and Exhibitions Manager reported that:-

The new Brunei Nights initiative (intended to raise the Brunei Gallery's profile and engage new audiences both internally and externally) was launched in December 2011. The first event was a great success with approximately 350 people attending. The following events in January and February had been less successful but over 100 people attended the February event in reading week. The initiative will be reviewed for viability in June 2012.

There has been an increase in objects offered to the Brunei Gallery as well as requests to borrow objects, including a donation from Xu Longsen, and a Livingstone portrait loaned to the Museum of Scotland. This has resulted in a far more detailed Loan Agreement and policy for international loans being drawn up in conjunction with Archives and Special Collections.

It has also raised questions of storage as SOAS does not have any dedicated art storage space. Such dedicated space could be considered for inclusion in the North Block plans. There is also a need to be aware of the value of any new acquisitions as they need to be added to the School's policy for insurance purposes. The Galleries and Exhibitions Manager will follow this up with the Director of Finance and Planning and report back with an update at the next meeting (**action**).

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee **noted** the date of the next meeting was 18 May 2012.