

SOAS**EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Friday 17 May 2013, Room 116, 1.15pm - 3.15pm

AGENDA

- I **Minutes**
To approve: Minutes of the ERCC meeting held on 1 March 2013 Attached
- II **Matters Arising**
To receive: Oral update on SOAS 'email for life' - Director of Library and Information Services
- III **Annual Report- ERCC and External Relations Strategy 2012-15** Appendix A
To note: Annual report on the work of the ERCC including update on External Relations Strategy 2012-15 - Director of External Relations and Development
- IV **Development and Alumni Relations** Appendix B
To receive: Update on major gifts and alumni relations activities and future plans - Deputy Head of Development and Alumni Relations
- V **Marketing and Student Recruitment** Appendix C
To receive: Update on Marketing and Student Recruitment activities and future plans - Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment
- VI **Communications/Media Relations** Appendix D
To receive: Update on communications and media relations activities and future plans including proposed improvements to the SOAS website - Communications Manager

To approve: SOAS Social Media Guidelines Attached
- VII **Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP)** Attached
To note: Minutes of BGAP Meeting - April 2013
To receive: Oral update on Brunei Gallery activities and future plans - Galleries and Exhibitions and Manager
- VIII **Dates of next meetings**
To note: Friday 18 October 2013 Room 116 at 1.15pm
To note: Friday 28 February 2014 Room 116 at 1.15pm

SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE****MINUTES**

Friday 17 May 2013 - 1.15pm in Room 116

Chair: Professor Graham Furniss (deputising for Mr Donald Beaton*)

Members: Professor Nadjie Al Ali
Mr David Christmas
Dr Christopher Gerteis*
Mr Evan Hancock
Mr John Hollingworth
Mr Harrison Lanigan-Coyte
Dr Friederike Lüpke
Dr Dina Matar*
Ms Fiona McWilliams
Professor Anne Pauwels*
Mr John Robinson
Lord Michael Williams

In attendance: Mr Giles Lesser
Ms Katie Nugent
Ms Katie Price
Ms Clare Rhodes
Ms Zeba Salman*

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

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from the Chair, Dr Christopher Gerteis, Dr Dina Matar, Professor Anne Pauwels and Zeba Salman.

Professor Furniss welcomed Lord Williams to the Committee.

2. ERCC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2013 were **approved**.

3. Matters Arising

The Director of LIS gave an update on the SOAS Alumni "email for life".

The Processes and Systems Programme board were currently undertaking a review of technical and policy matters and had until the end of May 2014 to complete this. As the School has Google's corporate email system it must comply with Google's terms and conditions and under these, when a student ceases being a student and becomes an alum/na they have to be transferred to a different Google account, (which would not be part of SOAS' corporate email system and would therefore contain advertising). This transfer cannot be done automatically and the alum/na would have to opt in to be moved to the new alumni account. Input had been sought

from the Information and Compliance Manager on this question and the issue of Google's reputation and the recent stories of tax avoidance were discussed.

It was agreed that a proposal should be developed by the Director of LIS and Alumni Relations. The Director of LIS would put forward a formal proposal to Executive Board and report back to the next meeting (**action**).

The Action Points from the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2013 were discussed:-

Action Point 5 – Discussion between Students' Union and ERD re central Marketing support of Students' Union events - the Communications Manager reported that she had met with the Students' Union and guidelines had been put in place for the Students' Union to promote their own events.

Action Point 6 – Investigate media training for academic staff – the Communications Manager reported that the School in fact has a number of academic staff who are very experienced in media relations and therefore at the moment the Communications team are offering informal advice and training on a one to one basis.

There were no other matters arising.

4. Annual Report of ERCC and External Relations Strategy 2012-15

The Director of External Relations and Development (ERD) presented the Annual Report on the work of the ERCC including an update on the ERD Strategy 2012-15 (ERS) and Action Plan. It was noted that mid-way through the year, ERD took on responsibility for Student Recruitment and it was agreed by members that what had been achieved in the past year was extremely impressive.

In response to a comment by the Chair at the 1 March 2013 meeting the Action Plan now showed the progress of strategic aims and objectives to date.

Members discussed the exhibition of photographs, "Challenging perspectives: A journey through Africa by bicycle" shown in the Wolfson Gallery by an alum and former member of staff. It was being discussed by the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP) whether all gallery spaces including the Wolfson Gallery and the library should fall until the BGAP's remit. Members suggested ways in which there could be a fora to allow discussion between members of the SOAS community with differing views.

5. Development and Alumni Relations

The Director of ERD reported that the Deputy Head of DAR (who is currently Acting Head of DAR) is in the US on a development and alumni relations trip. Various Alumni events were taking place including a large gathering on the west coast and an academic talk and panel discussion in New York. These events would be reported on at the next Committee meeting and she spoke to the report at Appendix B on behalf of the Acting Head of DAR and highlighted the following:-

- The John Loiello American Friends of SOAS (AFSOAS) Bursary for an American Masters student – this is the first AFSOAS fundraising project and by the end of the current US trip it is hoped that this will be fully funded;
- Alum and Friends Fund Telephone campaign- it was expected that the total would be above target; and
- It was agreed that members would be sent details of the Alumni and Friends Weekend 2013 on 28-29 June and be encouraged to attend.

6. Marketing and Student Recruitment

The Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment (MSR) spoke to the report at Appendix C.

A Marketing and Student Recruitment Strategy and short term Action Plan had been drafted. To achieve the additional student numbers required additional resource would be needed for which approval would be sought from Executive Board.

Activities to increase student recruitment for 2013-14 include:-

- conversion campaign - aimed at the 120 or so potential students who had made enquiries to SOAS but had not yet applied – it would include a calling campaign to target potential students who held offers from SOAS but had not indicated whether SOAS was their first choice university;
- clearing campaign - a paper on the options for this campaign would be presented to Executive Board next week and a YouTube video is being produced to show potential students how to engage with the clearing process.

The Director of ERD commented that MSR will be focusing on how to improve communications with students.

As part of the School's ongoing projects and systems improvement project a workshop was to be held later in May to understand and improve the processes around student enquiries. There would be a short demonstration by Hobsons of their Customer Relationship Management system for student recruitment immediately after this meeting.

The Students' Union Co-President for Finance and Communications commented that Insight Day had been a great success. The issue of student housing came up a number of times on the day as a concern. The Director of Student and Registry Services commented that SOAS is expanding the number of rooms available to SOAS students.

7. Communications/Media Relations

The Communications Manager spoke to the report at Appendix D.

The WebFirst project incorporated ambitious plans and deadlines for overhauling SOAS' outward facing website so that it serves its users, (especially students), much better.

It was reported that the weekly SOAS News Bulletin is being read but not necessarily immediately after receipt and therefore calls to action contained in it are being missed.

The Head of Communications reported that 88% of visitors to the SOAS website visit via means other than searching against the term 'SOAS' which makes media such as YouTube and Twitter even more important. Social Media Guidelines for staff have been approved and would be highlighted in the SOAS News Bulletin.

8. Update on Brunei Gallery activities from the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager and Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP) Minutes

The minutes of the BGAP meetings held in April 2013 were **noted** subject to an error in paragraph 2 (Matters arising) which referred to SOAS' 'bi-centenary celebrations' this should of course read 'centenary celebrations'.

The Galleries and Exhibitions Manager reported that there would be two SOAS centenary exhibitions curated by SOAS academics, the first of which will open in April 2016 and the second in April 2017.

The Foyle Gallery is currently displaying various materials from the General Fereydoun Djam bequest. The exhibition will remain on display until October 2013 and the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager reported that he had been approached by a research associate offering to help catalogue the remainder of the extensive bequest.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee **noted** that the date of the next meeting is 18 October 2013.

Members raised the question of the timing of committee meetings and whether it could be changed. It was noted that the scheduling to the committee meetings is a complex process and there may not be any options for flexibility. It was agreed that the Director of ERD will discuss this with the Secretariat Manager and report back at the next meeting (**action**).