

**SOAS**

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Friday 28 February 2014, Room 116, 1.15pm - 3.15pm

**AGENDA**

- |      |   |                              |
|------|---|------------------------------|
| I    | <p><b>Minutes</b><br/>         To approve: minutes of the ERCC meeting held on 18 October 2013</p>  | Attached                     |
| II   | <p><b>Matters Arising</b></p>   |                              |
| III  | <p><b>External Relations Strategy</b><br/>         To receive: Oral update on External Relations Strategy development -<br/>         Director of External Relations and Development</p> <p>To note: Action Plan update 2013/14</p>  | Appendix A                   |
| IV   | <p><b>Centenary Celebrations</b><br/>         To receive: Update on Centenary Celebrations – Communications<br/>         Projects Manager</p>   | Appendix B                   |
| V    | <p><b>Marketing and Student Recruitment</b><br/>         To receive: Progress report on Marketing and Student Recruitment<br/>         activities and future plans – Interim Director of Marketing and Student<br/>         Recruitment</p>   | Appendix C                   |
| VI   | <p><b>Development and Alumni Relations</b><br/>         To receive: Progress report and future engagement plans re Centenary<br/>         Fundraising Campaign and Alumni Relations activities – Deputy Head,<br/>         Alumni Relations and Annual Fund and Deputy Head, Development</p> <p>To receive: Update on development of Gift Acceptance policy – Director<br/>         of External Relations and Development</p> | Appendix D<br><br>Appendix E |
| VII  | <p><b>Communications and Media Relations</b><br/>         To receive: Progress report on internal communications, media relations<br/>         and digital media (including website development) – Head of<br/>         Communications</p>  | Appendix F                   |
| VIII | <p><b>Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP)</b><br/>         To note: Minutes of BGAP meetings held in November 2013 and January<br/>         2014</p> <p>To receive: Oral update on Brunei Gallery activities and future plans -<br/>         Galleries and Exhibitions and Manager</p>   | Appendix G<br>Appendix H     |
| IX   | <p><b>Date of next meeting</b><br/>         To note: Friday 23 May 2014 - Room 116 at 1.15pm</p>  |                              |

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

Friday 28 February 2014 - 1.15pm in Room 116

**Chair:** Mr Graeme Appleby

**Members:** Professor Nadjé Al Ali\*  
Mr Johann Barbé  
Professor Richard Black  
Mr David Christmas\*  
Dr Christopher Gerteis  
Mr John Hollingworth  
Dr Friederike Lüpke\*  
Dr Dina Matar\*  
Ms Fiona McWilliams  
Professor Anne Pauwels  
Mr John Robinson  
Lord Michael Williams\*

**In attendance:** Mr Nick Butler  
Ms Marva de la Coudray  
Ms Catriona Finlayson  
Ms Madeleine McGowan\*  
Ms Katie Price  
Ms Clare Rhodes  
Ms Zeba Salman  
Ms Alison Woolley

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

### 1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Professor Nadjé Al-Ali, Mr David Christmas, Dr Friederike Lüpke, Dr Dina Matar, Ms Madeleine McGowan, and Lord Williams.

### 2. ERCC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2013 were **approved** subject to:-

- The correction of a typo at minute 7 – ‘Meet the World at SOAS’ not ‘Meet the World and SOAS’; and
- Final paragraph of minute 7 – the Director of Student and Registry Services would be asked for clarification of how SOAS’ conversion rates compare with other institutions as the minutes did not cover that (**action**).

### 3. Matters Arising

The Action Points from the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2013 were discussed:-

Action Point relating to minute number 2 – the Chair reported on the investigations made into the question of whether it would be possible and appropriate to have a union representative on the Committee – the Acting Secretary had confirmed that it would not be appropriate for Trade Union representatives to sit on formal School committees such as ERCC. The School's committee governance documents state "*The role of committee members is not to represent a particular group or interest. Members are on committees as individuals, bringing their skills and expertise to help with the overall governance of the institution, to the benefit of the School as a whole. While members may be from a particular group, and can bring the views of that group to the meeting, once at the meeting, the interests of the School must be the overriding consideration*".

The only exception to this non-representative role is where committees (such as Health & Safety) have for example, Trade Union representatives on them, and are required to do so. This view of committee membership is supported both in the School's Standing Orders and in the guidance produced by the Committee of University Chairs (CUC), which the School is required to follow

There were no other matters arising.

#### **4. External Relations Strategy**

The Director of External Relations and Development (ERD) spoke to the report at Appendix A and reported that ERD was rolling out activities in the External Relations Strategy (ERS) Action Plan and had revised performance indicators to make them more meaningful with specific measurable targets which were reflected in the updated Action Plan.

It was noted that:-

- the Marketing and Student Recruitment (MSR) promotional campaign had had a good effect on UG UK applications which were up on those for September 2013 entry;

the Head of Widening Participation noted that there had been a decrease in PGT applications and she would be interested in seeing overall trends. The Chair confirmed that a report had already been prepared for Executive Board at a departmental level for areas of concern only. Reports on applications were circulated by Admissions and the Chair would ensure that Dr Gerteis and the Head of Widening Participation are added to the circulation list (**action**);

- the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) has been implemented and will go live prior to Insight Day later this month;
- the Alumni Relations (AR) team had already exceeded the target for the number of contactable alumni and is continuing to increase the number;
- Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) has a new Director, Matthew Gorman who will lead the Development, AR and Development Services teams;
- Dr Gerteis noted that DAR had done an excellent job at stewarding the WG Beasley Lecture/Japan Research Centre event in November 2013 and this had already precipitated gifts towards scholarships and a potential gift in kind (discounted air travel from a Japanese airline);
- SOAS' list of media experts has increased; and
- 2015 was the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the surrender of Japan during World War II and SOAS should reach out to the BBC to remind them of SOAS' regional expertise.

#### **5. Centenary Celebrations**

The Director of ERD and the Communications Project Manager spoke to the report at Appendix B and reported that the Centenary Planning Group (CPG), (which reports to Executive Board) had been convened by Professor Webley to consider what the centenary celebrations will

encompass. The Centenary Celebrations' strategic aims are to raise the profile of SOAS, build the SOAS community (current students and staff and alumni) and raise funds to support the centenary celebrations.

## **6. Marketing and Student Recruitment**

The Student Recruitment Manager gave a powerpoint presentation and spoke to the report at Appendix C.

It was noted that:-

- against the total of international students coming to the UK, (and SOAS' London competitors) to study SOAS subjects, SOAS has a very high market share in some subjects (eg niche languages) but not so in other subjects (such as Law). It was not clear what proportion of all London students are SOAS students. It was agreed that the Student Recruitment Manager would investigate what proportion of all London students are SOAS students and MSR would report back at the next Committee meeting;
- MSR is developing an engagement strategy for schools – 57 target schools where data has identified significant opportunities had been contacted. MSR is working very closely with Widening Participation;
- four levels of target countries had been created – MSR was working with DAR to create 'incentives' for applicants from level 1 and 2 countries to apply to SOAS (such as the Mo Ibrahim scholarships);
- UG and PGT markets were very different and if international UG students were being targeted then international schools should of course be targeted; and
- the School's first ever promotional campaign was cited by the Guardian as 'the best performing educational campaign they have ever seen'.

## **7. Development and Alumni Relations**

The Deputy Head, Alumni Relations and Annual Fund and the Deputy Head, Development gave a powerpoint presentation and spoke to the report at Appendix D.

It was noted that:-

- a case for support for the SOAS China Institute is in development and annual lectures were being set up based on the very successful model of the WG Beasley Memorial Lecture;
- on 1 November 2013 the Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago private foundation had given the School a £20million donation to advance the study and preservation of Buddhist and Hindu art in Southeast Asia . The donation is one of the largest recorded to UK Higher Education, particularly in the field of arts and humanities and represents 28% of SOAS' 2012-13 turnover. It provides funding for over 80 scholarships, increases academic capacity with the addition of three fully endowed posts and supports SOAS' campus expansion in central London, supporting the Senate House North Block project. The Chair noted that the donation is a huge achievement for SOAS and all staff involved should be congratulated;
- the roll out of 'email for life' to current SOAS students who graduate this year would start in May 2014. The question of how alumni can take a more active role in student recruitment was discussed and the Deputy Head, Alumni Relations and Annual Fund reported that alumni were already going into schools as SOAS 'ambassadors' and participated in mentoring schemes - this international reach via alumni would be invaluable in the centenary campaign;

- the list of cities proposed to be SOAS' 'hub' cities to support DAR, Student Recruitment and academic partnerships included New York, Washington DC, San Francisco, Rome, Geneva, Lagos, Istanbul, Dubai, New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Islamabad, Tokyo, Beijing and Hong Kong. Members discussed the inclusion of African cities and it was agreed that the Committee should be kept informed of the strategy; and
- DAR are developing an engaging stewardship programme including producing a prototype video report format for the donors of one of the School's scholarship programmes which can be rolled out for all such relationships.

The Director of ERD spoke to the report at Appendix E and gave an update on the Gift Acceptance Policy.

It was noted that:-

- DAR are working on a SOAS specific philanthropic Gift Acceptance Policy based on the ethical framework developed by CASE (the Council for the Advancement of Support of Education).
- the School has had a philanthropic due diligence procedure relating to philanthropic gifts in place since Summer 2011 and the Finance department and DAR work very closely together to ensure that the School does not receive any philanthropic income without it first being assessed through the due diligence procedure;
- the School's acceptance of philanthropic gifts does not allow donors to sit on selection panels for posts they are funding;
- the funding of academic staff at source by foreign governments was not considered as philanthropic;
- any Library staff who were contacted about gifts in kind should notify DAR; and
- the Galleries and Exhibition Manager confirmed that there is an existing policy and procedure in place to assess donations to the Brunei Gallery and he was working on a due diligence form for the Brunei Gallery looking at provenance and whether checks are made such as on the UNESCO lists of stolen art where there are concerns/doubts.

The Chair requested that the Due Diligence Procedure at Annex A be amended to include the above points and that the numbering should be corrected (**action**).

## 8. Communications/Media Relations

The Head of Communications spoke to the report at Appendix F.

It was noted that:-

- the SOAS website had ranked very highly (second of the former Russell Group/1994 universities and 52 out of 339 in total) in the quarterly rankings of higher education institutions recently issued by Sitemorse. Kings was ranked at 63 and LSE at 226;
- over the past few months there had been record breaking coverage of the Alphawood donation and that increasingly SOAS experts are featuring on key media outlets such as BBC News, Newsnight and the Today programme on BBC Radio 4;
- the Web Content Manager reported that the new website template designs were pretty much finalised and he would be pleased to show any members the designs outside the meeting. The new templates would be launched at the end of May 2014.

Members discussed the issue of automatic updating of the website (ie how far the website is updated automatically with for example course information and leavers/joiners) and it was agreed that the Web Content Manager would review where and how any information on the SOAS website could be automated and report back at the next meeting (**action**).

Concerns were raised in relation to the privacy for users of the Chinese micro blog site, Weibo, however, Student Recruitment only uses the site for information purposes to inform users of activities and events in country and this should not pose any data protection or privacy issues.

Members noted that:-

- digital communications are increasingly supporting SOAS' profile with Twitter followers increasing by 2000 to 10,000 and the School's Facebook subscribers increasing 100% since the last meeting;
- Readership of the SOAS staff News Bulletin increasing by 30% over the last four months; and
- MySOAS would be launched later in the Spring.

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

It was agreed that the update from the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager would be moved up the Agenda for the next meeting.

The minutes of the BGAP meetings held in November 2013 and January 2014 were **noted**.

The Galleries and Exhibitions Manager reported that:-

- the forthcoming planned exhibition for April – 'Dream, Fantasy and Reality: Agbarha-otor-Harmattan Workshops 1998-2010' would be withdrawn – a withdrawal letter has been sent to the organiser and the Director has written to the exhibition sponsor;
- the Livingstone exhibition is being extended into May as the Southeast Asia exhibition curated by Professor Contadini was going to replace it but she is busy working towards trying to finalise content in time for the Alphawood launch event on 27 May;
- there has been excellent press coverage of the current Recalling the Future exhibition in the Financial Times, La Monde, BBC, CNN and the Asian Art newspaper;
- the 'Empire Faith and Kinship exhibition (part of the World War One centenary) will be having a preview on 8 July;
- the 100 Years of SOAS exhibition will now be co-curated by the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager with Dr Stacey Pierson; and
- as SOAS does not have a dedicated art store it poses an issue regarding the potential gift/donation of artworks – SOAS currently stores some larger paintings in off-site storage as the School has no facility to store them and it would be very difficult to create storage at the School. The Galleries and Exhibition Manager will look into off-site storage and will keep the Committee informed of progress.

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

The Committee **noted** that the date of the next meeting is 23 May 2014.