

SOAS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Friday 27 February 2015, Committee Room (116), 1.15pm - 3.15pm

AGENDA

Centenary theme: Raising SOAS' profile in UK and key regions

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| I | <p>Minutes
 To approve: minutes of the ERCC meeting held on 17 October 2014</p> | Attached |
| II | <p>Matters Arising</p> | |
| III | <p>External Relations Strategy 2015 – 17
 To receive: External Relations Strategy 2015-17 and Action Plan
 Director of External Relations and Development</p> | Appendix A |
| IV | <p>Centenary
 To receive: Report - Centenary update
 Centenary Project Manager</p> | Appendix B |
| V | <p>Centenary Research themes
 To receive: Update report: cross-SOAS research themes: Discussion –
 the themes and their implementation
 Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise)</p> | Appendix C |
| VI | <p>Marketing and Student Recruitment
 To receive: Report – Marketing and Student Recruitment: raising SOAS’
 profile with prospective students and markets worldwide
 Acting Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment</p> | Appendix D |
| VII | <p>Development and Alumni Relations
 To receive: Report – Development and Alumni Relations
 Director of Development and Alumni Relations</p> | Appendix E |
| VIII | <p>Communications and Media Relations
 To receive: Report – Communications
 Interim Head of Communications</p> | Appendix F |
| IX | <p>Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP)
 To note: Minutes of BGAP meetings held in November 2014 and January
 2015
 To approve: revised Membership and ToR for BGAP
 To receive: oral update on Brunei Gallery activities and future plans
 Galleries and Exhibitions and Manager</p> | Appendix G and
Appendix H
Appendix I |
| X | <p>Date of last meeting for 2014/15 session
 To note: Friday 22 May, Committee Room (116) at 1.15pm – 3.15pm</p> | |

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

Friday 27 February 2015 - 1.15pm Committee Room (116)

Chair: Ms Laura Gibbs

Members: Professor Nadjie Al Ali*
Professor Somnath Batabyal*
Professor Richard Black
Dr Christopher Gerteis
Ms Philippa Hewett
Mr John Hollingworth
Mr Kabir Joshi
Ms Fiona McWilliams
Professor Anne Pauwels
Mr John Robinson*
Lord Michael Williams*
Professor Jae Hoon Yeon*

In attendance: Ms Marva de la Coudray
Mr Matthew Gorman
Ms Katie Price
Ms Clare Rhodes (Minutes)
Ms Shoshana Goodman
Mr Jamie Wells

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

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Nadjie Al-Ali, Somnath Batabyal, John Robinson and Jae Hoon Yeon.

2. ERCC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2014 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

The Action Points from the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2014 were discussed:-

- minute 6 – Acting Head of Marketing and Student Recruitment (MSR) to bring an annual plan/calendar of student recruitment events for academic staff to this meeting – this had been completed and the acting Head of MSR would circulate it to members via email following this meeting (**action**);
- minute 6 – Director of SRS to report back on possibility of School having a guaranteed accommodation policy for first year students outside M25 area. As the Director of SRS had left SOAS the Chair reported on this action point and confirmed that work is progressing on this as part of the Estates Strategy.

There were no other matters arising.

4. External Relations Strategy 2014/15 – 2016/17

The Director of External Relations and Development (ERD) spoke to the report at Appendix A and reported that the focus of the External Relations Strategy (ERS) is achieving the Centenary Objectives, which are:-

1. Profile raising – in the UK as well as our key regions (of expertise and in key territories eg USA)
2. Building a sense of community – amongst the whole SOAS community: staff and former staff, students and alumni, honorary members and volunteers, partners; and
3. Fundraising to support core SOAS aims and projects.

The Action Plan sets out how the Objectives which actually be achieved and is updated on a rolling basis.

5. Centenary

The Centenary Project Manager spoke to the report at Appendix B.

The focus at present is raising the profile of the Centenary within the School and with key audiences. Public engagement is also a priority. A visual identity for the Centenary is being developed and will be flexible enough to be used in all formats.

An online digital timeline has now gone live - see:-

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/centenary/timeline/active-timeline.html>

The timeline is promoted internally via the Staff and Student News Bulletins and on Facebook and Twitter. Whilst it is not possible for people to post their own stories directly on to the timeline the Communications team is looking into how the timeline might be made more interactive.

A programme of School-wide events is being developed and the Centenary Project Manager will bring a schedule of Centenary events to the next meeting (**action**).

6. Research Themes for the Centenary

The Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise) spoke to the report at Appendix C.

Members discussed how to capture the discussions of the Research Themes steering group meetings most effectively. It was agreed that it would be very beneficial for staff (including professional services staff as well as academic staff) to hear more about the Research Themes and in the most engaging way possible. It may be possible to do this via a TEDx talk. The Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise) will investigate the various options and report back at the next meeting (**action**).

7. Marketing and Student Recruitment

The acting Head of MSR spoke to the report at Appendix D.

The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has now captured over a year's worth of enquiry data and it was agreed that its introduction represented a step change. Members discussed communications with prospective students who attend Open Days – the CRM logs their details and sends follow up emails/newsletters.

Levels of attendance at Open Days were discussed and how they and conversion rates are measured against competitor institutions. MSR have access to data showing cross offers with competitors and this requires updating.

The impact of the 'Meet the World at SOAS' campaign and the improved awareness of SOAS has been felt with a 33% increase in UG applications over a two year period. At PG level the picture is not quite so positive and there will be an increased focus on PG recruitment.

The UG prospectus had received excellent feedback and the new mini-prospectus introduced for the first time in late 2014 had driven down costs. Members discussed the use of paper and online prospectuses (both UG and PG) and whether online versions could replace the paper versions. The acting Head of MSR reported that paper versions were obviously still popular at events and fairs. The online version needs to be updated regularly. At the moment, individual departments are responsible for updating their pages and there is currently insufficient resource for the updates to be executed centrally.

Members discussed the idea of prospective students being offered the opportunity to join a regular scheduled lecture or class (rather than special taster lectures/classes) and MSR will look into this possibility for 2016 entry.

MSR launched programme specific campaigns for Economics and Law in December 2014 and these had been very successful generating strong conversion and click through rates. Economics applications had improved by 18% since the start of the campaign.

Members discussed the involvement of academic departments in closing applications to offer holders – Heads of department and other staff are given access to offer holders contact details immediately after an offer is made so they can get in touch with offer holders and let them have any relevant information (for example, what classes are running). In some cases it seemed that this contact information may not be getting through to academic departments. The acting Head of MSR will look into this and report back at the next meeting (**action**).

8. Development and Alumni Relations

The Director of Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) spoke to the report at Appendix E.

It was noted that:-

- Total cash income received for the year to date is just over £6.5million;
- New pledge payments of just over £7.5 are projected for 2014/15;
- 2014/15 looked to be a very strong year for legacy fundraising and work was being done to ensure the ongoing excellent stewardship of legacy pledgers;
- The majority of the Alumni and Friends Fund (AFF) activity will take place in the second half of the year; an email fundraising campaign in North America had taken place in late 2014 securing donations from 0.7% of contactable US alumni, whilst low this is credible for a first e fundraising campaign;
- Fundraising for Senate House North Block is of course a priority and supporters (including, potentially, SOAS staff) will be asked to donate £50 to have their name featured in the mosaic artwork in the Alumni and Friends lecture theatre (to be confirmed);
- Alumni Relations had hosted a number of international events which are being more strategically pitched with the pool of invitees being widened to include, for example, local government representatives and student offer holders.

Members discussed the new initiative of crowdfunding – a SOAS offer holder had raised £27k, (including contributions from SOAS staff and students) through a crowdfunding campaign to pay for his tuition fees, accommodation and living expenses to study for an MSc. This posed challenges for SOAS fundraising as the personal element of this type of campaign is powerful and attractive to potential funders. It would not be possible for SOAS to compete with this on that particular level.

DAR is exploring funding options to enable student groups to work with them to fund student projects – as the projects would be through a crowdfunding platform SOAS would put together the benefit was that gift aid could be claimed. The University of York has set up a similar 'Hubbub' platform, 'Yustart'.

9. Communications/Media Relations

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

It was noted that:

- Internal communications have been improved by the introduction of the first termly meeting for professional services and faculty administrative staff and the Registrar has instigated termly 'drop-in' sessions for herself and the Pro-Directors to raise the visibility of senior management;
- content development has been a focus and research stories have been developed to support the outcome of the REF;
- key pages on the SOAS website were being developed and Communications are working with departments to ensure that their interim home pages are informative and engaging;
- various blogs (including a new Research blog by Richard Black, SHNB blog, and the fortnightly Centenary blog) were all now underway;
- the online Centenary timeline was now live; and
- Communications are developing a business case to enable them to offer media training more widely which would benefit the School and its academics.

10. Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP) Membership and Terms of Reference and Minutes Update on Brunei Gallery activities from the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager

The amended Membership and Terms of Reference for the BGAP at Appendix I (which added the responsibility for overseeing and reviewing the arrangements for the use and display of the School's own collections and those held on behalf of the Percival David Trust in the Lady David Gallery, housed in the Doctoral School, Gordon Square) were **approved**.

The School of Arts supported this change.

Members discussed whether the Wolfson Gallery came under the remit of the BGAP and the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager confirmed that it had previously come under the BGAP's remit for a short while but was now under the remit of the Library.

The Galleries and Exhibitions Manager reported that:-

- Three exhibitions had been confirmed for after Easter; the *Tent Makers of Cairo*, *When I came to England*, and *Art of Integration* (including a panel discussion event with the South Asia department);
- As part of the Knowledge Quarter, SOAS is working with the London Borough of Camden's Arts and Tourism department contributing to their events marking the 50th anniversary of the London Borough of Camden;
- The Brunei Gallery will be 20 years old in November 2015 and planning for how to mark this is underway;
- The Brunei Gallery is working more closely with DAR on their use of the galleries and with Widening Participation in relation to ways of developing the educational outreach potential of the galleries.

11. AOB

The Chair informed members that the Director of External Relations and Development is leaving SOAS in May and thanked her for her service as Secretary to the committee.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee **noted** that the date of the next meeting is Friday 22 May 2015.