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**APPENDIX A
ER
12 February 2008**

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Friday 2nd November 2007 at 11.00am in Room B211

Chair: Professor Michael Hutt*

Members: Dr Elizabeth Moore
Dr Jeevan Deol*
Professor Gilbert Achcar
Professor Werner Menski
Ms Sharon Page
Mr Nick Butler*
Ms Fiona McWilliams
Mr Michael Sherry
Ms Emily Huns
Mr Alan Parker*
Ms Aileen Puhlman*

In attendance: Ms Jamie Bruce
Ms Dzidra Stipnieks

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

1 Membership, terms of reference, conduct of meetings

The Chair was taken by the Registrar and Secretary who welcomed members to the first meeting of the new Committee. She noted the contribution that the late Professor Lisa Croll had made to SOAS and to this committee in particular. She had championed the cause of SOAS to external stakeholders and the School would sorely miss her.

Members noted the terms of reference and membership of the Committee. The Chair outlined the School's new committee structure and explained that the External Relations Committee would oversee the strategic direction of

Marketing, Communications, Development and Alumni Relations initiatives as well as the marketing elements of Student Recruitment activity.

2 **Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel**

The Committee approved the membership and terms of reference of the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel. Members noted the minutes of the Panel's meeting on 17th October. It was also noted that proposals for new projects at the Brunei Gallery must be approved by the Panel. The Committee **agreed** that Panel meetings should be scheduled before External Relations Committee meetings.

3 **External Relations Strategy**

The Committee received and considered the draft External Relations Strategy noting that it was a supporting strategy which will underpin the delivery of the School's Vision and Strategy for the Centennial and in particular the Academic and Research sub-strategies. The Committee's comments were being sought on the draft before it is presented to Resources and Planning Committee and Governing Body for approval. The Chair explained that the External Relations strategy, along with the other seven supporting strategies will be reviewed and updated in light of changes in internal and external environments.

Members noted and commented in particular as follows:

- Raising the School's profile in the City and business community generally should be a priority as there is room for growth. The School has to be more engaged with the business sector in relation to research and consultancy. The Chair pointed out that some action had already been taken to address this issue, for example the establishment of the International Advisory Board (IAB) however, the Acting Director of Development, commented that better use could be made of IAB meetings and contacts. Indeed, business and community contacts across the School need to be cultivated in a co-ordinated way.
- The Chair clarified that the Academic Development Committee and the Research Committee will have responsibility for developing academic partnerships. It is the role of External Relations to explore how the School's reputation and profile can be enhanced through these partnerships.
- The Committee **agreed** that the School had to be more targeted in its approach to developing new and existing markets and stick to agreed priorities, in particular academic priorities, when developing operational plans. Fundraising and development initiatives will also focus on projects address the problem of lack of space, particularly at the Russell Square campus. The Acting Director of Development reported that a plan outlining priorities was 2008 onwards was being developed.

- The Acting Director of Development and Head of Marketing outlined how the strategy relates to existing and proposed action plans. They emphasised that they will continue to prioritise the co-ordination of operational plans within external relations and with other departments for example Interface.
- Members **agreed** changes to the wording of the draft strategy so that it:
 - Is developed and implemented in relation to other supporting strategies and departmental plans
 - Supports the School's vision of developing its focus on contemporary issues and maintaining language-based regional studies
 - Clearly identifies key messages which differentiate the School from other institutions and help address misconceptions and perceptions about the SOAS 'brand'
 - Identifies and supports the development of new programmes and initiatives
 - Addresses resource implications with regard to media relations for example
 - Includes a section on the School's Careers Service
 - Reflects the revised student recruitment targets in the updated Academic and Research strategies

The Committee **agreed** that the strategy should be recommended to Resource and Planning Committee and Governing Body.

4 Dates of Meetings 2007/08

The Committee noted the dates of its meetings for the remainder of the 2007/08 academic year:

- 1.15pm on Tuesday the 12th February 2008 in Room 116
- 1.15pm on Tuesday 6th May 2008 in Room 116

Action points

Minute 2

Head of Marketing to check that Brunei Advisory Panel meetings are scheduled before External Relations Committee meetings.

Minute 3

Head of Marketing to update draft External Relations Strategy for recommendation to Resources and Planning Committee and Governing Body.

There were no Reserved Minutes.