

## SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

### EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

#### MINUTES

Tuesday 3 November 2009 at 1.15pm in Room 116

- Chair:** Ms Sally Neocosmos
- Members:** Professor Gilbert Achcar  
Mr Nick Butler \*  
Professor Rachel Dwyer  
Professor Graham Furniss\*  
Professor Mike Hutt  
Mr Sebilo Uribe  
Ms Fiona McWilliams  
Professor Werner Menski  
Professor Tim Screech \*  
Mr Michael Sherry  
Ms Elizabeth Wright  
Ms Sue Young
- In attendance:** Ms Debbie Adeusi  
Mr David Atkins  
Ms Marva De La Coudray  
Ms Johannah Flaherty  
Mr John Hollingworth

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

#### 1 Membership and Terms of Reference

- (i) The Membership and terms of reference of the Committee (Appendix A) were **noted**
- (ii) The procedures for the conduct of the meetings (Appendix B) were **noted**.

#### 2 Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel

- (i) Terms of reference for the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (Appendix C) were **approved** with an addition to the membership, suggested by Director of External Relations & Development, of the Events Manager
- (ii) The minutes of the BGAP meeting held on 20 May 2009 (Appendix D) were **noted**
- (iii) An oral report on the BGAP meeting held on 21 October was **received** from Galleries Exhibition Manager, who briefed members on the current 'Fancy Stitch' exhibition. He informed members that as Fancy Stitch was a charity they would not be taking any commission and the decision on whether to take commission from future exhibitions would be judged on an individual basis. He also reported that visitor numbers to the Brunei Gallery had increased and that the Brunei Gallery had received coverage in a number of

new publications. The Students' Union representative asked if there was any co-operation with London Student magazine to which the answer was yes. The Director of External Relations asked Head of Marketing for an update on plans to produce any note cards and posters from Treasures of SOAS and the Head of Marketing **agreed** to report back on this at the next meeting.

### 3. Committee Review

- (i) The Committee **considered** the effectiveness of the External Relations Committee (Appendix E), as requested by the Directorate for Committee Review. The Head of Marketing, the previous ERC Secretary, said that previous minutes of ERC meetings had shown the committee meetings to have dealt with operational rather than strategic matters. He also felt there was confusion regarding responsibilities of the ERC and the Academic Development Committee (ADC) particularly with regard to student recruitment, a view supported by Head of Student Recruitment & Admissions. It was felt, however, by the ERC membership that the ERC was an appropriate forum at strategic level for discussions about student recruitment as well as the ADC as each committee looked at different aspects of recruitment.

Professor of South Asian Studies stated that he felt there was a new will for departments across the School to work collaboratively but was not sure how this was being fed back to the School community as a whole. The Governing Body member noted the importance of external relations activities on the reputation of the School. There was a discussion about how external relations activities could be better understood and promoted across the School and it was **agreed** that this could be discussed at a future meeting.

The Director of External Relations outlined the importance of having members of the academic community engaged in external relations activities amongst the ERC membership. It was **agreed** that the Director of External Relations would speak to faculty administrators about academic membership of the ERC. The Chair also **noted** that committees should not be used as a substitute for management.

- (ii) The Director of External Relations explained the need to strengthen the School's brand and reputation in order to continue to attract the right students, staff, stakeholders and funders and that this need had guided the development of the proposed new Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership. There was a discussion about the need to focus on strategic issues vs the need for key operational staff to be present in order to allow meaningful discussion. As a result, the Committee did not recommend the proposed new Membership and ToR for the ERC as it was (Appendix F) and it was **agreed** that the Widening Participation Co-ordinator should be a member (rather than the Director of Academic Development Directorate) and that other proposed changes to the ToR should be considered at the next meeting.
- (iii) It was also **agreed** that it would be helpful for members to have an annual 'route-map' with each meeting focussed on a particular subject for discussion

#### 4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting (Appendix G) held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009 were **approved**.

#### 5. Matters Arising

The Chair asked the Director of External Relations to explain to members the background to the Kingston Audit of Marketing & Branding and Action Plan (Appendices H and I) and to report on progress for members. Members were informed that the audit had considered the School's marketing and branding operations and had produced a lengthy report with 21 recommendations and a verdict of only limited assurance. The Director of External Relations had produced the Action Plan to help implement the recommendations, identifying responsibilities and a timeline. It was **agreed** that there would be a further update at the 26 February ERC meeting.

The Dean of Languages & Culture felt that as the Audit was critical of marketing and faculty planning it would be helpful to involve the Head of Planning to ensure everything 'mechanically' linked in. The Head of Marketing said that the recruitment cycle doesn't always fit in with planning and it was **agreed** that the Head of Marketing should liaise with Head of Planning, the Academic Development Directorate and Head of Student Recruitment and report back at the next meeting regarding the planning cycle.

The Chair asked the Head of Admissions for the completion date of the operational business plan for Student Recruitment. The Head of Admissions reported that the Head of Student Recruitment was drafting the document and currently travelling but he believed it would be finalised on his return from a business trip in late November and that the Head of Student Recruitment would be able to update members at the next meeting.

The Head of Admissions said that SOAS needs to look at improving effectiveness in recruiting, particularly with regard to verifying visas and qualification online to minimise fraud risk, and he was asked to report back on this at the next meeting.

#### 6. External Relations Strategy

The Chair asked the Director of External Relations to outline the key points of the draft External Relations Strategy (Appendix J). It was **agreed** to hold a special meeting of one hour's length before Christmas to allow members to read the draft External Relations Strategy in detail and discuss issues and input in the round.

#### 7. Brand Review

Members **received** an oral report from Head of Marketing who explained the background to the proposed brand review. A brand review was one of two priority 1 recommendations in the Kingston Audit and a working group led by the Head of Marketing had been set up to scope out the project and make recommendations to the External Relations Director and the ERC. It is planned that a wide range of SOAS stakeholders will be involved in the consultation process.

It was **agreed** that Head of Marketing would give a detailed written report for the next meeting.

**8. HEFCE Widening Participation Strategic Assessment**

The Committee **noted** the report on the Strategic Assessment of Widening Participation (Appendix K). The Widening Participation Co-ordinator drew the Committee's attention to the School's work with external organisations, engaging academics to work with schools and colleges and increasing the diversity of the student body. The Chair asked the Head of Marketing and Head of Admissions to consider the survey commissioned by Widening Participation Co-ordinator that went to Academic Development Committee and to evaluate the student market research. The Head of Marketing **agreed** to report back at the next meeting.

The Widening Participation Co-ordinator informed the Committee that the Student Retention Report is due to be published by February 2010.

**9 AOB**

There was no other business.

**10 Dates of Meetings 2010**

The Committee **NOTED** the date of the next meetings:  
1.15pm on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February in Room 116  
1.15pm Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May Room 116

**ERC 3 November 2009 Action Points**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>By When</b>
2	BGAP	Head of Marketing to report back to ERC on production of notecards and posters from Treasures of SOAS	MS	26 February 2010
3	Committee Review	Director of Ext Rels to revise proposed new ToR and include in papers for consideration at the next ERC meeting. Membership to include the Widening Participation Coordinator	FM	26 February 2010
		Discussion about promoting external relations activities to the School community.	ERC (FM to include on agenda)	26 February 2010
		ERC to have an annual 'route map' with each meeting having a 'theme'	SN/FM	20 January 2010
		Director of Ext Rels to speak to faculty administrators about academic membership of the ERC.	FM	26 February 2010
5		Head of Marketing to liaise with Head of Planning, Head of Academic Development and Head of Student Recruitment and report back at next meeting regarding the planning cycle.	MS	26 February 2010
		Head of Student Recruitment to update members on operational business plan	DA/NB	26 February 2010
		Head of Admissions to report on improving effectiveness in recruiting with regard to verifying visas and qualifications online	DA	26 February 2010
6	External Rels Strategy	Special meeting of one hour to be called to discuss the draft ERS	DAd	Before end of autumn term
7	Brand Review	Head of Marketing to give detailed written report for the next meeting	MS	26 February 2010
8.	HEFCE Widening Participation Strategic Assessment	Head of Marketing and Head of Student Admissions to evaluate student market research and report back	MS/DA	26 February 2010