

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL & AFRICAN STUDIES

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday 22 February Room 116, 1.15pm - 3.15pm

Theme: Reputation & Identity

AGENDA

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| I | Minutes
To approve: Minutes of the ERC meeting held on 26 October 2010 | Attached |
| II | Matters arising | |
| III | Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel
To receive: Minutes of the BGAP meetings held in October 2010 and February 2011 | Appendices A & B |
| IV | Media relations
To receive: Report from the Communications Manager on the School's media relations programme and internal communications audit | Appendix C |
| V | League tables
To receive: Report from the Head of Marketing and Communications Manager on activities relating to the HE league tables and SOAS' position | Appendix D |
| VI | Marketing department
To receive: Report from the Head of Marketing on the refocus of the Marketing department functions | Appendix E |
| VII | Student Recruitment Strategy
To consider: Report from the Director of Student and Registry Services on activities and progress towards a School Student Recruitment Strategy | Appendix F |
| VIII | Reputation & Identity Review
Update and presentation by Jane Wentworth Associates on Phase 1 of the Reputation and Identity Review | |
| IX | Date of next meeting 2011
To note: 26 May at 1.15pm | |
| X | Any Other Business | |

These minutes are for information only. Any corrections to the minutes will be recorded in the minutes of the subsequent meeting of the committee

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday 26 October 1.15pm in Room 116

Chair: Mr Donald Beaton (Chair)

Members: Mr David Christmas
Professor Rachel Dwyer
Professor Graham Furniss
Mr John Hollingworth
Dr Dina Matar
Ms Fiona McWilliams (Secretary)
Professor Anne Pauwels
Mr Matthew Richards
Professor Iain Scobbie
Ms Elizabeth Wright
Professor Annabelle Sreberny
Ms Sue Young

In attendance: Ms Debbie Adeusi (Minute Secretary)
Ms Marva De La Coudray
Ms Johannah Flaherty
Mr Michael Sherry

1 Membership, terms of reference and conduct of meetings

The Chair welcomed everyone and then drew attention to the ERC membership, Terms of Reference (ToR) and conduct of meetings, which were **noted**.

2 Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP)

The Galleries & Exhibitions Manager noted that Professor Richard Fardon was no longer a member of the BGAP and that Professor Trevor Marchand had joined it. The BGAP ToR were **approved**.

Further to the minutes of BGAP meetings distributed, the following points were mentioned:

- The Alkazi Foundation's exhibition scheduled for October had been cancelled and the *'Escaping the War'* exhibition has expanded to include the ground floor front gallery.
- The British Council's existing project *'My Father's House'* will be shown in the lower level gallery with the launch/private view on 29 October.
- The Brunei Gallery has recently received a lot of press interest, including good previews in *The Guardian* and a 'Critics top 5 for Around Town in *Time Out* for the recent *'Hibakusha Portraits'* exhibition

- The art and artefacts received from the General Djam bequests have been catalogued and finalised
- The Communications & Events teams were now working closely with the BG staff to raise the profile both internally and externally of the BG and its exhibitions

3 ERC Minutes

There was one change needed to the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2010 which was that the Governing Body member was in attendance, not absent. With this correction the minutes of the last meeting were **approved**.

4 Matters Arising

The Chair asked members for an update on action points from previous meetings:

- 12 The Director of Student & Registry Services (S&RS) informed members that a Student Recruitment Strategy was being drafted to go to EB in November. The Chair stated that this is an ambitious project which needs a lot of analysis, with input from a number of departments, including planning and marketing. In the current and likely future funding environment the importance of a robust Student Recruitment Strategy was highlighted. It was **agreed** that the Strategy would be presented at the next ERC meeting (**action**).
- 24 The Secretary of ERC (Director of ER&D) has a meeting scheduled with the Head of Planning to ensure that the remits of R&P committees do not overlap.
- 26 The Communications Manager informed members that media alerts went out to members of GB on a weekly basis and more frequently for anything of an urgent nature.
- 27 Director of ER&D explained that the internal auditors had confirmed that if an audit recommendation had been debated and agreed not to be appropriate, it could be considered to be completed. It was therefore **agreed** that minutes and papers from ERC need not be distributed to a wider list, and that there were more appropriate ways of engaging the School community in External Relations matters.
- 28 The Communications Manager updated members on plans to integrate the School events calendar with that of the Students' Union. Director of ER&D informed members on progress regarding a suitable intranet for the School. A needs analysis would be informed by staff responses in the Internal Comms Survey. An intranet (which the School has not had before) is a major project requiring staff and budget resource and will need to be taken to the Corporate Systems Programme Board. In addition, a Web Editorial Board to consider web content is to be set up in Spring 2011 and its remit would include the differential between web (external facing) and intranet (internal facing) content.
- 30 A project to create an online system of documenting academic travel plans is on the list of projects to be implemented but the Chair advised that although a worthy aim it is not a top priority. The Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) mentioned that the old system of the 'blue form' was still in operation so it was not a question of starting from scratch, merely a transition from paper to an electronic system. The Director of ER&D confirmed that the Development & Alumni presentation was being presented to academic departments.

- 31 The Head of Widening Participation confirmed that the 1994 Group marketing materials had been released. As discussed at the ERC meeting in May, it has gone to teachers, advisors and university colleagues. It was agreed to send the materials and report to both the Director of Student & Registry Services and the Chair. **(action)**.

The Head of Marketing confirmed that Governing Body was informed about Universities Week and that the national campaign had been considered a success and was now planned to be an annual event. On the Universities UK website there was coverage of 400 events and 200 press items. He was asked to confirm how many HEIs were involved **(action)**. Next year's Universities Week is scheduled for 13-17 June 2011.

The Director of ER&D explained that the 2009 Kingston City Group internal audit on Marketing & Branding was no longer to be an agenda item as all the recommendations had either been completed or were important enough to now be agenda items in their own right, as with 5, 6 and 7.

5 Marketing Department restructure

It was noted that the restructure of the Marketing department to improve effectiveness and value for money was a Priority 1 recommendation in the 2009 Kingston Audit and a key objective of the External Relations Strategy. The Head of Marketing highlighted where changes to the structure of the department and roles made to date better served customers' needs and improved value for money and efficiency as well as providing a platform to better control corporate identity. The restructure was not yet final though new and relevant job descriptions had been agreed or were in draft form for all posts.

The Dean of Languages & Cultures asked if, when functions are moved into other directorates, eg the web duo, this resulted in changing priorities. The Chair confirmed that the School's web presence was high on everyone's agenda, regardless in which directorate the function was resourced, and also explained the distinction between long-term and medium-term objectives and that it was expected that departments would plan to meet both. The Director of ER&D added that in this instance, the move of the two web staff from ER&D to L&IS was a secondment and that she and the Director of L&IS would be discussing long term web resource and management with the new Assistant Director (IS) when he joined in November.

The Director of SRS noted that market intelligence was as much a matter of knowledge management and that it would be necessary for this function to work with students, academics and student recruitment. The Head of Marketing confirmed that the job description for the Marketing Manager was being re-evaluated to include this function and considerable cross-School liaison with would be part of any role. The Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) welcomed the market intelligence initiative which he felt had been lacking in the School and stressed the need to think in 'supply side terms' to deal with new market sensitivities.

The Governing Body member reported on a recent meeting of the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) where it was agreed that, whether we like it or not, HE will soon be in a completely market-led environment. The Chair agreed that this would be particularly the case for SOAS, as a niche institution and asked the Head of Marketing for an update on the restructure at the next meeting **(action)**.

6 Internal Communications Review

The Communications Manager talked members through the paper, noting that none of the findings of the initial interviews and focus groups were very surprising but that they confirmed people's perceptions of what needed to be improved. The next stage is the all staff online questionnaire which is completed but will be sent out mid November so its impact is not lost amongst all staff information about the Staff Survey and USS consultation.

The Dean of Languages & Cultures enquired about the length of time it would take to see any action from the results of the survey. The Chair detailed the need to balance getting feedback from colleagues, garner information and 'take colleagues with you' in any change implementation but agreed that there should be a specific time for actions and a defined end point. It was **agreed** there would be an update on the Internal Communications Review at the next meeting, including an action plan with timeline to implement agreed recommendations (**action**).

The Chair queried why the Student Communications Survey was 'subject to budget' in the paper and the Director of ER&D explained that while she was confident that the budget will be found, it was not all to come from ER&D and the brief and budget needed to be agreed between ER&D, Academic Development and Student & Registry Services. It was **agreed** that there would be an update as to the progress of the Student Communications Survey at the next meeting (**action**).

7 Reputation & Identity Review

It was **noted** that a review of the School's brand, or reputation and identity, was a Priority 1 recommendation in the 2009 Kingston Audit and a key objective of the External Relations Strategy. The Governing Body member detailed the process of selecting the chosen agency and stated that it had been a very thought-provoking exercise and given that all four short-listed agencies were first class, a difficult decision. Jane Wentworth Associates had shown real understanding of and empathy with the School and it was felt they were the right fit for this project. The Governing Body member noted that in light of the Browne Review and the CSR, it was essential that the School had a clear and agreed understanding of its place within its environment, where it needed to be and how to promote itself in order to get there. Clear and consistent messages in order to manage reputation and identity would be increasingly important in securing the School's future support and income. She drew members' attention to the findings of the 1994 Group reputation research that showed that although SOAS was reasonably well known amongst opinion formers in London it was almost unknown in the rest of the country. It was noted that SOAS only needed to attract ten more students in one year to cover the costs of the whole project and that given the proposed multiple benefits the project represented a good return on investment.

The Chair fully endorsed the importance of the review but asked if it would be possible to speed up the schedule as decisions would need to be made quickly that should be informed by the outcomes of the review. The Director of ER&D confirmed that Jane Wentworth Associates will attend the next meeting to report back on interim findings and that she would make the schedule as tight as possible.

Members were asked if they had been surprised by any of the findings of the 1994 Group reputation research and it was generally agreed they had not been, with the Head of the Centre for Media and Film Studies noting that SOAS was better known in Delhi than Durham. The Director of Student & Registry Services noted that the term 'audience' was more relevant to SOAS than 'market segmentation' and that students were of course one of our key audiences. It was confirmed that student feedback would be an important part of the review.

8 Employer Relations

The Chair emphasised the many important reasons for SOAS to understand and explore relations with employers. The Head of Careers talked to her report and said that the objective of the focus group work that had been undertaken was to understand:

- Why organisations would recruit a SOAS graduate
- What contribution can SOAS graduates make
- How can we improve and strengthen the appeal of our graduates

Feedback was very good and positive and it is clear that our SOAS' specialisms are valued, as is our wide range of global students who often speak more than two languages. The Dean of Languages & Cultures noted that we should be asking employers what they were prepared to do for our students in order to get the best employees.

It was **agreed** that the information from this report should be fed into marketing and recruitment initiatives (**action**) and it was confirmed that a copy had been given to Jane Wentworth Associates and that the Head of Careers would be consulted as part of the RIR review. The Chair stressed the need to keep asking what differentiated SOAS graduates as many of the findings could apply to graduates of most universities.

There was also a discussion about the need for SOAS to have a formal internship scheme and it was **agreed** that SOAS needed to catch up with other institutions that were already doing this. The Head of Careers was asked to update ERC members at a future meeting (**action**).

9 Date of Next Meeting

The Committee **noted** the date of the next meeting was 22 February 2011.

10 AOB

It was **agreed** that the theme for the next meeting should be 'Reputation and Identity' and that the agenda should include a presentation by Jane Wentworth Associates, an update on media relations and league tables. Members were asked for suggestions for a theme for the May meeting (**action**).

There was a discussion about SOAS entering high profile awards such as the THE awards which could have a very positive benefit internally as well as externally. However, given the amount of work involved in putting together a submission it was **agreed** that we should be very selective and only enter a category for which there was a very real chance of a nomination. Members were asked to suggest which of the THE categories they thought would be appropriate for SOAS to enter (**action**).