

# SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL & AFRICAN STUDIES

## EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tues 25 May 2010 1.15pm -3.15pm Room 116

### AGENDA

#### Theme: Building supporter engagement

- I Minutes**  
To approve: minutes of the ERC meeting held on 26 February 2010 [Attached]
- II Matters Arising**
- III Committee Review**  
To note: Information for Committee members Appendix A  
To receive: Principles on which the committee structure is based  
To receive: Recommendations relating to all sub-committees of Resources & Planning Committee  
To consider: Proposed ERC Terms of Reference for 2010-11
- IV Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel**  
To receive: Oral report on current exhibitions and events from Galleries Exhibitions Manager [next BGAP meeting is 26 May 2010]
- V External Relations Strategy**  
To receive: Oral report from Chair on progress of the ERS through Resources & Planning Committee and Governing Body  
To receive: Copy of External Relations Strategy Appendix B  
To receive: Report on progress against Performance Indicators and oral update from Director of External Relations & Development regarding Risk Analysis Appendix C
- VI Kingston Audit of Marketing & Branding**  
To receive: Oral update from the Director of External Relations & Development on action plan to address recommendations
- VII Internal Communications Review**  
To receive: Update from Communications Manager on progress of ICR to date Appendix D
- VII Reputation Management Review**  
To receive: Update from Head of Marketing on progress of RM Working Group Appendix E
- IX Building Supporter Engagement**  
To receive: Report from Head of Development & Alumni Relations and Alumni Relations Manager Appendix F  
Discussion: How to increase the impact of communications with all School supporters
- X Date of next meeting**  
To note: 1.15pm Tuesday 26 October 2010 Room 116
- XI 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 25 May at 1.15pm in Room 116

**Chair:** Mr Donald Beaton

**Members:** Professor Gilbert Achcar \*  
Mr Nick Butler  
Professor Rachel Dwyer  
Professor Graham Furniss \*  
Professor Mike Hutt  
Mr Sebilio Uribe  
Ms Fiona McWilliams  
Professor Werner Menski  
Professor Tim Screech \*  
Mr Michael Sherry  
Ms Elizabeth Wright\*  
Ms Sue Young

**In attendance:** Ms Debbie Adeusi  
Ms Marva De La Coudray  
Ms Johannah Flaherty  
Mr John Hollingworth  
Mr Craig Pollard  
Ms Zeba Salman

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

#### **22 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February were **approved**.

#### **23 Matters Arising**

The Chair introduced himself, welcomed members and explained that this was his first ERC meeting as Chair. He then asked for an update on action points from 26 February meeting:

- 12 The Head of Marketing reported that sales of prints were steady and that plans were in place to enhance promotion of all merchandise through better display, including in SU outlets.

The Director of External Relations & Development (ER&D) confirmed that the initial.surname format for email was being trialled in ER&D and then would be rolled out across the School.

The Chair said that he knew the Student Recruitment Plan is in progress and that he was looking forward to seeing it.

During a discussion about league tables, the Head of Student Recruitment noted that there was a widely available HEFCE League Tables Report and the Communications Manager informed members about the work of the new SOAS league tables planning group, chaired by the Head of Planning. The Head of Planning was preparing a detailed analysis of the league tables and the planning group would report to EB and in due course to the ERC.

- 17 The Director of ER&D confirmed that the SOAS Vision & Strategy had been refreshed with some minor edits to update data.

## 24 Committee Review

The committee **noted** the Information for Committee members provided by the Director of ER&D and **received** the Principles on which the committee structure is based, and the Recommendations relating to all sub-committees of Resources & Planning which the Committee Review had provided for ERC members. The Chair informed members that the recommendations for ERC had been straightforward and that the Terms of Reference for the 2010-11 session had been slightly revised as a result. These recommendations and the revised Terms of Reference would be submitted for Resources & Planning Committee approval. The Director of ER&D said that the only outstanding action was for the Secretaries of ERC, SEC and ADC to liaise and ensure that the remits of each committee did not overlap (**action**).

## 25 Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel

As the date of the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel had been moved from before to after this ERC meeting the Galleries and Exhibitions Manager gave members an oral update on current exhibitions and events. It was noted that the launch for *My Dear Brother: Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* had attracted some high profile guests including the Armenian Ambassador and good media coverage including BBC World Service and Aljazeera Television. *Rastafari in Lusoland* has also had some very good media coverage and both exhibitions are to be included in SOAS' activities for Universities Week 14-18 June.

He also explained that the main Brunei Gallery exhibition spaces are currently scheduled until autumn 2012 and likely soon to be through to 2013-14. A new policy is being developed around how the space is utilised.

## 26 External Relations Strategy

Chair reported that the External Relations Strategy (ERS) was recommended by Resources & Planning Committee and then well received and approved by Governing Body. The Director of ER&D thanked members for their contributions which had strengthened the Strategy.

The report on progress against Performance Indicators in the ERS was welcomed and members agreed that substantial progress had been made. During a discussion it was confirmed that the target for new donors to the Alumni & Friends Fund was 400 which it was thought would be reached, as would the target of 20 academic experts willing and confident to talk to media

The Governing Body member requested to receive the daily media alerts and would give the Communications Manager her feedback (**action**). She also commented that it was very good to see the School dealing robustly with incorrect reporting about SOAS in the media.

Director of ER&D reported on actions to mitigate key risks identified in the ERS, noting that considerable efforts were being made to strengthen relationships with alumni and existing donors and that governance of the IAB was improving as a result of DAB oversight. As regards Risk C vii, that internally within SOAS it would be difficult to engage people in external relations activities and so limit the impact of the Strategy, she reported that many people across the

School, including committee members, were becoming involved in such activities, which was very encouraging. She urged all committee members to act as ambassadors.

## 27 Kingston Audit of Marketing & Branding

The Director of ER&D advised members that key recommendations were on track, some with slight changes to delivery date due to changes in circumstances. One which was felt now not to be appropriate was the recommendation to distribute External Relations Committee agendas and minutes to a wider audience. It was **agreed** by members that it would be preferable to publicise external relations activities and outcomes and to ask for engagement through other means (eg e-newsletter and face to face) rather than ask people to be enthused through reading minutes. The Chair advised that this point would need to be closed off with the auditors Kingston City Group (**action**).

## 28 Internal Communications Review

The Communications Manager informed members that there are now two academics on the Internal Comms Working Group which had already held two useful meetings and gave a brief update on the activities of the Review, particularly that the initial face to face meetings with senior staff were taking place, and that the Review would focus initially on staff communications, with student communications addressed in a second phase in the autumn. The Dean of Languages & Cultures noted that he had already had his meeting with the communications consultants and been impressed.

The next activities would be staff discussion groups led by a specialist. These would be held over lunchtimes with lunch provided and run during the last week of June and the first week of July. A discussion followed about the best way to encourage staff to attend, since it was essential to hear the views of a wide range of staff, especially academic staff. It was agreed that all members would either attend these sessions and/or encourage staff and colleagues to take part. The Communications Manager advised that results of the face to face meetings and group sessions would inform an email questionnaire to be sent to all staff in the autumn and confirmed that she had worked closely with the HR team to ensure that it would be complementary to and not replicate the current Staff Survey.

The Director of ER&D informed the Chair that outcomes and recommendations from the Internal Comms Review would help inform the development of a new Internal Communications Strategy (which reports into the IICC). The Chair requested that issues should be thought through in advance as far as possible so they could be quickly addressed and impetus and goodwill was not lost. This was **agreed**.

A discussion was held about the importance of an effective intranet for the School which would be for internal use, with the main SOAS website then able to be an external facing site only. The Director of ER&D informed members that there will be a separate Intranet Working Group arising from the work of the Internal Comms Working Group specifically to address this issue. The Chair asked for an update at the next ERC meeting (**action**).

Other discussion points included a suggestion by the Co-President of the Students' Union that their events calendar could be uploaded into googlemail and that this facility might be useful across the School. The Communications Manager agreed to discuss this with him (**action**).

## 28 Reputation Management Review

The Head of Marketing briefed members on recent activities of the Reputation Management Working Group, which included meetings with 10 prospective agencies to see if they 'understood' and would work well with SOAS. He encouraged members to get involved in the Review – either as members of the pitch panel or in discussion groups when the consultation process starts. Members discussed the importance of engaging Executive Board, Governing

Body, and the wider school community. The Chair asked the Head of Marketing to report back with a project timeline and activities at the next meeting **(action)**.

## 29 Building Supporter Engagement

The Head of Development and Alumni Relations Manager gave a well-received presentation on alumni engagement. The Chair then led a discussion. The Governing Body member said that she thought that the development and alumni team were doing 'an amazing job' and that a lot had been achieved after many years of slow progress. Members stressed the importance of building relationships with academics as many had links with alumni over decades which they could share with colleagues to the benefit of the whole School. It was confirmed that some academic colleagues are increasingly aware of the benefits of the development and alumni office's work, with one recently agreeing to pass over 300 alumni contacts.

The importance of liaising with academics over their travel dates so they could take part in alumni events overseas was also discussed. The Alumni Relations Manager confirmed that the team was now proactive in this regard. The Chair told members that the key to getting this right was the sharing of information and that we need to find a simple, non-bureaucratic system. The Dean of Languages and Culture told members that this issue had previously been brought to Executive Board but against other priorities had been considered to be low on the list. The Head of Student Recruitment added that Management & Information Services (MIS) held the same view. The Chair agreed to take this forward **(action)**.

It was widely felt by members that the development and alumni presentation should be given to as many academic groups as possible and it was agreed that this would be explored **(action)**. The Chair told members that as much work as possible should be done to inform academic colleagues particularly about the benefits of establishing an effective development department, given the increasing need for alternative and sustainable sources of funding. The Widening Participation Co-ordinator told members about the need for both academics and students to know about the work of the development office as a way of completing the loop of volunteering and mentoring, and that students need to be involved as soon as possible so that they are aware they are expected to become active alumni. The Co-President of the SU made suggestions as to how this could be encouraged which was **agreed** would be explored with the Alumni Relations Manager **(action)**.

## 30 AOB

The Widening Participation Co-ordinator informed members about the work of a 1994 Group working party of which she is a member. The remit is to explore if there is a need to promote the 1994 Group of universities as a group to schools and careers advisors, and ways in which that could take place. In discussing what is unique and different about 1994 Group universities the following results came from a survey of teachers and careers advisors as key messages which could be conveyed about all 1994 Group universities, regardless of their individual differences:

- Employability
- Campus feel, community based
- Combination of history and cutting edge
- Research led teaching
- Quality
- International reputation

The 1994 Group working party is to finalise a report and the WP Co-ordinator will update the committee at the next meeting **(action)**.

The Head of Marketing informed members about SOAS' involvement in a national 'Value of Universities Week' 14 -18 June to celebrate and raise the profile of the contribution that universities make to the UK. Over 60 universities across the UK are taking part, both promoting

existing events during that week to the wider public under the Universities Week banner, or releasing stories and case studies to the media to support a media campaign. Marketing and Communications will work together to promote Universities Week internally and externally. The Chair and Governing Body member requested that Governing Body should also be informed **(action)**.

The Director of ER&D informed the committee that UUK, UMF (Universities Marketing Forum) and CASE who are supporting Universities Week are also working together on a sister week in the autumn which will focus on philanthropic giving to encourage participation in the Matched Funding Scheme.

**21. Date of next meeting 2010**

The Committee **noted** the date of the next meeting:

1.15pm on Tuesday 26 October 2010