

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL & AFRICAN STUDIES

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday 24 May Room 116, 1.15pm - 3.15pm

AGENDA

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|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| I | Minutes
To approve: Minutes of the ERC meeting held 22 February 2011 | Attached |
| II | Matters arising | |
| III | Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel
To receive: Oral update from meeting held 11 May 2011 from Galleries & Exhibitions Manager | |
| IV | External Relations Strategy
To receive: Update on progress against Performance Indicators from the Director of External Relations & Development | Appendix A |
| V | Employer Engagement Strategy & Operating Plan
To receive: Report from Head of College Careers Service | Appendices B & C |
| VI | Marketing Department
To receive: Oral update from Head of Marketing on progress towards refocus of Marketing department (market intelligence/research and SUMS printing review) | |
| VII | Media Relations
To Note: Update on results of internal communications review (report summary) by Communications Manager | Appendix D |
| VIII | Widening Participation
To Note: Report on Access Agreement for 2012-13 submitted to OFFA by Head of Widening Participation | Appendix E |
| IX | Date of next meeting 2011
To note: 21 October 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 24 May 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
Professor Anne Pauwels
Mr Matthew Richards*
Professor Iain Scobbie
Ms Elizabeth Wright
Professor Annabelle Sreberny
Ms Sue Young

In attendance: Ms Debbie Adeusi
Ms Marva De La Coudray
Ms Johannah Flaherty
Mr Michael Sherry

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

21 The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February were **approved**.

22 Matters Arising

The Chair welcomed members and asked for an update on action points from 22 February meeting.

12 The Head of College Careers Service updated members on the formal internship scheme and highlighted the following:

- Academics from seven departments are interested in various types of internship
- There are approximately 16 external organisations (including VSO and Save The Children) interested in partnering with SOAS in some form
- There is a need for a further resource of an internships co-ordinator for two days per week initially to help get the scheme up and running and discussions have been had with the Director of S&RS regarding this proposed resource.

13 The Galleries & Exhibitions Manager reported that he had drafted a policy for permissions and use of images for the Brunei Gallery and was to ask for input from the Communications Manager. He also informed members that the Head of Art

Collections at HSBC was open to the idea of the *Staunton Portrait* being returned to them and instead lending SOAS artwork in rotation from their collection for a suggested three-year fixed period. He was to take this forward **(action)**. It was noted that this would be another facet to the School's already strong relationship with HSBC.

- 16 The Chair informed members that the work of the Student Recruitment Strategy Group was ongoing and that there would be a further update at the first ERC meeting of the next session **(action)**.
- 17 The Director of Student & Registry Services informed members that the draft Student Recruitment Strategy has been shown to various departments and data produced on SOAS' competitors and student choices was extremely valuable. He agreed to update members on the progress of the strategy at the next meeting **(action)**.

Members' noted that the North American market was very important to the School and that there was a need to collaborate across departments to maximise efforts in this area. The Committee was informed that a cross-departmental meeting had been arranged to discuss opportunities arising from the recent establishment of American Friends of SOAS (AFSOAS). It was hoped that by coordinating efforts (across Development, Alumni Relations, Student Recruitment and with academic partnerships) the School could grow its profile in North America and enhance both recruitment and fundraising. The Director of ER&D agreed to update the Committee on the development of AFSOAS at the next meeting **(action)**.

- 18 The Director of ER&D reported that the Reputation & Identity Review Project Board was considering feedback from the perceptions audit produced by Jane Wentworth & Associates and recommendations for Phase Two.

23 Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel

The Galleries & Exhibitions Manager gave members a verbal update from the Brunei Gallery Advisory Panel (BGAP) meeting held on May 11 and some promotional literature on forthcoming exhibitions. He highlighted the following points:

- The previous two exhibitions (*Bridge of Knowledge* and *History Lessons 1*) were very well-attended with over 8,000 visitors including large numbers of group visits
- The *Bridge of Knowledge* was the Gallery's 100th exhibition and the celebratory event on 24 March was very successful. Many staff who attended admitted they had not previously been to a gallery event
- The current exhibition, *A Disappearing World*, is also proving very popular with over 3,500 visitors since 14 April
- The author and activist Arundhati Roy as to be part of a panel discussion on 5 June in the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre
- The London Open Gardens Weekend on 11 and 12 June would coincide with the School's Alumni Weekend which could increase footfall to the Japanese Roof Garden
- The *Golden Temple of Amritsar* exhibition would be on during SOAS graduation which would present an opportunity for guided tours during the three-day period
- There had been an increase in tour groups to view the *Treasures of SOAS* and further meetings are planned with the Head of Archives to assess material for future display
- The Head of Archives, Galleries & Exhibitions Manager and the Development team were working to compile a comprehensive list of the materials donated by the Fereydoun Djam Charitable Trust and ongoing archive needs and costs

- Camden Council have finally given planning permission for the new chiller units to provide air conditioning for the gallery and lecture theatre and these should be installed over the summer for the start of the new academic year
- The Empire & Commonwealth Museum (ECM) had pulled out of the *British in Palestine 1917-1948* exhibition scheduled for October 2012. Curators are hoping to proceed independently and this will be confirmed by the end of October 2011
- The BGAP had agreed there was a need to make improvements to the entrance of the Brunei Gallery entrance. The Chair suggested this should be discussed at the Estates & Infrastructure Committee

24 External Relations Strategy

The Committee **received** the update on progress against Performance Indicators of the External Relations Strategy 2009-11. The Director of ER&D reported that this had been an ambitious strategy which was intended to have substantial impact School-wide and to lay the groundwork to enable SOAS to maximise the opportunity of the Centennial. She drew members' attention to:

- The performance of the Development and Alumni relations team. SOAS was on track to reach the Tier 3 Matched Funding targets which would leverage an additional £2.75m from Hefce for SOAS in addition to the over £8.25m of philanthropic income received by the School for a range of projects
- The performance of the Communications and Events team which was doing 'stellar work' to raise School's profile
- Implementation of the Strategy had seen a number of School 'firsts' including telephone fundraising campaigns, American Friends of SOAS (AFSOAS) and the upcoming Alumni Weekend (9-11 June 2011).

She thanked the members of other academic and professional services departments across the School who had worked with ER&D staff and helped to achieve, and in some cases exceed, PIs. Members and the Chair said that great progress had been made and the Chair told members that the success in fundraising was notable as it had been a very ambitious target.

The Director of ER&D noted that the priority for the Communications team of two needed to be internal communications and that it was hoped that the new systems and procedures to improve media relations efficiency would mean that the School's recent increased media profile would not diminish as a result. It was noted that academic colleagues could really help in this regard by responding quickly to availability requests.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of ER&D outlined the top few priorities going forward as follows:

- To draft an External Relations Strategy over the summer to bring to the next meeting **(action)**
- Internal communication – to implement the recommendations of the review
- To maximise the opportunities for SOAS in the USA, including developing AFSOAS and a sustainable income stream

Members were asked to engage with Alumni Weekend if they could and give any feedback. If it proved successful, it was hoped it would be a regular fixture. The Professor of Indian Cinema & Cultures was thanked for agreeing to host a Meera Syal event as part of the activities.

25 Employer Engagement Strategy & Operating Plan

The Committee **received** the papers from the Head of College Careers Service and attention was drawn to the following:

- A new Employer Liaison Officer had been appointed with the aim of enabling the department to develop a more proactive programme
- The papers were written to be complementary to other School-wide strategies
- The findings of the SWOT analysis
- The need to continue to work with and develop the relationship with Alumni Relations and other departments.

The Chair requested that these papers go to other committees as it was important for colleagues across the School to see them, especially the Student Experience Committee. Members noted the need for departments to work together to maximise relationships with organisations and individuals, which the Chair approved and commended.

26 Marketing Department

The Head of Marketing gave members a verbal update on progress towards the refocus of the Marketing department and informed them that a review of advertising and promotion across the School was underway and an audit of the School's design needs was about to start. Members were also informed that positive feedback had been received from stakeholders about the new systems and procedures in the Print Room. Not as much progress had been made on developing the marketing intelligence unit as hoped, although the requirements had been identified (benchmarking against other universities) and would be used to inform the development of the Marketing Business Plan. The Head of Marketing also informed members that he had now joined the Joint Faculty Project Panel which would help with planning at an earlier stage.

The Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) observed that even at the Faculty Approval Board stage, plans were already quite far advanced and it would be more sensible for academics to assess the likely demand for new courses or programmes with the Marketing department at the earliest possible stage of an idea. The Head of Marketing agreed and said he would welcome direct approaches. He informed members that the lead time to adequately market a new programme is 18 months.

The Chair informed members that efforts were being made (along with the Pro-Director, Teaching & Learning and the Pro-Director, Research & Enterprise) to encourage a more proactive relationship with departments and more analytical and evidence based decision making to proposed new courses. Members agreed that new programme proposals should be evaluated in terms of demand and potential student numbers.

27 Media Relations

The Committee **noted** the results of the internal communications review and the Communications Manager highlighted the following points from the report summary:

- The review had been conducted by an independent company and responses were anonymous
- Research included 35 one-to-ones and four focus groups
- From a total of 284 staff who took part in the survey, 58% were professional services, 35% were academic and the remainder were contract staff.

It was acknowledged that it would have been preferable to have had a higher number of academic staff take part but that even so, the numbers taking part had been

encouraging. Members were also informed that the quality of responses was very good and that there was evidenced a genuine desire to improve communications at the School. The key findings and these were highlighted as follows:

- The need for more face-to-face communications with managers and colleagues
- The need to improve the way the Directorate and other senior managers interact and communicate on key decisions
- The need for Committee decisions to be communicated faster and more openly
- The need for more appropriate communal space
- The need for greater interaction between sites and departments
- The need for an improved intranet and website as a source for valuable information

The Chair asked for a steer from the Committee on which points were the most important and members highlighted the need for improvements to the Staff Common Room and the need for an effective intranet. The Chair informed members that he and colleagues in ER&D and Library & Information Services were working to find ways of moving forward towards implementing a cost-effective intranet service at SOAS. It was agreed that an action plan for implementation of the agreed recommendations from the Internal Communications Review be brought to the next meeting (**action**).

28 **Widening Participation**

The Committee **noted** the School's Access Agreement submitted to OFFA on 19 April 2011. The Head of Widening Participation informed members she felt that, in light of the £9,000 fee, once OFFA had made its decision the School would have to decide on its promotional strategy. She informed members that an action plan was being drawn up in consultation with the OFFA Working Group and the OFFA Steering Group which was expected to be completed by the end of July 2011 and that this plan would be shared with committee members at the next meeting (**action**). It was noted that rumours that OFFA would reject one third of university submissions were erroneous.

29 **Any other business**

There was no other business.

30 It was **noted** that the date for the next meeting is Friday 21 October at 1.15pm