

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

SOAS, University of London

## **Human Resources Committee – Minutes**

10.00 a.m. on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2016 in Room 116

Ms Laura Gibbs, Registrar (Chair) \*

Mr Paul Doyle, HR Director (Secretary) \*

Mr David Atkins, Head of Admissions

Dr Tamsyn Barton, External Adviser \*

Dr Teresa Bernheimer, Senior Lecturer in the History of the Near & Middle East

Professor Chris Bramall, Dean of Faculty of Law & Social Sciences

Professor Rachel Dwyer, Professor of Indian Cultures and Cinema \*

Ms Regina Everitt, LIS Assistant Director (Customer Services & Operations)

Mr Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager

Professor Julia Strauss, Professor of Chinese Politics

Ms Dalia Dasgupta, Interim HR Director – In attendance (Acting Chair)

Ms Seema Sanyal, HR Business Partner – Minute Secretary

Mr Tim Surch, Interim HR Business Partner – In attendance

Ms Serena Yeo, Staff Learning & Development Manager – In attendance

\*Those whose names are marked with an asterisk were unable to attend the meeting

## **12. Minutes of the last meeting (22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015)**

The HR Committee minutes of 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 were APPROVED subject to one amendment:-

The second sentence of the fourth paragraph under Item 6 'HR Strategic Priorities 2015-2020' (page 4) should read: "RE mentioned the need to develop the management skills as currently there is no training for managers on working with staff representatives to enable them to build effective relationships."

## **13. Action Taken**

The Committee received verbal updates on action taken and NOTED the following:-

**Minute 1** - the Interim HR Director, Dalia Dasgupta (DD) reported that an update on the HR Transformation Project had been circulated.

**Minute 2** - the Committee NOTED that an item covering HR Strategic Priorities 2015-2020 was on the main agenda.

**Minute 3** - the Committee NOTED that the Equality and Diversity Strategy was on the main agenda.

**Minute 4** - Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager (MH) reported that the Terms of Reference for the Academic/student Focussed group 'Studying at SOAS' are decided by the Equality and Diversity Committee (E&DC) and that the group is chaired by the School Secretary. The Committee NOTED that MH will report to E&DC that academics have three representatives on the group and are, therefore, well represented and that MH will ask E&DC to consider a more appropriate role holder to chair the group.

## **14. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising to report.

## **15. Transforming HR**

The Interim HRD, Dalia Dasgupta (DD) presented her update report and initial evaluation of the HR Restructure 2015. The Committee NOTED the report and staffing update and further NOTED that a more detailed evaluation would be provided at the next meeting by the HR Director.

The Committee discussed the workload of the HR Business Partners and NOTED that it would be easier to assess after the new Deputy Director of HR commences work on 14<sup>th</sup> March and the Employee Relations Consultants are fully trained.

The Committee discussed the need for clarifying processes for workstation assessments and reasonable adjustments and it was AGREED that this would be done when the reasonable adjustments budget is transferred from the Diversity Officer to the HR Directorate.

The Committee NOTED the possibility that a Staff or Pulse Survey will be conducted in Term 3; it was AGREED that DD will discuss this with Paul Doyle, HR Director on his return.

## **16. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) Framework**

Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager (MH) presented his report on streamlining the ED&I framework and consolidation of 10 action plans into one to facilitate the realisation of the key objectives. Chris Bramall, Dean of Faculty of Law & Social Sciences expressed his appreciation, as Chair of Equality & Diversity Committee, of MH's work on the action plans.

The Committee NOTED the report and further NOTED that the chair of the Open Forum would have a crucial role in effectively managing expectations of action created by the forum.

## **17. Respect at SOAS**

Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager (MH) presented the report on the Respect at SOAS Policy, which had been approved by Equality & Diversity Committee, subject to minor changes to include reference to students as well as staff. The Committee NOTED the report, which confirmed that the Respect at SOAS Policy would replace the Dignity at SOAS Policy

The Committee discussed the role of the Anti-Harassment Contacts, which is to set out options for resolution neutrally and not to advocate or represent. The Committee NOTED that although 3 new Anti-Harassment Contacts had been recruited recently following an advertisement in the weekly e-News Bulletin, a further 7 Contacts were required. The Committee discussed the role of the Diversity & Inclusion Managers and NOTED that it includes providing informal guidance on the wording of 'Stop' notices, organising training for Anti-Harassment Contacts and facilitating mediation, but not representing employees. It was AGREED that clarification would be added by MH to the Respect on SOAS Policy on the role of the Anti-Harassment contacts and who arranges mediation.

## **18. Employment Policies and Procedures**

Seema Sanyal, HR Business Partner (SS) presented the revised schedule for the review of employment policies and procedures and reported that the HR Directorate had fallen behind the timetable because of the Transformation of HR project. The Committee NOTED that the new HR Deputy Director, Sophie Harris will be taking on responsibility for reviewing policies and procedures and may revise the schedule on taking up her role in March 2016.

Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager (MH) reminded the Committee that Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) have to be conducted for new and revised policies and procedures. It was AGREED that SS would contact MH to discuss conducting an EIA on the revised Disciplinary Procedures.

## **19. Sustainable SOAS**

Chris Bramall, Dean of Faculty of Law & Social Sciences (CB) reported that a large amount of verbal consultation was taking place with Academic Departments on the Sustainability plans and that the feedback had been largely predictable so far with concerns raised about any consequential compulsory redundancies, and queries regarding the surplus target and Vernon Square. The Committee NOTED that Vernon Square only has planning consent for educational use and that, consequently, the sale value would be low and further NOTED CB's view that selling Vernon Square would be a false economy. CB reported that following the end of the consultation period on 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Sustainability Programme Board will review and revise the plans as necessary for submission to the Board of Trustees.

The Committee NOTED concerns about an historical lack of managerial accountability relating to estates acquisition and a lack of an overall vision for the future of SOAS to underpin the sustainability consultation. CB confirmed that the plans were currently broad brush and non-specific regarding impact on posts and explained that the current consultation process would feed into clarifying the overall strategy, which would impact the future shape of SOAS. The Committee NOTED that the different views are being expressed during the consultation on the centrality of the Faculties of Languages & Cultures and Law & Social Sciences.

## **20. The Prevent Duty**

Serena Yeo, Staff Learning & Development Manager (SY) reported that Laura Gibbs, Registrar (LG) is the School's Institutional Lead on Prevent, the Government's anti-terrorism initiative, which imposes a duty on HEIs to prevent students being drawn into extremism.

The Committee NOTED that the working group established by LG had formulated the required institutional plan and conducted self-assessment on what the School is doing to meet the Duty, for example, to monitor guest speakers. The Committee further NOTED that although the self-assessment documentation appeared to have been accepted by HEFCE, the School will need to provide more information, such as the rationale for training certain staff groups to meet the training requirement imposed by the Duty.

SY reported that she, along with Alison Barty, Head of Student Advice and Wellbeing and Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager had undertaken JISC training and that the 'Helping Students to Succeed' document is being updated to clarify the support available in relation to meeting the Prevent Duty. The Committee NOTED that staff who support vulnerable students might receive broad, relevant face-to-face training for which the Prevent Duty is a minor, non-specific part.

## **21. Management / Leadership Development Initiatives**

Serena Yeo, Staff Learning & Development Manager (SY) provided a verbal report on current initiatives and ongoing provision:-

- SOAS Leadership Programme, which started in May 2015, for a targeted group of Academic and Professional Services participants, nominated by the Deans and the Registrar.
- Aurora Programme, run by the Leadership Foundation to support the leadership and development of women up to Grade 9; SOAS has 5 employees (4 Professional Services, 1 Academic) participating in each of the last 2 years.
- Leadership Matters, run by the Leadership Foundation for female academic managers; SOAS has 2 employees (1 Professional Services, 1 Academic) participating.
- SOAS Management Courses are continuing to run, with Level 1 for employees up to Grade 7 and Level 2 for employees on Grades 8 - 10.
- SOAS Desktop Mentor, which is now available to all staff.
- Induction training for Academic Heads of Department.
- Work for the Registrar, which involves collating information on past training, expenditure and achievements – 2 overlapping pieces of work.

The Committee NOTED that training had been provided to two new Academic Heads of Department in Term 2 by SY and Seema Sanyal, HR Business Partner and further NOTED that the two recently appointed Deans of Faculty had enrolled on Leadership Foundation Programmes.

SY reported that the Level 2 Management Courses were not well-subscribed and that the last scheduled course had to be cancelled, with individual coaching sessions provided to three of the potential participants. The Committee discussed the low application rates for the Level 2 course and NOTED the following possible factors:- lack of time for training and courses being scheduled during school half-term, concerns about confidentiality leading to a preference for external courses, reluctance amongst female academics to go into management based on their observations of the experiences of new Heads of Department.

The Committee NOTED that the management courses had external trainers and that confidentiality was assured and further NOTED that although there had been a discussion about making management training compulsory prior to academic managers taking up post, the Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise) had been strongly against the idea. It was AGREED that SY would publicise the management courses, for example, at FMG meetings, further target information to line managers and individuals and encourage attendance. Mark Harrison, Diversity & Inclusion Manager AGREED to circulate to Committee members a report from the University of Tromsø on their successful initiatives to support women into senior roles.

**SOAS, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Thursday 18 February 2016

**ACTION POINTS**

<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Status</b>
5	Clarify processes for workstation assessments and reasonable adjustments when the budget is transferred to HR	July 2016	HR	
6	Discuss if Staff or Pulse Survey will be conducted in Term 3 with Paul Doyle	March 2016	DD	DONE
7	Add clarification to the Respect on SOAS Policy on who arranges mediation	May 2016	MH	
8	Contact Mark Harrison to discuss conducting an EIA on the revised Disciplinary Procedures.	May 2016	SS	
9	Publicise the management courses for example at FMG meetings, further target information and encourage attendance.	Dec 2016	SY	
10	Circulate to HRC members the University of Tromsø report on successful initiatives to support women into senior roles.	Feb 2016	MH	