

SOAS  
**Human Resources Committee**

10.00am on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May in room B101

**Agenda**

Items marked with an asterisk are formal business, not intended for discussion. If members wish to discuss any issues arising from these items they should inform the Chair by 9.00am on the day prior to the meeting.

**I Minutes**

To approve minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010.

**II Matters arising**

- i) Communications update
- ii) School Promotions Panel

**III Committee Review 2009/10**

Appendix A

To note the outcome of the review and the response to the recommendations made by HR Committee in October 2009

**IV HR Strategy Advisory Groups**

To consider: progress and action undertaken so far:

- i) Oral report from Staff Development Manager
- ii) Oral report from HR Manager (Reward)

**V HR Strategy 2010/11 – 2012/13**

Appendix B

To consider: the draft Strategy and Action plan

**VI HR Strategy progress report**

Appendix C

To consider & approve: the annual report to Resources & Planning Committee

**VII Gender Equality Statement and action plan**

Appendix D 1& 2

To note the draft Statement and Action plan

**VIII 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.

SOAS

**Human Resources Committee**

10am on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2010 in Room BG202

Mr Donald Beaton, Registrar and Secretary (Chair for items I- V)\*\*

Mr Peter Mitchell, HR Director (Secretary) (Chair for items VI – VII)

Professor Matthew Craven, Dean of Faculty\*

Mr John Harmer, Computer Network Manager

Dr Ted Proferes, Programmes Convenor & Director of Studies

Dr Julia Strauss, Senior Lecturer

Dr Desmond Thomas, Research Skills Co-ordinator

Ms Deb Viney, Diversity Adviser

Dr Justin Watkins, Senior Lecturer\*

Ms Zoe Weaver, External Adviser

Mr Charles Perry, HR Manager (in attendance)

Ms Serena Yeo, Staff Development Manager (in attendance)

\*Those whose names are marked with a single asterisk were unable to attend the meeting,

\*\* Those whose names are marked with a double asterisk left part-way through the meeting.

**14. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2010:**

Corrections AGREED.

Page 2 : Under item 9 – bullet point 2: “All staff emails are unsuitable for disseminating information

Page 3: Under point 10 - HR strategy advisory groups 10.1 change to “and Professor Craven”

Page 5: “From an average of 40% and drops from there

Minutes of the last meeting was AGREED.

## **15. Matters Arising:**

i) Communication between HR and UCU: Charles Perry updated the Committee on positive progress with UCU local and regional officers. These discussions are ongoing and address concerns raised by members at the previous HR Committee meeting.

ii) School Promotions Panel: It was NOTED that the Panel meets tomorrow and that a report would be brought back to the next meeting of the HR Committee, next session. In the meantime, it was AGREED, that an AOB item would be raised at the Panel meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010 to ask for the results of the promotions to be published, as previously occurred.

## **16. Committee Review 2009/10**

It was NOTED that the review of the Committees was a core commitment to good governance. The Chair said that there needs to be a standard form of paperwork across all committees, that there was a need to be succinct and that committees should not be used as the means of communicating between colleagues.

Discussion took place about roles of ex-officio roles and those who are required to attend, such as the Staff Development Manager. It was NOTED that it was not appropriate for the Staff Development Manager to be *ex officio* member of the committee, as the HR Director was already an *ex officio* member. It was AGREED that the Staff Development Manager should, however, continue to attend.

## **17. HR Strategy Advisory Group**

The Committee considered the progress and action with regards to:

### *i) Staff Development*

Staff Development Manager said that the working groups would meet after the Staff Survey results come back in July 2010.

This led to a discussion about the Staff Survey and it was NOTED that the current response rate is running at just over 30% (closing date 11<sup>th</sup> June 2010). The last survey had a 35% return but the aim was to achieve 50% return if possible and certainly to better the 35% from last time.. Concerns were raised about level of staff engagement, the content of the survey and the length of time it was taking some staff members to complete. It was NOTED that many of the questions were now benchmark questions (and so difficult to alter) and that CAPITA had estimated the average completion time to be around 20 minutes.

It was AGREED CAPITA should be asked to provide updated response rates, split by areas and departments, so that any noticeable gaps could be targeted before the survey closed. It was further AGREED that any follow up action should concentrate on the key achievable issues raised.

### *ii) Reward:*

Secretary said that there will need to be another meeting and the results of the Staff Survey will feed into that meeting in the next academic year.

## **18. HR Strategy 2010/11 - 2012/13**

The Committee considered the draft strategy

Secretary introduced the paper and said that this 'draft' strategy has come through planning cycle, and that any changes made at this stage cannot include the requirement for additional resources. I was NOTED that this still allowed the committee to make amendments to wording and priorities etc.

The wide range of objectives set out were NOTED and the Chair asked what the priorities were. The Secretary said that the objectives for the coming session had been identified as priorities (hence why they were in the first year of the strategy action plan) and that it was difficult to prioritise between them. It was NOTED that the specific objectives and the timescales for completion would likely change in the light of external drivers (such as the introduction of the Equality Bill and how this would affect existing policies and procedures, or HEFCE funding changes etc).

The Committee discussed the strategy for Management and Leadership which aimed at professionalising aspects of management, including the academic Head of Department role. There followed considerable discussion about the possible contradictions faced in undertaking the role of Head of Department and it was NOTED that this was merely one objective concerning one aspect of the HR Strategy. The HR Strategy as a whole was about setting the framework and agenda for culture change within the organisation that would enable staff, including academic members of staff, to feel that their views and concerns were listened to and that School management was trustworthy.

In particular, as part of this discussion, it was AGREED that the optimum size of Departments within Faculties should be considered and it was NOTED that considerable progress had already been made in respect of agreeing the new Heads of Department job description and allowance structures.

The Secretary also explained the risk register attached to the back of the Strategy and Action Plan and it was NOTED that the risk relating to objective 7 was unacceptably high from a governance point of view and it was AGREED that this should be amended to better reflect the School's situation.

The HR Strategy and Action Plan for 2010/11 was then AGREED subject to the following amendments:

- There should be an addition aim relating to employee engagement on page 1;
- Removal of the word "minimal" in respect of statutory compliance for health and safety issues (Objective 7, page 7) and this should be reflected in a reduced "likelihood of risk" score in the Risk Register.

## **19. HR Strategy progress report**

The Committee considered the report.

It was AGREED to use the term 'performance indicators' rather than Key Performance Indicators.

After considered discussion the Committee APPROVED the report to be presented to Resources and Planning Committee.

## **20. Gender Equality Statement and action plan**

The Committee NOTED the statement and action plan

The Diversity Adviser said that statement and the action plan have not been uploaded onto the website due to IT problems. Discussion followed about objectives and actions for addressing the recommendations.

## **21. Any Other Business**

### *i) On-line recruitment:*

It was NOTED that one member of the Committee had received complaints about the online recruitment system, but that the members of staff raising complaints felt unable to approach HR about them. The Secretary urged the Committee member to ask these staff members to contact him about these issues, as they could not be dealt with otherwise.

### *ii) Service Level Agreements (SLAs)*

The Secretary circulated the Committee with information about HR SLAs. The SLAs include the process of feeding back "Compliments, Comments and Concerns" about the HR Directorate and the services it provides. It was NOTED that this SLAs process is being trialled between now and December 2010. A report will then be sent to Executive Board and, if the trial is successful, similar SLAs could then be developed throughout SOAS professional services Directorates.

Meeting ends 11.35am