

SOAS
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences
FACULTY BOARD

30 November 2005

MINUTES

Prof Bob Ash	Dr Sudipta Kaviraj
Prof Henry Bernstein	Dr Jens Lerche
Dr Hong Bo	Ms Lara De Marco
Professor Stephen Chan (Chair)	Prof Michael Palmer*
Dr Matthew Craven	Ms Sonja Ruehl*
Professor Ben Fine	Dr Lynn Welchman*
Dr Jane Harrigan	Ms Evita Rackow (UG student rep)
Prof Laurence Harris	Ms Indira Campos (PG student rep)
Dr Stephen Hopgood	

In attendance: Ms Carolyn Heath (Secretary)
Mrs Barbara Spina

Those members whose names are marked with an asterisk were unable to be present: (*) gave apologies, (**) were absent.

14 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

14.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2005 were APPROVED as an accurate record with the following amendment:
Butler Report (Minute 3.5.2) – should read: “It was NOTED that *departmental* plans will be forthcoming”

15 MATTERS ARISING

- 15.1 EAA Budget 2005/6 (Minute 3.4 refers)
It was NOTED that no further EAA funds are available for 2005/6 under instruction from Governing Body’s Finance and General Purposes Committee to address the projected School deficit.
- 15.2 Butler Report (Minute 3.5.2 refers)
It was NOTED that Matthew Craven has produced the first draft plan for the School of Law, to be considered at the next departmental meeting. It will then be presented for discussion at the subsequent Faculty Board meeting.
- 15.3 RAE (Minute 3.6.1 refers)
15.3.1 It was NOTED that some reservations have been entered on the strategy of undertaking mock reviews by externals. The sensitivities of academic colleagues were NOTED, but it was felt wise to be as prepared as possible for the RAE.
- 15.3.2 It was also NOTED that some departments are struggling to find an appropriate / available external for this.

15.4 Recruitment and Admissions (Minute 5.4.1 refers)
It was NOTED that meetings have been arranged with Heads of Department, Admissions Tutors and David Atkins (Head of Recruitment and Admissions) for Wednesday 7 December 2005.

15.5 Plagiarism (Minute 6.1.1 refers)

15.5.1 It was NOTED that a Registry paper confirming the regulations and procedures for Examination Offences (including plagiarism) was APPROVED at L&TPC last month.

15.5.2 It was also NOTED that L&TPC had asked the Head of LTU to lead a group to review the current procedures for plagiarism.

16 DEAN'S REPORT

16.1 Budgets

16.1.1 It was NOTED that the School's deficit for 2005/6 is likely to be approximately £1m – and that the Governing Body are expected to approve a deficit budget of approx £500k. A series of clawbacks have therefore begun to take place, although these are not expected to affect the normal business of L&SS.

16.1.2 It was NOTED that the income stream patterns are still worrying – that L&SS are still the sole major contributor to the School's financial viability. It was NOTED that there are prospective signs that the Faculty of Languages and Cultures may be able to increase its revenue streams in future.

16.2.3 It was NOTED that Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) have advised that all plans for 2006/7 are based on a 0% growth from 2005/6.

16.2.4 However the staff plans for L&SS' 2006/7 vacancies/new posts have still been approved as follows:

DeFiMS:

- Academic Director, MSc International Management for China (new post);
- Lecturer in Financial Law (shared with Law) (replacement)

Development Studies:

- Teaching Fellow / Lecturer in Development Studies (new post)

Economics:

- Lecturer in Economics (replacement);
- Teaching Fellow (Fixed Term) (replacement)

Law:

- Lecturer in Financial Law (shared with DeFiMS) (replacement);
- Reader/Professor in Public Law and Governance (vacancy);
- Lecturer in Law (vacancy)

16.3 Library

16.3.1 It was NOTED that the two librarians have been re-instated and will be reintroduced to their duties in a phased manner. For the foreseeable future, their direct reporting line will be to the Dean of Languages and Cultures, Prof Mike Hutt.

16.3.2 It was NOTED that ACAS will continue to be involved to discuss and advise all parties, regarding the immediate issues and longer-term matters regarding communication, procedures and policies.

16.3.3 It was NOTED that there will be an extraordinary meeting of Academic Board before the end of term to consider the final report from the internal Library Strategy Working Group.

16.3.4 Faculty Board was concerned to hear from the Faculty Librarian that there had been no communication to Library staff about these developments. It was AGREED that the Dean would speak to the Directorate to request that this is addressed as a matter of priority.

16.4 Communications

16.4.1 It was NOTED that Academic Board have approved that the membership of both Resources Committee and Executive Board be augmented with two additional academic members. It was AGREED to be important that L&SS are represented, particularly on Resources Committee.

16.4.2 Concern was NOTED regarding the additional members having membership without responsibility.

16.4.3 On balance, the change to membership was WELCOMED as an immediate measure, but it was AGREED that this won't deal with the fundamental communication deficiency highlighted by the Library problems. Faculty Board requested that more active steps are taken, particularly regarding regular and comprehensive communication from the Directorate.

17 **REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (LEARNING AND TEACHING PG)**

17.1 Publication of provisional MA/MSc results

17.1.1 The recommendation from the FLTC was NOTED – however it was felt that the concern that mistakes could be made was unfounded, and would not be solved by continuing to expose academic staff to requests from students for informal results during the summer.

17.1.2 The Faculty Administrator NOTED that many other universities managed to release provisional marks to students “subject to confirmation by the Exam Board” without mistakes being made – and that she would be in favour of this matter being discussed further.

17.1.3 It was therefore AGREED that the matter should be discussed at the next Faculty Board meeting, and that members should seek views from their departments.

17.2 Intercollegiate courses for MA/MSc students

17.2.1 It was NOTED that there is no formal system for PG students to take courses from other University of London colleges as there is for UG students. All such cases are therefore subject to academic consideration and approval – and individual colleges charge varying fees for these courses. As in the case of LSE courses, these can be disproportionately high for the credit-value of the course meaning that SOAS loses money in each case. It was AGREED that this was not operational.

17.2.2 It was NOTED that this was discussed at L&TPC via Phil Deans during 2004/5, but that a formal school or faculty policy had not been agreed. This had led to some confusion during registration in 2005/6 and clarification was therefore required.

17.2.3 However, there was concern that student choice would be restricted by this policy – and that Heads of Department and/or Programme Convenors would have more work to justify each case individually. It was NOTED that this would not be the case, but it was AGREED that the matter should be discussed further at the next Faculty Board meeting when the AD (L&T PG) was present.

18 REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (LEARNING AND TEACHING PG)

18.1 It was NOTED that there were no items not elsewhere on the agenda.

19 REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (RESEARCH)

19.1 Publications

19.1.1 It was NOTED that the publications database is very out-dated and is not at all user-friendly regarding either collecting or reporting information. Concern was NOTED that this should be a very important tool for RAE preparations.

19.1.2 The Faculty Administrator NOTED that this had been of concern since the responsibility for collecting the information was passed from the Research Office to the Faculty Offices in 2001, but that Information Strategy Committee had been unable to prioritise the development of the current database.

19.1.3 It was NOTED that the three Faculty Administrators will be presenting a paper to all three Faculty Research Committees, Faculty Boards and onto Research Policy Committee next term to request that the necessary (and not substantial) investment is made to improve this tool.

20 PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

20.1 MA Law programmes

20.1.1 It was CONFIRMED that the proposal to re-model the existing MA International and Comparative Legal Studies into 9 named degree programmes be forwarded to L&TPC for approval as follows:

- MA in Chinese Law
- MA in Law, Development and Globalisation
- MA in International and Comparative Commercial Law
- MA in Human Rights Law
- MA in Islamic Law
- MA in International Law
- MA in Law, Culture and Society
- MA in Dispute and Conflict Resolution
- MA in Migration and Ethnic Minority Law [*Secretary's note – this additional programme was added subsequent to the meeting and confirmed by Chairs Action*]
- MA in International and Comparative Legal Studies

20.1.2 It was CONFIRMED that no combination of courses can result in any more than one named degree.

20.2 PG Diploma programmes (DeFiMS)
It was CONFIRMED that the following Distance Learning programmes be forwarded to L&TPC for approval:

- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Financial Management
- Postgraduate Diploma in Policy Studies
- Postgraduate Diploma in Public Management

21 COURSE PROPOSALS

21.1 It was CONFIRMED that the following new COURSES had been recommended at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee as follows:

- The International Monetary Fund and Economic Policy (DeFiMS – Distance Learning)
- The Japanese Financial System (DeFiMS – Distance Learning)
- Policy Analysis (DeFiMS – Distance Learning)

These courses were APPROVED.

22 STUDENT SERVICES REPORT

22.1 The Student Services annual report for 2004/5 was RECEIVED and NOTED.

22.2 It was NOTED that the sample based on only 13 responses was insufficient to make substantial conclusions.

22.3 It was NOTED by the student representatives that the responsibilities of Student Services were unclear, particularly regarding drop-out rates – overseas students particularly felt that they had insufficient support. It was NOTED that the drop-out rate has decreased over the last few years, but the student representatives expressed their concern about the level of support generally.

22.4 It was also NOTED that in many departments students are regularly reminded that they can seek academic support when required – but that in other departments this did not seem to be as thorough.

23 CAREERS SERVICE REPORT

23.1 The Careers Service annual report for 2004/5 was RECEIVED and NOTED.

23.2 It was NOTED by the student representatives that the information/support provided by the Careers Service is often not relevant to the specialisms of SOAS students. It was also NOTED that the information is made available only on noticeboards in the office (rather than on-line) and does not seem to be updated regularly. The plan to introduce a web-site by 2007 is insufficient for current students.

- 23.3 It was NOTED that it is hoped that there will be a Bloomsbury Consortium Careers Service to pool the limited resources of the partner colleges.
- 23.4 It was AGREED that the Dean would request, on behalf of Faculty Board, that the Careers Service take some immediate action in liaison with students and academic staff in order to ascertain the users' actual needs. It was also SUGGESTED that the students request that the SU liaise with the Careers Service to ensure that the needs of students in all departments are considered.
- 23.5 However, it was also NOTED that although of concern to the Faculty, this is a school-wide issue requiring steering, prioritising and resources through the appropriate channels.

24 DeFiMS GUIDELINES

- 24.1 The guidelines for internal use by DeFiMS staff were NOTED.

25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 25.1 It was NOTED that there was none.

CJH
8 December 2005
Confirmed by Chair