SOAS
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences
FACULTY BOARD

22 October 2008

MINUTES

	Dr Tat Yan Kong
Professor Christopher Cramer	Dr Costas Lapavitsas
Professor Matthew Craven (Chair)	Dr Martin Lau
	Irfan Mehmood (PG Student rep)
Mr Richard Story *	Mabasher Rasul (UG student rep) *
Mr Norman Flynn *	Ms Sonja Ruehl
Professor Jane Harrigan	Professor Alfredo Saad Filho
Professor Laurence Harris	Dr Jan Toporowski
Dr Salwa Ismail	Professor Lynn Welchman

In attendance: Mr Simon Buller (Secretary)
                      Mrs Barbara Spina

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

1   MINUTES OF LAST MEETING
1.1   The minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2008 were APPROVED as an
          accurate record.

2.0   MATTERS ARISING
2.1   It was AGREED that no further matters were arising from the minutes of the last
          meeting not appearing elsewhere on the agenda except for the following issues:

          (3.4) It was NOTED that there was a general problem relating to membership in
          Faculty committees leading to the real possibility that they might occasionally be
          inquorate.

          Action points:
2.2

          (4.2) It was NOTED that Personal Tutors system had been chosen for the
          Faculty with a mixed approach between Departments. The structures range from
          a fully-fledged Personal Tutor system where all staff act as tutors, to having
          more year tutors to meet the appropriate staff/student ratio or a mix of this. It was
          AGREED that this system would be monitored over the year and a decision
          made at last Faculty Board of the 2008/9 Academic Year as whether to continue
          with this system or seek to revise it.

          (5.4) It was NOTED that the latest requests from Faculty Board to update the
          Course Proposal forms has not yet been achieved. The Faculty Administrator
          reported that it is a school change and received considerable resistance from
          Registry and other Faculties. The change would be required cross-faculty then
          presented through FLTC. It was AGREED that the Faculty Administrator will
          continue to enable these changes and liaise with CeFiMs about specific forms
          for Distance Learning.

Action: Simon to enable changes to Forms

(6.3) – The Associate Dean (Research) NOTED the difficulty in finding a uniform system to ensure research students complete their degree within the 3-4 year completion period. There was also conflict between administrative requirements and academic process such as the need for a PhD student to lengthen their studies either for personal issues or because of the nature of their research subject.

The Faculty Administrator NOTED that the Registry and Student Services have decided to set up a Research Team headed by Mr Marcus Cearny who will be responsible for the admissions and registration of research students. It is envisaged that their scope will also be expanded to their studies and guidance of regulations with supervisors. It was potentially possible for this Team to have a stronger influence over the timely completion of research degrees.

(7.1) – It was NOTED that the Online Tutorial Signup system did not launch this year as it could not fit with present regulations – where students are expected to attend tutorials before they have registered for courses.

(7.3) – It was NOTED that the three Faculties have completed a vast amount of work and research for Online Coursework Submission (OCS). However, it was being scaled down from the original plan to launch it across the faculty. Small but significant issues with the Blackboard Programme would not allow an adoption at full-scale. A small number of courses across the departments would be piloted to give Academics and Faculty Officers a live run through of the near-finished system. It was also NOTED that the Faculty Administrator would be setting up and chairing a cross-institution Bloomsbury Learning Environment OCS Working Group to bring about the changes in the Blackboard system to make it suitable for SOAS requirements.

3.0   DEAN'S REPORT

3.1   IFCELS

It was NOTED that a speculative ballot for industrial action was being organised with the Trade Union and IFCELS. The problem derives from the fact that the move to Permanent Fractional Contracts has meant the projected deficit of IFCELS would rise to an unsustainably high level. In order to avoid this, staff teaching hours have been reduced. Whilst staff will receive at least as much money as previously earned, the dispute centres on the reduction in their teaching hours.

3.2   Permanent Fractional Staff

It was NOTED that Permanent Fractional Staff contracts are being finalised. This Faculty has particular problems as the school benchmark was set below, although above for the two remaining faculties. However, the Faculty are obliged to meet the amount paid previously.

The Faculty Administrator had attended a meeting with HR and was currently recalibrating the calculations to ensure all staff earn at least at the same rate the previous year and that new staff earn the equivalent entry rate.

3.3   Faculty Plans

It was NOTED that Faculty Plans are to be completed by end of October 2008. These have been affected by recent enrolment figures which showed a generally buoyant number of students however the overseas students decreased and home increased which has left a deficit against target income.

The Dean advised that Heads of Department need to scrutinise their plans for student number increases to help generate further income for the future. Not reaching targets would have a profound effect on the ability of the Faculty to meet its strategic aims and therefore warrants serious research when producing target figures for future years.

It was NOTED that Departments have no control over recruitment and how concerted campaigns can take place. In essence there was strategy for enrolment. It was AGREED that Marketing and Recruitment staff should be invited to talk at the next Faculty Board.

4.0 REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (LEARNING AND TEACHING)
4.1   Degree Awarding Power
It was NOTED that QAA will inspect the school between Autumn 2009 and Spring 2010. They will be scrutinising all activities within the school throughout this period. One particular concern is Distance Learning quality systems as it is shared between SOAS and UL External System. Further discussion highlighted the concern that despite the teaching being of excellent standard, the administrative systems would require greater improvement.

4.2   Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee
Faculty Board were asked to APPROVE the proposal to set up Start of the Year working party led by FLTC. It was AGREED to set this party up to include academics and administrative staff.

Faculty Board were asked to APPROVE the proposal that new staff receive copies of the course proposals for the courses they are to teach. It was AGREED that Faculty Office staff would manage this process.

4.3   It was NOTED that UoL External System Quality Assurance and Student Lifecycle Subcommittee was held on 17th October 2008.

The meeting was inquorate for the third time. No decisions could be made. A discussion was held regarding 'dual registration' of distance learning students. College participation would be optional. There would be numerous implications such as IT issues, Library Access, ID cards etc. The Director of Business Transformation provided an update the introduction of the Moodle portal for external LLB students

5.0 REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (RESEARCH)
5.1   It was NOTED that Associate Deans for Research are being pushed to get PhDs to complete their studies in three or the four years. It was NOTED that there were issues that divided administrative and academic motivation to achieve this as NOTED in 2.2 (6.3).

It was CONSIDERED that students should re-register each year although there were barriers to this. It was NOTED that MPhil research students must submit

their work by year 1 in order to upgrade to PhD.

5.2   It was NOTED that staff need to make their repository entries by 7th November 2008.

5.3   It was NOTED that the Faculty are required to set up a separate research panel to review RAE related activity. It was CONFIRMED that the Faculty Research Committee would expand and take on this responsibility with additional members reporting on these activities. Tasks would include reviewing RAE potential submissions, co-ordination of bids and grants and communication of information with Pro-Director (Research and Enterprise).

5.4   It was NOTED that £20,000 will be made available to the Faculty for research enterprise funding such as seedcorn projects. At first a sum of £10,000 will be made available. A call for bids will go out from w/c 27th October 2008.

6.0   REPORT FROM FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR
6.1   It was NOTED that Faculty Promotions round will take place with a deadline of 24th October 2008

6.2   It was NOTED that the Workload Model staff forms were now being populated with basic data on Teaching, Research and Administrative Roles. Staff will be sent their form in early November 2008 in order for them to review, correct and add additional activities relating to their work. It was AGREED that Faculty Board would decide where this information would be kept, how it is maintained and who it is shared with. It was also NOTED that this information could be obtained at Department level such as Development Studies who already have this information.

6.3   It was NOTED that the Faculty Officers of the Academic Support Office were now going to take over monitoring responsibilities of the web pages for the departments which will include further training on web editing.

        Further discussion highlighted the problems with publishing approval from the web team. It was suggested that web editors have the right to publish but the Marketing team then review the changes and have the ability to unpublish.

        It was NOTED that a review of all activities will take place for Support Offices.
6.4   There were considerable problems with various activities such as Studypacks and Tutorial allocation which were a result of technology problems, lack of support from central services, the nature of having temporary staff in managerial positions within the faculty and that there are many new staff starting for the first time this year. The first goal would be to complete reviews of activities and recommendations for the following year. The second is to create an administrative guide to activities within the Faculty in order to have knowledge retention.

7.0   FACULTY ISSUES
7.1   It was AGREED that requests for institutional Membership requests should be made via Department Meetings and costs charged to Dept Budgets.

7.2   A proposal was CONSIDERED to create an MoU with EHESS which would specifically allow co-supervision of PhD students. It was NOTED that the French Government are also interested to build partnerships with SOAS. The Board did

NOT AGREE to this proposal stating that this type of MoU requires greater investigation into our policies of co-supervision and partnership.

8.0   CHAIRS ACTIONS
8.1   It was NOTED that the following Chairs Actions were APPROVED between this and the last Faculty Board of 4th June 2008.

See Appendix A for table.

9.0   COURSE DELETIONS
9.1   It was APPROVED that the following courses are to be deleted from the school registry and subsequent information systems:

15PECC046 Comparative Political Economy
15PECC012 Cost Benefit Analysis for Developing Countries
15PECH001 Economic Social Theory & Development

It was AGREED that a CORRECTION is to be made to Appendix G which should state Department of Economics and NOT Department of Development Studies.

10.0   ANY OTHER BUSINESS
10.1   Librarian Update
It was NOTED that the Library are gathering requests for access to online journals. They have also been redecorating study carrels for research students and space rearrangements have been made to create quiet zones.

Staff are busy working to convert articles with many departments with both articles and e-books. It was NOTED that usually one course takes a day to convert so heavy on resources.

It was AGREED that the Librarian has a regular 'REPORT FROM LIBRARIAN' item in the Faculty Board Agenda.

PG Student Representative
10.2   It was NOTED that clashing of classes still existed, often exacerbated by time it takes to walk from Vernon Sq to Russell Sq.

It was NOTED that some poor impressions from Pre-sessional experience. Students could not access notes, could not read information about courses they would like to choose, the course had no suitable assessment.

The Board were asked to CONSIDER a request that audited courses could appear on transcripts. This was NOT AGREED for reasons of ambiguity and the ability of administration to plot this information.

11.0   NEXT FACULTY BOARD
11.1   Date of next meeting was NOTED as Wednesday 26th November at 1.15pm

8.1 APPENDIX A

COURSES PROPOSED AND/OR AMENDED AND CHAIR'S ACTIONED BY FLTC AND FACULTY BOARD

Level	Department	Names of courses	New codes given and/or amendments made to
PG	CISD	International Security	15PFFC015
PG	Development Studies	Critical Introduction to East Asian Development	15PDSH025
PG	Development Studies	Industrial Globalisation and Development	15PDSH024
PG	Development Studies	Migration & Development	15PDSC006
PG	Law	Dispute and Conflict Management Special Applications	15PLAC157
PG	Politics	International Politics of East Asia	15PPOC251
UG	Development Studies	Environment and Development	151010030
UG	Development Studies	Issues in Development Practice	151010029
UG	Development Studies	Poverty, State Policy and Civil Society	151010031
		AMENDMENTS PROPOSED AND CHAIR'S ACTION TAKEN	
PG	CISD	15PFFC001 General Diplomatic Studies and Practice	change to weighting from 60/10/15/15 to 50/10/15/15 + 10% attendance and class exercise/presentation.
PG	CISD	15PFFC004 International Economics	change to weighting from 50/25/25 to 50/20/30
PG	CISD	15PFFC002 International Relations	change to weighting from 60/20/20 to 50/10/20/20
PG	Development Studies	15PDSC005 - Globalisation and Development (new title)	was Globalisation, Governance and Development
PG	Development Studies	15PDSH015 - Issues in Forced Migration	number of contact hours changed to 2 hours lecture 1 hour tutorial.
UG	Law	155200054 – Law and Institutions of Contemporary China	resubmission of course work now disallowed
PG	Law	15LAC139 Modern Chinese Law and Human Rights (new title)	was Modern Chinese Law
		15LAD139 Modern Chinese Law and Human Rights (new title)	was Modern Chinese Law
UG	Politics	153400057 - Nationalism and Ethnicity in Asia and Africa	Essay length weighting and deletion of Assignment 4.
		Programme Proposal	
	Development Studies	MSc Migration, Mobility and Development	Part II and III submitted

				updates to UGSF0002 AND UGSF0001 to provide two part version of Quantative Methods one for 'A' students and one for non 'A'
	Programme Specifications	BSc Honours, BA Honours Economics		level students