

SOAS
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences
FACULTY BOARD

23 October 2007

MINUTES

Prof Christopher Cramer	Dr Stephen Hopgood
Professor Matthew Craven (Chair)	Dr Tat Yan Kong
Mr Luke Dillon *	Dr Costas Lapavitsas
Mr Ian Edge *	Prof Machiko Nissanke
Mr Norman Flynn **	Ms Sonja Ruehl
Dr Jane Harrigan	Dr Alfredo Saad Filho
Prof Laurence Harris	Dr Lynn Welchman

In attendance: Mrs Carolyn Heath (Secretary)
Dan Plesch (CISD) *
Mrs Barbara Spina

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

1 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2007 were APPROVED as an accurate record.
- 1.2 The membership and Terms of Reference were APPROVED.

2 MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 HR Policies – Staff Appraisal System (Minute 71.2 refers)
It was NOTED that a review of the system is currently in progress.
- 2.2 HR Policies – Fixed-Term Staff (Minute 71.3 refers)
It was NOTED that agreement has been reached regarding fixed-term / hourly-paid staff in faculties, and that there is on-going discussion re staff in the Language Centre and IFCELS. It is expected that the new contracts will be issued in January 2008.
- 2.3 HR Policies – Heads of Department (Minute 71.4 refers)
It was NOTED that there has been no progress re the rewards, training, workload and support mechanisms for Heads of Department.
- 2.4 HR Policies – PhD Training Contract (Minute 71.6 refers)
It was NOTED that a PhD training contract has also been agreed for existing PhD students undertaking teaching.
- 2.5 Strategic Plan (Minute 72.3.2 refers)
It was NOTED that Heads of Department should liaise with the Dean to invite him to a Department Meeting to discuss the Faculty / School strategy.

- 2.6 Estates Plan (Minute 72.4 refers)
It was NOTED that the plan is moving ahead, that the Halls of Residence at Vernon Square will be sold off after they are built, with the capital used for investment into the development of the Russell Square campus.

3 DEAN'S REPORT

3.1 Faculty Strategic Plan 2007-2012

- 3.1.1 It was NOTED that each Faculty is required to submit a 5-year business plan by the end of October. Department plans have been submitted to the Dean and these are now being pieced together.
- 3.1.2 All three faculty plans will be considered by Executive Board and will then be confirmed by Governing Body in December.
- 3.1.3 It was NOTED that the process is on-going and that the plans will be revisited each year regarding targets, staff recruitment etc.
- 3.1.4 It was NOTED that each of the L&SS department plans were seeking reinvestment and growth – mostly at PG level, including some new MSc programmes and/or expansion of numbers.
- 3.1.5 In aggregate, the Faculty is in a comfortable position due to over-recruitment, which gives us and the School confidence in meeting targets. Running the plans through the financial model provided demonstrates that we should be able to invest in staff in all departments over the next few years.
- 3.1.6 It was also NOTED that the Faculty plan will include an increase in admin staffing – to enable improved support to Heads of Department and more proactive support to all academic staff and students (and related systems).
- 3.1.7 However, it was NOTED that space is a major concern, both for academic offices, teaching and admin offices – and will pose urgent problems in 08/09. It was also AGREED that provision for PhD students should be reviewed by the School.
- 3.1.8 It was NOTED that during 2007/8 the resource allocation model (prepared by Graeme Appleby) will be considered by a working group, to review the assumptions and allocation of costs. L&SS will be represented on this group by Alfredo Saad Filho and Carolyn Heath. This model will then be used to evaluate the level of cross-subsidy (from L&SS to the other faculties), and to plan for this to reduced each year.
- 3.1.9 Faculty Board very much welcomed the increased level of financial information and transparency, which is already enabling better decision making.

3.2 Staff Survey

- 3.2.1 Key points were identified as relevant to L&SS:
- a) school-wide problems of managerial failure regarding processes, clarity and transparency etc.
 - b) feeling in L&SS of staff being over-worked
 - c) the tension between academic and support staff regarding roles, support structures, HR policies and pay frameworks

- 3.2.2 It was NOTED that EB are attempting to draw key priorities from the survey.
- 3.2.3 It was also NOTED that, if considered to be useful, the faculty could set-up focus groups re the following two key issues:
- relationship between academic and administrative staff (generically)
 - transparency

3.3 Additional Resources for 2007/8

- 3.3.1 On the basis of the over-recruitment, it was NOTED that the Dean will be requesting additional resources for 2007/8 as follows:
- additional Lecturer in Development Studies (brought forward from 2008/9)
 - additional EAA for dissertation marking
 - additional admin staff (temps) in Student Support Office from January-July 2008

4 **WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The report was NOTED.

5 **REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (LEARNING AND TEACHING)**

5.1 Peer Observation of Teaching

- 5.1.1 It was NOTED that although this has been formal School policy since 2003, it was picked up in the recent QAA audit as not being fully implemented.
- 5.1.2 The amended scheme was considered – it was NOTED that it is concurrently being considered by UCU.
- 5.1.3 It was NOTED that the Reading Week deadline clearly can't be met during 07/08, but that it is hoped that, subject to approval by LTQC and UCU, it can be by the end of term 1.
- 5.1.4 The importance of staff receiving a clear 'steer' from the Dean was NOTED – it was therefore agreed that, subject to the above approval, the Dean would send an email to all staff regarding the new scheme. It was also agreed that the Academic Support team would offer administrative support to the Heads of Department.
- 5.1.5 It was noted that the model states that an alternative model is in place for new EAA and probationary staff - clarification was therefore sought whether continuing EAA staff should also be included in this model, particularly given that the majority of them will be on permanent contracts from January 2008 onwards.
- 5.1.6 It was NOTED that Distance Learning staff should be paired up to review each other's learning materials.

5.2 Careers Service Report 2006/7

- 5.2.1 Appendix E was NOTED as discussed at FLTC.
- 5.2.2 It was NOTED that Emily Huns is preparing sets of alumni case studies – and is open to receiving names & contact details of students who may be interested.
- 5.2.3 It was also NOTED that Political Research and NGOs careers forum will be set up. Other such ideas should be forwarded to Emily Huns (eh12@soas.ac.uk) .

5.3 NSS / Student Course Evaluation Results

- 5.3.1 It was NOTED that the results had previously been sent to Heads of Department by the LTU.
- 5.3.2 It was NOTED that the in-house student evaluation of courses has been re-modelled to match the National Student Survey (NSS), and that both require significant encouragement for students to complete them. It was NOTED that it is planned that the feedback process will be fully on-line from 07/08 - Faculty Board strongly supported this plan.
- 5.3.3 Further clarity was requested re the guidelines for Heads of Department (which have not yet been circulated to HoDs for comment/discussion) - including a request that they receive a summary of the results from their department, rather than just the results from each course. It was NOTED that guidelines for Heads of Department are being drafted by Mandy Bentham.
- 5.3.4 One significant delay in the current system is the feedback loop re Exam Boards (currently student feedback cannot be forwarded to academic staff until after the Exam Boards have taken place, to ensure anonymity of the assessment process). However it was NOTED that when the system is on-line the necessary summaries could be produced much more easily.
- 5.3.5 It was requested that feedback be sought in both terms, even for full-year courses - this would give a more balanced feedback from the students of the entire course, particular in the several cases where there are different tutors in terms 1 and 2. It was also requested that more open-text boxes be introduced to encourage students to clarify their feedback, increasing the usefulness of the results for the school.

5.4 FLTC Modus Operandi

- 5.4.1 It was NOTED that a suggestion had been received that FLTCs were replaced by a cross-faculty committee for scrutinising course proposals etc. It was NOTED that this proposal was NOT supported by L&SS and A&H FLTCs due to the value of faculty scrutiny of proposals. It was, however, NOTED that cross-faculty ADLT meetings will continue on an ad-hoc basis.

5.5 Changes to Assessment Weightings and Deadlines

- 5.5.1 The proposal from the Faculty Administrator, which had been agreed by FLTC, was AGREED – that changes to deadlines and/or weightings of any assessed element must be formally made through FLTC in advance, and that the Student Support Office would communicate any such changes to students, staff and systems after approval.

5.6 Library

- 5.6.1 The additional opening hours were welcomed, as were the additional study sessions.
- 5.6.2 It was also NOTED that Anne Poulson will be leaving SOAS in December, details of her replacement are not yet confirmed.

5.7 Faculty Prizes

- 5.7.1 It was NOTED that there are a range of School prizes for which nominations are made by Examination Boards – but AGREED that the Faculty wants to set up Faculty-wide prizes (both UG and PG).

- 5.7.2 It was AGREED that the PG prizes would be set-up first, with nominations to be made by the forthcoming Exam Boards. The Prizes would be:
- Deans' Prize – for the best L&SS masters dissertation
 - Deans' Prize – for the best L&SS overall masters student

Both prizes would be £200 book tokens. Faculty Administrator to liaise with Registry regarding the necessary arrangements.

6 REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (RESEARCH)

6.1 Phd Completion Rates

6.1.1 The information agreed at LTQC was NOTED.

6.2 PhD student re-enrolment

6.2.1 The information agreed at LTQC was NOTED.

6.3 Bloomsbury PhD Studentships

6.3.1 It was NOTED that three proposals had been made from L&SS (all with Birkbeck), with none being put forward from A&H or L&C. Costas and the Dean thanked those who had submitted proposals, it was NOTED that SOAS is expecting to get a minimum of two studentships.

6.3.2 It was AGREED to schedule an earlier October deadline for proposals in future years.

6.4 Report from previous ADR

6.4.1 Michael Palmer's report was NOTED and welcomed.

6.4.2 The reliance on Pam Radford was also NOTED, and the urgent need for Registry to have a succession plan for her replacement.

6.5 Research Allocation 2007/8

6.5.1 It was NOTED that the internal research allocation has been set at £500. It was AGREED that, if possible, this should be significantly increased for 2008/9 once devolved budgets are in place. It was NOTED that the Dean is discussing methodologies relating to allocation faculty 'cuts' from overheads with Graeme Appleby.

6.6 Research Leave

6.6.1 It was PROPOSED that the previously agreed principle of not allowing post-probation sabbatical leave during terms 1 & 2 be relaxed, on the clear understanding that staff will be required/expected to return to normal duties in term 3/summer. It was AGREED that this be discussed at the next FRC.

6.7 Faculty PhD Training Programme

6.7.1 It was NOTED by the Associate Dean that the process of reviewing the structure of the programme is underway for 2008/9.

7 RECRUITMENT

7.1 The recruitment numbers vs targets were NOTED.

8 ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

8.1 The entry requirements for 2008 entry were NOTED.

9 NEW COURSE PROPOSALS

9.1 It was CONFIRMED that the following NEW COURSES had been APPROVED by Chairs Action during the summer as follows:

- (i) HIV, Aids, Culture and Development (PG Devp Studies)
- (ii) Human Rights and Islamic Law (PG Law)
- (iii) International Law and Global Orders (PG Law)

10 COURSE AMENDMENTS

10.1 It was CONFIRMED that the following COURSE AMENDMENTS had been APPROVED by Chairs Action during the summer as follows:

- (i) International Comparative and Corporate Law (PG Law)
- (ii) Justice, Reconciliation and Reconstruction in Post Conflict Societies (PG Law)
- (iii) Comparative Politics of the Middle East (PG Politics)
- (iv) Introduction to Global Forced Migration (UG Devp Studies)

11 PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

11.1 It was CONFIRMED that the following PROGRAMME PROPOSALS had been APPROVED by Chairs Action during the summer as follows:

- LLM – regulations for the newly approved SOAS LLM

12 REPORTS FROM FACULTY CENTRES

12.1 Annual reports from the following Faculty centres were received:

- Centre for Ethnic Minority Studies (Law)
- Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy (Politics)
- Centre on International Law and Colonialism (Law)
- Centre of East Asian Law (Law)

12.2 However, reports from the remaining Faculty centres

- Centre of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law (Law)
- Centre for Law and Conflict (Law)
- Centre of Taiwan Studies (Faculty Centre)

had not been received as requested.

13 DEPARTMENT AND FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES 2007/8

13.1 The representatives on the faculty and school committees for 2007/8 were NOTED.

14 QAA ACTION PLAN

14.1 The SOAS action plan arising from the recent QAA Institutional Audit was NOTED.

15 CEFIMS CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES

- 15.1 Secretary's Note: further to the meeting, this item was withdrawn as it was prematurely submitted to Faculty Board, having not previously been considered by the forthcoming Programme Review process.

16 CEFIMS DISTANCE LEARNING REGULATIONS

- 16.1 Secretary's Note: further to the meeting, this item was withdrawn as it was prematurely submitted to Faculty Board, having not previously been considered by the forthcoming Programme Review process.

17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 17.1 It was NOTED that there was none.

CJH