

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
Faculty of Law and Social Sciences
FACULTY BOARD

25 November 2009

MINUTES

Mr Richard Alexander *	Dr Nigel Poole
Professor Mashood Baderin	Dr Dan Plesch
Professor Anne Booth	Professor Alfredo Saad Filho
Professor Matthew Craven (Chair)	Dr Lawrence Saez
Ms Nathifa Hall	Professor Laixiang Sun
Dr Tat Yan Kong	Dr Carol Tan *
Prof Costas Lapavitsas	Dr Jan Toporowski
Julian Lasius (UG Student rep)	Charlotte Wakam (PG Student rep)
Dr Jens Lerche	

In attendance: Mrs Carolyn Heath (Secretary)
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 3 June 2009 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

2. MATTERS ARISING (INCLUDING ACTION POINTS)

2.1. Use of BGLT (minute 28.7 refers)

Despite initially not able to use the BGLT for timetabled teaching again this year, large student numbers in PED has necessitated Estates agreeing that BGLT be used for 4-5 sessions throughout the year. More sessions in the BGLT were not possible due to previous external bookings. Carolyn will continue to liaise with Estates regarding properly timetabled use of BGLT for large lectures next session.

2.2. Personal Tutors (minute 28.8 refers)

Feedback from departments was as follows:

Development Studies – system seems to be working fine.

Law – some students complain that the Personal Tutors don't know them well enough to write references. Suggested that the SoL re-consider their reference policy in light of this.

Economics – Personal Tutors are also Year Tutors, who is also the Lecturer on one of the core courses in that year. System seems to be working well.

2.2.1. Student reps were not clear who their Personal Tutors were, and weren't aware of communication about this. They noted that it was difficult to put a face to the email/name when they are meeting so many new staff at the start of year, and that a photo attached to the communication would be useful!

Some staff were unclear what their role was when approached by students – and noted that this happens only occasionally. It was noted that academic staff should make better use of the professional welfare/support available at Vernon Square.

2.2.2. In summary, it was AGREED that we need to keep reviewing/reflecting on this.

2.3. Individual Research Plans (minute 29.2 refers)

Feedback from departments:

DeFiMS – all staff have done this.

Economics – research committee has interviewed all members of staff, who are in the process identifying their 4 publications.

Politics – research committee is gathering information from individuals

The importance of these being in place very soon was NOTED, so that individuals requiring additional support can be identified.

The Dean requested that all individual plans are completed by the end of January. This should entail, for each member of staff, a list of publications they expect to be submitting in 2012, with a status for each (e.g. in print, submitted, speculative).

- 2.3.1. Faculty Office to request/collate these. AGREED that a template is circulated. [Secretary's note – it was subsequently agreed that Ian Brown, Dean of A&H, would draft a template for use by all faculties. To be circulated in January.]

2.4. Departmental Research Monitoring systems (minute 29.3 refers)

It was NOTED that research mentors should be combined with SDRs to minimise duplication. These should be completed for all members of staff from Jan-March 2010.

It was NOTED that Heads of Dept won't be able to review all staff – FMG/HoDs will need to identify senior staff to undertake the reviews.

2.5. Workload Model (minute 28.3 refers)

It was NOTED that the new Workload Model has been completed by the Academic Support Office and confirmed/amended by individual staff, with summaries & individual returns circulated to the Dean & relevant HoD. It was NOTED that it has raised some very interesting issues, which be discussed at FMG and within departments.

3. DEAN'S REPORT

3.1. Faculty Plan

It was NOTED that the School had been expecting a budget deficit for 09/10 – but that actual enrolment has generated an operating surplus for 09/10.

L&SS' modest Faculty Plan focuses mainly on slightly increasing PGT numbers, and increasing PGR numbers over a number of years. The latter is expected to be most difficult. It was NOTED that the School is reviewing scholarships and fees policies for PGRs. Other Universities with reported PGR growth have linked this specifically to availability of scholarships.

There is no additional HEFCE funding for UG students, so this profile is static.

- 3.1.1. It was NOTED that the Faculty Plan was approved by Resources & Planning Committee recently.

It was also NOTED that an October FB meeting is required to consider the final submission of the Faculty Plan prior to submission. It was also NOTED that an earlier schedule for department plans & therefore for initial draft of Faculty Plan is required. It was AGREED that a general/provisional discussion re departmental & Faculty Plan is held at the February meeting. This was welcomed by FB members.

3.2. New/Replacement Posts

It was NOTED that each academic dept has at least one new post approved – also a number of replacement posts to be advertised. Early approval means that we should be able to advertise early in January. Richard Story will liaise with HR and HoDs to organise this.

3.3. Research Overheads

It was NOTED that an additional £50k has been received by the Faculty from the RAM for 09/10 – that this money has been distributed to the departments to support their research. It is anticipated that we will have a similar amount next year.

It was NOTED that an unchanged budget of £37k has been received from the school as a standing research budget, and that an additional £63k has been identified by the faculty (including from overhead funds) to top-up this budget for individual staff research allocations.

It was NOTED that there is no policy yet for tying overhead funds to individuals and/or departments.

3.4. Additional Support Hours

It was CONFIRMED that the school is still negotiating with the Unions regarding a final agreement re additional support hours (office hours) – UCU want a proportional flat-fee for all TFs/STFs within the school, whereas the School position is that we should focus this as required, i.e. to large courses, particularly within L&SS. The Dean is hopeful that we will reach an agreement.

As an interim measure, to ensure that students continue to receive the support necessary, additional support hours have been offered to all courses with more than 4 tutorial groups. It was NOTED that some staff have accepted this offer.

4. **REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (LEARNING AND TEACHING)**

4.1. Annual Report for 2008/9

The Report, written by previous ADLT Sonja Ruehl, was presented.

4.2. Summary of Key Issues raised by Visiting Examiners during 2008/9

The report was NOTED with the following points:

- Noted national ‘problem’ that 70% is considered to be the maximum mark awarded. However Visiting Examiners consistently ask markers to use a greater range of marks – that excellent work is given an excellent mark, and that bad work is given a lower mark.
- Noted that Development Studies are considering withdrawing the availability of language courses from its PG programmes precisely because of the skewing/inequities arising from the grades often awarded. When this issue was discussed at JPP, L&C acknowledged the issue and agreed to reduce their marks slightly.
- Noted that Mandy Bentham is undertaking an audit of marking schemes of different departments to identify such issues, and to propose solutions.
- Noted that a summary of issues from PG VE reports will be presented later in the year and that this should include the Distance Learning reports.

- Noted that since the Merit band was adjusted a few years ago, 2/3 of students in Development Studies now achieve a Merit or Distinction (compared to 1/3).

4.3. Proposal for additional exam re-sit opportunity

It was NOTED that a proposal was received by FLTC to invite the possibility of an additional opportunity for final year students to resit their exams (in exceptional circumstances) in September. This was not supported by FLTC, and the decision endorsed by FB.

4.4. Report on Student Evaluation of Courses

4.4.1. CH to ask for clarification of each faculty's response rate – and for a more detailed/useful summary report of the feedback received.

4.4.2. It was NOTED that the Faculty Office consistently receives poor scores in the SEC, partly because Students often combine a wide-range of issues in their feedback to this question.

It was NOTED that the Faculty has been requesting that this question be amended for some time – and it was NOTED that Mandy Bentham is now prepared to allow this, and is expected to send an amended version soon. It was NOTED that the online form is more flexible than the paper form and allows students to provide more information. [Politics and Development Studies are piloting the online system this term.]

4.4.3. It was NOTED by the student reps that earlier feedback to their submitted/marked assignments is required, particularly for PGT students. It was NOTED that online submission/marking makes this slightly easier, but that clearer expectations regarding timing of feedback should be specified.

CH to circulate the rule/policy regarding timescales for return of marked coursework.

It was NOTED that the Student reps would also welcome additional essay preparation sessions specific to the department/subject. It was NOTED that good practice elsewhere is to provide sample essays to students – examples of 1st, 2:1, pass, fail standard etc.

4.5. Introductory Language courses for final year students

It was NOTED that there is unwillingness to let final year UG students take introductory language courses – this has been forwarded onto the LTQC.

It was also NOTED that funding of the language taster funding was introduced to a late version of the proposal – a small amount of money will be transferred to L&C.

4.6. Marking Schemes

It was NOTED that the document summarising the School's marking policies & procedures will be circulated once amendments from Nick Page are incorporated.

4.7. Work falling over agreed limits

It was NOTED that draft guidelines have been prepared, to be discussed by LTPC. It was NOTED that they will be required shortly, particularly for dissertation marking during 09/10.

5. **REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (RESEARCH)**

5.1. Annual Report for 2008/9

The report was presented.

5.2. January entry for PhD students

It was NOTED that the general view from within the faculty is that a January entry is not welcomed, largely because of the implications regarding the training programmes and also because of the impact on completion rates. However the school is keen that this is pursued so an amended proposal is expected.

It was NOTED that it could be possible to introduce an additional entry point in March with the training programme remaining offered from September-December, enabling more background reading/research in advance of this.

5.3. Extended upgrade periods

It was NOTED that this has been largely successful, with all applications for extensions made during 08/09 being granted.

5.4. Internal Research funds

Call for applications for the faculty's £20k research pot was distributed recently.

6. REPORT FROM FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

6.1. Recruitment numbers vs targets

Recruitment numbers as of 30 October 2009 were NOTED. The relative performance of the three faculties was discussed.

It was also NOTED that the admissions targets for 2010/11, approved as part of the Faculty Plan, will be confirmed shortly.

6.2. Attendance monitoring requirements

It was NOTED that online registers are planned to be available from 2010/11 via UNITE (similar to systems used in QM and LSE among others).

Meanwhile staff should continue to use the existing manual system – non attendance to be flagged up to Faculty Office who will send standard letters.

6.3. PGT Exam Boards – feedback

It was NOTED that the first School-wide PG Exam Board was recently held, this went well but raised some inconsistencies between departments, to be considered during year in advance of next year's boards.

It was NOTED that Registry have started a working party to begin the process of reviewing/rewriting the regulations.

6.4. Deadline for course proposals / amendments for 2010/11

The impact of course proposals and amendments being received late was NOTED, and it was AGREED that we should attempt to stick to the existing deadline of all proposals being completed/received by 4 March in time for FLTC on 18th March. The difficulties of this to some academic staff were also NOTED.

It was AGREED that there should be no chairs action over summer except in extraordinary circumstances, and that newly appointed staff should either have new course(s) approved ready for them – or wait to write them during their first year in post.

6.5. Research Leave

It was NOTED that the deadline for applications for research leave during 2010/11 is Thursday 17th December (via email to Nazima).

It was NOTED that the concept of post-probation leave is becoming confusing as individuals have different probation periods. It was NOTED that this principle was originally designed for new lecturers in their first teaching post, not for experienced academic staff. It was AGREED that Matt would seek clarification from the school asap.

Noted change to Alfredo Saad-Filho's research leave dates.

6.6. Extensive Clerical checks

The report from the Student Support Team Leader was NOTED. The importance of consistency re assignment deadlines between UNITE, BLE and verbal info from Convenors was NOTED – that there should not be any changes to deadlines once published, and that individual tutors should not set separate deadlines for their tutorial groups.

It was also NOTED that assessment deadlines are now on BLE for students to see what the official deadlines are.

7. **LIBRARY MATTERS**

7.1. Library Transformation Project

The report regarding the forthcoming major building project was NOTED, aiming to provide a significantly improved study/research environment and improved access to the collections.

7.2. Collection Development Policy

It was NOTED that Subject Librarians will attend Department Meetings to explain collection development in more detail.

8. **CENTRE CONSITUTIONS**

8.1. Centre for Conflict, Rights and Justice [Politics]

It was NOTED that this is an interdisciplinary centre to give visibility to this research area within the department and the faculty – focussing on the international relations perspective on the subject.

Faculty Board welcomed the idea & the proposal – the cross-over with the existing centre in the School of Law and with established subject/research area within Development Studies was NOTED.

The membership rules were questioned – particularly regarding the need for the Politics Department to approve non-departmental members.

It was AGREED that two things are required:

- a full discussion with other departments, particularly Law and Development Studies, to ensure that all are comfortable with the distinctions. The group was requested to consider having a faculty centre to incorporate all. It was AGREED that Costas would convene such a discussion.
- clarification regarding the membership rules be reconsidered.

The Centre proposal was not agreed – to be reconsidered by a later meeting once these issues have been addressed.

8.2. Centre for Development, Environment and Policy (CeDEP) [Faculty Centre]

It was NOTED that CeDEP is currently part of DeFiMS on account of the distance learning links – it was acknowledged that this is not the most sensible solution for the students or staff due to the significant intellectual/subject differences. This proposal is for it to operate as a Faculty Centre. Staff in the Centre would initially report directly to the Dean rather than to the Head of DeFiMS as currently – and would be allocated to the most suitable department in time (as required for all members of faculty centres).

Concern was NOTED from some FB members that this centre could be better located within one of the two departments in the faculty who already focus on Development issues (Development Studies or Economics). Concern was also NOTED regarding the precedent being set – the Dean reminded the Board that this is an unusual situation which the Faculty has a responsibility to resolve to the best interests of the staff & students concerned.

Concern was also NOTED about the name of the Centre (which had not previously been discussed/approved by the Faculty Board) – the name CeDEP considered too broad and clashes with the name/work of the existing departments of Development Studies and Economics. It was suggested that dropping “Development” from the title may address these concerns.

It was NOTED that we should learn from the previous experiences of setting up CeFiMS and the impact on the Economics department which took several years to resolve.

8.2.1. It was AGREED that the proposal should be discussed by the affected departments (Development Studies and Economics) – with a request that they do so with an acknowledgement that a constructive solution is required – to be re-discussed at the next FB meeting.

8.2.2. It was NOTED that the school’s strategy to increase distance learning programmes and to increase collaborative research activity – and that staff in CeDEP are keen to work with colleagues in both these areas.

8.2.3. The need for a clarification of the purpose of the centres within the faculty and school was NOTED – particularly in light of the forthcoming REF and resultant preparations.

9. **PROGRAMME PROPOSAL**

Part 1 of the MA Globalisation and Corporate Development (CISD) was NOTED. Noted that it would be a full fee programme.

It was APPROVED for further development.

10. **COURSE PROPOSALS**

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

Development Studies

Issues in Industrial Globalisation and Development (0.5) (UG) 151010032

Issues in East Asian Development (0.5) (UG) 151010033

Non-Governmental Organisations, Development and Change (0.5) (UG) 151010034

Migration and Policy Perspectives from the Global South (PG) 15PDSH029

Politics and International Studies

Identity in International Relations (0.5) (PG) 15PPOH016

Power in World Politics (0.5) (PG) 15PPOH017

11. COURSE AMENDMENTS

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

CISD

General Diplomatic Studies and Practice 15PFFC001
International Economics 15PFFC004
International Law 15PFFC003
International Relations 15PFFC002

DeFiMS

(B) for Birkbeck has been removed from all course titles (PG)

Development Studies

Development Conditions and Experience (UG) 151010001
Globalisation and Development (PG) 15PDSC005

Law

Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management 15PLAC157

Politics and International Studies

Government and Politics of the Middle East (UG) 153400060
Government and Politics of Modern South Asia (PG) 15PPOC003
Comparative Politics of the Middle East (PG) 15PPOC026 – retrospective for 08/09
Comparative Politics of the Middle East (PG) 15PPOC026 – for 09/10

12. COURSE PROPOSALS

12.1. It was CONFIRMED that the following NEW COURSES had been recommended at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee as follows:

CeDEP (Distance Learning)

C118 Conservation and Society
C122 Environmental Valuation: Theory, Techniques and Application
C124 Climate Change and Development
C126 Water Resources Management
C168 Sustainable Land Management
C198 Utilising Biodiversity
C201 Understanding Sustainable Development

Development Studies

Issues of the Working Poor and Development (0.5) (UG)
Political Economy of Finance, Development and Debt (UG)
The Working Poor and Development (0.5) (PG)

Politics and International Studies

Conflict, Rights and Justice (0.5) (PG) – for January 2010 start

These courses were APPROVED.

13. COURSE AMENDMENTS

- 13.1. It was CONFIRMED that the following COURSE AMENDMENTS had been recommended at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee as follows:

Development Studies

Independent Study Project – 151010006
Issues in Gender and Development – 151010021
Political Economy of Violence, Conflict and Development – 15PDSC003
Theory, Policy and Practice – 15PDSC001
Political Economy of Development – 15PDSC002
Gender and Development – 15PDSH010

Politics and International Studies

Comparative and International Politics – 153400063

These course amendments were APPROVED.

- 13.2. It was CONFIRMED that the following AMENDMENTS to LEARNING OUTCOMES had been recommended at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee as follows:

Development Studies

Civil Society, Social Movements and the Development Process - 15PDSH001
Development Practice – 15PDSH013
Fundamentals of Research Methods for Development Studies – 15PDSH017
HIV/Aids and Development – 151010019
HIV and Aids, Culture and Development – 15PDSH021
Introduction to Global Forced Migration Studies – 151010020
Issues in Forced Migration – 15PDSH015
Political and Economic Development of Latin America – 15PDSH016
Problems of Development in the Middle East and North Africa – 15PDSH019
Themes in Contemporary Development: Civil Society and Social Movements – 151010024
War to Peace Transitions – 15PDSH020

Law

Islamic Law of Succession – 15PLAC122

These course amendments were APPROVED.

- 13.3. It was CONFIRMED that the following CHANGE TO COURSE TITLE had been recommended at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee as follows:

Development Studies

Migration and Mobility in the Middle East and North Africa (151010036)

This was APPROVED.

14. COURSE DELETIONS

- 14.1. It was CONFIRMED that the following COURSE DELETIONS had been recommended at the Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee as follows:

Development Studies:

Environment and Development (UG) 151010030
Social Policy Analysis: Politics and Process (UG) 151010026
NGOs as Development Agencies (PG) 15PDSH014

These course deletions were APPROVED.

15. COURSES AVAILABLE TO PG DEVELOPMENT STUDIES STUDENTS FROM OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT

The list of courses available to PG Development Studies students from other departments in SOAS in 2009/10 was APPROVED.

16. COURSES AVAILABLE TO DEVELOPMENT STUDIES STUDENTS FROM OUTSIDE SOAS

The list of courses available to Development Studies students from the Geography department at Kings in 2009/10 was APPROVED.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1. It was NOTED that there was none.

CJH
Approved by Chair
Dec 09