

***[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

15 June 2010

**MINUTES**

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

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 29<sup>th</sup> April 2010 were APPROVED as an accurate record.

**2. MATTERS ARISING (INCLUDING ACTION POINTS)**

2.1 It was NOTED that there were no matters arising.

2.2 Action points:

2 (5.3) – Graham Furniss will be taking up the issue of research monies with Heads of Department and other staff – it was suggested that a faculty discussion be arranged to provide clarification regarding financial distribution.

2 (10.2) – the meeting between staff from Development Studies, Economics, CeDEP and CDPR is still to be arranged.

2 (16.1) – the Faculty Administrator has again requested communication from Director of Student Services regarding this. It was also noted that there will be an on-line register system in place from September 2010.

5.1 – completed

5.2 – completed

8.3 – Nick Page has confirmed that although strongly encouraged, completion of exam comments sheets by both markers is not compulsory.

11.1 – completed

15.1 – noted that there is a SUMS review of these procedures, and that QA are aware of our concerns. It was agreed that Faculty Board wouldn't want to see the entire Part 2 of each proposal, but there is a need for more information to be routinely presented prior to formal

approval.

19.1 – noted that should be confirmed before Easter 2010/11 to provide clarification for 2011/12.

### **3. REVISION OF REGULATIONS**

3.1 A paper containing the new and revised regulations and procedures was NOTED. It was NOTED that these revisions have been considered by FLTCs and LTQC, and are to be considered by Academic Board for implementation in 2010/11.

Concern was NOTED that there hasn't been sufficient consultation with departmental Exams Officers, Chairs of Exam Boards etc given the important regulatory implications.

It was also NOTED that the first few (sections A and B), if approved at Academic Board, will come into effect in 2010/11, and that section C will be piloted during the 2009/10 exam boards for a decision to be made early in 2010/11 for implementation from 2011/12.

### **4. SCHOLARSHIPS**

4.1 The paper outlining suggestions for dealing with Masters Scholarship applications was RECEIVED with the following comments:

- This was felt not to be in a problem in Politics, partly because the number of applications to these programmes was manageable – the applications had been distributed to all PG convenors who each selected the applications felt to be the strongest.
- Overall an inordinate amount of time/effort spent for a very small number of scholarships available.
- Questioned whether there could/should be an element of means testing – asking applicants to answer 'what difference would having the scholarship make to your studies'?
- Suggested that some scholarships could be ring-fenced for specific application areas – but not these general scholarships which should be focussed on academic excellence.
- Suggested that the applications are targeted – to attempt to reduce the number of applications received, and to assist the department in selection. These could be set at departmental level.
- Important to retain the prestige of the awards – having named awards for each department helps to create this.
- Suggested that the criteria that were previously used by the Scholarships Committee be re-introduced to assist with selection/grading e.g. quality of references, trajectory of degree results, relevant professional experience.
- Suggested that a set number of the 11 scholarships were designated to L&SS, so that we can set relevant academic criteria. Requested 5 for L&SS – 1 for each dept. This would require 1 person to shortlist from each department, to put forward 1-2 best applicants from each department – decisions then made across faculty.

### **5. DEAN'S REPORT**

#### **5.1. Department and Faculty plans**

It was NOTED that the Dean had hoped that the Faculty Plan would be available for this meeting, but is still waiting for clarification from departments regarding several points. The Dean is keen to encourage more interdisciplinary / interdepartmental activities - there will be further discussion about this at future FB meetings.

It was NOTED that the final plan will be distributed to Heads of Dept and to FB members.

An ongoing issue raised through the planning process was that of databases (often specialist) which are prioritised by departments but require support/approval by the library. The Library member stated that their priorities must lie with databases required by large numbers of students – and it was agreed that procedures of housing/supporting more specialist databases requires further discussion, including use of devolved finances.

Also noted that there is a need for a cross-faculty review of licenses for existing databases/systems (e.g. datastream, stata etc) to ensure the most appropriate licenses are in place.

## 5.2 Role of Faculty Board

It was NOTED that the Faculty of Arts and Humanities are planning to reconsider the membership and role of Faculty Board. The Dean NOTED that thoughts regarding how to make our Faculty Board work more efficiently & effectively welcomed. Some initial comments:

- Feeling that our current structure of FMG (3 week cycle: week 1 without HoDS, week 2 with HoDs, week 3 no meeting) and Faculty Board works well

It was AGREED that further thoughts should be raised with Carolyn for discussion

## 6. **REPORT FROM ASSOCIATE DEAN (LEARNING AND TEACHING)**

### 6.1. Annual Programme Reviews

A summary of issues raised through the UG/PGT APRs was presented, with an additional addendum regarding those APRs that were received late.

It was NOTED that the reviews demonstrated that the faculty has successful programmes, and that the students are happy with the programmes and the teaching. The large student numbers have at least two negative effects – lack of student contact with tutors outside classes, and poor & over-stretched facilities / resources.

It was NOTED that there is a view that online study packs would be welcomed by students, and the continued use of new technologies (to reduce costs and make things easier for students). It was NOTED that the Library are able to create online reading lists (giving links to books/articles) – and that items within study packs that are available online should be replaced with the relevant links. Staff are to be encouraged to keep study packs as slim as possible, making as much use of online links wherever possible, including only items that are not available online in the hard-copy packs. Also noted complications of international copyright legislation.

It was NOTED that there was some positive feedback (from staff and students) regarding the Faculty Office.

It was NOTED that some APRs are very brief and contain a lack of useful detail – this makes it difficult for the Associate Dean (L&T) to complete the QA requirements, but also will create difficulties for departments at the quinquennial Departmental Reviews.

The conflict between school policy of encouraging students to take languages as part of their UG degrees and departments wishing to prohibit final year students taking language courses as floaters was NOTED. It was NOTED that in some cases this gives students disproportionately high marks, and in other cases very low marks. Law and Economics were encouraged to consider how/if opportunity can be made for students to take language courses in their second year.

### 6.2. Visiting Examiners Reports

A summary of issues raised through the Visiting Examiners reports was presented, with the following key points:

- High levels of satisfaction throughout the faculty – high levels of teaching as viewed by VEs and students.
- Concern regarding distribution of marks was raised by some examiners:
  - a) independence of 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> markers,
  - b) vigilant process for reconciling differences,
  - c) use of wider range of marks particularly within the 70s and 80s (noted that this was a national dilemma). It was agreed that use of 80s etc would be difficult, but that staff should be encouraged to use marks up to 78 for mark that is first class. It was NOTED that clear guidelines re use of marks in 70s would be beneficial to

help markers use these, particularly in light of the potential move to classifications being calculated through aggregate marks. It was also NOTED that attempts have been made to draw up criteria for use of lower and higher marks, and that discussion regarding these will continue. FB would welcome further guidance from the school regarding this issue.

6.3 Plagiarism

It was NOTED that some commercially purchased essays are 'getting through' the plagiarism detection software built into Turnitin. Associate Dean L&T to discuss outside the meeting.

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

7.1 REF

It was NOTED that some work has already been done with external readers for REF submissions, and that was useful in informing the strategic decision not to submit to an Economics panel. It was less useful for general feedback.

7.2 Allocation of Faculty Research Funds

It was NOTED that this year there were two tranches of application/allocation, each for £10k. Both were heavily subscribed and took a lot of committee time. It was felt by FRC that in 10/11 there will be one call for applications early in term 1. It was also noted that this would give individuals more time to spend the moneys allocated by end of financial year (end July) as these moneys cannot be carried over. It was NOTED that it would be useful if these funds could be carried over – Carolyn to speak with Barry to see if this can be more flexible.

7.3 Student Issues

It was NOTED that the procedure for examining students for PhDs is now completely internal to SOAS – that it is acceptable to have an internal examiner from SOAS, but that caution is currently being taken regarding use of University of London examiners as 'external'. However it is expected that this will be accepted within a couple of years.

7.4 Faculty Research Training

It was NOTED that there had been problems with student attendance – departments asked to encourage students to participate in this.

7.5 ESRC Recognition

It was NOTED that the application had been submitted, awaiting decision in October. Initial feedback was uniformly good.

**8. REPORT FROM FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR**

8.1. Exam Boards

It was NOTED that there would be some changes to documentation presented to Exam Boards this summer: results by course, and student profiles will show different calculations of classification – using primary rule, using secondary rule, and using the proposed LLB aggregate score. It was NOTED that the aim is that for the 2010/11 Exam Boards student profiles will be considered only for finalists.

There was concern that this may make the meetings longer, but it was also NOTED that the Exam Board Chairs should ensure that little time is spent discussing individual cases as decisions about progression are made on the basis of the regulations not by Exam Board recommendation.

8.2. Online Course Registrations for 2010/11

It was NOTED that the online course registration system is now closed for returning students – and that the system would re-open on 1 September for all new (UG and PG) students as well as for returners who have not yet registered. It was NOTED that this online system will replace the manual course registration system from 2010/11, although students will need to use a paper-form if they wish subsequently to change their course choices.

## **9. LIBRARY MATTERS**

- 9.1. It was NOTED that consideration will be given shortly to requests received for new journals/databases.

It was CONFIRMED that materials currently stored off-site will be formally returned during the summer – and that individual requests are being dealt with as received. Staff should contact the relevant Subject Librarian regarding this.

## **10. ASIA PACIFIC INSTITUTE (FOR COMPARATIVE SOCIAL SCIENCES)**

- 10.1. Appendix F was CONSIDERED as a Faculty Centre. It was NOTED that Graham Furniss has held a meeting with the regional centre chairs, and that on balance they were in favour of this initiative, agreeing that it should help with applications for grants etc.

There was some concern regarding the name 'Institute' – Yan Kong AGREED that he was willing to change this to Asia Pacific Centre (for Comparative Social Science) if required by Academic Board.

It was NOTED that it had been difficult to obtain the balance between this appearing to be too focussed (re social sciences) and appearing to be too broad (re the territory of the regional centres).

It was AGREED to recommend to Academic Board.

## **11 PROGRAMME AMENDMENT**

- 11.1. An amendment to the Graduate Diploma in Economics programme was APPROVED.

## **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:

Economics:

Preliminary Mathematics and Statistics (PG)  
Economic Principles b) and c) (Grad Dip)

DeFiMS:

Preparation for MSc Finance and Financial Law Study (PG)  
Contemporary Issues in the Middle East and North Africa Economies (UG)  
Contemporary Issues in Japan and Korea Economies (UG)  
Finance in Japan and Korea (UG)  
Finance in Middle East and North Africa (UG)  
Management in Japan and Korea: Domestic and International Developments (UG)  
Management in the Middle East and North Africa: Domestic and International Developments (UG)

School of Law:

Preliminary Law, Legal Reasoning and Legal Methods (PG)  
Law and Policy of International Courts and Tribunals (PG)

Politics:

Northeast Asian Politics and Society - Japan, Korea and Taiwan (PG)

New York University in London:

Britain and Slavery (UG)

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:

Theory and Evidence in Contemporary Development (151010022)

School of Law:

Colonialism, Empire and International Law (15PLAH025)

International Commercial Arbitration (15PLAC153)

Politics:

Nationalism and Ethnicity in Asia and Africa (153400057)

These course amendments were APPROVED.

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

Development Studies:

Development and Conflict (UG)

School of Law:

Equity and Global Wealth (UG)

These were APPROVED.

### **14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 14.1 It was NOTED that there was none.

CJH  
Draft  
June 10

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15 June 2010

**ACTION POINTS**

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Action Required</u>	<u>By whom</u>
2.2 (5.3)	Dean to arrange for Graham Furniss to hold discussion with L&SS staff in order to clarify method of calculation of research money re distribution of overheads through FEC projects.	Dean (with Graham Furniss)
2 (10.2)	Convene discussion/meeting with staff from Development Studies, Economics, CeDEP and CDPR.	Dean
2 (16.1)	Liaise with Director of Registry & Student Services re attendance monitoring statement.	Faculty Administrator
3.1	Liaise with Deputy Registrar to ensure increased consultation with Exam Board Chairs during 10/11 regarding changes to regulations.	Faculty Administrator
4.1	Suggestions regarding Scholarships proposal to be forwarded to Registry.	Faculty Administrator
5.1	Heads of Department to send outstanding information and points of clarification regarding departmental plans to the Dean.	Heads of Department
5.2	FB members to consider ways of increasing Faculty Board effectiveness.	All
6.1	Liaise with Academic Support Team regarding maximising use of links within study packs.	Faculty Administrator
6.1	Ensure that Annual Programme Reviews are completed comprehensively and on-time.	Heads of Department
6.1	Consider how/if the opportunity can be made for UG students to take language courses in their second year.	Heads of Department Economics and Law
6.2	Liaise with Registry and ADLT regarding guidelines for staff re use of marks in 70% bracket.	Faculty Administrator/ ADLT
19.1	Consider whether to continue having Geography courses 'deemed as' DS courses – low student take-up vs high administrative workload. To be confirmed by Easter 2010/11 for 2011/12.	Development Studies