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Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) Project Board

Minutes: 22 March 2017 (Meeting 25)

Membership	Dr Tamsyn Barton (TB) (Chair) Professor Anna Contadini (AC) Dr Heather Elgood (HE) Matt Gorman (MG) Dr Ben Murtagh (BM) Liam Roberts (LR) (Secretary)
In attendance	Baroness Valerie Amos (VA)
Apologies	None

Purpose: To manage and oversee the delivery of the Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) funded by the Alphawood Foundation.

Agenda item.	Agenda Item and Notes
1	<p>Previous Minutes and Actions</p> <p><i>Minutes</i> The minutes of the meeting held 26 January 2016 were agreed as accurate.</p> <p><i>Notes on Actions</i> None noted</p>

2	<p>Update on discussions with Alphawood Foundation (standing item) (MG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG reported that the Donor is aware that the Programme is currently underspent, and requested further analysis to be undertaken to determine accurate projections of spend going forward. TB noted that this was now in progress with the recruitment of permanent Project Management staff, and that initial analysis of financial situation corroborated the appearance of underspend on scholarships against original projections. • AC noted that, in the most recent scholarship selection process, all candidates deemed to have fully satisfied selection criteria were selected for award, and that further efforts and outreach and marketing might help the Programme draw a wider field of high-quality candidates • VA noted that analysis of the trends in scholars' countries of origin, marketing efforts and areas of focus might help determine where marketing efforts could be focused in future. Strengthened and formalized relationships between the School and institution in-region might assist with recruitment and marketing efforts
3	<p>Alphawood funded academic posts (reporting to donor) (MG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MG noted that the Donor would be interested in a briefing on activity taking place under each of the endowed academic posts in non-narrative form. It was suggested that this might take form of a spreadsheet or matrix with comprehensive information on research projects, taught modules, publications and other activities • ALL agreed the utility in communicating overall activity of the funded posts, while noting that Terms of Reference in the Deed of Gift allowed considerable latitude. Several voiced concerns about risks to academic freedom • MG clarified that the objective of a briefing would not be to assess activity in itself, but rather to annotate narrative reporting with quantitative data • TB noted that our primary focus in correspondence with the Donor was to assure them that SOAS was fulfilling the remit of the programme and to explain how this was being done <p>Action: MG and LR to develop an early draft briefing that highlights activity in a form appropriate to the Donor's needs and that illustrates the relationship between activity and SAAAP strategic objectives</p>
4	<p>Incoming scholarship cohort (selected) (AC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC reported that the 2017/18 cohort appeared to be professionally diverse and of high quality. 10 Diploma, 1 Certificate and 13 Masters scholars had been notified of their award • The composition of the Scholarships sub-group was discussed in light of pending resignations. The Board noted that Mulaika Hijjas, in her role as observer to the sub-board, has provided useful insight and expertise to proceedings, and would be considered well-placed to take up membership of the sub-board if it took such a decision. TB asked AC and the sub-board to discuss any new potential members to be approached in the next sub-group meeting and to make a recommendation on future composition <p>Action: AC to discuss Scholarships Sub-Board composition and membership in next scheduled sub-board meeting</p>
5	<p>Outreach Implementation Plan (AC)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AC presented the Outreach Implementation Plan, designed by the Outreach Sub-Board. The Plan is designed to capture not only Outreach activity, but also how it relates directly with the Programme strategic objectives, as with the Research and Publications Implementation Plan. • MG noted that this would be a very useful tool in communications with Alphawood, and asked if it was now ready to send to the Donor in upcoming discussions. AC affirmed that it needed only minor finalization. • VA note tthat the Plan could and should be used to demonstrate instances of collaboration across the Programme <p>Action: AC to update Outreach Implementation Plan and distribute, with support from LR, and MG to use in discussion with Alphawood</p>
6	<p>Internship Bursaries Proposal (Revised) (BM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BM reported that, incorporating feedback from HE and others, the proposal envisaged approximately two graduate interns annually. Interns selected and placed would be required to report on impact and how the experience had contributed to their professional development. The cost was estimated at £600 per student • HE noted that internships were extraordinarily valuable, but that they also required supervision. It would need to be ascertained that interns' prospective supervisors would be in a position to commit the time required. BM agreed, noting that the programme would be advertised within Alphawood scholarship cohorts only, and that there were encouraging signs of interest • TB recommended that BM outline supervisors' commitment to the scheme in a fuller proposal to be submitted in subsequent Board. <p>Action: BM to submit finalized internship proposal to the Board</p>
7	<p>Funding Applications</p> <p>7a (SAAAP031): Postgraduate Journal Proposal (BM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BM noted that there was one error in the budget submitted, in that one Cambodia-based delegate would be flown Phnom Penh-London-Phnom Penh for related meetings, rather than several UK-based delegates flying return to Phnom Penh. • BM reported that the Online Journal would be hosted on a discrete web site customized for such purposes, which could attract significant online traffic • AC questioned whether some of the mandate of the proposed Journal overlapped with the remit of the SAAAP newsletter in its approach to "articles." BM clarified that the content of the Journal would be significantly different (i.e., long, peer-reviewed articles) so that there would be no overlap, and that descriptive terminology in relation to the types of article which would appear could be changed

The Board approved the proposal

7b (SAAAP032): Research Publication Series (BM)

- BM noted that Ashley Thompson had built strong links with the NUS Press and that they were enthusiastic about this proposal. There was a launch cost of £10,000, after which the cost was estimated at GBP 15,000 annually. The proposal would develop two publications per year focusing on topics clearly within the SAAAP remit
- TB noted that the question of whether the proposal falls within the SAAAP remit is the primary focus of the Board in these matters, given the academic quality assurance within the Sub-Board
- In relation to the approval process, TB noted that the only concern would be if a future publication under an approved series were to address a topic outside the SAAAP remit. It was agreed that in any situation in which the relevance of an area was potentially ambiguous, that the sub-board could defer the approval to the full Board. Otherwise the Sub-Board would keep the Chair informed.
- It was agreed that the role of Board was not to take routine decisions on the activities of sub-boards, but that it was important for the Board to be informed of any important issues.

The Board approved the proposal

7c (SAAAP033): Research Trip (BM)

- BM said that the proposal would lead to Ashley Thompson's first major research trip to the region since her appointment. All Board members agreed that the proposal was sound and should be endorsed.
- Discussion followed regarding whether any future guidance surrounding the fielding of research funding through the SAAAP Academic Support Fund might be informed by SOAS' own processes to streamline evaluation by Board members. TB and all concluded that of primary importance was whether applications to the Fund satisfy criteria established through the SAAAP remit, and concluded that this application indeed does satisfy such criteria.

The Board approved the proposal

7d (SAAAP034): NMCPP Book Repair Proposal (AC)

- AC reported that there were alumni with whom Peter Sharrock was working in the region, who were enthusiastic about the proposal. It has the formal endorsement of the National Museum of Cambodia (Phnom Penh) and has the support of the Outreach sub-group. TB noted that the application form Peter had used was out of date, and the proposal would need to be transposed into the correct form. Pending this resubmission in the correct form, **the Board approved the proposal.**

8

Finance update (standing item) (TB)

- TB reported that there was a significant underspend on scholarships, with a reported balance of **£ 2,307,076**. There might be further spend of approximately GBP 177,000 once all fee waivers from the 2016/17 academic year had been accounted for, but this still represented an underspend.
- TB noted that the Programme was currently underspending approximately GBP 165,000 on the Masters component of the programme, in part due to English-language tuition requirements which have led to deferrals. An urgent task for the Project Manager would be to ascertain the likely size of deferred cohorts entering academic programmes in years later than those in which they were approved for award, and to determine the extent to which this would reduce the underspend.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TB also noted that temporary Project Administrator staff had not had access to Agresso, and that the promised back-up had not been forthcoming. This had contributed to uncertainty regarding the precise financial situation to date. It is nevertheless apparent that spending was slow in comparison to the original planning. • TB noted that the underspend appeared to be at a scale which might suggest a no-cost extension of the current programme was more appropriate than a proposal for additional funding. The one area where there was insufficient budget allocation was for the leadership of the Programme. She raised the question of whether the Board might approach Alphawood about the creation of a Director post. In her view, this might not need to be an endowed post. • MG notes that an endowed post had benefits, but that the programme itself was time-bound. The Board would need to consider whether an alternative approach, such as a fixed-term contract covering the remaining period of the programme, would be successful. <p>Action: LR to continue to liaise with Jane Wood (Finance) and MG to improve the financial reporting and to give a clear overview for the next Board.</p>
9.	<p>AOB</p> <p>None noted</p>

SAAAP Project Board Actions 2016/17

No.	Agenda Item	Added	Action Points	Deadline	Owner	Complete?
129	3 (Alphawood-funded academic posts)	22 March 2017	to develop an early draft briefing that highlights activity in a form appropriate to the Donor's needs and that illustrates the relationship between activity and SAAAP strategic objectives	Next board	MG/LR	In progress
130	4 (Scholarships)	22 March 2017	AC to discuss Scholarships Sub-Board composition and membership in next sub-board meeting	Scholarships sub-board	AC	In progress
131	5 (Outreach Implementation Plan)	22 March 2017	To finalise Outreach Implementation Plan, and authorise MG to use it in discussion with Alphawood	Outreach sub-board	AC	In progress
132	8 (Finance update)	22 March 2017	To improve financial reporting, providing a full overview for next Board.	Next board	LR	In progress