

Minutes of the LSE Alumni Association Leadership Forum 2009
Friday 25 to Saturday 26 September 2009

Venue: Wolfson Theatre, New Academic Building, LSE

Chair

George Davidson

Executive Committee

John Casey – Vice Chair; Pablo Halpern – Chair Constitutional Committee; Alice Huang – Chair, Communications Subcommittee; Michael Ivens – Chair, Internal Ambassadors' Subcommittee; Kenneth Lai - Chair, Group Leaders' Support Subcommittee; Nayantara Palchoudhuri – Vice Chair; Karina Robinson – Chair, Mentoring Subcommittee; Christoph Roescher - Chair, Establishment, Recognition and Obligations Subcommittee; Clare TaylorGold – Chair, Lifelong Contacts Subcommittee

Attendees

Alice Huang, Media Group; Amanda Cupples, Mentoring Committee*; Ami Kotecha (nee Chandarana), Kenya; Ann (Imlah) Schneider, AFLSE; Asha Lad, Mentoring Committee*; Ashwajit Singh, India; Charles Wahab, Lifelong Contacts*; Christoph Roescher, Executive Committee; Christopher Bodell, Executive Committee*; Collin Tseng-Liu, Singapore; Dan Korn, Israel; Dirk Robertson, Executive Committee; Elizabeth Halpern, AFLSE; Elliot Simmons, Lifelong Contacts Committee; Éva Számely, Hungary; Fabio Finazzo, Italy; Fiona MacDonald, France; Florian Kobele, Belgium; Gauri Kasbekar-Shah, Lawyers Group; George Davidson, Executive Committee; Gerd Mueller-Brockhausen, Germany; Gregory Sullivan, Canada; Gurpriya Bhatia, Mentoring Committee*; Ilja Boelaars, Netherlands; Jacques Beaumont, France; James Walton, Global Real Estate Group; Jing Miao, Lifelong Contacts Committee*; John Casey, Executive Committee; Jonathan Taylor, Communications Committee*; Kaashif Basit, United Arab Emirates; Karina Robinson, Executive Committee; Kenneth Lai, Hong Kong; Leon Desbrow, AFLSE; Levan Jugeli, Georgia; Lieven Brouwers, Belgium; Maciej (Matt) Zaleski-Ejgierd, Poland; Margitta Wuelker-Mirbach, Germany; Michael Williams, Executive Committee*; Nayantara Palchoudhuri, Executive Committee; Nina Lange, Denmark; Normand Morneau, AFLSE; Pablo Halpern Montecino, Chile/Executive Committee; Pablo Trevisan, Argentina; Pia Wagner, Germany; Pierre Dinan, Mauritius; Rafael Almeida, Brazil; Rewa Bouji, Mentoring Committee*; Reza Mahmud, Bangladesh; Sherif Kamel, Egypt; Sook Yee Muk, Mentoring Committee*; Subrata Mukherji, India; Thomas Kaiser-Stockmann, Germany; Towfic Shomar, Jordan; Ubadigbo Okonkwo, Nigeria; Vassilka Tchifilionova, Bulgaria; Vishnu Prasad, Establishment Committee*; Wasfi Abu-Ghazaleh, Lifelong Contacts Committee*; Yelena Don, Kazakhstan; Yumi Inada, Japan

* = Short listed candidate

LSE Staff

Fiona Kirk, Charlotte Armah, Nat Holtham, Shauna Honey, Sarah Hammond, Georgie Piper van Kuyk

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FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2009

Welcome and Delegate Introductions

George Davidson gave the welcome address and reviewed the programme for the next couple of days. Each delegate then introduced themselves.

Alumni Association Review 2007 to 2009

Chair's Report

George then gave a brief review of the Alumni Association in the two years since the 2007 Forum. He identified the successes as:

- the increase in the number of pre-departure events organised by alumni groups;
- the growing number of faculty undertaking alumni activity on their overseas travel; and
- the continued development of Houghton Street Online.

He highlighted the following future challenges:

- new programme development;
- increasing the number of alumni groups

He reviewed the budget, noting a small surplus on the 2008/2009 budget and that the Association had received a £5,000 increase to its 2009/2010 budget. He cited the key areas of expenditure: the Forum, pre-departure events, services to groups and visit support. He also emphasised his hope that the Forum would provide the opportunity for interactive discussion of future plans for the Association.

Establishment, Recognition and Obligations Subcommittee

Christoph Roescher, the Subcommittee Chair, outlined the work of the Subcommittee. He explained that their starting point had been the acknowledgement of the existing alumni groups and the intention to facilitate the creation of new groups. Their key outputs had been the creation of a voting structure and the identification of the three units of:

- alumni country group
- alumni special interest group; and
- alumni contact network

Constitutional Committee

Pablo Halpern, the chair of the ad hoc Constitutional Committee, identified the key areas in which he felt the constitution needed amending. He cited:

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- the ability to handle Executive and Subcommittee resignations during the term of office;
- the need to consider alternative methods for electing committee members
- how to integrate new joiners;
- the possible extension of the term of office; and
- whether or not to introduce term limits and phased terms of office.

School Reports

State of the School Address

LSE Director Howard Davies gave the State of the School address. His presentation covered student applications; teaching and research, campus development and School finances. He discussed the work of the Teaching Task Force in addressing class sizes and the redevelopment of the St Philip's site into the new student services centre.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

External Relations Update

Robin Hoggard, Director of the External Relations division, gave an update of the activities of his division. He talked about the Asia Forum, faculty visits and the Linking Up initiative, the development of the LSE website, the School's media profile, and the LSE Knowledge Transfer initiative.

Student Recruitment Update

Cath Baldwin, Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions, gave an update of how student admissions were faring in the light of the current economic downturn; the 'LSE Visits You' programme undertaken by her team and the pre-departure events programme.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Careers Service Update

Fiona Sandford, Director of the LSE Careers Service, discussed how her team was adjusting their offering and introducing new services to help ensure that LSE's students found a job or an internship after graduation. She gave an overview of the employers' events programme on campus and overseas and how her office worked with alumni groups to deliver them.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO [done]

Engaging with Students

Aled Jones, General Secretary of the LSE Students' Union, presented on the initiative that he and his Sabbatical Offices are undertaking in liaison with ODAR to facilitate greater participation by alumni in current student life. This included encouraging further co-operation between the national student societies and their counterpart alumni groups and to build supportive interactions between targeted alumni and some of the longer established student societies.

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Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Nominations Committee Report

George Davidson explained the application process for the Executive Committee and its Subcommittees 2009 to 2011 and reported that it had attracted over 100 applications. The Nominations Committee included representatives from the School, and from ODAR as well as one of the School's Governors. The Nominations Committee reviewed all the applications and, after discussion, overwhelmingly agreed the recommended slate to be put to the Forum.

The recommended slate for the LSE Alumni Association Executive Committee: Chair - George Davidson, Vice Chairs - Fiona MacDonald; Collin Tseng-Liu; Pablo Halpern; Subcommittee Chairs - James Afedo (Comms); John Casey (Establishment); Leon Desbrow – Group Leaders' Support; Mike Williams – Lifelong Contacts; Karina Robinson – Mentoring; Internal Ambassadors – Rafael Almeida; Chris Bodell; Ami Kotecha; Kenneth Lai and Greg Sullivan.

Shauna Honey presented the recommended slate for the Executive Committee and its Subcommittees – Communications; Establishment, Recognition and Obligations; Group Leaders Support; Lifelong Contacts and Mentoring. Due to the small number of short listed Internal Ambassadors, the Nominations Committee recommended that the Ambassadors sit on the Executive Committee.

At the Forum there was concern expressed at the inclusion of 3 Vice Chairs on the Executive Committee slate without prior discussion of the proposal. The change from 2 to 3 Vice Chairs was viewed as an amendment of the Constitution, which requires due notice ahead of the Forum.

After considerable discussion, however, the Forum voted overwhelmingly in favour of electing the slate as presented, with the exception of Germany.

Forum voted unanimously to reconvene the Constitutional Committee to present proposals for amends to the Constitution

Action: Constitutional Committee to present proposals for amends to the Constitution for voting by 31 December 2009.

LSE Faculty Lecture

Professor Michael Cox, Co-Director of LSE's IDEAS centre for the study of international affairs, diplomacy and grand strategy, gave a lecture on Asia in the 21st century.

Action: Podcast of lecture to be posted up to HSO [done]

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Alumni Programme Update

Charlotte Armah, Head of Alumni Relations, gave an update on the School's alumni programme. The presentation focused on the role of alumni in School life, the objectives of the alumni programme and the key findings of the 2009 Annual Alumni Group Leaders' Survey. The survey findings would help to inform the projects and initiatives undertaken by the Alumni Association for the next two years. There was a good deal of discussion about various alumni group activities, particularly on the desire to further increase the number of academics undertaking alumni activity when they travel overseas.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Houghton Street Online Update

Shauna Honey, Development Communications Officer (and previously Alumni Relations Officer) gave an overview of Houghton Street Online (HSO), the School's online alumni community. Its purpose is to provide alumni groups with an online presence and a communication tool, to be the alumni's portal into LSE and to provide alumni with a 24x7 connection to each other and to the School. She examined the new developments on offer such as the launch of the alumni mentoring service, the development of the Facebook application and the site's interaction with the LSE's website. She also highlighted the work being undertaken with individual groups to develop their individual HSO pages.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Mentoring Update

Nat Holtham, Deputy Head of Alumni Relations and Karina Robinson, Chair, Mentoring Subcommittee 2008 to 2009, gave an update on the history and the development of the LSE Alumni Professional Mentoring Network. Karina gave an overview of the work of the committee over the past two years and explained what mentoring is and what it isn't. Nat discussed the launch of Mentoring on HSO for global access and gave a demonstration of how to sign up as a mentor and the kind of mentor searches alumni seeking advice might undertake. Karina ended the presentation by inviting Forum delegates to register as mentors so that the network could become a genuinely international resource accessible to all alumni.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Fundraising at LSE

Major Gifts Fundraising

Fiona Kirk, Director of Development and Alumni Relations and Katie Walsh, Head of the Annual Fund presented on how LSE undertakes fundraising. Fiona reviewed the sources of the School's philanthropic support – alumni, friends, corporates, trusts and foundations and non-alumni; the two types of funding undertaken – major gifts of over £5,000 and the Annual Fund

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for unrestricted giving of up to £5,000 and how the fundraising team is structured. She then briefly reviewed the outcomes of the Campaign for LSE and in particular the fundraising for the New Academic Building. Discussion focused on the role of groups in fundraising for LSE and Fiona emphasised the inherent complexity of co-ordinating any group's fundraising activity with the School's stated priorities and with ODAR's activities and approaches. However, she would be happy to discuss well-thought through proposals for working with alumni groups who wished to fundraise.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Annual Fund

Katie Walsh, Head of the Annual Fund, gave an overview of LSE's Annual Fund. She explained that this is LSE's unrestricted fund of donations by alumni, friends, staff and parents out of which the School funded many 'quality of life' projects and initiatives that would not otherwise receive funding. She identified the 6 core categories to which the Annual Fund is allocated: student support, the Students' Union, campus facilities, teaching and research, departmental initiatives and public lectures and events. She also discussed the funding incentive scheme established last year to encourage alumni groups leaders to foster active support amongst their local alumni for the Annual Fund. Although the total raised by the Annual Fund had increased, this had not been combined with increased international participation. 4 countries met their donor target; another 7 achieved at least 80% of their target but most countries did not succeed in meeting their donor target. Following discussion with the Director of Development and the Head of Alumni Relations, she explained that the incentive scheme as currently structured was, therefore, being disbanded. Good relationships had been built between the Annual Fund and alumni group leaders and this interaction would continue with the aim of building more support for the Annual Fund.

Action: Presentation to be posted up to HSO

Interactive Panel Discussion

Communicating with your Groups, Events and Faculty Visits

Moderator: Alice Huang, leader of the Media alumni group and outgoing Chair, Communications Subcommittee

Panel members: Rafael Almeida - Brazilian Alumni Association; Lieven Browers – Belgian Friends of LSE and Fiona MacDonald – French Friends of LSE.

Alice explained how she and her committee had rethought their programme in the light of declining membership and increased coverage of media through the LSE Public Lectures programme. She commented that abandoning the membership fee combined with the refocusing of the group to embrace a more contemporary view of media had resulted in an increase in the number of members. Lieven discussed how the Belgian Friends of LSE had become reactivated, significantly helped by the introduction of a targeted and focused, mostly online, communications strategy to create an engaged alumni community. Rafael explained how

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the Brazilian Alumni Association was created against a background of little alumni activity and experience in Brazil and how the concept had been embraced with enthusiasm. Fiona shared the French experience of the generational transfer of leadership from a highly respected leader who had retired to pass the baton so that the group could embrace the opportunity of the expanded pool of young new French graduates from LSE.

Action: Presentations to be posted up to HSO

How can the AA best serve you?

The scheduled second panel discussion on membership, committees, governance and finances was rolled into the discussion on how the AA can best serve alumni groups.

Moderator: John Casey, Vice Chair of the AA and leader of the New York chapter of the American Friends of LSE.

Panel members: Collin Tseng-Liu, leader of the LSE Alumni Association of Singapore, Fabio Finazzo, Treasurer of the Italian Alumni Association and Pablo Halpern, Executive Committee member and leader of the Chilean Friends of LSE.

There was a resumption of the discussion around the amendment of the Constitution. Following extensive discussion, Forum agreed that the Constitution needed to evolve in the light of experience but that changes should be presented as proposals for the Forum to discuss and vote on. Where possible, this would take place at the biennial Forum. Should the need to make amendments arise between Forums, approval would be sought by online voting.

Forum agreed unanimously to reconvene the ad hoc Constitutional Committee under the chairmanship of Pablo Halpern to present proposals for amending the Constitution to be voted upon by alumni group leaders.

Action: Constitutional Committee to present proposals on:

- **the number of Vice Chairs;**
- **the handling of Executive and Subcommittee resignations during the term of office;**
- **term limits and phased terms of office;**
- **alternative methods of voting for the Executive Committee and its Subcommittees**