

Southeast Asian Art Academic Programme (SAAAP) Project Board
Minutes: Friday 19th October 2018 (Meeting 34)

Membership	Dr Tamsyn Barton	Chair
	Professor Shane McCausland	Head of Department (School of Arts)
	Dr Heather Elgood	Course Director (Diploma in Asian Art)
	Ruth O'Hanlon	Head of Development
	Dr Ben Murtagh	Head of School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics
	Baroness Valerie Amos	SOAS Director
	Liam Roberts Chloe Osborne (Secretary)	Programme Manager Programme Administrator

Purpose: To 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</p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting (June 28th 2018) were agreed as accurate.</p> <p>On Action points:</p> <p>#156 – This had been completed by email</p> <p>#138-155 – These would be discussed through the course of the meeting</p> <p>Minutes were approved by all.</p>

<p>2</p>	<p>Chair's Report (TB)</p> <p>TB welcomed Shane McCausland to his first Programme Board meeting. She summarised the agenda and noted that the discussions to be had at this meeting were very important for the future of the programme, in particular for deciding on how to proceed with the Scholarships scheme.</p> <p>TB thanked those who had contributed to the tabled Teaching and Research plan, which she noted included very comprehensive coverage of the work being done by the endowed postholders.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Director's Report (VA)</p> <p>VA summarised the latest discussion she had had with the Alphawood Foundation in June. She and Jim McDonough had discussed the Annual Report which had been sent to the AW by the Board last academic year, which was generally well received. However, VA noted that it was felt that the report had not been clear enough about the research, teaching and publishing in relation to South East Asian art. However after this had been outlined more clearly no further queries were raised.</p> <p>VA noted that the proposed graduation event in Singapore would be very important for showcasing the Scholarship programme and highlighting the impact of the Scholars in the region. However, at this stage, it appeared unlikely that further funds for the Scholarship programme would be forthcoming.</p> <p>TB noted that the point about a lack of clear information on the teaching and research that had been funded had been well addressed with the latest update, which it would be positive to pass on to Alphawood. As discussed last time, SOAS should proceed with the expectation that there will be no more funding for Scholarships, which is why LR had looked closely into the possibilities of using existing funds to sponsor a number of final Scholarships. After recent work with the Finance department LR had evolved the proposal to reflect their advice on this funding, and this would be discussed during this meeting.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Finance Update (LR/TB) – Appendix 1</p> <p>LR summarised his review of SAAAP finances which had informed the Scholarships proposal. The time-limited funds, which had been spent on Scholarships and related costs, had spent just under its £2 million spend on this year (and next year's deferred) Scholars, in line with forecast expenditure. This did not account for Term 1 fees or maintenance payments, although these were on track. The programme would have in the region of £50,000 surplus expected at the end of the current Scholarships awards. (In December the full Term 1 costings would be available to refine the forecast.)</p> <p>In the Related Costs Fund, there remained around £59,000, which would probably be used for projects in the pipeline, including for example a Singapore graduation event.</p> <p>The Academic Support Fund (ASF) current value is £2.593 million which had already increased by £31,000 this year in investment movements. If this continued until August it would look like a £191,000 increase over the year, dependent on stock fluctuations. One approach to estimating the future gains or losses for this fund, according to the Finance Department, would be to look at the average increase over each year. However given the current evident uncertainties in global finances this was unlikely to be reliable. LR had therefore used some more conservative models as well, for example including only income derived from interest.</p> <p>LR explained that he had modelled various options for future PhD Scholarships. The choice of PhD rather than Master's or Diploma programmes had a logic of progress, given the work done in creating a pool of Master's graduates who might now be at the level to apply. Furthermore, PhDs were more straightforward to cost because no ELAS tuition would be needed for successful candidates. This plan had been tabled to each Sub-Board who had given feedback on the ideas. Overall it was proposed to support a total of 4 Scholarships. There might be some value in having them in cohorts of two to foster a sense of camaraderie.</p>

	<p>To fund the 4 scholarships would require viring around £582,000 from the ASF to CAL1. This would need permission from the Donor, but in so doing it would be explained that moving this money would not compromise normal activity funded through that fund, in which the gains in interest have far outweighed expenditure over the course of the Programme. This was the maximum amount to be considered at this stage.</p> <p>In terms of the management of the project, the amount suggested would be enough to cover the awards but not the administrative costs. PhD Scholars would not need the same level of administrative support.</p> <p>TB noted the logic to this proposal, the logic of progress, certainty over the finances, but also for the saving in Scholarships administration. The PhD Scholars would have the Doctoral School as well as the School of Arts. She suggested that the finances and the future of the Scholarships plan be discussed together. She also said that, while the logic of funding PhDs was so clear that the detailed work had focused on this option, she welcomed comments from the Board, including on other options.</p> <p>BM agreed that funding PhD Scholars seemed the obvious route at this point, and noted the logic that there should be a good pool of potential candidates from the MA alumni. Spreading the spend over several years would also be a good way of managing the risk, making it a smaller project, more manageable and cost efficient.</p> <p>HE suggested that successful applicants might still need a lot of English support, and noted her concern over the loss of Liam Roberts as the funds for administration diminished. She suggested that tapering support would be needed and a balance should be struck between the Doctoral School administering the Scholars and the SAAAP office. TB noted that while there is still more work to be done, current budget allocations would not allow for much administrative support from mid-2019.</p> <p>BM and TB discussed continuing to report back to the Donor in the coming years, and TB noted that it could be beneficial to continue some reporting, as it is good to gather material on outcomes to publicise more broadly.</p> <p>SM agreed with all these points, although he noted that the tapering process might be quite long and possibly complex. PhDs should not need pastoral support beyond what is already available in the School, given that there was a high PhD completion rate and effective support mechanisms for Doctoral students, and that even if they did not arrive in pairs they would have plenty of other PhD students around.</p> <p>BM noted the importance of flexibility in relation to the calibre of applications. If two applicants were considered to be high enough quality in year 1, it would be good to make these offers then. BM added that this plan seemed clearly aligned with the remit of the programme in the Deed of Gift.</p> <p>TB asked that the current plan be worked up into a full proposal given all agreed that it made sense. BM's point about how this plan fitted with the requirements of the Programme should be included. In terms of timing, it was agreed that LR should write up the plan in the form of a proposal to the Donor, setting out a number of specific models, and giving them an option to select from, with indication of our preferences. This would be sent through the Sub-boards for feedback in time for the December Board.</p>
5	<p>Alphawood Scholarships 2019-2024: Proposal v3 (LR) – Appendix 2</p> <p>Discussed above.</p>

6	<p>Current Alphawood Scholarships Update (LR)</p> <p>LR confirmed that all the Scholars had begun their programmes as planned, with the exception of one Scholar who had applied to the Master's and who was advised by ELAS to change to the Diploma and has now done so with the support of the Scholarships Sub-Board, and one PhD Scholar who had to defer his place at the last minute for health reasons. CO had now met with all the ELAS and Diploma Scholars and would be meeting with Rachel Humphries in the IFCELS office to discuss the In-session support options for the latter group. She would meet with all Master's Scholars over the coming weeks in order to assess their needs. All fees and reimbursements are currently being processed and these should appear in Scholars' accounts over the next week.</p>
7	<p>SAAAP Teaching and Research Plan (SM) – Appendix 3</p> <p>SM summarised this plan, which he had requested from the endowed posts in order to understand the teaching plans. He noted that it was an ongoing discussion, including queries related to how some teaching fitted within the remit, but that this had been very useful for a clearer overview. He noted the need for students to learn methodologies and theories, without which the SAAAP objective could not be achieved. TB agreed that this was a useful piece of work and good for the Board to have at the beginning of the year.</p> <p>BM agreed that this was very useful to have and demonstrated the input of these colleagues and the work supporting the Scholarships academically. He noted that the endowed postholders supervised Scholar dissertations alongside teaching many of these modules. He added that Peter Sharrock (PDS) had noted at the Scholarships Sub-Board how impressed Fred Eychaner had been with the quality of the Scholars he had seen at the Singapore event, which was testament to the teaching they have received.</p> <p>VA added that she completely agreed with this, and that the challenge in the past has been that communications with the Donor have failed to get this point across. All agreed that demonstrating these successes would be of priority to the Singapore event.</p>
8	<p>Academic Support Fund: Updates, Reports and Applications</p> <p>a. UPDATE: Singapore Alumni Event (RO)</p> <p>TB noted that this must be a top priority going forward and asked exactly how it would work as a shared event with Development.</p> <p>RO summarised developments with the plans, noting that there was now an evolved idea of what the event would entail. She noted that SM had been involved in the conversation about the master classes since the beginning. The idea was still to organise a weekend of SOAS engagement activity in Singapore, the front end of which would be the graduation ceremony for Alphawood Scholarship alumni scattered around the region. So far the date and venue had been booked and were in VA's diary, and the dates would be discussed with the endowed post-holders. The venue had been provided for free and a working group of SOAS alumni in Singapore were working on pulling the weekend together. The draft proposal was ready for the SAAAP Outreach Sub-board with a request for some funding. Development would cover appropriate costs.</p> <p>The plan is to have the graduation event on the Friday with FE as the Guest of Honour. All Scholars would be invited to come from the region, with air fare and 1-2 nights' accommodation provided.</p> <p>TB noted that the Alphawood endowed post-holders should indeed be invited, given that graduates there would largely have been supervised by them. She added that PDS as the Outreach and Communications Manager should also be involved with the organisation as this falls within his terms of reference. Action #157 RO to liaise with PDS over this.</p> <p>In terms of the non-SAAAP part of the weekend, RO asked whether the Alphawood alumni could present a lecture or join a panel. The Saturday and Sunday programme would work as a public engagement event for the ACM and the working group was looking at how to fund and advertise this. It would function as a means of showcasing SOAS's capacity in this area to Singapore, and classes would have direct associations with the ACM collections. More thought was needed about the plan for the Saturday evening, and whether this might be a good opportunity to do some sort of launch, to include SAAAP but also broader.</p>

RO noted that the new Development manager who will be joining her team soon will be focusing largely on Southeast Asia, and would work with LR to consider future funding possibilities for arts and scholarships at SOAS.

b. UPDATE: Status of Ho Chi Minh Catalogue proposal (SM)

SM explained that this was a proposal which had come to the Sub-Board, and it had been noticed that £1000 of the funding requested had already been spent, which was thought to be irregular and so it had been decided to bring the issue to Board.

TB noted that there had been cases of requests for funding after the money had been spent in the past, and that, as on previous occasions, it would not be authorised. Funding could not be given retroactively. SM added that the costs incurred to date are travel costs for a meeting, but it is unfortunate that it happened before the proposal was designed or submitted. TB noted that the decisions on this had to be consistent.

c. UPDATE: SAAAP031 - Pratu

BM summarised the project, a PhD student-led journal. One of the lead Scholars, Heidi Tan had given an update on developments at the latest Research & Publications Sub-board. They were slightly behind schedule, and would miss the planned January publication date for their first issue. BM noted though that this was normal for journals. They had discussed whether they should be publishing articles individually on the website before putting these into a complete journal and had decided they probably would do this in future, although not for the first edition. BM noted that they were receiving good support.

d. UPDATE: SAAAP037: Postgraduate Internships (BM)

BM explained that the internships were going ahead again this year, with one Scholar at the British Museum and one at the Royal Asiatic Society again. BM will meet both for a catch-up to check all is going well over the next few weeks and would encourage them to write something in the newsletter. TB noted that this was a really positive story to highlight.

e. UPDATE: SAAAP032: NUS Press Publication Series (BM)

BM noted that this was proceeding according to plan and that there were a number of planned proposals, but all had agreed that the first publication should be a from a non-SOAS author. All hope to have the first publication out in 2019, with three planned volumes after that with the involvement of SOAS colleagues. BM noted that it had been slow to get this project off the ground but that publication processes took time.

TB asked whether it would be possible to publicise the series in Singapore. BM agreed that this could be done if the information was ready and if anyone from NUS could speak about it. This would add prestige to the event.

f. REPORT: SAAAP030 : SEAM Membership (BM) – **Appendix 4**

BM outlined the question about whether or not SAAAP should continue membership, depending on whether we are getting full use of it. He noted that it is currently not being fully integrated into teaching, but if there is a cost for leaving and re-joining rather than just continuing we should take this into consideration. LR noted that the item tabled was a report from the funded project last year which had recommended reviewing the benefit before continuing funding. To continue funding this the Library would need to write an application for further funding, and the case would then need to be made.

To be reviewed.

g. REPORT: SAAAP047: EM Moore Library 2017-2018 (SM) - **Appendix 5**

	<p>This was discussed in tandem with item (8.h.).</p> <p>SM summarised that these had been considered at the Outreach Sub-Board. (8.g.) included a commendably detailed report, for just under £1000 expenditure, whilst (8.h.) was for future investment of just under £5000 for fixing various faulty items in the library and the purchase of a new laptop which will help with the project outlined in (8.i.).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">h. APPLICATION: SAAAP047: EM Moore Library 2018-2019 (SM) - Appendix 6</p> <p>TB noted that at this point in the programme cycle, the issue of sustainability should be raised. It would be important to consider what would happen with individual projects like this when there was no more time-limited funding.</p> <p>HE noted that the library had become a real centre for Alphawood alumni and scholars in the region more broadly, and though it was still not completely finished she sees the effect of it amongst students. It was very important for lasting impact that it continue, but it would be necessary to seek further sources of funding.</p> <p>BM raised the specific issue with offering an honorarium, given that the programme might not continue beyond the next couple of years. He added that whilst he was sure that this was an important addition to the academic community in Myanmar, thought should be given to an endpoint with SAAAP funding.</p> <p>LR added that EM already had in place an initiative to raise money with local donors for books and TB agreed that further local support could be explored, including with the University of Yangon itself.</p> <p>It was also noted that EM needed to submit a new application for the current year for her consultancy work. BM queried whether her role would need to be re-evaluated if no future Scholarships were planned. HE noted that it was still important to have her in the region as she nurtured alumni networks and sustained the SOAS identity there. TB suggested that this might be of interest to the new Development Manager when she arrived.</p> <p>BM finally asked whether caution would be necessary when working with the National University of Myanmar in the current situation of the state abuse of human rights of minorities such as the Rohingya. TB agreed that caution was needed, while noting the important role of the university students in expressing dissent.</p> <p>All agreed that the application should be approved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">i. APPLICATION: SAAAP059: Bagan Conference Publications (SM) – Appendix 7</p> <p>SM noted that EM had explained that many people in Myanmar did not have access to the internet and that scholars and academics tended to only read physical copies. Therefore it would be very useful for them to have hard copies of this conference publication. It was for this reason that there was an additional request to fund print costs (300 copies).</p> <p>All agreed that this should be approved.</p>
9	<p>AOB</p> <p>LR finally noted the plan to pick up on the Chair’s point on sustainability on the application form for funding, to ensure that due account is taken of the longer-term future, beyond Alphawood funding.</p>

Date of Next Meeting – December 13th, 10.00-12.00

SAAAP Project Board Actions 2018/2019

	Agenda Item	Added	Action Points	Deadline	Owner	Complete?
#157	8 a. UPDATE: Singapore Alumni Event (RO)	19/10/18	RO to liaise with Communications and Outreach Manager (Peter D. Sharrock) over the Singapore Graduation Event.	Next meeting	RO/PDS	
#153	5 Alphawood Scholarships 2019-2024: Proposal v3 (LR) – <i>Appendix 2</i>	19/10/18	LR to look into the options for future Scholarships funding, where the biggest impact might be, and what the implications are from the administrative side.	Next meeting	LR/CO	Ongoing
#150	8 a. UPDATE: Singapore Alumni Event (RO)	19/04/18	RO to update Outreach Sub-board and Programme Board with plans including budget for the graduation event.	Next meeting	RO	Ongoing