

QMUL, Lincoln's Inn Fields Campus, Room 3.1

Present: Chris Ashford, Diamond Ashiagbor, Sarah Blandy, Kevin Brown, Helen Carr, Naomi Creutzfeldt, Jess Guth, Rosie Harding, Maebh Harding, Rosemary Hunter (Chair), Francis King, Mark O'Brien, Gethin Rees, Marie Selwood, Michael Thomson, Tom Webb, Jed Meers.	
Agenda item	<i>Action</i>
1. Apologies	
Jen Hendry, Anne Barlow, Marian Duggan, Charlotte Bendall, Dave Cowan, Lydia Hayes, Jonathan Garton.	
2. Minutes of 18.09.14	
The Minutes were approved.	
3.1 Chair	
<p>The Chair welcomed Tom Webb who, together with Ben Mayfield, is joining the Exec as a representative for the Lancaster conference. Lydia Hayes is the new JLS representative, but was unable to attend this meeting.</p> <p>The Exec joined in a vote of thanks to those who have now left the committee: Antonia Layard, Sarah Christie, and Gita Gill.</p> <p>It was noted that the Vice-Chair, Secretary and Recruitment Secretary will all be standing down from the Exec at the AGM. There will be four vacancies for new Exec members. The new Vice-Chair and Recruitment Secretary will be appointed at the May Exec meeting.</p> <p>It was AGREED that Kevin Brown is the Secretary designate.</p> <p>It was AGREED to offer free conference places to the Law Commission, targeted at research assistants who work for the Commission.</p> <p>It was AGREED that a retention policy for both paper and electronic archive materials will be developed.</p>	Exec
3.2. Vice Chair	
No report.	
3.3 Treasurer	
The Treasurer reported on progress with online banking arrangements and the Lloyds account. A consultation has been arranged with an accountancy firm specialising in the not for profit sector to get advice on our financial obligations	

and legal status.	
3.4 Membership	
119 new members have signed up since the last meeting: 80 postgraduate and 39 full members. There are still some inconsistencies with the membership database, which will be more easily resolved once online banking is available.	
3.5 Recruitment	
The Recruitment Secretary provided a written report on the latest recruitment activities, focusing on postgraduate students following the PG conference.	
3.6. Newsletter and Web Editor	
The autumn/winter 2014 issue was well supported and work is underway for the spring 2015 issue (deadline 26 January). There have been no recent problems with the website.	
3.7 PG Student Representative	
Facebook and Twitter, together with the postgraduate mailing list, have been used to recruit new student members, promote the PG conference, and promote the PG poster competition.	
3.8. Webmaster	
A new security plugin has been added to the website. The mechanism for editing stream pages is in place, and a draft blog design has been implemented. AGREED that Rosemary Hunter and Jed Meers will contact stream organisers with information about the availability of stream webpages and how to edit them. Jed Meers will circulate a link to the draft blog for comments to those who previously agreed to be reviewers	Rosemary Hunter/Jed Meers Jed Meers
3.9 International liaison	
No report. Ben Livings and Rosemary Hunter attended the LSAANZ conference in Brisbane in December and affirmed the SLSA's commitment to co-sponsoring a joint meeting in Sydney in 2018. The SLSA has also joined the WCLS.	
3.10 Social Media	
Facebook and twitter numbers are growing. The 1500 th twitter follower will receive the prize of a book from the Palgrave Macmillan socio-legal series. There was no success in crowdsourcing an image of socio-legal studies.	

4.1.a Warwick 2015	
130 abstracts have been received so far, but a late surge in submissions is expected prior to the deadline. AGREED to send a separate reminder to members from the e-bulletin. AGREED early bird rate would be extended to the end of February. A second call for papers may be issued subject to what comes in by the deadline. Clarified that PhD student bursaries are administered by Warwick. Any student submitting a poster will get a bursary, covering travel up to a specified amount (to be determined by Warwick). The JLS provide £1000 for bursaries but this can be supplemented by the SLSA if needed.	Marie Selwood Jonathan Garton/Maebh Harding
4.1.b. Lancaster 2016	
Tom Webb introduced himself and indicated that the Lancaster team had already started a dialogue with the Warwick organisers. It was AGREED that Rosemary Hunter, Mark O'Brien and Francis King would undertake a site visit to Lancaster. Artwork is needed by May for the newsletter.	Rosemary Hunter/Mark O'Brien/Francis King Tom Webb/Marie Selwood
4.1.c Newcastle 2017	
Nikki Godden and Kathryn Hollingsworth are leading the local organising team at Newcastle.	
4.2. Postgraduate Conference	
It was reported that the recent conference went well. Feedback was positive with the only negative area relating to a request for more food. The event was over-subscribed. Rosie Harding and Birmingham University were thanked for organising. Oxford University is being considered as the venue for the 2016 conference. It was AGREED that Rosemary Hunter would contact Marina Kirkchyan, Director of the CSLS, about this.	Rosemary Hunter
4.3 One Day Conference	
Naomi Creutzfeld reported that the conference on 'Exploring the Comparative in Socio-Legal Studies' went well with around 60 people in attendance. There was a good mix of delegates and it is hoped that some sort of publication will be produced from the event. Initial planning has taken place for a one day training event in November 2015 on sources and methods in criminology and criminal justice, jointly organised with IALS and the British Library, and with the BSC agreeing to join as a co-sponsor. However budget projections indicate a shortfall so it is necessary to decide how to address this. AGREED that a fee increase may be necessary, but if a financial contribution is required from the SLSA, we would expect the BSC to make a similar contribution.	Rosemary Hunter

5.1 Book prizes	
The Chair reported on the shortlists and winners for each prize. All winners were nominated by their publishers so there is no need for membership checks. Details to be sent to Marie Selwood for the newsletter. Author meets reader sessions need to be organised for the Annual conference. Rosemary Hunter to contact relevant stream convenors.	Rosemary Hunter/Marie Selwood Rosemary Hunter
5.2. Article prize	
The Chair reported on the shortlist and provisional winner, whose membership status needs to be checked. Details to be sent to Marie Selwood. Rosemary Hunter to contact relevant stream convenor about an author meets readers session	Sarah Blandy Rosemary Hunter/Marie Selwood Rosemary Hunter
5.3 Contributions to the socio-legal community	
Sally Wheeler has agreed to accept the prize, but would like us to donate the prize money to charity.	
5.4 Grants	
The grants committee presented a report on applications and recommendations for funding. 16 applications have been received along with 10 PhD fieldwork applications. Cutoff points were agreed for funding those applications deemed to be excellent. This would mean funding 8 grants and 4 PhD fieldwork grants. It was noted that PhD fieldwork applications were significantly stronger than last year. Methodologies and costings were very strong. Thanks were expressed to Jess Guth and the sub-committee for their work. The sub-committee will need to be refreshed after the AGM. It was AGREED that Jess Guth would provide feedback to applicants.	Exec Jess Guth
5.5 Seminar Competition	
Rosie Harding has taken over as chair of this sub-committee. The seminar competition had seen a significant rise in applications. 20 had been received. A question was asked about extensions to applications and it was clarified that we do not have a policy on extensions. The sub-committee was now reviewing applications. This sub-committee will also need to be refreshed after the AGM and a larger group may be beneficial given the rise in applications.	Exec
6. New SLSA Awards	
The Chair provided a paper fleshing out the ideas discussed at the previous Exec meeting. It was AGREED to engage an independent contractor to provide administrative support. Suggestions for people who might be interested in the role were shared. It was AGREED that Mark O'Brien would	Mark O'Brien

<p>advise on administrative pay scales in HE and would explore the question of employment structures with the accountants.</p> <p>It was AGREED to introduce research methods training bursaries on the terms suggested. An application form and sub-committee would be needed. Text would also need to be produced for the website.</p> <p>It was AGREED to introduce a mentorship scheme. The mentor needn't be an SLSA member but we would expect them to be socio-legal. The per diem allowance in the proposal would be removed. The same sub-committee should deal with both research methods training and mentorship applications.</p> <p>It was AGREED not to introduce socio-legal sandpits due to the amount of work involved. However, the rules of the seminar scheme would be amended to encourage submissions for interdisciplinary/exploratory events.</p>	<p>Rosemary Hunter/Exec</p> <p>Rosemary Hunter/Exec</p> <p>Rosemary Hunter</p>
<p>7. Representatives from the BSB, QAA and SRA</p> <p>Rebecca Huxley-Binns (QAA), Julie Brannan (SRA) and Simon Thornton-Wood (BSB) attended the meeting from 2-3 pm to brief the Exec on their respective proposed changes to legal education policy and practice.</p> <p>Rebecca Huxley-Binns (QAA):</p> <p>The first Law QAA statement had been written in 2000 and is now undergoing revision. Whilst the Benchmark Statement would be informed by the professional legal education regulatory context, it is not bound by it. The Benchmark is not a curriculum and it will not have mandated subjects.</p> <p>It will focus on what a graduate of law can do. It will include the knowledge and understanding required and increased references to skills. The law subject benchmark will be set at threshold level (setting a minimum standard), and its role is to safeguard academic quality and standards. The statement will also seek to remove normative and passive language along with changes to tone and style, reflecting the contemporary lexicon of HE, including the language of employability. The aim is for it to be one side of A4.</p> <p>The benchmark group would be consulting with employers of law students. It is hoped that the statement would be repositioned as more dynamic and would encourage law students to be more creative. Consultation on the draft new benchmark statement would commence in the Spring and is likely to have an 8 week consultation period.</p> <p>Julie Brannan (SRA):</p> <p>Training for Tomorrow is the SRA response to the LETR report. It has two key objectives. Firstly, to ensure more rigorous standards and secondly to increase and encourage flexibility in pathways to qualification. The SRA is a regulator rather than a representative body. They are looking at mechanisms to promote social mobility.</p> <p>The proposed competencies consultation closed last month. A response to that will go to their Board on 11 March and will then be made public. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the final version of the competencies will be published in April at the same time as the new handbook. This will enable practitioners to make reference to/comply with the new statement in line with</p>	

<p>Principle 5 of the handbook.</p> <p>At the end of 2015, the SRA would go out to consultation on how to assess the specified competencies.</p> <p>Simon Thornton-Wood (BSB):</p> <p>The SRA and BSB were working closely together on this process. Much of what has been outlined for the SRA can be applied to the Bar process, but with a difference in tone. There was a shift in their role as a regulator, with a duty to focus their attention on standards.</p> <p>They are developing a Professional Statement focused on the point of entry to independent practice (at the end of the second six). This would go out to consultation in March/April.</p> <p>There was concern around a significant rise in the cost of training. The BPTC was receiving 'hard scrutiny'. Concerns related to access and diversity. There would still be a need to define something that looked like a vocational stage requirement, but the BSB wants to see a more flexible approach to vocational training. It is assumed that pupillage will be retained but training processes should be less highly prescribed.</p> <p>A distinction was emerging between the BSB and SRA in relation to the academic stage. The BSB was concerned about the current prescription manifest within the QLD and GDL. There are questions about how knowledge is prescribed and how gradueness is defined. Consultation on this would take place in the Spring.</p> <p>The Bar also needed to be concerned with other business models that were emerging in addition to traditional roles at the Bar.</p> <p>There was a short period of discussion following the presentations. The speakers were thanked for attending the meeting, providing presentations and responding to the questions of the committee.</p>	
8. Next Meeting Dates	
14 th May 2015, IALS, 12.30pm lunch, 1pm meeting.	
9. Any Other Business	
None.	