

18 April 2006

Dear Friends,

On behalf of CARA and SAR, we want to thank you again for your participation at the 15 March inaugural meeting of the CARA-SAR UK Universities Network working to assist threatened and refugee scholars. In all more than 45 UK university leaders and representatives, faculty and other experts participated in the meeting.

The enclosed report summarises key points of discussion at the meeting. We invite you to review the report and to share with us any corrections, additional thoughts or suggestions for follow-on activities.

We especially invite information about existing resources which may exist at your institution which may be of interest to the entire group, as we are setting up a website for the network, as recommended at the meeting.

We are also establishing a private email list for member-representatives and a second one for the public. All member-representatives will be automatically added to the private list to receive updates on the UK network and information about scholars seeking assistance. Please contact us if your institution would like to designate additional representatives, or if you would like to be added to the public list.

We invite also your help in sharing the report and information about the network with colleagues and other institutions that might be interested in taking part.

Thank you again for your help. We look forward to working together.

Sincerely,

John Akker
Executive Secretary, Council for Assisting Refugee Academics

Robert Quinn
Director, Scholars at Risk Network
Executive Director, IIE Scholar Rescue Fund

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CARA-SAR UK Universities Network Inaugural meeting and lecture 15 March 2006

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- Agreement on network structure and governance
- Election of a network board
- Agreement on guiding principles
- Agreement on core network activities
- Keynote lecture by NYU President Dr John Sexton

FOLLOW-UP:

CARA & SAR:

- To arrange for first board meeting in early summer as schedules permit
- To send draft guiding principles of board to member representatives for consideration
- To set up website and email lists for member representatives and the public
- To communicate network updates and information on hosting scholars to member representatives
- To circulate further information on “Pathfinder Grants”

UK university representatives and faculty

- To share information about the network with other UK universities, encouraging their participation
- To offer nominations for the board
- To receive information about network and refugee scholars via private email list and, where appropriate, to share advice, suggestions and opportunities with the network
- To share resources and information that may assist other UK institutions working to help refugee and threatened scholars

Institutions represented:

Birkbeck, University of London
Glasgow Caledonian University
King's College London
Leeds Metropolitan University
London School of Economics
London South Bank University
School of Oriental & African Studies
University College London
University of Cambridge
University of Edinburgh
University of Glamorgan
University of Lincoln
University of London
University of Luton
University of Manchester
University of Nottingham
University of Oxford
University of Sunderland
University of Ulster
University of Wolverhampton
University of York

Meeting co-sponsors:

CARA
Scholars at Risk (SAR)

Other participating groups:

Cymru Refugee and Asylum Seekers
Academic Council (C.R.A.C)
Hebrew University
IIE Scholar Rescue Fund
Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund
Magna Charta Observatory
Network for Education and
Academic Rights (NEAR)
University of Ireland, Galway
Universities UK

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Summary of Discussions & Outcomes

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The meeting began with Professor Sir Robert Boyd, Chair of the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), welcoming everyone. He discussed the goals of the afternoon meeting including to strengthen the newly formed network and to expand it to include other institutions.

Membership

There followed a discussion on membership and structure. It was agreed that membership will be limited, at least at present, to universities. Higher education associations, professional societies and other organisations sharing common purposes will be invited to participate formally or informally as affiliates, but not as members.

It was agreed that membership obligations would be minimal to include the widest number of institutions, and that efforts should be made to encourage participation by universities in all parts of the UK.

As stated in the guiding principles, members are required to designate at least one representative to the network, who shall receive and disseminate within the institution information about scholars seeking assistance. Members are encouraged, but not required, to establish a local, interdisciplinary committee within the institution to assist their representative in managing their participation in the network. It was agreed that at least for the present there will be no membership fee, although the board and members are free to revisit the issue in future years as the network matures.



Dr Zoulikha Zaidi, Ms Anne Lonsdale, and Prof Shula Marks at the 15 March inaugural meeting

Fourteen universities agreed in advance of the meeting to join the new network. These founding members are: Birkbeck, University of London; Glasgow Caledonian University; London South Bank University; Open University; SOAS, University of London; University of Cambridge; University of Glasgow; University of Kent; University of Lincoln; University of Luton; University of Sunderland; University of Ulster; University of Wolverhampton and University of York. Leeds Metropolitan University joined at the meeting. Other universities expressing

interest in joining the network soon include University College London, London School of Economics, University of Keele, University of Manchester, University of Nottingham, King's College London, and University of Oxford. It was agreed that it would be useful to share information about the network with other universities for the purpose of expanding its membership.

Governance

There followed a discussion of governance, with focus on overall principles. It was agreed that the draft resolution laid out at the 11 November meeting would serve as the guiding principles of the Network. It was agreed that a board would be formed to advise and guide the work of the network. Further discussion was delayed until later in the meeting.

Purpose and activities of the UK Network

A discussion of the purposes and activities of the network followed.

a) Direct Assistance to Scholars

It was agreed that the primary function of the network shall be to assist refugee and threatened scholars in the UK.

Mr John Akker discussed the possibility of network members receiving new “Pathfinder Grants” to upstart network activities on their campus. A proposal for support for such grants will be put forward to a private trust this spring. The grants would be made available by selective application to universities that are members of the new UK network.

Mr John Akker also emphasised that other institutions may be interested in supporting the network’s activities and that network members should consider what resources may be available either within their institutions or through other local sources of support. CARA/SAR will work with network members to identify other sources of support.

Mr Phil Begg discussed the great success at Wolverhampton University, announcing that the university has pledged to find full support for a one-year visit for a scholar. Mr Begg discussed the strategy he used in gaining the support of university officers and community members for the initiative. It was agreed that CARA/SAR will work with Mr Begg to provide a summary of the strategy that might be used to seek support at other universities.



Mr Robert Lawrie, Mr Robert Quinn, Prof Sir Robert Boyd, Mr John Akker, Prof John Annette discuss activities of the UK network

Prof Deian Hopkin noted that full funding such as at Wolverhampton is fantastic and extremely helpful, but that the network must remain sensitive to the different needs and abilities of each member institution. The network must recognise that not all institutions have the capacity to assist threatened and refugee scholars in the same ways.

After discussion, it was agreed that CARA/SAR will prepare a document for member-representatives to share with their university administrators outlining varying types of support and assistance that might be made available to visiting scholars, including:



Prof Shula Marks, Prof Colin Bundy, Dr John Ashworth discuss network activities for scholars

- hosting threatened and refugee scholars as temporary visiting researchers and professors;
- waiving tuition and fees for scholars seeking retraining;
- offering training services, including language, computer and other professional training;
- offering academic mentoring and help with orientation to UK academic life;
- access to refugee and social community support;
- access to library, computer and laboratory facilities; and
- introduction to disciplinary associations and networks.

Other key points raised included a suggestion that university financial packages should take into consideration varying financial responsibilities of scholars, such as supporting one's family and travel expenses. The possibility of reaching out to CARA/SAR alumni who have returned to their home country was raised. Prof Lewis Elton raised the necessity of building linkages with like-minded academies and organisations; to which there was agreement that such groups should be invited to participate as affiliates. Dr Max Farrar raised the importance of identifying where extensive refugee communities are located and linking up with them. He suggested networking with organisations already providing mentoring and other services for refugees. University representatives should consider contacting local organisations to inform them of their intentions. In response to experiences shared by CARA-assisted scholars participating in the meeting, Dr John Ashworth suggests building a possible dialogue with Home Office officers to encourage them to place academics in cities or towns where academic opportunities exist.

b) Promoting academic freedom and university values

There followed a discussion on how the network can promote academic freedom beyond helping individual scholars.

Mr Rob Quinn discussed the work of the international Scholars at Risk Network in raising awareness of attacks on academic freedom, including by organising lectures and conferences featuring formerly-threatened scholars. Mr Quinn explained that these events also help the scholars to network with colleagues and have led to scholars receiving other invitations and appointments. Mr Quinn proposed that members of the UK network could consider hosting talks by refugees scholars in the UK. Mr Quinn also discussed SAR's developing activities aimed at assisting imprisoned and threatened scholars still in their home countries, and other activities aimed at improving respect for academic freedom. The latter include a developing project to measure and monitor worldwide respect for academic freedom and related values.

Discussion followed, after which it was agreed that while the UK network may contribute to certain types of activities as an expert voice, at this early stage the network's focus should remain on assisting scholars in the UK.

Ms Natalie Nicora added information about the activities of NEAR, which is hosted in the CARA office. NEAR runs campaigns on behalf of imprisoned scholars and endangered university communities. Ms Nicora emphasised that even if the UK network does not make campaigning part of its official activities, interested faculty and individuals could be invited to support NEAR campaigns. (More about NEAR at <http://www.nearinternational.org>. It was later agreed that the network will maintain distinct public and private email lists, with the public list including information about such campaigns. The private, members-only list will be limited to information about the network and about scholars in need of assistance in the UK.)

Priorities for 2006-07

The meeting concluded with a summary discussion establishing priorities for the UK network for its first year.

a) Pathfinder Grants

Mr Akker reopened discussion of developing plans to seek funds from a private trust to support a small grant program for UK network members. The program of "Pathfinder Grants" envisions one-time awards of £5,000 to 8,000 to support efforts by network universities to organise themselves to assist refugee and threatened scholars. It is expected that 8 to 10 universities might receive such grants in the initial phase, beginning as early as the fall of 2006. If the initial round of grants is successful, additional funds will be sought to extend the initiative to more UK network members.



Ms Elizabeth Cafferty, Mr Robert Lawrie, Mr Robert Quinn discuss priorities for 2006-07

Extended discussion followed. Questions were raised about how the grant monies would be spent, and whether they would go to support individual scholars. It was clarified that as envisioned, the Pathfinder Grants were not for direct support of scholars but to defray administrative and other costs associated with hosting scholars. For example, it was suggested that a university might use the grant monies to survey existing university and community resources and expertise and to produce a report or guide to how the institution might best accommodate refugee scholars. Another suggestion was that the monies might support administrative staff for a local university committee which could be tasked with organising help for refugee scholars. It was agreed that each university might elect to allocate the funds differently, in keeping with the local conditions, while sharing the goal of using the funds to put in place policies or structures to help refugee scholars beyond the term of the initial grant.

Discussion followed on how a limited number of grants might be allocated among the network members. It was agreed that as the scheme goes forward, CARA/SAR, on behalf of the network

board, will solicit short proposals from interested network members on how they would use the funds. Dr Farrar suggested, and it was agreed, that selection as a “pathfinder” would be prestigious, justifying a formal proposal process, while Prof Hopkin suggested, and it was agreed, that the proposals should not be onerous to produce, as this would outweigh the benefit of the modest grant. It was agreed that CARA/SAR would prepare guidelines for the proposals and their evaluation.

It was also agreed that a committee of the network board would be established to evaluate the proposals, with representatives of universities that have applied recusing themselves from the evaluation process. Prof Carole Hillenbrand urged consideration of geographical diversity in the allocation of awards. After discussion, it was agreed that efforts might be made to allocate awards according to some formula, i.e., London (2-3), Scotland (2), Wales, etc., but that final allocations would depend upon the amount of funds available and the proposals received.

b) Election of board and next meeting

A discussion of board activities followed. It was agreed that the board will have a chair or co-chairs, and that the board will work to expand membership and build momentum for the network. Board members will work to get the network on the agenda of academic associations and other meetings. Board accountability was raised, and it was agreed that CARA/SAR will produce a statement of board procedures—including rules and powers of the board and members—for consideration by the board and the membership. It was agreed that the board should meet in the late spring or early summer to adopt such procedures, to discuss progress on the Pathfinder Grants scheme, and otherwise to continue the development of the network including the possibility of a meeting of the membership in the fall, possibly November.

The members then proceeded to the election of the board. Five nominations presented in advance of the meeting were reported and approved without objection: Prof John Annette (Birkbeck, University of London), Dr Robin Baker (University of Kent), Prof Deian Hopkin (London South Bank University), Ms Anne Lonsdale (University of Cambridge) and Mike Smithson (University of York). Additional nominations were then solicited, with the following additional representatives elected to the board: Mr Phil Begg (University of Wolverhampton), Dr Max Farrar (Leeds Metropolitan University), Dr Jim Franklin (University of Luton) and Michael Smith (Glasgow Caledonian University). CARA and SAR will each provide representatives to serve as members of the board. In addition, Ms Catharine Marston of Universities UK was elected as an affiliate advisor to the board.



NYU President Dr John Sexton gives keynote lecture on Mar 15

c) Communications

The final discussion outlined future communications with network members. It was agreed most communication would be via email with designated representatives. CARA/SAR will establish a private, members-only email list for communicating information about network activities and

about scholars seeking assistance or opportunities. It was agreed that the volume of emails to the private list should be limited to approximately one message per month.

CARA/SAR will establish a second, public email list for circulating more general information including campaigns on behalf of imprisoned scholars and reports of conditions in countries where scholars are threatened.

In addition, CARA/SAR will establish a website for the UK network, with links to member university websites as well as CARA, SAR, NEAR, SRF and network affiliates. An electronic newsletter linked to the website will also be considered as a means of highlighting major developments, member activities and best practices.

Closing Comments

There was general agreement on the success of the meeting and the importance of seeing the network advance. Toward this goal it was agreed that the network should focus on its own development, while keeping abreast on ongoing work outside the UK through the international Scholars at Risk Network and NEAR. It was agreed that maintaining linkages with the wider network will strengthen UK-focused efforts. At the same time, Mr Quinn expressed that the UK-focused network was an important model that SAR will work to replicate in other countries and regions, including Canada, Central Europe, Middle East and Latin America. As the UK network matures, its board and members will be able to provide leadership and expertise to these expanding efforts.



Prof Sir Robert Boyd, Prof Deian Hopkin, Mr Rob Quinn, Mr John Akker, Dr Allan Goodman, Dr John Ashworth, and Dr John Sexton

The meeting then prepared to adjourn to the lecture hall for the inaugural lecture “Of Academic Freedom,” by Dr John Sexton, President of New York University. It was mentioned that the lecture marked the anniversary of a 1966 lecture, also at the British Academy, on the same

theme by the late economics professor and former President of the British Academy Lord Lionel Robbins. Hope was expressed that an annual lecture on the theme might be a regular activity of the UK network.

The meeting then adjourned to the lecture hall. A copy of Dr Sexton’s address is provided as an appendix to this report. Formal reprints of the remarks are being prepared for distribution to all network members.