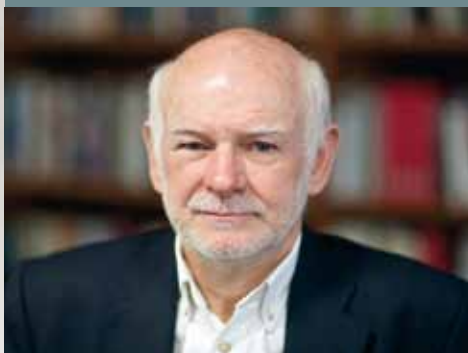


# A tribute to **Howard Davies** from **Peter Sutherland**, chair of Council



When I took over as chair of LSE's Council from Lord Grabiner QC in early 2008, Howard Davies (pictured) had already been director for five years and the School was prospering.

On taking up his post in 2003, Howard had both set in train and continued to develop a number of initiatives, all of which now stand LSE in good stead. In paying tribute to him I would like not only to refer to these, but also to his commitment and enthusiasm for LSE. His resignation following criticism over LSE's links to Libya was made all the more painful by his obvious enthusiasm – indeed he used the word love – for the School. He will be sorely missed.

LSE lives and dies by the strength of its research – and under Howard this has flourished. Measurements of research – and its value – are inevitably crude, but the School's success in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise does give

some indication of the vibrancy of research here. The School achieved the highest percentage of world-leading research of any university in the country, topping or coming close to the top of a number of rankings of research excellence. Two-thirds of staff at LSE were found to work in departments ranked in the top five in the country, and of these 26 per cent were found to work in departments ranked first in the country.

At the time Howard said that he was “thrilled with our strong showing” – and he saw the result as an impressive testimony to the quality of academics at LSE.

Howard has also committed the School to ensuring that teaching standards match the high quality of its research. In 2008 the School announced the results of its teaching taskforce, which comprised academics from a range of subjects across the School and made 40 recommendations.

As a result of the review, the School has invested at least £3 million extra a year in teaching. One of the outcomes is the highly innovative LSE100 course – a course that introduces first-year undergraduates to the fundamental elements of thinking like a social scientist, by exploring some of the great intellectual debates of our time.

In the same year, the School announced that it had raised £100 million after completing one of the largest fundraising campaigns ever set by a UK university. The Campaign received donations from more than 90 countries across the world, and included 22 gifts of £1 million or more. In total

there were more than 12,000 donors, of whom 10,300 were former students.

The year was crowned with the opening of the New Academic Building by Her Majesty the Queen, part of an estates strategy that continues apace with plans for a new Students' Centre.

But no account of Howard's tenure would be complete without recording the flair and humour he brought to so many occasions at LSE. He spoke at and chaired numerous public events here, always engaging with the speakers and, above all, with students. In 2007 he found time to chair the Man Booker prize and recorded the experience in a blog – reading over 100 books and noting with his usual eye for detail that “even at a brisk 80 pages an hour, that represents 437 hours at the typeface”.

This is not the place or time to comment on the events that brought about Howard's decision to resign. LSE's links to Libya are now the subject of the Woolf inquiry, and at the time of writing it is not clear when this will report. It is only appropriate to record that Howard's resignation was accepted very reluctantly by myself and by the Council, and that it is my view that history will be far kinder in its judgment of Howard than Howard himself has been. ■

On 11 March, the first ranking of global universities based on their reputation among senior academics placed LSE 37th in the world and fifth in the UK. Compiled by the *Times Higher Education*, the rankings were drawn from a survey of 13,000 academics from 131 countries. And although I share the cynicism of most towards such league tables, recognition from our academic peers is welcome.

Following in Howard's footsteps, I will be writing a small column in *LSE Connect*, bringing you more news in December 2011 and then, probably, a final column in June 2012.

In the meantime, I wish to thank all my colleagues and the many alumni who have written to me in recent weeks. I am extremely grateful for the offers of help, and really appreciate the expressions of confidence in my ability to ensure that the School will

rise above the current difficulties; I will do everything I can to ensure that such confidence is justified. Above all, I wish to reassure you that LSE academics will continue to engage with the world in thoughtful and productive ways. Our Fabian founders established the School over one hundred years ago to bring academic expertise to bear on the problems of society and in 1922 we adopted as our motto the phrase *rerum cognoscere causas* – to know the causes of things. We intend to continue this great tradition. ■

“ We need to remind ourselves that what has been lost in all the noise of recent months is what a wonderful and stimulating place LSE is ”