

## Staff Consultative Council special

### ANNE LAPPING

I was delighted to be asked to be the first chair of the new Staff Consultative Council. For me, the idea of having a body that represents such a wide range of staff experience and expertise is an idea whose time has come.

I have been a governor since 1994, and that is a very enjoyable experience. It enables me to meet regularly with a cross section of LSE's students, senior administrative staff, academics and other lay governors.

But what the SCC will add is a different dimension. It is a real opportunity to talk about issues such as work-life balance, management practices, environmental priorities, for instance. It will allow the School to hear, and ask, a wider cross-section of its staff about working issues – and that can only be a good thing. I must stress how importantly Council takes the SCC. It is my hope that the SCC will become a 'channel of intelligence' and source of advice for Council regarding the issues that concern staff and that the SCC will become influential to the development of the School.

We have some terms of reference:

- to consider and identify and be consulted on issues, trends and developments relating to LSE strategy, policy and governance likely to have an impact on the working environment at LSE with the exception of matters concerning individuals.

- to communicate its views on these matters to the relevant individuals or bodies within LSE and to request further information relevant to its deliberations.

But the exciting part is that it is up to the first members, including myself, to decide on the rest. The SCC won't have any decision making powers, or negotiating powers in respect of staff matters (which remains the purview of the trades unions) and is not a part of the governance structure and is a self standing body.

But I assure you that we will make our voices heard. So, please do make a point of meeting the SCC members and raising issues with them. We're aiming to meet once a term initially and bear with us as we find our feet. But let's see how we grow.



### ADRIAN HALL



Secretary and director of administration Adrian Hall said: 'Thank you for helping us to create the new Staff Consultative Council.

We asked for volunteers to be the new first members of the SCC and were very grateful to people who put themselves forward. I'm confident that once the SCC establishes itself there will be contests for vacancies.

Meanwhile, the volunteers come from a range of departments, divisions and units and the first decision of the Council was to designate members to form special links with groups such as catering,

security and residences staff.

The members of the SCC have all volunteered, as you can see from their manifestos, in the belief that the SCC does have value and can be a valuable new body within the LSE community. Pass on your views to them, and let them know how you'd like them to shape your Council and your working environment.'

### SCC email address

The SCC has its own dedicated email address to which we welcome and encourage you to send suggestions for agenda items that you would like to see the SCC discuss and address.

Equally if you have concerns, issues or questions for senior management that you would like the SCC to raise on your behalf please send them to [Lse.Staff.Consultative.Council@lse.ac.uk](mailto:Lse.Staff.Consultative.Council@lse.ac.uk)

All communications will be treated in the strictest confidence.





**Mark Atkinson, head of facilities, Estates**

I have worked in the Estates Division for about five years. I have a down to earth approach and feel that I can make a useful contribution to this body that is looking to give staff at LSE a real voice for the first time. I would like to be part of the mechanism that has the aim of ensuring that staff opinions and views are heard and considered seriously.



**Ayona Datta, lecturer, Sociology Department**

Ayona Datta was appointed lecturer in the Cities Programme, Sociology, in 2005 and would like to be the voice on the ground for junior academic staff, especially for those on pre-interim/major review stage. She is also interested in raising with the governing Council issues of family-friendly policies and work life balance, which are faced by junior faculty.

**Vhon Barrett, Transport and General Workers' Union (T&G) representative, interim member**

Vhon joined the School about seven and a half year ago. Previously, he was a telephone engineer for BT for a period of ten years. He was a union representative within BT and has continued union involvement with LSE and is presently secretary of the T&G.



**Cheryl Edwardes, manager, ISIG, Management Department**

Cheryl gained her MSc in political theory from LSE in 2004. She became Information Systems Group manager in December 2006. She said: 'I believe the SCC will make a difference as it provides a valuable link between staff members and Council. Its membership represents all School staff and I welcome the opportunity to help make the group a success.'



**Mike Bragg, systems specialist, IT Services**

I have worked at LSE for over ten years, first in MIS and, later, IT Services and have held different posts and responsibilities in that time, dealing with staff across the School. I feel that I have a good grasp of how LSE operates and where many of its strengths and weaknesses lie. I would like to use that knowledge to help inform critical decisions and to better understand why some things are as they are.



**Liz Ellis, employer liaison and Jobshop manager, Careers Service**

As Liz works with recruiters and professional bodies, she has a good understanding of how outside organisations see LSE and of student expectations. Liz said: 'I am looking forward to contributing to the direction of LSE strategy and the School's working environment for the benefit of all.'

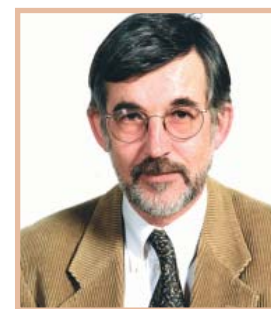
**Hugh Collins, professor of English law and head, Law Department**

Hugh's expertise lies in employment law, with particular reference to dismissal and civil liberties in the workplace, and to contract law, with particular reference to European Union law. Hugh has been a School governor, a member of Council, and a member of the APRC.



**George Gaskell, Directorate, governor**

As pro-director his main areas of responsibility will be for academic policy and resources, estates and relations with the Departments. His research focuses on social, legal and ethical implications of the life sciences with a particular emphasis on 'public ethics'. He is a member of the ESRC Evaluation Committee and is a participant in an EC research programme on biobanks.



**Drucilla Daley, UNISON representative, interim member**

Drucilla is a course administrator in DESTIN and a member of the Learn for You Committee. She has been a union member for 20 years, four with GDA and 16 with Unison, and hopes that her knowledge of procedures, interest in staff development, and openness to new ideas will be an asset to the group.



**Conrad Heilmann, graduate teaching assistant, Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method Department**

Like other graduate teaching assistants, Conrad is also a PhD student at the School and will bring his experience as a member of both the student body and part time academic staff to the SCC.

**Carol Hewlett, UCU, interim member**

Carol has been employed at LSE for over 40 years, working in IT Services since about 1970. She joined AUT (which joined with NATFHE to form UCU in June 2006) in the mid-70s and has represented LSE computer staff both locally and nationally. She is the treasurer of the UCU Local Association.

**Gabi Lombardo, deputy head, Academic Partnerships**

Gabi previously worked as executive officer to former LSE Director, Tony Giddens. In her current position, she works with many academic and administrative staff. She said: 'My experience lies in liaising and networking inside and outside LSE in an effort to develop research and teaching collaborative activities worldwide. I hope this experience will be useful to the SCC.'

**Dr John Kent, reader, International Relations Department**

'I have been at LSE since 1987 and a warden since January 2002 and have experience of the advantages and disadvantages LSE offers staff. I would hope to promote greater integration between residences and LSE as a whole. As departmental tutor and a former APRC member, I am aware of academic issues and the need to balance them with limited resources and the expectations of high fee students.'

**Anna Silver, Law Department**

Anna taught employment law on a part time basis whilst training to be a barrister. She then taught employment law and EU law before moving to the General Council of the Bar where she stayed for five years. During that time, she represented staff in respect of changes to the pension scheme. Anna has also worked as a researcher at the Law Commission and is a QAA Subject Reviewer, and currently teaches law at LSE.

**Astrid Küllmann-Lee, Language Centre**

Astrid was appointed as instructor in German in 1992 and was made co-ordinator for German, Chinese and Japanese in 2001. As a senior member of the management team, she has a number of administrative and teaching duties enabling her to have a foot in each camp which will stand her in good stead for serving on the SCC.

**Tony Simpson, Post Room**

Tony joined LSE over 12 years ago in the Security Department and is now Post Room supervisor. Previously, he ran a waste paper recycling business, dealing with such companies as Selfridges and Abbey National. He has been involved with an IIP committee and would like to think he helped to encourage staff to be more involved with School life.

**Anne Lapping, LSE governor and alumna**

Anne Lapping is chair of the SCC. She is the director of Brook Lapping Productions which she co-founded with David Elstein in 1982 and, since 1999, has been vice chairman of Brent, Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust. She has also worked with David Frost and John Birt for London Weekend Television

**Matt Lingard, Centre for Learning Technology**

Matt is a learning technologist, advising staff on both the pedagogic and technical issues of using online technologies in teaching. In addition to working with staff across LSE, Matt brings experience from London Business School, City University and London Metropolitan University, where he was the elected non academic staff member of the academic board.



## CONTACT DETAILS

Members of the SCC will be responsible for certain areas of the School. Areas and contact details are:

**DIRECTORATE**

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**ALL OTHER DIVISIONS**

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Mike Bragg: ext 4616, email: m.bragg@lse.ac.uk

Matt Lingard: ext 6219, email: m.j.lingard@lse.ac.uk

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS**

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Vhon Barrett: email: v.barrett@lse.ac.uk



# The value of collective representation

**John Kirkham from the Work Foundation assisted the School in its first discussions about why and how to set up the Staff Consultative Council. He writes:**

I have a three pillar model. This is based on practical experience, and is equally relevant to private, public and voluntary sectors.

It is based on assumptions that the strongest and most fundamental employment relationship is that between an individual and his or her line manager; that people work most effectively within a team ethos; and that people feel 'safer' where they trust that they have an effective collective voice, and that this collective voice provides employers with an effective mechanism for consultation, which in turn delivers better quality decisions.

So, the first pillar is the individual. Whatever the organisation's policies, procedures and strategic aims, these will only be as strong as the ability of day to day line managers to make them 'live'. Furthermore, it is to the line manager that people seek their most immediate feedback, and through whom corporate initiatives are made relevant to everyday work.

The experience of Work Foundation consultants is that at the core of many difficult situations is a lack of support for, and leadership from, first line managers.

The second is the 'team' pillar. Many organisations have invested in creating team environments, recognising the value and additional creativity generated by effective team working. Standards of conduct performance and behaviour become 'self-policing' once they are embedded in the team ethos.

The final pillar is the collective pillar. It is particularly valuable to explore, both with strategic decision makers, and trade union partners, the purpose and value of collective staff representation. There is a popular argument that, provided that managers are trained, and supported by appropriate HR policies, to promote individual performance management, learning and development, and team working, that the need for collective staff representation, particularly through trade unions, becomes unnecessary.

The counter-argument is set out below.

Firstly, from an employee perspective:

1. The HR approach assumes that managers are capable of delivering leadership, and that in the event of inappropriate management style, at worst bullying or harassment, that people are able to speak up and that HR can provide effective employee support. However, when an individual speaks, their views are immediately attributable to them. Similarly, any view expressed in a team meeting is individually attributable. Collective voice gives individuals an opportunity to voice concerns in confidence that their views are not individually attributable to them.
2. In the event that management fail to manage performance fairly

and equitably, fail to communicate regularly, or in other ways adopt an inappropriate management style, a collective voice gives employees the knowledge and confidence that such inappropriate management can be addressed in a non-confrontational manner.

Secondly, from the employer's point of view:

3. There will be issues on which management need to consult, but on which they will be unable to do through the individual or team conduit, on the basis either that there is insufficient time to accommodate such a widespread consultation process, or that the issues are confidential and cannot be allowed to enter the public domain.

4. Potentially contentious issues can only be addressed with a group of staff representatives with whom there has been built a relationship of mutual trust and confidence. Only in this environment will strategic

decision makers feel confident enough to raise confidential and contentious issues with staff representatives, safe in the knowledge that the issue will not be discussed with others; and staff representatives feel able to challenge management thinking and

management decisions without feeling threatened by so doing.

Are there any other pressures to have collective representation? Yes. There is now a legal obligation to inform and consult trade unions or staff representatives on the following issues:

- Redundancies (affecting 20 or more)
- Dismissals in relation to contractual changes
- Transfer of undertakings
- Health and safety.
- An option to create 'workforce agreements' in relation to:
  - Working time
  - Parental leave
  - Fixed term contracts.

The employment relationship is at the very heart of society and the economy. High levels of worker engagement can only be a good thing for the economic and social well being of our society. All the evidence suggests that an effective employee voice is a contributing factor to worker engagement, motivation and satisfaction with employment; and to health and well-being; and certainly there are no indicators to the contrary.

Given this weight of evidence, supported by a common sense approach that giving workers a say can only enhance decision making and staff engagement in implementing subsequent decisions, the argument for effective employee voice appears overwhelming.

**The Work Foundation is a not for profit organisation. It brings all sides of working organisations together to find the best ways of improving both economic performance and the quality of working life.**  
**See: [www.theworkfoundation.com](http://www.theworkfoundation.com)**

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**See: [www.lse.ac.uk/secretariat](http://www.lse.ac.uk/secretariat)**