



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

**Minutes of the Board of Governors  
Held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 on Zoom  
Meeting No. 9/20**

**Governors Present:** Dr Shafik Sachedina  
Dr Aziz Esmail  
Dr Mohamed Keshavjee  
Mr Naguib Kheraj  
Mr Zauhar Meghji

**Governors Absent:** Professor Afzal Ahmed

**Quorum present:** Yes

**Others present:** Dr Farhad Daftary (permanent guest)  
Mr Aryn Kassim-Lakha (permanent guest)  
Mrs Selina Ramji (permanent guest)  
Mr Shams Vellani (permanent guest)  
Dr Walid Ghali (invited guest for items three and six)  
Mr Philip Harmon (invited guest for item four)  
Ms Liz Geary (invited guest for items four and six)  
Mrs Salima Bhatia (invited guest for items five and six)  
Ms Tara Woolnough (invited guest for items five and six)  
Dr Shiraz Kabani, Dr Tullio Lobetti, Dr Shiraz Thobani, Dr Laila Halani, Mrs Mira Skura, Dr Shainool Jiwa, Dr Wafi Momin, Dr Hakim Elnazarov, Dr Omar Ali de- Unzaga and Dr Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (invited guests for item six)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.00pm.

*1. Conflicts of interest*

- a) There were no declarations of interest over and above the current standing list of interests notified to the Board.

*2. Co-Director's Report*

- a) The Co-Director's Report for September 2020 was noted.

*3. Aga Khan Library – Proposed outline for new five-year strategy*

- a) The proposed outline was considered.
- b) The library's relationship with our teaching programmes should be further strengthened.
- c) The strategy should include metrics to assess how the library is meeting the needs of its users and what can be done to make the library a more desirable space for staff and students.

- d) We should assess gaps, including digital materials, in our collections and plan to address these.
  - e) A revised draft, incorporating user feedback, should be brought to the governors for review.
4. *Aga Khan Centre – update on the re-entry of staff and students*
- a) The building services team was complimented for making AKC COVID secure.
  - b) Communication to staff and students should explain what has been done to make the building COVID secure so that staff have confidence that they can return to a safe working environment.
  - c) Return of staff to the building will be on a part time voluntary basis. Staff concerns about safety of travelling on public transport was noted. This policy will be reviewed on a monthly basis after considering government guidance.
5. *Department of Communications and Development (DCD) – Ebook summary*
- a) It was recommended that the IIS work with The Ismaili TV team to explore ways of using the ITV to educate the community about our publications.
  - b) The proposal to develop a Digital Scholarly Communications Strategy was encouraged.
6. *2021 Operational Plan and Budget*
- a) The pandemic will have some impact on our sources of funds so we should budget to stay within our means. This means taking account of the reductions in 2020 and planning programmes that can be realistically implemented in 2021. The IIS should not plan to expand any activities in 2021 unless such expansion can be funded by corresponding reductions in existing areas. We should not create new positions.
  - b) We should invest in improving the use of digital technology across the IIS.
  - c) We should plan on the basis that our activities and travel will be curtailed by the pandemic in 2021 as vaccines are unlikely to be available to the general public in the first half of the year.
  - d) The governors expressed their gratitude to the Senior Management Team for their support and the manner in which everyone had come together to deliver institutional objectives during this time.
7. *Any other business*
- a) None.

*Selina K Ramji  
IIS Board Secretary  
7 September 2020*