

A truly global Alumni Board

For London Business School and its global alumni community, having – in the International Alumni Board (IAB) – a representative body with a broad geographic spread of membership has been a high priority since the Board was created. Fortunately, distance does not preclude alumni from taking leading roles within the School community; of the current 25 alumni members, ten live and work outside the UK, mirroring almost exactly the 60/40 UK/international split within our alumni community.

These distant members play a vital role: they represent the views of international alumni to the School and are able to impact decisions the School makes which directly affect the global community.

IAB members from outside the UK also act as a vital bridge between their local alumni communities and the School, playing a role in recruitment and other School activities.

The current IAB has a strong cadre of members with a real understanding of alumni needs in their area and significant experience of organising local alumni activities.

John Briginshaw (MBA93) was one of three

Board members from North America elected to the first IAB in 1999. He had direct experience of organising alumni club activities in the San Francisco Bay area and was determined that creating a strong global network was a very high priority for the School and the Board. John was not alone. The first Awayday in January 2000 placed a strong emphasis on the creation and development of volunteer-led alumni clubs and sent a strong message to the School that dedicated resource would be vital to making these a success.

The IAB welcomes alumni who have had club leadership experience to stand for the Board. **Alejandro Dillon** (ADP25), one of the founders of the alumni club in Buenos Aires, has

been a member for five years. He and his club colleagues have been able to open doors for the School, for example by identifying companies interested in meeting visiting Sloar students during a field trip in November 2004.

In 2002 the category of Nominated member was introduced to help ensure that the IAB was fully representative of its

community in terms of programmes and geographic region. In identifying candidates for nomination, the IAB has sought alumni who are already actively engaged with the community, such as **Cornelia Strauss** (ADP29) from Stockholm, who had been an active class representative, and **Tomomi Takagi** (MBA31). Tomomi was President of the Japanese Alumni Club from 2001-4 and played an important role in establishing a regular programme of local events and building the local community.

Members without clubs in their own area have also decided it's high time they took action. Nigerian alumna, **Alero Ootobo** (SLN2001), organised the Nigeria alumni club re-launch on 15 March 2005. Alero also offers significant support to the student Africa Club, participating in the annual Africa Day and has worked with the Africa Regional Advisory Board, on the Global Business Capabilities project.

With some 50 clubs now established globally and increasing levels of activity, the IAB's focus has evolved, recognising that international club leaders need different kinds of support to ensure that the leadership is refreshed and revitalised over time. **Jane Deuser** (SLN19) who, as well as being President of the New York Alumni Club has taken on a North American leadership role says "I try to be a voice for alumni in North America, as well as alumni who are not in

Distant IAB members represent the views of international alumni and 'impact' school decisions affecting the global community



Tomomi Takagi (MBA31) with Dean Laura Tyson during her January 2005 visit to Tokyo

London. I think I am able to put this point of view across and hope I've been helpful in improving understanding of issues that are important."

IAB members now sense that their voices are being heard. **Marcus Kennedy** (MBA94), based in Melbourne, Australia and a former Sydney Club leader, is delighted at the strides the School has made since he first became a Board member in (2001). "When I first became involved with the IAB, I felt that the School only played lip-service to its position as a leading global School. This has changed and the School is doing much more to reach out to its alumni around the world." Marcus and a local team, representing the Sydney and Melbourne alumni clubs, are helping the School plan two Business Fora in Australia later this year.

The geographic distribution of IAB members creates a real challenge in working together to build and support the community. Attendance at twice-yearly IAB meetings is considered a minimum commitment. For those travelling long distances, it involves a significant contribution of time and money. The School pays some expenses but expects members to fund travel to attend at least one meeting a year.

"an important development if you are travelling from Asia or Australia", according to Marcus Kennedy.

For other meetings, IAB members outside the UK participate by teleconference. When participants are based in locations from Tokyo to California or Buenos Aires, finding a time of day when everyone can participate is not easy!

The exception is ExCo – the IAB Executive Committee – where members are expected to attend meetings in London four to six times per year. There are now two ExCo members who don't live in London – **Lisa Duke** (MBA95) and **Mark Inigo-Jones** (MIFPT2000) – coincidentally both living in Switzerland. With dates fixed well in advance (and economical flights on Easyjet!), they have both committed to travel to London on a regular basis. Lisa says: "I try to combine my ExCo trips with Women's Network events and chairing Professional Networks Task Force meetings. It's not easy and it's not always possible, but it certainly makes life interesting!"

Asked what he found most satisfying about being a member of the IAB, Mark Inigo-Jones said it was "the sheer commitment and passion of so many IAB members. It takes a while to understand the IAB, its relationship

The February Awayday provides an excellent opportunity for IAB members to debate strategy, review priorities and implement plans, and generally get to know one another better. The June meeting has been organised around the Global Leadership Summit, International Regional Advisory Board meeting and Congregation and, this year, the Alumni Reunion,

to the School; the initiatives and resources which are already in place and to determine how to add value, both individually and as a group. I have been impressed at the hard work that had gone into positioning the IAB and creating the right structure. The group has a lot of energy and a lot of passion!"

Barry Herstein (MSc19), who joined two and a half years ago, believes that the most enjoyable aspect of being a member of the IAB is "knowing that our work has a positive impact for the School and for the alumni. It's our responsibility to ensure that the School continues to grow and thrive – and that alumni and the School have a mutually beneficial relationship."

Saeb Eigner (IEMP97) IAB Chair, believes that the international members play a vital role in the School community. "We are a global School. We have a global community and we want to engage all our alumni. Having a geographically diverse membership of the IAB is vital if we, and the School, are to achieve our objectives."

Don't forget to vote in the IAB elections

1 July

Deadline for receipt of applications, manifestos and nominations by Alumni Relations

15 July

Manifestos and ballot forms mailed/posted on Portal

2 September

Election closes

w/c 9 September

Results announced

For more information, visit Portal:
<http://portal.london.edu>

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