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THE IALS REVIEW

The Board of the Institute appointed a committee on 3 November 1998 to 'review the current structure, management and academic performance, academic activities and objectives of the Institute, and to furnish a report and recommendations to the Chairman of the Board ...'. The Board received and endorsed the Committee's report and recommendations at its meeting on 7 May 1999.

The Review Committee received and took evidence from a large number of witnesses and has, by all standards, produced a most thorough and helpful document. It gives great emphasis to the Institute's national and international role in conducting and facilitating research and scholarship at an advanced level across the whole field of law. While the Institute is, and should remain, part of the University of London, the Committee repeatedly emphasised the vital importance of its national responsibility to serve and support the legal community as a whole. The Committee commends the establishment of the Society for Advanced Legal Studies and looks forward to even greater collaboration between scholars and practitioners.

The Committee welcomes the developments that have taken place within the Institute over the last decade and commends in particular the work of Professor Avrom Sherr, the Woolf Professor of Legal Education, and his research team. It attributes many of the weaknesses that it does discern largely to deficiencies in funding, rather than management. It recommends the establishment of no less than five centres of research, within the Institute, supported by additional chairs and senior research appointments. It specifically endorses the Institute's plan to develop and build a new building next to Charles Clore House and mount an appeal for funds. On the other hand, the Committee recognises that raising the millions of pounds that will be required to undertake these significant developments will not be an easy task for the Director, and suggests that the Institute seek additional funds from the University, London law schools, funding authorities and Commonwealth governments.

The Committee considers that the international reputation of the Institute must be based on the excellence of its scholarly research and, of course, its library, which is specially commended. While recognising the importance of disseminating legal information and assisting research the Committee appears less impressed with the Institute's involvement with 'periodicals that are designed primarily for practitioners'. Although the Committee's concern for scholarly standards is shared by us all, there is a feeling in some quarters that not enough credit has been given to the fact that a very significant proportion of the research active staff of the Institute are funded directly or indirectly by legal publishers. For almost its first 50 years the Institute's academic staff rarely exceeded one and a half posts. In the last four years this figure has risen to 17. During this period, the Institute's Research Assessment Exercise rating rose from a 2 to a 4. Of course, when the Institute does emerge from its present stage of transition, it is accepted that more permanent and independent funding for its core academic posts will be vital.

While many, if not most, of the Committee's recommendations and observations, reflect in substance the views of the Institute's 'management team' (see, for example, *Law at the Centre: the IALS at Fifty*, March 1999, Kluwer) the value of having them so well and authoritatively articulated by an independent committee of such eminent scholars and lawyers will be of immeasurable assistance to the Institute in the future. The Institute owes Professor Goode, his committee and its secretariat a sincere vote of thanks.

Professor Barry Rider

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Committee, chaired by Professor RM Goode QC (Oxford), consisted of The Rt Hon Lord Justice Mummery and Professors Hazel Genn (UCL), Geneva Richardson (QMWC), Paul Davies (LSE), Hugh Beale (Warwick) and Sir David Williams QC (Cambridge).

The Committee's report is available from the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies on request, and it will be featured in further issues of *Amicus Curiae*.