

GOLDSMITHS
University of London

COUNCIL
10 April 2014

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2014

- Present:** Rt Hon Estelle Morris (in the Chair), Professor Roger Burrows, Mr Sebastian Hicks, Professor Mark D’Inverno, Mr Gerald Lidstone, Mr Howard Littler (for Mr Conrad Grant), Mr Patrick Loughrey, Mr Brian Lymbery, Mr Dick Melly, Ms Jackie Morgan, Professor Jane Powell, Ms Cathy Runciman, Ms Vanessa Sharp, HHJ Mary Stacey, Dr Derval Tubridy, Mr John Wadsworth, Ms Jessica Wanamaker, Mr Philip Wright, Dr Michael Young.
- Apologies:** Mr Nick Barron, Dr Rupert Evenett, Mr Conrad Grant, Mr James Grierson, Mr Dan Lambeth, Dr Richard Noble, Mr David Richards, Ms Vivienne Rose, Mr Tom Wilson
- In attendance:** Registrar and Secretary (Secretary), Director of Finance, Director of Governance and Legal Services.
- Observers:** Mr Chris Lloyd, Ms Lucinda Parr, and Trades Union representation (UCU only).

OPEN BUSINESS

1 MINUTES

Resolved:

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2013.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

- (i) that the issues finalising the Student Union Budget for 2013-14 had been resolved;
- (ii) that the Estates Masterplan would be presented to the next meeting of Council.

3 REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN BY THE CHAIR

Noted:

The action taken by the Chair since the last meeting of Council (14-151)

4 WARDEN'S REPORT

The Warden gave an oral report, including the following matters of concern to the College.

- (i) student recruitment remains on an upward trajectory, with the College having been allocated an increased allocation of core places, 1200, within its student number control (SNC);
- (ii) the numbers of applications for taught programmes have increased since last year by 18% for home and EU undergraduates, more than 30% for overseas undergraduates, 9% for home and EU taught postgraduate, 24% for overseas postgraduates, 37% for initial teacher training places but in respect of fewer places to allocate;
- (iii) growth has been complemented by a suite of new undergraduate programmes, including English Language and Literature, Management and Entrepreneurship and Journalism, all of which were successfully recruiting off-quota students;
- (iv) a series of alumni events, Goldsmiths Reunite 2014, would be taking place in major centres and cities including Athens, Berlin, Paris and New York during the summer;
- (v) an analysis was being undertaken to manage the impact of the planned boycott of marking from 28 April 2014, including how Boards of Examiners might be constituted in the event of failure to resolve the industrial dispute. In this context, the Warden supported by SMT had been promoting a moderate path to UCEA, but it was expected that a firmer line would be supported a majority of members and implemented. Members were invited to look at and comment on the FAQs posted on the College Website;
- (vi) the Media and Communications Department had incorporated the Centre for Investigative Journalism, presenting opportunities for promotion, recruitment and student internships;
- (vii) the College had successfully hosted a visit from Professor Les Ebdon, the Chief Executive of the Office for Fair Access in March 2014.

Members discussed the following matters:

- (i) efforts to ensure that staff retained a sense of well-being were paramount and these included reviewing and modernising the promotions process for academics to ensure that it was contemporary and captured what staff do that contributed to the success of College. Similarly conversations were ongoing with the unions concerning how to reward Professional Services staff.
- (ii) strategies were being implemented to ensure the diversification of our overseas student markets including South America and India, to ensure that there was no over-reliance on China as a provider of overseas students and conversely that Chinese students studying at Goldsmiths could have a truly international student experience. More balanced relationships with Chinese institutions, e.g. stronger research collaborations and options for joint programmes were being actively explored.
- (iii) the affordability of and return on student loans would remain a major focus for the current and future governments and hence should be added to the Strategic Risk Register;

- (iv) a new branding project underway, and the College was going out to tender some work with various agencies.

5 REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

Received:

a report from the Chair of Audit Committee and the minutes of the meeting of Audit Committee held on 25 February 2014 (14-144).

The Chair drew attention to the following:

- (i) an item on fraud would be considered at next meeting of Audit Committee;
- (ii) the committee had been pleased to receive data relating to student retention and had now asked to receive further benchmarking information and explanations for outliers;
- (iii) it would seek further assurance about how local risk registers aggregated to the strategic risk register;
- (iv) the committee would like to see Audit recommendations dealt with more quickly and would be requesting progress updates on each priority 1 recommendation and might require the responsible managers to attend the committee if recommendations were not being cleared;
- (v) further assurance was needed concerning the monitoring of UKVI requirements.

Resolved:

to rename the Audit Committee the Audit and Risk Committee.

6 REPORT FROM FINANCES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of Finance and Resources Committee held on 18 March 2014 (14-143).

7 PENSIONS UPDATE

Received:

an update on pensions from the Director of Finance (14-147).

Noted:

- (i) the current report updated the contents of a paper originally presented in March 2013 and some of the issues reported at that time had begun to crystallise;
- (ii) pensions issues were being discussed extensively at all major committees;
- (iii) there was a recovery plan in respect of the LPFA and that removal of Crown Guarantee had been removed, meaning that in event of a failure of a higher education institution (HEI), the government would not make good the deficit;
- (iv) the plan implemented for the LPFA was seeking a faster recovery than had been expected resulting in increased contributions for HEIs. For Goldsmiths the proposed increase

amounted to more than £0.5m per annum from this year, these payments being both earlier and more than anticipated. The College was in discussion with the LPFA about the relative strength of Goldsmiths and proposed contribution in the hope of obtaining a better deal and corresponding lower contribution;

- (v) approximately 40% of staff were in the LPFA and 60% in USS. However, as the staff members in the USS were more highly paid, the costs were more skewed towards USS;
- (vi) an actuarial valuation of USS was in progress with the results to be released in September 2014. A large deficit (at least the £11.5 billion estimated in March 2013) was anticipated. A recovery plan would need to be devised that would look holistically at scheme and would be of interest to Pensions Regulator given the size of the scheme and the size of the deficit;
- (vii) the introduction of the Single Tier State Pension Scheme would mean that national insurance contributions would have to rise significantly in the 2016-17 financial year;
- (viii) institutions would need to plan for different scenarios including what could happen should some institutions not be able to afford any increased contributions required as part of the recovery plan. One scenario might involve different benefits being afforded at different institutions and the implications of particular decisions were being discussed across sector;
- (ix) Goldsmiths should continue to monitor the national discussions and developments and contribute as appropriate.

Resolved:

- (i) that there should be a standing item on pensions at all meetings of Council;
- (ii) a revised set of forecasts should be prepared.

8 ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN – TRAC

Noted:

the TRAC report that was submitted to HEFCE in February as part of the Annual Accountability Return and associated commentary 2014 (14-104).

9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

Resolved:

that the Treasury Management Policy be approved (14-101).

10 REPORT FROM HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of Human Resources Committee held on 18 March 2014 (14-152).

Noted:

- i) it should be confirmed that the new pensions administration requirements were in scope in the HR and Payroll Systems development;
- ii) the restructure of the Human Resources department had been completed and the new team now in place;
- iii) the programme to review all Human Resources policies was welcomed;
- iv) Equality and Diversity Committee should consider the options for replacing the Equality and Diversity Manager following the resignation of the current postholder.

11 HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW

Received:

a report on the College's preparations for Higher Education Review by the Quality Assurance Agency in June 2015 (14-145)

12 DEGREE AWARDING POWERS

Received:

a proposal to seek permission to extend the College's use of its Degree Awarding Powers (14-123)

Resolved:

- (i) to apply to the University of London to extend the College's use of its Degree Awarding Powers to enable the College to enter into different types of partnership arrangements with other higher educations both in the UK and abroad;
- (ii) to keep under review the market impact of a University of London award compared to a Goldsmiths award for different types of provision.

13 RISK REGISTER

Received:

the Strategic Risk (14-30R).

Noted:

- i) there was a full discussion of the risks on the Risk Register at every third meeting of SMT, and the register was provided for information all other meetings;
- ii) the Risk Register was considered by the Professional Senior Services Team at its meetings and directors of the services were mandated to maintain department registers that should feed into the Strategic Risk Register as appropriate;
- iii) new risks relating to the potential assessment boycott and the QAA review outcome had been added to the register;

- iv) much of the decline referenced in SRR28 relating to PGT markets was attributable to the national changes in initial teacher training. There were also a number of initiatives to promote our taught postgraduate programme including piloting fees incentivisation schemes and web-based recruitment activities.

14 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Received:

the latest Key Performance Indicators (14-102).

Noted:

- (i) the KPIs had been received and considered by Finance and Resources Committee at its meeting on 18 March 2014;
- (ii) business continuity planning process had now been established.

15 COMMITTEE REVIEW

Resolved:

that the schedule for Council Effectiveness Review be approved (14-145).

16 REPORT FROM THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND SYSTEMS COMMITTEE

Received:

the annual report (14-67R) and minutes from the Information Management and Systems Committee held on 05 March 2014 (14-129)

17 FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Noted:

the next meeting of Council would take place on 26 June 2014 at 4.00 pm and be followed by the annual Council and Academic Board Dinner.

Rachel Soper
May 2014