

Council

Academic Board

3 June 2020

Minutes of the meeting held 1.30-4.00pm on Microsoft Teams

Present: Professor Frances Corner (in the Chair), Professor Michael Archer, Professor Claudia Bernard, Dr Clea Bourne, Mr Timothy Chapman, Dr Debbie Custance, Mr Adrian De La Court, Professor Mark d’Inverno, Dr Henrike Donner, Dr Jasna Dragovic Soso, Ms Sara Ewing, Professor Anna Furse, Dr Iris Garrelfs, Professor Dimitrios Giannouloupoulos, Dr Stephen Graham, Ms Alison Griffiths, Mr Conrad Heyns, Professor Elisabeth Hill, Ms Wei Jin, Mr Steve Keirl, Dr Rodger Kibble, Professor Frank Krause, Dr Rebekah Lee, Dr Ben Levitas, Mr Gerald Lidstone, Dr Jo Lloyd, Dr Dagmar Myslinska, Professor Daniel Neyland, Professor Richard Noble, Professor David Oswell, Dr Tara Page, Dr Rajyashree Pandey, Professor Alan Pickering, Ms Maggie Pitfield, Dr John Price, Dr Wood Roberdeau, Dr Martin Savransky, Professor Cris Shore, Professor Lauren Stewart, Dr Ragupathy Venkatachalam, Professor Mike Waller, Mr Shuai Zhao, Professor Robert Zimmer and Professor Joanna Zylinska.

In attendance: Mr Nirmal Borkhataria, Mr Matthew Brooks, Jan de Fockert, Mr John Dickinson-Lilley, Ms Louisa Green, Ms Sally Priddle, Ms Melanie Rimmer, Ms Helen Watson, Dr Kathryn Woods and Mrs Cathryn Thompson (Secretary).

Apologies: Professor Michael Banissy, Ms Lauren Corelli, Dr Ayesha Hameed, Mr Kevin Jones, Dr Pdraig Kirwan, Mr Joseph Leam, Mr Kierin Offlands and Dr Naomi Thompson.

Open Business

1 New Members

Noted:

- 1.1 Professor Claudia Bernard from Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies was welcomed as a new staff member of the Board. Dr Kathryn Woods as Dean of

Students and Ms Melanie Rimmer as Director of Strategic Planning and Projects were also welcomed in attendance to the Board.

2 Minutes

Resolved:

- 2.1 That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2020 be approved.

3 Updates on actions from the previous meeting(s)

Received:

- 3.1 Updates on action from previous meeting(s) (19-328R).

4 Extenuating Circumstances for Applicants Policy 2021

Resolved:

- 4.1 That the Extenuating Circumstances for Applicants Policy 2021 (19-440R) be approved.

5 Warden's Report

Received:

- 5.1 Report from the Warden on issues of concern and interest to the College (19-441).

Noted:

- 5.2 The Warden thanked colleagues for the huge amount of work they had done to support students and their learning opportunities throughout the past few months in particular. Members were reminded that parts of campus remained open to the approximately 300 students currently in residence.
- 5.3 The maintenance of quality and standards throughout the radical changes to teaching and learning and assessment taking place was paramount, and members were again thanked again for their efforts in ensuring this.
- 5.4 The meeting's agenda contained some important topics for discussion and decision for the next academic session, including term dates, Welcome Week, induction, and the student and international student experience.

- 5.5 Approximately 2000 student complaints had been received in relation to the 2019-20 industrial strike action. This was a notable volume, which continued to be investigated and responded to.
- 5.6 2020-21 recruitment of students remained a priority for the College as well as maintaining a good student experience for continuing students, with departments asked to be as encouraging and supportive to new and continuing students as possible.
- 5.7 The College had reported its financial difficulties and short term liquidity problems to the Office for Students (OfS), with another meeting scheduled in July. The College had responded to their latest admissions and clearing consultation, appended in full to the Wardens Report, which clearly stated that the proposal was unhelpful and would place institutions in a difficult position. The College was championing its position wherever possible.
- 5.8 One member of the Board queried whether there was tension with not running all modules and/or programmes in 2020-21 when no offers were to be changed to applicants. It was confirmed that adjustments to teaching and learning, as well as module offer, would be necessary next year and that it was possible a small number of programmes would not have sufficient applicant numbers to run. For example, if only 5 applicants accepted a place on a programme, then the College would need to be pragmatic in determining the viability of running it next year. This would be the position the College would take in 'ordinary times' each year, irrespective of the current situation. The Board were assured that everything was being done to ensure all programmes could run but some would require adjustment. The cut-off point for making decisions regarding the viability of running programmes next year was queried. Discussion between Heads of Department and Head of School would take place. One Head of Department cautioned against decisions being taken too soon, as for some Masters programmes it was difficult to know who would turn up until the week of induction. Although this uncertainty was recognised, the College had to adhere to its regulatory responsibilities and obligations under consumer legislation law, and keep the learning experience of its student and applicants at the fore.

6 Term dates 2020-21

Received:

- 6.1 Revised term dates 2020-21 (19-442).

Noted:

- 6.2 The Board noted the proposal to delay the start of the 2020-21 academic year whilst continuing to maintain the overall number of teaching weeks during the year. It was proposed to delay the start of the teaching by one week, commencing on 5 October. This would be compensated by the removal of reading week in the Autumn Term. The last permitted date of delayed enrolment would also be moved.
- 6.3 It was noted that the proposal confirmed that enrolment and induction would take place online. The College's usual Welcome Week of activities would now be delivered virtually, during the week commencing 28 September 2020. All published dates for new and continuing students would be clear about dates for enrolment, induction and the beginning of teaching, as some confusion was noted in the paper.
- 6.4 Whilst the paper outlined the delayed start date to the College's standard term, it was noted that there would be some programmes which started earlier than this and also others for which a later start might be proposed, so requests for non-standard term dates for individual programmes were expected to be submitted to Heads of School in response to the paper. The departments of Art and Music were likely to request delayed individual programme start dates in order to enable degree shows to take place and for the organisation of studios to accommodate social distancing. The Department of Educational Studies was currently awaiting confirmation of PGCE/ITE start dates from the Department for Education.
- 6.5 It was queried whether a more staggered and planned start date for programmes, and even a January start for some postgraduate taught, would be a more pragmatic approach given that an October start was felt to be too early for a number of programmes. It was acknowledged, however, this approach could present different issues with an overlap of two student cohorts. The Warden was clear that too many exceptions to programme start dates could lead to a loss of clarity and potential disorganisation. Competition from other universities and potential students going elsewhere, who wanted to start year on time, should also be a main consideration. Goldsmiths was trying to make the best of a very complex situation and in turn provide clear communication to new and continuing students, with a decision needed as soon as possible. The Warden was happy to take Chair's action on this if needed.
- 6.6 The Deputy Warden had recently met with all Heads of Departments, which had confirmed an overall view that a standard October start date was the preferred option for the majority of departments and programmes. It was also deemed the most logistically practical one for applicants. The Board noted that there would be some very specific exemptions to this, which had a clear rationale behind them. Members of the Senior Management Team had been in discussion with a number of other institutions and competitors and this had also informed this paper.

- 6.7 If departments hadn't yet informed their Head of School about an earlier or later start date for specific programmes, they were requested to do so as soon as possible.
- 6.8 It was noted that some students had expressed concern relating to the removal of the Autumn Term reading week. However, the College needed to be realistic about the compromises that were needed in the light of the pandemic. Clear and positive messaging to students on this would be essential.
- 6.9 Concern was expressed by one member of the Board about opening campus too soon. It was noted that the College had followed Government guidance throughout, and moved rapidly to enable people to work at home. Campus had never been fully closed given the number of students, who called campus 'home', remaining onsite throughout the pandemic. The Warden informed members of the Board that architects were currently reviewing campus and that there was a genuine commitment to the health and safety of all staff, students and visitors to the College. The Critical Incident Group was monitoring this carefully. Getting people to and from work safely, given the College's limited parking facilities, would be one of the main challenges.

Resolved:

- 6.10 That revised term dates 2020-21 (19-442) be approved.

Action:

- 6.11 The Academic Registrar and Director of Student Experience to provide exact dates for enrolment, welcome and induction, and the start of the teaching term to members via email by the end of the week.
- 6.12 Departments to confirm with Head of School any requirements for earlier or later start dates for specific programmes.

7 Programme re-approval process

Received:

- 7.1 The process for re-approving programmes for delivery from 2020-21 (19-443).

Noted:

- 7.2 The paper contained a request to Academic Board to approve a proposal to re-approve all programmes in advance of 2020-21, taking account of social distancing

requirements and other factors. The second part of the paper requested that Academic Board delegated authority to Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC) to approve the specifics of the revised approval process to be implemented. The paper outlined what information departments would need to submit, and what the requirements were in relation to student consultation and external input, in order to maintain quality and standards throughout.

- 7.3 It was recognised that departments had already carried out extensive work on programme development for 2020-21, which would need to be put into standard programme re-approval templates, as part of the new re-approval process.
- 7.4 The process would involve a rolling programme of approvals, depending on the scale of the changes proposed. Minor changes would be approved much earlier and more quickly, with events scheduled later in July to consider major programme and module changes. Any programmes starting earlier than the standard Autumn term start, would be prioritised in the re-approval process.
- 7.5 One Head of Department understood the rationale behind the proposal but raised concerns around staff workload. It was noted that staff had worked hard moving current programme delivery online, and pulling a submission together for programme re-approval for 2020-21 would be challenging given the timeframes concerned and the fact that some programmes were still teaching current students at this point in the academic year. Consultation with students and External Examiners was also required within the proposed timeframe, however, this consultation needed to be meaningful. Given the above, it was suggested that the timeline was unrealistic.
- 7.6 Whilst the Warden understood the points made, she stressed the importance of ensuring programmes were reviewed and approved for 2020-21 within an appropriate timeframe. The Office for Students (OfS) had been very clear about this requirement. The scale of the task and workload placed on staff was acknowledged, along with the complexity behind some of the programme amendments required, all alongside existing work staff were still undertaking to complete the current academic year. It was clarified that the proposed timeline had been set around how and when changes needed to be communicated to students. However, accommodations could be made in relation to the timings, along with re-ordering the sequencing of department submissions within it. It was noted that the scale of department submissions, and specifically the complexity of changes proposed, would vary enormously. A review of the timeline was welcomed by members of the Board.
- 7.7 The consultation process with students was queried, particularly if department representatives, for example, were unresponsive. The challenge presented by the timing of the programme re-approval process was acknowledged. However, meaningful conversations with students continued to remain a critical part of this and

other College processes. Consultation might vary depending on the specifics of the changes proposed, whether at programme and/or module level. Whilst department representatives played an important role within the student voice framework at Goldsmiths, there were other means of engaging and consulting with students.

- 7.8 Support for students was discussed, particularly for those who do not have the necessary resources available to them to enable them to study remotely, such as broadband. In acknowledgement of the difficult conditions some were working in, it was confirmed that a fund was available to students to request equipment they needed. This could also be taken into account when opening campus, as the demand placed on the learning fund referred to had been enlightening. How a learning fund such as this could run alongside the student hardship fund during the next academic year would be considered.
- 7.9 Whilst the first term would be disrupted by Covid-19, with students potentially starting term later than expected, some potentially being in quarantine, and some being unwell and/or isolating, it was hoped Terms 2 and 3 would be a bit more manageable, ideally under planning scenarios amber and/or green. Academic departments should continue to keep supporting students to complete their studies, with some sort of stability, at the heart of their planning for next year.
- 7.10 Much work had been undertaken to gather information relating to Estates and Timetabling, working with academic departments regarding their requirements and to ascertain how social distancing rules might impact on what was to be delivered on campus. A first view on the outcome of this work was expected to be available by the end of the week. The Critical Incident Group workstreams and other team discussions would inform this work. It was noted that departments might choose not to run some modules next year in the light of this information.
- 7.11 The Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre had launched an intense set of meetings in the previous week, which looked at how programme delivery, remote learning and use of available technology, might be taken forward. A suite of workshops were open to all in the Goldsmiths' community, which would be advertised in the following week, building on some informal versions which had already taken place.

Resolved:

- 7.12 That the proposal to re-approve programmes for delivery from 2020-21 (19-443) be approved and that delegated authority to Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee to approve the specifics of the re-approval process to be implemented be granted.

Action:

- 7.13 Programme re-approval process timeline to be reviewed.
- 7.14 How a learning fund for equipment and remote access to learning could run alongside the student hardship fund during the next academic year would be considered.

8 Department Boards

Received:

- 8.1 Reports from Department Boards outlining activity, impact and risks for escalation:
 - a) Art in December (19-336)
 - b) Confucius Institute in November (19-337)
 - c) English and Comparative Literature in December (19-338)
 - d) Institute of Management Studies (19-339)
 - e) Law in December (19-340)
 - f) Media, Communications and Cultural Studies in December (19-341)
 - g) Music in January (19-342)
 - h) Politics and International Relations in December (19-343) and April (19-444)
 - i) Sociology in December (19-344)
 - j) Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies in February (19-445)
 - k) Visual Cultures in December (19-360)

Noted:

- 8.2 One member of the Board queried why there were so few Department Board Impact Reports received by the Board, given the number of Department Boards which should have taken place by this point within the academic cycle. Given demands on the Board it was queried whether it was a valuable use of its time. It was confirmed that a review would be undertaken at the end of the academic cycle to assess the success of the new reporting structure and whether the College was fulfilling its Governance responsibilities. Whilst the Board was busy, it was required to maintain oversight of Department Boards and activities within academic departments, providing a route for any issues to be escalated to the Board as required.
- 8.3 The majority of departments had nothing further to add to the Impact Reports which had been provided, many of which related to the Autumn Term as they were received by the Board for the second time, given that the March Board meeting prioritised other agenda items for discussion at that time. Many departments confirmed that

more recent Department Board meetings had taken place and that the Impact Reports relating to these would be presented to the July meeting of the Board.

- 8.4 The Department of English and Comparative Literature's Report related to a meeting earlier in the year which had preliminary discussions around their recent Department Strategy Review at that time. A more recent Department Board meeting had considered draft Programme Specifications for the revised BA in English, which had been sent to two External Readers for comment, one of whom had already returned positive comments. It was noted that everything was on track in relation to this programme development and feedback so far had been more than encouraging.
- 8.5 The Department of Law's November meeting had discussed the further development of its programme portfolio, which had progressed to the point at which its new pathway had just launched, 'subject to validation' by the Programme Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
- 8.6 The Department of Music noted the recent development of new co-curricular modules, and the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies' recent Department Board meeting had discussed partnership development and the department's recovery from Covid-19.

9 Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee

Received:

- 9.1 Report from Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (LTEC) in February (19-345).

Noted:

- 9.2 The Chair of LTEC informed the Board that the additional meeting of the Committee scheduled in April to review Department Development Plans (DDP) did not go ahead due to the pausing of the DDP process in response to the quantity of work Covid-19 brought. Additionally, the scheduled May meeting of the Committee had now been postponed to late June or early July in order to consider important activity in advance of the next extraordinary meeting of Academic Board at the end of July.

10 Academic Development Committee

Received:

- 10.1 Report from Academic Development Committee (ADC) in November and February (19-349), and March (19-446).

Noted:

- 10.2 The March meeting of the Committee was not quorate due to industrial strike action. It was reported that another exceptional ADC meeting was scheduled to take place later this term to pick up any Covid-19 items coming through.

11 Research Excellence Framework

Received:

- 11.1 Update on preparations for Goldsmiths' submission to REF 2021 (19-447).

Noted:

- 11.2 Whilst no definitive update to the REF Team had been received, a 31 March deadline was likely. Goldsmiths' response to the recent consultation had been included in the report.
- 11.3 The REF Team would continue discussions with departments regarding the body of work needed for their submission, and the accuracy of staff data continued to be reviewed, which at this point was looking largely accurate. The REF Strategy Group had also met to look at a small number of case studies and their impact. Staff were thanked for their continued work and support on their REF submission.
- 11.4 A member of the Board asked whether applications for the formation of centres had been considered by Research Enterprise Committee (REC). It was confirmed that REC had met a couple of weeks previously and centre applications were discussed. Decisions would be sent out to departments with more detailed feedback by the end of the week or early the following week.

Action:

- 11.5 REF team to work with departments on the body of work needed for their submission.
- 11.6 Decisions from the Research Enterprise Committee regarding formation of centres would be sent out to departments with more detailed feedback.

12 Knowledge Exchange Framework

Received:

- 12.1 Update on the Knowledge Exchange Framework (19-448).

Noted:

- 12.2 The submission of the narrative statement had been paused, although good drafts had been developed thus far which were considered and discussed at the last meeting of REC. The full submission would be shared with members of the Board in due course for consideration and comment.
- 12.3 It was noted that much work continued to be put into supporting the College's submission. Goldsmiths was very good at civic and public engagement with its communities, although some could be better in terms of 'proper' engagement and increased consultancy. Goldsmiths impact on local growth and regeneration was also strong, some of which was linked with the development of the enterprise hub. However, there was more that could be done to strengthen this. Discussions around this would take place with departments and more would be reported to the Board in future.

Action:

- 12.4 Department level discussions on civic engagement and knowledge exchange would be arranged.

13 Research and Enterprise Priorities**Received:**

- 13.1 Research and Enterprise priorities progress report (19-449).

Noted:

- 13.2 The priorities progress report was a lengthy document, some details within which had already changed in light of Covid-19 and Government announcements.
- 13.3 The UK government established a task force on the future of research and sustainability. The task force had reported that the university sector should be more responsive and identify how it could contribute to recovery culturally, economically and socially. Covid-19 had highlighted social inequality across the UK in general. Goldsmiths were already aware of the issues and taking action to address. This work needed to be forefronted to ensure Goldsmiths' position in this space.
- 13.4 It was agreed that the College absolutely needed to support and sustain its research excellence, although it was acknowledged that this would be challenging in the

current climate and with limited resources. Goldsmiths had to demonstrate its research impact locally, nationally and internationally, but also to business, the third sector and Government. Research had to be translatable, which Goldsmiths would need to be in a position to demonstrate. Finally, Goldsmiths would need to be aware how it could generate income for its research, and as a result of its research.

- 13.5 One member of the Board queried whether academic staff and departments would receive guidance as to how, under the current conditions, they would be able to continue their research in the light of the rising workloads due to Covid-19. For example, through protected research days and research leave. The difficulty for departments to work this through was acknowledged and discussions around research leave would take place. The next few months required a significant amount of work on teaching and learning activities, but it was acknowledged that the College could not lose sight of research activities. The College would need to prioritise research activity so it could showcase and invest in the best work, with the limited resource it had over the next few months.

14 Research and Enterprise Committee

Received:

- 14.1 Report from Research and Enterprise Committee (REC) in March (19-348).

Noted:

- 14.2 It was noted that the meeting took place in advance of lockdown and the closure of the majority of campus spaces in response to Covid-19.
- 14.3 A query on the sustainability of dedicated research time was raised. The Chair of REC informed the Board of an earlier email communication sent to Heads of Departments following a meeting of the Goldsmiths Leadership Group, which outlined the severe conditions the College was facing over the next few years. Departments needed to think carefully about staff priorities over the coming months.

15 Programme changes 2019-20

Noted:

- 15.1 An update on the delivery of programmes in 2019-20 (19-450).

16 Exceptional Academic Regulations

Noted:

- 16.1 Exceptional Academic Regulations approved by delegated authority by Academic Board to Quality and Standards Sub-Committee (19-451).

17 Review arrangements and Internal QA process review

Noted:

- 17.1 Revised timeline for preparing for external review and the review of internal quality assurance processes (19-452).

18 Membership of Academic Board

Noted:

- 18.1 Revised membership of Academic Board for 2020-21 (19-453).

19 Academic Board representation on Council

Noted:

- 19.1 Update on Academic Board vacancies on Council (19-454).

20 Appointment of Students' Union Sabbatical Officers 2020-21

Noted:

- 20.1 Appointment of Students' Union Sabbatical Officers for 2020-21:

Lauren Corelli – President

Fowsia Kadiye – Education Officer

Niquella Simpson-West – Campaigns and Activities Officer

Sara Bafo – Welfare and Liberation Officer

21 Periodic Reviews

Noted:

- 21.1 TaLIC Periodic Review Report and Action Plan (19-389).

22 Complaints and Appeals

Noted:

22.1 Update to Complaints and Appeals Report 2018-19 (19-388).

23 Any Other Business

Noted:

- 23.1 One item was received concerning messaging from the College to incoming students for the next academic session. Whilst the College's web pages held much content, concern was expressed that the College was not promoting itself in a positive way on its home pages in relation to its responses to Covid-19, and work which was currently underway. Departments were receiving frequent enquiries about what Goldsmiths was doing, so it needed an effective way of messaging current students and applicants.
- 23.2 It was confirmed that now term dates and the programme re-approval process had been agreed, clear communications could take place. It was a delicate balance between getting messages out and having something meaningful to say. Two strands of communication were identified as being the College's web pages and communications from departments via the recruitment team to prospective students on the changes coming. Goldsmiths could commit to an exciting and innovative learning experience, which maintained quality and standards, through a blended approach to learning.
- 23.3 The Director of Communications highlighted to the Board that universities who had published their plans early had received significant push back on (particularly on social media), to which they had been unable to respond effectively. We were now moving into a phase where more concrete topics could be communicated on.
- 23.4 Goldsmiths was working on a longer-term system for communication, to ensure conversion and continuation. This work involved the Communications team in collaboration with Student Recruitment and the Student Engagement team, and going forward, connecting up with the Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre (TaLIC) in order to demonstrate to students what working online looks like, as well as what social distancing might look like on campus. An entire "comms" package that students could engage with was being put together to demonstrate the importance the College attached to their welfare.

- 23.5 It was agreed by members of the Board that some really good practice was taking place in departments, and some positive student experiences could be promoted widely. Many students really advocated their online learning experience, and alternative creative practice taking place as a result. These positive student experiences should be used to promote the College's resilience and its robust response to the pandemic. The Director of Communications agreed with this and confirmed that the "comms" plan would include this. Departments would be contacted in due course to get involved.
- 23.6 The Academic Director of TaLIC confirmed that the Centre would be pleased to be involved and could see on the VLE where alternative delivery and assessment had worked well. The Centre had intended to collect case studies for sharing good practice, and to support other staff who may be facing challenges moving online, so this aligned well.

24 Retirements from the Board

Noted:

- 24.1 Retirements from the Board would be taken at the exceptional July meeting of the Board.

25 Future meetings of Academic Board

Noted:

- 25.1 A further extraordinary meeting of Academic Board would be organised in July 2020 (date to be confirmed).
- 25.2 Board dates for 2020-21 were as follows, from 2.00-4.30pm, the location for each would be confirmed nearer the time:

Wednesday 23 September 2020

Wednesday 11 November 2020

Wednesday 17 March 2021

Wednesday 26 May 2021