

# Goldsmiths Senior Management Team: Response to Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action Group Demands

1 April 2019

Goldsmiths' Senior Management Team (SMT) appreciate that you have taken time to meet with us and discuss your concerns. We know you have not engaged in your current protest lightly. Goldsmiths has always sought to promote diversity and – as you have pointed out – the College has a tradition of understanding itself as an organisation that actively works to address inequalities, through our teaching, research and other activity. We recognise that you believe we are not living up to this. The fact that you felt moved to take the action you have is a matter of regret to us, and your protest has been at the top of our agenda since it started.

We also know that rebuilding trust in an institution where that has been lost is a slow process that will require understanding, potential risk and compromise on both sides. We would like to reassure you that:

- We respect the overarching aims behind your protest;
- We acknowledge the inclusive, creative and community-spirited way in which your protest has broadly been conducted;
- We will not act punitively towards those engaged in peaceful protest. The only situations over which we might take action are those which have caused significant distress or actual harm to staff or students, or where there has been deliberate damage to property.

However, we hope you will understand that we are keen to be able to continue teaching and other activities in DTH uninterrupted. We also care about your own learning experience, particularly those of you who have assessments next term. We want you to feel able to continue your studies with the confidence that we are taking forward the agenda to which you have successfully drawn close attention.

More broadly, as we will go on to explain, we are keen to ensure that the wider Goldsmiths community and beyond can feel actively involved in addressing the issues you have raised. Only by broadening ownership of the issues beyond us six SMT members and those of you still engaged in the occupation will we stand any chance of properly addressing the concerns you have raised.

With all this in mind, our response below seeks to address your key demands and build upon the initial activity to which we committed in [our letter of 14 March](#).

We hope that, by continuing the conversation on the basis of this response, we can demonstrate our commitment to action. We look forward to working in partnership with you, the Students' Union, and our wider community of staff and students to meet our shared aims of creating a truly inclusive place of learning, free of all forms of racism and discrimination.

## 1) The Occupation:

### We demand:

- a) Freedom for students to leave and enter the occupation Deptford Town Hall between 9am-7pm.
- b) As per Article 14 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Paragraph 49 of the 'London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority Enforcement Policy Statement', all routes to emergency fire exits must be kept clear and unobstructed at all times. The final exit doors must open easily and immediately, without obstacle.
- c) Students do not face any disciplinary or legal actions as a result of any involvement in the occupation or associated actions.
- d) Security staff must not face any disciplinary action as a result of the occupation.

Further to your requests over the weekend of 16-17 March, and in order that we could together focus on the substantive issues raised by your protest, **SMT agreed to enable access in and out of Deptford Town Hall between 9am and 7pm**. Alongside this, we asked for the following:

- All entry and exit is to be via the main front door. Other fire exits must not be opened other than in a legitimate emergency.
- Protest activity is to be confined to Rooms G2-G5 and no private staff offices are to be entered. Protesters must leave the Council Chamber, primarily to enable music rehearsals, recitals and assessments to take place.
- Teaching in other rooms is not to be disturbed and staff and students should not feel threatened outside of the classroom. Noise levels must not disrupt teaching or other activity.
- The ladder which has been used to access the upper floors of the building is to be removed and taken off site.
- The fabric of the building must remain unharmed.
- If any keys to offices have been taken, they must be returned: this can be done anonymously.
- Staff and students using the building will be asked to show their Goldsmiths passes, and occupiers will also be asked to sign in and out.

Despite a lack of formal response to our requests, **SMT agreed to your further request for weekend opening from 9am – 7pm**. At our meeting on 22 March, you asked us to extend these hours to 10pm each day. SMT remains concerned about the additional risks this extended opening might pose to your own safety and security in the building. Furthermore, some commitments from you regarding our requests above would help build mutual trust around our shared willingness to take steps to enable the occupation to end.

**We have ensured that fire exits are left fully accessible since the reopening of the building.** We note again for completeness that our previous practice (while the building was closed) was discussed with the London Fire Brigade prior to you separately calling out the Fire Service on 15 March. On both occasions the Fire Brigade confirmed they were content with the arrangements we had in place. We also note GUCU's Health and Safety Representative has acknowledged this position independently.

We are happy to make clear that **students engaging in peaceful protest will not face any form of disciplinary or legal action**. However, this does not constitute permission to remain within the building, and continued occupation does remain unauthorised. While

students engaging in peaceful protest will not face disciplinary action, if behaviour breaches our usual community standards or College property is damaged, we reserve the right to investigate through our usual procedures: those engaged in the protest cannot expect to be automatically immune from any form of disciplinary action where this is warranted. All students and colleagues on campus should be treated equally and fairly in this respect.

**Security staff who perform their duties to an acceptable standard will not face any form of disciplinary action**, though again this does not relieve security staff of their general duties to behave proportionately and with an overriding objective of ensuring the safety of College students, staff and property.

**2) Cleaners, security and all outsourced workers should be brought in-house as Goldsmiths staff.**

**We demand:**

- a) We demand there is no delay to the in-housing of the cleaning staff. All cleaning staff must be directly employed by the university by the 1st of May.**

**It remains the College's goal to complete the insourcing of cleaning staff by 1 May.**

UNISON, as the recognised trade union representing cleaning staff, is currently consulting with cleaning staff on improved terms and conditions and, reflecting concerns raised by staff, the revised shift patterns that will apply once staff have transferred over to Goldsmiths. All parties are working in good faith to achieve the 1 May target.

Regular updates on the progress of the insourcing process are provided at:  
<https://www.gold.ac.uk/about/statements/goldsmiths-cleaning-provision/>

- b) We demand that Goldsmiths officially recognise IWGB as representatives of Security Staff.**

UNISON is the formally recognised trade union for the representation of security staff. We understand that CIS, the current out-sourced provider, has now signed a local recognition agreement with UNISON: <https://unisongoldsmiths.org.uk/update-on-transferring-the-security-provision-back-in-house/>

**As previously reported, Goldsmiths management are in discussions with UNISON about the future of security provision. As with all services, we will review options as we approach the end of the current security contract (January 2020).**

Under the terms of the College's trade union recognition agreement (provided as an Annexe), all parties (i.e. Goldsmiths, UNISON and UCU) would have to collectively agree the formal recognition of another trade union.

- c) Management must meet all demands set by IWGB to see security staff brought in-house.**

**As per the answer above, we will continue to negotiate with UNISON, the recognised trade union for security staff on matters pertaining to security provision.**

3) **Deptford Town hall remains a reminder of our colonial past.**

**We demand:**

- a) **All four statues of known colonisers and the slave-ship should be removed immediately not labelled with a plaque. The university must recognise and acknowledge the history of the statues.**

Deptford Town Hall, which is Grade II listed, was built by the former Metropolitan Borough of Deptford in 1904 and the local community sought to recognise Deptford's maritime history in the design of the building. Researchers' interpretations of the iconography – particularly the ship weathervane – differ substantially.

The College is not in a position to make a unilateral decision on any substantial amendments to the building. Not only would such changes require the permission of listing authorities, different parts of the local community might expect to be part of a discussion about how best to acknowledge, confront and interpret the iconography of the building. We cannot make decisions on our shared built heritage alone.

**We will commit to the facilitation of a proper process of consultation within the College and, crucially, with Lewisham Council and community groups, to discuss options for how best to address your concerns around the architecture of the building.** We would be happy to discuss the best way forward on this, in a way that might serve as a model for other institutions facing similar challenges with legacy buildings.

- b) **Deptford Town Hall should be opened to the local community, as was promised when Goldsmiths took over the building. As it stands, the only people able to use the building are Goldsmiths students and staff, and even then, access to the building is very minimal. As an example the same as public access to Richard Hoggart Building.**

**We very much share your vision that Deptford Town Hall should be open to the local community.** Some progress has already been made on this: having once served as a primarily administrative centre for the College, the building now houses a far higher proportion of teaching activity and student-facing services. Deptford Town Hall already hosts numerous external events throughout the year, including music recitals and public lectures.

We support your vision of using the building for more community events and making it available to hire for private occasions. The primary constraint on community use at present is a lack of step-free access into, and within, the building. A lift cannot be incorporated into the structure of the building as a result of its Grade II listing. However, **the College is currently progressing a major project which would see the renovation of 304-312 New Cross Road and the construction of a lift and bridge link to Deptford Town Hall, which would greatly increase the accessibility of the principal spaces within the building.**

After the completion of these works, it is our intention to broaden the use of DTH. We will provide updates on this through Estates & Infrastructure Committee and External Relations Committee, both of which include student representation. We will also consult with the wider student and local community about effective use of the building.

- c) **Goldsmiths should reinstate scholarships for Palestinian students, with immediate effect.**

The terms of the Humanitarian Scholarships agreed with the Students' Union in 2009 stated that they would be in place for ten years and that there would then be a review. The original terms of the Scholarships stated that they would be available to prospective taught Masters students who are citizens of any country which is affected by oppression, persecution, political or military strife such that their human right to higher education is denied to them. Two scholarships would be ringfenced for Palestinian scholars for this initial period.

We are currently undertaking a review of these scholarships including consultation with the Students' Union.

During the last ten years, the world has become a more complex, and arguably more dangerous, place. As members of the CARA Scholars at Risk UK Universities Network we hope to support persecuted and at-risk scholars in many places across the globe.

**SMT commits to extending the Humanitarian Scholarships scheme for three years from 2019 entry, making support available to all those at risk of discrimination, persecution, suffering or violence.** We will continue to be keen to consider candidates from Palestine alongside other applications.

- d) **Goldsmiths should follow in the footsteps of Glasgow University's efforts to make colonial reparations. Goldsmiths should conduct an independently verifiable study, analysis and acknowledging the benefits the university received from colonialism and slavery. From the results, Goldsmiths must commit to a programme of reparative justice.**

(Link here <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/sep/17/glasgow-university-to-make-amends-over-slavery-profits-of-past>)

The present Goldsmiths College is a creation of the twentieth century, having been founded in 1904. Its original activities were confined to a School of Art, which was funded by the London County Council, and a Teacher Training College, which was funded by central government. There has not been a historical tradition of receiving major philanthropy at Goldsmiths. It is therefore unlikely that the College received direct financial benefit from colonialism or slavery.

This is clearly a very different position from a number of long-established institutions, such as the University of Glasgow, which were historically far more dependent on philanthropy born of the profits of Empire than on government or other public funding.

However, we are conscious that the United Kingdom has historically received a range of benefits from the legacies of colonialism – benefits that many other institutions have been coming to terms with in more recent years. In this context, we understand that there may be wider questions about how Goldsmiths may have more indirectly profited from colonial activity through relationships with other organisations. Such links need to be properly researched and understood, to inform future activity to address them.

With this in mind, **the College is keen to learn more from the University of Glasgow about their approach to this issue and to understand the process they undertook in this respect, as part of a comprehensive audit (see section 4, immediately below).**

#### **4) Racial abuse against XXXX is representative of a wide systemic problem.**

##### **We demand:**

##### ***An institution-wide strategic plan on how the university plans to tackle racism and the realities of life as a BME student at Goldsmiths:***

- a. *This strategy must be launched by June 2019 - ahead of the financial budget being finalised. **Failings to do so will result in further escalations, including but not limited to spontaneous occupations.***
- b. *This strategy must have clear Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and clear timelines.*

The strategy should encompass **but not be limited to** the following:

1. Public, formal acknowledgement of Goldsmiths' complicity in increased attacks against marginalised groups on campus.
2. **Mandatory training for SMT, Heads of Departments, lecturers, and seminar teachers** on unconscious bias as well as teaching and learning. The planning of this involves a collaboration between the college, the BME Academic Lead, two elected representatives of the Students' Union, two representatives from UCU, two representatives from UNISON, two representatives from IWGB, two representative students from each of the following liberation groups as according to NUS' structure: Black, disabled, women, trans, LGBTQ+
3. The curricula must be audited and overhauled across all departments, with emphasis on material that challenges the tradition of Eurocentric, colonial content taught in academia. This must include student-led groups and dedicated paid staff working closely with academics to reflect best practice across the HE sector.
4. Ensure that there are paid BME Department Representatives in each department.
5. An annual fund designated for Black History events for the Students' Union.
6. Recruitment of a team of full-time staff hired to work with Dr Nicola Rollock and the BME Attainment Gap Working Group on race equality, both at the Students' Union and at the university.
7. Recruitment of Tutu Foundation to audit racism at Goldsmiths College.
8. Wellbeing and counselling services: Employing specifically BAME staff as well as mandatory cultural competency training to all the current staff in the teams. The demographics of qualified staff should represent and be proportionate to the demographics of the Goldsmiths students' population.

We recognise the emphasis you have placed on this particular demand and hope you will agree with us that any strategy to tackle racism must be carefully thought through, as well as properly resourced. The focus on BAME students is important, but we believe an institution-wide strategy that seeks to address racism must also engage the needs and experiences of staff as well as students from these backgrounds.

As well as acknowledging and seeking to address your views about an institution-wide strategy, we believe that it is right and fair that we also include the views of others from across the College and beyond. This includes those unable or unwilling to take part in your campaign as well as academic colleagues with expertise in the area. Goldsmiths is fortunate to be home to a number of researchers whose work in race equality is considered to be pioneering and we must bring them into the discussions. We also need to respect the professional perspective of Dr Nicola Rollock, who has been appointed to lead on College-wide efforts to address discrepancies in the experience and outcomes of BAME students compared to their white peers. Dr Rollock is keen to engage actively with your demands as

she continues to shape the direction and content of her work. Similarly, we want to continue to work constructively with the Students' Union staff member recently appointed to conduct research into the experiences of BAME students at Goldsmiths.

**SMT is keen to work with a range of internal and external partners to conduct a comprehensive institution-wide audit of the experience of BAME students and staff. The audit would also include reviewing our current organisational support and procedures to address examples of race inequality and racial harassment, and any examples of historical financial benefit from slavery.** This would enable a proper evidence base from which to devise an overarching action plan. We agree with you that this must be appropriately resourced and must set out clear timescales and KPIs.

We have already committed to the delivery of mandatory training for all student-facing staff, to begin from the next academic year.

We appreciate that further discussion with you will be necessary to provide reassurance about our commitments in this broad area and to map out a series of milestones that indicate the progress you seek. We are keen to have these conversations as a priority over the next two weeks, including with Dr Rollock and the SU staff member.

- 9. The designated £100,000 to be spent on wellbeing and counselling services is until August 2019. This money should be spent transparently, and Goldsmiths should publish a financial statement on how the money has been spent on their website. We expect this funding to also continue to the next academic year.**

This commitment SMT made was for additional recurrent spend in this area. The activities supported by the £100k committed to this financial year (the majority of which is for additional permanent staff) will become part of the baseline for 2019/20 onwards. **We will happily publish a breakdown of how the money is being spent, once the allocation has been finalised.**

- 10. Increased funding to the chaplaincy services as well as a bigger prayer room space to better support students of faith.**

**The £100k funding already announced following your initial demands includes specific funding for faith leader provision, delivered through chaplaincy services.**

Use of the multi-faith prayer space varies throughout the week. SMT would be happy to commission a proper audit of usage throughout the week to ascertain when peaks in use take place (beyond Friday lunchtimes, for which we have already secured a larger space throughout term time, including during the exam and assessment period). **If, in discussion with the Students' Union, there is agreement that the current space is not fit for purpose, we will explore other accommodation on campus.**

- 11. Goldsmiths must reject the SEAtS Software for its racist, xenophobic perpetuation of surveillance culture which will indiscriminately target international students (particularly those who are BAME).**

Like all universities, Goldsmiths remains concerned about supporting students' wellbeing as well as their teaching and learning experience. We believe that a proper understanding of

student attendance is crucial to our ability to identify and support students who may need additional help: this is something that has been requested by student representatives (e.g. Student Representatives Report on Student Retention, 2019, who endorsed similar systems at other institutions). SEAtS offers a way for Goldsmiths to do this work, by replacing the current mix of paper and online registration systems with a more consistent approach across the College. Again, this consistency has been requested by students (including via the Students' Union representation mechanisms) over a number of years and is a particular driver for our approach.

The SEAtS project is being delivered with student representation on the project board.

**SEAtS in no way changes our statutory responsibilities and there is no intention for increased reporting to any external body. As SMT members have discussed with you in person, SEAtS does not introduce greater surveillance of students beyond the College's existing rules and policies.** We are grateful to you for flagging this concern, as we can reflect this more carefully in future student communications about the system.

## 12. The Hate Crime Reporting Centre

The centre needs urgent reform:

- **There must be a centralised disciplinary system across the College**
- **An adequate review of the policy and processes**
- **The mediation process that is sometimes used for hate crimes and racial antagonization on departmental levels, is inadequate and needlessly traumatic for BME students. For race-based hate crimes, there must be at least one trained BME member of staff in the room. The reporting of hate crimes must be victim led, without necessitating direct confrontation of the perpetrator.**
- **A full breakdown of how the £100,000 grant raised through external and internal funding to set up the centre has been spent to date.**

**Since your initial demands of 12 March, we have committed to working with the Students' Union, with whom the Hate Crime Reporting Centre is jointly delivered, to review the operation of our hate crime reporting processes and to establish clearer protocols that avoid prejudicing potential legal proceedings.**

We acknowledge the scope for confusion in this area. As stated previously, operating as a third party hate crime reporting centre means we have to follow certain protocols. These place emphasis on supporting persons reporting a hate crime incident to have a safe space to report such incidents and to feel encouraged and comfortable to do so (Hate Crime Reporting Policy and Procedure, paragraph 17, attached as an annexe). The protocols required prevent the College or the Students' Union from investigating the matter internally to ensure that "Goldsmiths will report without prejudice or opinion on claims brought forward by our students, staff and members of the community" (paragraph 14).

**It is clear that, jointly with the Students' Union, the College should further clarify these protocols and ensure a greater understanding of the operation of them, including how the protocol sits alongside the College's disciplinary process.**

A full breakdown of how the £100k grant has been spent has recently been submitted to the Office for Students (OfS) and will be shared more widely, including consideration at the Student Experience Sub-Committee, once the OfS have signed off the report.



**5) Contact time for BA Applied Social Science, Community Development and Youth Work degree should be reinstated, where 80% of students are BME and funding is being cut.**

**We demand:**

- a. The reinstatement of contact hours, back to seventeen hours per week, with immediate effect.**

This issue has been subject to an ongoing complaint, which we acknowledge has not been dealt with quickly enough. We hope you will understand that it would not be appropriate for us to prejudge the outcome of a 'live' complaint by responding to third party requests relating to the same matters. **SMT has however followed up the resolution of this complaint, and anticipates responses to the students concerned in the next few weeks. SMT are also committed to working with STaCS staff and students to open up a series of discussions about contact hours next term.**

In the meantime, as a gesture of goodwill, **colleagues in STaCS have confirmed they will be willing to commit to providing temporary additional resource contact hours for existing students on the programme in question.**

- b. Reimbursement of fees for course, as the conditions of the contract were not met.**

As this demand relates to a 'live' complaint, the conclusions and recommendations of which are due to be issued shortly, it would not be right to prejudge those findings here. SMT acknowledges the complaint in question was not handled with the speed it should have been, and **we have recently taken steps to accelerate the conclusion of this complaint process.**

- c. The protection of BME-majority courses and places, specifically the securing of funding and contact hours.**

Changes to course format or our programme portfolio are made on the basis of pedagogical (i.e. teaching-based) needs and trends, or shifts in demand from students. In the current context of higher education funding, we would rather not make blanket commitments about avoiding any such changes to BAME-majority courses. Building trust with you involves us being honest where we simply can't reasonably meet your demands consistently with our wider management responsibilities.

However, **SMT commits to ensuring that relevant decision-makers will always bear in mind the demographic profile of courses where teaching models or future provision are being reviewed, and to consider the impact any proposed changes might have on Goldsmiths' commitment to widening participation in higher education.**

- 6) Goldsmiths University to contact the Israeli Embassy in London regarding the status of Goldsmiths Alumni Hafez Omar who has been abducted by Israeli Security Forces to apply pressure and demand his immediate release.**

We are grateful for the additional information you have provided on this concerning case.

**We will prepare a letter to send to the Israeli Embassy to raise this case and seek assurances about Hafez' welfare.** We will send this letter early this week (w/c 1 April) and will share any response we receive.

We are available to meet this week (w/c 1 April) to discuss this set of proposals and how together we may bring the continued occupation of Deptford Town Hall Building to an end. We look forward to hearing from you as soon as possible so that we can set up a mutually convenient time.

As we hope our comprehensive response above indicates, drawing the occupation to an end could be accomplished with confidence that you have made a real impact on the pace and substance of the College's approach to tackling racism, and promoting diversity and inclusion.

**Goldsmiths Senior Management Team**

1 April 2019