

GOLDSMITHS
University of London

ACADEMIC BOARD AND COUNCIL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 15 May 2007

Present: Lady Celia Goodhart (Chair), Professor Sara Ahmed, Ms Vicky Annand, Mr Alex Blandford, Ms Hannah Bullivant, Dr Rosalyn George, Ms Beth Moore, Ms Bindiya Patel, Mr Chris Pearson, Mr James Souter, Ms Suzanne Stead, Mr Bob Westaway

Attendance: Ms Hilary Lowe, Ms Jeanette Muff

Apologies: Dr Philip Broadhead, Ms Mary Bown, Ms Lante Yan'kyaa

36 ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair Lady Celia thanked Luca Perera for his work on the Committee, wishing him all the best in his new job, and welcomed Jeanette Muff (Equality & Diversity Administrator) to the Committee.

37 MINUTES

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2007 be approved.

38 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Received: An oral report from Hilary Lowe, EO Advisor, regarding the policy on disabled toilets and agreement for them to be kept open.

Noted: that the possibility of getting a representative from the Estates Department to attend Committee was being investigated by the Pro Warden (Students and Learning Development).

39 RESPONSES FROM STAFF AND STUDENT GENDER SURVEYS

Received: An Interim Report produced by the E&D Administrator summarising the key findings (07-193).

During discussion, the following matters were noted:

- (i) Vicky Annand had taken details of the safety issues raised by students regarding the New Cross area to a meeting with Joan Ruddock MP and would feed information to the Safer Neighbourhoods Committee which liaises with Lewisham Council. Similarly, Hannah Bullivant, SU Welfare Officer / incoming President, was pursuing routes such as the New Cross Safety Group.

- (ii) It was planned that the College *Harassment And Bullying* code of practice and routes of support and advice for complaints, such as Harassment Advisors, would be revisited and updated.
- (iii) There were concerns that Visiting Tutors' feedback might not be represented in the survey results. Surveys were sent to a proportionate number of VTs; of those who gave their staff type, 2 female VTs and 2 male VTs responded.
- (iv) That Equal Opportunities Facilitators and Heads of Departments were well placed to disseminate information on the Scheme throughout their departments.
- (v) Overall survey response rates were deemed low. Short timescales for returns to meet the statutory deadlines were partly to blame, together with unfortunate timing which coincided with student elections and examinations. Email and online reminders had backed up the posted forms. There could also be an amount of 'survey fatigue' as several other staff and student surveys had been undertaken recently.
- (vi) Future survey response rates could be improved by:
 - Introducing electronic forms to make it easier to enter responses. Internal Communications have previously offered the service of an independent person for staff who do not have email access to sit with to enter survey answers.
 - Offering a student prize, as with other surveys.
 - Longer lead-times and more reminders.
 - Alter the timing of future surveys:
 - Staff – late October or early November.
 - Students – after Christmas.

40 GOLDSMITHS UNIVERSITY OF LONDON, GENDER SCHEME

Received: A report from the EO Advisor on the Gender Equality Scheme, which was in place by the statutory deadline of 30 April 2007 after being approved by the Senior Management Team and Human Resources Committee with only minor changes to the draft (07-166).

- Noted: 1 that the Chair stated monitoring and commitment to involve staff and students was necessary to ensure that the identified actions happened;
- 2 that the Scheme would be considered by Council for formal ratification on 28 June 2007.

41 STANDING ITEM ON DISABILITY

Received: A report from the Disability Co-ordinator Students, presented by the EO Advisor, on the current position regarding support of and facilities available to students with disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties (07-195).

During discussion, the following matters were noted:

- (i) The number of students declaring a disability had increased from 633 in May 2006 to 859 in May 2007. Of these, 441 required special exam arrangements. Numbers had risen annually since 2002.
- (ii) HEFCE's 1997 baseline recommendations for disability posts were that institutions

have one full-time disability advisor's post for each 200 students and one full-time dedicated administrator's post for each three advisor posts.

- (iii) Having a temporary Disability Advisor had helped reduce waiting lists for student assessments from three weeks to 10 days.
- (iv) The Academic Registrar quoted monitoring statistics from the last four years which showed disproportionately more complaints were received from students who had registered a disability. These issues were not directly related to disability but concerned the College in general, showing that more efforts were needed to examine the causes of why this particular student group was unhappy.
- (v) The SU Welfare Officer warned that many students were unaware where to get help or their rights (eg mitigating circumstances allowing special exam arrangements). In particular, to gain support for dyslexia was very complicated.
- (vi) The necessity for more staff training was highlighted. The Staff Development Team would provide Deaf Awareness training.

42 REPORT ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ADMISSION OF APPLICANTS UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN YEARS DRAFT POLICY

Received: A report from the Academic Registrar to invite members of the Committee to comment on the College proposals for dealing with issues relating to the admission of students less than 18 years of age (07-196).

During discussion, the following matters were noted:

- (i) At the start of each academic year there might be 50 – 60 students still only 17 years old. This would reduce to just a couple by the end of the first year. PACE students were often even younger.
- (ii) Duty of Care responsibilities under Child Protection legislation for under 18s had to be considered.
- (iii) The need to perform Criminal Records Bureau checks especially on key staff who would be in contact with under 18s and the growing situations where students under 18 might be under Goldsmiths' care (eg PACE classes, student residences etc).
- (iv) Additions to be made to the draft policy explaining that Certificate 18 library materials cannot be loaned out. Heads of Departments to be informed that it might be difficult to give certain study materials to under-age students.

43 AUDIT OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENT TO PUBLISH A DISABILITY SCHEME

Received: A report carried out on behalf of the Office for Disability Issues (07-197).

Noted: that the report showed the university sector generally in a good light and that Goldsmiths had incorporated all necessary items in its Disability Equality Scheme.

The Chair thanked the team for a job well done. It was noted that UNISON had commented they were pleased that Goldsmiths involved the Trade Unions in the development of the scheme.

44 TWO TICKS SYMBOL

Received: An update from the EO Advisor noting action required for the College to be positively assessed to use the Two Ticks symbol (07-270).

Noted: 1 that the contact point for Goldsmiths' region was Saira Khan, Disability Co-ordinator;
2 that there were five commitments (stated in the report) which employers must implement and collect evidence on before asking for an assessment;
3 that the Director of Human Resources and EO Advisor would produce a realistic timetable of steps to achieve this and instigate appropriate monitoring, ensuring recruitment staff were aware of their roles.

45 HIGHER EDUCATION EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES NETWORK AND EQUALITY CHALLENGE UNIT GUIDANCE

Received: Extracts from the new guidance and recommendations which relate to the role of the Equality Specialist (07-271).

Noted: that the Committee was informed of these five good practice titles and where online further information is held online (www.ecu.ac.uk).

46 DRAFT NOTES FROM THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FACILITATORS MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2007

Received: The draft notes of the Equal Opportunities Facilitators meeting held on 9 May 2007 (07-272).

47 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted: that the project to overhaul signage of the campus would commence the week after the meeting; this would improve Goldsmiths' image to visitors and the ease with which people use the buildings.

48 NEXT MEETING

Noted: that the next meeting would be held on 6 November 2007.