

**GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE**  
**University of London**

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2006**

**Present:** Mr Kenneth May (in the Chair), Ms Vicky Annand, Mr Andrew Brett, Mr Rob Letham, Professor Celia Lury, Professor Marj Mayo, Professor Jane Powell, Mr Terry Rosenberg, Mr Ian Turner

**Apologies:** Mr Brendan Prendeville

**In attendance:** Ms Johanna May (Secretary), Mr Andrew Fisher (for items 5 and 6), Mr Shaun McConnell (for items 8 and 9), Ms Eleanor Sanders (for item 11), Ms Hilary Lowe (for item 15 )

**1 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the reconstituted Committee, noted the challenges facing academe and looked forward to optimising the various skills and experience available to assist the HR Department in its task over the following 12 months

**2 COLLEGE POLICY ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Noted the policy approved by Council which had become effective on 1 September 2006 and that no member of the Committee had any conflicts to declare

**3 THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM AND TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP**

Noted: 1 the new committee structure and details of membership and terms of reference of this Committee

2 in response to a question, that there was no intention to invite trade union representatives to sit on this committee although they had the right to attend Council as observers, this being a management committee, helping to frame College policy; that being a trade union member while serving on the Committee did not necessarily represent a conflict of interest

**Resolved:** **that all reports to this committee should indicate what, if any consultation has taken place with staff and/or their union representatives**

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## MINUTES

**Resolved:** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2006

### 5 COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO CORPORATE PLANNING

- Noted:
- 1 the report of the Head of Planning on the relationship between the Strategic Planning process and the role of the Committee in delivering HR policy and initiatives
  - 2 the comment by the Chair that HR had already done a lot of work in this area and that the current HR strategy brought together a range of strategic policy initiatives as well as a number of more minor operational matters
  - 3 that the annual departmental planning process had already been launched and submissions on planned activities and targets were due by 12 January 2007. This timescale provided an opportunity for the Director of HR to revise the draft strategy in the light of the new framework (and to incorporate any other issues arising during the course of the meeting). Following this a report would go to the Senior Management Team (SMT) in January/February with final decisions to be made in March 2007
  - 4 that in addition to the Corporate Plan there were also more than 30 corporate projects led by members of SMT. This was a separate area of activity with no unified timetable – the timetable was set to each project's own terms and there was no formal link to the planning process or corporate plans or department plans
  - 5 the HR and similar strategies (as revised) would become part of the corporate plan
  - 6 the comments of the Director of Resources and Planning that
    - (i) the corporate projects had been identified on an away day arising from the risk register and SMT had identified ongoing work
    - (ii) some projects involved more than one SMT member
    - (iii) one key risk identified was not having/not being able to retain appropriate staff and skills
  - 7 that some of the activities identified by departments had been very specific and some were over generalised meaning there was a limited usefulness to what could be pulled out; Heads of Departments (HODs) needed more specific/coherent information to enable them to complete these returns; it was also impossible to know at the beginning of a year the issues that were going to come up in that year
  - 8 the comment of the Head of Planning to the effect that HODs were asked if anything came up after completion of the plan
  - 9 the HR material within the plan was more strategic but that the casework report would perhaps show that Personnel was spending a lot of time on non strategic issues

## 6 REVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

- Noted: 1 the comments of the Director of HR that
- (i) the HR elements in the report on Strategic Aim 9 were contained in the former HR Strategy
  - (ii) the document constituted an agenda for future work and Director of HR could engage with departments in helping them to achieve and refine certain things and pick up work for further strategies; it was also good to note that one head been critical about certain processes
  - (iii) some things had not been addressed – for example change management there would be major changes due to the fact that £1.4M was to be taken out of the budget in the next 2 years. The College and departments needed to be confident and competent in knowing how to change and the protocols around achieving change; HODs would also need to be competent and confident around performance and contribution management.
  - (iv) there was a potential difficulty around the system of rotating HODs since individual management styles could influence problems that arose in departments; at any time one third of the 15 departments would have heads in their first year, one third have a heads in their second year and one third have heads in their last year. This pattern, could work against sound, consistent management processes.
- 2 the good examples that emerged in the discussion about how this issue could be addressed and the suggestion that this matter be discussed further outside this meeting (perhaps in the form of a workshop in early 2007). This way of addressing some of the other challenges ahead was welcomed
- 3 casework took a lot of time in HR which was prevented from investing time in other processes; there needed to be a balance between new/strategic work and picking up the problems

**Revolved: that HR should revise their contribution by 12 January 2007 and specify which activities and targets would be relevant to next year and regroup the activities into 4 or 5 themes.**

## 7. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2006-07

- Noted: 1 the comments of the Director of HR to the effect that the training budget was small - £122K on a staffing budget of £33m on staff which represented around 0.4% of the total expenditure on staff. This was, however, an improvement on the previous budget.
- 2 it was recognised that further money on training was spent elsewhere – by Departments and the Information Technology Service and that training and development embraced activities wider than attendance on courses.
- 4 the T & D Unit was small, consisting of a manager and assistant – to provide a service for 1000 staff

- 5 the Unit needed to deliver services in the most efficient manner - hence e.learning was being considered for diversity training as well as access/induction.
- 6 that spend is not necessarily an indicator of effort allocated. Different kind of activities needed different resources, e.g while much Learning and Teaching development was done in house, top management/leadership training usually involved external programmes which were expensive
- 7 departments provide funding for staff to attend conferences and for external speaker programmes

**Resolved a further report and discussion on this subject should be made to the next meeting of this committee**

## **8. HR MEASUREMENT AND BENCHMARKING**

- Noted:
- 1 the report from Shaun McConnell, Personnel Manager, on the user group forum of the benchmarker group he had attended in the last week
  - 2 in future the Performance Indicator Survey (one of two annual surveys undertaken by the group) would take place in November of each year (with the first being in November 2007) which would be just after the HESA exercise.
  - 3 there was a proposal to trial a report of ethnicity data by region and that London wide figures would be helpful although pre 1992 institutions in London and the 94 group were the most helpful comparators for the College
  - 4 that the user group had also talked of a pre and post 92 split being trialled.
  - 5 that the turnover figure for GSC was higher than the benchmarked comparison. and this might be expected because: 1) the College is small, can not always provide a career ladder for staff in the way that larger institutions can; 2) the London area provides more employment opportunities for staff with transferable skills
  - 6 that since the College had been contributing to this survey since 2004 the data could be used for internal benchmarking to identify trends within the College.
  - 7 it would be useful to disaggregate the sickness figures which could be distorted by just 1 or two cases.
  - 8 that the absence of formal disciplinary case could indicate that employee relations were not good, with performance issues etc. not being addressed.
  - 9 the comment by one Head of Department that the Occupational Health provision appeared to be responsive rather than proactive and that this shared by Personnel
  - 10 that a review of Occupational Health was about to begin which could address these concerns
  - 11 the comment of the Head of Communications and Publicity that there had been a lot of material in the staff survey carried out in relation to communications that might be useful to examine in the context of a general staff survey.

- 12 that the information provided in this survey was key management information which should be received and addressed by all relevant managers and while the information in the benchmarking survey went to members of this Committee, it would be good to have a discussion at the Senior Management Team on it

**Resolved** that by the next meeting of this Committee there would be proposals developed as to who would receive this information in the future and what they would be expected to do with it.

## 9. SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

Noted: 1

that the College was required to undertake a self assessment exercise to mainstream Recruiting and Developing Staff (RDS) funds and the necessary activity by Goldsmiths would occur in the academic session 2007-08, to ensure the necessary report was sent to HEFCE by their deadline of May 2008

- 2 the discussion reaffirmed the suggestion of an awayday to discuss HR initiatives

**Resolved:** that this activity should be included in the revised HR Strategy with a report on progress to be made to a future meeting of this Committee (although it was noted that no further progress was likely until after the implementation of the Framework Agreement)

## 10. PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS

Noted:

- 1 the usual timescale for reviews was from June to October but that the return rate was patchy and Personnel staff spent more time chasing returns than reviewing the quality of them.
- 2 the process had also been impeded over the summer by industrial action
- 3 that the Director of HR intended to write to departments urging them to complete their performance reviews and wished to put the weight of this committee behind his communication
- 4 the comment of the Chair that he had had experience of a number of PDR schemes and felt that the ones created by the College were simple and straightforward and would be beneficial to all managers and supervisors in improving performance and the personal development of staff
- 5 that the casework report (item 19) could reflect the lack of progress in relation to PDRs.
- 6 that the lack of continuity in relation to the office of Head of Department might also contribute to the poor return rate and the lack of a culture to encourage development.
- 7 the comment of one Head of Department that they had to undertake 35 PDRs (although the recommended maximum was 8) since so many processes were centralised on the Head of Department; staff seeking promotion and staff on probation, for example, were advised to have their PDR with the head of department

- 8 that it was entirely legitimate to construct management sub structures in departments so that these activities could be delegated
- 9 that while this was another issue which could benefit from an awayday, the Committee applauded the progress that had been made so far and wished to examine ways to encourage greater participation in the scheme.

## **11. PAY AND GRADING RESTRUCTURING**

Noted: 1

the implementation date of the HERA project had been postponed from August 2006 due to two issues: firstly resourcing , since the HERA team was not fully resourced, and secondly major difficulties associated with getting role holders and verifiers to complete the exercise. It was estimated that 50% of the time of the HERA team was spent on chasing

- 2 a communication from the Warden had generated a considerable response but not enough to enable the project to be where it should be and implementation in stages might have to be considered if there was not enough information to implement in full
- 3 the budget for the project was £1.15 m so it was essential that the points boundaries of grades were set so that this amount of money was not exceeded
- 4 the comment of one head of department that staff often misunderstood the process and were submitting excessive and inappropriate amount of data on the initial forms

**Resolved:** to note the progress on this project and the blockages that had arisen and express concern that the timescale for the project had to be extended in this way.

## **12. STATUTE 14**

Noted:

- 1 the comments of the Director of HR that this statute applied to all pre 92 universities and had been designed to protect academic freedom. It was out of date in relation to employment legislation, circular in its processes, the Warden was involved at various stages, and the procedures were complex and time consuming. The statute also covered staff for whom academic freedom was not an issue. Changing the statute would also be a lengthy process involving consultation with the UCU, Council and the Privy Council and realistically this large project could not be undertaken until mid 2007 and was likely to last for one year.

**Resolved: this project should be included in the HR strategic plan**

## **13. PROMOTION PROCESSES**

Noted

- 1 the guidance attached to the agenda was to be re-written slightly and circulated in the next week or so.
- 2 that the issue of promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer needed to be aligned with the HERA process.

- 3 there was a potential conflict in that HERA captured a snapshot of activities of a particular role whereas the current promotion process measured the record of achievement of an individual over a period of time
- 4 the fluidity of certain roles since certain responsibilities – such as that of Head of Department – were only undertaken on a temporary basis but certain competencies were expected of that role
- 5 the comment of the Director of HR that it was hoped that the generic roles to be defined for Lecturer/Senior Lecturer would encompass the notion that duties may be changeable in this way

#### **14. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Noted

- 1 the concern that the requirement to have all departmental admissions and recruitment tutors CRB cleared could lead to interruptions to the service if someone had to take up this role at short notice (since CRB clearances could take up to 4 weeks).

that this might indeed be an unfortunate consequence of the need for CRB clearance, but that institutions such as schools were becoming ever more vigilant (imposing restrictions that were beyond the legislative requirements) and hence clearances would be necessary.

#### **15. DRAFT DISABILITY SCHEME**

Noted

- 1 that the draft disability scheme had been drawn up by a working group chaired by the Pro Warden Students and Learning, Dr Philip Broadhead and had involved surveying 700 students, half with a disability and all disabled staff plus 200 more staff and that the information gained from these surveys had been used to identify action points in the action plan. Focus groups had also been convened with interested groups and these processes enabled the College to demonstrate it had consulted disabled people in the drawing up of the plan.
- 2 that the scheme would be submitted to Council for approval on 14 December 2006 and, although this was somewhat after the legal date of implementation (4 December 2006), the delay was unavoidable given the timing of Council meeting.
- 3 there would be a need to continually update the plan and it would be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Equality and Diversity Committee.
- 4 that this process had already encouraged the greater disclosure of disabilities by staff – the record had shown thirteen staff with disabilities – several more had declared a disability in the course of the consultation exercise
- 5 that disabled staff were assisted by the Access to Work scheme when appropriate
- 6 that the scheme would involve additional costs in some areas, such as Training and Development and these financial implications had been examined by the Senior Management Team

## **16. ANNUAL REPORT OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE FOR 2005-06**

Noted the report on this subject.

## **17. CHANGES TO MATERNITY LEGISLATION**

Noted the report on this subject.

## **18. INTRODUCTION OF AGE LEGISLATION**

- Noted
- 1 the concern expressed by one academic head to the effect that retiring employees only had to indicate a wish to work on beyond the College's retirement date, three months before that date. The concern was that departments would need to initiate recruitment procedures to replace the existing member of staff far in advance of this date
  - 2 that the three month rule was a legal specification and therefore could not be varied in the College's procedure but that consideration would be given to making clear to employees that unless they applied in good time to work beyond the normal retirement age, business demands (i.e. the need to take measures to fill the post) might mean that their request could not be granted

## **19 CURRENT CASEWORK**

Noted the report on this subject

## **20. THE HIGHER EDUCATION WORKFORCE IN ENGLAND**

Noted the report on this subject