

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE
University of London

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2007

Present: Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Ms Vicky Annand, Mr Andrew Brett, Dr Basem El Haddadeh, Professor Celia Lury, Professor Marj Mayo, Mr Chris Pearson, Professor Jane Powell, Mr Brendan Prendeville, Mr Terry Rosenberg, Mr Ian Turner

In attendance: Ms Johanna May (Secretary), Mr John Edgar, Mr Shaun McConnell (for item 4), Ms Eleanor Sanders (for item 5), Ms Hilary Lowe (for item 6)

1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed Dr Basem El Haddadeh and Mr Chris Pearson, newly appointed Director of Human Resources (DHR), to the meeting

2 MINUTES

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

3 REVIEW OF HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

- Noted:**
- 1 that the submission from Human Resources on the next planning round had been due on 12 January, the DHR had started work on 15 January and the revised draft had been submitted on 19 January 2007 which had been considered an acceptable deadline
 - 2 that one of the first jobs of the new Head of Staff Development, Steve Collins, who would be starting at the College on 1 March 2007, would be to review the training strategy for the College
 - 3 that the DHR had reviewed the planning statement prepared by the previous Director of HR and identified some of the priorities in the forthcoming year as:
 - i) the HERA project where major progress had been made with a draft pay structure now being drawn up which would be costed, evaluated and then go out for trade union consultation. The target date for implementation date was May 2007 and work was being done on a communication strategy
 - ii) the review of the HR function – where it was planned to have an early review with the assistance of an external adviser. Building on the work of the existing strong team, the DHR favoured the business partner approach with dedicated resources from HR adding value to the departmental function by providing good

management information, assisting with re-organisations and managing sickness and dealing with issues such as reward and pay, There would also be a resourcing function, including systems and data and an area dealing with employment law and policies as well as the existing separate strands for staff development and equalities. The review of Occupational Health would assist in the management of sickness absence and it would be important to consult with the HR Committee and Heads of Departments on these matters. The DHR had already reviewed three HR Departments in a Local Authority, the Treasury and in a Charity and wanted to talk to departments about the ways in which HR could assist them

- 4 the comments of several heads of departments to the effect that they often did not know to whom in HR they should refer enquiries – there might be several different contacts at different stages of the recruitment process, for example or queries might be directed to one person who had been helpful in the past
- 5 the comment of the Head of Communications that there were ways of quality controlling advertisements and inducting new staff into ways of communicating the brand while cutting costs
- 6 the tensions between strategy and casework – a lot of the latter being reactive while HODs needed to be managing staff proactively. The HEFCE report made to the last meeting” The Higher Education Workforce in England: a framework for the future” had referred to planning for the longer term and the business partner model of HR would help departments develop skills to enable them to manage in a proactive way
- 7 that induction and training for heads of departments was critical and that one useful model of training would be to look at typical case studies, how to deal with these situations and how prevent them
- 8 that HODs would find it useful to be given an idea of the services which HR could offer to meet their needs
- 9 that the plan was for the review of HR to take place from April – July with implementation in the Autumn
- 10 that while (because of HEFCE requirements) it had initially been necessary to develop the HR Strategy in isolation, this now needed to be incorporated into the overall College Strategy which would be underpinned by the Corporate Plan and departmental plans with the separate 44 projects identified at previous SMT away days also being incorporated within the corporate plan
- 11 that the Senior Management Team would be having two planning meetings in March to establish what the College could do within the assumed finances available; this would be approved by the Finance and Resources Committee as the budget plan for next year and feedback given to the relevant Committees
- 12 that members of this Committee would serve as a as sounding board for the DHR on that part of the Strategic Plan relating to HR

Resolved: the list of projects defined at the SMT should be circulated to members of this Committee

4 HR MEASUREMENT AND BENCHMARKING

Noted:

- 1 the proposals as to where the external benchmark data should be reported but that the issue of internal data measurement had not been taken account of
- 2 that data relating specifically to Goldsmiths from previous surveys was available from the last 2 to 3 years and this could be circulated together with the current data to enable the tracking of previous years' information; some of the datasets had changed but numbers could be traced
- 3 the plan was for HR and Finance to produce a suite of 7-8 reports tailored appropriately to the recipient ; the Warden and Senior Management Team would have a different set of reports from those going to heads of departments
- 4 these reports would enable the College to benchmark where it varied from other institutions within the sector and from the wider community and it could decide where its efforts could be concentrated and allow managers to work proactively to produce change
- 5 this Committee's role would be to look at highlights within the data to see if there were matters that needed to be referred upwards or across to other committees - – one example could be sickness absence with a separate analysis of long term sickness
- 6 the comment of the Head of Communications that some information gained from previous surveys on staff communications might be relevant for HR use
- 7 the DHR was currently conferring with some of his colleagues in the 1994 group about the possibility of undertaking a staff survey in conjunction with some other institutions

5. PAY AND GRADING RESTRUCTURING UPDATE

Noted: 1

- the report of the Reward Project Manager to the effect that the College now had a robust, scored sample of jobs on which to design a pay and grading structure and she had been advised by the ECC that they had done a good job in analysing the roles identified in phase 1 of the exercise and hence that the allocation of other roles should now be relatively straightforward
- 2 that it was essential to communicate with colleagues about the requirements on them arising from the project and efforts were being made to improve the communication process
- 3 a concern expressed that since HERA recognised job size, then effectively a decision by a Head of Department that the duties of an individual post should be increased would increase the status and level of posts. This would mean that decisions on promotion would de facto be made in departments rather than by an independent, central body as now. This also had financial implications since

logically it assumed a cost centre management model with individuals responsible for their own budgets. If this were the case there would need to be mechanisms to ensure equity across departments.

- 4 there was a difference between academic and non academic jobs since the latter depended on the quality of the outputs i.e. the quality of the research and teaching rather than simply job size
- 5 HERA would give a profile for a grade which would be wide enough to accommodate minor changes – and which could cover a range of competencies – and it would take a significant degree of movement to shift a job onto a higher grade. If, however, a role merited promotion, there would have to be a promotion whether Department/College budgeted for it or not
- 6 it was inevitable that job growth could occur since people were keen to take on skills, which made them marketable at the next level; this was natural career progression
- 7 the comment of the DHR that he was conscious of these issues, the Pay Forum was now meeting more frequently and as the project moved forward a programme would be agreed as to what would be done when and by whom
- 8 that the pay and grading structure would involve obtaining the best fit at the optimum cost, the proposals would be costed, approved by the Warden and then go to the Trade Unions for their ballot. Whilst that was happening, other roles would be assigned to the structure which would involve each individual employee being assigned to new potential grades
- 9 the Framework Agreement memorandum of understanding fixed some parameters but the evidence and spread of data would result in the final structure
- 10 that draft proposals on the pay structure should be available by the end of March with a ballot to be completed in the following 6 weeks so that implementation could start from May onwards
- 11 it would be the majority of posts that would be allocated to the new structure with some red and green circling
- 12 the union membership would be balloted on the grading structure itself - at that point individuals would not know where they were on the scale although they would have access to an appeals procedure if they wished to dispute the outcome
- 13 that this information and the timescales would be made public and that it was important that staff hear from the organisation as well as trade unions
- 14 that the question of who would feed back to staff on the outcome of their grading needed to be discussed
- 15 that red circled staff would have meetings with HR and their management about the process and what would happen to them next

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY UPDATE

Noted:

- 1 the report from the EO Adviser that the Disability Equality Policy (DEP) and action plan had been completed within the necessary deadline and had been approved by Council after a considerable amount of constructive discussion
- 2 the major change implemented by Council had been to reduce the target for disabled staff from 10% to 4%
- 3 the next big project was to produce a gender scheme by the end of April; currently a staff and student survey was being undertaken on a sample of staff and students with a view to convening focus groups; the policy would then be ratified by a series of committees
- 3 the comment of the Chair that it was important to know how and if the various equality policies had impacted on students and staff; the comment of the Equal Opportunities Adviser that to date the priority had necessarily been to produce the policies, given the deadlines set by legislation
- 5 that the action plan for the DEP would be monitored via the EOC and would be published on the website; that people needed to be reminded what they had signed up to do. There was a grid for the year with people's names against actions to be completed in a certain time span
- 6 the comment from one Head of Department that there needed to be an equality and diversity action plan for each department to conform with the institutional plan
- 7 it was planned to produce checklists and fact sheets to assist departments in the implementation of the plan
- 8 the comment from the Chair that was essential to discuss how the plan would be implemented since it was tangible and practical things that affected the Equality and Diversity agenda and whether in due course there could be one equality plan encompassing all of the issues.

7. CASEWORK

Noted:

- 1 the high incidence of cases of stress and complaints about bullying and harassment in the latest casework report
- 2 that it was important that the College had a strong Occupational Health provision to assist in the managing of sickness absence
- 3 that manifestations of these sorts of complaints/illness was symptomatic of what was happening in an organisation and the human costs to individuals, the financial and resource costs of managing these cases and potential negativity in terms of the College's reputation were important
- 4 the comment of the DHR that there had been a learning process in relation to new legislation and that the College could do more to prepare Heads of Departments to undertake their responsibilities under employment legislation

8. ATTENDANCE AT DEPARTMENTAL TEAM MEETINGS

Noted: a request from the DHR that individual members of the Committee join the HR team at one of their monthly departmental team meetings to brief them on the work of their department – this would assist HR staff un understanding better the working of the College and the way in which they could assist heads of departments

The Chair thanked Ian Turner, Director of Resources and Planning, for his contribution to the work of the Committee during his time at Goldsmiths.