

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

ACADEMIC BOARD

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2008 at 2.00pm

Present: Professor Nirmala Rao (in the Chair), Dr Catherine Alexander, Ms Vicky Annand, Dr Philip Broadhead, Mr Geraint Fox, Dr Andrea Gilroy, Ms Hannah Bullivant, Mr Jack Gillis, Mr Gerald Lidstone, Professor Carrie Paechter, Mr Bob Westaway, Professor Geraint Wiggins.

In attendance: Head of Quality and Governance, Quality and Governance Administrator (Secretary).

Apologies: Dr Helen Jones, Dr Gavin Butt

OPEN BUSINESS

1 NEW MEMBERS

The Chair welcomed two new members of the Committee, Ms Rachel Soper (Head of Planning) and Dr Catherine Alexander.

Noted:

that it was increasingly difficult for academics, particularly those who sat on a number of committees, to attend committee meetings that fell on days other than Wednesday.

(Secretary's note: This is a recognised issue among academics with regard to College committees. Unfortunately, due to lines of reporting and the fact that there are fewer weeks than committee meetings, some committees must meet on days other than Wednesday.)

2 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2007 be approved.

3 MATTERS ARISING

Received:

a report from the Secretary on matters arising from the meeting held on 16 October 2007.

4 NEW MASTERS PROGRAMMES

Received:

proposals for two new Masters programmes, the MA Brand Development and Public Communication (08-8) and the MA in Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship (08-9).

Noted:

that there was an interim solution which ensured that any new programmes proposed would fit into the new framework for postgraduate programmes.

5 CHINA STRATEGY GROUP

Received:

the minutes of the meeting of the China Strategy Group (08-10).

Noted:

- (i) that good progress was being made in regard to the dual degree MA programme in Media and Communications (with Shanghai University; see *minute 9, Academic Development Committee, 16 October 2007*), and that proposals would be considered at the next meeting of the Programme Scrutiny Sub-committee;
- (ii) that in gaining approval for new programmes, relevant parties should be aware that Communications and Publicity had no set budget for the promotion of new programmes.

6 GOLDSMITHS' APPROACH TO GROWTH

Received:

a discussion paper on options for growth, presented to Council on 29 November 2007 (07-453).

Noted:

- (i) that the notion of growth referred not just to student numbers, but also to income in general;
- (ii) that it would be detrimental to increase the College's student numbers without an associated increase in financial surplus that could be channelled into necessary improvements in infrastructure, resources, and staffing level;
- (iii) that growth was not advisable unless there was an associated improvement in the student experience;
- (iv) that the College should not overestimate the appeal of its "small and friendly" nature, as National Student Survey results demonstrate that this may be outweighed by the students' desire for better resources;
- (v) that the College was aware that it had fallen short in some areas related to customer service (for instance, turnaround times for applications), and that this was a necessary area of improvement in the case of increased growth;
- (vi) that the Committee, in general, endorsed the view that Goldsmiths should grow.

7 GOLDSMITHS' ACADEMIC FOOTPRINT

Received:

a discussion paper from the Warden, presented to Council on 28 June 2007 (07-275).

Noted:

- (i) that across the Higher Education sector, there was a tendency to develop new provision after demand had peaked;

- (ii) that the College should be maintaining awareness of popular school and further education subjects, as development in these areas would affect higher education;
- (iii) that the option of improving flexibility in delivery (eg part-time, evening) should be considered, but that demand for flexible delivery might not be particularly high in the types of courses offered at the College; however, the College could definitely benefit from investigations into alternative modes of delivery such as short courses, work-based learning;
- (iv) that the Committee would welcome a demand-driven response to programme development, given that the College had focussed too long on a supply-driven approach to new programmes; as such, convenors of new programmes should be consulting with Recruitment and Admissions from the beginning to determine market (see *Minute 15, 16 October 2007*);
- (v) that the College's infrastructure was holding it back in some cases, particularly with regard to practice subjects and research, but that strategic solutions could allow for short-term improvements;
- (vi) that the College had not capitalised on opportunities for consultancy, which if aggressively pursued, would benefit the College greatly;
- (vii) that the College should take stock of its strengths; for instance, in the number of Arts and Humanities Research Council grants received;
- (viii) that in terms of the relationship between academic footprint and growth, the College would need to strike an appropriate balance between building on its strengths and responding to demand; it was important for the College to mitigate weaknesses and maximise strengths by choosing where and how to grow.

8 RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2008

Received:

an oral report from the Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions.

Noted:

- (i) that compared to this time last year, applications were down five percent; but that the maximum number of choices students were allowed to enter on their UCAS form had been decreased from six to five, so a drop in applications had been expected;
- (ii) that overseas undergraduate offers were down, as were home postgraduates, but that overseas postgraduate offers were up sixteen percent;
- (iii) that there had been a great deal of inter-departmental variation in regard to application numbers;
- (iv) that the Recruitment and Admissions Office would need to investigate how it could make improvements to ensure the best possible service, particularly as demand for a speedy service was set to increase as more schools encouraged early applications;
- (vi) that the admissions process for some departments had been centralised, and that the results of this had so far been encouraging;
- (vii) that any future changes to the admissions process had to be made in such a way that the confidence of the academic community was maintained.

9 EQUIVALENT LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS

Received:

an oral report from the Head of Planning.

Noted:

- (i) that withdrawal of funding for Equivalent Level Qualifications was definite, and that HEFCE would identify £100m and withdraw this over three years;
- (ii) that these withdrawn funds would remain in Higher Education, but be reprioritised to fund ASNs to increase and widen participation, by focusing public funding mainly on students participating in the system for the first time;
- (iii) that the Committee recognised the withdrawal of ELQ-funding to be crucial in terms of the government's need to be accountable to taxpayers and meet the targets set by the Leitch Review;
- (iv) that the College would experience a reduction of £1m in teaching grants over three years;
- (v) that, due to the likely negative impact of ELQ policy on home postgraduate students (who would be the most vulnerable group), the Senior Management Team had provisionally agreed that the College should subsidise Masters students to the sum of £2300;
- (vi) that due to the small amount of ELQ undergraduate students affected, the College had considered charging the full overseas student fee for these students;
- (vii) that HEFCE would consider exemptions, including undergraduate medicine and dentistry, social work and teacher training; as a college, Goldsmiths would need to determine where it would need to make its own exemptions, for instance for MRes students;
- (viii) that positive and clear communication to all, along with a coherent strategy, would be the most important element in dealing with withdrawal of ELQ funding.

10 CREDIT FRAMEWORK

Received:

a report on proposals for introducing a credit framework for qualifications at Goldsmiths (08-11).

Noted:

- (i) that the proposal was for a framework for credit and not qualification, and as such credit could be awarded for modules, units or qualifications;
- (ii) that a credit framework was in line with the College's drive to improve social access and inclusion by creating a variety of alternative routes with entry and exit credits that acknowledge attainment;
- (iii) that the Committee welcomed the important role a credit framework would have in establishing transparency and comparability of standards, which would improve student mobility;
- (iv) that any changes made would affect only new cohorts, and would not disadvantage current students in any way;
- (v) that the current system of allowing students to fail up to two units during their degree was an obstacle to a credit-based system, as it would appear on a transcript that the students did not have the required number of credits; as such, the issue of condonation of/compensation for failure would be investigated;
- (vi) that the introduction of a credit framework would not devalue a degree in any way, in fact, changes made as a result of the credit framework would improve the academic standards of the degree and encourage better performance;
- (vii) that, as previously, all learning outcomes must be achieved for a pass to be awarded.

Recommended:

that the principle of a credit framework be endorsed as providing an appropriate infrastructure for a range of strategic academic developments.

11 MEETINGS IN 2008

Noted:

that the remaining meeting in the current academic year would be held at 2.00pm on the following date, in Room 110, Deptford Town Hall Building:

Wednesday 23 April 2008

Jessica Pavlos
Quality and Governance Administrator
January 2008