

**GOLDSMITHS  
University of London**

**ACADEMIC BOARD**

**ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
23 April 2008**

- Present:** Professor Nirmala Rao (in the Chair), Dr Catherine Alexander, Ms Vicky Annand, Dr Philip Broadhead, Dr Gavin Butt, Mr Geraint Fox, Dr Andrea Gilroy, 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:** Ms Hannah Bullivant, Mr Jack Gillis, Dr Helen Jones, Ms Rachel Soper.

**OPEN BUSINESS**

**1 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Noted:

- (i) that a member of the QAA's degree-awarding powers/institutional audit team was present to observe the meeting;
- (ii) the Committee's thanks to Liz Thussu, as she would be leaving the College at the end of April to take up the post of Director of Administration and Clerk to the Governing Body at Heythrop College, University of London;
- (iii) the Committee's thanks to the Chair, Professor Nirmala Rao, as she would be leaving the College in August to take up the post of Vice Principal of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

**2 MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2008 be approved, with the following amendments to minute 9:

- (i) that withdrawal of funding for Equivalent Level Qualifications was definite, and that HEFCE ~~would~~ **had been told to identify savings of £100m and withdraw this over three years through implementation of this policy;**
- (ii) that these withdrawn funds would remain in Higher Education, but be ~~reprioritised to fund ASNs to increase and widen participation~~ **redistributed in line with strategic priorities, likely to include** widening participation and focusing public funding mainly on students participating in the system for the first time, **but that no further details or specific proposals had been determined at this 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 **approximately** £1m in teaching grants over three years **and could not afford to ignore the financial consequences of this reduction in funding**;
- (v) **that SMT had agreed the following proposal for Home/EU students with ELQs who first register for a qualification in 2008/09 (ie the forthcoming academic year):**

**For undergraduate students: the appropriate overseas fee will be charged. As only a small number full-time undergraduate students are affected, and undergraduate recruitment remains generally healthy, it is assumed that those who do still want to study will be willing to pay at the same rate as overseas students.**

**For taught postgraduate students: a supplement of £2,300 will be added to the relevant fee for the programme. The supplement reflects the lost HEFCE funding, weighted slightly towards band C funding levels to reflect our student mix.**

- (vi) ~~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;~~
- (vii) ~~that due to the small amount of ELQ undergraduate students affected, the College had considered charging the full overseas student fee for these students;~~
- (viii) that HEFCE ~~would consider exemptions~~ **had proposed exempting certain subjects from the policy**, including undergraduate medicine and dentistry, social work and teacher training; as a college, Goldsmiths would need to determine ~~where~~ **whether** it would ~~need~~ **be willing** to make its own exemptions, for instance for MRes students; **a separate process had been agreed by SMT to consider any such exemptions**;
- (ix) 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.

### **3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Received:

a report from the Secretary (08-166).

### **4 CHINA STRATEGY GROUP**

Received:

the unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the China Strategy Group (08-167).

### **5 RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS**

Received:

a report concerning student admissions for 2008-09 as at March 2008 (08-168).

Noted:

- (i) that these figures represented a very early point in the admissions cycle from which few strong conclusions could be drawn, however early trends included a slight drop in applications and an increase in acceptances;

- (ii) that the biggest area of concern at this stage was home postgraduate students, for which applications, offers and acceptances were all down;
- (iii) that the pilot scheme of centralised admissions had been extended, having been shown to have speeded up the admissions process and thus positively affected conversion rates;
- (iv) that there was no indication that the issues raised in the previous meeting relating to withdrawal of ELQ funding (see *minute 9, 22 January 2008*), despite the fact that unlike many other institutions, the College would be implementing changes in this area effective for the 2008-09 cohort;
- (v) that the College should consider how factors such as closure of the East London Line and the safety of the neighbourhood would affect recruitment, and how recruitment issues resulting from these external factors can be mitigated (for instance, with prospective student visits);
- (vi) that Open Days, while resource-heavy, were a very helpful recruitment tool and the College should consider increasing the number of Open Days, perhaps by offering them after hours and combining them with other events (such as exhibitions);
- (vii) that the results of the National Student Survey should be fed into planning and appropriate communication with departments was necessary to ensure that student issues were addressed in a strategic way, and that the College's response was communicated to students in an effort to make them aware that their comments were considered and did contribute to the enhancement of the student experience.

**Resolved:**

that a paper on a strategic approach to recruitment, highlighting the issues above, be produced for the next meeting.

**6 THE COLLEGE'S GROWTH STRATEGY**

Received:

a paper from the Pro-Warden (Academic) (08-169).

Noted:

the following general points on the growth strategy:

- (i) that the paper, incorporating necessary changes from the Committee and Senior Management Team, would be received by Council members in a special workshop, and should include a SWOTs (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis;
- (ii) that the next step was to identify how to prioritise the ideas put forward in the strategy and identify those activities that were fundamental to achieving growth; the ideas could also be grouped into those that relied on short-term operational changes, and those that relied on long-term strategic developments;
- (iii) that it was important to recognise that different departments might feel they can achieve growth in different ways, and that while some aspects of the strategy would eventually be implemented institutionally, other aspects might suit some departments more than others;
- (iv) that, in addition, departments would need to receive a firm message from the College that the aim was to grow in many ways, not simply by increasing student numbers; in some cases it might be useful to release some staff members from their departmental responsibilities to allow them to concentrate on the growth agenda;

- (v) that in devising a strategy for growth, the College must keep in mind the Student Experience Strategy and its recognition that there is no generic student experience, but rather individual experiences reflecting different backgrounds and identities; as such, our idea of “what a student is” needs to evolve and widen, to ensure that all students are given the same access to achieving the experience set out in the College’s mission statement;
- (vi) that the College must prepare itself for the challenges set by the growth strategy by ensuring its systems are flexible enough to allow for innovation and change;
- (vii) that the College would benefit from playing to its unique selling points; these needed to be identified and incorporated into aspects of branding, programme design and marketing.

the following points in relation to specific sections:

- (i) *re section 2.2, study abroad and internationalising the curriculum*: that Study Abroad is in theory an excellent idea but students have not as yet shown a great deal of enthusiasm for programmes such as Erasmus and Socrates; as such, perhaps the College needed to consider which countries would be popular Study Abroad partners;
- (ii) *re section 3, flexible modes of delivery*: that improvements resulting from modularising the curriculum and introducing a credit framework (supported by the new student records system) would lead to more flexibility for students; this is particularly relevant for the very front-loaded Masters programmes;
- (iii) *re section 4, collaborative provision and partnerships*: that the College would need to better define what “high quality” relationships with institutions of “good standing” means – if decision is made to embark upon a collaboration, the College needed to determine not only what it can offer a collaborative partner, but how the collaboration will benefit the College;
- (iv) *re section 5, engaging with employers*: that, particularly given that HEFCE has proposed to continue providing public funding for students studying for a foundation degree as an ELQ, these should be considered a high priority.

## **7 MEETINGS IN 2008-09**

Noted:

that future meetings would be held on the following dates:

Tuesday 21 October 2008  
Tuesday 13 January 2009  
Wednesday April 29 2009

Jessica Pavlos  
Quality and Governance Administrator  
April 2008