

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

ACADEMIC BOARD AND COUNCIL

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 31 Oct 2007

Present: Lady Celia Goodhart (Chair), Ms Vicky Annand, Professor Dennis Atkinson, Mr Alex Blandford, Dr Philip Broadhead, Ms Mary Bown, Richard Ford, Ms Bindiya Patel, Mr Chris Pearson

Attendance: Ms Lynda Agili, Ms Hilary Lowe, Ms Jeanette Muff

Apologies: Professor Sara Ahmed, Dr Rosalyn George, Mr James Souter, Mr Bob Westaway

OPEN BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that the Disability Co-ordinator would be leaving Goldsmiths at the end of term and thanked her for all her work on the Committee.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Richard Ford was present as the nominated UNISON substitute for Ms Suzanne Stead.

2 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

To consider any requests from members that items identified for Formal Decision or Report should be the subject of substantive discussion.

3 APPROVAL OF ITEMS FOR FORMAL DECISION

To confirm all formal decisions as proposed in the circulated papers.

4 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2007 be approved.

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) Vicky Annand reported that she had raised the issues on safety in the local area and on public transport identified in the Gender Equality Survey with Mrs Joan Ruddock MP (Lewisham Deptford) and the Students' Union have also raised these issues at a number of transport-related focus groups.

(ii) Arrangements for the Admission of Applicants Under the Age of 18 – this policy is still under development and any feedback may be sent to the Equal Opportunity Advisor, who will forward them to the Academic Registrar.

Matters for Discussion

6 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Received:

the revised Standing Orders for the College which were approved by Council on 28 June 2007, following consultation with Academic Board on 6 June, to take effect from 1 September 2007. (07-306)

7 COLLEGE POLICY ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Received:

the College policy which was approved by Council on 23 March 2006 to take effect from 1 September 2006 and remained unchanged for 2007-08. (07-307)

8 THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM AND TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

Received:

the Committee structure and details of membership and terms of reference of this Committee. (07-343)

Noted:

that the Pro Warden (Students and Learning Development) would formally recommend that a representative from Estates be added to fill the vacant Committee member position.

9 COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE 2006-07

Received:

a report by the Equal Opportunity Advisor to advise Committee on progress in meeting the objectives for 2006-07. (07-344)

Noted:

(i) that this new style formalised the E&DC Annual Report which had always been produced for good practice and that item 10 now encompassed the full range of work from the Equal Opportunity Advisor;

(ii) that it was proposed to introduce a Dignity At Work policy to replace the existing Code to Combat Bullying and Harassment;

(iii) that the Pro Warden (Students and Learning Development) asked that thanks to the Equal Opportunity Advisor and team for a significant year's work under great time pressures be minuted.

10 ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ADVISOR

Received:

a report by the Equal Opportunity Advisor to advise Committee on progress throughout 2006-07. (07-345)

Noted:

(i) that key achievements this year had included the implementation of the Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and action plans; carrying out impact assessments in relation to the Research Assessment Exercise; providing research and advice to departments on equality issues; maintaining links with local organisations and investigating and advising on cases of bullying and harassment;

(ii) that the recruitment of an Equality & Diversity Administrator had proved very useful in these tasks in addition to Committee work.

Resolved:

that the attached report be submitted to Academic Board and Council.

11 REPORT ON FORMAL STUDENT APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS 2006-07

Received:

the Annual Report and Appendix from the Academic Registrar previously discussed at Academic Board on 7 March 2007. (07-094)

Noted:

that the actual numbers of complaints and appeals are contained in the appendix in addition to the percentages quoted in the report.

12 REVIEW OF COLLEGE CODE OF PRACTICE RELATING TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Received:

the report from the Equal Opportunity Advisor to inform members of the Committee of the College Code of Practice relating to Equal Opportunities (07-347)

Noted:

(i) that members were asked if they wish to make suggestions for change;

(ii) that discussions about the usefulness of collecting new data as a baseline for future monitoring was tempered against the need to ensure the College data management systems were first improved to be able to hold this information reliably;

(iii) that in principle it was agreed that the next data collection exercise should consider including the headings sexual orientation and religion or belief;

(iv) that it was recognised staff often didn't declare any disability as it was perceived they may be disadvantaged by doing so;

(v) that the next staff information-gathering exercise be performed to collect as much necessary details together and be advertised so that staff realise the importance and reasoning behind providing their details.

13 STANDING ITEM ON DISABILITY

Received:

the report of the Disability Co-ordinator, Student Services. (07-348)

Noted:

(i) that a breakdown of numbers using the Assistive Technology Centre would be useful so as to inform Academic Board;

(ii) that the Chair asked for assurance that there was still support for students using assistive technology.

14 REPORT ON DEAF AWARENESS WORKSHOP

Received:

a report from Staff Development detailing the RNID workshop run on 26 September 2007. (07-358)

Noted:

(i) that this training had been implemented after suggestion from the Equal Opportunities Facilitators and feedback had been very positive so further sessions are planned;

(ii) that the problem of acoustics in rooms with little dampening (such as in Deptford Town Hall) made it difficult for people who are hard of hearing and that the Equal Opportunity Advisor would contact Estates to suggest that simple, low-cost options be considered.

15 PROGRESS ON COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORTS ON RACE AND DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEMES AND GENDER EQUALITY SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION

Received:

an oral report from the Equal Opportunity Advisor on progress in producing the College Annual Race and Disability Equality Reports and the Gender Equality Scheme implementation.

Noted:

(i) that the Gender Equality Scheme had been successfully ratified by Council;

(ii) that as part of next term's monitoring, the Equal Opportunity Advisor would talk to Students' Union elected officers to consider running student focus groups;

(iii) that the first Disability Equality Scheme annual monitoring exercise would take part in December and the first Gender Equality Scheme one in April; thereafter a suitable date to consolidate with the Race Equality Scheme would be sought;

(iv) that the Equality & Diversity Team are now keeping folders of good practice found throughout the College so any information on the Race, Disability or Gender Schemes can be forwarded to the team for filing throughout the year.

16 PROGRESS ON RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Received:

an oral report from the Research Administrator on the final Research Assessment Exercise.

Noted:

(i) that a summary of the process used (as available on the College website and circulated to staff at the beginning of the Research Assessment Exercise) was given;

(ii) that HEFCE guidelines were used in determining key issues, such as special circumstances for fewer outputs (eg illness, part-time working, maternity returners etc), and staff had had opportunity to appeal if they felt that any decisions were unfair;

(iii) that two dry-runs and impact assessments were performed to ensure that any issues could be addressed prior to the final submission;

(iv) that the final submission passed to SMT and the Warden will be backed up by an extra check of data in mid-November to allow for inclusion of any further publications.

17 PROGRESS ON DISABILITY SYMBOL (TWO TICKS SCHEME)

Received:

an oral report from the Equal Opportunity Advisor on progress made on drafting a project plan .

Noted:

(i) that feedback has been provided by the HR Committee;

(ii) that support from Heads of Departments is needed to ensure a successful implementation.

18 GUIDELINES FOR PRODUCING PRINT MATERIALS

Received:

a report from Communications and Publicity advising on accessible methods of producing print materials. (07-370)

Noted:

(i) that these good practice guidelines will now be widely circulated and made available on the College website;

(ii) that Committee papers are not yet covered in these guidelines but it was anticipated they would be in the next academic year.

19 MEETING THE DUTY - AN ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO THE DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY

Received:

the final report from the Disability Rights Commission advising on meeting the Disability Equality Duty. (07-377)

Noted:

(i) that twenty-one Disability Equality Schemes randomly selected across the sector were checked;

(ii) that the Equal Opportunity Advisor will identify good practice for future work.

20 DRAFT NOTES FROM THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FACILITATORS MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2007

Received:

the notes from the Equal Opportunity Advisor for information. (07-349)

Noted:

(i) that issues around how to simplify processes for disabled staff needing equipment were discussed and that these should be advertised on the College website and in Hallmark so that people were more aware of them;

(ii) that HR are to advise whether or not staff have to pay for their own dyslexia assessments (as do students).

Other Business

21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

22 NEXT MEETINGS

Noted:

that the next meetings will be held on 29 January 2008 and 1 May 2008.