

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE
University of London

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2007

- Present:** Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Ms Vicky Annand, Mr Andrew Brett, Mr Hugh Jones, Professor Marj Mayo, Mr Chris Pearson, Professor Jane Powell.
- In attendance:** Ms Johanna May (Secretary), Mr Steve Collins (for item 7), Ms Hilary Lowe (for item 8).
- Apologies:** Dr Basem El Haddadeh, Professor Celia Lury, Mr Brendan Prendeville, Mr Terry Rosenberg.

1 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

The standing orders effective from 1 September 2007 were noted.

2 COLLEGE POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The College policy on conflicts of interest was noted and no conflicts were declared.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

The terms of reference, composition and membership were noted.

4 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE

The annual review of the Committee for 2006-07 was approved. It was agreed that a draft report on the review of the operation of the committee during 2007-08 would be presented for consideration to this Committee at the last meeting in this cycle.

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2007 were approved.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Re: minute 3.1 (Statute 14) it was noted that the Registrar and Secretary had now engaged lawyers to assist with the review of Statute 16 (formerly Statute 14).

Re: minute 3.2. (Review of Occupational Health (OH) provision) the Director of Human Resources reported that recommendations in this area had been part of the HR review and he was about to set up a project to provide the new provision. In the meantime some provision came from the College Medical Centre with cases needing specific OH expertise being referred to the OH department at the Marsden.

It was noted that information on how to handle staff who became disabled during the course of their employment would be helpful for managers; the

Director of Human Resources indicated the new sickness and capability procedures would make these pathways clear.

The Registrar and Secretary commented that the College was current re-negotiating the College health service for students and this imminent change would be a staging post for the introduction of the new occupational health provision.

7. STAFF DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Received:

a paper from the Head of Staff Development on the current work agenda in his section (07-362) which detailed the eight highest priority projects

The Head of Staff Development indicated that the top priority – the on line induction – had gone live that day and would be followed up by inviting on line feedback from new starters which would include information on how they had been inducted at departmental level. He explained that there were currently two central inductions per year (usually in March and October).

The Head of Staff Development indicated he planned to visit each department after the cycle of performance and development reviews had been completed to build up a consolidated staff development plan based on the collective issues arising which could be fed into the work programme of the Staff Development Unit for the next 12 months.

The Chair indicated he would welcome a future report on this process.

The Committee agreed that the benefit of the PDR process was that it created and allowed a dialogue between line managers and the people they managed and that this was very important. The Chair commented favourably on the job chat forms devised for manual workers' PDR.

It was noted that the junior management programme would involve attendance at four half day sessions, and at three learning sets of 2 hours' duration with some on line learning and that this course could usefully prepare people for future management roles as well as assisting staff currently in such roles.

The Chair commented that this programme represented a huge amount of investment which should yield significant benefits in the next 12-18 months.

8. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ADVISER

Received:

a report from the Equal Opportunities Adviser on the progress that had been made towards meeting the Equality and Diversity Committee's objectives for 2006-07 as well current activities

The EO Adviser indicated that the disability schemes of 21 HEI's had been monitored in order to report on good practice in the sector but that the College's scheme had not been selected for review under this process.

It was noted that the impact assessment on the RAE process was ongoing with monitoring of a third stage of selection still to take place.

On the issue of monitoring the EO Adviser indicated that the intention was ultimately to bring together the monitoring process for the three current schemes. Currently Disability and Race had to be monitored by December and Gender by April. Following this the date for future monitoring exercises would be determined. The data necessary for this exercise was also required for Quality Assurance purposes and so the plan was to co-ordinate this exercise with the needs of that office.

It was noted that future activities would include a policy on transgendered staff and revising the Equal Opportunities Policy.

There then followed an extensive discussion on the operation of the two ticks symbol – the introduction of which was to be considered by the Equal Opportunities Committee at future date - which guaranteed an interview to disabled candidates who met the selection criteria and the concerns of some members of the Committee that this could result in a large number of applicants having to be interviewed. It was noted that the focus should be on getting the right people in and looking at their abilities and that the College had a duty actively to promote disability. It was noted that person specifications might have to be more tightly drafted than had previously been the case.

It was also noted that although it was still planned to have one unified equality opportunities and action plan (rather than three separate plans for Disability, Gender and Race), it had been thought preferable to look at the issues arising from all these plans and integrate those into one action plan, rather than to try and integrate the schemes in isolation from the overall action plan.

It was noted that a further report would be made to the Committee on this aspect.

9. PAY AND GRADING RESTRUCTURING UPDATE

The Registrar and Secretary reported that negotiations on the implementation of the Framework Agreement were continuing and it was hoped to have a package for ballot after Christmas with an implementation package to take place in Spring. Work was ongoing on drawing up role descriptions for academic staff, progression policies and agreeing new payscales. Discussions had also taken place on the harmonisation of terms and conditions of service and it was hoped that an in principle agreement could be reached this term. All changes to salaries would be backdated to 1 August 2006. In summary, although progress had not been as fast as had been hoped, the process was nearing completion. It was noted that not all HEIs had yet implemented the Framework Agreement and that staff were regularly kept up to date on progress by a joint newsletter distributed with payslips, the next one being sent out this month.

10. CURRENT CASEWORK

Noted:

the report attached to the agenda and the comparative data (tabled) on the level and type of casework compared to the same period last year.

11. REVIEW OF HR SERVICES

The Director of HR reported that the HR review had gone well with colleagues impressed firstly that it was being done and secondly that it was being undertaken by external consultants. The report had looked at how to do things better, had been completed by the end of August and submitted to the Senior Management Team in October with a set of proposals on how its recommendations could be implemented.

The Senior Management Team had been impressed by this vision of the future which involved a change of culture and wanted this to be proactively taken forward by the institution. It was acknowledged that there would be real challenges in relation to the change of culture needed – academics were appointed largely because of their expertise in academic functions and they would need a lot of new skills and support to engage in the HR management process.

SMT had indicated they would like to look again at balancing the savings that could be gained from the re-organisation against the investment needed to effect it. It was recognised that implementing this review would require an initially greater investment which would be followed in the medium term by a reduction in spend. There was professional acceptance from the HR team as to what was in the report and its vision for the College chimed with initiatives in other areas.

It was noted that the review had implications for restructuring beyond HR and into academic departments and this could fuel the tension around appointing academic heads of department for 3 years which involved some sacrifice on their part given the pressure to be productive in academic terms. It was felt it would not be possible to juggle these conflicting demands unless there was more administrative support in each department to accommodate the outflow of some tasks from HR although it was acknowledged that it would be good to free up HR to feed in other support to departments.

It was acknowledged that there was a necessity to review procedures and to have a robust policy framework with more responsibility for implementing it at departmental level.

The Director of HR agreed that that heads of departments (HODs) needed better support and tools to deliver the responsibilities they already had. He cited these tools as being robust policies, the introduction of e.recruitment to reduce the paperwork and intervention needed by HR in the recruitment process, better support and advice as to how to tackle problems, better management information and good quality support so that HR staff were not filling in bits of paper but spending time on making a difference to quality.

The Chair commented that a lot of time was spent by HR and departments in reacting and not being pro active as borne out by a lot of discussion at this committee which was about reacting to and coping with and problem solving. The review would depend on HR being able to help and support departments in the transition period to accept the responsibility they already had. Too much money and time was being spend on the 2-3% of people with problems whereas the College should be investing and helping the 97% and HR could change this emphasis in partnership with managers.

It was acknowledged that there needed to be discussions on what HODs were to take on and how much support would be provide centrally and locally. The shift in resources from the centre to departments needed to be taken into account and the role of administrators was key since their advisory role to HODs was critical and their presence ongoing in the department. They – like HODs – needed careful induction and training.

It was noted that the DHR planned to circulate a summary of the HR report to staff who had taken part in the review (such a wide circulation being possible by excluding some of the commercially sensitive information that had led the report to be put on the Reserved Business section of this agenda).

The Chair thanked all those who had participated in the review of HR and indicated this committee looked forward to being briefed on progress on the implementation of the review at future meetings.

12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNSELLING SERVICE 2006-07

Received:

the annual report of the Counselling service; it was noted that the issues in that report correlated with those identified in other reports to this Committee.

13. MEASUREMENT

The Director of HR reported that Kevin Browne, the HR Manager with special responsibility for systems and management information had now taken up his position and was concentrating on familiarising himself with the HR system (Pyramid) including data cleansing and issues of access and training. He had also been assisted by Rachel Soper, an MBA student in scoping the management information needs of departments. The next stage would be to develop the Pyramid system and enable staff to self –serve on the system.

The Chair confirmed that the Committee had previously identified the need for SMT to have a “basket” of management data so they could see what was happening in departments; it was good that HODs had also been asked what they wanted as leaders of departments, the Director of HR indicated that it would need a few months to get the data right and that it could be April before HR was able to provide good reports.

14. SUBMISSION OF MINUTES TO FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

It was noted that it would be appropriate for the minutes of this committee to be submitted to the F&R for information since the majority of the expenditure of the College was on staff.

Resolved: to pursue this possibility further

15. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

Thursday 24 January 2008 2.00 p.m.

Tuesday 13 May 2008 2.00 p.m.