

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE
University of London

COUNCIL

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (JCC)

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 29 October 2007

Present: Mr Hugh Jones(Chair), Ms Pamela Beevers (UCU), Dr Ben Levitas (UCU,.) Mr Chris Pearson, Ms Suzanne Stead (UNISON)

Apologies: Professor Simon McVeigh, Dr Philip Broadhead

In attendance: Ms Johanna May

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

It was agreed that this item would be discussed under the review of the JCC (below).

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2007 were approved.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

(i) (re: minute 3.1, CCTV in Library) that the Director of Human Resources had now written to UNISON, as promised.

(ii) (re: minute 4, Recognition/Facilities Time Agreement) that UNISON would like to look again at the draft Agreement they had submitted in 2005, but which, due to time commitments, it had not been possible to discuss in detail; they indicated they proposed to submit a new draft in May 2008

Resolved: that discussion of this matter be deferred until that time

(iii) (re: minute 10, Review of Occupational Health (OH)) that through the

review of HR, the HR department was now looking at the provision of a new OH service which would be a separate provision from that for Students which would continue to be provided by the Medical Centre (which was shortly to relocate)

that this service would ensure that staff were healthy and safe within the terms of their work and the College could be advised about any adjustment needing to be made to their work because of their health issues; the relevant legislation gave employees the right to see the report made on them, the right to amend it or to attach their comments to it

- (iv) (re: minute 14 – research leave) that Professor McVeigh was currently drafting a questionnaire which would be sent to heads of academic departments shortly asking about the policy in each department; the results of this survey would be analysed and discussed at the next meeting of the Research Committee on 21 November and Professor McVeigh would like to meet with UCU representatives in advance of this so they could inform the development of the wider policy

that the UCU very much welcomed this approach

- (v) re: Minute 18 (Observer status on Committees) the unions' views that observer status on committees e.g. the HR Committee would enable the unions to relay the committee's activity more accurately to members, thus increasing transparency in the institution; they also believed their status at Council should be expanded to provide them with the opportunity to contribute to discussions which would provide another point of view and enable some issues to be resolved more quickly.

the view of the College representatives that on balance the present arrangements were satisfactory but that it would be useful to re-examine the role and functions of the JCC to ensure it fulfilled its purpose as a conduit of information between unions and management.

7

REVIEW OF ESTATES AND ESTATES STRATEGY

Noted:

- (i) that there had been some outstanding issues to deal with in relation to the transfer of the cleaning services – to do with the implications of the Framework Agreement. A meeting was taking place shortly with the contractors to clarify and hopefully to resolve these issues; the unions would kept informed of developments in this case
- (ii) the comments of the Registrar and Secretary that the College was trying to recruit a new Director of Estates and that meanwhile the Head of Administration in Estates was acting into that role; the new Director would be asked to take stock of the Estates Review concentrating on the cleaning, access and security services
- (iii) that the College was seeking a short extension to the current security firm until the interim/new Director could address these issues; that in the meantime the Estates department was addressing the backlog of

maintenance works and progress could be followed on the intranet

- (iv) that the refurbishment of the Whitehead Building had been delayed due to unforeseen difficulties but the project was now back on track and the building would be handed back to the College by 17 December although work on the exterior would continue into the Spring term; it was very much regretted that staff had been subject to additional inconvenience as a result of this and the Registrar and Secretary knew from experience how wearing and disruptive the process of locating to temporary offices had been for staff; the question of the liability of the additional costs due to the delay would be examined
- (v) the painting of the houses in Laurie Grove had greatly improved that environment; the College also planned to introduce a rational system of signage; a suggestion that the Senior Common Room would benefit from a re-vamp which could usefully include provision of a catering facility

8 REVIEW OF HR

Noted

- (i) the report of the Director of HR that the review of HR had not contained too many surprises – data and processes needed significant work and HR was too reactive. The report had been discussed with the Senior Management Team and the Director of HR had put forward a phased implementation plan which SMT were considering in the light of further financial information.
- (ii) the report would be summarised and circulated since it was important that staff knew of its recommendations and what was going to change in the short term; the full report could not be circulated as it contained commercially confidential information
- (iii) it would be useful to see how HR reviewed itself and how benchmarks would be established to assess its progress
- (iv) the report was all about interactions and how HR would work with other people in the College

9 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEWS IN ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS AND AREAS

Noted

- (i) the concerns expressed by the trade union representatives about some recent re-organisations in academic departments and areas; the UCU had already had some discussion with the Director of HR about lessons learnt in relation to the re-organisations in the Modern Foreign Languages area of the Language Studies Centre and redundancies in the Department of Art but the unions wanted their concerns in these matters to be expressed at this meeting
- (ii) the confirmation of the Director of HR that he had had discussions with the UCU full time and local officials on this matter and his observation

during his first year in this position was that there needed to be more co-ordination and handling of issues on a project basis. In Visual Arts, where one year of a two year programme had taken place, re-visiting the first year had not been helpful. Things had been done on an ad hoc basis and a lot of time had been lost which meant that other processes, i.e. interviews, had been at the back end of the process and taken place too late. The starting point should have been "what do we want to achieve and by when?". Communication with staff could have been better - one lesson learnt was that you cannot communicate enough and you need to reinforce what you have already said.

- (iii) there had been a lack of clarity about who was responsible for dealing with specific aspects of re-organisations and how the College operated with the Trade unions i.e. whether the College should work with local or full time officials and the limit of their authority.
- (iv) the HR review had stressed the need to be clear about who was responsible for what i.e. what HR should do and what our colleagues should do. It was agreed that there needed to be clear routes of consultation, appropriate training for managers and transparency.

10 THE REVIEW OF THE JCC

Noted

- (i) the views of the UCU representatives to the effect that it was inappropriate to maintain the JCC only as a consultative committee. In fact it had powers to negotiate, as demonstrated by the fact that it would be the body signing off the Framework Agreement. They were also concerned that issues that should have been brought to this Committee had not been done so, the Committee should also have been more responsive to issues as they arose
- (ii) the view of the Director of HR that it would be appropriate to have an Employee Relations Committee or Forum with multiple functions of consulting, informing and negotiating with meetings between management and unions taking place monthly with report backs made back to the formal body every term.
- (iii) that both sides would consider proposals for the way forward on this matter and bring them to the next meeting
- (iv) that the annual report of this committee should reflect the fact that the terms of reference of this committee were under review.

11 UPDATING OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Noted:

- (i) the comment of the UNISON representative that there had been some changes in the practice of conducting disciplinary hearings which were welcomed – for example hearings being chaired by independent managers rather than by the Head of Department and investigations

being conducted by independent managers, but that it was unfortunate that the written procedures had not yet been updated to reflect these changes

- (ii) the comment of the Director of Human Resources that it was planned to update the disciplinary procedures as soon as possible

12 NURSERY FEES

Noted:

- (i) that the College currently provided a substantial subsidy for the Nursery which was not sustainable and it was recognised that the current accommodation was not suitable
- (ii) that the project to provide new Nursery premises was under review given that the costs were now known to be much higher than originally estimated
- (iii) that the latest OFSTED report had confirmed that the Nursery was providing high quality care and education but that under HERA salaries were likely to increase which in turn would have an impact on the Nursery fees

13 USE OF GCINFO FOR UNION BUSINESS

Noted

- (i) the request of the unions that they have access to GCINFO for disseminating information which might be of general interest to the College community.
- (ii) that some concerns had been expressed by the Head of Communications about this request since access to GCINFO was purposely restricted and the number of messages disseminated limited to ensure recipients did not feel overwhelmed. She felt there could be more efficient and appropriate ways for union messages to be communicated and had offered her advice on this basis.
- (iii) this offer of assistance was welcomed by the unions.

14 REPORT BACK FROM PAY FORUM

Noted:

- (i) that the pay forum had continued to meet according to its schedule and it was hoped to go to ballot on an agreement early in the calendar year with an implementation date around March.
- (ii) that there was a significant amount of work to be done before this point was reached

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FINANCIAL POSITION

Noted:

- (i) that the end of year statements for last year were not yet available, but it was believed that student recruitment had been relatively healthy and so HEFCE grants would be as expected
- (ii) there was however still a need to make savings in the budget to achieve the planned budget surplus the year after next

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DEPARTMENT OF ART

Noted:

- (i) the comment of the Registrar and Secretary that it had become clear that there were some problems in the Department of Art evident through expressed student dissatisfaction and low morale among some staff which had given rise to a number of grievances and complaints. The Warden had therefore appointed a small team consisting of the Pro Warden Students and Learning Development, Dr Philip Broadhead, Professor Jane Powell as a former academic Head of Department and the Registrar and Secretary, to find out the facts, how the department was functioning and how things were working, or not.
- (ii) this investigation was not a substitute for formal procedures but was an attempt to find out what was going on with no preconceptions.
- (iii) the Registrar and Secretary would forward the terms of reference and rationale, and what was hoped to achieve by this review, to the unions.
- (iv) the Warden had now met the Acting Head of Department, Sam Fisher, who was supportive of the exercise and there would be a departmental meeting to brief staff on the investigation next week.
- (v) the union representatives' view that this was a very helpful development since unfortunately it did appear that there had been a breakdown of trust in this area.

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DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

Noted

the dates for the remaining meetings of this Committee in the current academic year would be:

Monday 18 February 2008

Monday 19 May 2008