

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

ACADEMIC BOARD

**STUDENT COMMITTEE
29 April 2008**

- Present:** Dr Philip Broadhead (Chair), Ms Mary Bright, Ms Hannah Bullivant, Ms Sarah Chowdry, Mr Jack Gillis, Mr James Hutchinson, Ms Rachael Johnson (for Mr Basem El-Haddadeh), Mr Ed Randall, Dr Richard Smith (for Linda France), Ms Alison Ahern (Secretary).
- Apologies:** Mr Bob Westaway
- In attendance:** Mr Andrew Brett, Ms Anne Francis, Quality and Governance Administrator (note-taking)

OPEN BUSINESS

25 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Noted:

- (i) the Committee's thanks to James Hutchinson, who would be leaving to take up a post in the Students' Union at the University of Exeter;
- (ii) the Committee's thanks to Hannah Bullivant and Jack Gillis, both of whom would be standing down as sabbatical officers of the Students' Union.

26 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Noted:

that Item 9, Student Charter, would be discussed.

27 MINUTES

Resolved:

that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2008 be approved, with a minor amendment to correct the spelling of Anne Francis's name.

28 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

- (i) re Item 17 (i): that consultations on amending the composition of the Committee to include the Head of the Learning and Teaching Office were ongoing;

[Secretary's note: It has subsequently been decided not to proceed with this for 2008-09, pending consideration of other issues concerning ex officio membership.]

- (ii) re Item 19: that the Student Charter had been approved at the meeting of Academic Board on 17 February 2008, and that the Chair and Secretary of Student Committee were working on an action plan to implement it.

29 MATURE STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Received:

a report on Mature Students from the Students' Union (08-194).

Noted:

- (i) that the majority of students in each category were in fact satisfied; two-thirds were happy overall with their Goldsmiths experience;
- (ii) that some recommendations arising from this report had already been acted upon: the development of the Student Learning Area in the Rutherford Information Services Building and a "one-stop shop" at the front of the Richard Hoggart Building, revisions made to the personal tutor's handbook, and the continuation of the Programme Monitoring Pilot;
- (iii) that two years ago a similar project had been commissioned for postgraduate students and the current project demonstrated a marked improvement on the results received previously;
- (iv) that it was important for the College to keep in mind that the student experience was different for mature students than it was for students younger than 21, and that their needs and experiences reflected this;
- (v) that in the recent planning round the library had requested more money, particularly to use for licences for e-materials and the like, which would improve accessibility for mature students who are unable to spend as much time on campus;
- (vi) that it was important that the College's response to feedback 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 for the next meeting of Student Committee, a clear overview of recommendations from this report would be produced.

30 INDUCTION PLANNING

Received:

a report from the Chair on induction plans for 2008-09 (08-195).

Noted:

- (i) that the College would have to make changes to how it delivered information to students over the induction period, particularly as the volume of information was so high and received over a very short period, resulting in an information overload for most students;

- (ii) that in planning the induction process, the input of various relevant parties should be sought in order to streamline induction processes and avoid duplication of information;
- (iii) that the induction process should be seen as not just a practical induction to Goldsmiths, but also an introduction to higher education in general;
- (iv) that some elements of the induction process should be carried out online where possible, however given that the induction period was a good time for students to begin building up networks and making friends, it was very important to ensure that any changes to the induction programme didn't negatively impact on the time students had to get to know each other and familiarise themselves with the campus.

Resolved:

that the process for induction be mapped out and streamlined for the 2008-09 induction.

31 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Received:

a paper detailing the sustainable travel plans for Goldsmiths (08-196).

Noted:

- (i) that Transport for London would be providing the College with £10000 at the end of the consultancy period, for the College to use as it saw fit;
- (ii) that two major issues relating to travel at the College were the closure of the East London Line (which had aggravated the parking problems at the College) and the lack of appropriate shelter/security for bicycles;
- (iii) that the Committee would receive details of the outcome of the sustainable travel plan at the next meeting.

32 STUDENT CHARTER

(Minute 19, 5 February 2008, refers)

Received:

a report from the Pro Warden (Students and Learning Development) on the progress of the Student Charter (08-77).

Noted:

- (i) that the Students' Union was happy to see that comments from the last committee meeting had been incorporated;
- (ii) that although the students felt that perhaps the Charter focussed too heavily on the 3D Graduate programme, it was recognised that the Programme was a vital component of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy;
- (iii) that the section on Learner Voice should include a bullet point stating "we will make you aware of the feedback systems available to you", in recognition of the need to adequately publicise these systems.

Recommended:

that minor drafting changes to the Student Charter be incorporated and forwarded to Academic Board for approval.

33 COUNSELLING REPORT

Received:

a report from the Student Counselling Service (08-197).

34 STUDENT BAROMETER

Received:

a report on the outcomes from the Student Barometer - StudentPulse survey of students (08-193).

It was noted that this was the first year the College had participated in the Student Barometer, a student survey which would allow the College to be benchmarked against other universities in London and in the 1994 Group to ensure meaningful comparisons. Given that the Barometer surveyed students in waves, it provided an excellent opportunity to track students' feedback over time. It was recognised in considering the results that it was important for the College to separate the issues it could control (learning spaces, accommodation, social activities etc) from those it could not control (cost of living in London, the locality).

A number of factors were recognised in relation to specific areas/departments, including careers, IT and residences. The Careers Service had been surprised at its low scores, which ran counter to the feedback received by the office itself; as such the question was raised as to whether students had been asked at the outset whether they had in fact actually used the service. Another area with puzzlingly low scores was internet access, because most students had direct internet access in halls and for those that had communal or no access, this was reflected in the cost of accommodation. It was noted that plans were in place to improve the students halls and that communication of these plans to students was vitally important.

In terms of arrival issues, the ISB reflected students' difficulties in opening a bank account. It appeared that the College's relationship with the onsite bank was not beneficial to students, and that this might be improved by appropriately following through on complaints and ensuring students had access to detailed information about how to deal with the bank.

The Committee noted the importance of the recommendations 4.1 – 4.6, which encompassed the arrival process, learning resources and environment, living issues and support services.

Resolved:

that details of the results of the Student Barometer be referred to the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee when available.

35 NEXT MEETING

Noted:

that the next meeting would be held on 4 November 2008.

Jessica Pavlos/Alison Ahern
May 2008