

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE
University of London

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2008

Present: Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Mr Michael Dick, Professor Mark d'Inverno, Mr Barry Douglas, Dr Basem El Haddadeh, Dr Helen Jones, Mr Hugh Jones, Mr Chris Pearson, Mr Terry Rosenberg, Ms Becca Watts (deputising for Ms V. Annand)

In attendance: Mrs Rebecca Pearson (Secretary), Mr Kevin Browne (for item 10), Mr Steve Collins (for items 12 and 14), Mr Alex Gibson, Stepstone (for item 7), Mr Robert Jackson, Stepstone, (for item 7).

Apologies: Ms Vicky Annand, Professor Celia Lury, Professor Marj Mayo

1 MINUTES

Resolved:

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2008

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Nothing was raised by the Committee

3 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY

Received:

The policy is circulated at the first meeting of each academic session. The policy was noted and no members declared a conflict of interest.

4 AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Received:

the last amendments were in 2007 and were received and noted.

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE, COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP

Received:

The Chair reminded Committee members of the importance of their roles in contributing to and monitoring of strategic items. The Chair also informed the Committee that the minutes of the HR Committee will go to the Finance & Resources Committee, which will next meet on 6th November 2008. It is planned that members of the HR Committee should receive copies of minutes of the HR Committee within 2 weeks of the meeting.

6 IMPLEMENTATION OF HR REVIEW - STAFFING

Received:

the report on the new staffing structure in the HR Department, including Business Partner team departmental remits.

The new staffing structure had now been implemented following the HR review. New staff members had now joined, apart from Nicola Gray (HR Business Partner – Team C, who joins on 3 November 2008). Recruitment for the positions of PA to the Director of HR and Staff Development Assistant were taking place in the next few days.

Business Partner teams had already begun setting up meetings with their constituent departments. The programme was for much more proactivity with HR going to customers rather than vice versa. Other upcoming activities would include an HR Forum in November to introduce the team to all Department Administrators and to provide HR with the opportunity to update them on certain items; in December an open meeting would be held for Heads of Departments. There would also be an article in Hallmark in the next edition.

The Director of HR also reported on progress with changes to the recruitment process i.e. the introduction of e-recruitment (see item 7 below). The college had now signed a contract with Stepstone and it was planned that the system be implemented by end January / beginning February 2009. The intention was to have all departments working with e-recruitment by Easter.

In relation to the new HR structure some queries were raised regarding the client departments of Teams A, B & C. The Director of HR clarified that the three teams had been allocated a mixture of academic and support departments. Academic departments had been allocated according to Pro Warden linkage, and support departments had been allocated to give each team a mix of large & small departments so the headcount per team was roughly similar. The Chair suggested that the committee should encourage all departments to make full use of the new Business Partner teams.

In response to a request the Director of HR agreed to circulate to Heads of Department the job descriptions of the HR Business Partners and Assistant Business Partners.

The Director of HR also provided an update on Occupational Health. 11 tenders had been received and it was planned to make a decision by the end of the week. Goldsmiths was currently using the Royal Marsden Hospital on an ad-hoc basis. It is intended that the new service should be in place by the end of January 2009 at the latest.

7 INTRODUCTION OF E-RECRUITMENT

A presentation was given by Alex Gibson of Stepstone, which is part of the Guardian Group. Stepstone was formed 8 years ago and had a large number of clients. Clients included organisations from the HE sector (e.g. Universities of: Essex, Kent, Newcastle, York, Birkbeck College, and City University, London), plus Local/Central Government, others in the not-for-profit sector and also private sector clients.

It was planned that implementation of e recruitment would take 12 weeks and be in place by end January / beginning February 2009.

Some features of the product included:

- More targeted tailoring of recruitment campaigns to a job
- Online authorisation of vacancies
- On line candidate self assessment against pre-determined criteria

- On line candidate booking of their own interview slots, reminder text messages, automatic confirmation letter, maps
- Online psychometric testing function
- Speculative applications bank and talent pool
- System security in terms of data protection and confidentiality – notes on applicants, scoring etc were only accessible by those authorised and applicants could access details. Applicants would also have their own password protected log in system, so that others could not access their data.
- On line reading and sifting of applications which could be accessed/read as they arrive in, or could be saved and accessed at specific closing dates depending on the working preferences of those involved in the recruitment process;
- Quick generation of recruitment reports
- Online feedback from applicants surveys can be gathered from applicants
- The system also allowed other functions to be incorporated
- easy to use, icon driven and intuitive

It was noted that reports from other institutions using the system had been positive and that time and money spent had been reduced. In terms of advertising, money was saved as the positions were automatically posted on to the Guardian's online jobs site and jobs.ac.uk whilst for press advertisements, a small ad can be placed simply directing the individual to the website which will contain all the details.

The Chair asked if there were any downsides – Alex & Robert stated that so far, clients have given good feedback, and have found implementation of the system to be almost challenge free.

Further information on the system can be found at www.stepstonesolutions.com

8 PAY AND GRADING RESTRUCTURING UPDATE

The Director of HR updated Committee members on progress with the Pay & Grading exercise. All new grading had now been implemented and there were a small number of appeals being dealt with.

Two major issues remained to be resolved in the Framework Agreement on the Modernisation of Pay Structures: arrangements for visiting/associate tutors and hourly paid staff, and the issue of progression through and between pay scales.

With regard to VT/AT staff and hourly paid staff, it was reported that there needed to be an assessment of the roles of VT/AT staff, their terms and conditions, assimilation onto the new pay spines, and moving onto contracts that were consistent with the Framework Agreement and statutory requirements. It was noted that there was a strong likelihood of substantial cost increases in reviewing this element of Goldsmiths' staff contracts, and that there would need to be a shift in calculating necessary working time. The matter was to be discussed at the Pay Forum in October when the TU side was due to respond to the management proposals, which had already been circulated to departments for information and comment.

The Director of HR also clarified that if an employee is employed on fixed term contracts totalling four or more continuous years' service, then s/he is legally a permanent employee.

9 PROPOSALS ON PROGRESSION

Received:

the report on progression.

The Director of HR explained that this paper was presented at the Senior Management away day and therefore most people attending the HR Committee meeting were already familiar with its content.

The paper proposed some radical changes to the current progression system for academic staff based on the following principles:

- Promotion between grades should be criteria based and subject to objective analysis.
- Movement between Lecturer A and Lecturer B would be determined by the meeting of identified criteria based on the generic role profiles published. Decisions would be made within the department following careful analysis. Moderation would be undertaken at Pro Warden level.
- Movement between Lecturer B and Senior Lecturer would be non competitive, based on published job descriptions, evidence based and critically reviewed by Heads of Department. HoDs' and Pro Wardens would determine who should be referred to external assessors for comment on research quality. Final decisions would be made by a college promotions panel.
- Movement to Reader would be determined in the same way as movement to Senior Lecturer, but moderation would be by a panel of Pro Wardens and the Warden, with assessments being sought and then referred to a college promotions panel. Applicants could only move from Senior Lecturer to Reader. It would be possible to move from Lecturer B to Senior Lecturer to Reader in the same year.
- The process for applications for professor would be the same as the process for applications for Reader.
- Applications would be assessed on clear evidence in relation to the stated job descriptions.
- It would no longer be necessary to seek references.
- Pay progression for Readers and Professors in Band 1 would become automatic provided PDR had taken place
- Pay progression for staff with non automatic incremental progression or where, in future, provisions were in place for accelerated progression, would be dealt with by a pay progression panel
- Personal Development Reviews and appraisals would need to form a positive part of development and talent management for the future.
- The paper puts forward a proposal for 2 Committees to replace some of the existing Committees in this area. The proposed Committees are: a Promotion Committee and a Pay Progression Committee to replace Panels A, B, C and D, and the abolition of the probation committee.

It was recognised that this was a significant shift in assessment, continuous development and decision making. Heads of Department were now being asked to make detailed and objective evaluations against detailed evidence from staff, rather than providing supporting statements for applications. It would be necessary to work with HoDs' to provide them with the skills and support to enable them to undertake the roles we were now seeking from them in relation to staff career management. This also might call for Departments to have a stronger senior team to support the Head in making assessments and judgments about staff development.

In addition HR would need to support staff by providing self assessment workshops so that staff themselves took a more proactive and significant role in their own development and readiness for promotion.

The Assistant Director (Partnerships and Development) asked that HoDs' think about extra support they may require. General responses included gaining knowledge of the structures being put in place, what their responsibilities were and how to implement these.

It was acknowledged that the proposals had quite significant implications and the HR Committee's input would help to inform final decisions.

The last Probation Committee as it currently stands is proposed for July 09.

A query was raised regarding the roll out of processes over the coming academic year considering the proposed changes, e.g. the PDR process. The Director of HR agreed HoDs should continue with the current PDR process as nothing would alter until all changes had been agreed.

The Director of HR will provide a follow up of this paper. Any recommendations and/or action points will come back before the next HR Committee meeting takes place in February 2009.

10 MANAGEMENT INFORMATION – STAFF DATA AS AT 1 SEPTEMBER 2008

Received:

the report on management information.

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) introduced the report. This was the first workforce profile report and members were reminded of the caveats concerning the level of confidence in the accuracy of current data.

The HR team were now embarking on a data cleansing activity to improve the quality of data.

The individual tables in the report addressed general areas e.g. ethnicity, disability, gender, age bands and examined them in conjunction with grade data etc. Sickness absence data was also presented, but it was noted this has been measured according to headcount rather than full time equivalent staff numbers with the result that the figures might appear lower than expected.

Members were invited to comment on: the layout of the data, data that is included which is not useful, additional data Committee members would find useful, the best ways of communicating data and how often they would like to receive data.

Comments included suggestions that it would be useful to separate out research staff as they are funded separately and it needed to be clarified whether research staff were included in the provided management information; it was agreed it would be useful to have fte data included for departments; it was noted that the bulk of the data refers to academic staff only and future analyses should include support staff. Committee members agreed they were happy to receive data at the start of each academic year in order to assist with strategic planning, although data relating to sickness absence should be produced on a more frequent basis, and accuracy levels from departments needed improving.

It was agreed that data will be placed on the shared drive and all will be emailed the link.

11 MEASURING PERFORMANCE IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Received:

the report on measuring performance in Human Resources.

The Registrar & Secretary explained that the reports provided were trial data run on HR to measure performance. Some of the fields in the given data reports were not yet populated; however, as recording and reporting of data improved these will be included. The aim was to have such data reported regularly across the College by each support department.

The Chair clarified that with regard to voluntary staff turnover, targets were informed by a benchmark service other Universities subscribe to, and queried if these were relevant measures and whether perhaps University of London targets would be more appropriate. Further clarification of

what constitutes “voluntary” turnover would also be useful, as would some qualitative data from sources such as exit interviews.

The “HR dashboard”, as it is called, was a work in progress and the overall number of fields would need reducing. Other figures that were noted included recruitment costs and it would be useful now to monitor expenditure reduction once the e-recruitment system was in place. HR budgets were not profiled at the moment.

IT and Student Support Services would be joining the data trial and the overall Committee feeling was that data of this type would be welcome for academic departments.

12 STAFF DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

An update was provided by the Assistant Director (Partnerships and Development), who explained that the Staff Development Advisor had taken on a bigger role and that recruitment for a Staff Development Assistant was imminent. There would be a re-launch of the Central Staff Development Programme in January 2009 and the team intended to carry out more personalised staff development within departments.

The Chair stated that a theme which had emerged from the last few HR Committee meetings was how Training Needs Analysis (TNA) could be developed. It was explained that the PDR process would help identify TNA but that more needed to be done, with the support of Business Partners will address.

The Staff Development team was currently involved in some work on helping people coming to the end of fixed term contracts and would be meeting Jane Powell, Pro Warden to discuss further.

13 EQUALITIES UPDATE

Received:

report from the Equal Opportunities Advisor.

The Director of HR raised some key points from the provided report including making the Committee aware of the new equalities bill coming through next year containing the proposed Single Equality Scheme (implementation date on/after 2010/11) which will include age, sexual orientation, religion & belief. We would therefore need to consider collecting further data on a voluntary basis. He looked forward now to Goldsmiths making positive use of legislation to press the business case for diversity rather than simply needing to comply with legislation.

14 CURRENT CASEWORK

Received:

casework report for the HR Committee.

The Assistant Director (Partnerships and Development) explained that the provided report reflected the priority work of the Business Partner teams in reviewing all casework. The report provided outlined how the HR team will be taking a more proactive approach to providing a high quality HR service.

It was noted that the 4th paragraph from the bottom should read 10 cases and not 9.

The Assistant Director (Partnerships and Development) clarified that with regards to the review of Occupational Health provision, we were still working with the Royal Marsden Hospital in the interim.

It was also clarified that with reference to the alleged harassment case that none of the allegations had been substantiated.

15 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Noted:

that the dates of meetings of this committee in the 2008/09 academic session had been scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 10 February 2009 - 2.30 p.m.

Thursday 7 May 2009 - 2.30 p.m.