

**GOLDSMITHS**  
**University of London**

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2009**

**Present:** Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Ms Vicky Annand, Mr Michael Dick, Dr Basem El-Haddadeh, Professor Mark d'Inverno, Dr Helen Jones, Mr Hugh Jones, Professor Marjorie Mayo, Mr Chris Pearson, Mr Terry Rosenberg.

**In attendance:** Mrs Bunmi Odulaja (Secretary), Mr Kevin Browne (for items 19 and 22 below), Ms Hilary Lowe (for item 23).

**Apologies:** Mr Barry Benjamin, Professor Celia Lury.

**16 MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2008.

**17 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(re: item 6 – Implementation of HR Review - Staffing)

**(i) HR Forum**

It was noted that the HR forum had not taken place in December 2008 as initially planned. It was now scheduled for 10 March 2009. The Director of Human Resources confirmed that an invitation would be sent to all Heads of Department and Departmental Administrators, encouraging as many as possible to attend the event. The HR department would use the forum to circulate new draft policies and procedures.

**(ii) Staff**

It was reported that Ms Johanna May, Deputy Director of Human Resources had retired in December 2008.

**(iii) Occupational Health**

It was noted that the service contract was due to be signed by the end of February 2009 and that the service was scheduled to be launched on 6 April 2009. The service provider was to be the Institute of Occupational Medicine. It

was further reported that Human Resources were working closely with Internal Communications to place an article in the staff Hallmark informing all staff of the service.

## **18 PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-RECRUITMENT**

Received:

A report on progress already made and the impending implementation date (09-33R).

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) introduced the report and confirmed that the implementation was going well. He confirmed that the Human Resources Department was currently testing the workflow of activities. Any issues or comments would be passed on to Stepstone by the end of the following week in time for go live date of Monday 23 February 2009.

It was recognised that more communication on the system was still needed and the HR Manager (Systems and Support) confirmed that a visit would be made to each department to advise Heads of Department and Departmental Administrators of their roles and responsibilities. The visits were scheduled for the next 6 weeks.

It was noted that the Human Resources Department intended to use the system for the next round of promotions.

The Director of IT suggested that any changes to the workflow might be done internally, as a member of the IT Services Department was part of the implementation group, provided that such changes were allowed in the contract signed with Stepstone. The HR Manager (Systems and Support) would check details of the contract.

It was further noted in discussion that, whilst the E-Recruitment software would speed up recruitment activities, it would not immediately replace the current Establishment Control Form (ECF) process.

In discussion it was confirmed that departments would be given a handbook detailing how to use the software.

## **19 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS – A NEW APPROACH**

Received:

A report from the Deputy Director of Human Resources on changes in how the College now dealt with disputes resolution, including a casework report (09-54).

On behalf of the Deputy Director of Human Resources, the Director of Human Resources reported on the changes made in the last couple of years in the College's approach to conflict resolution and disputes. In previous years, the College had focused primarily on compliance with the law and process as its main focus.. Staff and their representatives often remained distressed and cases were slow to resolve. The introduction of coaching and mediation in dispute resolution had changed this focus to a more positive approach and created a "safe environment" where staff were

able to focus on resolving issues of contention between them and learn to work together to deliver Goldsmiths' objectives.

In the 12 instances where mediation had been used only 2 cases had been unsuccessful in achieving the desired outcome.

The Chair welcomed the report and asked the Director of Human Resources what was expected of the Committee and where next was the report going.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that the next step was to circulate the report to Heads of Department and to train them in using the new approach to deal with dispute resolution at their local level.

Comments were invited from members and these included suggestions:

- (i) to strengthen the need for timely action to prevent cases taking too long to resolve;
- (ii) to include an indication of where and how to register issues;
- (iii) to make the examples anonymous so that staff individuals could not be identified from the report.

In discussion, members wanted to know why Heads of Department were not told the outcome of mediation instead of simply being informed that the case had been resolved. The Director of Human Resources informed the Committee that in cases of mediation or dispute resolution it is best practice to contain the issue to the point and parties where the dispute occurred rather reporting back to others. The resolution was "owned" by the parties in dispute, and wider publication of outcomes might jeopardise this and confidentiality.

The Chair suggested that whilst there were two examples given in the report (academe and military - perhaps at different ends of the spectrum), there were many examples of organisations which feature many of the positive elements of successful organisations, combining the appropriate mix of 'authority' and 'power'.

It was also discussed and generally agreed that unclear structures and reporting lines, allocation of responsibilities, sometimes out of date job descriptions and unclear objectives were some of the reasons for conflict in the College.

The Director of Human Resources agreed to have the paper revised and to have it circulated back to the Committee.

## **20 HERA UPDATE**

Received:

An oral report from the Director of Human Resources

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.

With regard to progression, it was reported that the College was planning to minimise the process by removing the need for referees and only seeking assessors' reports. It was also noted that the Performance and Development Review (PDR) was significant in ensuring performance was maintained and provided the opportunity to ensure staff were ready to seek promotion.

In discussion, members raised concerns that it was unclear when PDR should take place, and that it was even more important to be clear on expectations if PDR were linked to progression. There was also a concern that some members of staff do not want to take part in the PDR process. The Director of Human Resources confirmed that departments should focus on those members of staff that do want to take part in the PDR process. There was a query about how PDR could be done without linking it to a timed progression process.

The Director of Human Resources reminded members that all staff should have a PDR. There was no reason why Heads of Department should not cite PDR outcomes in their evidence based reports on staff seeking promotion, nor indeed encourage staff to seek promotion on the basis of the outcome of their PDR. Equally, there was no reason why the lack of evidence from a refusal to undertake a PDR should not be cited in a covering report on application for progression.

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. The Director of Human Resources explained that there were currently inconsistencies in how much value each department placed on different tasks performed by hourly paid staff. It was important that hourly paid staff should be paid on the basis of Job Evaluated grading rather than on course funding. It was confirmed that where possible, fractional contracts would be issued to hourly paid staff reflecting the volume of work in their jobs.

## **21 NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE**

Received:

an oral report from the Director of Human Resources.

The Director of Human Resources explained that the agreement in the new JNCHES arrangements on national pay negotiations was that Trade Unions and employers would start negotiations in March and seek to conclude negotiations in May for any pay award to be implemented in August.

However, UCU had not joined the new JNCHES arrangements as yet. Discussions were taking place at Acas between UCEA, UCU and the other signatory Trades Unions to seek to resolve the issues on which UCU remained in dispute on the bargaining machinery. UCU had indicated that they proposed to ballot for industrial action if progress was not made in discussions.

## **22 HR DASHBOARD UPDATE**

Received:

a report on HR performance (09-55).

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) explained that there had not been significant change from the data provided at the last meeting. He noted that definitions of items and Financial updates that were not available at the last meeting had been included in this report.

The Chair agreed that this data was valuable but suggested that it would be helpful to have some external comparators. It was confirmed that the targets had come from external comparator information from a benchmarking exercise to which the College subscribed. As from next year there would be more internal information when the Department would be able to measure trends. He also indicated that the introduction of E-Recruitment would add more value and provide more accurate and timely data.

The Chair asked for clarification on paragraph 5.1.7 of the report and the target of 25% of Black Minority and Ethnic (BME), as he had been informed at Council that the 25% target was not achievable and he had suggested that the information should be cross-checked.

In response to the Chair's comment, the Equality and Diversity Adviser confirmed that the Equality and Diversity Committee was doing some additional work on the BME target which was due out by the summer.

On the matter of management information, it was confirmed that this would be provided once a year at least but that interim reports would also be made.

## **23 EQUALITIES UPDATE**

Received:

a report on the current work of the Equality and Diversity Adviser (09-57).

The Equality and Diversity Adviser raised key points from the report including the background to the Equality Bill and a confirmation that there was collaboration with the HR Manager (Systems and Support) on the implementation of E-Recruitment.

The Director of Human Resources reported that a recommendation from the review of the HR department was to introduce a dignity at work policy that would set the tone for expectations and behaviour. This was attached in draft for members' comments.

The Chair asked members of the Committee to provide written comments to the Equality and Diversity Adviser. It was agreed that a second draft would be circulated to the Committee.

## **24 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Noted:

that the next Committee meeting would be on Thursday 7 May 2009 - 2.30 p.m.