

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

**FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2009**

Present: Mr Kenneth May (Chair), Ms Vicky Annand, Mr Michael Dick, Mr Hugh Jones, Professor Celia Lury, Professor Marjorie Mayo, Mr Chris Pearson, Mr Terry Rosenberg.

In attendance: Mrs Bunmi Odulaja (Secretary), Miss Fatma Gormus (note taker), Miss Gisele Constant (deputising for Mr Barry Benjamin), Mr Steve Collins (for items 6 and 9) Mr Kevin Browne (for items 8 and 12).

Observer: Visiting Researcher.

Apologies: Mr Barry Benjamin, Professor Mark d'Inverno, Dr Basem El-Haddadeh,

**4 MINUTES**

Resolved:

approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2009.

**6 UPDATE ON HR FORUM**

Received:

A report from the Deputy Director of Human Resources on HR Forums (09-186B)

The Deputy Director of Human Resources introduced the report and confirmed that HR had organised two HR Forums for Heads of Departments since the last HR Committee with the twin aims of raising awareness of the new Business Partner model and gaining some valuable feedback from internal clients. The forums were held on 10th March 2009 and 28th April 2009 and they were well attended.

**(i) 10th MARCH FORUM**

The Business Partner model received much positive feedback at the forum as clients felt that by having access to named individuals they were able to get a more personalised service which they appreciated as the information and messages are now more consistent.

## Policies and Procedures

It was reported that one major obstacle still to be overcome in implementing the Business Partner model was the fact that the underpinning policies and procedures were not in place and without them managers felt that they were 'working in the dark'.

## Interface between HR and Payroll

Concerns were raised about this important interface which left managers and staff feeling that gaps still exist between the two functions. A bi-monthly meeting between HR and Payroll now takes place and further discussions would take place once the newly appointed Director of Finance joins the College at the end of May.

## Visiting Tutors

Members of staff from academic departments were concerned about the College's plans to move towards fractional, as opposed to hourly paid contracts.

The Chair welcomed the report and asked if there had been any surprises and what steps had been put in place to address the concerns raised at the HR Forum.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that as part of the review of HR, it had already been recognised that policies and procedures were out of date and a Policy Adviser was appointed on a fixed term basis to work on the policies to ensure that they were brought up to date. Also, once the policies and procedures were updated, managers would be consulted on them at the HR Forum. HR would further consult on the policies with a small focus group before final consultation with the Trade Unions.

## (ii) 28th APRIL FORUM

It was reported that the main focus in this Forum was as a consultation exercise on five draft policies and procedures grouped under the generic heading of Performance Development.

Copies of the draft policies and procedures were made available to interested members.

It was noted that HR would organise a third forum before the end of the summer term.

## **7 UPDATE ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**

Received:

An oral report from the Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that the occupational health service was launched on 6 April 2009. The service would be for 60 days a year of which 42 days would be on Mondays. The additional days would be used for initiatives such as Health Awareness Days and Well Being events. The service is situated on the Ground Floor, St James Hall Block 1. It was reported that the occupational health nurse had already seen a number of staff on the 4 days of the contract so far.

As part of the service, the nurse would advise on how best to support members of staff. It was reported that a pre-employment questionnaire would be sent out to the newly appointed members of staff and the nurse would advise on their fitness to perform the posts that they had been appointed to.

It was confirmed that the nurse would attend the next HR committee meeting.

In discussion, members asked if they could see a copy of the pre-employment questionnaire. The Director of Human Resources agreed to circulate a copy of the pre-employment of the questionnaire to the committee.

## **8 UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF E-RECRUITMENT**

Received:

An oral report from the HR Manager (Systems and Support)

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) reported that the system went live on 11 March 2009. Since the launch, 734 applications for 24 posts had been processed at a cost of £478 per position compared to £1,000 per position previously.

It was reported that the next stage of the project would be to set up a roll-out programme which would consist of visiting departments in order to show Departmental Administrators how to set up and manage their recruitment processes.

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) confirmed that the HERA process and the streamline of ECF process would be linked to the system.

It was further confirmed that the E-Recruitment system would be used for this year's Academic progression process. This would see a huge reduction in paperwork.

The Registrar and Secretary asked if a test model could be set up for members to provide them with an opportunity to see first hand what the candidate experience is like.

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) agreed to set up a test vacancy on the internal site for members.

The Chair thanked the HR Manager (Systems and Support) and congratulated HR for the project.

## **9 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

Received:

A report from the Deputy Director of Human Resources on the current Case Work (09-187C)

The Director of Human Resources reported that HR had been tackling sickness cases more efficiently and effectively, and had been looking at capability where necessary and

dealing with these fundamentally. It was noted that a number of cases had been resolved since the last meeting.

In discussion, it was reported that the draft Probation Policy was based on the framework agreement which was signed off by the Trade Unions.

The Chair asked if members of staff were happy with the length of time between when they start in their post and when the first Probation Review is expected to take place.

In response to the Chair's question, the Director of Human Resources confirmed that there was no problem with doing the review before the mid way point, the only concern HR had was that people were not doing them at all.

One of the Committee members asked if the mentoring process could be put into the probation period as academics have mentors during their probation periods and that the mentors would have a better insight into the member of staff's progress.

It was noted that this was previously discussed, and it was agreed that the mentors could not have an input into the probation period process as the role of mentors is one of help and assistance and the relationship would at all times be kept confidential.

The Chair asked if there was a project plan for updating policies and procedures with an indication of time scales for completion.

In response, The Director of Human Resources reported that there would be a launch of newly drafted and agreed policies by September 2009 and that the progress up to date had been impressive. It was confirmed that all the policies would be made available on the intranet.

It was recognised that more communication was still needed before the launch of the policies.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that focus groups would be organised in order to inform members of staff of the policies.

The Chair suggested that the launch would need to be a proactive process so that members of staff understand what the message is. The Chair also asked for a confirmation of the process for agreeing new policies.

In response, the Director of Human Resources confirmed that draft policies are circulated internally within HR for comments, they are then viewed by key clients and if necessary, they would be revised. HR would then consult with the Trade Unions. Once an agreement is reached, HR would set up briefing sessions for key people and launch the agreed policies.

The Registrar and Secretary commented that the HR Review demonstrated that Policies and Procedures were in need of development and that it was good to see that things were in progress.

## **10 HERA UPDATE**

Received:

An oral report from the Director of Human Resources

It was reported that there were two big issues from the Framework Agreement still to be resolved.

### **(i) Progression**

The progression process paper was launched on 6 May 2009 and although there were short time scales, the Director of Human Resources was hopeful that the new process would be more efficient, evidence based and non competitive. Promotions would commence from September 2009.

The Chair asked if there was a level of resistance of change from members of staff.

In response, the Director of Human Resources stated that although some people may be reluctant to change, it was in the College's best interest to implement the process due to legal requirements.

### **(ii) Visiting Tutors**

Different aspects of the project had been addressed and currently the project is at the stage of deciding what the contract hours should be for each individual.

It was reported that HR is working through the project as quickly as they can, but it was unlikely that the new contracts would be issued before September 2009, therefore, all departments would continue using the current system until the project is completed.

## **11 NATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS UPDATE**

Received:

An oral report from the Director of Human Resources

It was confirmed that UCU has called a ballot on industrial action on 22 May 2009 as they had not received a 'credible offer' to the pay claim for an 8% increase and also because they had not received a categorical assurance that any offer that may be forthcoming would not balance considerations of increases in remuneration with job security.

It was reported that a paper had been circulated by the Warden and the Director of Human Resources explaining the College's position.

## **12 HR DASHBOARD UPDATE**

Received:

An oral report from the HR Manager (Systems and Support)

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) reported that the new E-Recruitment system would be able to report on where applicants are sourcing for jobs and at present the GC website had the highest referral score followed by jobs.ac.uk.

It was confirmed that HR has been working closely with the Communications and Publicity department in order to reduce the size of adverts in the press media. There has been reduction in the cost of advertisement while still having a print media presence.

The Chair asked if there was a way of attracting those who live in the local area.

In response, the HR Manager (Systems and Support) confirmed that HR had been advertising in the local job centre, this is also now a legal requirement from UK Border Agency.

The Chair commented that the report from the last meeting had good statistics on staff costs, recruitment and budgets and asked whether this could be produced for the next meeting.

The HR Manager (Systems and Support) agreed to produce a written report for the next meeting.

## **13 EQUALITIES UPDATE**

Received:

A report from the Equalities Adviser (09-188D)

On behalf of the Equalities Adviser, the Director of Human Resources reported that there is now a draft policy on religion and belief. The dignity at work policy had been consulted on with the Trade Unions and other colleagues and there would be briefing sessions for staff on how to use the policy.

## **14 CHILD CARE VOUCHERS**

Received:

An oral report from the Director of Human Resources

It was reported that the proposition would be going to SMT to seek agreement. It was envisaged that once it had been agreed, the service would be launched in September 2009.

The Director of Human Resources confirmed that there would be sufficient communication to members of staff.

#### **15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business

#### **16 NEXT MEETING**

Noted:

that the next meeting would be on 22 October 2009 – 10.30am