

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

ACADEMIC BOARD

STUDENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 27TH January 2009

Present: Philip Broadhead (in the chair), Mary Bright, Graham Gaskell, Jess Tratt, Alison Ahern (Secretary)

Apologies: Basem El – Haddadeh, Jesse Fajemisin, Anne Francis, Ed Randall, Richard Smith, Vivian Taibe

In Attendance: Shanaz Begum (note taker), Adam Cresswell, Annette Hayton, Rachael Johnson

OPEN BUSINESS

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2008 were approved, subject to an alteration to the wording in section 12 under 'Recommended' action. The new wording now reads – 'A small one off working group was agreed with a suggested group comprising of:'

5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Noted:

- i) That the Medical Centre is still not included in the internal post run. The Estates & Facilities Department have turned down a request for internal post to be delivered there, causing the delivery of confidential material to be compromised.
- ii) That the impact of the proposed strategic increase in international student numbers on the level of current student advice provision is still being monitored
- iii) That the Student Charter has now been sent to Reprographics for production.

Resolved:

- i) Alison Ahern to continue with requests to Estates & Facilities to include the Medical Centre in the internal post run.

ii) Alison Ahern to supply a small number of copies of the Student Charter to the Student Union to be made available to students this academic year, with a view to disseminating it on a larger scale at the start of the next academic session, 2009-10.

6 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF WIDENING PARTICIPATION

Received:

Progress Report from the Widening Participation Task Group Consultation to support the Strategic Assessment of Widening Participation.

Noted:

i) That a Widening Participation Task group was set up to develop an institutional strategy in response to a request by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for institutions to report on their Widening Participation Strategic Assessments by June 2009.

ii) That the strategy aimed to combine admission-related objectives with those relating to the subsequent student experience.

iii) That the Task Group reported directly to the Academic Development Committee with input from other relevant Committees, including the Student Committee.

iiii) That the Student Committee was represented in the Task Group by the Students' Union President, with additional input to be sought from the Student Support Services Manager.

Resolved:

That the Student Committee supported the Task Group in its aims and targets, and members are happy to be consulted about any issues that may arise.

Recommended:

i) That in relation to the aims as laid out in section 4 of the report, the following changes should be considered:

- Point 4 should take out the references to Aimhigher and Lifelong Learning Networks as these initiatives are finite - the strategy should focus on what Goldsmiths aims to achieve independently of external organisations and programmes.
- Add an additional aim to 'provide appropriate support towards progression and attainment, as well as to a positive student experience'.

- Change wording of point 7 to 'evaluate our widening participation and student experience activity'.
- ii) That in relation to the target groups as laid out in section 5:
- Mention should be made of the need to provide support after students have arrived, for example, in the form of study skills support.
 - The importance of responsible recruitment should be highlighted, for instance, by providing comprehensive information on all aspects of being a student, especially on the financial implications of studying.
 - Attention should be drawn to the need for a proper induction to the college, so that students are not intimidated or overwhelmed by the experience.
 - Point 7 relating to students with 'lower A level grades' should be approached with caution, as it may cause problems in future, for example, if the college decides to raise its academic standards for entry.
- iii) That special mention should be made of returning adult learners who have children, and the importance of initiating special activities for them, for example, by providing a half-term childcare scheme.
- iv) Additional advice and input should be sought from Student Support Services on a regular basis.
- v) The strategy should emphasise the need for a more uniform student attendance monitoring procedure across the college

7 GOLD AWARD

Received:

Paper update on Personal Development Planning and the proposed development of the Gold Award.

Noted:

- i) That other universities have implemented similar schemes to this proposed Gold Award.
- ii) That low take-up is feared due to lack of student motivation. The current 3D Graduate scheme which offers a tool for personal development planning currently does not have a high participation rate, and there are concerns that students will not get involved in the unaccredited Gold scheme. GSU felt that the scheme was helpful for the personal development of students, but was concerned about the rate of take-up.

iii) That the scheme will be trialled on all new undergraduate students in 2009/10, with a view to rolling out to all students in subsequent years.

iv) That even though the Goldsmiths Learning Enhancement Unit (GLEU) will act as the central administrative point for the scheme (for example, in terms of record-keeping and monitoring), each department will have to nominate one of their existing staff to act as Award Coordinator for that department. No additional resources are anticipated for the administration of the scheme, except for extra IT support.

v) That consideration needs to be given to the way in which the award is made to students.

Resolved:

That the objectives of the scheme are excellent, but further work needs to be carried out by GLEU to ensure satisfactory participation in the scheme.

Recommended:

i) That the award is not presented at the students' graduation ceremonies. An informal event (involving the Careers Service perhaps) should be organised for this purpose.

ii) That the possibility of a student obtaining a guaranteed referee by the end of the scheme is considered in order to encourage involvement.

8 FUNDING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Received:

Discussion paper on funding reasonable adjustments for disabled students.

Noted:

i) That there are currently limited funds available to help international, EU and FE students with disability related costs and that these were available by direct application to the Head of Finance by HoDs of academic departments.

ii) That the Access to Learning Fund only provides assistance to home students, and specifically, for funding dyslexia diagnostic tests. This

costs the Fund approximately £50k per year, and impacts on the money available for other students who may be in financial hardship.

iii) That the current limits on statutory funding available for disability related costs may be dissuading students from entering HE. The maximum claim for interpreter costs is currently £20k, for example, and is insufficient for students who have more advanced needs and therefore higher costs.

iv) That a targeted fund to assist students with these costs would be helpful in both encouraging students to attend HE and in supporting them whilst they are here.

v) That any special fund would not be used to fund structural adjustments to the college premises, and would only be available for individual student cases.

Resolved:

That members supported the setting up of such a fund, and that the issue be referred to SMT for further consideration.

9 STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Received:

Draft Action Plan for the implementation of the Student Experience Strategy.

Noted:

That due to time constraints of this meeting, the action plan could not be looked at in depth. However, the Committee Secretary will invite and collate individual comments on the action plan from members and prepare a report on responses before the next meeting.

However, some comments were received during the meeting on some of the points of the action plan, where it was noted that:

i) With reference to the 'Composition of Services':

- progress on the implementation of a one-stop shop service to students will take place when the current restructuring process for the creation of the Student Office is completed.
- identification of appropriate accommodation for this service will be made in the College's Estates Master Plan.t.
- a Project Manager has now been recruited by the Registry to implement the Student Records Project.

ii) With reference to 'The Goldsmiths Environment', the college's physical environment has not been considered.

iii) With reference to 'Applying and Entry to Goldsmiths':

- a mandatory online induction process could be the way forward in terms of increasing efficiency. Residences already have an online induction procedure which is working successfully.
- Attendance and monitoring is a big issue at the moment, especially in relation to international students who *must* be monitored now under new Home Office regulations.

iv) With reference to 'Accommodation and Catering':

- an increased demand for hall places is anticipated as a result of the college's strategy to recruit more international students
- Talks are currently underway with the SMT on how catering will in the future be structured at Goldsmiths.

Resolved:

i) That even though the rate of progress on the one-stop shop is being affected by other factors, steps should still be taken to get the project started in time for 2010/11, including;

- Identification of the different functions of the one-stop shop
- Identification of any training requirements
- Identification of suitable accommodation by the end of 2009/10.

Recommended:

i) That the following be considered in the Goldsmiths Environment section of the Action Plan:

- The Estates strategy to form part of the action plan
- A statement on 'green' issues and environmentally-friendly initiatives to also be included
- Student Support Services to also be responsible for monitoring student safety along with the Students' Union.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

11 NEXT MEETING

To be held on 5th May 2009

*Alison Ahern
4 February 2009*

