

**GOLDSMITHS
University of London**

COUNCIL

JOINT CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2010

Present: Mr Hugh Jones (in the Chair), Dr Philip Broadhead, Ms Dail Francois, Mr Des Freedman, Professor Marjorie Mayo, Mr Chris Pearson, Ms Suzanne Stead

In attendance: Ms Kathryn Nesbitt (Secretary), Ms Greta Farlan (UNISON), Ms Sally Townsend (Director of Finance)

Apologies: Professor Jane Powell

OPEN BUSINESS

33 RECOGNITION AGREEMENT

Received:

the final Recognition Agreement for signature (10-82R).

Resolved:

the Recognition Agreement was signed off by all parties.

34 MINUTES (JNCC5)

Noted:

that UNISON had been incorrectly referred to as UNISION in 16 point 16 (page 3)

UCU asked whether, with regard to point 16, the College was sometimes unable to provide robust data regarding sickness absence. The Director of Human Resources responded that it was currently difficult to be satisfied with the quality of data. However, driven by the Warden's desire that the data cleansing project was driven forward as a priority, improvements were being, and would continue to be made. The role of the Well-being Working Party was noted.

35 MINUTES (JNCC6&7)

Noted:

that there were no corrections to be made

36 STAFF COST REDUCTION PROGRAMME

The Director of Human Resources advised that, with regard to promotion of the Staff Cost Reduction Programme, all relevant documents had been posted on the College's intranet site, and that he had held four open presentations for staff the previous week (which had seen approximately 120 attendees in total). He noted that subsequent to this promotion, 63 expressions of interest in the Voluntary Severance Scheme had been received, and, although a detailed analysis had not been conducted, he could confirm that they had come from both academic and non-academic departments. The Director of Human Resources added that it was important that staff were reminded of the programme and relevant dates.

UCU asked what the turn-around time for feeding back to staff who had submitted expressions of interest in the Voluntary Severance Scheme was. The Director of Human Resources responded that it was between four to six weeks. The Director of Finance highlighted the dependency on the College's pension providers for pension figures, and that (based upon information she had received from other HE institutions running Voluntary Severance Schemes similar to that of Goldsmiths) it could take 12 weeks for the LPFA to provide figures in the more extreme cases. She added the Finance Department could provide indicative figures for staff who were members of USS. The Director of Human Resources, stated that turn-around times would be monitored and, if necessary, programme closing dates would be reviewed.

The Director of Human Resources noted his expectation that the majority of applications for flexible working would be received during the Summer-period.

UNISON asked whether there had been any actual applications for voluntary severance (rather than expressions of interest). The Director of Human Resources responded that there had not been. He added that the trade union would be kept up-to-date regarding numbers of expressions of interest and applications – that it would not be necessary for them to wait until the next JNCC meeting for this, although of course a full update would be given at the next JNCC which was to take place after the closing date for final applications.

The Registrar and Secretary stated that it was in the College's best interests for the Staff Cost Reduction Programme to be promoted as effectively as possible, and added that it was unlikely such a generous voluntary severance package would be offered in the foreseeable future.

37 2.5% DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET CUTS

UCU asked whether the 2010-11 Budget had been presented to Council. The Director of Finance advised that it had not; that it would first be presented to the Resources Committee (on 24th June 2010) and then to Council (on 29th June 2010). She noted that in the worst case scenario the College would have a surplus of only £200,000 (not taking into account the Voluntary Severance Scheme) – which would not be sufficient for the

College's needs. She added that it was anticipated that the pension salary sacrifice scheme would result in savings in 2010-11 and beyond, and that a number of comparatively 'pain-free' approaches to expenditure reduction were being reviewed, for example certain areas of procurement.

UCU asked for clarification regarding paragraph three of notes presented by the Director of Finance. She responded that it was based both upon information gathered at the Budget Setting Meeting and on the knowledge of the College held by the Warden and Pro-Wardens. She added that, given the management information which they had, Heads of Departments had reached a ceiling with regard to budgeting. The Registrar and Secretary noted the importance of being realistic.

UCU asked whether all Departments had made the requested 2.5% savings. The Director of Finance responded that some administrative departments had. UCU asked whether the consequences of any financial difficulties were to be shared amongst all departments of the College. The Director of Finance responded that transparency and equality were key, and that, going forward monitoring would be absolutely essential. The Registrar and Secretary noted that there were different cost implications for different academic programmes, and thus that different departments would be constrained in different ways. UCU asked whether this meant that some departments were shouldering, or would shoulder, more of a burden than others. The Registrar and Secretary responded that he did not believe that there would be a significant disparity between departments.

The Director of Finance advised that it would be necessary to revisit scenario planning when further information was available, noting that the College was operating in very dynamic times and that this meant that conclusions / decisions may sometimes, through necessity, be superseded by new conclusions / decisions.

The Registrar and Secretary advised that more would be known when the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review was announced (for example regarding the scale of cuts for the three years subsequent to 2011). UCU asked whether this be communicated to the College by a letter. The Registrar and Secretary responded that it would be.

38 PENSIONS

The Director of Human Resources advised that for the past two years a joint review group had been looking at the University Superannuation Scheme (USS), their objective being to find a way to make it sustainable. He continued that the group had not been able to reach agreement about how to do this, and therefore that the next step was for UCU and the Employers' Group to make individual proposals to the Joint Negotiating Group. He noted that if there was still not agreement that it might be necessary for the Chairman to use his casting vote; which he was rarely asked to do. Following this, the JNC would make proposals to the USS Board, who would then decide whether to accept the proposals. If they did so, USS members would be consulted on their views in the autumn, as required by statute.

The Director of Human Resources added that the proposal of the Employers' Group was that employees who were already members of USS should retain their current benefits and new members would be able to join a 'career average scheme'. However, to facilitate this it would be necessary for the normal retirement age to be raised from 60 to 65, and also for employee contributions to increase.

UCU noted that in a ballot of its members, 96% were in favour of UCU's proposals. The Director of Human Resources noted that **all** USS members would be consulted. UCU stated that based on what had happened thus far the process of negotiation would not be a happy one. The Director of Human Resources and UCU agreed that the status quo was not in anyone's interests. The Registrar and Secretary highlighted the important role of the Trustees of the Scheme. The Director of Human Resources stated that potentially the cost of pensions was a more serious issue than that of the cost of salaries.

He noted that an offer of 0.4% pay increase (consolidated) had been tabled and that UCU and EIS had taken the matter to dispute.

39 NURSERY

The Pro-Warden (Students and Learning Development) advised that he had met with a number of groups (the Trade Unions, the Students' Union, Nursery Staff and Nursery Users) the previous day to confirm the decision of the College's Senior Management Team that the College Nursery was not sustainable and that its subsidy was to be withdrawn and thus it was to close. He advised that the date of closure was to be the end of September 2010. He explained that at their meeting Nursery Staff had been given a letter which outlined the situation and confirmed that they were at risk of redundancy. He advised that this would be followed up by the Human Resources Department. The Pro-Warden advised that the Nursery Users had expressed a number of concerns with the proposed closure. He advised that a communication had been sent to Heads of Department to keep them abreast of the situation so that they could assist in supporting Nursery Users (both staff and students) during the period of transition.

UNISON asked whether an impact assessment had been carried out. The Pro-Warden confirmed that it had, and that it had been posted on the College's intranet. UCU responded that they did not feel that it was a full impact assessment, that there were significant gaps, and thus that they would challenge it. UCU asked who had carried out the assessment, and whether the Pro-Warden was satisfied with it. The Pro-Warden advised that it had been carried out by the Student Services Department, and that he was content with it. UNISON advised that they were not sure that the Equality and Diversity Officer had seen it.

UNISON advised that whilst the output of the Childcare Working Party had been undoubtedly positive, one of its concerns (which had been put on record) was that insufficient childcare-related expertise had been made available to them. UNISON asked whether the College had given consideration to bringing in a childcare expert to review the viability of the Nursery. The Pro-Warden responded that an external expert had been a member of the Party, and that they had had significant experience and knowledge regarding managing nurseries in the Higher Education sector.

UCU asked how the Working Party had been advised of the Senior Management Team's decision. The Pro-Warden advised that the Working Party had been 'stood down' by the time that the decision had been made. He continued that the Working Party had been aware that the proposal to increase revenue had been dependent upon increasing the number of places for children, and that, unfortunately, this was not a viable solution.

UNISON advised that they would like to meet with Human Resources to discuss the futures of the Nursery Staff who were at risk of redundancy. The Director of Human Resources agreed to this.

UCU stated that the word 'shock' was an appropriate adjective to describe their reaction to the announcement that the Nursery was to close in September. They continued that the Nursery had been symbolic of the College's support for its staff and students. UCU noted their concerns around whether an architect should have been called upon to measure the Nursery, and also that the timing of the closure meant that Users may struggle to make alternative arrangements. They stated that they would urge the College to re-think the decision until all relevant facts had been fully considered and there was a holistic strategy in place.

UCU asked why the aforementioned meetings had only been called with 24 hours notice. The Pro-Warden responded that there would never have been a perfect, or even good time to communicate the decision that the Nursery was to close, and that the Senior Management Team's intention was to share the decision as soon as was possible and that he was sure that he would have been criticised if he had 'held' the information for a week. UCU commented that they were reflecting the views of their members – and not just those members who were parents.

UNISON advised that they did not believe that the communications with Nursery Staff had been handled as well as they might have been. The Pro-Warden responded that the use of e-mail to advise staff of the meeting had not been effective, and that this has been taken on board. He reiterated the importance of sharing the decision with them as soon as had been possible.

The Pro-Warden, responding to the comment regarding measurement of the Nursery Building, stated that the building had been measured twice by the Estates Department following OFSTED guidelines. UCU asked whether the measurements had been checked by OFSTED as the Working Party had requested. The Pro-Warden advised that it was not for OFSTED to check the measurements, but that they advised how the building should be measured and for the measurements to then be sent to them.

UCU queried whether the aforementioned measurements had been shared with the Working Party. The Pro-Warden advised that they had been, as had the associated drawings. UCU responded that this was disputed by the Working Party. The Registrar and Secretary advised that any former members of the Working Party could raise any concerns / questions which they had with the Director of Student Services in the first instance.

UCU noted that in a College-wide communication, so as to make a financial illustration, the children in the Nursery had been compared to textbooks, and that this had been insensitive. The Registrar and Secretary advised that he would feedback to the Internal Communications Team regarding this.

UNISON asked that the College reconsider the timing of the closure of the Nursery. The Registrar and Secretary advised that he did not anticipate that there would be a change to what had already been communicated.

UNISON noted that, regarding the Nursery, they were unhappy about the outcome of the Working Party, concerned about the timing of the closure, concerned about the method / content of communication, concerned about the impact assessment, and concerned about the lack of alternative provision.

NOTE: Ms Greta Farian (UNISON) left the meeting

40 PAY FORUM – OUTSTANDING ISSUES

The Director of Human Resources advised that it was unlikely that the VT Working Group would conclude its work by the end of the current term due to the complex nature of the challenges it faced. He also advised that he was mindful of the current national pay negotiations, and of not wanting to put a local agreement in place which would then be overturned by a national one. UCU noted that they were keen for progress to be made.

The Director of Human Resources advised that it was important to move forward with development of job families for support staff, and that it was necessary for the policy on grading to be redrafted in the next few weeks.

41 ESTATES

The Registrar and Secretary noted that discussions were ongoing between UNISON and the Working Group. UNISON noted that they were waiting to receive a project plan from the Head of Facilities. The Registrar and Secretary responded that he believed one had been drafted and should be available shortly. UCU asked whether it would be possible for them to feed into the discussions. The Director of Human Resources responded that it would be.

42 CATERING CONTRACT AND CLEANING STAFF

With regard to the catering contract, the Registrar and Secretary noted that, 20 expressions of interest had been received, and that 5 organisations had subsequently been short listed and had been asked to prepare more detailed submissions for consideration. He continued that a contract should be in-place by mid-August. UNISON asked whether the contract would include a clause that staff would receive at least the London Living Wage. The Director of Human Resources responded that it would.

The Registrar and Secretary noted that there had been no developments regarding the Cleaning Contract.

43 REPROGRAPHICS

The Registrar and Secretary noted that there had been little change to the Reprographics Department's financial situation since it was last reported on at the JNCC. He explained that whilst it was hoped that it would be possible to retain an in-house service, it was important that the College received value for money and thus that the review would continue. He noted that an advisor, who had been involved in a similar review, was to be engaged to assist with the review process.

44 THE TRUST SCHOOL

The Registrar and Secretary noted that a public communication was shortly to be made that the Trust School proposal was not to go ahead. UCU asked how this decision had been reached. The Registrar and Secretary responded that following discussion between the College, three local schools and Lewisham it was agreed that in the current climate the College's focus needed to be elsewhere. Both UCU and UNISON advised that they were supportive of this decision.

45 HR POLICIES

UCU noted that it was still necessary for Greg Barnett to review and sign off the grievance policy. The Director of Human Resources noted that he was keen to make progress with agreeing policies.

UCU stated that it was important that the College have a policy in place regarding sickness absence. The Director of Human Resources responded that sickness absence would come under the well-being policy which was currently under development.

The Director of Human Resources noted that he was waiting to hear from UNISON regarding some of the wording included in the proposed redundancy policy.

46 Membership

Noted:

that as Professor Mayo was retiring from the College that this would be the last JNCC meeting which she would attend as a representative of UCU. She was thanked for her outstanding and positive contribution not just to the JNCC but to Employee relations in the college as a whole.

47 Next Meeting

that the next meeting would be held on 13 October 2010